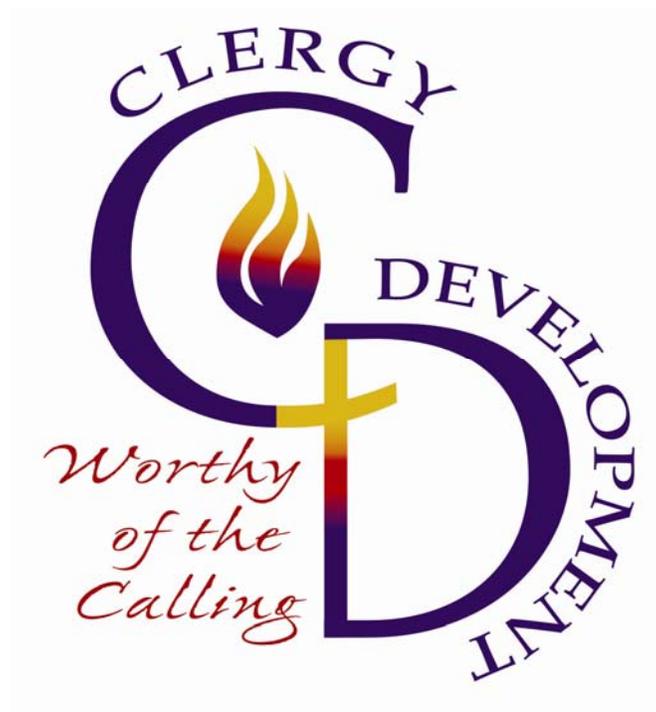

Faculty Guide

Telling the Old Testament Story of God



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Kansas City, Missouri
816-333-7000 ext. 2468; 800-306-7651 (USA)
2002

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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Series Foreword

A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, all of the creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people: the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, community life, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people, in a form referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe God calls and persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry should continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled by God's call. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful

preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, "preparation" never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1: 7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the "mystery of God," which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6: 19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach "the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3: 8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1: 5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one's charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward's principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a "job." It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ's Church. The person who embraces God's call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister's stewardship must be, should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to "shun" the love of money. Instead, the minister must "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness." He or she must "fight the good fight of the faith" and "take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called" (1 Tim 6: 11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes “the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; ‘in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left’ (2 Cor 6:6-7)” (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ “must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching . . . able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God’s Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ’s Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21:33-44; 25:14-30; Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

Preparation for ministry in Christ’s Church—one’s education in all its dimensions— should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect those standards to be

observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules comprising the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

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Introduction

Intended Use of This Faculty Guide

This faculty guide serves as an instructor's guide for teaching principles of *Telling the Old Testament Story of God* to adult learners who are preparing for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. The content is based on intended outcomes defined through the collaborative process conducted at Breckenridge, CO, USA, between 1990 and 1997. The materials prepare the pastor-teacher to present the topic by providing background reading, lesson plans, lectures, instructions to the teacher, and teaching resources for each class session. In most lessons complete lectures, questions for guided discussions, and defined learning activities are provided.

The pastor-teacher who will lead this module should hold a master's degree. Ideally, the pastor-teacher should have participated as a student in a module using this material prior to teaching the material to others. This faculty guide assumes that the pastor-teacher has some basic understanding of the Old Testament.

It is further assumed that learners participating in a module using this material will be high school graduates and be adult learners beyond the traditional college age. Learners are assumed to be motivated to learn, and to have adult life-experiences. No prior college classroom experience is assumed on the part of the learners.

Acknowledgments

Every module is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the module for publication. This module is not different. Many people have contributed to this module. Every effort has been made to represent accurately the original intent of the principal contributors.

Principal Contributor

The principal contributor and original author of this manual was Thomas J. King, professor of Old

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Revision History

Third Quarter 2005, Revision 5, the current version

- module guides edited for gender inclusiveness

First Quarter 2004, Revision 4,

- module title changed from *Old Testament History and Literature* to *Telling the Old Testament Story of God*

Fourth Quarter 2003. Revision 3,

- copyright was transferred to Nazarene Publishing House.

Second Quarter 2003. Revision 2,

- Redundant printing of objectives and assignments was removed from lesson plans
- Lessons and reading assignments were keyed to the recommended textbook, Varughese, Alex (ed.). *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2003.

Fourth Quarter 2002. Revision 1

- Copyright was transferred to Clergy Development
- Spring 2001*. Original manuscript completed
- Formatted for electronic publishing
 - Keyed to a separate Student Guide

About This Module

The material in this module originally appeared in the form of lecture outlines for a 4-credit-hour course that met once a week during a 10-week quarter. Actual class time each week was 3 hours, making a total of 30 hours of "in-class" time. Two class sessions were given over to midterm and final exams respectively. Thus, the class consisted of 24 hours of actual instruction time.

The material has been adapted for on-line teaching by transforming the lecture outlines into lecture manuscripts and taught during a 6-week session. For the on-line session, midterm and final exams were replaced by weekly discussion questions and additional weekly projects. A similar transition has been incorporated into this module by emphasizing weekly discussions and weekly homework assignments.

Module Materials

We have tried to design this module to be flexible and easy to adapt to your situation. For each lesson, there are several support pieces, which we have called simply "resources." These can be used in many different ways. Resources have been reproduced in the student guide for this module. The instructor will want a copy of the student guide for his or her own use.

1. The instructor may photocopy these to use for his or her own lecture outlines. There is space to add notes from the faculty guide, from the textbook, or from the additional suggested readings. Add in your own illustrations too!
2. The pages may be photocopied onto overhead transparencies for use in class.
3. These pages appear in the Student Guide for the students' use and participation.

One reason for developing this module is for the benefit of extension education. We understand that teachers all over the world are called upon to teach courses not in their area of specialty, but they teach them because they want to see pastors trained and leaders developed for the church. Extension education is basic to rapid church growth. We want to provide this as a resource for extension educators. If it helps others along the way, that's fine too.

Another reason for developing this module is to equip indigenous faculty. We believe a class like this is best taught and contextualized by someone from within the culture of the students. Many fine teachers, who are leaders in our churches around the world, do not have higher degrees in theology but have the skills to teach a module like this effectively. We want to set them free to do so, and in so doing, to actually improve the module and make it more dynamic and meaningful for their context than it would have been had we held onto it and insisted on teaching it ourselves.

Notes from the Original Author

The lesson homework assignments are designed to prepare the students for each upcoming lesson. Since the original directive for this module requires that it be “textbook independent,” the homework assignments serve to acquaint the student with key biblical material for the upcoming lesson, as well as involve the student in critical interaction with that material.

Student sharing from the product of their homework assignments has been integrated into the structure of each lesson. All assignments should be typed or written out and brought to class the session in which they are due.

Intended Outcomes for the Module

The *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, and the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* define educational preparation for ordination. Additionally, each region of the International Church of the Nazarene has developed educational guidelines to qualify educational programs for ordination offered within their region.

The USA Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* defines outcomes for the overall ministerial development program. The module assists candidates in developing these skills. Other modules in the program may also address the same outcomes. The specific outcomes that relate to this module are:

- Ability to identify the main story line of the OT with the events and characters involved
- Ability to identify the books of the OT by genre
- Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the OT in its historical context

Intended Learning Outcomes

The following are competencies for ministry as required by the Ordination Course of Study that the student will achieve by completing this course. Below each competency are listed specific abilities for the course, which correspond with each particular competency. It must be recognized that the listed abilities below each competency do not necessarily comprehend the entire range of the competency addressed in the lessons.

- CN1 Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament.
- List four major themes that run through the Pentateuch.
 - Describe the significance of the literary patterns and thematic emphases that appear in Genesis 1 and 2.
 - Identify the unique features that distinguish Genesis 1 and 2.
 - Trace the theme of the “promise of land and descendants” through the patriarchal narrative.
 - Appreciate the significance of God’s “re-introduction” of Himself to the people of Israel in the wilderness.
 - Describe the difference between a “king like the nations” and God’s desire regarding the character of kingship for Israel.
 - Recognize the way in which the books of Samuel and Kings reflect the themes of Deuteronomy.
 - Understand the unique ways in which the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel word their messages of hope in response to the exilic conditions.
- CN2 Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre
- Recognize the different content and divisions between the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant canons of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament.
 - Identify the main characteristic of biblical Hebrew poetry and its various forms.
 - Recognize the various forms of Wisdom Literature.
- CN3 Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament.
- Outline the major contents of the Pentateuch.
 - Comprehend the purpose and style of the Book of Deuteronomy.
 - Distinguish the unique features of the Books of Joshua and Judges.
 - Understand the pattern of judgment for and against the various kings of the divided monarchy, within 1 and 2 Kings.
 - Describe the major themes reflected in the eighth-century prophets.
 - List and describe various types of psalms.
 - Understand the historical context and purpose of Wisdom Literature.
- CN4 Ability to identify the main characters of the Old Testament and their role in the story.

- Identify the factors that led to the “tragic” downfall of Saul's kingship in God's eyes.
 - Recognize the difference between Saul's response to his sin and David's response to sin in his life.
 - List the accomplishments described in the Bible that portray the grandeur of Solomon's kingdom.
 - Identify the characteristic marks of a prophet of God.
 - Recognize how the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah contribute to the new focus of the postexilic community (re: law and purity).
- CN5 Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament.
- Comprehend an introductory exposure to historical criticism as it has been applied to the Old Testament.
 - Understand the geographical divisions of Palestine.
 - Recognize the background of the Ancient Near East (peoples and places).
 - Appreciate significant archaeological discoveries pertaining to the Ancient Near East.
 - Identify the contribution of Ancient Near Eastern archaeological finds to the understanding of the Old Testament.
 - Discuss the similarities and differences between the “primeval history” in the Pentateuch and comparative texts from the Ancient Near East.
 - Recognize the connection between the biblical narrative in the Pentateuch and the history of the Ancient Near East.
 - Describe the dramatic impact of the Babylonian exile (living conditions in exile and back in Palestine, the resultant “Jewish Diaspora,” etc.).
 - Explain Judah's shift in focus from political concerns to more individual religious concerns in the wake of the exile, and under Persian dominance.
- CN6 Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the Old Testament.
- Identify traditional dates attached to major periods of Old Testament history and significant events.
 - List major themes that are reflected throughout the Old Testament.
- CN7 Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament.
- Identify various ways in which God communicates to humanity.

- Recognize the unique importance of God's revelation through Scripture.
- Express the significance of "inspiration" as it is applied to the Bible.
- Understand how the first two covenants in the Pentateuch reflect God's desire to reach and bless all humanity.
- Identify the purpose and intended messages derived from the account of the plagues in Egypt.
- Explain how the laws of God (including the organization of the Ten Commandments) can be summed up in the directive to love God and love neighbor.
- Recognize the ongoing theme of blessing all humanity, within the third covenant in the Pentateuch (Sinai).
- Identify the lessons portrayed in the "*Ebenezer*" account, early in 1 Samuel, in regard to Israel's relationship with God.
- Understand the significance of the Davidic Covenant and its messianic implications.
- Describe the implications for messianic expectations, of the images of the "Son of Man" in Daniel, and the "Suffering Servant" in Isaiah.
- Appreciate how God embraces humanity in all its frailty while empowering humans to right living.
- Describe ways in which Old Testament themes are brought to fulfillment in the New Testament.

CN16 Ability to identify the steps of historical, literary, and theological analysis used in exegesis

Suggested Meeting Schedule

This module contains 13 lessons designed for sessions of approximately 2 hours each, making a total of 26 full hours of class time. Each lesson is complete in itself with an opening, a middle, and a closing. They are sequential. Each lesson assumes the learners have mastered material presented in previous lessons. The lessons can be grouped in a variety of ways to accommodate the schedules of your learners.

When lessons are taught in the same meeting, instructors will need to adjust homework assignments because participants will not have time between lessons to prepare homework. It is very important for the instructor always to be looking ahead and planning for upcoming lessons.

Here are three suggestions (out of many) for ways the meetings can be organized.

1. Resident campus. The class can meet two days a week for two hours. Present one lesson per meeting time. Total time: 7 weeks.
2. Extension education. The class can meet one day (or evening) each week for four hours. Present two lessons per meeting with a break period between lessons. Participants will need to travel to a centralized location for meetings, so make it worth their time. Total time: 7 weeks.
3. Intensive module. The class can meet five consecutive days for 7 to 8 hours per day. Present two lessons in the morning with a break period between lessons, and two lessons in the afternoon with another break period between the lessons. Participants must complete reading assignments before arriving at the module site, and written assignments can be submitted 30 to 60 days following the class meeting. Total meeting time: 4 days. (Elapsed time including reading and written assignments: one to two months.)

The module is divided into 13 lessons. The progression of these lessons can be seen in the chart below. Space is given for you to fill in the dates when your class sessions will meet.

Date	Lesson
	1. Introduction to Old Testament Studies
	2. Literary, Historical, and Geographic Divisions of the Old Testament
	3. Peoples, Places, and Archaeological Discoveries
	4. Introduction to the Pentateuch
	5. Primeval History and the Patriarchs/ Matriarchs
	6. The Exodus Event and Covenant at Mount Sinai
	7. Entering the Promised Land and a Call for Monarchy
	8. Period of the United Monarchy in Ancient Israel
	9. Divided Monarchy and Eighth-Century BC Prophets
	10. The Period of the Exile
	11. The Postexilic Period
	12. Poetic and Wisdom Literature
	13. Synthesis: With a View to New Testament Fulfillment

About This Faculty Guide

Note: It is critical to remember that active participation by the learners will enhance their learning. That means you will not be an information giver. This module is not about you. The focus of the module is helping students learn. Your role is to design an environment in which your students will learn. Sometimes you will give lectures. At other times you will guide discussions or assign your students to work in groups. These kinds of activities keep the participants actively involved in the learning process. Learning is a team activity.

The faculty guide has been written to guide an instructor as he or she prepares to teach this module. It contains complete lesson plans and resources to provide a solid educational design for the topic. You will need to prepare for each lesson well in advance of the meeting time. Often there are background reading suggestions for the instructor, or you may know additional reference materials you want to interject into the lesson. Questions intended to be answered or discussed by the students are in italic type.

A two-column format was chosen for the faculty guide. The right-hand column contains the content of lectures, descriptions of activities, and questions to keep students involved. The left-hand column is to give suggested instructions to you, the teacher. It also contains examples you can use to illustrate concepts in the lectures. Whenever possible you should use

examples from your own experience and from your students' real-life context.

Large white space has been left in the left column to allow you to write notes and personalize the faculty guide.

The faculty guide has three major components: the Faculty Guide Introduction, the Lesson Plans, and the Teaching Resources. The Introduction and Lesson Plans are in this document and the Resources are contained in the companion student guide. You are reading the Faculty Guide Introduction now. It provides a teaching philosophy for adult learners, background information for organizing the module, and ideas about conducting the lessons.

Each section of the faculty guide is numbered with a two-part page number. Page 5 of Lesson 3 would be numbered "3-5." The first number is the lesson number and the second is the page number within the lesson. Each resource sheet is numbered for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered "2-1."

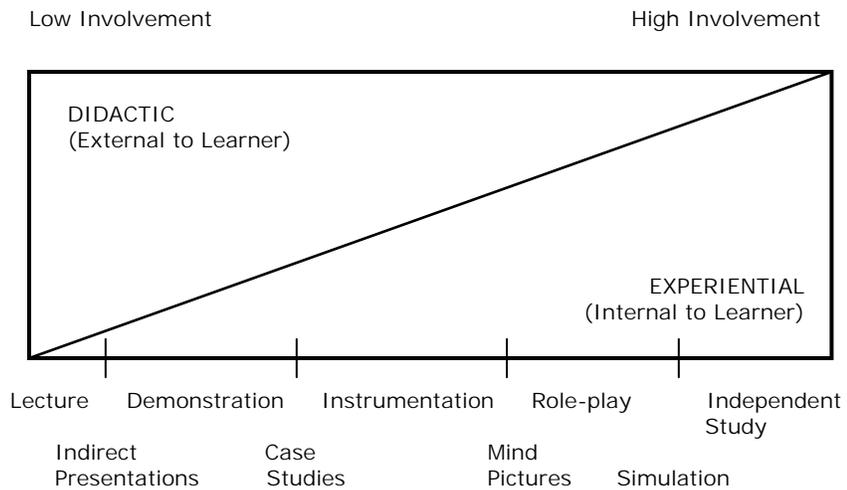
The Lesson Plans are complete in themselves. They contain an Overview, Introduction, Body, and Close. The Lesson Overview provides you with a planning tool for preparing and conducting each lesson.

The Lesson Introduction should get participants' attention, orient them to the place this lesson holds in the overall module, define the intended objectives, and prepare them for the learning activities.

The Lesson Body is the core message of the lesson. The key is to keep the learners actively involved. Even in lectures, ask questions that prompt learners to think about the content, not just hear the lecture.

The following chart shows a continuum of learner involvement in different teaching methods. Lecture requires the least learner involvement, and independent study requires the most learner involvement.

METHODS CONTINUUM



A variety of learning activities are used to present information and allow learners to experiment with their new knowledge. Each learner has a set of preferred methods of learning and has different life experiences that can color or filter what one actually learns. A variety of learning activities help adults adapt to the learning task—by hearing, by doing, by reading, by discussing, or by combinations of these. The learners should have opportunities to test and clarify their new learning by talking with the instructor and other participants, and applying new knowledge in real or contrived situations as soon as possible.

The Lesson Close provides a time for answering questions, reviewing the information, connecting this lesson to future lessons, making assignments, and punctuating the finish. The close does not provide any new information but gives a sense of closure to the lesson.

Homework assignments are important learning activities. They provide the student with an opportunity to synthesize classroom learning. Working on these assignments also extends the learning experience beyond the time constraints of class time.

The student—especially the adult student—needs frequent and timely feedback about his or her learning. While interaction with other students helps the learner refine what he or she is learning, feedback from the instructor is also critical to the quality of learning and

ultimately to his or her persistence in the Course of Study.

It is your responsibility as the instructor for this module to provide students with timely responses to homework assignments in order to enhance the learning process. Reviewing and responding to homework will also provide you with critical information about what your students are learning and whether or not the teaching-learning process is succeeding.

Since these modules are preparing the learner for ordination rather than leading to a university degree, a letter grade may not be appropriate. Your response to the learners' assignments should be thoughtful and in most cases it should be written. Its purpose will always be to refine and enhance the learning of the student.

Teaching Resources are reproduced in the student guide. Each resource sheet is numbered for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered "2-1."

You must determine how each resource will be used in your context. If an overhead projector is available, transparencies can be made by replacing the paper in your photocopier with special transparency material.

The student guide for this module contains the series foreword, acknowledgments, syllabus, copies of all resources, lesson objectives, and assignments. A copy of the student guide should be made available to each student.

Recommendations for printing. You may print this faculty guide if desired. The introduction and lesson plan segments are formatted for printing on both sides of the paper. The resource pages of the student guide should be printed on one side for use as transparency or handout masters.

The student guide should be printed on one side.

A Hidden Agenda

Hidden curriculum issues . . . because the way we teach teaches

In each session, there are certain methodological and environmental things to consider.

First, consider the classroom arrangement. Whenever possible, the room should be arranged to encourage a sense of community. Either the group should sit in a circle or around a table. If the group is very large, chairs can be arranged for easily moving into clusters for discussion.

Second, consider how you present yourself as teacher. Standing behind a lectern with your students facing you in rows says you are above the students and have something to give them (although in a very large group this standing to teach may be unavoidable). Sitting as part of the circle makes the teacher a co-learner at the same level as the students. Speak naturally. Pay close attention to your students, and value the things they share. Learn their names. Encourage participation. Remember that you are modeling for them, and the way you teach will teach them far more than the words you say.

Third, invite the Holy Spirit's presence in the classroom. Do this each time the class meets.

Fourth, the sharing-of-stories activity does more than help the students begin to reflect on their own Christian experiences. It is a way to build community between the students. This is more than an exercise to be checked off. It is vital to set the tone of your intentional community.

When meeting times exceed 90 minutes, consider adding break times. The break between segments is an important time for community building. Remain available to the students during this time. Consider offering coffee or tea during this time as a way to encourage fellowship.

Journaling: The Key to Spiritual Formation

Journaling is a major assignment of each module in the Course of Study. It is the integrating element that helps draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each module whether the module concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know, and Do" is present in every module in which one participates. What is journaling and how can it be meaningfully accomplished?

The Syllabus contains this explanation of journaling. Journaling provides the spiritual formation component for the module and is an integral part of the learning experience.

Have students read the journaling section during the Syllabus review in Lesson 1 and emphasize that journaling is an assignment for each lesson in the module.

When giving assignments in each lesson, assign journal writing each time the group meets.

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module you will be required to listen to lectures, read books and articles, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head through your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work faithfully to spend daily time in your journal. Many people confess this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an 'ah-ha' that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, and aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

Recommended Book

Each module within the Modular Course of Study is intended to be textbook independent. This does not imply that the modules are textbook irrelevant, or that the module content cannot be enriched by selecting and requiring that students study a textbook along with the lessons provided in this faculty guide.

If these modules are adapted for use outside of the English-speaking countries of North America, a specific textbook may not be available in the language of the students. Therefore, the module does not rely on one textbook. The instructor may select any doctrinally sound textbook available to the students.

The following textbook is recommended and optional reading assignments from this text have been included in the homework assignments for each lesson.

Varughese, Alexander, ed. *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2003.

Optional Video Series

That the World May Know

This series of video lessons was produced by Zondervan Publishing House in cooperation with Focus on the Family and hosted by Ray Vander Laan. The series was taped on location in the Holy Land. The best current source for the purchase of this series is Christian Book Distributors (CBD). It is also available from Zondervan and Focus on the Family.

Although the videos offer archaeological research, this series is not intended to be a definitive cultural and geographical study of the lands of the Bible. No original scientific discoveries are revealed here. Its purpose is to help students better understand God's revealed mission for their lives by allowing them to hear and see His words in their original context.

In an independent review conducted for Modular Course of Study, the series was recommended as a

supplemental source of information for those teaching the Course of Study on Telling the Old Testament Story of God.

The reviewer had some reservations concerning the series. The reviewer noted that the host was not always careful enough to maintain accuracy in some of the details, and that he was often too simplistic in his present-day applications of information. This simplicity may have been due to the scholarly level of the audience that traveled with the host as the series was taped.

The reviewer continued to say that in spite of these weaknesses the series provided a supplemental introduction to the land of the Bible for those who had not had the privilege to visit the Holy Land personally.

The video series is optional. Time in some lessons is provided to show the videotapes. If you choose not to use the series, you will need to provide additional content, learning activities, and discussions to fill the allotted time.

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Lesson 1

Introduction to Old Testament Studies

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:15	Revelation in the Old Testament	Lecture and Guided Discussion	Bible <i>Nazarene Manual</i> (2005-2009)
1:05	Influences on Thinking	Discussion Groups	Student Guide Discussion Page
1:25	Abbreviated History of Historical Criticism	Lecture	Resource 1-1
1:45	Student Response	Questions	
1:55	Lesson Close	Review Assignment	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Pontifical Biblical Commission. "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." *Origins* 23 (1994): front, 499-524.

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Course Overview

Direct students to the Student Guide. Make sure they all have a copy.

We need to spend a few minutes looking at the Student Guide and becoming familiar with the requirements for this Module.

Go through the Syllabus with the students, pointing out the course requirements.

Are there any questions?

Orientation

As we begin our investigation of the Old Testament, this lesson begins with a discussion of the means of divine revelation and the "inspiration" of the Bible. This lesson concludes with a brief introduction to the methods of historical criticism that have been applied to Old Testament studies.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- identify various ways in which God communicates to humanity.
- recognize the unique importance of God's revelation through Scripture.
- express the significance of "inspiration" as it is applied to the Bible.
- comprehend an introductory exposure to historical criticism as it has been applied to the Old Testament.

Lesson Body

(100 minutes)

Revelation in the Old Testament

(50 minutes)

Lead the students in a discussion of how God communicates to people.

How does God communicate to people?

Divine Revelation

God's Word is communicated through various forms. In relation to the Bible, we think of the written forms of God's Word. These include: narrative or historical literature (communicated through scribes and other authors), law (communicated through priests and the person of Moses), prophetic literature (communicated through prophets), poetic and wisdom literature (communicated through poets, sages, and "wise ones").

What do Scriptures reveal?

Have students read the following passages: Ps 104:24; Ps 19:1-7; Rom 1:20. Discuss with the class the implications of these texts, in relation to God's revelation to humanity.

Discuss what the "Mighty Acts of God" communicate about the nature and will of God.

The written Word also points to other avenues of divine revelation, including nature and God's actions on behalf of humanity. The Bible testifies of God's revelation through nature (Ps 104:24; Ps 19:1-7; Rom 1:20). The Bible also testifies to God's revelation through divine action in relation to humanity. Such revelation is sometimes referred to as the "Mighty Acts of God." Examples in the Old Testament include: the Exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and conquering and settling in the Promised Land.

Notice that God's revelation is intimately involved with human life and history. That is, God does not simply write out a message with a divine hand and send it to earth from some other realm. Rather, God communicates by divine involvement *in and through human history*. God inspires humans to write, and God acts within nature and human history to communicate God's Word.

The main purpose of divine revelation is twofold: to communicate the truth about God, and to communicate the truth about creation, especially humans. From the Scriptures, we learn who God is, how to relate to God, and what God's will is. In addition, we learn who we are as humans and what God intends for humanity.

The Inspiration of Scripture

Have a student read 2 Tim 3: 16-17.

Lead students in a discussion of what this popular and familiar text (2 Tim 3: 16-17) brings to mind.

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3: 16-17, NRSV).

What constituted "Scripture" in Paul's day? What does the word "inspired" mean to you? What is the function or purpose of Scripture?

In Paul's letter to Timothy, quoted above, Paul is referring to the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Old Testament. At the time Paul wrote this letter, the New Testament was not yet complete or canonized. Over the centuries, Christian groups and denominations have argued over what is meant by "inspired by God." The debate normally focuses on the amount of human versus divine involvement evident within the biblical text. Views range from only divine involvement on the one hand (in which every letter and punctuation mark is dictated and penned by God), to only human involvement on the other hand (in which the entire biblical corpus is simply a human creation).

Every variety of divine-human cooperation in the production of the Bible constitutes the diverse views that make up the many understandings that lie in between the range just described. For example, some hold that God revealed the message of the Bible but allowed human authors to put that particular message into their own words. Others believe God simply inspired human authors to produce the biblical text, based on their own human reflections in relation to their experience of God.

One of the key concerns related to this debate about the "inspiration" of the Bible has to do with the "inerrancy" of the text. Without diverting this discussion into a full-blown theology course, let us examine the Nazarene position on this issue in order to set the tone for the approach taken in this course.

Read to the class, Article IV, "The Holy Scriptures" from the Nazarene Manual (2005-2009).

The Nazarene statement regarding the Holy Scriptures, taken from the *Manual* of the church, includes the following phrase: "innerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation." The Nazarene Church recognizes God's revelation comes *in and through human history*, and God made use of fallible humans in the transmission of the written Word of God. *However, God has ensured, through the*

inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the message necessary for our salvation has been clearly preserved throughout the history of the transmission of the biblical text.

Accordingly, our task as students of the Bible is to seek to understand the divine message within the historical revelation of God's written Word. Thus, our approach includes the historical investigation of both the setting of the Bible and its transmission. Our guiding methodology is that of "exegesis." Exegesis literally means "to lead out of," or show the way, to expound. The idea is to read out of the Scriptures their intended meaning. That is, to derive the intended meaning out of the text. This is in opposition to "eisegesis," which means "to lead into," the idea being to read into the text something that may not be there.

Discussion Groups

(20 minutes)

Have students work in groups of 3 to 4. Encourage everyone to participate.

Refer students to page 17 in the Student Guide.

You were taught a history of your country that came out of textbooks. What factors influenced the story told in the textbooks about that history?

Similarly, what factors influence your acceptance and interpretation of the Old Testament story?

In small groups work on the questions on page 17 in Lesson 1 of the Student Guide. You will have 20 minutes in your small groups.

Abbreviated History of Historical Criticism

(20 minutes)

Lead a "word association" by having students share the first thought that comes to mind in relation to the word "criticism."

Display Resource 1-1: Historical Criticisms.

What are the first thoughts that come to mind in relation to the word "criticism?"

Biblical Criticism

The term "criticism" is often used to connote a negative evaluation of something. "To criticize" is understood as demeaning or finding fault with someone or something. A "critical" person is often considered to be one who judges harshly or severely, often expressing disapproval. It is important to recognize that these negative connotations of the term "criticism" do *not* apply to its use in Biblical Studies.

The term “criticism” as it is used in biblical studies has to do with analysis and evaluation, without necessarily finding fault. The concern of biblical criticism is to be *careful and exact* in regard to evaluation. The biblical critic feels an accurate analysis of the Scripture is “critical” (i.e., crucial) for proper interpretation. The concern is not to be judgmental, but rather to be as *precise* as possible. Consequently, “critical” methods in biblical studies (historical criticism, literary criticism, source criticism, etc.) reflect a desire for accuracy in biblical understanding and interpretation.

Brief History of Historical Criticism

In its classical sense, LITERARY CRITICISM denotes the study and evaluation of literature as artistic production. It is concerned with the rhetorical, poetic, and compositional devices used by an author to structure thought and communicate messages. Initially in biblical studies, literary criticism has tended to be more narrowly defined as the study of sources, and consequently called SOURCE CRITICISM. Source criticism has sought to identify sources (in the Pentateuch, for example) based on such elements as repetitions, reduplications, linguistic and stylistic peculiarities, and theological or conceptual variations. It is concerned with placing each source in its historical context, and tracing its redaction and incorporation into the final form of the text. The major results of source criticism in the Old and New Testaments respectively are the four-source Pentateuchal theory and the two-source theory of Synoptic interrelationships. That is, the theory that the Pentateuch is actually the compilation of four different sources, and the Gospels derive from two major sources. A major impact of source criticism has been to divide the biblical text into numerous historical sources.

More recently, there has been a return to the “classical” sense of literary criticism, emphasizing rhetorical and compositional devices evident in the biblical text. This shift is often referred to as NEW LITERARY CRITICISM. This approach emphasizes the present text as it stands. It views many of the textual features, which source critics see as evidence for multiple strata in a text, as intentional literary elements that actually speak to the unity of the text. Repetitions and reduplications are seen as intentional devices for producing a specific literary effect.

A related approach to the historical investigation of the biblical text is called FORM CRITICISM. This approach is concerned with identifying the origin and function of a

biblical text based on its "form." The concept is actually quite simple. We recognize "forms" of language that relate to specific situations. For example, when you hear the following terms, you know that they refer to a specific setting: ram, megabyte, virtual memory, disk, hard drive, etc. These terms reflect the setting of the computer world.

Similarly, consider the following terms: interference, 4th down, field goal, incomplete, fumble, tackle, etc. You recognize these terms in relation to the setting of "football." More specifically, we recognize certain linguistic forms in relation to their function. For instance the form of a "business letter," or the form of the title page of a research paper, or the form of a "Deed of Trust." In a similar fashion, biblical form criticism seeks to identify and classify units of oral or written material and relate them to their setting in the life of the community. This type of investigation has been especially productive in identifying and classifying the Psalms (laments, hymns of praise, songs of thanksgiving, etc.). This approach to the investigation of the Bible has also influenced the classification of biblical material according to GENRE. That is, the identification of legal material, historical narrative, poetry, prophecy, etc.

As we pursue the historical investigation of the Bible, it is important to keep in mind the dual character of the text. The Bible is transmitted through human history, yet at the same time is divinely inspired. Thus, I conclude this section with these important thoughts and quotes from an article titled "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church."

*Quotes taken from:
Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" Origins 23 (1994): front, 499-524.*

". . . the message of the Bible is solidly grounded in history."

"It follows that the biblical writings cannot be correctly understood without an examination of the historical circumstances that shaped them."

One cannot study the Bible in the same way one studies human literature. "As the exegete must keep in mind the historical character of the revelation of the word of God through human means, even so the exegete must also recognize the ultimate source of that revelation as Divine."

"The Holy Spirit is considered the principal author of the Bible."

"The Christian exegete is not just searching for the

intent of the biblical authors and editors, but for the message of the Holy Spirit as principal author of the texts. Thus, the exegete must be sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit, through prayer, meditation, and in the direction given through the church.”

Student Response

(10 minutes)

*Allow students to respond.
Encourage response.*

Do you have any questions about any of the material or discussions from this first lesson?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- identify various ways in which God communicates to humanity?
- recognize the unique importance of God's revelation through Scripture?
- express the significance of "inspiration" as it is applied to the Bible?
- comprehend an introductory exposure to historical criticism as it has been applied to the Old Testament?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will continue to examine the background to Old Testament studies. From this discussion of divine revelation, inspiration, and methods of critical study, we will move on to a consideration of the divisions of the Old Testament, and a historical overview.

Assign Homework

Direct the students to the Student Guide.

List the books of the Old Testament and organize them into 3 to 5 categories, according to their content (type of material they contain). You may use your Bible to obtain the list of books, but organize them according to your own understanding of their content.

Based on your own recollection of Bible events, make a timeline from creation to the time of Jesus. Simply list any significant Old Testament events, in order between creation and the birth of Jesus. Don't worry about including any dates.

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 19-45.

Remember to be writing in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on the question: *How influential are children's Sunday School teachers on what we believe about the Bible? Do we easily accept new ideas that may challenge our childhood beliefs?*

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Lesson 2

Literary, Historical, and Geographic Divisions of the Old Testament

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Shared Homework	Pairs Activity	Homework Assignment 1
0:15	Major Literary and Historical Divisions of the Old Testament	Lecture	Resource 2-1 Resource 2-2
0:40	Shared Homework	Pairs Activity	Homework Assignment 2
0:50	Major Biblical Periods	Lecture	Resource 2-3
1:05	Matching Exercise	Student Activity	Resource 2-4
1:15	Geographic Divisions	Map Discovery	Maps, Bibles, Atlas
1:30	Standing at the Crossroads		Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Suggested Atlases for Use in This Lesson

Frank, Harry Thomas, ed. *Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Revised edition, Maplewood: Hammond, 1997.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this lesson we continue to investigate background concerns to the study of the Old Testament. We will examine ways in which the Old Testament and its content have been organized literarily, historically, and geographically.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- recognize the different content and divisions between the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant canons of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament.
- identify traditional dates attached to major periods of Old Testament history and significant events.
- understand the geographical divisions of Palestine.

Lesson Body

Pairs Activity

(10 minutes)

Have students share their work from the first homework assignment due this session. Discuss ways in which the books of the Old Testament might be organized into categories.

Get into pairs and share your list of categories of the OT. Compare the similarities and differences.

Now let's have someone from each group share what you found.

Major Literary and Historical Divisions of the Old Testament

(20 minutes)

Display, and refer students to the Student Guide Resource 2-1: Divisions of the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures. Review with the students the differences in each column of the chart.

Literary Organization of the Old Testament

The word "canon" is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "measuring reed." The "canon" refers to the official writings accepted as authoritative by a particular religious group, and recognized as Divine revelation.

The "Hebrew Scriptures" refers to the Scriptures originally accepted as "canonical" by the Hebrew-Aramaic speaking Jews in Palestine. These Scriptures are also accepted as the "Old Testament canon" by Protestants. Note the following differences for Jews, Catholics, and Protestants in the makeup and organization of the canon:

1. Difference between Jewish and Christian (Catholic and Protestant) canon: Both Jews and Christians see in the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures the revelation of God to the people of Israel. Jews do not, however, see JESUS as a binding revelation of God, or the expected Messiah of God. Thus, Jews do not accept the New Testament as authoritative scripture (i.e., the New Testament is not part of the Jewish canon of Scripture). The Protestant and Jewish canons of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament are the same (though organized/divided differently).
2. Difference between Catholic and Protestant canons: Catholics recognize seven additional books as part of the scriptural canon. The seven extra books stem

from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible), which had more books in it than were generally accepted in Palestine by Hebrew and Aramaic-speaking Jews. Early Christians used the Greek Septuagint more commonly than the Hebrew Bible. All seven of these “extra” books were referred to by authors of the NT, along with other writings not accepted in any contemporary canon of scripture (i.e., Enoch, Assumption of Moses).

3. A number of terms are used to identify various collections of books generally considered “outside” of the canon of Scripture (this may depend on whether one is Catholic or Protestant). It is helpful to distinguish between these terms and the collections to which they refer. Note the following definitions:

Display Resource 2-2: Book Collections.

Deuterocanonical: Literally, “second canon.” Refers to the seven extra books in the Catholic canon which are not recognized in the Jewish or Protestant canon. These books include Judith, Tobit, Baruch, I and II Maccabees, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon.

Apocrypha: Meaning, “hidden” books. Protestants often use this designation to refer to the seven deuterocanonical books, as well as some additional material that does not appear in any traditionally accepted canon.

Pseudepigrapha: Literally, “false writings.” Given this title because many of these books claim the author to be some great religious hero of ancient times, such as Enoch or Moses. Protestants apply the term Pseudepigrapha to still other noncanonical books. Catholics, however, apply the term “apocrypha” to the deuterocanonical books and to pseudepigraphal works.

Historical Survey of the Old Testament

Archaeological Periods

Ancient times are often identified broadly in terms of archaeological periods. Though these periods can be broken down into a number of divisions (see chart on p. 650 of the textbook), there are three major archaeological periods related to the material out of which tools are made at the time, as follows:

1. STONE AGE: prehistoric times to about 3500 BC (chart in textbook places the end of this age, and the beginning of the Bronze Age, around 3200 BC).
2. BRONZE AGE: 3500 BC to about 1200 BC
3. IRON AGE: From about 1200 BC forward.

Pairs Activity

(10 minutes)

Have students share their work from the second homework assignment due this session. Use this discussion to lead into the lecture material in the right-hand column.

Get into pairs again but this time with someone different. Share and compare your report to the class.

Major Biblical Periods

(15 minutes)

Major historical periods in the Bible are also often identified according to important events, figures, or national dominance. The dates given below are often the subject of debate. In some cases, your textbook may differ somewhat from these dates. I want you to be familiar with the dates given here because they represent traditionally accepted designations for a number of scholars.

Display Resource 2-3: Major Biblical Periods.

PRIMEVAL HISTORY: "Belonging to the first or earliest age(s)." This includes the accounts of creation, the Flood, and the tower of Babel.

PATRIARCHAL/MATRIARCHAL PERIOD: 1900-1800 BC; Abraham/Sarah, Isaac/Rebekah, and Jacob/Leah/Rachel.

EXODUS: 1280 BC; Traditional figure attached to the period of the Exodus from Egypt. The period when God brought forth the descendants of Jacob from slavery in Egypt.

CONQUEST: 1250-1200 BC; period of the conquest of Canaan.

JUDGES: 1200-1020 BC; period of the judges who governed over the various tribes of the Hebrew people.

UNITED MONARCHY: 1020-922 BC; Reign of Saul, first king of the nation of Israel (1020-1000 BC). Reign of David, second king of Israel (1000-961 BC). Reign of Solomon (961-922 BC).

DIVIDED MONARCHY: 922-722/721 BC; the split of the Kingdom into North (Israel) and South (Judah) (922 BC).

FALL OF ISRAEL (SAMARIA): 722/721 BC; Fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel at the hands of Assyria.

FALL OF JUDAH (JERUSALEM): 587 BC; Fall of Jerusalem, as the Southern Kingdom of Judah is taken into exile to Babylon.

EXILIC PERIOD: 587-538 BC; Period in which the Southern Kingdom of Judah is in exile in Babylon.

POSTEXILIC PERIOD: 538 BC+. In 538 BC, the edict of Cyrus released the Jews to return to Palestine.

Student Activity

(10 minutes)

Have students fill out exercise on Resource 2-4: Matching Exercise. Then go over the exercise together in class.

Find Resource 2-4 in your Student Guide. Follow the instructions and in a few minutes we will compare answers.

Geographic Divisions of Palestine

(15 minutes)

Using a Bible atlas (see "Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher" above) or Bible map (large wall map, or maps located in the back of student's Bibles), locate with the students the various geographic areas corresponding to the discussion in the right-hand column. A physical or topographical map would be most useful here.

The land of Palestine is generally recognized to include five distinct geographical regions. They are identified as follows:

1. **Coastal Plain:** Plain stretching north to south through Palestine. Includes the plain of Asher, the plain of Sharon, and the Philistine Plain. This region is narrow in the North and wider in the South. This region includes a major "north-south" highway from Egypt through Damascus and on to Mesopotamia. This highway is referred to as the "*Via Maris*" ("the way of the sea").
2. **Central Mountains:** The central mountains form the north to south backbone of Palestine. This region is interrupted only by the plain of Esdraelon ("the valley of Jezreel").
3. **Jordan Rift:** The Jordan Valley includes: the tributaries of the upper Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, and the Arabah (an arid valley stretching to the Gulf of Aqaba).
4. **Transjordan Plateau:** A high plateau that rises suddenly above the Jordan Rift to the east, and then slopes down to the Syrian and Arabian deserts.
5. **The Negev:** Literally "South." The southern portion of Palestine which constitutes a dry high steppe, predominately recognized as wilderness area.

Video: Promised Land “Standing at the Crossroads”

(25 minutes)

*Have the video player set up for
“That the World May Know,”
Volume 1, lesson 1.*

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- recognize the different content and divisions between the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant canons of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament?
- identify traditional dates attached to major periods of Old Testament history and significant events?
- understand the geographical divisions of Palestine?

Look Ahead

In the next session, we will conclude our examination of background concerns for the study of the Old Testament by looking at the peoples and places making up the greater context of the Ancient Near East. We will also discuss significant archaeological discoveries that pertain to the Old Testament.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the homework assignment in the Student Guide.

Scan through different sections of the OT and list at least 15 people groups (nations, tribes, etc.) and/or places (countries, or regions, or cities/towns). The people you list should not be directly within the families of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or the twelve sons of Jacob (i.e. not among the people of Israel). Likewise, the places you list should not be among the tribes of Israel. Each item must be taken from a different chapter of the OT (thus, no more than one can be taken from a list of nations in one chapter). In addition, try briefly to describe as best you can discover, each people group or place which you list. Also, include the scripture reference where you found each item.

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 47-58.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on the strategic location of the land of Israel and how that location helped fulfill God's plan to reach out and redeem humankind.

Lesson 3

Peoples, Places, and Archaeological Discoveries

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Homework	Pairs Activity	Homework
0:25	Peoples and Places Significant to the Old Testament	Lecture/Discussion	Maps, Atlas Resource 3-1
0:50	Archaeological Discoveries Related to the Old Testament	Small Groups	Resource 3-2 Resource 3-3 Resource 3-4 Resource 3-5
1:45	Promised Land "Wet Feet"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Suggested Atlases for Use in this Lesson

Frank, Harry Thomas, ed. *Atlas of the Bible Lands*.
Revised edition, Maplewood, MN: Hammond, 1997.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*.
New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this session, we will conclude our examination of background concerns for the study of the Old Testament by looking at the peoples and places making up the greater context of the Ancient Near East. We will also discuss significant archaeological discoveries that pertain to the Old Testament.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- recognize the background of the Ancient Near East (peoples and places).
- appreciate significant archaeological discoveries pertaining to the Ancient Near East.
- identify the contribution of Ancient Near Eastern archaeological finds to the understanding of the Old Testament.

Lesson Body

Pairs Activity

(20 Minutes)

Have the students share their findings from the homework assignment due this session.

I want each of you to share your list of Old Testament people and places. Divide into pairs, finding someone who you haven't been with before.

Peoples and Places Significant to the Old Testament

(25 minutes)

Using a Bible atlas (see "Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher" above) or Bible map (large wall map, or maps located in the back of students' Bibles), locate with the students the various areas corresponding to the peoples and places listed in the right-hand column.

Discuss the significance of these peoples and places in relation to the Old Testament. Have students share which terms they recognize and to which biblical context they apply.

Refer students to Resource 3-1, which they can fill in as they desire.

Key Locations and Civilizations

The following terms identify a number of significant locations and civilizations related to the biblical accounts:

ANCIENT NEAR EAST: Includes the boundaries of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Turkey.

SEMITIC: A classification of ethnic groups bound together mainly by the type of language they spoke. Important to Old Testament study because Hebrew is a Semitic language.

FERTILE CRESCENT: A wide arc of agricultural land extending from the Nile valley in Egypt, through Palestine and Northern Syria, and then down along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to the Persian Gulf. Due to the surrounding deserts and mountains, this fertile farmland was most valuable, and Palestine was right in the midst of it.

PALESTINE: The location of Palestine is significant, as it forms a natural highway for merchants and invaders moving between the greater empires of Egypt and Mesopotamia and also Turkey. Though mountainous and desert in terrain, this area was a strategic passage between major civilizations.

"GIFT OF THE NILE": Term attributed to Egypt by the Greek historian Herodotus. Rainfall was rare, and life revolved around the water of the river Nile, which provided drink, irrigation, communication, and transportation.

HYKSOS: Foreign invaders (Semitic) from Asia who dominated Egypt from 1750 to 1550 BC.

PHILISTINES: Part of the groups of "Sea peoples" who tried to invade Egypt and finally settled along the coast of Palestine. The "Sea peoples" were groups of Indo-Europeans who migrated down through Turkey, Greece, and the islands of Crete and Cyprus. These invasions occurred around the middle of the 12th century (period of the judges).

SUMER: At beginning of the Bronze Age, the Sumerians appear in lower Mesopotamia. They developed important centers of power and religion in the cities of Eridu, Uruk, Nippur, and Ur. Sumerians invented writing about 3200 BC. They appear to have developed the potter's wheel, the first systematic law books, the concept of collecting proverbs and wisdom sayings, and formal schools.

AKKADIANS: About 2400 BC., Sargon of Akkad became the first Semitic ruler to overcome the power of Sumer. Akkad was a town in the middle of Mesopotamia.

BABYLON AND ASSYRIA: After the short-lived empire of Sargon, northern and southern Mesopotamia developed differently. The southern region was called after its chief city, Babylon. The northern component was called Assyria. Babylon and Assyria were settled by related Semitic peoples and shared the same language and culture. Babylon had two centuries of early greatness under Hammurabi and his successors (1750-1550 BC).

SYRIA: Thanks to tablets from Ugarit and Ebla, cities in Syria, it has been revealed that the religious ideas the Israelites encountered in Palestine were closer to the thought of the peoples of Syria and Phoenicia than they were to the Akkadians in Mesopotamia. Ugarit provides great insight into the religious ideas of the Canaanites.

EDOM, MOAB, AND AMMON: About the time of the Exodus from Egypt, new groups began to settle the Transjordan (area East of the Jordan River), including Edom, Moab, and Ammon. In the Bible, these groups are continually hostile to Israel.

Archaeological Discoveries Related to the Old Testament

(55 minutes)

Discuss the significance of the discoveries described in the right-hand column.

Have students break into four small groups. Assign each group an area related to significant archaeological discoveries (Mesopotamia, Asia Minor/Syria, Egypt, and Palestine; note the smaller lists in Asia Minor and Syria should be combined for one group; in addition, that group might include a smaller number of students). Refer each group to the resource pages corresponding to their assigned area (Mesopotamia=Resource 3-2; Asia Minor/Syria=Resource 3-3; Egypt=Resource 3-4; Palestine=Resource 3-5). Have each group participate by sharing the discoveries from their assigned area, and how they understand such discoveries to be significant to Old Testament studies.

You will notice that the resource pages, which the students will be sharing, duplicate the information given in the right-hand column. This information is for you to monitor the discussion and to be sure important data is not overlooked or misunderstood.

Discoveries Related to Mesopotamia

CUNEIFORM: Wedge-shaped writing system used in Mesopotamia. Not a single language, but rather a system of writing been used for different languages such as: Sumerian (related to no other known language), Akkadian (language of the Semitic family), Hittite (an Indo-European language).

LIBRARY OF ASSYRIAN KING ASHURBANIPAL (668-633) IN NINEVEH: Site of one of the earliest groups of tablets discovered. The library is dated from the 7th century BC. The king instructed his scribes to seek out and make copies of earlier texts. This library revealed parallel accounts to the biblical stories, such as: a Babylonian creation account, and a flood story. In 1969 an edition of the story of *Atra-hasis* was published containing an account of the creation of humans and a flood story in the same narrative.

NUZI TABLETS: The town of Nuzi to the east of the Tigris in Mesopotamia yielded clay documents giving insight into the culture of the 2nd millennium BC. Some of the customs portrayed in these tablets seem to reflect the customs of the patriarchs portrayed in Genesis, including legal and social structures. Includes 20,000 clay tablets dated to the 15th century BC. These were found in the family archives of several of the villas of the town.

THE BLACK OBELISK: A memorial column erected by King Shalmaneser III of Assyria that depicts King Jehu of Israel bowing down to submit to Assyrian rule.

SENNACHERIB'S PRISM: Includes a detailed account of the attack on Jerusalem by King Sennacherib of Assyria. In this account, Sennacherib does not admit defeat but hints he failed to take Jerusalem. The biblical account of this battle claims Jerusalem was spared by divine intervention after an oracle was pronounced by Isaiah (1 Kings 18-19).

ENUMA ELISH: Ancient creation story. A Babylonian-Sumerian epic concerning how Marduk overcame Tiamat and formed heaven and earth from her

body. Considered to have some parallels to Genesis 1.

GILGAMESH EPIC: Ancient flood story found among Babylonian tablets. Concerns a hero, Utnapishtim, who was saved in a ship with people and animals from a great flood.

THE EPIC OF ATRA-HASIS: Originally included the fullest account of the Babylonian flood story. Dated to the 17th century BC.

SUMERIAN FLOOD STORY: A Sumerian flood story from about 1600 BC.

LAW CODE OF HAMMURABI OF BABYLON: Most famous collection of laws from ancient Mesopotamia. Dated from the 18th century BC. Has added insight to legal sections of OT.

ESHNUNNA LAW CODE: Law code predating Hammurabi.

LAW CODE OF LIPIT ISHTAR: Law code predating Hammurabi.

SUMERIAN LAWS OF UR-NAMMU: Law code predating Hammurabi.

Discovery Related to Asia Minor

CAPPADOCIAN DOCUMENTS: In Kanesh of Anatolia these documents were found, dating to around 1900 BC, which gave information concerning trade, caravans, legal procedures, and various customs.

Discoveries Related to Syria

EBLA TABLETS: Numerous tablets found in Ebla, one of the two major sites containing significant groups of texts in Syria. Ebla promises information on the mediation of Mesopotamian culture to Canaan in the period before the patriarchs, and about earlier stages of the linguistic family of which Hebrew is a late development. These tablets come from about 2300 BC.

UGARIT: Second major site in Syria containing significant groups of texts. Deciphered in 1930, these texts have revolutionized our understanding of the Canaanite religion and clarified many obscure

biblical passages. Ugaritic has also helped in the translation of certain Hebrew roots.

ARCHIVES OF MARI: Located on the upper Euphrates river, in Syria. Produced information about tribal society among early northwest Semitic peoples and information on the backgrounds of the prophetic movement in later Israel.

Discoveries Related to Egypt

ROSETTA STONE: Accidental find by Napoleon's soldiers when he invaded Egypt in 1798. Found at a place called Rosetta on the Nile Delta. A triangular inscription of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Written in Greek and both forms of the Egyptian language: Hieroglyphic (ancient picture writing) and Demotic (late form of Egyptian). The Egyptian was deciphered through the key of the Greek version of the stone's writing. French scholar Jean François Champollion finally broke the system. He steeped himself in Coptic (the surviving descendant of the language of ancient Egypt), and with the help of the work of others, he laid the foundation for the full recovery of the ancient language (Hieroglyphic). Inscriptions that covered the walls of tombs and temples of ancient Egypt became accessible to interpretation.

AMARNA LETTERS: Cuneiform tablets found in ruins of the capital of Pharaoh Amenophis IV. These revealed information about international relations in the 14th century BC, and specifically about the city-states in Canaan. Include correspondence between Babylonian and Canaanite rulers to Pharaohs Amenhotep III and Akhenaton. Some include letters from Canaanite city-states requesting help against the "hapiru," a word possibly related to the word "Hebrew."

EXECRATION TEXTS: Texts discovered in Egypt comprised of curses written on small figurines or vessels directed against potential rebel vassals of the Egyptians. A first group of such texts, dating to around 1925-1875 BC, lists about 30 Palestinian and Syrian chiefs. A second group of texts dates to the second half of the 19th century BC and refers to many more towns and fewer chieftains than the first group.

MERNEPTAH STELE: Stele containing a poem commissioned by Pharaoh Merneptah celebrating his victories over the Libyans. The conclusion of the

poem describes the results of this victory. The peoples of Asia were impressed and submitted to Egypt without trouble. In the list of Asiatic lands and peoples was discovered the first occurrence of the name "Israel" outside of the biblical narrative. The Stele is dated about 1220 BCE.

SHESHONQ INSCRIPTION: This Pharaoh attacked Israel and Judah in 918 BC. The attack is recorded in 1 Kings 14:25-26. The Pharaoh also recorded an account of the attack on the walls of the temple of Karnak in Thebes.

HITTITE TREATY: Ramses II (1290-1224 BC) sought to regain Egyptian power in Asia. He came to acknowledge that the Hittites of Asia Minor were a major force to be reckoned with. Therefore, he formed a nonaggression treaty with the Hittites. The treaty has been preserved in both Egyptian and Hittite forms. It has been argued that the pattern of the treaty is similar to the literary form of the Sinai covenant.

TALE OF SINUHE THE TRAVELER: Dated about 1900 BC. Egyptian writer (a fugitive from the Egyptian king) giving a description of the land in the general area of Palestine. The glowing account of parts of the land has been associated with the biblical phrase referring to the land as "flowing with milk and honey."

Discoveries Related to Palestine

QUMRAN AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: Scrolls found in caves near Khirbet Qumran, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. Major group of documents, among others found in caves and ruins located from Wadi Daliyeh north of Jericho to Masada toward the southern end of the Dead Sea, and dating from the 4th century BC to 8th century AD.

ARAD: Originally an Early Bronze Age city. It yielded the discovery of ostraca (potsherds with writing in ink on them) containing commercial and political accounts dating from about 700 BC.

LACHISH: Important ostraca found at this site shed light on the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 598 BC.

SILOAM INSCRIPTION: Carved in script typical of 8th century BC. Describes the final phases of the digging of the Siloam tunnel under Jerusalem to

bring the waters of the spring Gihon within the city walls. The project was probably undertaken by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20: 20; 2 Chr 32: 30; Ecc 48: 17). Found in the tunnel itself, the inscription described how two work groups digging from opposite ends successfully met in the middle.

GEZER CALENDAR: Small tablet containing seven lines. It apparently lists the months and seasons of the year (or perhaps only agricultural seasons). Dated to the 10th century B.C.

MOABITE STONE: Stone carved for King Mesha of Moab commemorating his war against the rule of Israelite kings in the 9th century B.C. The stone gives insight into Moabite writing, religion, and relationship to Israel. It names Omri as the king of Israel who subjugated Moab before Mesha freed it.

SAMARIA OSTRACA: A few potsherds with notations regarding the delivery of olive oil and wine, possibly from the royal warehouses of Jeroboam II or Menahem, kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Video: Promised Land “Wet Feet”

(10 minutes)

Have the video player set up for “That the World May Know,” Volume 1, Lesson 2. Only the first half of this lesson applies to the Old Testament.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- recognize the background of the Ancient Near East (peoples and places)?
- appreciate significant archaeological discoveries pertaining to the Ancient Near East?
- identify the contribution of Ancient Near Eastern archaeological finds to the understanding of the Old Testament?

Look Ahead

After having covered in the previous lessons introductory material dealing with the background of the Old Testament as a whole, the next lesson will focus on the first major unit of the Old Testament. We will discuss the divisions, content, and major themes of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament).

Assign Homework

Direct students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Scan through the content of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament) and make your own outline of the major sections of the Pentateuch. Don't make the outline too detailed. Simply organize the content into 5 to 10 major sections. Include two to five subsections for each major section of your outline (i.e., briefly outline the content of each major section you identify). Do not merely organize your outline by the books of the Pentateuch. Instead try to organize the content according to major events and/or narratives.

Read the following texts describing three important covenants in the Pentateuch: Gen 9:8-17; Gen 12:1-3 with 17:1-21; Ex 19:1-8. For each covenant, list the following: (a) with whom is the covenant made, (b) how long is the covenant intended to last, (c) what are the promises of the covenant, (d) does the covenant benefit anyone beyond those immediately involved in the making of the covenant, i.e. what is the sign of the covenant?

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 61-74.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion of: *What did you learn about archaeological discoveries and how they support, add to, or detract from "Scripture?"* Describe some times in your life when you had to step out in faith and get "wet feet." *How did you grow during that time?*

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Lesson 4

Introduction to the Pentateuch

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Major Divisions of the Pentateuch	Lecture	Resource 3-2 Resource 3-3
0:15	Homework	Small Groups	1st Homework Assignment
0:30	Outlining the Contents of the Pentateuch	Lecture	Resource 4-1 Resource 4-2 Resource 4-3
1:05	Homework	Small Groups	2nd Homework Assignment
1:25	Major Themes of the Pentateuch	Lecture	
1:35	Prophets and Kings "God with Us"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

After having covered in the previous lessons introductory material dealing with the background of the Old Testament as a whole, this lesson focuses on the first major unit of the Old Testament. We will discuss the divisions, content, and major themes of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament).

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- discuss the similarities and differences between the “primeval history” in the Pentateuch and comparative texts from the Ancient Near East.
- recognize the connection between the biblical narrative in the Pentateuch and the history of the Ancient Near East.
- outline the major contents of the Pentateuch.
- list four major themes that run through the Pentateuch.

Lesson Body

Major Divisions of the Pentateuch

(10 minutes)

In sharing the following information with the class, reference may need to be made to Resources 3-2 and 3-3, in order to refresh each one's memory in relation to the Enuma Elish, Gilgamesh Epic, Nuzi Tablets, and the Archives of Mari.

The term "Pentateuch" refers to the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). The Pentateuch can be organized "historically" according to the following outline:

Primeval History: Genesis 1-11

The term "primeval" can be defined as "belonging to the first or earliest age, original." Other Ancient Near Eastern communities had "myths" similar to Israel's primeval history. The connection of "myth" to history is that a myth seeks to present a truth that relates to all time. It is the attempt of a people to understand and explain their existence, customs, and traditions. Often such attempts include "etiological" concerns. That is, a concern to understand how and why things are the way they are. Some have pointed to evidence of "etiological" concerns in the primeval history of Genesis 1-11. For example: Why do snakes crawl on the ground? How did people come to wear clothing? Why do people die? Why are some people so big and tall (as if giants compared to others)? Why are there different languages in the world? How did sin enter the world? How did the earth come into existence?

Other Ancient Near Eastern communities had stories, in some ways similar to Israel's primeval history, which sought to explain their own questions of existence. For example: the Sumerian creation story called Enuma Elish, and the Babylonian flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic.

The similarities between such stories and Israel's primeval history point to an important aspect of God's divine revelation in Scripture. God often uses devices that are familiar to His people. Ancient Israel was exposed to and understood the significance of how myths and etiological stories were used by its pagan neighbors. Rather than inventing a new format of communication that might be unknown to Israel, God used a familiar format to communicate God's TRUTHS.

Consequently, the unique feature of Ancient Israel's primeval history (Genesis 1-11) is that it communicates TRUTH from God, about the relationships between humans and each other and between humans and God. This divine revelation from God in Israel's primeval history, though similar in format to surrounding myths, actually DENIES PAGAN CONCEPTS in favor of the TRUTH from God.

Patriarchal and Matriarchal History: Genesis 12-50

For the skeptic who may think the stories of the Bible are completely fiction and unrealistic, sources outside the Bible begin to verify the realistic environment of the Scriptures, beginning with the patriarchs and matriarchs (stories of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel/Leah, and Joseph).

Names and places, customs, and traditions described in the biblical narrative begin to emerge in documents from surrounding communities in the Ancient Near East. For example, the archives of Mari and Nuzi.

The Exodus and Wilderness Period (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

It is often argued that the history of "Israel as a nation," which emerges out of a tribal society, actually begins with the Exodus account. The earliest formation of what eventually becomes the nation of Israel emerges from the family groups (tribes) brought out from slavery in Egypt. It is at this point the Hebrews begin to become traceable historically (at least through vague references), not only in the biblical narratives, but also in the documents of surrounding nations (consider the Amarna Letters and the Merneptah Stele).

Small Groups

(15 minutes)

Have students share their outlines of the Pentateuch from the first homework assignment due this session.

Get into groups of three and share your outlines from the first homework assignment.

Outlining the Contents of the Pentateuch

(35 minutes)

*Refer students to Resource 4-1:
Outline of the Pentateuch.*

The following outline lists the significant content included in the Pentateuch:

- 1) Primeval Accounts (Genesis 1-11):
 - Creation Accounts
 - Flood Story
 - Tower of Babel
- 2) Patriarchal and Matriarchal Stories (Genesis 12-50):
 - Abraham/Sarah
 - Isaac/Rebekah
 - Jacob/Leah/Rachel
 - Joseph cycle
- 3) The Exodus (Exodus 1-14):
 - Moses and the Plagues
 - Parting of the Red Sea
- 4) The Sojourn in the Wilderness (Exodus 15-Numbers 36):
 - From the Red Sea to Mount Sinai
 - Covenant at Sinai (Ten Commandments)
 - From Mount Sinai to Plains of Moab
- 5) Preparation for Entering the Promised Land (Deuteronomy):
 - Sermon on the Plains of Moab
 - Death of Moses

*Within the above outline, two other significant types of material appear, as follows:

- 6) Legal Material at Sinai (Exodus 19-Numbers 10):
 - Instructions for building the Tabernacle
 - Laws regarding sacrifice, festivals, and social relations
- 7) Redactional/Transitional/Framing material (scattered throughout):
 - Genealogies, wilderness stations, other transitions

Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches to the Pentateuch

1. Diachronic analysis of the Pentateuch and Source Theory.

A "diachronic" approach is one that focuses on the history of a text. In the case of the Pentateuch, this approach has led to the investigation of possible historical sources that may have been used to form the writing of the Pentateuch.

KEEP IN MIND: as we discuss these approaches, they are NOT A THREAT to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. God could have used any author or number of authors to produce the inspired work of the Bible through His Holy Spirit!

One of the major products of a diachronic approach to the Pentateuch comes through "source criticism" (the investigation of possible sources used to produce the Pentateuch). This major product is known as "source theory," or specifically in the case of the Pentateuch, the "documentary hypothesis."

The Documentary Hypothesis, or "four-source theory," claims the Pentateuch was produced from four original sources, which can be described as follows:

*Display Resource 4-2:
Documentary Hypothesis.*

- i. The YAHWIST source (known simply as "J"). This source is characterized by material in the Pentateuch that consistently refers to God as "Yahweh."
- ii. The ELOHIST source (known simply as "E"). This source is characterized by material in the Pentateuch that consistently refers to God as "Elohim."
- iii. The PRIESTLY source (known simply as "P"). This source is characterized by material in the Pentateuch that reflects a concern for law, ritual, and statistics such as genealogical information.
- iv. The DEUTERONOMIC source (known simply as "D"). Characterized by an emphasis on the centralization of worship in the one place where God chooses (understood to be the Jerusalem Temple). The source is mainly found in Deuteronomy.

Following is an outline of biblical data to which scholars point as evidence of multiple sources (in this case, four sources) in the Pentateuch:

- i. Different language, terminology:
 - Two different names for God (Yahweh, Elohim)
 - Two different names for the covenant mountain (Sinai, Horeb)
 - Two different names for the native inhabitants of Palestine (Canaanites, Amorites)
- ii. Duplications, repetitions:
 - Two creation accounts (Gen 1, 2).
 - Three stories of a patriarch who deceives others by claiming his wife is his sister (Gen 12, 20, 26).
 - Two accounts of Abraham sending out Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 16, 21).
 - Two calls of Moses to lead out people (Ex 3, 6).
- iii. Stories which appear to blend two accounts:
 - Flood story (Gen 6-9; 7 pair of clean animals vs. just 1 pair of every animal).
 - Joseph being sold to Egypt (Gen 37; Reuben pleads for Joseph and he is sold to Midianites vs. Judah pleads for Joseph and he is sold to Ishmaelites).

2. Synchronic analysis of the Pentateuch.

A synchronic approach is not concerned with the history of the transmission of a text, but rather focuses on the text as a whole literary unit. Some recent studies on the Pentateuch have begun to deny the validity of the documentary hypothesis (described above) and focus on the unity of the Pentateuch. Such "synchronic" studies emphasize significant ties within the Pentateuch that cross source boundaries and bind the Pentateuch together as a whole. Such studies recognize patterns and links throughout the text that demonstrate the unity of the material.

A simple example of this kind of synchronic analysis can be seen in the "envelope-type" pattern of "promise, wilderness, law, wilderness, promise" evident within the Pentateuch, from the patriarchs to Deuteronomy. I will try to illustrate this pattern as follows:

Refer students to Resource 4-3: Synchronic Reading of the Pentateuch.

- A. Genesis 12-50: Contains God's giving of the **PROMISE** of land, descendants, and blessing to the patriarchs and matriarchs.
- B. Exodus 1-18: Contains the Exodus and **wilderness wanderings** from Egypt to Mount

Sinai. God leading the people toward fulfillment of the **PROMISE**.

C. Exodus 19-Numbers 10: Contains the giving of the LAW at Mount Sinai. This law defines the relationship between God and His people.

B'. Numbers 11-36: Contains further **wilderness wanderings** from Mount Sinai to Plains of Moab. Still on the way to fulfillment of the **PROMISE**.

A'. Deuteronomy: Contains sermon on the plains of Moab, in preparation to receive the **PROMISE**.

Notice how the pattern above unites the material under the theme of PROMISE. The sections labeled A and A' correspond, as one refers to the "giving" of the PROMISE, and the other refers to preparation for "receiving" the PROMISE.

Sections B and B' correspond in the fact that both sections reflect "wilderness wandering" on the way to the fulfillment of the PROMISE.

Enveloped in the center of the pattern is section C. Section C is highlighted and emphasized by standing alone in the heart of this pattern. It emphasizes the **central message** that the fulfillment of the PROMISE depends on faithful obedience to the LAW and covenant with God.

The central message is confirmed at the end, in Deuteronomy, which is a sermon filled with warnings about keeping the LAW of God or else the nation will lose the land of PROMISE!

This kind of synchronic analysis of the Pentateuch suggests the biblical material often appears to contain patterns and related structures that demonstrate the Pentateuch is one united document (rather than the product of multiple sources).

Small Groups

(20 minutes)

Have students share their findings from the second homework assignment due this session.

In groups of three share your findings from the second homework assignment.

Major Themes in the Pentateuch

(10 minutes)

Following is an outline of three major themes within the Pentateuch:

Covenant

There are three important covenants in the Pentateuch:

- i. *Covenant with Noah*: promise never to destroy the earth by flood again; sign is the rainbow.
- ii. *Covenant with Abraham*: promise of land and descendants; sign is circumcision.
- iii. *Covenant with Moses or the Sinai Covenant*: God promises to be God to the people and the people agree to obey His statutes; sign is obedience (some say Sabbath).

Promise of Land

As illustrated in the discussion above (see synchronic analysis of the Pentateuch), the theme of the PROMISE of land runs throughout the Pentateuch.

Theme of Abundance and Fruitfulness

Related to the theme of the promise of land is the theme of abundance, fruitfulness, and multiplication. God tells the first couple in the garden to “be fruitful and multiply.” God also promises Abraham his descendants will be as abundant as the stars in the sky, or the sand on the shore. The Hebrews become so abundant in Egypt that they become a threat to Pharaoh’s power and control. These examples illustrate the significance of this theme in the Pentateuch.

Law and the Sacrificial System

The giving of the Law at Sinai constitutes the main concern of Ex 19-Num 10. All of Leviticus is concerned with legal stipulations and instructions for the sacrificial system. Deuteronomy is cast as a speech from Moses serving as a review of the Law.

Video: Prophets and Kings “God with Us”

(20 minutes)

Have the video player ready for
“That the World May Know”
Volume 2, lesson 5.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- discuss the similarities and differences between the “primeval history” in the Pentateuch and comparative texts from the Ancient Near East?
- recognize the connection between the biblical narrative in the Pentateuch and the history of the Ancient Near East?
- outline the major contents of the Pentateuch?
- list four major themes that run through the Pentateuch?

Look Ahead

Following the introduction to the Pentateuch in this lesson, the next session takes a closer look at the primeval history and the patriarchal/matriarchal history contained in Genesis.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Read Genesis 1-2:4. First, list the items created on each day. Identify any pattern you see with regard to the order of creation in this chapter. Second, list any phrases repeated within the chapter, and make note of anytime a repeated phrase appears to be significantly changed or adjusted in terms of its wording. Third, read Genesis 2:4-25, and list each item created, in the order in which it is created. Compare the order of creation in chapter 2 with the order of creation in chapter 1. How would you explain any differences?

Read Genesis 12. Make a list of the places included in Abraham’s journey as described in this chapter. According to this chapter, where would you identify the location of the “promised land” (the land God intends to show Abraham, Genesis 12:1)?

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 75-93.

Write in your Journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your readings. Write a sample covenant of your own between you and God, include all the parts of a covenant. Have you

experienced covenant services like the installation of a new pastor? How meaningful are these covenant services in today's culture? In God's covenant with Israel, expressed in the Ten Commandments, what does it mean when God says "Your sacred place is My sacred place?"

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Lesson 5

Primeval History and the Patriarchs/Matriarchs

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Homework	Small Group Discussion	1st Homework Assignment
0:25	Israel's Primeval History	Lecture	Bible
0:55	Homework	Small Group Discussion	2nd Homework Assignment
1:15	Patriarchal/ Matriarchal History	Lecture	Bible Atlas Resource 5-1 Resource 5-2
1:35	Video Review	Group Discussion	
1:55	Lesson Close	Review Assignment	Student Guide

Suggested Atlases for Use in this Lesson

Frank, Harry Thomas, ed. *Atlas of the Bible Lands*.
Revised edition, Maplewood, MN: Hammond, 1997.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*.
New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

Following the introduction to the Pentateuch in the previous lesson, this lesson takes a closer look at the Primeval History and the patriarchal/matriarchal history contained in Genesis.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- describe the significance of the literary patterns and thematic emphases that appear in Genesis 1 and 2.
- identify the unique features that distinguish Genesis 1 and 2.
- understand how the first two covenants in the Pentateuch reflect God's desire to reach and bless all humanity.
- trace the theme of the "promise of land and descendants" through the patriarchal/matriarchal narrative.

Lesson Body

Small Groups

(20 minutes)

Have students share their findings from the first homework assignment due this lesson.

In groups of three share your findings from the first homework assignment.

Israel's Primeval History

(30 minutes)

The Account of Creation

Genesis 1

Notice the pattern that appears in Genesis 1. As God calls things into existence, the phrase that appears in the text is "Let there be. . ." Note the phrase is passive and impersonal (third person speech). The phrase (or some related form of the phrase) appears in the first chapter, at verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, and 24. This repeated phrase conveys the impression of a powerful God who simply calls the universe, and everything in it, into existence in an impersonal and passive manner.

Notice how the pattern is suddenly and dramatically broken at verse 26! By now the reader is used to seeing the phrase "Let there be. . .," and is suddenly awakened by the new phrase in verse 26: "Let us make. . ." This new phrase is no longer passive and impersonal (third person speech), but rather it is active and personal (first person speech).

Through the break in the pattern, verse 26 is set apart from the previous verses (3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). Thus, the item created in verse 26 appears to be highlighted and emphasized. This item is not just called into existence; this item is personally made (fashioned, built, formed) in a personal way, as if by the hand of God himself! This unique and important item is HUMANITY!

Another pattern in Genesis 1 conveys a similar message. Notice the phrase "after their kind," which appears in verses 11, 12, 21, 24, and 25. This repeated phrase communicates that the items of creation (such as trees, plants, animals) are all called into being in accordance with "their own kind." As the

reader recognizes this pattern, he or she expects the same to be true for humans.

However, once again, there is a surprising break in the pattern, when the reader sees the new phrase “in our image, after our likeness.” This new phrase appears in verse 26. The dramatic change in wording, once again, highlights, accents, and stresses this particular item of creation as different, honored, and most important. This item is not simply “after its own kind,” but rather, this creature is created “in the image and likeness of God!” Once again, the reader discovers this unique creature is humanity!

The impact of these two literary patterns is a powerful message that humanity is the most important aspect of God’s creation! God’s wondrous grace has determined that humans are the most important part of His creation.

Introduce the concept of “parallelism” in Hebrew poetry. Ask the students to identify what the traditional characteristics of modern English poetry are (rhyme, rhythm, meter, etc.). Point out that ancient Hebrew poetry is often characterized by “parallelism.” Parallelism refers to lines of verse that repeat words or thoughts directly or through synonymous terms.

It is important to recognize that the “parallelism” in 1:27 makes it clear the creature made in God’s image includes both male and female; i.e., both men and women are fashioned personally by God and made in the image and likeness of God!

And **God created** *the human* IN HIS IMAGE,
IN THE IMAGE OF GOD **He created** *it*.
MALE AND FEMALE **He created** *them*.
(paraphrased)

In each line the subject of the sentence is expressed as follows: **God created**, **He created**, and **He created**. Each subject is in parallel and refers to the same thing (i.e., God).

In each line the object of the sentence is expressed as follows: *the human*, *it*, and *them*. Each object is in parallel and refers to the same thing (i.e., the human). Note, however, that the parallelism expresses an important feature of the human. That is, the human God created is actually plural (them). Thus, there is more than one human God created (see next).

In each line a modifying phrase is expressed as follows: “in his image,” “in the image of God,” and “male and female.” Each modifying phrase is in parallel and refers to the same thing (i.e., the image of God). Note, however, that the parallelism expresses an important feature of the image of God. That is, the image of God includes both MALE AND FEMALE! Thus, despite the bias of a patriarchal society, God’s Word

communicates that both men and women were created in the image of God!

Genesis 2

Chapter 2 of Genesis creates an interesting contrast with chapter 1. Recall in chapter 1 that everything appeared to function very smoothly according to the will and power of God. Notice in chapter 1 the repetition of the phrase "and it was good" (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; in fact in verse 31, things are "very good").

This is contrasted in Genesis 2 by an apparent lack or need within the creation. Chapter 2:5 states there is no shrub, no plant, no rain, and no human. In verse 18, God comes right out and says that "it is not good" (in contrast to how good everything was in chapter 1) in response to the lack of a partner for the human.

Of course, God meets all of these needs and fills all of the lack, through His provision. In verses 8-9, God plants a garden, including trees for food. By verse 10 there is a river flowing to water the garden. In verses 7 and 15, we see God has made a human to cultivate the garden. In verses 21-25, God fashions a partner for the human.

Notice the theme of "interdependence" in chapter 2. God creates everything in such a way that each item depends on the other: garden needs water to grow, human needs garden for food, garden needs human to cultivate it, human needs partner to avoid loneliness, etc.

Also notice the theme of "God's provision." God fills in all of the lack and provides for all of the need. God is the great Provider of the universe!

REVIEW: The message in chapter 1 depicts God as all-powerful Creator of the universe. Chapter 1 also brings the message that humans are the most valuable and important aspect of God's creation!

Chapter 2 communicates the message that God is our great Provider and the world was created to function with a peaceful harmony in which we all depend on each other, under God.

Flood and Covenant

In Genesis 3 sin is introduced into the world. By 6:5-6, 11-12, the picture of sin has increased to unacceptable proportions. In response to sin, God determines to destroy the earth by flood. Instead of destroying all, however, God saves a remnant through Noah and his family.

Notice God's choice of Noah appears to be based on the description of Noah as righteous and blameless (6:9). After the Flood, God starts over with Noah and his family.

God's new beginning with Noah is grounded in the first covenant. This covenant is eternal and universal. God promises never to destroy the earth by flood again (8:21-22; 9:9-17).

The record of these events makes the following message clear: (1) God despises evil and sin, (2) God favors righteousness and blamelessness, and (3) God determines to begin anew, with an eternal promise not to give up on humanity again.

God does not simply leave this new start with the descendants of Noah to develop on its own power. God eventually enacts a second covenant and initiates a plan to reach the whole world with His blessing.

God calls Abraham into the second covenant. In this second covenant, God promises to bless all the families of the earth through one family (Abraham and Sarah's; see 12:3, 17:16-19,).

At this point, the Bible introduces the theme of God's promise of land to Abraham and Sarah's descendants (Genesis 12:1-2, 7). The promise of land and a multitude of descendants becomes an important key to the fulfillment of the covenant (i.e., the blessing of all the families of the earth through Abraham and Sarah). The rest of the Pentateuch pursues this promise of land and its fulfillment. This pursuit begins in the narratives of the patriarchs and matriarchs.

Small Groups

(20 minutes)

Have students share their findings from the second homework assignment due this lesson.

In groups of three (different group members from last time) share Abraham's journey lists.

Patriarchal/Matriarchal History

(20 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 5-2: Patriarchal/Matriarchal Journeys.

Using a Bible atlas (see "Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher" above) or Bible map (large wall map, or maps located in the back of students' Bibles), locate with the students the various areas corresponding to the movements of the patriarchs/matriarchs. Also, display Resource 5-1.

Abraham is told to go "to the land which I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). This creates the anticipation of discovering where the land is. As you read through the stories in Genesis 12-50, notice how much the patriarchs move around and how difficult it appears to get them to settle in the place God chooses.

When Abram reaches Shechem, God appears and says, "to your descendants I will give THIS land" (Genesis 12:4-7). It would seem God's appearance and words should be enough to confirm that Abram is the place! However, Abram moves farther south.

At Bethel, Abram builds an altar and calls upon the name of the Lord, but God does not respond (12:8). Perhaps that is an indication that Abram should go back up to Shechem where God did appear to him.

Instead, however, Abram moves farther south, into the Negev. At this point a FAMINE hits (12:9-10). It seems pretty clear Abram is not where he is supposed to be. However, rather than moving back up North, near Shechem, Abram runs to Egypt.

Throughout, the rest of Genesis, there seems to be somewhat of a pattern in regard to the movements of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph). God repeatedly appears to them and repeats the PROMISE of land and descendants. These appearances from God usually occur when the patriarchs are near the areas of Shechem, or Bethel, or even Beersheba (God seems to tolerate their movements and repeats the promise in areas south of Shechem). However, when they run off to Egypt or over to "Philistine country" or far north to Haran, they often get into trouble with the inhabitants of those places and end up being pressed back toward the area of PROMISE.

On three occasions, a famine hits. In each instance, the famine hits when a patriarch is "out of place." The first, when Abraham is in the Negev; the second, when Isaac is in the Negev; and the third, when Joseph is sold and ends up all the way in Egypt! It almost appears as though God uses those famines as attention-getters to let the patriarchs know they are "out of place."

In the midst of all the moving around, there are some very significant texts in which God repeats the PROMISE of land and descendants:

Original CALL AND PROMISE—12: 1-7.
Promise repeated to Abraham—13: 14-17.
Promise repeated to Abraham—22: 17-18.
Promise repeated to Isaac—26: 1-6.
Promise repeated to Isaac—26: 23-25.
Promise repeated to Jacob—28: 10-17
Promise repeated to Jacob—35: 9-15

By the end of Genesis, ironically, the descendants of Jacob all move to Egypt! When Exodus begins, the children of the PROMISE are all enslaved in Egypt!

In all of this, a few messages emerge: (1) God demonstrates steadfast love and commitment despite the wanderings and questionings of His people, (2) God calls for His people to trust His PROMISES and remain faithfully obedient, and (3) despite negative odds, God will accomplish His purposes.

The patriarchal/matriarchal history begins with the great promise from God and ends with His people enslaved in Egypt. The story does not end there, however. God's steadfast love and His power are demonstrated as He delivers His people and takes them through the wilderness to the land of promise!

Group Discussion

(20 minutes)

Have the class get into groups of 3 to 4 to discuss these questions. The questions are on the Group Discussion page for this lesson in their Student Guide.

We have viewed three segments of video from the series *That the World May Know*. Ray Vander Laan has taken stories and settings from the Bible to draw faith lessons for today's culture.

Which lesson (setting) do you most remember?

Why did it impress you?

How can you use the ideas that have been illustrated to communicate contemporary truth?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

- Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you
- describe the significance of the literary patterns and thematic emphases that appear in Genesis 1 and 2?
 - identify the unique features that distinguish Genesis 1 and 2?
 - understand how the first two covenants in the Pentateuch reflect God's desire to reach and bless all humanity?
 - trace the theme of the "promise of land and descendants" through the patriarchal/matriarchal narrative?

Look Ahead

From our look at significant elements within Genesis, we will move on in the next lesson to two major events in Exodus. We will focus on the Exodus event, in which the children of Israel are freed from slavery in Egypt, and we will discuss the covenant God initiates at Mount Sinai.

Assign Homework

Read through the narrative of the 10 plagues on Egypt (Ex 7: 14-12: 32). List each plague. Also, note the wording of the phrase that indicates Pharaoh's heart was hardened. For each plague, record "who" or "what" hardened Pharaoh's heart, according to the text. Explain the differences in regard to "who" or "what" hardens Pharaoh's heart in each case.

List the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20. Organize the list into categories by grouping the commandments according to whatever patterns or relationships you determine.

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 93-131.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on: *How can the dramatic stories of the patriarchs/matriarchs be used to illustrate truth in contemporary sermons?*

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Lesson 6

The Exodus Event and Covenant at Mount Sinai

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	The Exodus Event	Lecture and Guided Discussion	Bible, Homework
0:50	Covenant at Mount Sinai	Lecture and Guided Discussion	Bible, Homework
1:35	Promised Land "First Fruits"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

From our look at significant elements within Genesis, in the last lesson, we will now move on to consider two major events in Exodus. We will focus on the Exodus event, in which the children of Israel are freed from slavery in Egypt, and we will discuss the covenant God initiates at Mount Sinai.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Study Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- identify the purpose and intended messages derived from the account of the plagues in Egypt.
- appreciate the significance of God's "reintroduction" of himself to the people of Israel in the wilderness.
- explain how the laws of God (including the organization of the Ten Commandments) can be summed up in the directive to love God and love neighbor.
- recognize the ongoing theme of blessing all humanity, within the third covenant in the Pentateuch (Sinai).

Lesson Body

The Exodus Event

(45 minutes)

Moses and His Call (Exodus 1-4)

The story of the Exodus begins with the people of Israel enslaved in Egypt. Moses is born, and hid among the bulrushes in the river, due to the command of Pharaoh that all sons born to the Hebrews be killed. Pharaoh did this out of fear because the Hebrew slaves were multiplying too rapidly. Moses is rescued by a princess in Pharaoh's family and raised by her.

When he grows up, Moses is exiled in the Sinai desert for killing an Egyptian in defense of a Hebrew slave. There he receives his call from God at the burning bush and returns to set the people free as God's agent.

At the burning bush, God reveals His plan to save Israel and His personal name, Yahweh. In this encounter the theme of promise is emphasized. The promises to the patriarchs/matriarchs are recalled, along with the new promise of deliverance and a land flowing with milk and honey.

The Plagues (Exodus 5-12)

This section describes the confrontations between Moses and Pharaoh. Moses is God's instrument to perform mighty wonders (the plagues), while Pharaoh hardens his heart and refuses to let the people go free.

Lead students in a group discussion of the impact plagues such as these would have on a large community.

Also, discuss the students' findings regarding the first homework assignment due this session.

List of 10 plagues:

- Water to blood
- Frogs
- Gnats or lice
- Insects
- Pestilence on livestock (cattle, etc., die)
- Boils
- Hail
- Locusts
- Darkness for three days
- Death of all firstborn

It has been argued that many of these plagues have natural explanations and have actually occurred on

other occasions in Egypt. Such arguments are not a threat to the power and majesty of God or to the inspiration of Scripture, for at least two reasons. First, God is the Creator who controls natural events themselves. Second, and more important, these plagues occur exactly when God calls for them, and they accomplish His purposes. Thus, the miracle is found in God's control of the plagues, so that they occur according to His timing and to accomplish His purposes!

One of the important purposes of the plagues is for Pharaoh and the Egyptians to know who God is. "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (see 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 16, 29; 14:4, 18; contrast 5:2).

God also addresses Moses and his descendants in declaring the plagues will also serve the purpose of letting them know God is the Lord (10:2).

This purpose of recognizing, fearing, and believing the Lord is explicitly fulfilled for Israel (not for Egypt, at least not with any explicit statement) as stated in Ex 14:31. Recall that Moses, back at the burning bush encounter with God, had implied the children of Israel did not know who God was (3:13). After the great deliverance from Egypt, that dilemma has been resolved: now they know, fear, and believe the Lord!

As a result of the plagues, the following messages become evident to Israel:

- a) God is stronger than Pharaoh and the supposed gods of Egypt.
- b) God is the only one, true God.
- c) God is Lord of creation and in control of all nature.

Crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 13-15)

Story of Israel fleeing into the desert. God leads the people of Israel with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Pharaoh changes his mind about freeing them; so he pursues them, and Israel becomes trapped between Pharaoh and the Red Sea. At the Red Sea, God splits the water and the people walk through on dry ground. Pharaoh's army pursues, and the waters close on them and drown them.

Again, there are those who have argued such an event can be explained as a natural occurrence. In fact a similar event has been described at Lake Sirbonis near the Suez canal. Major Palmer, a 19th-century English explorer, described a similar occurrence at Lake Sirbonis:

Strong north-easterly gales, on reaching Suez, would, by its action on an ebb tide, make it abnormally low, and prevent while it lasted, at least for a time, the return of the usual flood tide. In this way a good passage across the channel might soon be laid bare and remain so for several hours. In the morning, a shift of wind to the south, probably of cyclonic nature, takes place. The pent-up flood tide, now freed from restraint, and urged on by the south gale, returns to its wonted flow.

Again, such claims are no threat to the authority of the Scriptures or to God's power. The miracle at the Red Sea occurred right when God ordained it, and it accomplished His purpose of freeing the Israelites from the pursuit of Pharaoh and his army. God brought about the event according to His timing, to accomplish His purposes!

Wilderness to Sinai (Exodus 15-18)

This section describes the journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai. This material includes the following incidents:

- Making the bitter waters of Marah sweet (by throwing a tree into the waters)
- The provision of manna to eat
- The provision of quail to eat
- Water from the rock
- Victorious battle against Amalek (victory comes as Moses' arms were held up)

Two important themes emerge from this material. One, God's constant care and provision for the children of Israel in the wilderness. Two, the complaints and rebellious attitude of the children of Israel.

The Covenant at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-Numbers 10)

(45 minutes)

Lead students in a group discussion regarding the impact generations of slavery would have on a people. Especially consider the impact such circumstances would have on individual and community religious beliefs and practices. Is there a sense in which the community of Israel would need to be reintroduced to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

Exodus 19 describes the children of Israel arriving at Mount Sinai. They are camped at Mount Sinai from this point through the rest of Exodus, through all of Leviticus, and up to Numbers 10.

At Mount Sinai, the children of Israel are introduced to God! This group of Hebrews have been enslaved in Egypt for years and are separated from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by many generations. During the time in Egypt, it is likely many of the Hebrews neglected their relationship with God. As a result, many in this generation likely did not know God. That is why, Moses

argued, back at the burning bush, the people may not know who God is, who is sending Moses to free them (Ex 3:13). God has delivered a new generation of Hebrews, slaves out of Egypt, some of whom do not know Him.

Through the deliverance from Egypt, the miracles of the plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea, this generation of Hebrews has witnessed and experienced the power and activity of God. The powerful series of plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the miraculous provisions in the wilderness (water, manna, quail, victory in war over enemy) all become revelations of God to the Hebrews.

Now, at Mount Sinai, God formally introduces himself to this new generation of Hebrews and invites them into a "covenant relationship!" God begins describing himself by reminding the people of what He has done for them, and then He invites them into a covenant relationship:

Read aloud Ex 19:4-6.

Please read Ex 19:4-6.

Consider the basis of this invitation to relationship with God. When someone enters into a special relationship, he or she must consider if the relationship is worthwhile and trustworthy. Consider what God has done to demonstrate His intentions and trustworthiness: God's mighty acts of deliverance, salvation, and provision as described above. God brings His power, love, and provision to this relationship.

Consider what the children of Israel bring to this relationship. They have been helpless slaves in Egypt. They are helpless in the wilderness, crying out for food and water. They really have nothing to offer to God!

We are the same way when we come to God. We have nothing to offer that would really benefit God Almighty. What God asks of Israel is the only thing they can offer Him: themselves! God asks for obedience in a relationship of love.

This covenant relationship of love is directed by God's Law. After the people agree to accept God's invitation to a covenant relationship, He gives them the Law, which defines how God wants the relationship to function.

The epitome of the many laws in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers can be seen in the Ten Commandments.

The focus of the Ten Commandments is the love of God and love of neighbor. Notice this focus can be seen in the following division of the Ten Commandments:

- Commands 1-4 address relationship with God.
- Commands 5-10 address relationships among humans.

This is confirmed by Jesus' words in the New Testament. Recall, when asked what the two greatest commandments are, Jesus replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus went on to say that "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Mt 22: 37-40).

Jesus' words are reflected in the Ten Commandments, which indeed focus on loving God and loving neighbor. It is important to recognize the main purpose of the covenant at Mount Sinai. God calls the children of Israel to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Consider that if Israel is a nation of "priests," who are the people of the congregation? The answer is the rest of the world! Thus, Israel is to become a model of holiness and spread God's love to all people. This is consistent with the previous covenant, which God established with Abraham. Recall, in that covenant God told Abraham "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12: 3). Blessing the whole world is still God's plan. Now He will carry it out through the people of Israel who are called to serve as a kingdom of priests.

Video: Promised Land "First Fruits"

(20 minutes)

*Have the video player set up for
"That the World May Know,"
Volume 1, lesson 3.*

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- identify the purpose and intended messages derived from the account of the plagues in Egypt?
- appreciate the significance of God's "reintroduction" of himself to the people of Israel in the wilderness?
- explain how the laws of God (including the organization of the Ten Commandments) can be summed up in the directive to love God and love neighbor?
- recognize the ongoing theme of blessing all humanity, within the third covenant in the Pentateuch (Sinai)?

Look Ahead

From the wilderness of Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments, our focus will turn in the next lesson to preparations for entering the Promised Land, and the records of the conquest of the Promised Land. We will also consider the events that preceded the call for a king within the nation of Israel.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Read the following texts: Judges 2: 11-23; 3: 7-15; 4: 1-24; 6: 1-16; 10: 6-11:33; 13: 1-5. Explain the general pattern (series of events) that appears to be repeated in these texts. List the steps that seem to make up this pattern (some steps may not be evident in every passage).

Read 1 Samuel 5-6. Summarize the story recorded in these two chapters. Discuss the lessons the Philistines appear to have learned through the experience described in this account. Compare the experience of the Philistines to the lesson the men of Beth-shemesh appear to have learned in the story. Now read 1 Samuel 4, and consider the lesson the people of Israel learned in relation to placing their trust in the ark rather than in God. What conclusions would you draw regarding how to approach God and the sacred objects of God (such as the ark of the covenant)?

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 135-166.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on: *How does the story of Rahab's survival in the siege of Jericho relate to the theme of "blessing all humanity"?*

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Lesson 7

Entering the Promised Land and Call for Monarchy

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Entering the Promised Land	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Resource 7-1 1 st Homework Assignment
0:50	The Call for a King	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Bible 2 nd Homework Assignment
1:35	Promised Land "Confronting Evil"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

From the wilderness of Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments, we now turn our focus to preparations for entering the Promised Land, and the records of the conquest of the Promised Land. We will also consider the events that preceded the call for a king within the nation of Israel.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- comprehend the purpose and style of Deuteronomy.
- distinguish the unique features of Joshua and Judges.
- identify the lessons portrayed in the *Ebenezer* account, early in 1 Samuel, in regard to Israel's relationship with God.

Lesson Body

(110 minutes)

Entering the Promised Land

(45 minutes)

Final Instructions before Entering the Land

The setting of Deuteronomy is “the Plains of Moab,” across the Jordan River from the Promised Land. The people of Israel are camped across the Jordan, anticipating crossing the river to enter the Promised Land. Deuteronomy depicts Moses preaching the book of Deuteronomy as a sermon with the purpose of preparing the children of Israel for life in the Promised Land.

The message of Deuteronomy serves to communicate the following to the children of Israel:

- Reminder of what God has done to bring them here; miracles and how He has cared for them through the wilderness.
- Reminder of the covenant and God’s statutes.
- Warnings regarding disobedience and avoiding the paganism of the inhabitants of new land.

The following are considered major characteristics of Deuteronomy:

Display Resource 7-1: Major Characteristics of Deuteronomy.

- Sermonic Style: long speeches of exhortation and warning.
- The Word of God is spoken through a leader (such as Moses or Joshua).
- Exhortations: to obey God’s laws with the promise of blessing (6: 1-3, 10-11; 7: 12-15).
- Warnings: to disobey God’s law will result in punishment (6: 12-15; 8: 11, 19-20).
- Centralization of Worship: in the one place God chooses (12: 1-7).
- Theme of the Land: obedience will result in the prosperity of the land, and disobedience will result in the loss of the land and exile (3: 18; 4: 1; 8: 1, 7-10; 11: 8-17).

Conquest and Settlement

Annotated Outline of Joshua

Chapter 1: Introduction; Authority of Joshua

Joshua's opening speech promises victory in the taking of the land, if the people obey the Law of God. Note the two characteristics of Deuteronomy evident in this speech: (1) word from the Lord is communicated through the leader, and (2) obedience will result in victory/blessing/prosperity.

Chapters 2-12: Conquest of the Promised Land

These chapters describe swift and decisive victories in the taking of the Promised land. The taking of the Promised Land is described in accordance with three swift military campaigns as follows:

1. Jericho, Ai, Central hill country (7-9)
2. Southern hill country, as far as Lachish and Hebron (10)
3. Northern hill country, valley of Jezreel, Hazor (11)

Chapters 13-21: Division of the Land Among the Tribes

The Promised Land is divided up among the 12 tribes of Israel.

Chapters 22-24: Joshua's Farewell and Covenant Renewal

These chapters include Joshua's farewell speech and covenant renewal. Joshua leads the people in a renewal of their commitment to the covenant relationship with God. Joshua's final exhortation urges the people to choose obedience and blessing, and bears similarities to Moses' final exhortation before his death (Josh 24:15-27; cf. Dt 30:15-20).

Conquest in the Book of Judges

The description of the conquest of the Promised Land is quite different in Judges in comparison to that in Joshua. Joshua gave a picture of a swift military campaign carried out by a united Israel under the leadership of Joshua.

Lead students in a discussion of why Joshua and Judges give such differing pictures of the conquest of

Judges gives a different picture, of a struggling and lengthy campaign over many years, in which

the Promised Land. Consider the following possibilities:

Each book represents a different purpose (i.e., Joshua gives a condensed view of the conquest, emphasizing God's power in providing swift victory; while Judges presents a more detailed view of the struggles encountered in taking the land).

Joshua depicts the initial entry into the land; while Judges describes the ongoing struggle to maintain control of the land.

Have the students share their work from the first homework assignment due this lesson.

independent tribes and regional leaders acted in times of crises to take portions of the land.

Judges highlights an important pattern of sin and grace repeated throughout the book. A general description of the pattern is described in Judges 2:11-23. This pattern includes the following six elements:

- The people of Israel sin.
- Israel is delivered into the hands of an oppressive enemy.
- The people of Israel cry out to God because of their oppression.
- God raises up a deliverer (judge) who frees them from the enemy.
- Israel experiences freedom and prosperity.
- The people of Israel sin again, and the cycle starts all over.

Most of the elements in this pattern of sin and grace can be seen in the following examples in Judges:

- 3:7-15
- 4:1-24
- 6:1-16
- 10:6-11:33
- 13:1-5

The Call for a King

(45 minutes)

The Story of *Ebenezer* (1 Samuel 4-7)

In 1 Samuel 8, the elders of Israel approach Samuel and request that he appoint a king to judge Israel "like the nations." Immediately preceding this account, in 1 Samuel 4-7, is a story that depicts the attitude of the nation in relation to God and somewhat foreshadows the nation's request for a king. This story involves a series of battles with the Philistines. Within the story, the Hebrew term *Ebenezer* plays a significant role.

In the first battle, Israel is encamped at the location of *Ebenezer*, while the Philistines are encamped at *Aphék*. The description of the battle is short. Israel is defeated, losing about 4,000 men on the battlefield. The elders of Israel raise the question: "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines?" Their solution to the defeat is to send for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and take it into battle with them. It is felt this will give them victory over the enemy.

As preparations are made for a second battle, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord is brought into the camp of Israel, the Philistines become frightened. They

hear the confident shouts of anticipated triumph in the camp of Israel, and the Philistines fear "God has come into the camp." Nevertheless, the Philistines gathered their courage and joined in the battle. This time the defeat of Israel is even greater. Israel loses 30,000 soldiers, the ark of the covenant of the Lord is stolen, and the two sons of the high priest are killed. Report of the defeat is brought to the high priest who falls back and dies upon hearing the ark of the covenant was taken. Later texts imply Shiloh and the tabernacle are destroyed. In addition, the pregnant wife of one of the sons of the high priest, upon hearing the tragic news, went into labor, gave birth, and called her son, *Ichabod*. The child's name translates, "no glory." The text states, upon giving the child this name, his mother said, "the glory has departed from Israel."

The picture at the end of this second battle is one of death and defeat. Worst of all, with the loss of the ark of the covenant of the Lord, it is felt God has abandoned Israel. A number of concerns can be attributed to Israel's defeat, and the absence of God's deliverance. First, it is stated that the word of the Lord had finally returned to Israel after a time of silence (1 Sam 3:1, 19-21; 4:1a). Despite this, when the Philistines threaten war, no one appears to consult the word of the Lord. Second, passages surrounding this account indicate the proliferation of sin within the community of Israel. The people have been following the sins of the sons of the high priest (1 Sam 2:12-17, 22-24). In addition, the people of Israel had been worshipping and serving idols and false gods (1 Sam 7:3). Finally, Israel appears to place its trust in the ark of the covenant of the Lord, rather than consulting the Lord himself. It is as if the ark was Israel's means of manipulating God or was the magic box that would deliver them from their enemy through its divine power.

Have the students share their work from the second homework assignment due this session.

The story traces the adventures of the ark of the covenant in the hands of the Philistines. It appears the ark brings great trouble to the Philistines. Consequently, they send the ark back to Israel. Israel receives the ark and hides it away in the town of Kiriath-jearim for 20 years. Meanwhile, Samuel leads the people in a time of renewal.

At this point in the story, Israel is still under the oppression of the Philistines, and Shiloh is apparently still in ruins. Samuel gathers the people at Mizpah and leads them in renewal. He calls the people to remove all of their foreign idols, turn away from false gods, and return to the Lord alone. The people of Israel fast,

confess, and pray humbly before the Lord. As Israel is gathered for this time of renewal, the Philistine war host assembles once again. Israel becomes fearful, and Samuel offers a sacrifice and cries out to the Lord. In response, the Lord God “thunders” against the Philistines, and the enemy is defeated before Israel.

Lead the students in a discussion of the significance of this account. Consider the following questions:

- *What does the use of the term Ebenezer at the beginning and end of the story suggest?*
- *What attitudes toward God are portrayed by the people of Israel in different parts of the story?*
- *Where do the people of Israel place their trust at various stages of the account?*

It should be noted that there is no mention of the ark of the covenant of the Lord being involved in this final battle. It appears what has prompted the Lord to act on Israel’s behalf are the acts of renewal and humility on the part of Israel. After the victory over the Philistines, Samuel sets up a stone monument and calls it *Ebenezer*. As he does so, Samuel states, “Thus far the Lord has helped us” (note: *eben-ezer* literally translates, “stone of help”). Thus, the Philistines are subdued, and the cities of Israel are restored.

Some significant messages can be drawn from this account. Israel learns that its trust is not to be placed in false gods or idols, nor is it to be placed in the sacred objects of God (such as the ark of the covenant). An actual relationship of submission to God should come before sacred objects. The people of Israel also learn that sacred objects do not serve as means of controlling God. That is, simply taking the ark of the covenant into battle does not obligate God to fight for Israel. God is in control, not those who wield the sacred objects of the Lord.

- *What does the story suggest in regard to the significance of sacred objects such as the ark of the covenant?*
- *What does the story suggest in regard to God’s will for Israel at this stage in history?*
- *Why do you think the people of Israel desire a “king like the other nations”?*

The lessons appear to be short-lived, or at least unsatisfactory, for the people of Israel. Following this account, the elders of Israel ask for a king like the other nations. Despite the fact that God just demonstrated that a humble and direct relationship with God provides greater leadership and strength than any human king, Israel nevertheless requests a king like the nations. Israel’s rejection of God as King is stated explicitly in 1 Sam 8: 7. This marks a significant turning point in the history of Israel, as the Lord consents to appointing a king for Israel. Nevertheless, God’s continuing concern for the people of Israel becomes evident in the way in which God reveals God’s idea of a great monarch, as opposed to one “like the nations.”

Video: Promised Land “Confronting Evil”

(20 minutes)

Have the video player set up with “That the World May Know” Volume 1, lesson 4

Lesson Close

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- comprehend the purpose and style of Deuteronomy?
- distinguish the unique features of Joshua and Judges?
- identify the lessons portrayed in the *Ebenezer* account, early in 1 Samuel, in regard to Israel's relationship with God?

Look Ahead

Having called for a king, we will next examine the early years of monarchy in Ancient Israel (i.e., the period of the united monarchy).

Assign Homework

Refer Students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Read 1 Samuel 8-11. Summarize the process by which Israel's first king is established. Compare this process to your thoughts regarding how other nations normally installed their kings. Consider what message(s) may be implicit in this account in regard to God's idea of kingship for Israel.

Compare and contrast 1 Samuel 15 and 2 Samuel 11:1-12:23 with Psalm 51. Compare and contrast Saul's reaction to his sins and David's reaction to his sins. What lessons can be learned from these texts in regard to an appropriate response to sin?

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 167-176, 213-221.

In your journal record your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on: In the OT, God called His people to confront the evil of their day. *What evil must we recognize and confront in our own culture?*

Lesson 8

Period of the United Monarchy in Ancient Israel

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	The United Monarchy in Ancient Israel	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Resource 8-1 Homework Assignment
1:35	Promised Land "Iron of Culture"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this lesson we turn our attention to the early years of monarchy in Ancient Israel (i.e., the period of the united monarchy). We will discuss significant events in the reigns of Kings Saul, David, and Solomon.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the session and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- describe the difference between a “king like the nations” and God’s desire regarding the character of kingship for Israel.
- identify the factors that led to the “tragic” downfall of Saul’s kingship in God’s eyes.
- understand the significance of the Davidic Covenant and its messianic implications.
- recognize the difference between Saul’s response to his sin and David’s response to sin in his life.
- list the accomplishments described in the Bible that portray the grandeur of Solomon’s kingdom.

Lesson Body

The United Monarchy in Ancient Israel

(90 minutes)

Kingship for Israel

Discuss with the students possible reasons why the people of Israel wanted a king, even to the point of sacrificing some of their personal belongings and freedom (as Samuel warns).

1 Samuel 8 describes the people of Israel demanding a king. They specifically request a king "like all the nations." Israel wanted the prestige and position they saw in other nations. Having a king "like all the nations" was one way they felt would advance them upon the world scene.

Samuel warned the people what it would really be like to have a "king like all the nations." He described what the custom of kings was (1 Sam 8: 11-18). He warned them the king would take their children, their servants, and even themselves to be his own servants. The king would also take their fields and their livestock and use them for his own purposes. Nevertheless, the people insisted: "No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles" (8: 19-20).

Have students share their work for the first homework assignment due this session.

God gives in to the people's demands and grants them a king. However, God does not establish a kingship "like all the nations." God begins to establish kingship in Israel in a unique way. God's plan was to create a kingship for Israel that was not "like all the nations."

So what does it mean to have a king among the people of God? What does it mean to be a king in Israel? Following is a description of how God goes about establishing a unique kingship for His people.

Refer students to and display Resource 8-1: A Kingship for God's People.

STEP 1: God agrees and tells Samuel, "Yes, appoint them a King." Samuel announces they will have a king and then sends "every man to his city" (1 Sam 8: 22). What is striking here is that there is no big parade, no coronation ceremony, no celebration banquet; instead there is just an announcement and everyone is sent home.

STEP 2: Later, God instructs Samuel to anoint the man named Saul to be king of Israel. This anointing however is done in secret. No one is around except Saul and Samuel alone; even the servant is sent

ahead so he does not participate in the anointing (1 Saml 9:27-10:1). What may also be considered unusual is that Saul is described as being "from the smallest tribe, and the least family" (1 Sam 9:21). Surely, the first king of Israel should come from a more important background than that! After the anointing, Saul is sent home. So at this point, there has been an announcement that Israel will have a king, a king has been secretly anointed, and everyone has been sent home! Where is the ticker-tape parade, when is the coronation, how about a celebration ball, and when do we build the palace!?

Lead the students in a discussion of the contrast between the announcement/anointing/selection of the king (see steps 1-3 in the right-hand column), and the final celebration for the new king (see step 4 and following). Consider the following:

- *Why was there no celebration or action to "set up" the kingship (palace, throne, etc.) when Saul was initially anointed and publicly selected to be king?*
- *Why did a celebration of kingship finally take place after the defeat of the Ammonites? Was it simply because of the excitement over victory in battle?*
- *How does God's concept of kingship for Israel differ from kingship "like the nations"?*

STEP 3: Finally there is a public choosing of the king (1 Sam 10:17-25). The king is determined by lot, and of course the lot falls on Saul (already secretly anointed earlier). Now, surely there will be a great celebration and coronation ceremony "like all the nations." Yet, Samuel again sends all the people away, "each one to his house"! No pomp and circumstance, no big crowning, no festival, no mention of big throne or castle! What kind of a kingship is this?

STEP 4: Nothing appears to be any different in Israel. Then, 1 Samuel 11 describes a crisis. Ammonites attack the town of Jabesh-gilead. The people of Jabesh-gilead negotiate a deal in which they agree to become slaves to the Ammonite leader Nahash, if he will only spare their lives. Nahash agrees to the deal if first he gouges out the right eyeball of all the people of Jabesh-gilead. The people of Jabesh-gilead agree, but first request that they be given seven days to search for someone who might come and rescue them. Obviously, Nahash is arrogant and confident in himself, because he allows the people of Jabesh-gilead to have their seven days to look for a savior.

When word gets to Saul in the heart of Israel, something unusual occurs. It must be kept in mind that Saul is surely NOT expected to do anything for this crisis. After all, Jabesh-gilead is way up north, and it is on the other side of the Jordan ("wrong side of the tracks"). Some might consider them as not really being a part of Israel, and certainly not worth risking war over. In addition, the Ammonites are organized, experienced, and strong in war.

At the same time, Saul has just been newly elected, he has no organized military, no palace, no stock of weapons; he is just the leader of a loose confederation of tribes. In fact, when word about the crisis reaches

Saul, he is not sitting on a golden throne in a magnificent palace; but rather, is out in the field behind a plow.

In the midst of this backward circumstance the awesome plan of God is revealed! The Bible says, "The Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily." Saul quickly (in a rather unusual manner) gathers up an army and leads Israel to rescue the people of Jabesh-gilead! With no resources (at least nothing like what the kings "like all the nations" had), Saul risked his life and position to follow the Spirit of God and bring about a successful rescue. It becomes a great day of salvation!

It is precisely at this point that God's idea of kingship in Israel is revealed. Saul proclaims in 1 Sam 11:13, "the Lord has accomplished deliverance in Israel!" The reason there were no coronations, celebrations, or parades before this was so there would be no distraction from God (i.e., no undue attention to the "human" position of kingship). This is because God's plan for kingship in Israel is this: (1) the king in Israel is to be ruled by the Spirit of God, (2) the king in Israel is to be a servant of God, and (3) the real King of Israel is still the Lord God himself!

Only after the above truths are experienced was there a celebration of kingship, and even then it was done in the context of sacrifices before the Lord (1 Sam 11:14-15).

The Tragedy of Saul

In a series of four events, it becomes apparent that Saul begins to rely on himself and neglects his dependence upon the Spirit of God. Saul does not appear to rebel intentionally against the Lord. However, the stress and pressure of kingship seem to push Saul into a panic. In addition, the power and prestige of the position of king seem to be too much for Saul's fragile ego to handle.

EVENT 1: In a desperate situation against the Philistines, Saul makes the priestly sacrifice himself instead of waiting for Samuel, the proper priest. Saul's desperate action implies his confidence is in the ritual itself; as if performing the ritual will guarantee victory, as if by magic.

EVENT 2: Later, while Jonathan boldly provokes the enemy with trust in the Lord, Saul is confusedly consulting the word of the Lord through one of the priests. Hearing the commotion Jonathan has

started, Saul tells the priest to withdraw his hand, thus ending the communication with God. This act represents dramatically Saul's tragic falling away from his relationship with God, through lack of communication with (listening to) God.

EVENT 3: Still later, Saul puts a curse of fasting on all the people of Israel until "I have avenged myself on my enemies." Notice the quote focuses selfishly on Saul and his own desire for vengeance, rather than on God's will. As a result of Saul's command (and Jonathan's subsequent breaking of Saul's command), the people rush upon the spoil of the battle and greedily eat sheep and oxen with the blood in them, thus sinning against the Lord.

EVENT 4: As if with a last chance to demonstrate his obedience to God, Saul is given a direct order from God, and he disobeys the order. In 1 Samuel 15, Samuel confronts Saul with his disobedience. Consider the following outline, which describes Saul's attempt to cover up his sin:

- Saul, acting ignorant of his sin, has set up a monument for himself.
- Saul greets Samuel saying, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord."
- Samuel confronts him with the spoil that was saved (against God's command).
- Saul feebly explains that the best of the spoil was saved to sacrifice to God.
- Samuel and Saul argue. One can sense Saul getting frantic and desperate.
- Samuel again presses: "Why did you not obey?"
- Saul cries out again, "I did obey. . . but the people took some of the choicest spoil to sacrifice to God!" [note how Saul passes the blame to the people]
- Samuel responds with the famous words: "To obey is better than sacrifice."

Discuss with the students the character of Saul as king. Consider the following:

- *In light of the successful start Saul experienced as king, what went wrong? What led to his failure?*
- *How would you describe Saul: rebellious, evil, prideful, insecure, arrogant, or inexperienced? Illustrate your view with examples from the stories about Saul as king.*

This confrontation ends with Samuel's painful statement, "God has rejected you from being the King." Now Saul desperately tries another approach. insincere confession: "I sinned, because I feared the people, now pardon me and return with me" (notice the emphasis in Saul's words on himself: "pardon me and return with me"). Samuel replied, "No, I will not return with you, for you rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you." In panicked desperation, Saul seizes Samuel's robe and it tears as he goes. In a dramatic moment, Samuel proclaims,

"The Lord has torn the Kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you."

- *Would you characterize the life of Saul the king as wicked, sad, tragic, unfair, just (what he deserved), or in some other way?*

Even when the loss sinks in, all Saul has left is his concern for "saving face" before the people. Saul pleads, "I have sinned, but please honor me now before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God" (again, notice the insincerity of this statement; it is focused on Saul's desire to "honor ME," i.e., himself).

King David (Founding of a Dynasty)

David, the son of Jesse, is anointed as the new king by Samuel. This is done while Saul is still the acting king. In fact David does not actually take the position of King for many years. During those years of waiting and anticipating becoming king, David demonstrates great loyalty to God, loyalty to Saul as God's currently anointed king, and trust in God's timing and plan. One example of David's loyalty and trust can be seen in his refusal to kill Saul and take the throne by force.

David rises in popularity within Saul's court. David defeats the giant Goliath and becomes a very capable military leader under Saul. David becomes so popular that Saul becomes jealous and feels insecure because of David's great ability and popularity. As a result, Saul attempts to kill David. David then must go into hiding, and Saul begins to chase him in an attempt to kill him as a rebel.

In the midst of this chase, in which Saul's army seeks to hunt down David and the band of strong men gathered around him, David has at least two opportunities to kill Saul and take over the throne (1 Sam 24 and 26). In each case, David does not allow his men to harm Saul. David proclaims his loyalty to Saul as "God's anointed." This demonstrates David's trust in God's timing and plan.

When David finally does become king, he wishes to build a "house for the Lord" (i.e., the Temple). God does not allow David to build the Temple; instead, God makes a covenant with David in which God promises to build the house of David (i.e., a dynasty from his family). 2 Samuel 7 contains the account of the Davidic covenant. In this covenant God promises a descendant of David will always reign upon the throne of Israel.

This promise becomes a foundational component of the promise of a Messiah. The Messiah is the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Thus, the Messiah must trace His lineage to David. The last king to rule on the throne of Israel is the Messiah, and He still reigns today! The words of Jesus Christ imply that all believers become the children of Abraham. Consistent with this concept, the Church sees itself as the "New Israel." Thus, Jesus as the Messiah, is not only a descendant of David who is identified as "King of the Jews" but also the King of kings who reigns in all the earth!

David's sin is of a different type than that of Saul. Yet, both fail to please God with their wrongful actions. Discuss with the students the difference between Saul's response to sin and David's response to sin (i.e., the difference between how Saul repents and how David repents). What does this teach us regarding the dynamics of sin, repentance, and our relationship to God?

Have the students respond in relation to their work for the second homework assignment due this session.

Like Saul before him, David also falls into sin. Second Samuel 11 describes David's sin of adultery and murder. David, however, responds to his sin much differently than Saul. Recall that Saul was insincere in his confessions and maintained a focus on his own pride and position. David, however, confesses sincerely and accepts the judgments of God against him. David responds with prayer and fasting (1 Sam 12: 15-16). Further expressions of David's sincere repentance are reflected in the Psalms (see Ps 32 and 51). This is an important lesson regarding one's relationship with God. Sincere repentance and submission to the will of God lead to forgiveness and restoration!

A review of some of David's significant actions as king sets the stage for understanding the glory Israel achieved under her next king. Following is a list of some of the more important accomplishments of King David:

- David strategically located the political capital of the united monarchy in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a neutral site, neither controlled by the Northern or the Southern tribes at the time. Jerusalem was centrally located and easily defensible.
- David also designated Jerusalem as the religious center of Israel. He brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. This served as a unifying factor for the tribes of Israel.
- David conquered all the surrounding enemies of Israel and set the stage for one of the greatest periods of Israel's prosperity.

The Glory of Solomon

Solomon inherited the benefits of David's achievements. The nation was basically united through its political and religious center in Jerusalem. The nation was also generally at peace with all of its neighbors. The glory of Solomon's kingdom is reflected

in the following list of Solomon's own accomplishments, by the grace of God:

- Building projects: Temple, palace, chariot cities (1 Kgs 9: 15, 17-19)
- Alliances: Marriage alliance with Egypt; covenant of peace with Hiram of Tyre
- Wisdom, riches, and honor (1 Kgs 3:5, 9-13)
- Great wealth: 1 Kgs 4:20-28; 10:16-27
- Devotion to God: 1 Kgs 3:3-4; 8:56-61

The later downfall of Solomon's glory can be attributed to two major factors. First, in order to accomplish such great building projects, Solomon made use of forced labor and heavy taxation upon his own people. This resulted in great discontent among his subjects. The second factor is just as, if not more, significant to Solomon's downfall. Against God's instruction, Solomon married many foreign women and was influenced by their pagan and idolatrous worship of false gods (1 Kgs 11:4-8).

Video: Promised Land "Iron of Culture"

(20 minutes)

Have the video player set up with "That the World May Know," Volume 1, lesson 5.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

- Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you
- describe the difference between a “king like the nations” and God’s desire regarding the character of kingship for Israel?
 - identify the factors that led to the “tragic” downfall of Saul’s kingship in God’s eyes?
 - understand the significance of the Davidic covenant and its messianic implications?
 - recognize the difference between Saul’s response to his sin and David’s response to sin in his life?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will briefly examine the series of kings following the division of Israel into North (Israel) and South (Judah). In addition, we will give attention to the prophets of the eighth century.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Read 1 Kings 3-11. Make a chart that summarizes the life of Solomon. Include four columns in the chart as follows: 1) evidence of the wealth and accomplishments of Solomon, 2) evidence of Solomon’s actions that would have pleased God, 3) evidence of Solomon’s actions that have displeased God, and 4) evidence of Solomon’s actions that would have displeased the people of Israel. *Upon evaluating the findings in your chart, how you would explain the downfall of Solomon’s kingdom (i.e., the split of the kingdom after Solomon’s death)?*

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 177-201, 283-302, 340-342, 344-348, 354-357.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on:

- *When you are confronted with sin in your life, is your response like Saul’s or like David’s response?*
- *Think about the time David was running from Saul. Does God cause bad things to happen to good people? Why or why not? If not, how can you explain what happened to David?*

Lesson 9

Divided Monarchy and Eighth-Century BC Prophets

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Homework	Small Groups	Homework Assigned
0:25	Period of the Divided Monarchy	Lecture/Discussion	Bible
0:35	Eighth-Century BC Prophets	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Bible Resource 9-1
1:20	Prophets and Kings "Innocent Blood"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this session, we will briefly examine the series of kings following the division of Israel into North (Israel) and South (Judah) kingdoms. In addition to this focus on the "divided monarchy," we will give attention to the eighth-century prophets.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the session and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- understand the pattern of judgment for and against the various kings of the divided monarchy, within 1 and 2 Kings.
- recognize the way in which Samuel and Kings reflect the themes of Deuteronomy.
- identify the characteristic marks of a prophet of God.
- describe the major themes reflected in the eighth-century BC prophets.

Lesson Body

Small Groups

(20 minutes)

Have students share their findings from the homework assignment due this session.

In small groups of three share your charts of Solomon's life. Share your evaluations of Solomon's life.

Period of the Divided Monarchy

(10 minutes)

Rehoboam, Solomon's son, promises to be a harsher ruler than Solomon was (1 Kings 12: 13-14). As a result, the Northern tribes forsake Rehoboam and choose Jeroboam as their King (1 Kings 12: 16, 20). So Rehoboam rules Judah (including Benjamin); while Jeroboam rules the other tribes in the North (Israel). Thus the kingdom is divided: the Southern Kingdom is known as "Judah," while the Northern kingdom retains the title, "Israel."

The kings in the Southern kingdom of Judah are judged according to the standard of the great King David. Some of the kings of Judah are judged as good, like David (e.g., 1 Kings 15: 9-13); while others are judged as evil, unlike David (e.g., 1 Kings 15: 1-3). According to 1 and 2 Kings, each successive king of Judah and Israel is judged according to the standard of a previous king. For Israel in the North, each king is judged as "evil, walking in the sins of Jeroboam." Jeroboam is described as a sinful king who led the nation in evil ways. Each successive king in the North is judged according to the standard of Jeroboam and is described as likewise being evil (1 Kings 15: 25-26, 33-34; 16: 23-26, 29-33).

The kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah are judged according to the standard of the great King David. Some of the kings of Judah are judged as good, like David (e.g., 1 Kings 15: 9-13); while others are judged as evil, unlike David (e.g., 1 Kings 15: 1-3).

The theology reflected in Kings follows the themes set forth in Deuteronomy. In accordance with the theme of the centralization of worship, successive kings are judged by their faithfulness to God and whether or not they tore down rival centers of worship and high

places, in contrast to the proper central place of worship at the Jerusalem Temple. In accordance with the theme of securing prosperity for the land through obedience to God, the loss of the land at the end of the Kings is explained as the result of disobedience to the covenant and turning away from God.

Eighth-Century BC Prophets

(45 minutes)

Introduce the concept of what characterizes a prophet by leading the students in a word association game. Simply ask students to share the first thoughts that come to mind when they hear the term "prophet."

Characteristic Marks of a Prophet of God

One of the marks of a prophet of God is access to the divine counsel. This is illustrated in the account of the prophet Micaiah (1 Kings 22:19-23). Micaiah is described as envisioning the Lord in counsel with the host of heaven. The key to this characteristic of a prophet is simply that the prophet of God speaks truth directly from the Lord. This is in contrast to those who may be considered the "king's prophets" who merely repeat whatever the king wants to hear (1 Kings 22:13).

The most important mark of a prophet of God is NOT the ability to foretell the future. Rather the most important characteristic of a prophet of God is the prophet's position as a "spokesperson" for God. That is, the prophet is one who speaks "the word of the Lord." The prophet says what God tells the prophet to say; the prophet speaks for God to the people.

Major Themes of the Eighth-Century BC Prophets

Display Resource 9-1: Major Themes of Eighth-Century BC Prophets.

Be sure to read with the students, the sample scripture texts listed for each major theme of the eighth-century prophets. These texts should illustrate the theme with which they are listed.

The eighth-century prophets include Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. The following list constitutes major themes reflected in the eighth-century prophets:

1. Condemnation of empty ritual/vain worship (hypocrisy). The eighth-century prophets confronted the hypocrisy of "going through the motions" of religious rituals, without a sincere heart for obedience to God. This concern was combined with a call to justice, right living, and walking with God. See Is 1:10-15 (1 Sam 15:22); Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Mic 6:6-8.

2. Condemnation of injustice/oppression. The confronting of injustice and oppression, along with a call for ministering to the needs of the poor and oppressed. See Amos 2:6-8; 4:1; 8:5-6; Is 3:15 (cf. Jas 1:27).
3. Oracles of God's wrath and punishment against evil and injustice. The prophets proclaimed God's displeasure with idolatry and unfaithfulness to the covenant. See Amos 3:11-15; Hos 5:8-14.
4. God's mercy and passion for Israel to return to God and repent! God's purpose in His wrath is not destruction but rather is to bring about repentance and a turning back to God. See Amos 5:4-7; Hos 11:8-11; Is 1:16-19.
5. Hope of restoration and the promise of saving a remnant. God's promise to preserve a remnant that sustains God's promise in relation to the Davidic covenant (i.e., always have a descendant of David on the throne of Israel). This theme reflects God's ultimate desire of restoration and renewal for His people. See Amos 9:11-15; Hos 14:4-9; Is 12; Mic 4:1-5.

Book of Amos

Discuss with the students the significance and impact of the pattern of conviction represented in the oracles of Amos.

Amos was active in the time of Jeroboam II (786-746 BC). Amos was a Judean (1:1) who prophesied in the Northern Kingdom. Amos 1:1 and 7:14 identify Amos as a herdsman, dresser of sycamores, and a sheep breeder.

Amos 1:3-2:16 contains a series of divine judgments proclaimed against neighboring states and then upon Israel itself. This reflects a pattern that draws in the listeners and then suddenly turns on them with conviction. Listeners from Israel become proud as their enemies are denounced. Then, suddenly the conviction is aimed toward Israel itself!

Jesus uses a similar technique in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Listeners join in the condemnation of the haughty priest and Levite who neglect their people. But listeners are convicted when their enemy, the Samaritan, turns out to be the hero. This has the convicting effect of placing the listeners in the place of the haughty priest and Levite.

Book of Hosea

The book contains little direct information about the prophet himself. No indication is given of his home, his occupation, or the circumstances of his prophetic call.

Only his father's name is given in the text (Beerai). It seems certain, however, that he came from the Northern Kingdom of Israel and carried out his mission there. His sayings are mostly directed to Ephraim.

The book reflects the events and conditions in Israel during the years 750-722, from the prosperous and peaceful years of Jeroboam II until the end of the Northern Kingdom.

Hosea's proclamation is modeled after the Exodus from Egypt, wilderness wanderings, and settlement in Palestine. Hosea implies this experience was to be repeated in a sense. The impending exile would be similar to a return to Egyptian captivity. The eventual restoration and renewal would be similar to a second exodus and settlement (8:13; 9:3).

Read with the students the sections of the text of Hosea that present the metaphor of Hosea's marriage and family. Discuss how the names of the children and Hosea's relationship with his wife reflect Israel's relationship with God.

Hosea's marriage and family become important metaphors for Israel. The names of Hosea's children become metaphors of the relationship between God and the people of Israel (1:2-9). Likewise, Hosea's prostitute wife becomes the image of Israel's unfaithfulness to God (2:2-13). In each case, the metaphors turn to hope and restoration. The children regain the promises of God and are again called children of God (1:10-11; 2:22-23). The unfaithful wife is betrothed again in faithfulness (2:14-20).

Book of Micah

Micah served as a prophet in the South. Micah began his prophetic ministry before the fall of Samaria (in the North) and continued after that fall.

Micah can be outlined as follows:

- 1-3: Judgments against Judah and Samaria
- 4-5: Oracles of salvation for Zion and Israel
- 6-7: Oracles of judgment and promise addressed to Israel

Book of Isaiah

The Book of Isaiah can be organized according to the following divisions based on the setting implied and the audience whose needs God seeks to address:

1. Isaiah 1-39: the life of Isaiah the prophet, active in Jerusalem, before the Babylonian exile (his ministry can be dated around 740-700 BC, during fall of Israel).
2. Isaiah 40-55: the prophetic message carried on in the name of Isaiah during the exile with a setting in

Babylon. This section is often referred to as Deutero-Isaiah.

3. Isaiah 56-66: set in Palestine, after Cyrus of Persia conquered the Babylonian Empire and arranged for the exiles to return to Palestine and restore Jerusalem and the Temple. This section is often called Trito-Isaiah.

These divisions are based on the evidence from the text that suggests God addresses three unique periods of Israel's history through Isaiah. This does not deny God's ability to foretell the future through the prophet. In fact each of the three sections of Isaiah include futuristic elements of prophecy. For example, the first section of Isaiah prophesies the fall of Israel and its restoration. Both of these events are then reflected in the second and third divisions of Isaiah. Isaiah also contains significant messianic prophecies.

Isaiah of Jerusalem (Isaiah 1-39)

Isaiah was active in Jerusalem during the latter half of the eighth century. Isaiah 1:1 claims his ministry took place during the reigns of kings Uzziah (783-742 BC), Jotham (742-735 BC), Ahaz (735-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-687 BC). The reigns of these kings are discussed in the 2 Kgs 14:17-20:21 and 2 Chr 26:1-32:33.

Read with the students the text of Isaiah 6:8-13. Discuss Isaiah's commission. Consider the following:

- *Does it appear God is no longer giving the people opportunity to hear and repent?*
- *Is the commission intended as a prescription of what Isaiah is to bring about or a description of what has already occurred in the hearts of the people?*
- *How does verse 13 reflect hope and restoration?*

Isaiah's commission from the Lord appears in Isaiah 6:8-13. His mission appears to be the announcement of the destruction of Israel and Judah. The reason for this judgment was the gross disregard of the laws of God, on the part of the people in these kingdoms. A major aspect of this wrongful action was the oppression and neglect of the poor and needy. Considering the irony of God's word to Isaiah in **Isaiah 6:9-10**, it appears God had already given the nations of Israel and Judah years of opportunity for repentance and now is the time for judgment. It appears Isaiah's commission is not so much a call to repentance, as it is a warning and explanation of the coming destruction. Thus, there can be no complaint that God did not clarify in advance the reason for such action. Nevertheless, for those who do seek to repent, Isaiah's commission ends with a subtle promise of hope for a remnant of the faithful (6:13).

The period of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel, was a prosperous time. Both of these kings had long reigns. The two nations expanded to the combined size of nearly that of Solomon's kingdom. This was a period of peace with flourishing trade and

commerce. Wealth poured into the nations and the population grew. With such prosperity came moral decay and injustice. Jeroboam led his nation in idolatry, and Uzziah allowed worship at the high places (associated with idolatry).

In addition, wide class distinctions emerged between the rich and poor. Consequently, injustice abounded. Small farmers were at the mercy of moneylenders. That is, during difficult times (crop failure or drought), when farmers could not pay for the land, they might lose their land or even be forced into slavery. Also, during this period, the prophecies of Isaiah accuse the wealthy of cheating in the marketplace through the use of false weights and measures. The result of such moral decay was often hardest on the poor, including the widow and the orphan.

Isaiah's preaching announced God's judgment against such oppression and idolatry. Following the period of Uzziah and Jeroboam II, Assyria became a growing threat. Military instability and national insecurity became signs of the coming destruction.

Video: Prophets and Kings "Innocent Blood"

(30 minutes)

*Have the video player set up with
"That the World May Know,"
Volume 2, lesson 1.*

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- understand the pattern of judgment for and against the various kings of the divided monarchy, within 1 and 2 Kings?
- recognize the way in which Samuel and Kings reflect the themes of Deuteronomy?
- identify the characteristic marks of a prophet of God?
- describe the major themes reflected in the eighth-century prophets?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will close out the period of the monarchy of Israel, as we look to the downfalls of the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms. Our attention will then turn to the period of exile in Babylon.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Read 2 Kings 24-25. Summarize the downfall of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). Note the number of attacks and the number of deportations described in this account. Also, describe those taken into exile and those left behind. Though the destruction of Judah and the initial period of exile were brutal, note the change of conditions reflected at the end of this passage.

Compare and contrast the following prophetic accounts: Is 42:9-13; 43:14-21; 48:6-7; Jer 31:31-40; Ez 36:22-37:14. These accounts all speak of God's promise of restoration from exile. Identify and describe the significance of the different metaphors, key phrases, and images each prophet uses to communicate God's message of restoration.

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 203-211, 303-328.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on: *Have you encountered forms of idolatry in your culture? How do these false*

gods hold their followers? Compare God's response to Baal worship in the OT with how He would have us respond to idolatry today.

Lesson 10

The Period of the Exile

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	The Exilic Period	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Resource 10-1: Structural Elements of Isaiah 40-55, Homework
1:35	Prophets and Kings "Who Is God?"	Video	Video
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this lesson we will close out the period of the monarchy of Israel, as we look to the downfalls of the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms. Our attention for the majority of this lesson will then turn to the period of exile in Babylon.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Study Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the session and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- describe the dramatic impact of the Babylonian exile (living conditions in exile and back in Palestine, the resultant “Jewish Diaspora,” etc.).
- understand the unique ways in which the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel word their messages of hope in response to the exilic conditions.

Lesson Body

The Exilic Period

(90 minutes)

Be sure to take time to have students read aloud the scripture texts indicated within the lecture.

Fall of Israel (Northern Kingdom)

The Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians around 721 BC. This loss of the Promised Land and defeat at the hand of enemies is clearly explained as the result of disobedience to the covenant, turning away from God, and worshiping false gods and idols (2 Kgs 17:6-18). The Assyrian policy was to scatter the peoples they defeated. Thus, the leading citizens of Israel were relocated to other lands, while foreigners were relocated to live in the land of Israel.

Fall of Judah (Southern Kingdom)

Have students share their work from the first homework assignment due this session.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon early in the 6th century BC. Unlike Assyria, Babylon took the leading citizens of Judah and placed them in exile back in the land of Babylon. Thus, the Babylonian conquest of Judah begins what is known as the "exilic period."

The Babylonian conquest of Judah actually took place over a period of several years and involved at least three deportations of citizens from Judah to Babylon. The initial siege of Jerusalem and the first deportation are described in 2 Kgs 24:10-16. The poor (farmers, uneducated, etc.) were left in Judah, while the leading citizens (the educated, priests, rulers, administrators, scribes, military officials, artisans, etc.) were taken into exile to Babylon. This first deportation is dated around 598 BC.

The second deportation and the actual destruction of Jerusalem are described in 2 Kgs 25:8-12. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were burned. More leading citizens were taken into exile to Babylon, while the poor were left behind. This second deportation is usually designated the "Fall of the Southern Kingdom" or the "Fall of Jerusalem," because of the destruction of the capital city (Jerusalem). This second deportation is dated around 587 BC.

A third deportation seems to have taken place around 582 BC.

Living Conditions during the Exilic Period, in Babylon

The Judean exiles in Babylon were not placed in prisons or dungeons. Instead, they were actually allowed to live under rather comfortable conditions. Scripture indicates Babylon began to treat the exiles with some sense of favor and tolerance (2 Kgs 25:27-30). The exiles were allowed to settle in villages and rural areas near Babylon itself. They were free to establish their own neighborhoods and even engage in profitable business ventures.

The prophet Ezekiel was free to move about and preach to the exiles. The prophet Jeremiah, from back in Jerusalem, was able to write letters and maintain contact with the exiles.

Some of the exiles became so comfortable and prosperous they remained in Babylon, even after the period of exile ended, when Babylon fell to Persia.

It is in relation to this period of the exile of the Judeans from the Southern Kingdom that the term "Jews" begins to be applied to the remnant of Israel. The term is especially applied at first to the exilic remnant during the rebuilding of life centered around religious faith (focused on the Torah) in the postexilic period.

Living Conditions during the Exilic Period, Back in Palestine

In discussion with the students, compare and contrast the living conditions for the Jews in Babylon and those left behind in Palestine.

The land of Judah lay in ruins from the devastation of war. Almost all the fortified towns in Judah were destroyed (razed to the ground). The population of the land was drained away by various factors. Some had been taken into exile, many were killed in battle, many died from the impact of war (i.e., from starvation or disease), and some fled as refugees (to Egypt and elsewhere). Babylon did not replace the population with others from outside nations (as was the Assyrian policy that repopulated Samaria, in the North, with a foreign element).

The few poor people who remained in Judah eked out a minimum subsistence living off the land, among the ruins. The Temple remained a holy spot for pilgrimages to offer sacrifice, even among its burned ruins.

The “Jewish Diaspora”

Israelite settlement outside of Palestine actually began with the fall of the Northern Kingdom. In 721 BC, Sargon II of Assyria deported many inhabitants of Samaria. They were resettled in Assyria; in Halah, on the Habur river in Gozan; and in the cities of the Medes (2 Kgs 17:6). These deportees have sometimes been referred to as the “ten lost tribes of Israel.”

As previously described, the exilic period, brought on by the conquest of the Southern Kingdom by Babylon, resulted in some dispersion as well. That is, some Jews remained in the comforts of Babylon even after the exile; and some fled from Palestine to Egypt during the war.

As a result of these dispersions, in the period following the exile, three major centers of Jewish settlement developed. There were major Jewish settlements in Palestine, Babylon, and Egypt.

Prophetic Responses to the Exilic Period

Isaiah 40-55

Chapters 40-55 of Isaiah address the situation of the exile with a setting in Babylon. The structure of this section of Isaiah reveals two important themes that “envelop” the material, with an important central theme within the material:

Display and discuss Resource 10-1: Structural Elements of Isaiah 40-55.

- These chapters begin and end with a focus on the power and endurance of God’s word (40: 1-8; 55:6-11).
- Also near the beginning and end of these chapters appears an emphasis on the announcement of salvation for Jerusalem (40:9-10; 52:7-10).
- Thus, these two themes surround or envelop the material of Isaiah 40-55.
- Within this envelopment lies the central concern of God’s action on behalf of the exiles: the collapse of Babylon and her idols, and the rise of Persia as God’s chosen instrument of deliverance (44-47)! Cyrus is depicted as God’s chosen instrument for the restoration of the Jews (44:28-45:4).

Have the students share their work from the second homework assignment due this session.

The overall theme of Isaiah 40-55 is the restoration and salvation of the exiles. This theme is set forth by the prologue in 40: 1-11. “Comfort my people, her exile has ended, prepare ye the way of the Lord, a highway in the wilderness.” Long before the Spirit inspires the application of this text to the coming Messiah in Jesus

Christ, it serves as God's promise to bring the exiles home via a highway through the wilderness from Babylon to Palestine! (Notice: both the immediate application of this prophecy for the people in exile, and the second, and much later, application of this prophecy to the coming Messiah in Jesus Christ.)

Following are three significant themes that emerge in Isaiah 40-55:

- God will do a "new thing" (42:9). Israel is called to forget the past and notice the new thing God is doing (43:18; 48:6-7). This "new thing" refers to the promise of restoration!
- The theme of "universal salvation" is introduced. God's salvation is not only for Israel, but for all the nations! The nations will recognize God and His salvation, and God will call to them (45:14-15, 22-25).
- The "restoration of Zion" (52:8-10; 54)

Jeremiah

Jeremiah's ministry stretches over the period from the reign of Josiah up to and including the exile (Jer 36:2). Jeremiah's ministry covers the period of the final series of kings of Judah (Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah).

Following is a brief outline of the major themes in Jeremiah:

- The condemnation of idolatry (2:27-28; 10:3-5); and the condemnation of injustice (2:33-34).
- Proclamation of God's wrath/punishment for evil and apostasy (1:13-15).
- A pleading for renewal and repentance among the people: through the prophet, God proclaims His desire to receive repentant children from Judah. The people are called to turn back to the covenant and to God (. 3:12, 22; 4:1; 7:3; 8:5; 18:8).
- Proclamation of hope for restoration after the destruction: in 29, in a letter to the exiles, Jeremiah claims that after 70 years of exile, God will restore the people to the land of Palestine. God promises a new covenant written on the heart, with a promise of forgiveness and renewal (31:31-34)! In chapter 32, Jeremiah is described as buying a family farm, even though Babylon has already taken the land. This reflected Jeremiah's conviction that the punishment of Babylonian exile was only temporary.

Ezekiel

Outline of Ezekiel

- 1-24: Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem before 587 BC
- 25-32: Oracles against foreign nations.
- 33-48: Oracles of hope and restoration for Judah.

Major Themes in Ezekiel:

- Judgment/punishment against deteriorating spiritual conditions such as: pagan cults that had reached as far as the Temple grounds and were supported by the priests themselves (8); widespread use of magicians and fortune-tellers and other false authorities (13); false prophets proclaiming all would be well, despite the evil conditions (14); idolatry that had become worse than in Samaria, or even Sodom (16, 23); injustice, bloodshed, violence, bribery, stealing from poor (5-7, 18).
- Proclamation of Babylon as the instrument of God's punishment against Judah: it is a common theme among the prophets to understand the nations as the instruments of God.
- The promise of restoration. Ezekiel describes a new version of past history. He relates the period of the exile to the time of slavery in Egypt, and therefore, the Exodus from Egypt foreshadows the new promise of a return and restoration from exile in Babylon. The new covenant God will make with the exiles will reflect the Sinai covenant of the Exodus.
- God announces a two-fold plan of restoration. First: restoration to the promised land and the purification of the covenant relationship. There is a focus on conversion and change (33-39; key text: 36:22-38). Second, God announces a new order of community life (40-48). Ezekiel has a vision of a new Temple at the center of a renewed nation, in which each person has a place. Central to the vision is a picture of life-giving waters flowing from the Temple and touching all living things in the land (47:1-12). The source of prosperity becomes the true worship of God alone!

Video: Prophets and Kings, "Who Is God?"

(20 minutes)

*Have the video player set up for
"That the World May Know,"
Volume II, lesson 2.*

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- describe the dramatic impact of the Babylonian exile (living conditions in exile and back in Palestine, the resultant “Jewish Diaspora,” etc.).
- understand the unique ways in which the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel word their messages of hope in response to the exilic conditions.

Look Ahead

The next lesson turns to the formative stage of Judaism, as we examine the postexilic period. We will also give attention to specific aspects of the development of apocalyptic literature.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Read the short book of Haggai. Identify the four oracles in the book (give the scripture references for each oracle). Describe how the beginning of each oracle is marked. Summarize the message of each oracle, followed by a summary of the overall book.

Read the following passages, which describe the “Servant of the Lord” in Isaiah: 42: 1-4; 49: 1-6; 50: 4-9; 52: 13-53: 12. Note any verses within these accounts that explicitly name the “Servant of the Lord,” and identify who the servant is. List the characteristics and qualities attributed to the “Servant of the Lord.”

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 223-233, 329-337.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Include a discussion on: *Have you experienced a spiritual roller coaster like Elijah’s Mount Carmel to the brook at Kerith? How did God meet your spiritual and physical needs during that time?*

Lesson 11

The Postexilic Period

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	The Postexilic Period	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Bible, Homework
1:00	Apocalyptic Literature	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Bible, Homework
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this lesson we will discuss the postexilic period, in which the people of Judah are released to return to the land of promise. We will also give attention to specific aspects of the development of apocalyptic literature.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- explain Judah's shift in focus from political concerns to more individual religious concerns in the wake of the exile and under Persian dominance.
- recognize how Ezra and Nehemiah contribute to the new focus of the postexilic community (re: law and purity).
- describe the implications for messianic expectations, of the images of the "Son of Man" in Daniel and the "Suffering Servant" in Isaiah.

Lesson Body

The Postexilic Period

(55 minutes)

Return from Exile

Cyrus of Persia overtook Babylon and allowed the Jewish exiles to return home to Palestine. Cyrus made a proclamation allowing the exiles to return home. This proclamation is often called "The Edict of Cyrus." The edict is dated to around 538 BC. The edict of Cyrus is described in both 2 Chr 36:22-23 and Ez 1:1-4. The edict opens the door to the "postexilic period."

Two main groups left Babylon and returned to Palestine. The first group of returnees, under Prince Sheshbazzar, son of King Jehoiachin, departed for the Holy Land shortly after 538 BC. This first group began rebuilding the Jerusalem wall and the Temple but only got as far as laying the foundations.

A second group of returning exiles came to the Holy Land about 20 years later under the leadership of Zerubbabel (possibly a nephew of Sheshbazzar) and Joshua, a priest. Ezra appears to reflect some confusion in that it states the foundations of the Temple were laid by both Zerubbabel (3:10) and earlier by Sheshbazzar (5:16).

Discuss with the students possible reasons why the Jews left behind in Palestine during the exile would not welcome the return of their fellow Judeans from exile. Consider the following:

Those left behind were the poor and unskilled. They have struggled to survive off the land left in ruins. Thus, for about 50 to 70 years they have lived off this land. Now the wealthy and educated return wanting to reclaim the land as their own.

The returning exiles faced considerable opposition in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. Neither the people already living in Palestine nor the inhabitants of Samaria welcomed the returning exiles. These opponents tried to stop the rebuilding of the Temple and the city walls. Such opposition was the reason for the small amount of progress on the work during the time between Sheshbazzar's return (around 538) and the group with Zerubbabel (around 520).

When Zerubbabel and Joshua arrived with their group of exiles (around 520), the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began to preach warnings that God was displeased with the delays and that the Temple must be built. Zerubbabel and Joshua led an intensive effort, and the Temple was rebuilt by March/April of 516 BC. Opposition to the efforts of the returning exiles appeared again about 50 years later in the days of

Ezra and Nehemiah, when the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was finally completed.

These restoration periods are described in Haggai, Zechariah, and the later portion of Isaiah (56—66), as well as Ezra and Nehemiah.

Have students share their findings for the first homework assignment due this session.

Shift in Focus: from Politics to Religious Life

Persia did not allow the restoration of Judah's political independence and power. Thus, they did not allow the restoration of Judah's royal house. Instead, Persian officials granted more and more authority to the high priest of Judah, as time progressed. At the same time, a shift in the general role and message of God's prophets took place after the exile. This transition might be described as a shift from politics to piety.

The emphasis of prophetic preaching shifted away from political concerns and criticism of the king and nation, to more individual matters of daily living and worship. It was a shift away from government matters to community life; away from social injustice to personal and inner-directed concerns regarding faithfulness and worship. The new focus for Israel, without immediate or realistic hopes of political prowess, became the proper worship of God. Consequently, classical prophecy, which emphasized challenges against national apostasy and injustice, faded, and was replaced by an emphasis on the Torah and apocalyptic hopes for the future. The focus on the Torah emphasized the study and application of the Law of God in everyday life.

Book of Ezra

Outline of Ezra

- 16: Tells of the first two groups of returning exiles under Sheshbazzar (538) and Zerubbabel (520). This section of Ezra reaches its climax with the rebuilding of the Temple in 516.
- 7-10: The scene shifts to around 458, when Ezra, a priest, is sent from Babylon (under the Persian king Artaxerxes) to restore Israelite faith (Ezra 7:10-26).

The second portion of Ezra recounts the work of the priest Ezra in his efforts to restore the faith of the Jews. A major problem Ezra encounters is that the

people had intermarried with Gentiles, which distracted them from the Law. Recall the downfall of Solomon was attributed to his many marriages with foreign women who led him to worship other gods. Recall also the explanation in Kings for the destruction of Israel and for the exile was based on idolatry and the forsaking of the covenant law.

Finally, recall the many prophetic warnings to stay away from idolatry. Ezra strongly feared the mixed marriages among the returned exiles because of their potential to lead the people away from God and toward false gods and idolatry. In addition to this concern, Ezra sought to correct a general disregard for the regulations regarding purity and sacrifice.

Discuss the impact on the community when Ezra persuaded the people to send away their foreign wives and children. Consider the commitment that motivated such dramatic measures. Is Israel's record of devastation resulting from idolatry, and the recent return from exile, enough to justify such drastic action?

Consequently, Ezra began a work of reform. A major step in this reformation was the sending away of all foreign wives and their children (9-10). This harsh action was necessitated by a call for devotion to the covenant law, which was to be practiced even at home. Such practice would have been impossible in homes filled with mixed beliefs, including idols, false gods! Thus, the foreigners had to be sent away.

Another important act of Ezra's renewal efforts included the public reading of the Law (possibly a version of the Pentateuch) and a covenant renewal ceremony (Neh 8-9). Practices defined in the Law were reestablished. After the covenant renewal ceremony, the Festival of Tabernacles was celebrated, as recorded in the Law.

Ezra's work brought a sense of unity and cohesion to the previously depressed postexilic community. Ezra inspired the spirit of the community with a new foundation built on the following ideals of holiness and purity:

- A sense of election as God's people
- A worship-centered community of faith
- A central feature of this newly restored community was the recognition of the Torah as the guidebook for living.

Book of Nehemiah

Nehemiah was appointed by King Artaxerxes I of Persia to be governor of Judah and to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (around 445). Opposition to Nehemiah's project came from Sanballat, the governor of Samaria; Tobiah, the governor of Ammon; and Geshem, the

governor of Edom (each appointed to their position by Persia).

The first portion of Nehemiah recounts his work of completing the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in the face of such opposition. The opposition actually sent armed troops in an attempt to stop the refortification of Jerusalem. Nehemiah armed his workers and the basic wall was finished in 52 days. The text describes workers building the wall with one hand and carrying defensive weapons in the other (4:10-17).

Nehemiah also records continued efforts to purify the community by eliminating mixed marriages and following the law, with special emphasis in regard to Sabbath observance.

Apocalyptic Literature

(55 minutes)

Postexilic Development of Apocalyptic Hope

Apocalyptic literature can be characterized as messages of hope in the midst of tribulation and/or depression. Messianic texts (texts that promise the coming of a Messiah) are filled with the hope of a coming leader who will deliver his people from oppression and establish an age of prosperity. Not all apocalyptic literature is messianic. Nevertheless, in this section of the lesson we will focus on messianic texts, due to their implications for New Testament applications to Christ.

Review, in discussion with the students, the possible hopes and dreams of the Jews in the Greco-Roman world. Consider the following:

Oppression and lack of freedom resulting from the dominance of Greece and later Rome.

Longing for the glory days of David and Solomon, which were likely rehearsed in stories and literature.

This type of hope-filled literature emerged in the post-exilic period, when Israel was no longer an independent political force and was subject to Persia, Greece, and eventually Rome.

For many, these messianic texts were interpreted as promises of a military and political leader who would overthrow Rome (or Greece) and restore Israel as in the days of David and Solomon.

In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as a Messiah. However, Jesus is described as a Messiah distinct from the nationalistic expectations of a military messiah. Jesus fulfills the type of Messiah modeled after spiritual concerns. Two important OT passages the Gospel writers draw upon to describe the character of Jesus as Messiah are Daniel 7 and the Servant Songs of Isaiah.

Messianic Expectations Applied to Christ

Jesus as "Son of Man" (Daniel 7)

Daniel 7 contains a vision of gruesome beasts struggling for authority, by means of power, strength, and might. The text states authority is simply taken away from these beasts and life is granted to them for a time by the "Ancient of Days." Notice how the vision depicts authority and even length of life itself as completely outside the control of these beasts. It is in the control of the "Ancient of Days."

In contrast to the beasts, the text describes one like the "Son of Man" who comes peacefully in a cloud, and all authority and dominion is given to Him. Notice how the beasts fought, scratched, bit, struggled for power and dominion, and it was all simply taken away from them. However, this peaceful "Son of Man" floats in on a cloud and authority and dominion is simply given to Him (no battle or struggle).

If Jesus, who suffered and died, is to resemble such a Son of Man as in the vision, Jesus seems to be implying His kingdom/dominion will come through suffering, death, and resurrection, as opposed to military strength, might, and power (such as the beasts signify). Jesus' dominion comes through the laying down of life, rather than the taking of other's lives. Thus Jesus' dominion comes, not by contributing to sin and violence in the world; but rather, by acting in love and trusting God to control who has dominion in the end!

Daniel 7: 15-28 offer an interpretation of the vision. The interpretation given here describes the beasts as waging war against the saints and overpowering them. Then the Ancient of Days passes judgment in favor of the saints, and the Kingdom is given to the saints (notice the beasts may kill the saints, but God can simply raise them up again). The saints seem to follow the Son of Man; as the disciples follow Jesus. In each case, those who remain faithful, and do not side with the opposition, will inherit the Kingdom!

Discuss with the students why it would be so difficult for the Jews in Greco-Roman times to accept the kind of Messiah Jesus modeled.

Daniel 7 gives us a picture of devotion to God which wins, not by force of arms, not by killing and conquering; but by living defenseless lives, even to death, faithful to God (i.e., by loving God and loving neighbor)! Thus, Daniel 7 is an apocalyptic text that reflects the hope of a coming Messiah; but not one

who will come with military power and authority. Rather, the Son of Man in Daniel 7 comes in peace and is granted authority because He is obedient to God, not because He has superior weapons!

Jesus as Suffering Servant (Isaiah)

Have the students share their findings for the second homework assignment due this lesson.

The Servant Songs of Isaiah also depict the promise of a coming Messiah. Like Daniel 7, the picture given here is not that of a powerful military authority. Rather, the Messiah described here in Isaiah is a servant who suffers in obedience to God!

Consider the following list of Servant Songs and their interpretations:

1. 42: 1-4: The mission of the Servant is to bring justice by gentle persuasion.
2. 49: 1-6: The Servant is a model of trust when He has no strength. This model will convert Israel and be a witness to the nations.
3. 50: 4-9: The Servant's role encompasses suffering and rejection. By accepting His suffering, the servant will be supported by God and emerge with victory.
4. 52: 13-53: 12: God uses the unmerited violence against the Servant to save other guilty people. This song promotes the concept of how God accepts the suffering of an innocent one to atone for the sins of others.

Discuss with the students the implications for the contemporary Church, of a Messiah modeled after the "Son of Man" and "Suffering Servant." In our efforts to be "Christlike," how should these models impact our daily living?

The Servant represents Israel in the past and the restoration of Israel to come. God uses Israel's suffering and restoration as a witness and light to the world. It is a testimony that success and victory does not come through military power and authority, because all power and authority is ultimately in the control of God! Thus, victory and prosperity come through obedience and trust in God.

The New Testament writers recognized Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of the Suffering Servant image. God acted to redeem all nations by the suffering of the innocent and obedient Servant, Jesus Christ! These Old Testament apocalyptic texts (in Daniel and Isaiah) were recognized by New Testament inspired writers as the foundations of a proper messianic expectation, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- explain Judah's shift in focus from political concerns to more individual religious concerns in the wake of the exile and under Persian dominance?
- recognize how Ezra and Nehemiah contribute to the new focus of the postexilic community (re: law and purity)?
- describe the implications for messianic expectations, of the images of the "Son of Man" in Daniel and the "Suffering Servant" in Isaiah?

Look Ahead

In our next lesson, we will consider the Poetic and Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. Specifically, we will discuss Hebrew poetry and the various types of Psalms found in the Old Testament, as well as the various forms of Wisdom Literature.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Read the following psalms: 19, 22, 91, 105, 116. Outline each psalm and identify the central theme or concern of each. Describe how you would categorize/label each psalm according to its content.

Scan through Proverbs and list at least 10 distinct themes/topics/issues addressed in the book. *How would you describe the character and purpose of Proverbs?*

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 237-267.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections and insights from this lesson and from your reading and study. Also select one prophetic description of Jesus from David and one from Isaiah. *How were these prophecies fulfilled by explicit events found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John's accounts of the life of Jesus?*

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Lesson 12

Poetic and Wisdom Literature

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Biblical Poetry in the Psalms	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Bible, Resource 12-1 Resource 12-2 Homework
1:00	Wisdom Literature	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Resource 12-3 Homework
1:55	Lesson Close	Review, Assignment	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Gottwald, Norman K. "Poetry, Hebrew." In *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Vol. 3, K-Q. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962, 829-38.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this lesson, we will consider the Poetic and Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. Specifically we will discuss Hebrew poetry and the various types of psalms found in the Old Testament, as well as the various forms of Wisdom Literature.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the session and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- identify the main characteristic of biblical Hebrew poetry and its various forms.
- list and describe various types of Psalms.
- understand the historical context and purpose of Wisdom Literature.
- recognize the various forms of Wisdom Literature.

Lesson Body

Biblical Poetry in the Psalms

(55 minutes)

Introductory Statement

The original setting in which the Psalms were used was the worship of the Jerusalem Temple. Initially, the Psalms were likely used in the Temple services of the pre-exilic period.

The Psalter as a whole (complete book of Psalms) did not receive its final form until the postexilic (second Temple) period. It was likely used for song and worship in this second Temple period. Consequently, Psalms has been referred to as the “Hymnbook of the Second Temple.” [Recall: the “second” Temple refers to the Temple built after the exilic period, since Solomon’s Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians.]

Later in the postexilic period, synagogue worship began to emerge. The synagogue became a focal point of prayer and the interpretation of Scripture. Due to its use in the synagogue, Psalms also became known as the “Prayerbook of the Synagogue.”

Introductory Themes

1. Psalm 1 establishes an introductory focus on the Torah (i.e., the Law of the Lord). Under Ezra, in the postexilic period, the Torah became the central focus of Jewish life. Psalm 1 appears to reflect this postexilic emphasis on the Law.
2. Psalm 2 reflects the promise and expectation of the coming Messiah as the Son of God, who will rule the nations.

These first two psalms express the hallmarks of Jewish faith during the Second Temple period: the revelation of God’s will through the Torah, and the hope of the Messiah who will inaugurate the kingdom of God!

Parallelism

Consider the major characteristics of poetry, as we learned them from childhood: rhyme and rhythm. Hebrew poetry is also characterized by some sense of

Discuss the following insights with the students:

- *Recall the postexilic focus on Law and apocalyptic hope discussed in lesson 11.*
- *Note how the first two psalms match that same postexilic emphasis.*
- *What do these insights imply regarding the final editing of the collection of Psalms?*

meter; however, its main characteristic is called "Parallelism."

There are at least three main types of parallelism.

Display Resource 12-1: Three Types of Parallelism.

1. Synonymous Parallelism: One or more words or phrases in the lines of poetry are repeated in equivalent or identical terms.

Examples:

(line 1) The waters saw thee, O God;
(line 2) The waters saw thee, they were seized with anguish.
(Ps. 77:16)

(line 1) Listen to me, **O coastlands**
(line 2) and hearken, **you peoples from afar**.
(Notice how each phrase from the first line is repeated in the second line using different words.)

(line 1) The Lord called me **from the womb**,
(line 2) **from the body of my mother** he named my name.
(Notice how each phrase from the first line is repeated in the second line using different words. In this case, the first phrase of line 1 is repeated in the second phrase of line 2; and the second phrase of line 1 is repeated in the first phrase of line 2.)
(Isaiah 49:1)

2. Antithetic Parallelism: One or more words or phrases in the lines of poetry are repeated in opposite terms.

Examples:

(line 1) For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
(line 2) but the way of the wicked will perish.
(Notice the opposing terms: righteous vs. wicked.)
(Ps 1:6)

(line 1) A wise son *rejoiceth* **his father**;
(line 2) but a foolish son *is the grief* of **his mother**.
(Notice the opposing terms: wise vs. foolish; rejoiceth vs. grief; father vs. mother.)
(Proverbs 10:1)

3. Synthetic Parallelism: A "constructive" parallelism achieved by grammatical constructions. Synthetic parallelism is also

described as one line of thought extending or completing the thought in a previous line.

Examples:

Whatever the Lord pleases he does,
in the heaven and in the earth,
in the seas, and in all the deeps.
(Notice the repetition of the prepositional phrase "in the . . .")

(Psalm 135:6)

(line 1) The fool says in his heart,
 (line 2) "There is no God."
(Notice how the second line completes the thought of the first line.)

(line 1) The Lord looks down from heaven
 (line 2) upon the children of men
(Notice how the second line completes the thought of the first line.)

(Psalm 14:1-2)

"We do not know from the first stitch . . . what it is that the fool says inwardly, and so the synthetic parallel gives us the content of his musing: 'There is no God.' Again, Yahweh looks down from his abode, but we do not know the object of his scrutiny until the synthetic parallel advises us that it is mankind."

Norman K. Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," In Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3, K-Q (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 829-38.

Types of Psalms

Have students share their work from the first homework assignment due this session.

Read with the students some of the psalms listed under each type of psalm. Discuss how the psalms reflect the category in which they are listed.

Display Resource 12-2: Types of Psalms.

Consider the following types of psalms:

1. Salvation History Psalms: Psalms expressing the "shared history" of the believing community. These psalms reflect a confessional retelling of God's action with the people of Israel, within their history (examples: 78, 105, 106).
2. Psalms of Lament (community, and individual): Psalms expressing distress in time of need or anxiety. These psalms usually contain both a complaint and a confession of trust in God for deliverance. Praise in the midst of distress and anticipation of deliverance (examples: community laments, 44, 80; individual laments, 22, 31).
3. Songs of Thanksgiving (community, and individual): Praise to God in response to an event of deliverance already experienced (examples: community, 107, 124; individual, 92, 116).
4. Hymns of Praise: Praise to God in general terms: for the majesty of God's being, for God's greatness

and goodness as Creator and Lord of history. Often with a universal and cosmic dimension (examples: 8, 19, 100, 114, 145).

5. Festival Songs and Liturgies: Songs sung at various festivals and liturgies used on special worship occasions. These include covenant renewal liturgies, enthronement psalms, songs of Zion (examples: 81, 46, 24, 95).
6. Songs of Trust and Meditation: Spiritual songs filled solely with the trust motif, characteristic of the latter part of a lament. Meditation psalms focusing on such themes as wisdom or the Law of God (examples: 23, 91, 37, 73).

Have the students creatively write their own Psalm (just a few lines). Instruct the students to illustrate a form of parallelism in their Psalm. Encourage them to reflect any category of Psalm they wish.

Wisdom Literature

(55 minutes)

History and Context

Every culture devotes itself in some way to the care and literary cultivation of its “experiential” knowledge. This is an elementary activity of the human mind, with the practical aim of averting harm and impairment of life from others. A person must know his or her way about in the world in order to hold his or her own in it. Thus, among the nations it has been a concern to pass on from generation to generation the gathered knowledge of the community. The classic example is that of a parent passing on to their child the wisdom they have accumulated through a lifetime of experience.

Ancient Israel also took part in the business of cultivating experiential knowledge. However, many of the most elementary experiences appeared quite different to Israel, in comparison to other nations. This is because Israel interpreted its experiences within a specific religious and spiritual context. The wisdom of ancient Israel comes to us with the biblical context.

For the most part, the Bible contains God’s word to us. That is, most texts involve God speaking to us. Some texts, however, reflect human expression. For instance many psalms contain human expressions of praise, lament, or thanksgiving to God. Still other biblical texts contain expressions of human reflection on life in general. Wisdom Literature is human reflection about life and how best to live it. Wisdom Literature in the

Scriptures begins with the assumption that life is overseen by God. Thus, biblical wisdom begins with the “fear of the Lord,” and the understanding that the wise are guided by God (Prov 3:5-6; 16:3, 9; 19:21). For biblical wisdom, human experiences are best understood and interpreted in relation to God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Therefore, the Wisdom Literature in the Bible might be called “God’s word written in human experience.” It is a recognition that God’s word is permeated throughout the universe and social order (Rom 1:20). It is a recognition of God’s revelation through nature and human reason! The sages of Ancient Israel sought such divine wisdom, through the examination of and reflection on human experience.

Purpose of Wisdom Literature

Wisdom Literature serves at least two important functions: (1) instruction of the young, and (2) general instruction for life.

The young were instructed in order to achieve well-being and to serve well the social order. General instruction for the old, as well as the young, was given in order to help people get along in life. This included practical concerns such as advice regarding home, family, and social issues. Wisdom Literature deals with the ongoing questions of living.

Have students share their work from the second homework assignment due this session.

For example: Job deals with the ever-present question of human suffering; Ecclesiastes addresses the limitations of human life; Song of Solomon deals with the major human issue of love between a man and a woman. Proverbs addresses a number of familiar human concerns: raising children (13:24; 22:6); moral virtues such as self-discipline (10:17) and honesty (15:27; 16:11).

Genres (Forms) of Wisdom Literature

Following is a list of the various forms of Wisdom Literature:

1. Sentence, Proverb, or Saying: The basic form of wisdom expression is the sentence, proverb, or saying. Such sayings seek to state a general truth or insight in a succinct, interest-catching, sometimes witty form. Short sentences also occur that can be described as admonitions, exhortations, and prohibitions. Example: Prov 22:1.

Read with the students some of the sample scripture texts listed which illustrate each form of Wisdom Literature.

Display Resource 12-3: Genres of Wisdom Literature.

2. Numerical Sayings: Numerical sayings bring together lists of events that possess similar characteristics. For example: “Three things are never satisfied; four never say, ‘Enough’” (Prov 30:15b; see also vv. 18, 21, 24, 29). Another example of a numerical saying can be found in Prov 6:16-19.
3. Allegory: At least two allegorical passages appear in wisdom literature: Prov 5:15-23, and Ecc 12:1-6 (an allegory of old age/death).
4. Autobiography: The autobiographical form is used by the sage in order to offer learning drawn from long and varied experience. Part of Ecclesiastes and some passages in Proverbs adopt this form (see also Ps 37:25, 35-36).
5. Dialogue: The dialogue form, popular throughout the Near East, is represented in the Old Testament only by Job.
6. Lists (Onomasticon—naming, list of names): A class of texts known as the list or onomasticon served to catalogue natural phenomenon, places, trades, flora and fauna, minerals, cities, etc. Such texts were found in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel. Such lists are seen in Job 38-39.
7. Polished Poetry: Israel’s sages also produced what can only be described as polished literary poems. For example, the poem on the ideal wife in Prov 31:10-31; and the poem at Ecc 3:1-8. In addition, didactic (teaching) poems can be found in Job and Proverbs (Job 27:13-23).

Dual Approach of Biblical Wisdom Material

Biblical Wisdom Literature contains at least two approaches to wisdom:

1. Positive Strand of Tradition within Wisdom Literature: This approach represents a confident and trusting attitude toward the human ability to understand and master life. It reflects a positive assessment of the human capacity to comprehend the ways and will of God in the world. This approach affirms God has gifted humans with a mind and the ability to use for understanding the experiences of life. Proverbs reflects this positive approach to wisdom.
2. Negative Strand of Tradition within Wisdom Literature: A strand of skeptical Wisdom Literature developed. This strand questioned traditional assumptions and laid siege to honored religious claims. It gave expression to the anguish of human existence and the torment of living with

unanswered questions. This approach affirms God and the universe are too great to understand; God and His ways are too far beyond human comprehension. Job and Ecclesiastes reflect this negative approach to human wisdom.

Paradoxically, both of these strands of wisdom exist side by side in the Bible. That is because both are true: God has gifted humans with the capacity to think, reflect, and understand human experience. At the same time, there are limitations to human knowledge. These limitations lead us to the realization that we are finite creatures who must place our trust in and our dependence upon God for daily living!

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- identify the main characteristic of biblical Hebrew poetry and its various forms?
- list and describe various types of psalms?
- understand the historical context and purpose of Wisdom Literature?
- recognize the various forms of Wisdom Literature?

Look Ahead

In the final session, we will attempt to draw together related thematic elements and trace them through the Old Testament as we look to their fulfillment in the NT.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Consider the character of God's revelation in the Old Testament. In relation to the affirmation that God has revealed God's word "in and through human history," write a brief essay explaining your understanding of divine and human involvement in the production of the Old Testament writings.

Reflect on the overall flow of the writings in the Old Testament. Identify and describe any common themes you see reflected and developed throughout all of the Old Testament.

Read *Discovering the Old Testament Story and Faith*, pages 269-279.

Journal reflections and thoughts. Include discussion on: *How does music, like the poetry of the Psalms, influence the form of our worship today? Do you think Hebrew worship always had the same form? Select psalms to illustrate your points.*

Lesson 13

Synthesis: With a View to New Testament Fulfillment

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orientation	Student Guide
0:05	Divine Revelation in Human Context	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Homework
0:50	New Testament Fulfillment of Old Testament Themes	Guided Discussion and Lecture	Homework
1:35	Group Prayer	Community	Guide

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Orientation

In this final lesson, the lecture material may appear somewhat condensed, with abrupt transitions. This is due to the character of the synthesis and review of a large amount of material. This lesson attempts to draw together related thematic elements and trace them through the Old Testament, with a view toward their fulfillment in the New Testament.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the session and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should be able to

- appreciate how God embraces humanity in all its frailty while empowering humans to right living.
- list major themes reflected throughout the Old Testament.
- describe ways in which Old Testament themes are brought to fulfillment in the New Testament.

Lesson Body

Divine Revelation through Human Context

The Human Context of the Word

Have students share their ideas from the first homework assignment regarding divine and human involvement in the writing of the Old Testament.

In the first lesson of this Module, we emphasized the importance of recognizing God's revelation comes to us *in and through human history*. God's revelation is intimately involved with human life and history. That is, God does not simply write out a message with a divine hand and send it to earth from some other realm. Rather, God inspires humans to write, and God acts within nature and human history to communicate God's Word.

The main purpose of divine revelation is twofold: to communicate the truth about God and to communicate the truth about creation, especially humans. From the Scriptures, we learn who God is, how to relate to Him, and what is His will. In addition, we learn who we are as humans and what God intends for humanity.

God's decision to communicate within the human context highlights His concern for genuine relationships with people. God is not interested in simply "sending" guidelines and instructions to the human race, for the purpose of directing us toward right living. Rather, God desires to share such guidance through direct involvement in human history. This includes everything from inspiring humans to record the Word of God, to the miracle of coming personally in Jesus Christ!

As a consequence of this approach, the Bible strongly reflects the human situation. That is why we say an important aspect of the main purpose of God's revelation is to communicate truth about creation, especially humans. God reveals who we are as humans and who God wants us to be (i.e., ultimately, Christlike).

Resultant Tensions in the Word

There is a tension in the Bible between its revelation of who we are as humans and who God intends for us to be. It is normally easy in Christian communities to recognize God's desired direction for us as revealed in the Scriptures. We can readily point to the standards of

the Ten Commandments, the proclamations of the prophets, and the Sermon on the Mount, for example. At times, however, we have more difficulty explaining why the Bible includes revelation of the more unacceptable aspects of human behavior.

The Scriptures do not shy away from portraying the reality of human existence. Accounts in the Bible include descriptions of polygamy, adultery, murder, deceit, idolatry, and other forms of sin. In the cases in which such activities are clearly labeled sin and lead to punishment, or to some type of repentance and renewal, the Christian community can clearly see what is acceptable and what is not. However, in some cases the revelation is not so clear. For example, many Old Testament characters are depicted with more than one wife; Saul consults a spirit medium to contact Samuel; and various other practices associated with Israel's idolatrous neighbors are reflected in the Old Testament. Though such practices may appear in some texts without judgment or condemnation, they are clearly rejected in others. For example: the legal material forbids sorcery, Solomon's downfall is attributed largely to the influence of his numerous foreign wives, and idolatry is repeatedly condemned by the prophets.

Some of these issues, seemingly overlooked as part of the ancient cultural norm, are addressed more explicitly in the New Testament (e.g., Paul's exhortation that a leader have only one spouse). More directly, however, the basis for recognizing such practices as unacceptable for the Christian is their opposition to the intent of the law of God. Recall, from Lesson 6, that the intent of the law is to promote love of God and love of neighbor. Any practice that detracts from this purpose of the law must be deemed unacceptable. It can be seen that such practices as sorcery, idolatry, and even ancestral worship direct one away from loving God. They place attention and reliance upon sources in opposition to, or in place of, loyalty to God. In a similar manner, such practices as adultery and polygamy obviously compromise one's love for neighbor. People are too readily hurt by compromised intimate affections.

New Testament Fulfillment of Old Testament Themes

(50 minutes)

Have students share their lists of themes from the second homework assignment due this week.

Thematic Emphasis of the Old Testament

A number of themes might be chosen, to be traced through the Old Testament and followed to fulfillment

in the New Testament. However, the overall theme of “covenant” serves best to demonstrate the unity of the Scriptures. This theme serves so well because it is tied so closely to and draws with it many other significant thematic elements.

The three major covenants of the Pentateuch (Noah, Abraham/Sarah, Sinai) reveal central concerns developed throughout the Bible. In relation to the first, Noah is identified as the one through whom God will preserve humanity, based on the characteristics of being “blameless” and “walking with God” (Gen 6:9). Similar terminology is reflected in the second covenant, in which Abraham is called to “walk before God,” and be “blameless” (Gen 17:1). In the first covenant, God demonstrates an ongoing love for humanity by promising never to destroy the earth again by flood. At the same time, God has communicated the desire for relationships characterized by holy (blameless) lives, in close contact with the Lord (walking with God).

The second covenant, with Abraham and Sarah, moves beyond mere preservation of the human race as God intentionally sets in motion a plan to “bless all the families of the earth” (Gen 12:3). The third covenant (Sinai covenant) expands this plan. God calls the children of Israel to become a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” The implication of such a call points to worldwide outreach. That is, if the entire nation is to function as priests, who represents the congregation? The answer is obviously the rest of the nations of the earth. Thus, as initiated with Abraham and Sarah, God intends to bless all the families of the earth, now, through all the children of Israel.

In the context of the Sinai covenant, God delivers the Law through Moses. The intent of the Law is the promotion of love of God and love of neighbor (another reflection of blameless lives walking with God). Similarly, the focus of the legal instructions regarding the sacrificial system is upon cleansing from sin and offering life to God.

The historical books reflect the struggles of the nation of Israel in its attempts to fulfill its call from God. The focus on covenant and its related themes remains a central concern in this material. The texts from Joshua through Kings especially reflect aspects of the Sinai covenant as elaborated in Deuteronomy. The concern of maintaining right relationship with God remains primary for both individual and nation. The historical books serve to provide Israel with an explanation for

the downfall of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms (Israel and Judah) in terms of failure to keep covenant relationship with God.

Images or models of individuals functioning in right relationship with God can be seen as highlights throughout the historical books. Even King Saul, who tragically ends his reign in rejection, begins his kingship with a positive picture of submission to the Spirit of God. In a moment of crisis, the Spirit of the Lord comes mightily upon Saul (1 Sam 11:6) to secure deliverance. When the crisis is ended, Saul acknowledges success was not accomplished through his own prowess, but rather deliverance came through the power of the Lord (1 Sam 11:13). This event echoes similar instances in Judges, in which the Spirit of the Lord came upon various judges of Israel to bring deliverance. Such accounts highlight the message that God's ideal for leadership is portrayed through one ruled by the Spirit of God and one who recognizes his or her role as an instrument of God.

The prophets proclaim the word of the Lord in an attempt to bring about necessary direction to a nation that has neglected the covenant with God. The oracles of the prophets often focus on judgment and renewal, aimed at restoring the covenant relationship with God. An important example can be seen in the attitude of the prophets toward the sacrificial system. The prophets did not reject sacrifices and festivals but proclaimed the importance of living out the intent of the entire system. Thus, they condemned the practice of going through the motions of sacrificial ritual and keeping the festive calendar, while behaving in a manner contrary to the meaning of such worship elements (e.g., oppressing orphans and widows, cheating in the marketplace, killing one's brother or sister for personal advantage, etc.).

Recall the aim of the sacrificial system is cleansing from sin and offering life to God. The prophets dramatically proclaimed the hypocrisy of offering a sacrifice while displaying actions of disobedience to God. Ideally, the worshiper who offers life to God through sacrificial ritual should then live in obedience to the Lord throughout the following week and year (even the rest of his or her life).

Finally, the Poetic and Wisdom Literature provides expression of human responses to the ongoing struggle to maintain right relationships with God and neighbor, as well as practical insight into God's design. From the ecstasy of praise to the agonizing paralysis of guilt, the

Psalms provide a full range of religious expression in relationship to God. These songs and prayers continue to reflect the themes of covenant and right relationship to the Lord. The desire and struggle to remain faithful to the instruction of God and live in a manner pleasing to the Lord are evident throughout.

The Wisdom Literature recognizes the grandeur of God's design in the universe and reflects both a positive and negative response. The positive approach affirms the blessings of God and recognizes practical principles for right living. The negative approach acknowledges aspects of life beyond human comprehension and explanation. In each case, however, the texts recognize the only fulfilling stance in life is one of dependence upon God.

Considering New Testament Fulfillment

The above themes are ultimately fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ. Christ demonstrates a blameless life, walking with God, as no other before ever did. Christ becomes the source of salvation that brings blessing to all the families of the earth. Christ models love of God and love of neighbor through teaching and in practice. Christ offers life to God through daily living in obedience to God, and literally, through sacrifice in death. Finally, Christ provides cleansing from sin, fulfilling the intent of the sacrificial system.

The call to holy living is not only modeled and fulfilled in Christ but also proclaimed in the Epistles. The author of 1 Peter reflects the language of the Sinai covenant by exhorting his listeners to recognize their role as a "royal priesthood" and a "holy nation" (2:9). Paul reflects the concepts of the sacrificial system by urging his listeners to "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1).

An emphasis on being ruled by the Spirit of God and serving as an instrument of the Lord is also brought to fulfillment in the New Testament. Jesus is clearly led by the Spirit as depicted at the outset of His ministry, when the Spirit descends upon Him as a dove and later leads Him into the wilderness. The significance of the Spirit's leading is clearly portrayed in the lives of the apostles, beginning especially with the scenes of Pentecost in Acts 2. The same emphasis appears in Paul's exhortations to live by the Spirit (Rom 8:9-14; Gal 5:18-25).

The prophetic emphasis on a genuine walk with God, free from hypocrisy, is also displayed in the life and

teachings of Jesus Christ. This is most readily portrayed through Christ's encounters with the scribes and Pharisees. These groups often accused Jesus of neglecting the Law, especially in relation to keeping the Sabbath. In these instances, Jesus highlighted the importance of the intent of the Law over the letter of the Law. Jesus emphasized the fulfillment of the Law in terms of loving God and loving neighbor, above the concern merely to perform proper ritual. This point is most dramatically made through Christ's use of hyperbole in the Sermon on the Mount. The author of James speaks with a similar prophetic tone by describing pure and undefiled religion as visiting orphans and widows in their distress (1:27).

Finally, the character of the Poetic and Wisdom Literature is reflected not only through the numerous New Testament quotes and allusions to the Psalms but also through the honest and determined expression of those committed to following Jesus Christ, acknowledged as God's Messiah!

Group Prayer

(20 minutes)

I want us to gather in a circle and spend the rest of our time praying for each other.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- appreciate how God embraces humanity in all its frailty that empowering humans to right living?
- list major themes reflected throughout the Old Testament?
- describe ways in which Old Testament themes are brought to fulfillment in the New Testament?

Assign Homework

Journal your reflections and insights from this lesson.

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