

Greetings:

This first study course is one of six important studies on the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. We pray that you will be blessed as you study this material. *Brian W. Hooper*

SEEKING GOD

THE

FATHER

OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

THE TRINITY (Our one God expressed in three personalities.)

The idea of a triune God is not clear in the Old Testament. However, there are very clear indications that there is more to God than singleness. The first word for God in the Old Testament, and the word in most general use, is 'El or variations such as Elah (in those parts of the Old Testament that are written in Aramaic – a language related to Hebrew), and Eloah (the Hebrew language equivalent). Eloah is used 40 times in Job between 3:4 and 40:2 and only 15 times in the rest of the Old Testament. Eloah is considered to be the singular form of Elohim which is a plural form for GOD and which is quite common as a designation for GOD in the Old Testament. This is of significant interest to Christians. As Elohim is a plural noun it hints that our God is more complex than simply singular.

GOD – THE FATHER

In Genesis 1:26 when God said, "Let US make man in OUR image." God wasn't talking to the angels. God was talking with someone who was part of Him. Our God had an image referred to as "our image." This is an early biblical hint of our triune God. The idea of God the 'Father' was not needed in the Old Testament times as Jesus had not been born in the flesh on earth. But there are many pointers to the 'Son'. For example, when Abraham put his son Isaac on the altar – that event pictures Jesus slain for us. And in that picture Abraham represents the 'heavenly Father'.

GOD – THE SON

Another Old Testament hint is the appearance of that interesting person *The Angel of the Lord*. It is believed by many Christian scholars that this ‘Angel’ is none other than Jesus Christ – the eternal Son of God – appearing in the Old Testament times. It is a fascinating study to trace, through the Old Testament, the appearances of Jesus Christ as “The Angel of the Lord”. No appearance by Jesus in the Old Testament is unimportant. This remarkable insight is covered in our third series of these studies.

One of the clearest pictures of a special person close to the Most High God is given in Daniel 7 verses 13 and 14. *“I was watching in the night visions and saw One like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days. They brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. And His kingdom shall not be destroyed.”* In the New Testament, Jesus identified himself with this special person by frequently designating himself as the **Son of Man** (Matthew 24:3, 30 etc.)

GOD – THE HOLY SPIRIT

A further hint of the complexity of God in the Old Testament is the many references to God’s *Spirit*. The Spirit is described as an agent in creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Isaiah 32:15). The Spirit sustains what has been created (Psalm 104:30; Job 34:14). The creative agent who animates the universe also vitalises the human organism (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4). When we come to the New Testament, Jesus teaches that this “Spirit” of God is not only intimately connected with God but is also a distinct personality (John 14:16). This verse has the **Son** praying to the **Father** about the **Spirit** coming. In our final two series we will experience walking with God’s wonderful Holy Spirit.

REFERENCES TO GOD THE FATHER in the Old Testament called THE HEBREW BIBLE

Psalm 2:7	<i>I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son today I have become your Father.”</i> (Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5 & 5:5)
Psalm 68:5	<i>A Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.</i>
Psalm 89:26	<i>He (David) will call out to me (God), “You are my Father, my God, the Rock, my Saviour.”</i>
Isaiah 9:6	<i>He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father</i> (Primary meaning is the “child born” – who is God.)
Isaiah 63:16	<i>But you God (says Isaiah) are our Father ...you O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from old is your name.</i>
Isaiah 64:8	<i>Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.</i>
Jeremiah 3:4 -and verse 19	<i>My Father, my friend from my youth, will you always be angry? (God says) I thought you would call me Father and not turn away from following me.</i>
Malachi 2:10	<i>Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?</i>

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INTRODUCTION TO SERIES:

Luke 15 **A story Jesus told**

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AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY ON THE TRINITY

THE FATHER, THE SON and THE HOLY SPIRIT

A STORY JESUS TOLD

Reading: Luke 15: 1-3

“Then Jesus told them this parable.”

This short comment by Jesus is the key to understanding the whole story. Jesus told them *“this parable”* or *“this story”*. Jesus did not say *“three stories”*. He expected his listeners to understand the three stories he was about to tell them were really three parts of one story. All the parables Jesus told were a way of expressing heavenly truths in earthly form. All the parables give us insight into the way God works – both in heaven and earth.

The parable we are about to study is the most explicit illustration of how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit co-ordinate to seek the lost – and to care for them.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. What are parables?
2. Why do you think Jesus spoke in parables?

Reading: Luke 15:4-7

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?” Luke 15:4

Please notice some key elements in this passage:

- One of the hundred sheep lags behind and is not present at the resting place.
- The shepherd goes to find it.
- He puts it joyfully on his shoulders.
- Back home he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, “Rejoice with me!”
- Jesus states that this illustrates the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

DISCUSSION POINTS

3. Discuss the relationship between the story about the lost sheep and lost souls.
4. Who do you think the “shepherd” is and can you find a supporting Scripture?
5. Discuss any significance regarding 1 lost soul and 99 righteous ones.

Reading: Luke 15:8-10

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one.” Luke 15:8

Our second story is about a woman who has lost her ten coins. A “drachma” Greek coin was equivalent to the Roman denarius and worth about a day’s wages (Matthew 20:2). Some scholars say that a bracelet of 10 silver coins was a wedding gift from the husband to the wife and of similar status as a wedding ring today. The ten coins, in Jewish circles, represented the Ten Commandments. The gift was a constant

reminder to the woman that she was part of God's covenant people. To lose one coin was a double tragedy. It was a loss of part of the wedding bracelet and also a coin that represented one of the Ten Commandments. Houses in Jesus' often had no windows and earthen floors making them extremely difficult to search for a small coin. Nevertheless, she found her precious coin:

- The woman lost one of her ten precious coins.
- She diligently looked for it.
- She found it, and called for her friends and neighbours to rejoice with her.
- Jesus made the point that there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repents.

DISCUSSION POINTS

6. Who do you think the woman represents in Jesus' story and why?
7. Why did Jesus choose a woman to be the key person in this story?

Reading: Luke 15:11-32

There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate". So he divided his property between them." Luke 15:11-12

At a father's death Jewish law allotted one-third of the estate to the younger son and two-thirds to the elder (Deuteronomy 21:17). The younger son's request betrayed his rebellious nature in wanting to live independently of his father's will. A Jewish father could abdicate his wealth prior to his death (1 Kings 1:2). To his immorality (verse 13) the son adds apostasy. He joins himself to a Gentile farmer who raises pigs, which were regarded by Jesus' audiences as especially "unclean". But the son "repented" (verses 18-19). It is interesting that, according to verse 17, the wayward son still had the father in his memory – even though there was a great distance between them. Repentance is sorrow for sin, confession that the offence has been committed against a holy God, and change of heart that manifests itself in change of action. Compare the son's prepared confession (verses 18 – 19) with what he actually says to his father (verse 21). He does not even have a chance to finish his confession before his father calls for a celebration of joy. From verses 22-24 we see that the father's reception shows that genuine repentance brings not only pardon but also complete restoration. In verses 25-30 the loveless attitude of the elder brother portrays the Pharisees claim to self-righteousness, their doctrine of salvation by achievement, and their uncharitable attitude toward repenting sinners. Just as the elder brother had no true relationship with his father, so the Pharisees have no real relationship with God. Verse 28 reveals that the search of the father extends not only to the younger son but to the elder son as well. Verse 30 with the elder son's "This son of yours" shows the joylessness of the man. He cannot bring himself to say, "My brother".

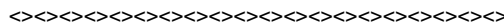
So in this third story, in a whole one-story parable, we have the following main points:

- There is a father with two sons.
- The younger son desires to go his own way.
- The Elder son and the Father stay at home.
- The younger son comes to his senses and decides, in genuine repentance, to return.
- The Father is overjoyed to welcome him back.
- There is a time of great rejoicing – except that the elder brother does not share it.

DISCUSSION POINTS

8. Jesus gave this story as an example of a sinner repenting. Why did he introduce the elder brother?
9. Do you see the similarity between all three stories? What are they?
10. Why did Jesus deviate from the repetitive style and introduce the elder brother?

This parable is a most significant one. It teaches that the one God (“this parable”) is, nevertheless, expressed in three personalities – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son is represented by the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) who searches for his lost sheep. The Holy Spirit is represented by the woman who searches for her lost coin. The father in the story of the father with two sons represents our heavenly Father who never searched but remains in his ‘home’. The choice of a “woman” is most appropriate for the primary twofold work of the Holy Spirit is to (1) bring to birth and to (2) nurture the new spiritual life that has come to birth. When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus in John 3, Nicodemus knew what natural birth was. Jesus made it clear that new birth (spiritual birth) was through the Holy Spirit. Even way back in the book of Genesis 1:2 when the Holy Spirit ‘hovered/brooded’ over the waters – the words in Hebrew are of a mother bird ‘hovering/brooding’ over her young. (Deuteronomy 32:11). In addition, when Jesus said to his disciples (John 16:8) that “He” the Holy Spirit would come etc. his original words were in Aramaic – then translated to Greek. The “He” in Greek is “She” in Aramaic. Hence Jesus actually said, “When She has come, She will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement.” Does that blow your theology? Of course, God is a non-sexual being. However, Jesus was giving us an earthly picture of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and a woman is the most appropriate earthly image for the Holy Spirit.



GOD OF CREATION

Genesis is the book of origins. *It gives a majestic account of the beginnings of all that the creator brought into being. It answers our questions concerning the origin of the world, and of plant, animal and human life. It tells of the establishment of the family, the origin of sin, the giving of the divine revelation, the growth and development of the race, and the inauguration of God's plan to bring about redemption through his chosen people. It presents and illustrates eternal truths, and it resolves enigmas, mysteries, and puzzling situations in the light of God's will for his people. In clear, meaningful language the writers sets forth God's revealed plans and purposes, and the marvels of his dealings with his created people. Genesis takes the reader back to the all-important moment of creation when the omnipotent Creator spoke into being the matchless wonders of sun, moon, stars, planets, galaxies, plants, and moving creatures, and the one whom he made in his image. He tells how sin came stealthily and relentlessly to bring ruin.* [With acknowledgement to the Wycliffe Bible Commentary, published by Moody Press.]

Read the whole Book of Genesis. You will be gripped by the story of how the universe and world came into being, how the human race arose, and how key personalities in these early times coped with their existence on a created planet. However, our part is to 'begin at the beginning' and introduce you to the most wonderful opening chapter of the Bible.

As we proceed verse-by-verse, we will discover two important threads:

- [1] We will discover that our Bible is an accurate historical record, and an accurate scientific statement. From Genesis alone we will see that the early Genesis account of beginnings does not contradict the established facts of scientific investigation. It does contradict unscientific theories. Harmony between Genesis and scientific facts rests on God being the Author of both Genesis and geology.
- [2] We will discover that even when God writes to us about the universe, world and creation, there are spiritual lessons for us. We will discover lessons arising out of God's creative activity that will help us personally. Our spirits should soar as we learn about God's power, creativity, love, compassion, planning and preparing.

Reading: Genesis 1:1-2

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

- **"In the beginning...GOD created..."** "The truth of this majestic verse," says the NIV Bible notes, "was joyfully affirmed by poet (Ps.102:25) and prophet (Isa. 40:21). *In the beginning God*. The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God's existence."
- There was a **"beginning"**. No 'Steady State' scientific theory that the universe has always been there eternally. Scientists are generally agreed that there was a beginning to our universe. So – within the opening words of the Bible, the Bible had a choice between (1) "always there" or (2) "had a beginning" and chose the correct one.
- **"God"** created. The Hebrew noun for the name for God (*ELOHIM*) is plural – thus hinting at something more than 'singleness'. Because it has been revealed through the New Testament that God is threefold (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) , the plural name for God *Elohim* is so appropriate.
- **Word study: CREATED.** This word is 'bara' (bah-rah) in the Hebrew Scriptures (Strong's #1254). It means to form, fashion, produce or create. It is used in 1:27 to identify that male and female were 'created' in God's image. It is also used in Joshua 17:18 when God told the people of Joseph to 'clear' the land in readiness for occupancy. That is: 'preparing and creating it so they could live there happily'. That God created everything is taught in Ecc 1:5; Isa 45:18; Jer 10:16; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2.

- The earth was “**formless and empty**”. This phrase appears elsewhere only in Jeremiah 4:23. The prophet sees his beloved land in ruins after the Babylonian onslaught. Before there was beauty, a lovingly and carefully formed city teeming with life and people. Now it was “empty of life”. This is an accurate Hebrew phrase for what the earth was like before it became suitable for human habitation. When the earth was first created, it was not physically and atmospherically ready for life. “The awesome picture of the original state of the visible creation is relieved by the majestic announcement that the mighty Spirit of God hovers over creation.” NIV notes.
- “**darkness on the face of the deep.**” This statement reveals that creation reflected God’s normal process of desiring to turn darkness into light (verse 3) and of bringing order out of chaos. It is God’s intention for the human soul that we move from darkness to light, from a chaotic condition to a life of orderliness and perfection.
- “the **Spirit of God was hovering**” over the waters. The Spirit of God was active in creation and the Spirit’s creative power continues today (see Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30). “**hovering over**”.. Like a bird that provides for and protects its young (see Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 31:5). The activity of the Holy Spirit over the water is so similar to that of a mother bird hovering over, protecting her young. Out of this hovering over the water came life. **Scientific fact:** It was once thought that life began on the land. The first life on earth began in the sea. The Bible again had two choices.

DISCUSSION POINTS

11. The Bible account of Creation is supported by the true facts that science has discovered. Please give your own personal understanding of the wonders of Creation, of our amazing God, and where good science fits in.
12. What do we learn about the Father and the Holy Spirit in this passage (Genesis Chapter One) that we have been looking at?

Reading: Genesis 1:3-27 GOD CREATES IN ORDERLY STAGES

There are many views as to how our universe, earth and life came into being. There are those who do not subscribe to “divine” purpose of any kind and say that there is no supernatural (only ‘evolution’).

Believers are (generally) divided into five camps!

1. Those who believe that the scientific theory of “**evolution**” can be accepted.
2. Those who believe that the Bible teaches that **God created all in six literal days.**
3. Those who believe that the Bible teaches that **God created all over six long periods.**
4. Those who believe that **God revealed his six creative acts to Moses over six days.**
5. Those who believe that the Bible account is simply **poetic, and/or mythological.**

Each of these five groups is supported by sincere Christians who passionately defend their understanding of how our universe and life came into being. For this first study of our creative God we have chosen to place before you the fact that there are differences of opinion in the Christian community. Having said that, we will now show that there is an amazing harmony between the Bible and scientifically proven facts of our origins and life.

A 'HARMONY' BETWEEN GENESIS ONE AND SCIENCE

GEOLOGIC PERIOD [Science says]	FACTS	BIBLE DAY
QUATERNARY Milder climates, human.	14. Humans	SIX
TERTIARY Moderate climates, many mammals	13. Land mammals	FIVE
CRETACEOUS Giant reptiles become extinct	12. Flying creatures	FOUR
JURASSIC Dinosaurs, climates mild, eruptions	11. Large reptiles	THREE
TRIASSIC First dinosaurs and marine reptiles	10. Abundant water life	TWO
PERMIAN Climate warm, skies clearing	9. Light finally dominates	ONE
CARBONIFEROUS Seas retreat, land building	8. Vegetation appears	
DEVONIAN Vegetation plants, trees, fish life	7. Dry land appears	
SILURIAN Continents flat but mountains rising	6. Atmosphere	
ORDOVICIAN Continents low, shallow seas,	5. There was light	
CAMBRIAN Seas, mild climate, much marine life	4. Earliest life began	
PROTEROZOIC Shallow seas, marine algae, warm	3. Darkness prevailed	
ARCHAEOZOIC Eruptions, earliest life, hot	2. The earth was formless	
AZOIC Formation of the earth's crust, extremely hot	1. There was a beginning	

DISCUSSION POINTS

13. Genesis Chapter 1 is in harmony with the sequence of life science reveals. Genesis is one of the oldest books in the Bible and it is amazing that it sets out celestial and earthly stages in complete accord with science. The Bible was first. We can believe that the Author of the universe and the Author of the Bible to be One and the same person. Write your comments on this.
14. What is meant (1:26) by **us/our** in "Let **Us** make man (humanity) in **our** image"?
15. What is meant (1:26) by **image** in "Let Us make man (humanity) in our **image**"?
16. Why (1:28) do you think God said: "Be fruitful and multiply; subdue...etc.?"

So let us first consolidate what we can confidently hold thus far:

- **There was a 'Beginning' to creation.**
- **God created it. (You may have heard of the term 'Intelligent Design').**
- **God is plural ("Let US make man").**
- **There is an amazing parallel between Genesis One and geologic science.**

Now let us examine the theories, and also the meaning of 'Day' in Scripture.

1. Those who believe that the scientific theory of "evolution" can be accepted.
2. Those who believe that the Bible teaches that **God created all in six literal days.**
3. Those who believe that the Bible teaches that **God created all over six long periods.**
4. Those who believe that **God revealed his six creative acts to Moses over six days.**
5. Those who believe that the Bible account is simply **poetic, and/or mythological.**

1. Those who believe that the scientific theory of “evolution” can be accepted.

Such believe that God, or a ‘Master Mind’, created life but that life then went on to evolve and diversify or that God created initial life forms. See **Wikipedia – Theistic Evolution**.

2. Those who believe that the Bible teaches that God created all in six literal days.

This “short-day creation” (Young Earth) view is popular in Christian circles and there is an abundance of well-produced material supporting it. www.answersingenesis.org. The notes (Bixler), for Genesis in the “Spirit Filled Life Bible” NKJV say, “The Hebrews began each new day at sunset. This time designation, along with the numbering of the days and the Sabbath rest on day seven, shows that the author views creation as happening in the course of six consecutive 24-hour periods, followed by a seventh day of divine rest.” But a contrary comment is expressed in the IVF New Bible Commentary (Kevan) with: “It is contended by some that this is an ordinary day of twenty-four hours. In support of this it is pointed out that that the periods of evening and morning are specifically mentioned, but there are serious difficulties in the way of accepting this interpretation.”

3. Those who believe that the Bible teaches that God created all over six long periods.

The No.3 viewpoint, of long creative periods is expressed in www.answersincreation.org where each day represents, not a period of twenty-four hours, but a geological age. It is pointed out that the sun, the measurer of planetary time, did not exist during the first three days. Further, that the term ‘day’ is used in Gen.2:4 for the whole six-fold period of creation; and that in other parts of Scripture the word ‘day’ is used figuratively of a time of undefined length, as in Ps. 90:4.” Short-day (or Young Earth) creationists sometimes accuse “long-day” (Old Earth) creationists of emphasising science over Scripture but the reverse may be true. The Hebrew word ‘day’ can mean many time-frames. [See below.]

4. Those who believe that God revealed his six creative acts to Moses over six days.

This viewpoint is interesting and has some merit. It considers that each of the six creative activities took time, they were **revealed** bit by bit to the earthly scribe (Moses?) over a period of six days. It was first proposed by the Scottish geologist Hugh Miller in the 1800’s and picked up by P.J.Wise,am in his 1946 publication, *Creation Revealed in Six Days*, which was reprinted in 1977. Others conceive of these days as days of dramatic vision, the story being presented to Moses in a series of revelations spread over six days. See www.graceandknowledge.faithweb.com/slross.html for ‘Seven days of revelation theory’ by Stephen L.Ross. Also www.Idolphin.org/hasseldays.html on Gerhard F.Hasel

5. Those who believe that some Bible parts are simply poetic, and/or mythological.

Please see **Wikipedia: Allegorical interpretations of Genesis**. An interesting article that says literal ‘days’ do not matter as Genesis 1 is to be interpreted allegorically or poetically.

The meaning of the word ‘yom’ – or ‘day’ – in Genesis and other related references?

The expression in Genesis 1 “And there was evening and morning, day xxx” has given rise to many interpretations. Does this mean a 24-hour day? Does “And in six days God made the heavens and the earth” of Exodus 20:11 validate the ‘days’ of Genesis Chapter One – or is there another interpretation? And how do we handle Genesis 2:4 that comes after Genesis 1 with its “In the day (*yom*) that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens” with its ‘six-day ‘day’? In the Hebrew Bible the word ‘day’ (Hebrew: *yom*) can have several meanings. It can mean “daylight”, “day”, “time”, “moment”, “year” or other widely variant periods of time. The very first mention of *yom* in the Bible (Genesis 1:5) refers to half a day – the light portion of day and night. This comes out in Genesis 8:22 also. “*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*” (Gen 1:5, 1:16, 8:22 Est 4:16b). *Yom* can mean 24 hours as we understand time today. Genesis 39:10 *She spoke to Joseph day after day, but he did not listen to her....* Esther 4:16a *Go gather together all*

the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day.... Strangely, in Esther 4:16 we have just given there is a reference to both a 24-hour-day and also a 12-hour-day. Esther 4:16b says: *....and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day.* Genesis 8:22 (Quoted for Half a Day also) *“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”* It can mean a fleeting moment in time. Genesis 2:17 *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.* It can mean ‘sometime within this very day’ (Genesis 25:31). *“Jacob answered, ‘Then sell me today the rights of a firstborn.’* **Yom** in the plural (*yamin*) can mean ‘from year to year’ as in Exodus 13:10 *“You shall therefore keep this ordinance at this time from year to year.”* It can mean an unspecified period as in Genesis 39:11 *Then it happened about this time that Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the men of the house were indoors.* It can denote a very long time as in Genesis 2:2 where God rested on the seventh ‘day’ interpreted by Hebrews 4:9-10 in the Amplified version as *And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. [Heb.4:9,10] (Amplified Bible)*

This ‘Seventh Day’ period began on the 7th Day and goes on forever.

GOD OF PROMISE

Reading: Genesis 12:1-9 GOD PROMISES A NATION TO ABRAHAM

“Then the Lord told Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the Father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.” So Abraham departed as the Lord had instructed him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth – his livestock and all the people who had joined his household at Haran – and finally arrived in Canaan. Genesis 12:1-5 NLT

Comments on the passage:

When God called him, Abram moved out in faith from UR to HARAN and finally to CANAAN. He had moved from present-day Iraq (south of Baghdad), up through present-day Turkey and down into present-day Israel just north of where Jerusalem would arise.

God then established a “covenant” (or “agreement”) with Abram, telling him that he would found a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, God said, but also the other nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram’s descendants. Israel, the nation that would come from Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram’s family tree, Jesus Christ was born to save humanity. Through Jesus Christ, people can have a personal relationship with God the Father and be blessed beyond measure. Although God promised to bless Abram and make him famous, there was one condition. Abram had to do what God wanted him to do. This meant leaving his home and friends and travelling to a new land where God promised to build a great nation from Abram’s family. Abram obeyed, walking away from his home for God’s promise of even greater blessings in the future.

DISCUSSION POINT

17. God has a plan for each one of us. We begin with the assumption that where we are now is where God would have us. If you have never sought God for direction as to what to do or where to go, begin now. Do not fret over previous moves or tasks that disappointed you. God will endorse your present state. Or, God may indicate that you are to take a new direction. If you are married, this must always be a joint and happily agreed upon matter. Is God leading you into a new line of activity? It need not be a change of location. Sometimes, we Christians are running away from difficult situations when, in fact, God wants us to face them and overcome. Discuss the whole area of keeping in tune with God.

Notice that God made Abram a sevenfold promise:

1. **“I will cause you to become a father of a great nation.”**
2. **“I will bless you...”**
3. **“I will make you famous (your name great - NIV)”**
4. **“and you will be a blessing”**
5. **“I will bless those who bless you”**
6. **“whoever curses you I will curse”**
7. **“All people on the earth will be blessed through you.”**

This blessing of Abram (Abraham) is confirmed and enlarged in three other places:

DISCUSSION POINTS

18. Read Chapter 13:14-17 and discuss changes, differences, expectations.
19. Read Chapter 15:1-7 and discuss as above.
20. Read Chapter 17:1-20 and discuss as above.
21. Read Chapter 22:16-19 and discuss as above – and compare. Any developments?

ABRAHAM: A PERSONALITY PROFILE

We all know that there are consequences to any action we take. What we do can set into motion a series of events that may continue long after we're gone. Unfortunately, when we are making a decision, most of us think only of the immediate consequences. These are often misleading because they are short-lived.

Abraham had a choice to make. His decision was between setting out with his family and belongings for parts unknown or staying right where he was. He had to decide between the security that he already had and the uncertainty of travelling under God's direction. All he had to go on was God's promise to guide and bless him. Abraham could hardly have been expected to visualize how much of the future was resting on his decision of whether to go or stay, but his obedience affected the history of the world. His decision to follow God set into motion the development of the nation that God would eventually use as his own when he visited earth himself. When Jesus Christ came to earth, God's promise was fulfilled; through Abraham the entire world was blessed.

We probably don't know the long-term effects of most decisions we make. But shouldn't the fact that there will be long-term results cause each one of us to think carefully and seek God's guidance as we make choices and take action?

Strengths and accomplishments; weakness and mistakes:

- His faith pleased God
- Became the founder of the Jewish nation
- Was respected by others and was courageous in defending his family at any cost
- Was not only a caring father to his own family, but practised hospitality to others
- Was a successful and wealthy rancher
- Usually avoided conflicts, but when they were unavoidable, he allowed his opponent to set the rules for settling the dispute
- Under direct pressure he distorted the truth

Lessons from his life:

- God desires dependence, trust, and faith in him – not faith in our ability to please him
- God's plan from the beginning has been to make himself known to all people

Vital statistics:

- Where: Born in Ur of the Chaldees, spent most of his life in the Land of Canaan
- Occupation: Wealthy livestock owner
- Relatives: Brothers: Nahor and Haran. Father: Terah. Wife: Sarah. Nephew: Lot. Sons: Ishmael and Isaac.
- Contemporaries: Abimelech, Melchizedek

Key verse:

“And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD, declared him righteous because of his faith” (Genesis 15:6) Abraham’s story is told in Genesis 11-25. And mentioned in Exodus 2:24; Matthew 1:1-2; Luke 3:34; Acts 7:2-8; Romans 4; Galatians 3; Hebrews 2, 6, 7, 11.

Lessons and principles in the story of Abraham:

1. As the flood of Noah was the classic on JUDGMENT, so this story of Abraham is the great classic on FAITH. If we would understand faith of which so much is said in the Bible, we must study this “first mention” and outstanding illustration. Abraham is the “Believer” of all believers, and so is called “Father of the Faithful”.
2. The faith that pleases God is the faith that is seen in Abraham, and consists in a confidence in the living God that results in:
 - BELIEVING HIM Abraham accepted what God said was true
 - OBEYING HIM By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed
 - NOT KNOWING Abraham was content to trust, without knowing the details
 - FACING Abraham faced impossibilities. He was strong in faith
 - PERSUADED Being fully persuaded that God could be trusted, he moved
 - TRUSTING He trusted God to perform what he had promised

Reading: Genesis 22:1-14 ABRAHAM OFFERS HIS SON ISAAC

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.” Hebrews 11:17 KJV

This is, perhaps, the most moving part of all that we read in the story of Abraham. How a godly person of faith could consider sacrificing his own son.

Main lessons:

1. The trial of faith is precious in God’s sight. If faith is real it will stand the test, and come forth as gold purified. (Nonetheless, do not rush away to sacrifice your child!)
2. Isaac is a “type” of the Son of God in his perfect submission – even in the face of death – to the Father’s will.

Note these main points of the story:

1. Vs 1. God tested Abraham with a call and Abraham responded quickly.
2. Vs 2. God asked that a very precious and much-loved son be offered.
3. Vs 2 The spot chosen (see 2 Chronicles 3:1), was the future site of the temple.
4. Vss 3. Abraham obeyed promptly
5. Vss 5-7 Isaac enquired, “Where is the lamb?”
6. Vs 8 Abraham gave a prophetic answer, “My son, God will provide a lamb.”
7. Vss 9,10 Abraham prepared to slay Isaac
8. Vs 11,12 The Angel of the Lord (Jesus Christ himself – a theophany) spoke
9. Vs 12 Abraham’s faith had been sufficiently evidenced and proved
10. Vs 13 A substitute was found
11. Vs 14 The place was named “Jehovah Jireh” (“In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen”)

DISCUSSION POINTS

22. Discuss the story and try to explain why Abraham attempted the sacrifice?
23. This is a wonderful picture of the future sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Explain, feature by feature of our story how it foreshadows the pivotal point in all history.
24. Identify the Father (God) and the Son. Is the Holy Spirit there?

Other lessons from the story:

1. **ALL FAITH WILL BE TESTED.** An untried thing has not the value of a proved and tested article. But real faith overcomes, and the testing gives it the opportunity of displaying its reality. 1 John 5:4 says, "Faith overcomes the world." If it does not, it is only talk or profession.
2. **TESTING IS NOT DESIRING.** Testing comes from God. Desiring comes out of our own hearts. We must distinguish between the two. We might desire something and because it is hard to achieve, think God is testing us. God gives trials to prove us and to strengthen us. (1 Peter 4:12)
3. **TESTING IS TRAINING** All things do work together for God Whether we go through trials we may have created (a rebellious or obviously wrong decision), or something out of our control such as grief over the loss of a loved one, all our testing is training for the rest of our life and preparation for the life to come.

DISCUSSION POINTS

25. How do you interpret the angels going up and down between heaven and earth?
26. Look at verses 20 to 22. Discuss the vow Jacob made. Can you see a positive side to his “If God will be with me” etc.?
27. Discuss “I will give God a tenth of everything he gives me.” Verse 22.

JOSEPH THE DREAMER

Reading: Genesis 37:1-36 JOSEPH, SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, and officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard. Genesis 37:36

Joseph had a wonderful “rags to riches” or rather, “slave to Second-in-charge” life. **Do read the full story when you leave here chapters 39 through 50. You will be blessed.**

As a youngster, Joseph was overconfident. His natural self-assurance, increased by being Jacob’s favourite son and by knowing God’s design on his life, was unbearable to his ten older brothers, who eventually conspired against him. But this self-assurance, moulded by pain and combined with a personal knowledge of God, allowed him to survive and prosper where most would have failed. He added quiet wisdom to his confidence and won the hearts of everyone he met – Potiphar, the chief jailer, other prisoners, the king, and after many years, even those ten brothers.

Joseph was betrayed and deserted by his family, exposed to sexual temptation, and punished for doing the right thing. He endured a long imprisonment and was forgotten by those he helped. As you read his story, note what Joseph did in each case. His positive response transformed each setback into a step forward. He didn’t spend much time asking why. His approach was, “What shall I do now?” Those who met Joseph were aware that wherever he went and whatever he did, God was with him. When we face a setback, the beginning of a Joseph-like attitude is to acknowledge that God is with us.

JOSEPH – HIS STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Rose in power from slave to ruler of Egypt
- Was known for his personal integrity
- Was a man of spiritual sensitivity
- Prepared a nation to survive a famine

If there was a weakness or mistake, it was in his openness in declaring to his brothers his dreams of sheaves bowing down to his sheaf and of the sun, moon and stars bowing.

DISCUSSION POINTS

28. Discuss his one seeming weakness.
29. Now, discuss his strengths and talk about the similarities to Jesus Christ.

READ GENESIS CHAPTERS 39 – 50 then note:

There are ten clear features in which JOSEPH foreshadows JESUS CHRIST.

[Items 2, 3, & 4 are from Marcelle Chambers from Whangarei, New Zealand].

- 1. HE WAS LOVED BY HIS FATHER** His brothers hated him, but he was sent to visit them. The Father loved Jesus before the foundation of the world (John 17:24) and loved him on earth (John 10:17). Jesus says the Father sent him (John 10:36), how he came from the father, and how his brothers hated him without a cause..
- 2. HIS DREAMS AND LIFE** demonstrated that he was uniquely in tune with God. Jesus, on many an occasion, demonstrated his unique relationship with his Father.
- 3. HE WAS A FOOD SUPPLIER.** He fed his people, on a vast scale, and his brothers. Jesus fed 5000+ and 4000+ and, in addition, claimed to be the “Bread of life”.
- 4. HE WAS 30 YEARS OLD WHEN HE BEGAN SERVICE.** Genesis 41:46 shows when Joseph began to serve the Pharaoh. Jesus was 30 when he began his ministry.
- 5. HE WAS REJECTED AND SOLD FOR PIECES OF SILVER.** He was rejected and sold for 20 pieces of silver. Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver. Joseph was sold in Egypt (Gentiles), Jesus killed by Roman soldiers (Gentiles).
- 6. HE WAS UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED** Joseph’s unjust condemnation under false accusation is a striking parallel. The imprisonment being a type of the Lord’s going down into death and Hades, the prison house of departed spirits.
- 7. HE WAS RAISED TO A HIGH PLACE** This is a wonderful figure of Jesus being raised from death. Acts 5:31, “God has raised Jesus to be a Prince and Saviour.”
- 8. HE TESTED HIS BROTHERS** [1] The brothers had a need – they sought “bread” (The Bread of Life) [2] They heard the “good news” (go to get food in Egypt) [3] On their arrival they were severely treated by Joseph, but did not know him as their brother. The aim of Joseph in this testing was to discover if there was *true repentance of heart*, or possibly if they had the opportunity of betraying another brother (Benjamin) they would treat him as heartlessly as they did Joseph. Under this discipline, they confess their former sin (42:21). They refuse to sin again (44:14-16).
- 9. HE REVEALED HIMSELF AT THE RIGHT TIME** Repentance being seen to be genuine, Joseph reveals himself. The brother born for adversity – their lord and saviour. Jesus Christ makes himself known to the genuine, seeking sinner.
- 10. HE ASSURED HIS FAMILY OF HIS UNCHANGING LOVE** Joseph expressed his joy, and arranged for his family to be with him permanently. Genesis 45:1-20.

GOD OF DELIVERANCE

Just as the Book of GENESIS is the “Story of Beginnings” – of the human race and of God’s people – the Book of EXODUS (meaning “exit-us”) is the “Story of Deliverance”.

After Joseph and his family were settled in Egypt, the Hebrew family grew in numbers and over a period of 430 years became a separate nation living in the land of Egypt. Because the growing Hebrew nation was a threat to Egypt, they were increasingly oppressed and for most of the 430 years they were in slavery. God chose and prepared Moses to be God’s instrument in Israel’s deliverance from bondage. Under Moses they trekked to Mt Sinai to receive God’s law, and through Moses received God’s instructions on the building of the tabernacle. The Book of Exodus ends with the construction of the tabernacle as the dwelling place for God. Our study will look at two important steps in the deliverance from Egypt. The first is when God speaks to Moses via a burning bush! The other is how God releases the Hebrew people through blood applied to door-posts!

SELECTED EVENT: MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

Reading: Exodus 3:1-10 GOD CALLS TO MOSES FROM A BUSH

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am...” Exodus 3:1-10.

There are three principal lessons from this story:

1. That God has not forgotten his people.
2. That God is still their Saviour and deliverer.
3. That trial tests, but does not destroy God’s people.

Notice the following facts of the story:

- In chapter 1:11 the Hebrews’ sad condition while Moses was a long way away.
- Moses in the desert keeping the flocks of Jethro – verse 1
- Moses comes to Horeb the “mountain of God” – later known as Sinai – verse 1
- **The Angel of the Lord** – a manifestation of Christ – appears - verse 2.
- The bush burned, but did not burn itself up – verse 2.
- Moses turned aside to look at the bush, and God arrested him. Verses 3-4.
- God told Moses that he was to put off his shoes for the place was holy – verse 5.
- God revealed himself as the unchangeable God – verse 6.
- Moses expresses reverential fear, and hid his face. Verse 6.
- God spoke tenderly of deliverance for his people (“seen their misery” “heard them crying” “concerned about their suffering”) – verse 7.
- So God has come down to deliver his people out of their misery – verse 8.
- God adds: “Their cry has reached me.” – verse 9.
- God tells Moses that he is sending him to bring the people out of Egypt – verse 10.

This story is an appearance of the “Pre-incarnate” Jesus Christ:

This is one of those wonderful visitations in the Old Testament by that remarkable “**ANGEL OF THE LORD**” – or the Lord Jesus Christ before his earthly appearance. Notice that it was “The Angel of the Lord” that appeared to Moses in flames of fire (of the bush – verse 2) and God called to him from within the bush (verse 4). This is a clear identification that the Angel of the Lord is God.

This story is a “Type”:

A “type” means that it represents something else. Fire is a type of judgement. Fire consumes the adversary, yet purifies the believer. So, the bush burning without being consumed is a type of **four** things:

1. Of the HEBREWS IN EGYPT tried fiercely for over 400 years, but not destroyed.
2. Of JESUS CHRIST who, in his death and resurrection, passed through the fire of God’s holy judgement on sin, but was raised up victorious to heavenly life.
3. Of the CHURCH. It has been hated and tried by the world but has not been destroyed – only purified and refined by the fires of persecution and rejection.
4. Of the INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER. Purifying and fiery cleansing does not injure, but causes us to become partakers of God’s holiness.

Further important lessons from the story:

1. The fire in the bush is the believer’s testimony.

Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, lives in the humble “bushes” of our bodies. In earthen vessels, the treasure is found. Out from the humble bush shines the glory of God.

2. The fire, not being consumed, illustrates the believers stand at the end.

John the Baptist was like a “burning and a shining light” (John 5:35). Stephen’s face seems to have shone with the radiance of God’s indwelling glory (Acts 7:55-56). The face of Moses ‘shone’ (Exodus 34:29,35). When Jesus ascended the Mount (Hermon) his face and bodily appearance changed dramatically (Luke 9:29). This event is called ‘the transfiguration’. We may draw a potent illustration of God’s light within us from these earthly happenings.

3. The fire in the bush conveys the faithfulness of God.

God was in the fiery bush – so God is with us in our fiery trials.

4. The fire portrays reverence for God.

Lessons of reverence for God can be drawn from verses 5 and 6. Let us learn to be in awe of a mighty God. When we go through fiery trials, be in awe of our mighty God!

DISCUSSION POINTS

30. The burning bush was, perhaps, on the slopes of “the mountain of God” – Sinai. Why do you think this is where God chose to have it?
31. Why do you think “The Angel of the Lord” was there in the burning bush?
32. Explain what a “type” is. Do you see any others?
33. Can you, from your experience, recall any “burning bush” type situations when you knew God was with you in them?

SELECTED EVENT : THE FIRST PASSOVER

Reading: Exodus 12:1-13 “I WILL PASS OVER YOU” SAID GOD

“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.” Ex.12:13

The principal lesson from this important event in history is that it points to the “Lamb of God” Jesus who shed his blood as a sacrifice for the whole world of people – past, present and future. It is **a** most important historical event in the life of the Hebrew people and a most graphic picture of **the** most important historical event in all history – the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. (“Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” 1 Cor 5:7)

- The month was changed. The 7th Canaanite month (Abib) became the 1st (Nisan) –v2.
- The lamb was to be chosen on the 10th day and kept until the 14th day – v3, 6.
- The lamb was to be without any imperfection (Blemish) but the healthy best – v5.
- The lamb must be killed. It must die – v6.
- The blood was to be applied to their doorframes, their entrances to their homes – v7.
- Each person had to participate in eating the lamb – v8
- In addition, the lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs (endive, chickery) – v8
- And with bread made without yeast – v8.
- The lamb was to be well cooked and all parts eaten with no leftovers – v9.
- While eating, the cloak was to be tucked in, sandals worn and a staff held – v11.
- It was to be eaten hastily – v11.
- The occasion was called “Jehovah’s Passover” – v11.
- God would execute judgement – v12.
- God would see the blood – v13.
- God would pass over, not pass by, but overshadow the house – v13.
- This would be followed by a feast of unleavened bread for seven days –v15.

DISCUSSION POINT

34. In the light of this first ever “Passover” pointing to the ultimate “Passover sacrifice of Jesus” – go through the above 16 points one by one and discuss the meaning that emerges from each one of them.

George Goodman (1928) wrote of the Passover:

“It is the Holy Spirit’s chosen Type of the fact that God saves from his just **JUDGMENT** those who believe, on the ground of the death of Christ.”

“It illustrates **CONVERSION**, that is, the day when the soul really enters into that finished work. Hence, ‘The beginning of months’. Christian life starts at Conversion.”

“**GOD SAW THE BLOOD**. God contemplates with holy love and joy the finished work of his dear son (John 10:17). He sees also when it is sprinkled on our hearts, that is, when we believe. “ “Take care to understand “PASS OVER”. God did not pass by the house. He stayed and sheltered it. See Isaiah 31:5.”

“The Passover is followed by the **LEAVENLESS FEAST**. So our conversion must be followed by a life in which sin finds no place. Let us keep the feast, that is, live in newness of life.”

GOD OF JOURNEYINGS

The Passover released the Hebrew people from 430 years of slavery in a foreign land. Then began “40 years in the wilderness” or, to be more precise, 38 years of journeyings. It was an exercise of some magnitude as estimates of the total number of people ranges from 1 to 3 million. Yet, God’s long-term purpose was to gradually reveal the coming Messiah to his people. Many historic events on their journeyings point to Jesus Christ. We will look at three of these. The first is the story of the “bread from heaven”. The word MANNA is a Hebrew word meaning, “What is it?”

SELECTED EVENT : MANNA FROM HEAVEN

Reading: Exodus 16:1-21 MANNA – BREAD FROM HEAVEN

Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you”. Ex.16:4

An outline of the story:

- Israel in the desert, hungry and murmuring (verses 1-3).
- God’s promise and his rebuke to them (verses 4-8). The first mention in Scripture of the Glory of the Lord (verses 9-10).
- The manna is described (verses 11-15). Six features are in this passage: Small – v14, round – v31, like Coriander seed / white – v31, like wafers made with honey – v31, it melted v21, it bred worms v21. Three additional features come from Numbers 11:4-9.
- Instructions are given as to how to gather it. Vv16-21 (1. All had enough v18, 2. Must not be kept vv19,20. 3. A double portion on the sixth day for the Sabbath v22.)

The manna points to Jesus Christ:

In John 6:33, 35, 51 Jesus explains this type as: *“The Bread of God is the one who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world.” “I am the Bread of Life.” “I am the Living Bread who has come down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread shall live for ever.”*

The nine points of the manna may be taken as each teaching a truth about Jesus Christ – the heavenly manna.

JESUS CHRIST

(1)	Small	Exodus 16:14	A seeming insignificant birth, and entry.
(2)	Round	Exodus 16:14	His eternal being.
(3)	White	Exodus 16:31	His sinless life
(4)	Honey	Exodus 16:31	Sweetness to the human heart.
(5)	Appearance	Numbers 11:4-9	Transparent – inward holiness.
(6)	Fresh oil	Numbers 11:4-9	Born and anointed of the Holy Spirit.
(7)	On the dew	Numbers 11:4-9	The “Manna” must land on a prepared heart.
(8)	Melted	Exodus 16:21	Opportunity must be taken to receive him.
(9)	Bred worms	Exodus 16:20	Knowledge of Jesus Christ in the head only.
(10)	Double	Exodus 16:22	Honour God's day for a double blessing.

SELECTED EVENT : WATER FROM THE ROCK

In every event that is recorded in the story of the wanderings, it should be our aim to discover the purpose of God behind the event. Sometimes, as in this case, the Holy Spirit gives us the answer in the New Testament:

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 speaks of the Hebrew “forefathers” who came out of Egypt. Paul says they “all passed through the sea” and “all ate the same spiritual food” (manna) and “drank the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them and that rock was Christ.” The manna and the water from the rock are used as figures representing the spiritual sustenance that God continually provides for his people.

Of course, the spiritual sustenance is embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the “Bread from heaven” – the manna and he is the rock from whom living water flows.

Another related Scripture is **John 7:37** where Jesus cried out: “If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture (Isaiah 58:11 possibly) has said, streams of living water will flow from within.”

Reading: Exodus 17:1-7 JESUS THE ROCK AND HOLY SPIRIT WATER

The Lord answered Moses, “Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will come out of it for people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The principal lesson of this story is that like the rock, Jesus Christ was struck – and as a result of that striking when he died, living water flowed as a blessing for all who would drink of that living water. 1 Peter 2:4-7 says “As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

A further lesson is that the water from the rock can be viewed as the Holy Spirit. The Spirit as living water can be traced all through Scripture – in Ezekiel 47; in the talk with the Woman of Samaria in John 4; in Jesus’ proclamation about living water in John 7; in the River of the Water of Life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb as expressed in the final chapter of the Revelation.

DISCUSSION POINTS

35. In the practical living of the Christian life today we can experience the “manna” from heaven in Jesus Christ. Explain how Jesus – as Manna – can feed you.
36. Likewise, in the living of the Christian life based on the “Rock” who is Jesus explain the roles of the “Rock” and “Water” (Holy Spirit) in your life.
37. Discuss 17:2-4 where the people grumbled – and Moses reacted.

GOD OF HOLINESS

God had two major thrusts of truth for the Hebrew people. These two thrusts would prepare them to live a life of holiness as God is holy. They would also, hopefully, prepare the Hebrew people for the coming of the Messiah – Jesus Christ. The first of these two major items were the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**. The second were the **OFFERINGS** and **FEASTS**. There were five offerings and twelve feasts – all seventeen designed to teach the Hebrew people holiness. They would point to the one true offering and sacrifice

SELECTED EVENT: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

We have four readings. The first gives the arrival of the Hebrew people at Mt Sinai – the mountain of God – where God calls for Moses. The second is the wording of God’s **Ten Commandments**. The third is the beginning of God’s detailed instructions to Moses Recorded from chapter 22:2 through to 31:17). The fourth reading is that at the conclusion of the instructions, God gives the tablets of stones to Moses..

Reading : **Exodus 19:1-25, 20:1-26, 21:1, 31:18 GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES**

One	<i>You shall have no other gods before me</i>
Two	<i>You shall not make for yourself an idol...</i>
Three	<i>You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God</i>
Four	<i>Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy</i>
Five	<i>Honour your father and your mother</i>
Six	<i>You shall not murder</i>
Seven	<i>You shall not commit adultery</i>
Eight	<i>You shall not steal</i>
Nine	<i>You shall not give false testimony</i>
Ten	<i>You shall not covet what your neighbour has.</i> Exodus 20:3-17 NIV

The Book of Exodus lays a foundational theology in which God reveals who he is, his attributes, his character, his law and how he is to be worshipped. God’s name is **YAHWEH**. Yahweh is the God of history – there is no one like him. “majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders” (15:11). The affliction of Israel and the plagues of Egypt were not beyond his control. Pharaoh, the Egyptians and Israel witnessed his mighty power. He has the attributes of justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness and holiness. God remembered his people and was so lovingly concerned about them that he planned their release (2:24). What he had promised centuries earlier to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he now begins to bring to fruition. The people are freed from Egyptian bondage, and set out for the land of promise. On the way they need to be given a foundation of God’s ethics and morality. So at Mt Sinai the Ten Commandments were given. With the Ten Commandments, Moses receives from God and conveys to God’s people practical instructions and significant ceremonies that will teach Israel how to apply the principles of the Ten Commandments – and how to live a Godly life.

SELECTED EVENTS: THE OFFERINGS AND FEASTS

THE FIVE OFFERINGS

Leviticus

1:1-17	BURNT OFFERING	Bull, ram or male bird wholly consumed – no defect.
6:8-13	OFFERING	<u>Voluntary</u> act of worship. Atonement for unintentional sin, expression of devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God.
8:18-21		
16:24		
2:1-16	GRAIN OFFERING	Grain, fine flour, olive oil, incense, baked bread, salt, no yeast or honey. Accompanied burnt offering and Thank offering (along with drink offering).
6:14-23	OFFERING	A <u>voluntary</u> act of worship. Recognition of God's goodness, provisions, and devotion to God.
3:1-17	THANK OFFERING	Any animal without defect, variety of breads.
7:11-34	OFFERING	<u>Voluntary</u> act of worship, thanksgiving and fellowship. It included a communal meal.
4:1-5:13	SIN OFFERING	1. Young bull for high priest and congregation. 2. Male goat for leader. 3. Female goat or lamb for common person. 4. Dove or pigeon for the poor. 5. Tenth of an ephah of fine flour for very poor.
6:24-30	OFFERING	
8:14-17	OFFERING	
16:3-22	OFFERING	<u>Mandatory</u> atonement for specific, unintentional sin; confession of sin, forgiveness of sin, cleansing from defilement.
5:14-6:7	GUILT OFFERING	Ram or lamb.
7:1-6	OFFERING	<u>Mandatory</u> atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution, cleansing from defilement; <u>make restitution; pay 20% fine.</u>

THE TWELVE FEASTS

Scripture

Ex 20:8-11	Sabbath	A day of rest for God's people and animals.
Ex 23:10-11	Sabbath Year	A year of rest for the land.
Lev 25:8-55	Year of Jubilee	Debts cancelled, slaves liberated, land returned.
Ex 12:1-14	PASSOVER	Remember Israel's deliverance from bondage.
Ex 12:15-20	Unleavened Bread	Remember how the Lord delivered Israel hastily.
Lev 23:9-14	Firstfruits	Recognize the Lord's bounty in the new land.
Lev 23:15-21	Weeks PENTECOST	Festival of joy culminating in Pentecost.
Lev 23:23-25	Trumpets	On a day of rest, Israel is presented to the Lord.
Lev 16, 23:26-32	Atonement	A day of rest and cleansing for priests and people.
Lev:33-36	TABERNACLES	Celebrating the journey from Egypt to Canaan.
Nu 29:35-38	Sacred Assembly	A day of rest and offering to close all the feasts.
Est 9:18-32	Purim	A special added feast day to remind Israel of its deliverance as a nation in the time of Esther.

THEIR PURPOSE

The first and obvious meaning of these OFFERINGS and FEASTS is that there was a purpose for the Hebrew people - and this is seen in the brief comments about each one.

However, they have great importance for the Christian for two reasons:

- They were intended to prepare the Hebrew people for the Messiah-*Yeshua* to come.
- They clearly show the person and pathway on earth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FIVE OFFERINGS

- The first three are voluntary. **The Burnt Offering** is an act of worship, devotion, surrender. Coming to the Lord Jesus Christ – or maintaining your relationship with Jesus after you have come to him – is your choice, voluntary. **The Grain Offering** recognises God's provision. You express your devotion as a voluntary act which he delights to receive. **The Thank Offering** focuses on a communal meal. Our devotion, as a Christian, is not in isolation. We voluntarily desire to worship God in the company of others who feel the same way as we do.
- The last two are mandatory. **The Sin Offering** is graded for all classes of people whether high or low, rich or poor, favoured or humble, good living or otherwise, there is still full and complete release from sin and cleansing from defilement of your past. Notice it is atonement from unintentional sin. We are all sinners. **The Guilt Offering**, likewise, is atonement from unintentional sin. The emphasis here is on the requirement to make restitution. When a person becomes a Christian, very often there are defrauded and hurting people in the past. The Christian is under obligation to make suitable restitution if it is at all possible. The Guilt Offering is mandatory.

THE TWELVE FEASTS

- The **Twelve Feasts** begin with an earthly and fundamental command to keep one day in seven as set apart for the Lord. Number eleven ends with a special day of rest and a commemoration closing the whole year of feasts. Our life on earth ends in heaven.
- There are three feasts special to the Hebrews and of great significance to the Christian. **The Passover** reminds us of the Passover Lamb that was slain for the world (1 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:28). In him we place our trust. Fifty days after the end of the Passover, came **Pentecost** (Deut 16:9-12). Three months after Pentecost came **Tabernacles**. This celebrates the long journey from the place of slavery (Egypt) to the Promised Land (Canaan). For the Christian, the Christian life begins with release from sin and captivity and after an earthly pilgrimage ends in a heavenly land of promise in fellowship with God. See John 7:2 and 37.

DISCUSSION POINTS

38. Can you say (a) where the Ten Commandments are found and (b) recite them?
39. As you review the Offerings and Feasts in your mind, what points of significance stand out for you? What do they, or any one, mean to you?

GOD OF FAITHFULNESS

THE PILLAR OF FIRE AND CLOUD

Reading: Numbers 9:15-23 THE CLOUD OVER THE TABERNACLE

The principal lesson that emerges from this fascinating happening is that God's people are a people who permit God to lead them. For the Christian, the cloud of fire is a symbol of the leading by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 says: "...those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God."

The Christian sees several important points in this historic happening:

- Verse 1 It was a rescued (redeemed) and separated (to God) people in the desert.
- Verse 15 The resting place of the cloud was over the Tabernacle (the place of the presence of God and of the sacrifices pointing to Jesus Christ). The Spirit is close.
- Verse 16 There was a twofold appearance – cloud by day and fire by night.
- Verse 17 Seven times in these verses is "command" or "order" given.
- Verses 17-22 The cloud indicated the will of God. When it moved they journeyed and when it rested they waited.
- Verse 21 They obeyed at once, whether it was in the day or in the night.
- Verse 22 Sometimes it rested a long time.

Three important verses in addition:

Numbers 10:12 says that two silver trumpets were to be sounded to call attention to the moving of the cloud.

Exodus 13:22 says that the cloud was never taken away.

Psalm 105:39 "He spread a cloud for a covering and a fire to give light at night.
(Two important functions of the Holy Spirit are to comfort and to guide.)

Other important lessons:

- There are two classes of people in this world. One wandering, unguided, lawless going its own way that can only lead to a dark lost eternity. The other led and directed every step of the journey of life. No longer wilful and disobedient, but guided by the Shepherd as in Psalm 23.
- The leading by God's Holy Spirit is not the same as following the natural light of conscience. The Holy Spirit leads through a prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures, and through a heart that turns to God and "tunes in" to God. Conscience confirms.
- We must "look up" if we are to see the cloud move. Prayer is essential.
- We must learn to wait until the cloud moves, never acting unless we are sure of God's will. Abraham tried to hurry God up and produce a child of promise (Genesis 16:1-3). Saul the king acted before God's time – and lost his crown (1 Samuel 13:8-9).
- We must be obedient when the cloud does move. If we know God's will we must do it.
- God was patient and gracious in not taking the cloud away (Exodus 13:21-22; 14:24). Even when the people danced round the golden calf (Exodus 32); when they rebelled with Korah (Numbers 16); when they wanted to stone Moses (Exodus 17), the cloud remained. God never takes the Holy Spirit away from us but lives within forever.

DISCUSSION POINTS

40. A basic question: Am I led by God's Holy Spirit? Am I a true child of God, or am I still wandering in darkness?
41. As a child of God, am I learning these guidance secrets: to wait on God, to pray and to read the Scriptures, and when I know God's will and direction – to obey?

THE BRONZE SNAKE

Reading: Numbers 21:4-9 “AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SNAKE...”

New Testament text: *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the **Son of Man** must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*” John 3:14-15

The principal lesson:

The snake represents Jesus Christ so when we look to Jesus Christ for the healing of our sinful life-condition, we will receive that healing.

[A personal note: I first trained as a military nurse in the Burnham Military Hospital, Christchurch, New Zealand. The brass badge I wore on my military hat was of a snake entwined around a vertical pole. This is a medical symbol with origins in this Old Testament incident. The badge declares that its wearer is involved in physical healing.]

Note these important points in the story:

- Verse 5 There was a sin that brought the judgement. The people's impatience led them to blaspheme God, to reject God's servant Moses and to despise the bread from heaven. Rejecting the heavenly manna was tantamount to spurning God's grace.
- Verse 5 The contempt for the manna is a warning for the Christian not to turn against the heavenly manna, Jesus Christ.
- Verse 6 While the snake on the pole represents Jesus Christ, the snakes on the ground represent Satan and all his evil works.
- Verse 6 Romans 6:23 says “The wages of sin is death”. Numbers 21:6 says, “Many Israelites died.”
- Verse 7 The people did react the right way. There was repentance, confession and a deep sincere acknowledgment “We have sinned”.
- Verse 7 There is an intercessor for the people – Moses. “So Moses prayed for the people”. In like manner, Jesus is our intercessor before God. (Example: John 17).
- Verse 8 This tells us that there is always a Divinely ordained remedy. “The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it on a pole...”
- Verse 9 There was a lifting up. Moses “put it up on a pole”. A reminder of Jesus.
- Verse 9 There was an explicit, exclusive way to be healed, “When anyone was bitten by a snake and looked”.
- Verse 9 Likewise, there was a specific result. The one who looked, lived.

The snake on the pole is a good illustration of the saving work of Jesus Christ:

- IT POINTS TO THE TRUE CHARACTER OF SIN
 - (a) Unbelief No confidence in God, no faith in God’s love.
 - (b) Defiance They spoke against God - lawless and disobedient.
 - (c) Contempt They loathed (despised) the Bread from heaven.
- IT PORTRAYS THE JUDGMENT OF GOD UPON SIN
 - (d) The Lord sent The Lord actioned a quick and effective response
 - (e) Snakes Venomous snakes were the appropriate response.
 - (f) Many died The outcome was decisive.
- IT PROVIDES THE REMEDY OF GOD FOR SIN
 - (g) God directed God used Moses to participate in the preparation
 - (h) Moses obeyed Moses allowed himself to be used by God
 - (i) The remedy Moses made the snake but God directed and enabled
- IT PRESENTS THE PLAN GOD HAS FOR LIVING
 - (j) A birthing The people looked and lived – a fresh beginning
 - (k) An expecting When you look your eyes look and your mind expects
 - (l) A relying When your sight rests and dwells on the object – you rely

DISCUSSION POINTS

42. God provided one, and only one, way to be healed from the deadly snakes. Assuming this account is a picture of Jesus Christ on the cross (John 3:14-15) discuss the Christian view that eternal life is only obtained through Jesus Christ.
43. If the snake on the pole is a picture of Jesus and the snakes on the ground represent Satan and the forces of evil, discuss why God chose to picture both Jesus and Satan’s host by snakes.

JOSHUA PREPARES TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND

Reading: Joshua 1:1-18 AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES...

At this point in our Old Testament studies we have reached the end of the wilderness wanderings and begin the events that occur in the Promised Land. Although there are many – as the rest of the Old Testament recounts – we will look at some key happenings.

The Book of Ruth tells us that God has the Gentiles (non-Jew) in his plans as well as the Jewish people.

The Book of Job says that God allows testing.

The Book of Daniel reveals that God can outline the future to us.

The Prophets predict Jesus Christ.

These will be the subject of our four remaining studies.

GOD OF JEWS AND GENTILES

RUTH: THE GENTILE. We study the Book of Ruth this session. What a wonderful little book this is! It is a “second chance” romance between a man of Israel and a non-Jewish widow who decides to follow the God of her mother-in-law. The purpose for the couple’s story being included in the Old Testament is clearly stated in the final verses.

We will approach our study differently from the others. As it is a small Book with a total of 85 verses divided into 4 chapters we will read the whole Book. It is such a delightful human-interest story that it warrants reading in one sitting.

First Reading: Ruth 1:1-22 NAOMI’S HEARTBREAK, RUTH’S DEVOTION

Christian’s have seen in this chapter a simple and beautiful illustration of a person choosing Jesus Christ for life and for eternity. Both Ruth and the believer express trust.

DISCUSSION POINTS

44. Ruth left her mother, her native land, and her religion, each of which were no doubt very dear to her heart, for she was a gentle, affectionate character.

Discuss: Natural ties must not hold us back from Jesus.

45. There are times in all lives when a choice has to be made. Discuss Ruth’s choice – then one you have had to make and now know was God’s plan.

46. The choice did not seem to be a very advantageous one. To stay with a widow in poor circumstances seemed unwise. Discuss.

Second Reading: Ruth 2:1-23 RUTH IN THE FIELD: BOAZ PROTECTOR

DISCUSSION POINTS

47. Discuss the behaviour of Boaz towards Ruth.

48. Discuss the reaction of Naomi when Ruth returned “home” to her.

Third Reading: Ruth 3:1-18 NAOMI’S ADVICE : RUTH’S OBEDIENCE

Ruth uncovered Boaz’s feet so that as the night temperature dropped, he would awake with cold feet and discover Ruth lying there. It is interesting that the words in verse 8 “was startled” may be translated “shivered with cold”. They mean, “startled with cold”.

Fourth Reading: Ruth 4:1-22 ANCESTORS OF JESUS

Ruth (a Gentile) and Boaz (a Hebrew) were ancestors (4:17) of Jesus (Matthew.1:5-16).

JOB – THROUGH TESTING TO TRIUMPH

JOB: THE GENTILE. The name “JOB” is pronounced “JOAB”. This book is a story about a man called Job. He lived somewhere between 2000 and 1000 B.C. The Jewish scholars who translated the ancient Hebrew Old Testament into Greek (Septuagint) more than 200 years before Jesus was born have added a postscript saying that Job was Jobab – the second king of Edom (Genesis 36:33). The kings of Edom generally lived in the rocky area of Edom south of the Dead Sea. But it is thought they also spent time in the more fertile plains along the northern borders of Arabia where Abraham came from. Another tradition is that Job was a descendent of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, and knew God by the name of “Shaddai” (“The Almighty”). There are 30 references to Shaddai in the book of Job. Of certainty is that Job was Gentile, a wealthy man living a semi nomadic lifestyle in the area between Palestine and Arabia (west and east) and from Edom (in the south) to the Euphrates (in the north). Tradition calls the home of Job Hauran, a region east of the Sea of Galilee, noted for its fertility of soil and grain, once thickly populated and now dotted with the ruins of 300 cities.

The story of Job may have been written by Moses. When Moses was in Midian country (Exodus 2:15) he would be close to Edom and could easily have access to the oral traditions and family records of Job – especially if Job was related to Abraham. Moses would consider Job being within the circle of God’s revelation.

Reading: Job 1:1-22 JOB LOSES ALL: BUT HE DID NOT BLAME GOD

In all this Job did not sin nor blame God. Job 1:22

DISCUSSION POINTS

49. **SATAN.** Satan’s interviews with God tell us (1:6-2:7) [1] that Satan is accountable to God; [2] that Satan’s mind is an open book to God; [3] that Satan is behind the evils that curse the earth; [4] that he is neither omnipresent nor omniscient (present in all places at once – know everything); [5] that he can do nothing without God’s permission. Discuss: Why did God let Satan test Job?
50. **JOB’S GREAT LOSSES.** Job lost much. Satan first attacked his property and his children. Discuss verses 21 and 22. Did the Lord ‘take away’? “In all this Job did not sin nor blame God.” What do we conclude from this statement?
51. Verse 15 speaks of the “Sabeans” raiders. Verse 16 speaks of the “fire of God” burning up. Verse 17 speaks of the Chaldeans capturing and killing. Verse 19 speaks of a “great wind” destroying. Where is God in each of these agencies?

Reading: Job 42:1-17 JOB PRAYS FOR HIS FRIENDS: GOD RESTORES

And the Lord restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Job 42:10

Of course, we have skipped right through the book to arrive at the triumph of Job. This means that we may not know all the discussions and travail Job has gone through. Nevertheless, we can make some observations based on the following:

- Satan, with his high profile at the beginning is strangely absent at the end.
- Job's three pontificating friends are reprimanded by God at the end.
- Job foreshadows Jesus Christ. Job suffered greatly and was humbled and stripped of all he had, but in the end he was restored and became the intercessor for his friends.
- Elihu (32:1) makes three significant statements about the role of the Holy Spirit.
In 32:8 he says that a person's understanding is not due to age or station in life, but rather is the result of the operation of the Spirit of God. The Spirit is the author of wisdom, endowing us with the capacity to know, and to make sense out of life.
In 33:4 we see that the Spirit of God is the source of life itself. Apart from the direct influence of the Spirit, we would not have come into existence.
In 34:14-15 says that if God withdrew his life-giving power of the Spirit, then human history would come to an end.

DISCUSSION POINTS

52. Are there any other indications of how Job foreshadows Jesus Christ?
53. Look up each of the three Scriptures on the Holy Spirit and put the teaching of each in your own words.
54. What do you think Job prayed for his friends?

SOME SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS

- 26:7a** *"He stretches out the north over empty space."*
 From the north pole there is a paucity of stars in the heavens.
- 26:7b** *"He hangs the earth on nothing."*
 One of the clearest ancient declarations that our earth 'hangs' in space.
- 26:8** *"He binds up the waters in His thick clouds, yet the clouds do not break under it."*
 We think clouds are lightweight. There are millions of tonnes of water up there!
- 26:10** *"He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness."* There is a spherical ring at that point on our earth. An incredible fact.
- 38:7** *"When the morning stars sang together..."*
 Radio telescopes depend on stars "singing". All stars emit a range of wavelengths.
- 38:14a** *"(The earth) takes on form like clay under a (spinning) seal."*
 Clay spinning on a potter's wheel is a good picture of a spherical earth rotating.
- 38:14b** *"And stands out like a garment."*
 A garment clothes us all around – a picture of earth's inhabitants around the earth.
- 38:22** *"Have you entered the treasury of snow?"*
 Within each snowflake are beautiful crystals, all different, that we cannot see.
- 38:31** *"Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades or loose the belt of Orion?"*
 The ancients were awed by the starry constellations. So are we today.
- 38:32** *"Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season or hide the Great Bear with its cubs?"* Who is able to guide and control the constellations? We cannot.
- 38:33** *"Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?"*
 Do we know completely the laws of the universe and of earth? No.

GOD OF THE FUTURE

The BOOK OF DANIEL is an incredible book! Daniel, the writer, is a most remarkable man who lived through the lives of different kings and lived to see the early part of his predictions fulfilled. Daniel was a man whose life demonstrated his words. He was a man of prayer. He was a man purpose. He was a man of power. Sometimes banished to insignificance, he would be given the opportunity to influence kings and to demonstrate the power of the mighty God. Testimony to his personal righteousness is given in Ezekiel 14¹²⁻²⁰ – a passage that ranks him with Noah and Job as among God’s greatest servants. His predictions of future events are graphic, clear and easily understood.

A BRIEF BACKGROUNDER TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Book of Daniel is divided into two equal sections:

HISTORICAL

PROPHETICAL

The DREAMS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR The VISIONS OF DANIEL

Chapter 1 The Young Captives	Chapter 7 The Four Beasts
Chapter 2 The King’s image dream	Chapter 8 The Ram and the Goat
Chapter 3 The Fiery Furnace	Chapter 9 The Seventy Sevens
Chapter 4 The Fallen Tree	Chapter 10 The Fallen King
Chapter 5 The Handwriting on the Wall	Chapter 11 The Wilful King
Chapter 6 The Lion’s Den	Chapter 12 The Time of the End

Babylon was a powerful city on the Euphrates River of what is now north of Baghdad in Iraq. Nebuchadnezzar was rapidly rising to power as a conquering general and then emperor of the newly resurgent Babylonian Empire. After Nebuchadnezzar’s first siege brought Jerusalem into submission, Daniel was taken captive to Babylon. It was Nebuchadnezzar’s custom to take the choicest teenagers from conquered lands, bring them to the capital Babylon, and subject them to a thorough indoctrination. These brilliant young people were fed Babylonian food, given Babylonian names and, as far as possible, absorbed into the Babylonian culture Daniel was renamed Belteshazzar, Hananiah became Shadrach, Mishael was renamed Meshach and Azariah was given Abed-nego. The only names that have gone down in history are these four who resisted brainwashing.

Reading: Daniel 1:1-22 DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS OBEY GOD

A believer today is always under pressure for being a Christian. It is often gentle and in fun, sometimes it is heavy and antagonistic persecution. But it is there and we are always being watched. In the Discussion Points that follow, you will be asked to answer some questions relating to **pressure** put upon you because you worship the one true God.

DISCUSSION POINTS

55. A believer today is always under pressure for being a Christian. It is often light – seemingly non-existent – but we are being watched. Sometimes it can be quite heavy. Discuss this pressure of the world and the temptation that sometimes comes to compromise. Can you think of some personal examples of how you have been put under pressure?
56. Daniel’s purpose was to remain separate at far as his upbringing; culture and faith were concerned. Discuss what is important to you in the preservation and protection of your godly culture and personal faith in Jesus Christ.
57. Daniel was under **pressure** to compromise, had a **purpose** to remain separate and perseverance regardless of the consequences. Discuss the possibility of facing a rule of government that set aside all your Christian privileges.

Reading: Daniel 2:1-49 NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM

“You saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands – supernaturally. You saw that it smashed to pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God has made known to the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its interpretation correct.” Daniel 2:45

THE 1ST KINGDOM HEAD OF GOLD BABYLON

Daniel interpreted the head of gold as representing Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian Empire. Gold, a very precious metal, symbolized royalty and monarchy matters. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch answering to no parliament, no courts. He ruled supreme.

THE 2ND KINGDOM CHEST AND ARMS OF SILVER PERSIA

Daniel said that the chest and arms of silver represented a kingdom that would arise after Babylon. It would be inferior to Babylon – just as silver is inferior to gold. Daniel lived to see the Babylonian Empire replaced by the Persian Empire. The Medes helped the Persians in their take-over – so it is sometimes called the Medo-Persian Empire. This twofold Empire could be illustrated in the two arms of the dream image. (See Daniel 5:28 and 8:20) It was larger and more powerful than the Babylonian Empire just as silver is stronger than gold. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, the Persian Emperors were not absolute but answered to the law (See Daniel 6:14-15). The Persian Empire dominated the world for 200 years after the conquest of Babylon in 539 B.C.

THE 3RD KINGDOM BODY AND THIGHS OF BRONZE GREECE

In 336 B.C., twenty-year-old Alexander the Great came to the throne in Macedonia in northern Greece. In the next thirteen years he conquered the whole of the Persian Empire from Egypt to the borders of India. When he died at 33, his Greek general divided his Empire. They and their successors ruled it as Grecian kingdoms for the next 250 years. Daniel does not identify this third empire in chapter 2, but in chapters 8 and 11 he names it and predicts its course in amazing detail.

THE 4TH KINGDOM LEGS OF IRON ROME

When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, Jerusalem was under Roman control. The Greek monarchs had fallen. Rome was the most powerful of all the empires, ruling with the strength of iron (Daniel 2:40). As iron is the most common of the four metals, so under Rome, the citizen was to have some rights unthinkable under Nebuchadnezzar. They included a right of appeal to higher courts used by the Apostle Paul (Acts 25:9-12). The clay in the feet of the image speaks of an awkward combination of democratic rights and dictatorial power.

THE 5TH KINGDOM THE STONE THAT SMASHES ALL

Nebuchadnezzar's awesome image was struck and destroyed by a "stone made without hands" – as some translations have it. Jesus Christ will fulfill this part of the dream at his Second Coming when he demolishes the governmental systems of the world. The stone "made without hands" or "supernaturally" suggests the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ.

The angel told Mary that her child would take the throne of David and rule forever (Luke 1:32-33). Daniel 2:44 tells us that Christ's rule will be over all nations. He will be King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

DISCUSSION POINTS

58. Examine King Nebuchadnezzar's response in chapter 2:46-47. What does it tell us about the king's heart and understanding of God?
59. Daniel spoke of each kingdom as being "inferior" to its forerunner. In what way was the second kingdom and others inferior?
60. The third Grecian kingdom broke into four at Alexander's unexpected death. The resulting dynasties ruled for 250 years. The four were Greek in government, language and culture. What influence did they leave by the time the Romans conquered and were firmly in place by the time of Jesus?
61. The iron and the clay may mean a combination of democratic rights and dictatorial power – but what else might they mean?
62. Eventually the "rock of ages" will smash all kingdoms and world governmental systems. Has there been any empire such as Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome since then? Discuss the Hitler/Mussolini attempts and more recently the Saddam Hussein attempt in Iraq. Discuss the growing might of China. Where do you think these fit in with Daniel's predictions?

Next we have a related study connected to our last one, 'God of the future'.

It lists some of the key Old Testament predictions of Jesus Christ's first coming to our earth.

First we give the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) prediction; then follows the New Testament fulfilment.

GOD OF THE COMING KING

MICAH SEES THE COMING CHILD OF BETHLEHEM

Micah 5:2 *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.* NIV

Micah predicts that out of little Bethlehem in the region of Ephrathah a ruler will arise. This ruler, in some mysterious way, has origins that go far back in time. The words of the NIV “from ancient times” can also be translated “from days of eternity”. The reference is clearly to the eternal Son of God - born as a babe in Bethlehem to be the Christ-Messiah.

Matthew 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem....

Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David (Bethlehem) a Saviour has been born to you....

ISAIAH PREDICTS THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The Virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (God with us).* NIV

A “sign” was usually fulfilled within a few years (see 20:3; 37:30; cf. 8:18). The word (*‘Almah*) can mean “virgin” or to a “young woman”. One possibility is that Isaiah was thinking of his own “young wife” (see 8:3). If this is so, God used Isaiah’s thought to point to someone far greater. Some translations of the Bible say “A young woman ... shall give birth to a son”. Accordingly, some doubt that Mary was a virgin, and suggest that Joseph or someone else made Mary pregnant. If we accept the Bible as “inspired” (“breathed into”) by God we must accept the statements of Scripture as given in **Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38 (Please read)**.

Matthew 1:18 *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.*

ZECHARIAH PREDICTS JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM

Zechariah 9:9 *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, Righteous and having salvation, Gentle and riding on a donkey, On a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Matthew 21:6-9. The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest!”

ISAIAH PREDICTS JESUS’ REJECTION BY HIS OWN

Isaiah 53:1, 3. *Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Matthew 26:3,4. *Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.*

John 12:37-38 says: *Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

DAVID PREDICTS THAT JESUS WILL BE REJECTED

Psalm 118:22 *The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone...*

Acts 4:11. *He is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.*

In the passage Acts 4:1-12 it says in verse 8, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit said to them...” The word “filled” is the same Greek word that is used in Acts 2:4 on the day of Pentecost. It means that God’s Spirit is in control of our spirit. So, when Peter was filled, again, on this occasion, his words to the Sanhedrin were God’s words.

DISCUSSION POINTS

63. Discuss the difference between the answer a believer gives out of natural wisdom, and the answer a believer can give when “filled” with the Spirit.
64. What is your definition of being “filled with the Spirit”?
65. Acts 4:12 says that Jesus is the only (exclusive) way we can be “saved”. What does the word “saved” mean - and what is the exclusive nature of Jesus saving us?

DAVID PREDICTS BETRAYAL BY A CLOSE FRIEND

Reading: **Psalm 41:1-13** This is a psalm written when King David was seriously ill. He was on his sickbed (3) but has confidence that God will “restore him from his bed of illness”. Word has reached his enemies of his condition and they gleefully await the expected outcome. Yet, David’s confidence is in the power of the Lord to raise him and his little psalm ends with praise. The value of this psalm lies in the way it is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. He left heaven’s glory to live in the weakness of frail humanity. His enemies gloated when they thought they had caught him. But God raised him up by his mighty power. The interesting part is verse 9. “Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” It is important because it reveals that a prophet may speak something that has an application for the time the prophet is living in, but it also has a predictive element that points down the years to a very special fulfilment.

Psalm 41:9 *“Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”*

Matthew 26:14 ... *Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests...*

Luke 22:21. *“But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.”*

ZECHARIAH PREDICTS THE 30 PIECES OF SILVER

Zechariah 11:12-13 *So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter” – the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.*

Thirty pieces of silver was the ancient Hebrew price of a slave (Exodus 21:32). There were three important elements to Zechariah’s prediction. 1. “Thirty pieces of silver” 2. Throwing the money into the Lord’s house (an unusual act) and 3. Reference to “potter”.

Matthew 26:14-15 Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” So they counted out **thirty pieces of silver**.

Matthew 27:5-7 So Judas threw the money **into the temple** and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this money into the treasury, since it is blood money.” So they decided use the money to buy **the potter’s field** as a burial place for foreigners.

ISAIAH PREDICTS THE TRIAL AND CONDEMNATION

Isaiah 53:8. *By oppression and judgement he was taken away...he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.*

Matthew 27:1-2. *Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, **led him away** and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.*

ISAIAH PREDICTS JESUS' SILENCE BEFORE ACCUSERS

Isaiah 53:7 *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

Matthew 27:12 *When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.*

Mark 15:3-5 *The chief priests asked him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." But Jesus still made no reply and Pilate was amazed.*

ISAIAH SAYS JESUS TO BE STRUCK AND SPAT UPON

Isaiah 50:6 *I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.* NIV

Mark 14:65 *Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.* NIV

DAVID PREDICTS THE MOCKING AND INSULTS

Psalm 22:7-8 *"All who see me mock me, they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."* NIV

Luke 23:11,35 *Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. (Later, at the cross) The people stood watching, and the rulers sneered at him...The soldiers also came up and mocked him.* NIV

DAVID PREDICTS THE DEATH METHOD OF CRUCIFIXION

Psalm 22:14,16-17 *"I am poured out like water. All my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax. It has melted within Me. Dogs have surrounded Me. The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet."* NKJV

Matthew 27:31 *Then they led him away to crucify him.* NIV

DAVID PREDICTS THE CASTING OF LOTS

Psalm 22:18 *"They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots."* NKJV

Matthew 27:35 *When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.* NIV

Isaiah 53:12 ISAIAH PREDICTS THE DEATH WITH CRIMINALS

...was numbered with the transgressors... NIV

Matthew 27:38 *Two robbers were crucified with him.* NIV

DAVID PREDICTS THAT VINEGAR WOULD BE OFFERED

Psalm 69:21 *"They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."* NKJV

Matthew 27:34 *There they offered Jesus wine (or vinegar) to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.* NIV

MOSES SAYS THAT NOT ONE BONE WOULD BE BROKEN

Exodus 12:46 *Do not break any of the bones.* NIV

John 19:33, *But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.*

ISAIAH SAYS THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD DIE FOR SIN

Isaiah 53:5-6,8,10a *But he was pierced for our transgression, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ...By oppression and judgment he was taken away.....he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken...Yet it was the LORD's (Yaweh's) will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering (sacrifice) he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. NIV*

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, "Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." NIV*

DAVID PREDICTS THE RESURRECTION

Psalm 16:10 *"For You (God) will not leave my soul in Sheol (the place of the dead), nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption (decay)." NKJV*

Acts 2:24-32 *But God raised him from the dead. David said about him: "...nor will you let your holy one see decay." Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. NIV*

DAVID SEES THE MESSIAH AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND

Psalm 110:1 *"The LORD (of the universe 'Yaweh') said to my Lord (the Messiah 'Adonai') "Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool." NKJV*

Mark 16:19 *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. NIV*

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE MESSIAH

I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, his hair like whitest wool. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire, and a river of fire flowed from his presence. Millions of angels ministered to him, and a hundred million stood to attend him. Then the court began its session and the books were opened:
As my vision continued that night, I saw someone who looked like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honour, and royal power over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal – it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. DANIEL 7:9-10 and 13-14

You have reached the end of this first course in our series of six courses. We trust you have been blessed and gained increased understanding of our God and the Word.