

# **God's Million Year Building Project**

## **The Story of the Kingdom of God**

### **Author's Introduction**

The lessons that follow were taught twice in the Sunday School at Lehigh Valley Presbyterian Church in Allentown, PA – first in the high school class, and then in the adult class. These lessons were adapted from a weekend conference I taught many times to college students. My pattern and inspiration was a similar conference created and taught to college students by The Reverend Jack Kinneer – at that time a pastor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and now ordained in the Presbyterian Church in American and teaching New Testament at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh.

Much of the organized biblical teaching available to us is systematic in nature. This is very desirable and necessary, but what many Christians lack is an overall picture of the whole story of the Bible. These lessons take students from one end of the Bible to the other, telling the grand story of God's eternal plan to establish a Kingdom of men and women like Himself – in harmony with God, each other, and all creation. College students were so hungry for this knowledge, some returned to the weekend conference several times, and it met a deep need in our church as well.

These lessons are my unedited notes. I generally covered each lesson in one class period, but that means I moved quickly and skipped some material. There is no time for idle chit-chat. The teacher must use some discretion in what to cover and what to skip. Of course the time could be extended, but that carries the risk of making the course so long it becomes tedious. What must never be skipped is pointing the students to the longing for a seed who will crush the serpent's head.

These lessons incorporate reading large sections of scripture. I did this because many of my original students had little familiarity with the Bible, and some had been misguided. They needed to read the texts for themselves. How much of the text is read in class will be dependent upon that level of biblical knowledge among the students.

David Green  
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## Lesson Plan

<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Passage</i>
1	Introduction	
<b>God's New World</b>		
2	Building a New World	Genesis 1
3	King of the World	Genesis 2
4	Enemy Invasion I	Genesis 3
5	Enemy Invasion II	Genesis 3
<b>New Family</b>		
6	Birth of the Seed	Genesis 4-5
7	End of the World	Genesis 6-7
8	New World II	Genesis 8-11
9	New Family	Genesis 12-15
10	Isaac	Genesis 16-26
11	Jacob, Joseph, Judah	Genesis 27-50
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12	Slavery in Egypt	Exodus 1-11
13	New Nation	Exodus 12-18
14	New Covenant I	Exodus 19-24
15	Breaking the Covenant I	Exodus 24-40, Numbers
16	New Home	Joshua
17	Breaking the Covenant II	Judges
<b>New King</b>		

18	New King	Ruth, 1 Samuel
19	New Covenant II	2 Samuel, Psalms
20	Glory of Solomon	1 Kings 1-11, Wisdom Lit.
21	Breaking the Covenant III	1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings
<b>Word from God</b>		
22	Early Prophets, Prophetic Office	Miscellaneous
23	Covenant Lawsuit	Isaiah 1-39
24	New Creation, New Covenant	Isa 40-66, Jeremiah, Lam. .
25	Pre-exilic Prophets	Hosea-Zephaniah
<b>Restored Nation</b>		
26	Renewed Covenant	Ezekiel
27	Restored Nation	Ezra, Nehemiah, Hag, Zech
28	Day of the Lord	Malachi-Matthew
<b>The Seed</b>		
29	Son of David	Matthew
30	Son of God	Mark
31	Son of Man	Luke
32	New Creator	John
<b>All Things New</b>		
33	New Covenant III	Miscellaneous
34	New People	Acts 2, Ephesians 2
35	New Man	Eph. 2, 1 Corinthians 15
36	New Worship	Hebrews

37	Jesus' Final Revelation	Revelation 1-11
38	All Things New	Revelation 12-19

## **Lesson 1**

### ***Introduction***

1. What's your favorite story in the Bible?
2. If someone said, "What is the Bible?" what would you say?
  - Gk. βιβλια: books
3. What sort of books are in the Bible?
4. There are several ways of classifying the books in the Bible. We can group them by types of literature, called "literary genres." Here are eight literary genres found in the Bible.
  - a. History
    - i. Purpose is to tell the story of redemption
    - ii. Not intended to be a consistent narrative of all events
  - b. Law
    - i. "Torah" may better be translated "teaching"
    - ii. Not a Roman/western type legal code
    - iii. Civil, ceremonial, moral
  - c. Poetry
    - i. No rhythm or rhyme
    - ii. Parallelism and images
  - d. Prophecy
    - i. Primary message: God is directing human affairs
    - ii. Use of symbols and poetry
  - e. Parables
    - i. Told to make one point
    - ii. Secondary points may be evident, but beware of over-allegorizing
  - f. Epistles
    - i. Purpose is to instruct
    - ii. Teach doctrine and ethics
  - g. Apocalyptic
    - i. Presents earthly events as manifestations of heavenly warfare
  - h. Gospel.
    - i. Neither history nor biography nor sermon, but contains elements of all
    - ii. Purpose is to herald the news of salvation in Christ

5. This is important because you have to know the type of literature in order to understand it.
  - a. Poetry stirs the emotions, but does not give a scientific description.
  - b. Narrative does not tell us specifically what to do.
  - c. The Onion article on the Korean dictator as “sexiest man alive” tricked Chinese newspapers because they did not grasp that it was satire. *U.S. News*, Sept 27, 2012
  
6. Another way of thinking about Biblical literature is to notice three types of writing. These types of writing can show up in various literary genres.
  - a. Narrative – tells a story
  - b. Discourse – instructs
  - c. Poetic – paints a picture
  
7. Is the Bible just a jumble of 66 books? Is there a consistent message? What is the Bible about?
  
8. Two of your three years in the high school Sunday School class you study the Westminster Shorter Catechism. That study is called systematic theology. It’s where you collect scriptures from all over the Bible that teach on a series of topics. This is important. You need to know what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit, baptism, creation, etc.
  
9. This year we are going to do what’s called Biblical theology. That’s where we read the Bible from beginning to end and learn its story. Some of our reading will be those familiar stories you’ve grown up with. Some will be completely new. This time we are going to tie them all together into one big story that goes from Genesis to Revelation.
  
10. The title of our class is “God’s Million Year Building Project.” We’re going to see that everything in the Bible is about God’s work to build a beautiful planet full of people like Himself with whom He can be friends forever. Genesis is about the start of this project, Revelation is about the completion, and all the books in between are about how God overcomes many obstacles to accomplish this goal.

**Lesson 2**  
***Building a New World***  
Genesis 1:1-2:3

1. What is the Bible?
2. What are some types of literature you can find in the Bible?
3. What did I say last week is the message of the whole Bible?
  - a. God's work to build a beautiful planet full of people like Himself with whom He can be friends forever.
4. Let's begin this morning's lesson by reading Genesis 1:1-25.
5. What do we learn about God from the first three verses?
  - a. Pre-existent
  - b. Triune
    - i. God
    - ii. Spirit
    - iii. Word
6. What was the initial condition of the creation? (v. 2)
  - a. Formless and empty
7. So there are two problems with creation: it is formless and it is empty. In the next six days God will correct these problems by shaping and filling creation.
8. What did God do on day 1? Day 2? Day 3? Day 4? Day 5? Day 6?
9. What were acts of shaping? On which days did they occur?
10. Days 1-3: structuring.
  - a. Separating light and dark
  - b. Separating the waters above and the waters below
  - c. Separating the water and the land
  - d. Firmament (expanse) – the heavenly dome

11. What were acts of filling? When did filling occur?
12. Days 4-6: filling.
  - a. Filling the heavens
  - b. Filling the waters
  - c. Filling the land
  - d. Ruling (v. 18)
13. Now let's read Genesis 1:26-2:3.
14. What is different about man?
15. In the ancient world an image is not a picture or statue. An image is the *representative presence of deity*. By saying man was made in God's image, God was declaring that man would be His representative. Man on earth would have the authority of God to rule the creation.
16. What was man's job? What did God tell man to do?
  - a. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth
  - b. Subdue it, have dominion over it
17. What does this mean?
18. What message does the world give us about our purpose in life?
19. What is *your* role in filling and subduing the earth?
20. How are young people tempted to shirk this calling?
21. Why did God rest on the seventh day?
22. Notice that rest is woven into the fabric of the universe. Later God will include rest on the seventh day as part of His law, but here at the beginning resting on the seventh day is founded in the nature of creation. Resting one day in seven is a creation law, like the law of gravity.

23. So now God has finished building His planet. Space and time are organized, the raw materials are provided, and the builder has been appointed. Everything about God's work was very good. But this is just the beginning. You aren't finished building a house when you have raised the walls and roof, bought all the material, and hired a contractor. The contractor still needs to hire more workers and use the materials to finish the house. He needs to install the cabinets, doors, moulding, etc. and finish it by painting, staining, etc. Likewise, now man will need to finish earth by using the raw materials to make it a comfortable house for him and God to inhabit.

**Lesson 3**  
***King of the World***  
Genesis 2:4-25

1. What were the two problems God faced at the beginning of creation?
  - a. It was formless, and empty
2. How did He solve these two problems?
3. What is man's special role in creation?
4. What does it mean that he is God's image?
5. What are *you* doing to fill and rule the earth?
6. Genesis chapter 1 is the broad overview of creation. In chapter 2 God focuses on man and his special role on the earth.
7. Read Genesis 2:4-9.
8. Look at verse 4. The phrase "these are the generations" shows up many times in the book of Genesis. It is always the mark of a new section of the book. The first section was about creation of the heavens and the earth from nothing. This section will be about the offspring of the heavens and the earth – what springs up from the earth.
9. What do these verses teach us about man?
  - a. Man was needed to work the ground
  - b. Man is a spirit-dust creature
10. Notice that the Hebrew word for breath (רוּחַ, v. 7) is the same word for spirit. God is giving man a spirit, different from animals.
11. Why did God prepare a garden?
  - a. Eden was a royal pleasure garden, a pattern for the earth
12. Read verses 10-14.

13. Why is this here? How is this information useful?
  - a. Raw materials for ruling the earth
  - b. Map of the earth
14. Read verses 15-17.
15. What is man's fundamental role at this point?
  - a. Tend and guard (vs 15)
16. What does it mean to tend?
17. What does it mean to guard?
18. What is implied in the need to guard the garden?
  - a. An enemy
19. Read verses 18-25.
20. Why did God make woman?
21. Is woman inferior to man?
22. How did Adam react when he saw the woman?
23. The world tends to distort the created order in two ways. One is to treat men and women as radically different, and that always entails women being inferior to men. This was more common 100 years ago. The other distortion is to treat men and women as essentially the same. This is the prevailing view today.
24. The biblical view of men and women is that they are made in God's image. Like the members of the trinity, they are equal in dignity, but different in role. Men and women are equally made in God's image. In that regard they are the same. But they play different roles, and in that way they are different. The biblical view refutes both worldly distortions of mankind.

25. The key verse is verse 18. Woman is a creature “fit” for man. Other words would be “corresponding to”, or “complementary”. Woman is not a man, but she is part of mankind. If Adam was king of creation, Eve was the queen. She was neither the king nor the servant. Mankind is like shoes. Two right shoes are no good. But a shoe and a bucket are no good either. You need two shoes, but you need two that complement each other. You need a right shoe and a left shoe. So man needs a creature who is human, but not man. He needs a woman!
26. In what way are you young men called to tend and guard now?
27. What should you young women be doing now?
28. If it is not good for man to be alone, what does that mean for all of you now?

**Lesson 4**  
***Enemy Invasion***  
Genesis 3

1. What sort of creature is man? How is he different from the animals?
  - a. A spirit and dust creature
2. What were Adam's two primary responsibilities?
  - a. Tend and guard the garden
3. What is woman's relationship to man?
  - a. She complements him
  - b. If man is king, she is queen
4. How does this apply to you now?
5. Last week we focused on God's command to Adam to tend and guard the garden. But God also gave one other important command. Do you remember what it was? (Genesis 2:16-17)
  - a. Refrain from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
6. This week this command is going to get Adam and his woman into a heap of trouble.
7. Let's read Genesis 3:1-6.
8. What's going on here? What's wrong with this picture?
  - a. Talking animal
  - b. Animal questioning God
9. What was the serpent asking the woman to do?
  - a. Note he did not ask her or tell her to eat the fruit.
  - b. He was inviting her to decide who was telling the truth – God or the serpent.
  - c. The woman was being enticed to make an independent evaluation of God's word.

10. On what basis did the woman make her decision?
  - a. Empirical observation – based on what she could see.
  - b. Which is more real – what you can see, or what God says?
11. What was Adam’s role in making the decision to eat the fruit?
12. What should Adam have done?
13. Why did he not prevent his woman from eating the fruit?
14. Why did Adam eat the fruit?
15. Let’s read verses 7-13.
16. What did Adam and his woman do? Why?
17. What did God do?
18. The Hebrew word translated “voice” in verse 8 (קוֹל) can also mean “noise, sound, roar, etc.” In this context I don’t think it was an enchanting sound. It more likely indicates a stern or fierce shout.
19. Why did God ask Adam what had happened? Doesn’t God know everything?
20. How did Adam respond?
  - a. Blamed his wife.
21. Who did the woman blame?
22. At creation, what was Adam’s relationship to woman and to animals?
  - a. Adam was in charge, but there was harmony.
23. How has that relationship changed?
  - a. Adam is no longer in control, and now there is discord.
24. Let’s read verses 14-19.

25. So God curses everything. What was the first curse?
  - a. On the serpent (v. 14-15).
  - b. Crawl on his belly.
  - c. Hatred between him and the woman.
  - d. Death at the hands of her child.
  
26. What was the second curse?
  - a. On the woman (v.16).
  - b. Pain in childbirth.
  - c. Subordination to her husband.
  
27. What was the third curse?
  - a. On the ground (v. 17-19).
  - b. Work shall be painful.
  
28. What is the ultimate fate of Adam?
  - a. Return to dust.
  
29. So Adam is going to die, just as God had warned. Now what? What shall he do next?
  
30. Let's read verses 20-24.
  
31. Why did Adam name his wife Eve?
  - a. She was the mother of all living.
  
32. How could Eve become a mother? God just told Adam that he would die.
  - a. God had also said that Eve's child would kill the serpent.
  
33. What does that tell us about Adam?
  - a. He believed God's promise to save him through Eve's child.
  
34. Why did God give Adam and Eve different clothing? What had to happen in order for Adam and Eve to be clothed in skins?
  - a. An animal had to be killed.

35. In 1 Timothy 2:14 we are told clearly that the woman was deceived by the serpent. He confused her, got her all mixed up. She thought she had to make her own judgment about whether or not God was telling the truth. Adam, however, was not confused. He knew exactly what was going on. His job was to guard the garden against enemy invaders, and he failed completely. He should have chopped off the head of the serpent immediately. Instead, he used his woman as bait to see what would happen if she ate the fruit.
36. God could have destroyed Adam and Eve right there, but He shows His mercy in postponing the death sentence. Even more, God allows Adam and Eve to participate in the eventual triumph over the serpent. Someday Eve will have a child who will chop off the serpent's head.
37. Adam was condemned to death, but he believed God's promise. He believed that his woman would become a mother and her child would save them all from death. So in faith he names her "Mother of all living."
38. God responded to Adam's faith by killing an animal in his place. The blood of the animal was a substitute for Adam's blood, and the skin of the animal was a covering for Adam's sin. But now Adam will go about dressed like a beast. What is Adam now? Is he the image of God? Or is he the image of the serpent?
39. In the midst of catastrophic defeat, God promised victory through a child. So now the central question before all humanity is this, "Where is the seed who will defeat the serpent?"

**Lesson 5**  
***Birth of the Seed***  
Genesis 4-5

1. Why did Eve eat the forbidden fruit?
2. Why didn't Adam stop her?
3. Who was most to blame for their fall into sin?
4. How did God show mercy to Adam and Eve?
5. How do we know Adam believed God's promise to save them?
6. Read Genesis 4:1.
7. How do you think Adam and Eve felt when Cain was born?
  - a. Joy at the arrival of the seed (savior).
8. Let's read verses 2-7.
9. What was Cain's problem?
10. Why didn't God accept Cain's offering?
  - a. Only blood can substitute for blood. It needed to be an animal.
11. What should Cain have done?
  - a. Traded some vegetables for some sheep and offer the sheep.
12. How did Cain react to God's judgment?
13. Note that worship was already being practiced even at this early stage in history.
14. Let's continue reading verses 8-15.
15. Why did Cain kill Abel?

16. Why did Cain lie to God. Wasn't that pretty stupid?
17. How can blood cry from the ground? (v. 10)
18. Are verses 10-12 sort of pagan? How can blood cry, the ground open her mouth, and the ground refuse to yield a good crop to Cain?
19. Did Cain repent of his sin? How would you describe his response to God? (vv. 13-14)
20. What would you have done if you were God?
21. How would you describe God's response?
22. Meanwhile, what would Adam and Eve have thought about all of this?
  - a. Sorrow at the loss of their son.
  - b. Dismay that wicked Cain was left.
  - c. Wonder about the promise of a seed.
23. Notice that false worship led to murder. Cain's problem was not that he didn't believe in God. He did. He even worshiped God. His problem was that he worshiped the wrong way.
24. These days people have the idea that what's important is to be sincere in worship. Well, Jesus attacked hypocrisy, but sincere wrong worship is just as bad. Sincerity is not enough. Worship that is acceptable to God must be done only the way God prescribes. False worship leads to murder.
25. Now let's see what became of Cain.
26. Read verses 16-24.
27. What does verse 16 tell us about Cain?
28. Some people think that it's a big mystery where Cain got his wife. What do you think?
29. What became of Cain's descendants? What sort of people were they?
  - a. Culture of art and murder

30. Is this the end? At this point Adam and Eve must think that God has abandoned them. Their only child is a murderer. Where is the child who will slay the serpent? Will God leave them to die?
31. Read verses 25-26.
32. Who did Seth replace?
33. Why did he not replace Cain? What does this tell us about Adam and Eve's understanding of the seed?
34. Read Genesis 5:1-32.
35. Did you notice that phrase, "this is the book of the generations?" Now we've turned to a new chapter in Genesis.
36. Genesis 5:1 reminds us that God created man in His likeness. Verse 3 tells us that Seth was begotten in Adam's likeness. Adam was like God, and Seth was like Adam. This implies that Cain was not like God or Adam. We're seeing two human races unfolding – the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent.
37. What happened to Enoch? (v. 24)
38. Who lived the longest? How long did he live?
  - a. Methuselah, 969 years. (v. 27)
39. The word "Noah" means "rest." What sort of rest would he provide?
40. Today we saw the deadly results of false worship. What are some examples of false worship today? What should we do about false worship?

**Lesson 6**  
***End of the World***  
Genesis 6-7

1. What was Cain's problem?
2. What does false worship lead to?
3. What should we do about false worship?
4. Genesis 5 gave us a hint that things were not going well on earth. Lamech named his son "Noah" in the hope that he would bring relief from their toil. Let's find out more detail about what was going wrong.
5. Read Genesis 6:1-8.
6. Who do you think were the sons of God?
7. Who were the daughters of men?
8. What happened when they married?
9. Verse 4 tells us that when the sons of God mated with the daughters of men, their children were giants. This leads some people to think that the sons of God were demons. Elsewhere in scripture the term "sons of God" is used for angelic beings, so this idea is not entirely far-fetched. The problem with this idea is that there is no evidence that angels or demons are capable of mating with human beings.
10. A better explanation is that the sons of God are men made in the image and likeness of God – the seed of the woman. This is also one way this term is used in scripture. So the daughters of men would be the offspring of Cain and his wicked children. Young men of godly parents were enticed by the beauty of young women born to wicked parents. Carried away by desire, these young men married the pretty girls. The children of these marriages were mighty, but wicked.

11. What would happen if this continued? If all the young men of godly parents married young women of wicked parent and their children turned to evil, what would eventually happen? And if there were no more godly children, how could there be a seed to crush the serpent? So we see that intermarriage was an attack of the serpent using woman as the bait. It was the same tactic he used in the garden, but with a different twist.
12. Verse 5 tells us that the earth was filled with wickedness. Verses 6-7 tell us that God decided to destroy the earth because of this wickedness. The picture here is not of random lying and stealing. The world had become a social jungle. Murder, kidnaping, rape, slavery, etc. were daily occurrences in every neighborhood. The powerful forced themselves on the weak, and no one was safe from violence every day.
13. Why would man's wickedness lead God to destroy the animals, too? (v. 7)
14. What did Noah do to receive God's blessing? (v. 8)
15. God chose Noah not because he was more righteous than his neighbors, although that was likely. God chose Noah because He wanted to. Grace is God's favor apart from anything we have done.
16. Read Genesis 6:9-22.
17. Here is that phrase again, "these are the generations..." We're beginning a new chapter of Genesis.
18. Now we learn what sort of man Noah was – in verse 9.
19. Why did God provide such detailed plans for the ark?
20. What did God promise to Noah? (v. 18)
21. What is a covenant?
  - a. "An agreement between two or more persons." WSC
22. What was it like for Noah to build an ark? How credible was it to expect a world-wide flood? Why would anyone believe this? What would his neighbors think?

23. Read Genesis 7:1-6.
24. How many years did it take for Noah to build the ark?
  - a. 100
25. Read Genesis 7:7-24.
26. After 40 days, what did the earth look like?
27. God acted against the wickedness on the earth by baptizing it. He sprinkled the earth with water and cleaned it of all the wickedness. After 40 days the earth returned to its original state. It was a watery wasteland – formless and empty. Sin had produced violence and brought about the end of the world.
28. One of the important lessons of this story is the danger of intermarriage with unbelievers. Unbelievers may look beautiful, but they are a trap of Satan.

**Lesson 7**  
***New World***  
Genesis 8-11

1. Why did God destroy the earth with a flood?
2. Why did God pick Noah to be saved?
3. How long did it take Noah to build the ark?
4. How much help did he get from his friends and neighbors?
5. How long did it rain?
6. After 40 days of rain, what was the earth like?
7. Read Genesis 8:1-19
8. What happened after the rain stopped? (v. 1)
9. The Hebrew word for wind (רוּחַ) is the same one we use for breath and spirit. When we read that “God made a wind blow over the earth,” we could also say, “God made His spirit pass over the earth.” Now what does that sound like?
  - a. Genesis 1:2; “The Sprit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”
10. What did the wind do?
  - a. Dried out the earth.
11. What did God do on the third day of creation?
  - a. Separated the seas and the dry land.
12. How long was Noah in the ark? (vv. 13-16, cf. 7:10-11)
  - a. One year and 10 days.
13. What was it like to spend a year closed up in an ark with thousands of animals?

14. Now read Genesis 8:20-22.
15. What was the first thing Noah did after he left the ark?
16. What would it mean for us to follow his example?
17. What are the implications of God's promise in verses 21-22?
  - a. Regularity of nature makes science possible.
18. Read Genesis 9:1-7.
19. What do you notice about God's blessing?
20. What is similar to God's blessing at creation? What is different?
21. Look at verse 4. What is the life of an animal?
  - a. Blood is the symbol for life.
22. What does verse 6 introduce?
  - a. Capital punishment.
23. Read verses 8-17.
24. Last week we saw in chapter 6 that God promised to establish His covenant with Noah. How did we define a covenant?
  - a. "An agreement between two or more persons." WSC
25. Now we learn a lot more detail about this covenant. Who is part of the covenant?
  - a. Noah, his children, the animals.
26. Why did God include Noah's children and the animals in the covenant?
27. How long will this covenant be in force? (v. 12)
  - a. "All future generations."
28. What is the sign of this covenant?

29. Who is this sign for? Who is supposed to see it? (v. 16)
  - a. God
  
30. Now our understanding is much enhanced. A covenant is much more than an agreement. It is different than a business contract. A covenant is an interpersonal bond – a personal relationship. Here we see that a covenant has four elements:
  - a. Interpersonal bond
  - b. Intergenerational
  - c. Extends to all subordinates
  - d. Physical sign: for God
  
31. We are going to see a lot more about covenants in the Bible, and more features will be added. But these four elements are foundational to the nature of a covenant.
  
32. Read Genesis 9:18-29.
  
33. Translations of the Bible typically read that Noah was drunk, but some scholars dispute that reading. The important point to grasp here is the curse that was placed on Canaan, which will become significant later.
  
34. Read Genesis 10:1, 32.
  
35. Another chapter! If you count them, you will discover 70 nations descended from Noah.
  
36. Read Genesis 11:1-9.
  
37. What did the descendants of Noah decide to do? (v. 4)
  
38. What did God think of this plan? Why?
  
39. What was wrong with their plan?
  - a. Making a name for themselves, not for God.
  - b. Refusing to fill the earth as God had commanded.

40. In the beginning, God brought a beautiful earth out of a watery waste. When man had completely corrupted the earth, God cleansed it with water and returned it to its original condition. It was *decreation*. Then God re-created the earth. He made a new heavens and a new earth. His spirit blew across the water and brought forth dry ground. God repopulated the earth with the people and animals from the ark. And He put a bow in the new heavens. This is the first new heaven and new earth.
41. God re-established the creation mandate – His command to Adam, now to Noah, to be fruitful and multiply, rule the earth and fill it. But this time he also gave Noah animals to eat, and He established human government to keep wickedness in check.
42. But within a few generations God’s people again rebelled against Him. They refused to serve God on earth, instead pretending to reach into heaven. They refused to fill the earth, instead clumping together in one city. This time God intervened to prevent their wickedness from growing into terrible violence. God stopped the growth of sin – but who is there who will serve God? And is there still any hope for a seed – a child who will crush the serpent and save the human race?

**Lesson 8**  
***New Family***  
Genesis 12-15

1. After the flood God recreated the earth and blessed Noah. What was similar to God's blessing to Adam?
2. What was different this time?
3. What are the four foundational features of a covenant?
  - a. Interpersonal bond
  - b. Intergenerational
  - c. Extends to all subordinates
  - d. Physical sign: for God
4. Who is the sign for? Who is it supposed to remind?
5. We left off last week with Noah's descendants in rebellion against God. The question hanging in the air is, "Where is the promised seed – the child who will crush the serpent and save all humanity from destruction?"
6. The next chapter really begins in Genesis 11.
7. Read Genesis 11:27-32.
8. This is the story of a family – Terah and his children. One of them will be central, but all are involved.
9. Read Genesis 12:1-9.
10. Where did God tell Abram to go?
11. How old was Abram?
12. Would you move to an unknown destination when you are 75 years old?
13. What do you think Mrs. Abram thought about this vision?

14. Why did Abram go?
15. What did God promise?
16. How many children did Abram have?
17. So how is he going to become a great nation?
18. Why is Abram not self-delusional?
19. When did Abram arrive? (vv. 6-7)
20. What was the first thing Abram did when he arrived at his destination?
21. Why did God call Abram? Why not his brother Nahor, or his nephew Lot, or some other person?
22. As with Noah, we see God's call is based on grace, not on performance. God did not call Abram because he *was* better than his contemporaries. God called Abram in order to *make* him better than his neighbors.
23. God called Abram to leave his father's house, land, people (cf 2:24). He promised Abram a new house, land, and people. In addition He promised that Abram would become a universal blessing. The hope of the seed lives!
24. In the following years Abram and Sarai traveled around the land where God sent them, and ventured into Egypt during a famine. Back in Canaan, Abram and his nephew Lot separated because their flocks were too large to manage as one operation. Later Lot was attacked and captured by an army from Mesopotamia. In a daring night raid Abram and his men rescued Lot. It was a great moment! But what will that big army from Mesopotamia do now? Will they come after Abram?
25. Read Genesis 15:1-6.
26. Abram is afraid of retaliation by the kings from Mesopotamia. How does God address his fear?

27. Why does Abram raise the question in verse 2?
28. How does God reply?
29. Why did Abram believe God? What proof did God give him?
30. What does it mean, “he counted it to him as righteousness?”
31. Read verses 7-21.
32. Isn’t this spooky? What is going on here?
33. Verse 18 tells us what this is all about. It is a covenant-making ceremony. Scholars have learned that this is how men in the ancient Near East made covenants. They cut apart animal sacrifices, joined arms, and walked between the pieces. They declared, “May God cut me like these animals if I am unfaithful to this covenant.”
34. So Abram prepared the animals and waited for God to show up. Finally God appeared, present in the smoke and fire. But God alone passed between the animal pieces. Why?
35. Now we can further define a covenant when God is involved.
  - a. Self-maledictory oath
  - b. Sovereign establishment
  - c. Instituted by shedding blood
  - d. A personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice
36. When mankind had again turned to wickedness, God called a man out from his family and his home, to make a new family from him and to give him a new home. God never planned to bless just Abram. From the beginning God intended to bless the whole world, using Abram and his family as the means. God has not forgotten the human race. He will bring a child who will crush the serpent and save the world – and that child will come from Abram.

37. To prove His intention and to solidify His promise, God made a covenant with Abram. God bound Himself to Abram in an eternal relationship. God and Abram would always be faithful to each other – always to serve each other and love each other. But when it came time to make the covenant, only God made the promise. “If either of us become unfaithful to this covenant, may he be cut apart as these animals.” Abram could not make that promise. Before long, Abram wavered and was unfaithful to God. But God was never unfaithful to Abram. However, one day God will be cut open to pay for the broken covenant. Since God was the only covenant maker, He alone will pay for Abram’s failure.

**Lesson 9**  
***Isaac***  
Genesis 16-26

1. Why did God call Abram instead of someone else?
2. How did Abram respond to God's promise of many children, even though his wife was barren?
  - a. Believed God
3. Why did God make a covenant with Abram?
4. From this event, how did we define a divine covenant?
  - a. A personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice.
5. Later God appeared again to Abram and repeated his covenant promise. This time God added a covenant sign.
6. Read Genesis 17:1-14.
7. Why did God rename Abram? What does this signify?
  - a. Naming as authority, as father
8. Covenant promise: "I will be your God" (v. 8)
9. This is the heart of the covenant God makes with His people. A lot of people think that a covenant is an agreement to keep certain rules. There are rules in a covenant, but the purpose of the rules is to keep the covenant healthy. The rules are not the essence of the covenant. The heart of a covenant is a personal bond. Just as marriage is a personal bond, so the divine covenant is a personal bond. And just as a man longs for a wife, and a woman for a husband – so God longs for a people, and human beings long for a god. These longings are satisfied when the only true God says to us, "I will be your God."
10. What sign did God give Abram to seal the covenant?

11. From now on God's people will be marked by circumcision, the sign of the covenant. Remember, who is the sign for? Who needs to see it?
12. The rest of the book of Genesis is about God's fulfilling His promises to Abram. First was the matter of a child.
13. Read Genesis 17:15-17.
14. How old was Sarai by now?
  - a. 90
15. How could she bear a child?
16. How did Abraham respond to God's announcement that his wife would have a baby?
17. Does this show that Abraham didn't believe God?
18. Sarah miraculously conceived, and a year later Isaac was born.
19. Read Genesis 21:1-7.
20. Why did Abraham name his son Isaac?
21. Twenty six years later Sarah died. Abraham was 137 years old, and he knew that Isaac needed a good wife.
22. Read Genesis 24:1-9.
23. Where was Abraham's servant supposed to get a wife for Isaac?
24. How far away was that?
25. Why was Abraham determined that Isaac not marry a Canaanite woman?
  - a. There was a curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:24-26)
26. Abraham's servant went to Mesopotamia and found Rebekah, daughter of one of Abraham's nephews. Rebekah was willing to leave her home and marry Isaac. What does this tell you about Rebekah?

27. Read Genesis 24:61-67.
28. This is the first use of the word “love” in the Bible.
29. Abraham married and had more children, but the story line passes to Isaac at this point.
30. Read Genesis 25:19-28.
31. Notice “these are the generations.” Now we’re in the chapter about Isaac.
32. Abram was a new beginning after the rebellion at Babel. Now we see conflict develop between two brothers – just like whom?
33. Conflict between older and younger is a theme that is threaded throughout the Bible. We’ll see this several more times.
34. Read Genesis 25:29-34.
35. In those days the oldest son received a double portion of the inheritance. If there were two sons, the first would get  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the inheritance, and the second would get  $\frac{1}{3}$ . If there were three sons, the oldest would get  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the inheritance, and the others would get  $\frac{1}{4}$  each. And so forth. The oldest son was also responsible for caring for his parents in their old age. So the birthright was not simply an unfair windfall for the oldest son – it was a means of providing for the parents in their old age.
36. Why did Esau sell his birthright?
37. What does this tell you about Esau?
38. Meanwhile, God reiterated to Isaac the promise He had made to Abraham. And that’s where we’ll pick up the story next week.

**Lesson 10**  
***Jacob, Joseph, Judah***  
Genesis 27-50

1. Two weeks ago we saw God all by Himself make a covenant with Abram. While normally each party takes upon himself the self-maledictory oath, this time only God walked between the cut open animals. If either party was unfaithful to the covenant, God Himself would be split open like those dead animals.
2. Let's review our definition of a covenant: "A personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice."
3. Last week we saw God give Abram a sign to seal the covenant. A seal is a badge of authenticity. Last night Mrs. Green and I went to the movies. When we entered the theater, we were admitted because we showed our tickets. We had paid the admission fee, and the ticket was proof of that. A seal is similar. It is proof that you are a genuine member of the covenant – that you are not an impostor.
4. What sign did God give Abram to seal this covenant?
5. What else did God do as a sign of His faithfulness to Abram?
  - a. Rename him Abraham
6. So Abraham and Sarah finally had a child of their own. What did they name him? Why?
  - a. Isaac; means laughter.
7. Isaac had sons. Who were they?
8. Meanwhile, God reiterated the promise He made to Abraham, to Isaac.
9. Read Genesis 26:1-5.

10. Last week we saw that Jacob and Esau did not get along. They fought in the womb, and they continued after they were born. Esau was an outdoorsman and a hunter. Jacob was an indoor guy. Their parents did not help matters. Isaac loved Esau's game, but Rebekah loved Jacob for his domestic inclination. Esau had already sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of lentils. Then when Isaac grew old and was ready to bless his heir, Jacob tricked Isaac into blessing him instead of Esau. Esau was enraged and plotted to kill Jacob. It was not safe for Jacob to remain, so Isaac sent him away to his relatives in Mesopotamia. Along the way he had a dream.
11. Read Genesis 28:10-22.
12. God passed on to Jacob the promise He had given to Abraham and Isaac. Isaac lived for a long time, but now the story shifts to Jacob.
13. Read Genesis 29:1-20.
14. Where did Jacob end up?
15. Whom did he meet?
16. Who took him in?
17. Why did Jacob serve Laban?
18. Would you serve someone for seven years and wait that long to marry a girl?
19. Read Genesis 29:21-30
20. What happened here?
21. Why did Laban trick Jacob?
22. What sort of person is Laban?
23. What sort of person is Jacob?
24. How does Leah feel about this?

25. How does Rachel feel?
26. As you might expect, this was not a happy family. Leah and Rachel competed for Jacob's love, which they sought by bearing children. Leah had six and Rachel had two. But to enhance their position, each wife gave Jacob her servant so that she could get credit for a child the servant might have. Each servant bore two children, bringing Jacob's total to 12.
27. I think you can see that Jacob is by nature an ambitious and energetic man. With his wives, servants, and children, he grew prosperous and accumulated large flocks. It wasn't solely his efforts. God was behind it all, making Jacob prosperous.
28. Jacob's father-in-law became jealous of Jacob, and Jacob began to fear him. So Jacob packed up his household and sneaked off to return to the land of Canaan. Laban pursued him, and there was a showdown between them. In the end they called a truce, certified by making a covenant.
29. Jacob escaped his treacherous father-in-law, but in returning to Canaan he will have to face his brother. The last time Jacob saw Esau, his brother was plotting to kill him. Along the way Jacob has a strange experience.
30. Read Genesis 32:22-32.
31. Who wrestled with Jacob?
32. How long did they wrestle?
33. Why did Jacob not let the man go?
34. How is a new name a blessing?
35. Who has the right to name someone?
  - a. An authority, a father
36. Why did God name Jacob "Israel?"
37. In the future Jacob's descendants will be called the children of Israel.

38. God delivered Jacob from Esau once, then he delivered him from Laban. Now a second time God protected Jacob from Esau. Esau had become prosperous and powerful, and was willing to forget the past.
39. Read Genesis 37:1-2a.
40. Now that Isaac is dead, Jacob is head of the covenant with God. We are entering the last chapter of Genesis. The rest of Genesis is mainly about Jacob's children, with a focus on Joseph. Joseph was Jacob's youngest son and the son he loved the most, but his brothers hated him.
41. Read Genesis 37:2-11.
42. If you had been Joseph's older brother, would you have hated him too? What a stuck up little snot! Joseph's brothers found a way to sell him into slavery and told Jacob that he had been killed. Joseph soon ended up in Egypt, where through no fault of his own he was thrown into prison. Eventually he had an opportunity to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh. He was released from prison and made prime minister of Egypt. In this position Joseph used his power to store vast quantities of grain to provide for the people during a terrible seven-year famine that was approaching.
43. Famine came over the whole land, and there was food only in Egypt – due to Joseph's provision. Jacob heard about it and sent his sons to Egypt to get food for the family. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Eventually they were reconciled, and Joseph invited the whole family to come live with him in Egypt. It was an emotionally intense scene when old Jacob saw his beloved youngest son after thinking he had been dead for all those years.
44. The last major scene is Jacob's blessing his twelve sons, Genesis 49. The longest and most significant passage is Jacob's blessing on Judah.
45. Read Genesis 49:8-12.
46. Notice verse 10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet." Rule and kingship are in view for Judah's descendants. Joseph was the hero of the family, but Judah will produce the kings. But what about the seed?

**Lesson 11**  
***Slavery in Egypt***  
Exodus 1-11

1. Who are the main characters we studied in the last three weeks?
  - a. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel
2. Those stories are fascinating reading, but is that the only reason they are in the Bible? Why else might they be included?
  - a. Tracing the line of the promised seed of the woman who will save the human race.
3. We left the children of Israel in Egypt. The book of Exodus tells us how they got out.
4. Read Exodus 1:1-7.
5. How many people went into Egypt?
  - a. 70
6. Who cares? Why tell us this detail? Where have you seen 70 before?
  - a. Nations descended from Noah.
7. What does verse 7 tell us about the children of Israel?
  - a. Faithful to God's creation command.
8. Read Exodus 1:8-22.
9. Why did Pharaoh enslave the people of Israel?
10. Do you know what a midwife is?
11. Do you recognize the attack of the serpent?
  - a. Killing the seed – boys.
  - b. Enlisting the assistance of the women.

12. Chapter 2 describes the birth and salvation of Moses. He was a son of an Israelite, but raised by the daughter of Pharaoh. That meant that he had the best education in Egypt, which meant the best in the world. When he became a man, he tried to rescue his fellow Israelites from their masters, but he failed and had to flee from Pharaoh. From age 40 to 80 he lived in the desert and herded sheep. Meanwhile the people of Israel cried out to God.
13. Read Exodus 2:23-25.
14. Read Exodus 3:1-15.
15. How was God revealed?
16. How was God revealed to Abram when He came to make the covenant?
  - a. Smoking firepot
17. Why was the ground at the bush holy?
  - a. Presence of God
18. What must one do when approaching holy ground?
  - a. Take off one's shoes.
19. Why did God appear to Moses?
20. Did the Israelites do anything to merit God's attention? Why did God decide to relieve them?
21. What was Moses' first question to God? (v. 11)
  - a. "Who am I?"
22. Was this a good question? Why or why not?
23. What was Moses' second question to God? (v. 13)
  - a. "What is your name?"
24. What is God's name?
  - a. YHWH (Yahweh)

25. What is significant about God's name?
  - a. Means "I am who I am."
  - b. Implies infinity.
26. Moses had two more objections to God's call, but eventually God prevailed. Moses got ready to head down to Egypt.
27. Read Exodus 4:18-26.
28. God is sending Moses to Egypt to rescue His people from slavery. Is God going to move Pharaoh to release the Israelites? (v. 21)
29. What is God going to do to Pharaoh? Why?
30. What is the relationship of Israel to God? (v. 22)
31. What is significant about being firstborn?
  - a. Receives the birthright and blessing.
32. If Pharaoh attacks God's firstborn, what will God do to Pharaoh's firstborn?
33. Verses 24-26 are a little murky, but one thing is clear. What was the solution to the problem? (v. 25)
  - a. Circumcise Moses' son.
34. If circumcision was the solution, what was the problem?
35. Remember, who is the sign of the covenant for? Who is supposed to see it?
36. There's this idea today that what really matters with God is just that you believe in Him and love Jesus. Other matters like church attendance, doctrine, and sacraments are clearly optional. Believing in Jesus is important; baptism is not. Furthermore, people believe the purpose of the sacraments is to demonstrate our faith in God. So baptism is a sign that I believe in Jesus.

37. But as we are seeing, the sacraments are signs for God, not for us. They mark us as God's people so that God knows to treat us as such. God will attack His enemies and eventually kill them, but He will save His people. And He knows whom to save by the sign of the covenant. In Moses' day God saved those marked by circumcision. Now in the New Covenant, God saves those who are marked by baptism. Sprinkling with water by itself does not save anyone, but no one who believes in Jesus will be saved without baptism.
38. Read Exodus 5:1-9.
39. What did Moses request of Pharaoh? (v. 1)
40. Why did Moses ask for permission to worship? I thought he was sent to set his people free.
- a. Worship is the central act of man. Who you worship and how you worship determine the destiny of a culture.
41. How did Pharaoh respond? (v. 2)
42. He is asking essentially the same question Moses asked of God. What is the difference between the two questions?
43. Pharaoh responded by intensifying the oppression of the Israelites. God responded with a series of plagues which devastated the land. By the end, the land of Egypt was wasted. But God was not finished. The last plague would ruin Egypt for centuries.
44. Read Exodus 11:1-10
45. God warned Pharaoh that He would kill Pharaoh's first-born. God is poised to strike!

**Lesson 12**  
***New Nation***  
Exodus 12-18

1. In what ways did we see Pharaoh acting like the serpent last week?
  - a. Killing the seed – boys.
  - b. Enlisting the assistance of the women.
2. What did Moses learn about God when he was at the burning bush?
  - a. His covenant name – Yahweh.
3. What did we learn about sacraments?
  - a. They mark God’s people and protect them from God’s anger.
4. Where did we leave off in the showdown between God and Pharaoh?
5. God has adopted Israel as His firstborn son. Firstborn sons are special. Jacob called his firstborn “the beginning of my strength.” The firstborn got a double portion of the inheritance. He also received the covenant blessing and became priest to his family. No father would tolerate an attack on any of his children, but an attack on the firstborn was an attempt to extinguish the family. This is in fact what Pharaoh was attempting to do by killing the Israelite boys. God gave Pharaoh 10 chances to repent. Now God will exterminate Pharaoh’s family.
6. Read Exodus 12:1-13.
7. What is going to happen on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month?
8. Does God promise to spare all the Israelites?
9. Who will be spared?
10. Why did God spare only those with blood on their doorposts?
11. If this was the escape route, don’t you think the Egyptians would have done the same, just to be safe?

12. As we will see soon, it appears likely that some Egyptians did in fact kill a lamb and spread its blood on their doorposts. But most apparently thought it was a stupid idea. Messy, too. I mean, how in the world could a bloody doorpost protect your child from a death angel? And who ever heard of a death angel, anyway? So you see this required an act of faith on the part of the Israelites. They did not have to do anything to be saved. God was doing all the fighting for them. But they had to trust God, even when it seemed ridiculous.
13. Do some aspects of following God seem ridiculous to you? Do you have trouble trusting that God knows what He is doing sometimes?
14. Why were they supposed to eat the meal in a hurry, all dressed up and packed for a trip?
15. Note verse 2, and also verses 14-20. God is establishing a national calendar. Israel will no longer be a clan, or a dozen clans. Now it will be a nation, with the institutional infrastructure of a nation.
16. Read Exodus 12:29-39.
17. What does this passage describe?
18. Look at verse 36. It says the Israelites “plundered the Egyptians.” Who typically plunders?
  - a. An army.
19. What does this say about the Israelite men, women, and children?
  - a. They are the army of God.
  - b. Mixed multitude.
20. Verse 38 says they were a “mixed multitude.” What does that mean?
  - a. Egyptians and other foreigners joined the Israelites.
21. Why in the world would any Egyptians join the Israelites after their God had destroyed their nation?
22. Read Exodus 14:5-14.

23. If all your slaves escaped, would you go retrieve them? Does Pharaoh's action make sense?
24. How about the people of Israel? Does their response make sense?
25. How would you have responded to see 600 war chariots racing after you?
26. What about Moses? Was he a hopeless optimist? Or did he have reason to think that Pharaoh's army would be killed that day?
27. Read Exodus 14:15-31.
28. Do you think God's opening statement was a bit rude? (v. 15)
29. How did God make His presence known? There are five ways.
  - a. Cloud (v. 19)
  - b. Darkness (v. 20)
  - c. Light (v. 20)
  - d. Wind (v. 21)
  - e. Fire (v. 24)
30. Which of these have we seen before?
31. All the way through Israel's history, in the psalms, and to Revelation God will use these images to reveal Himself.
32. When morning broke, what was the outcome?
33. Egypt was destroyed. The plagues destroyed the economy, the death angel destroyed the future, and now the army is annihilated. It will be hundreds of years before Egypt will again become a significant nation.
34. Just as Genesis is the pattern for creation, Exodus is the pattern for salvation. Genesis tells us about the earth and the universe, the nature of man, male and female, the origin and nature of sin, and the hope of salvation. Exodus shows us how God operates to implement His plan to save His people. For people enslaved by Satan, God first calls them to worship Him. Worship is always central. Then God challenges Satan, defeats him, and leads His people into freedom. God will use the pattern and symbols

of Exodus over and over as He repeatedly saves His people. Finally in the book of Revelation, these symbols are fully developed into a comprehensive picture of salvation.

35. Read Exodus 16:1-4.
36. What did God give the people to eat?
  - a. Bread from heaven.
37. Read Psalm 78:23-25.
38. What else is this stuff called? Why?
  - a. Grain of heaven.
  - b. Bread of the angels.
39. Read John 6:31-33, 48-51.
40. Why would Jesus refer to Himself as the true bread?
  - a. Greek word for “true” (αληθινος) also means “original”.
  - b. Whatever bread does for you, Jesus does more completely.
41. Read Exodus 17:1-7
42. Do you see a pattern here? What was the people’s complaint?
43. Why would God use such a peculiar display to provide water for the people?
44. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.
45. Who did this rock symbolize?
46. So now we also have bread and rock as symbols for God.
47. Were the people justified in all their complaints? Why or why not?
48. Do you complain about God’s provision? Are you justified in your complaints?

**Lesson 13**  
***New Covenant I***  
Exodus 19-24

1. Why was the last plague on the Egyptians so significant?
  - a. Death of the firstborn means extermination of the family.
2. How did the Israelites escape the death angel?
  - a. Blood on the doorpost.
3. When the dust cleared, what was the result of the battle between God and Pharaoh?
  - a. Economy devastated
  - b. Future exterminated
  - c. Army destroyed
4. We saw seven forms in which God revealed Himself last week. What are they?
  - a. Cloud (14:19)
  - b. Darkness (14:20)
  - c. Light (14:20)
  - d. Wind (14:21)
  - e. Fire (14:24)
  - f. Bread (16:1-4)
  - g. Water from rock (17:1-7)
5. The people of Israel journeyed on into the desert with Moses leading them. Eventually they came to the same mountain where Moses met God at the burning bush.
6. Read Exodus 19:1-9.
7. What was God's message to the people of Israel?
8. What would it mean to be a kingdom of priests?
9. What would it mean to be a holy nation?

10. What do they have to do in order to get these blessings?
  - a. Obey God's voice.(v. 5).
  - b. Keep God's covenant (v. 5).
11. Quick review: what is a divine covenant?
  - a. A personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice.
12. Why were the people so suddenly agreeable? Just a couple of chapters before they were nasty complainers.
13. Read Exodus 19:9-15.
14. What was this all about?
15. Read Exodus 19:16-20.
16. What are the signs of God's presence?
  - a. Thunder, lighting, cloud, trumpet (v. 16).
  - b. Smoke, fire, earthquake (v. 18).
17. Remember this passage. You will see echoes of this in the prophets, the gospels, and the Revelation. This passage is a comprehensive picture of God's Old Testament presence.
18. Read Exodus 20:1-17.
19. Verses 3-17 are what we commonly call the Ten Commandments. What is the purpose of verse 2?
20. Did the Israelites have to keep the Ten Commandments in order to be rescued from Egypt?
  - a. No
21. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?
  - a. Show them how to live after having been rescued.
22. Read Exodus 20:18-21.

23. Why were the people afraid of God? Did they need to be afraid?
24. Chapters 21-23 contain what we call case laws – examples of how the Ten Commandments would work in practice. Let's just sample a few of these.
25. Read Exodus 22:1-6.
26. After God revealed the Ten Commandments and some case laws, it was time to put these before the people.
27. Read Exodus 24:1-8.
28. Well, what did the people say? (vv. 3, 7)
29. How was this covenant-making ceremony different that the one with Abraham?
  - a. The people played a part. They agreed to the covenant.
30. Why was it different?
31. Read Exodus 24:9-11.
32. How many elders went up on the mountain with Moses?
33. Why 70?
  - a. Israel is a priest-nation for all the nations of the world.
34. What was under God's feet?
  - a. A clear pavement (v. 10).
35. What did they do?
36. What is the significance of eating and drinking?
  - a. Hospitality, intimacy.
37. This is not the first covenant we have seen so far. Although the word is not used, it is clear that there was an agreement between God and Adam. Adam broke the agreement and suffered as a result. God made a covenant with Noah, in which He repeated the commands and promises He made to

Adam, plus some. Then there was the covenant with Abram, and now with all Israel.

38. It is a common misconception that the essence of a covenant is a set of rules. People think of a covenant like a business contract – I deliver a truckload of widgets to you, and you deliver a bag full of money to me. But as we have seen, the essence of a covenant is a personal bond. That is what makes covenant breaking so vile. It is not merely failure to follow a set of rules. It is personal betrayal.
39. God was angry with Adam and Eve because they broke His commands. But what made it sting was the treachery in believing and aiding God’s mortal enemy. Their disobedience made them more than lawbreakers, it made those who had been friends into enemies. But because of His love and mercy, God made a new covenant with Adam and Eve. He promised to send a savior for them, and the sign of the covenant was the animal skins they wore. So we see a covenant as a personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice.
40. As we observe all these covenants we can also see five elements to a covenant. Each covenant has these five features, although they are not always mentioned in our text. All ancient near Eastern covenants were structured this way.
  - a. Identity – who is making this covenant?
  - b. History – what has he done to justify making a covenant?
  - c. Terms – what does it mean to be faithful to the covenant?
  - d. Punishments – what are the consequences of failing to keep it?
  - e. Future – provision for future generations

**Lesson 14**  
***Breaking the Covenant I***  
Exodus 24-40; Numbers

1. What did the children of Israel have to do for God to rescue them from Egypt?
  - a. Nothing.
2. Why did God rescue them?
  - a. He heard their groaning, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham. (Exodus 2:23-25)
3. What was the purpose of the law?
  - a. Show Israel how to live after they had been rescued.
4. How was this covenant different from the one God made with Abraham?
  - a. This one required agreement by the people of Israel.
  - b. The blessings of this one are contingent upon the people's faithfulness.
5. What are the five parts to a covenant?
  - a. Identity – who is making this covenant?
  - b. History – what has he done to justify making a covenant?
  - c. Terms – what does it mean to be faithful to the covenant?
  - d. Punishments – what are the consequences of failing to keep it?
  - e. Future – provision for future generations
6. “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” (Exodus 24:3)  
When Moses placed this new covenant before the people, they heartily agreed to it. Boldly and clearly they declared that they would be faithful to God. So upon this profession of faith Moses baptized the people with the blood of the covenant. But this is just the beginning. Now let's see how this new covenant works out.
7. Read Exodus 24:12-18.
8. Last week we read the passage just prior to this. That also was about Moses going up on the mountain to meet with God. Who went with him then?

(vv. 9-11)

a. Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 elders

9. Who went with Moses in the passage we just read?
  - a. Joshua.
10. What happened to the others?
11. Joshua must have been one of the 70 elders. It seems like he and Moses left the others and went further up into the mountain by themselves.
12. How long were Moses and Joshua on the mountain?
  - a. 40 days.
13. Where else have we seen 40?
  - a. Number of days it rained during the flood.
14. So what in the world could Moses have done for 40 days on a mountain? Let's read Exodus 25:1-9.
15. What are the people supposed to make? What are the two names given to it?
  - a. Sanctuary (v. 8), tabernacle (9).
16. What is the purpose of this structure?
  - a. God may dwell in their midst (v. 8).
17. What are all the materials that will go into the tabernacle?
18. Why these things? Why so many different kinds? What sort of place will this be?
19. Notice in verse nine that God emphasizes that this structure is to be built exactly the way he specifies.
20. We don't have time to read all the instructions for the building of the tabernacle. It covers the next seven chapters, including instructions about the priests who would serve there. But let's get a taste.

21. Read Exodus 26:1-6.
22. What materials went into these curtains?
23. What did they look like?
24. We've been saying that a covenant is a personal bond. It binds people together in an intimate relationship. Marriage is the most vivid example of a covenant. Marriage is not a matter of two people obeying rules – it is a matter of loving commitment. In a good marriage, husband and wife love to be with each other, and miss each other when they are away. We see here that God wants to be close to His people. The covenant draws God and the people of Israel close to each other. The tabernacle is the place where God lives, and it will be the place where God meets His people.
25. I guess it took 40 days for Moses to get all those instructions written down. Meanwhile, the children of Israel were waiting at the foot of the mountain.
26. Read Exodus 32:1-6.
27. What happened here?
28. Why did the people do this?
29. Why did Aaron participate?
30. Which command did they break?
  - a. 2<sup>nd</sup> – prohibition on using engraved images in worship.
31. Read Exodus 32:7-10.
32. How did God respond to this?
33. Was God right to be angry?
34. Was God right to plan to exterminate all the people?

35. What was God's plan for continuing the covenant?
  - a. Make a nation from Moses.
36. Was this a good plan?
37. Read Exodus 32:11-14.
38. What does Moses think of God's plan?
39. Does Moses know better than God?
40. Is it arrogant of Moses to argue with God?
41. What reasons does Moses give to support his argument?
42. Why does God change His mind?
43. Does God agree that Moses has a better plan than He?
44. Read Exodus 32:15-20.
45. Was Moses so reasonable when He got to the Israelite camp?
46. Was it wrong for Moses to lose his temper like this?
47. Read Exodus 32:21-29.
48. How many of the children of Israel were on the LORD's side?
  - a. The tribe of Levi.
49. If you were on the LORD's side that day, what did you have to do?
50. What was the meaning of all this slaughter?
51. Was this an example of Moses losing his mind? Or was there some justification for this behavior?

52. People often think this passage demonstrates God's hatred of worshipping other gods, but it does not. Notice that Aaron said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" This was a case of worshipping the right God in the wrong way.

People today think that any worship is good if it is sincere, but this is dreadfully wrong. It is not enough to worship, it is not even enough to worship the right God. Worship must be done according to God's command or it is displeasing to God. This is what the Protestant Reformation was about. The Roman church worships the true God, but their worship is polluted. Martin Luther and the other reformers knew that worship had to be corrected, and they risked death to do so.

53. Back to our text, the next day Moses prayed for the people, and God agreed to continue leading Israel to the promised land.

54. The rest of Exodus is mainly about the construction of the tabernacle. The next book, Leviticus, is packed full of laws for worship, and case laws regulating daily behavior. The book of Numbers is about Israel as the army of God. They are counted and prepared for battle as they approach the promised land.

55. Moses selected a man from each tribe – 12 in all – and sent them into the land occupied by the Canaanites. Their job was to spy out the land and return with a report of it. Let's hear their report.

56. Read Numbers 13:21-33.

57. What was the report?

58. How was Caleb's report different than the others'?

59. Why were the others so negative?

60. Why was Caleb so positive?

61. Let's see who the people believed. Read Exodus 14:1-4.

62. What were the people afraid of?

63. What did they want to do?
64. What do you think of the plan to go back to Egypt?
65. Why would anyone think of such a thing?
66. Again God declared that He would destroy the Israelites, and again Moses talked Him out of it. But this time God imposed a punishment upon the people.
67. Read Numbers 14:26-35.
68. What is the punishment?
  - a. Everyone 20 years old and older will die in the wilderness (vb. 28-29).
  - b. They will spend the next 40 years in the wilderness.
69. The people were afraid that their little children would die if they attempted to invade Canaan. What is God going to do with the little children?
70. The bad news is that the next 40 years will be spent wandering in the wilderness. The good news, however, is that God has not yet abandoned His people. And as long as God is faithful to the seed of Abraham, there is hope that one day a child will be born who will crush the serpent's head forever.

**Lesson 15**  
***New Home***  
Joshua

1. In last week's lesson, what was Moses supposed to build?
  - a. Sanctuary, tabernacle.
2. What was the purpose of the tabernacle?
  - a. Place for God to dwell, so He could be close to His people.
3. What did the people do while Moses was getting the instructions for the tabernacle?
  - a. Make a golden calf.
4. How did God respond?
  - a. He got angry.
5. How did Moses respond?
  - a. He got angry, too.
6. What happened?
  - a. Levites killed 3,000 men.
7. How did the people respond when it was time to conquer Canaan?
  - a. They were afraid and refused to attack.
8. What was the result?
  - a. Condemned to wander 40 years in the wilderness and die there.
9. The book of Numbers tells some of what happened during the 40 years in the wilderness. Fast forward, and 40 years later all the adults are dead – all except Moses, Caleb, and Joshua. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell speech to the children of Israel, and then he died.
10. Read Joshua 1:1-9.
11. What was it like for Joshua and all the Israelites when Moses died?

12. They had never known another leader. Moses rescued them from Egypt, guided them through the deadly desert, led them in several military campaigns. Except for Joshua and Caleb, Moses had been the leader for the remaining Israelites since they were children. He must have been like a father to them.
13. How would you have felt if you were Joshua, and now had to fill Moses' shoes?
14. How does God encourage Joshua?
15. What instructions does God give him?
  - a. Cross the Jordan River
  - b. Be strong and courageous
  - c. Obey the law of Moses
  - d. Meditate on the law day and night
16. What promises does God give him?
  - a. To give him all the land where he walks
  - b. No enemy will withstand him
  - c. God will be with him
  - d. Success and prosperity
17. God did many amazing things with Moses, but by far the most important thing that God did was to go with Moses. After the incident of the golden calf, Moses told God that he could not lead the people of Israel unless God went with him – and God promised to do so. Remember, this is the heart of the covenant – that God will be our God and we will be His people, and He will dwell with us. Now at this critical point where there is a change of leadership, God promises Joshua that he will succeed in conquering the land. But most of all, God promised Joshua that “the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Jesus told his disciples that he would not abandon them, and His last words were “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

18. God proved His promise right away. Just as Moses led the people through the Red Sea, Joshua caused the Jordan River to part, and the children of Israel crossed over into Canaan.

19. Read Joshua 5:1-9.
20. After crossing the Jordan River the Israelites were in enemy territory. What is the first thing you would do if you entered enemy territory?
21. What was the first thing the Israelites did?
22. How does circumcision affect your ability to fight and defend yourself? (v. 8)
23. Why would Joshua do this now? Why not after conquering the Canaanites?
24. We tend to think that worship is something you do after the important stuff is finished. This is so backwards! Worship is central to all of life, and sets the pattern for the rest of life. Remember that Cain's false worship set him on the path to wickedness. Remember that the first thing that Noah did upon leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer sacrifices. Remember that the first thing Abraham did when he settled in a new place was to build an altar. Remember that Moses' demand to pharaoh was to allow the children of Israel to worship the LORD.

The children of Israel are God's holy army. God will use them to cleanse the land of the pollution of the Canaanites. Therefore they must be holy. They must be circumcised, and worship must be first and central to the life of the nation.

25. Read Joshua 5:10-12.
26. So now we have the Israelites also celebrating the Passover Feast. Note that the miraculous manna was replaced by God's provision of grain and fruit.
27. Read Joshua 5:13-15.
28. Why was Joshua by Jericho? What was he doing?
29. Who is the commander of the LORD's army? How do you know?

30. How would Joshua feel about this encounter?
31. The next chapters describe the battles in the war for the promised land. First Joshua defeated the kings in the south, then he defeated the kings in the north. The whole process probably took about 10 years. Let's catch up with him just at the end of the campaigns.
32. Read Joshua 11:16-23.
33. What's the verdict? How successful was Joshua?
34. Did God keep His promises?
35. Why are the Anakim mentioned? What's important about them?
36. Notice the final sentence, "the land had rest from war." This sums it up. Finally after 10 hard years, the warriors could hang up their bows and go home to their wives and children. They could plant their fields and harvest their crops. Peace had come to the land.
37. After defeating all the kings of the land, Joshua divided the land among the tribes of Israel.
38. Read Joshua 14:6-15.
39. What sort of man was Caleb?
40. Why did he want to fight the giants? Was he a little nuts?
41. Read Joshua 21:43-45.
42. Here it is repeated. "Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." Do you think that is true? Can you trust God to keep all His promises to you? Or do you doubt Him?
43. The last chapter of this book is Joshua's farewell speech. Let's read the whole thing.

44. Read Joshua 24:1-28.

45. So the book ends on a good note. God kept all His promises, Israel has conquered Canaan, and the people are committed to keeping their covenant with the LORD. But we've been here before, haven't we? And by the way – where is the seed of the woman who will crush the serpent's head?

**Lesson 16**  
***Breaking the Covenant II***  
Judges

1. What was Joshua's biggest challenge when Moses died?
2. What did God promise Joshua?
  - a. To give him all the land where he walks
  - b. No enemy will withstand him
  - c. God will be with him
  - d. Success and prosperity
3. Did God keep His promises? How?
4. In what condition did Joshua leave the people of Israel when he died?
5. Let's read Joshua 21:43-45 again.
6. This is the conclusion to the life of Joshua. "Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." So the book ends on a good note. God kept all His promises, Israel has conquered Canaan, and the people are committed to keeping their covenant with the LORD.
7. This week we're going to continue the story after Joshua died.
8. Read Judges 1:1-10.
9. Last week we read that Joshua conquered all the land, and the land had rest from war. So why are the people fighting again?
10. Go back and read Joshua 13:1.
11. What Joshua accomplished was to break the military power of the Canaanites. He did not exterminate ever single Canaanite person, or conquer every village. After Joshua the Canaanites were not able to mount a sustained military operation to drive out the Israelites, but there were still a lot of Canaanites in the land.

12. Which king is the focus of this passage?
  - a. Adoni-bezek
13. How many kings had Adoni-bezek conquered?
  - a. 70
14. What did the Israelites do when they captured him? Why?
  - a. Cut off his thumbs and big toes
  - b. He would never again be able to hold a weapon or stand steadily
15. Adoni-bezek means “lord of the sunrise”. He was obviously a powerful king, having defeated 70 other kings. But the number 70 has a symbolic value. We saw that 70 nations descended from Noah, and this number is the symbol for all nations. Adoni-bezek symbolizes universal rule by the wicked. In defeating Adoni-bezek, God was showing that He would defeat wickedness universally.
16. Read Judges 1:11-15.
17. What do you think about Caleb’s method for getting a wife for his daughter?
18. What kind of man was Othniel?
19. What do you think of Achsah’s request of her father?
20. Read Judges 1:16-21.
21. Did Judah drive out all the Canaanites in her territory? Why not?
22. What does this tell us about the people of Judah?
23. What does this tell us about God?
24. Let’s see how the other tribes fared. Read Judges 1:22-36.
25. How successful were the other tribes in driving out the Canaanites?

26. Which tribe had the most trouble?
  - a. Dan
27. What happened? Did God let them down? Were the Canaanites just too powerful for the Israelites?
28. Let's see what God thought of all this. Read Judges 2:1-5.
29. Was God unfair? Was God expecting more than the people could do?
30. Why didn't the Israelites obey God and drive out all the Canaanites?
31. Read Joshua 2:6-10.
32. How does this explain the problem?
  - a. The next generation did not know the Lord or His works
33. This passage vividly highlights a basic life principle: God provides the power to obey His commands. Joshua faced far more powerful enemies than these tribes, and he defeated every one. Now, facing much weaker enemies, the Israelites cave. The problem is not the iron chariots, or the number of Canaanites. The problem is faith. God promised to drive out the Canaanites. It would be hard work, but God promised success. But the people refused to believe in God, and were unwilling to do the hard work. They were faithless and lazy.

Many people today are like this. They call themselves Christians, but they do not know God, and do not believe His promises. You see it everywhere. Pastors who are lazy and do not prepare good sermons. Men and women who do sloppy work because they are tired. Fathers and mothers who do not care well for their children. Children who are lazy about their studies. Failure to tell others about Jesus because it is difficult and awkward. Refusal to befriend people who are different.

All these things can be very difficult. Our tendency is to claim that we cannot do what we're called to do, and to complain that the demands are not fair. Sometimes you do face impossible demands, but even then, God is able to do the impossible. The root problem is unbelief – refusal to believe in God, to believe that God is with you and will help you. And when there is unbelief, things are going to get worse.

34. Read Judges 2:11-15.
35. The people refused to trust God to drive out the Canaanites. So what happened as a result?
  - a. They turned to idol worship
  - b. They were defeated by their enemies
36. God might call you to do something difficult and unpleasant, like befriend an obnoxious classmate, or study literature or calculus, or do household chores. Refusal to obey in these matters leads to open rebellion against God, and that leads to personal disaster later in life. You will not see it now, but you will see it someday.
37. Read Judges 2:16-3:6.
38. Did God abandon His people even though they refused to obey Him?
39. What two ways did God care for His people?
  - a. Provided judges (2:16)
  - b. Tested them, taught each generation war (2:22; 3:1-2, 4)
40. The book of Judges tells the story of sin and salvation. Over and over, the people of Israel sin. God hands them over to their enemies and they suffer. The Israelites cry to God for help, and He provides a judge to save them. Repeat. This story is repeated 12 times in the book of Judges, and it includes such famous characters as Gideon and Samson. It is some of the most fascinating reading in the world. But we must skip to the end.
41. The last four chapters involve two stories which summarize conditions during the period of the Judges. The first is about a man who sets up idolatrous worship right in his house.
42. Read Judges 17:5-6.
43. Notice why this happened?
  - a. There was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
44. The second story is about a horrible crime.

45. Read Judges 19:1-5.
46. The Levite stays with his father-in-law for several nights, and finally sets off for home. Along the way he spends the night in the town of Gibeah. Late at night the men of the town demand the Levite to have sex with him. Instead he gives them his concubine, and they rape her until she dies. This leads to a terrible civil war within Israel. And if we go to the end of the book, we find the author's conclusion.
47. Read Judges 21:25.
48. Why had Israel degenerated into such a horrible condition?
  - a. There was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
49. If the people of God, the nation chosen to be a blessing to the whole world, was filled with perversion and murder, and torn apart by civil war – what hope was there for anyone?

**Lesson 17**  
***New King***  
Ruth, 1 Samuel

1. What happened in Israel after Joshua died?
  - a. Joshua's generation was faithful to God
  - b. They conquered the Canaanites at first
  - c. As time went on they were less successful at driving out the Canaanites
  - d. Later generations were not faithful to God
2. Why did the people eventually turn to idols?
  - a. They did not know the Lord or the work that He had done for Israel
3. What was the conclusion at the end of Judges? How did the author summarize the situation? (Judges 21:25)
  - a. There was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
4. Why was there no king in Israel?
5. Other nations had kings. Why didn't Israel?
6. Moses had anticipated that Israel would need a king. Let's read Deuteronomy 17:14-20.
7. This is the law of the king. This law regulates who may be king and how he must conduct himself. What are some of its primary features?
  - a. An Israelite, not a foreigner
  - b. May not acquire many horses
  - c. May not acquire many wives
  - d. May not acquire excessive gold
  - e. Must copy and meditate on the law
8. The next book, the book of Ruth, depicts a happier side to life during the period of the judges. Ruth was a woman from the nation of Moab who married an Israelite man. When her husband died, she and her mother-in-law had to make ends meet on their own. She finds rest when a relative, a

bachelor, falls in love with her. It's a wonderful love story, but not too mushy for you guys. We're going to catch the ending.

9. Read Ruth 4:13-22.
10. Why are the generations of Perez listed here? Who was Perez?
  - a. Judah's illegitimate son by his daughter-in-law Tamar (Genesis 38)
11. How many generations are there from Perez to David?
  - a. 10
12. Why is this important?
  - a. Deuteronomy 23:2. "No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD."
13. Notice that Perez was the bastard son of Judah, and Ruth was a Moabitess. You see God using the outcasts of society as critical elements toward building His kingdom. You might not feel very significant compared to a lot of other people, but God can use you to accomplish something great. The only requirement is to trust Him.
14. Meanwhile, elsewhere in Israel a woman was unbearably miserable. Her husband had two wives. He loved Hannah and treated her tenderly, but Hannah was barren, and was viciously mocked by the other wife.
15. Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20.
16. Hannah miraculously conceived and bore a son. When he was weaned she took him to the tabernacle and committed him to the care of Eli the priest. Eli had commissioned his own sons as priests, but they were immoral and corrupt. God called Samuel to be the last judge of Israel.
17. Read 1 Samuel 3:19-21.
18. At this time the primary threat to Israel came from the Philistines. The Philistines were growing steadily stronger and forcing Israel to submit to them. At one point they even captured the Ark of the Covenant!

19. Read 1 Samuel 7:3-17
20. What sort of a leader was Samuel?
21. How did Israel fare under Samuel's leadership?
22. So did they not need a king after all?
23. Let's continue reading 1 Samuel 8:1-9.
24. Why did the people want a king?
25. Was this a legitimate request?
26. Had not Moses provided for the people to select a king?
27. What kind of a king did they want?
  - a. Like the other nations
28. What did Samuel think of this idea?
29. What did God think?
30. Who has been their king all this time?
  - a. God
31. Why, then did the book of Judges emphasize the problem of not having a king?
32. Let's keep reading. 1 Samuel 8:10-22.
33. Why did the people refuse to listen to Samuel's warnings?
34. So what sort of king did they want? Read 1 Samuel 9:1-2.
35. What was Saul like?
36. What tribe did he come from?
  - a. Benjamin

37. Saul was tall and handsome, but he was not a strong king. He was intimidated by the Philistines and was unreliable in obeying God's commands. After a particularly egregious act of disobedience God declared that He rejected Saul as king.
38. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-5.
39. What was Samuel afraid of ? Why did he sneak off to Bethlehem?
  - a. Afraid of Saul
40. Read 1 Samuel 16:6-13.
41. What was God looking for in a king?
42. Why didn't Jesse bring David to Samuel with his other sons?
43. What does this tell us about David's status in the family?
44. How did God equip David to be a good king?
45. Next we see David, still a young boy, out on the battlefield.
46. Read 1 Samuel 17:1-11.
47. How tall was Goliath?
  - a. 10 feet
48. What would it be like to face this man?
49. Who would you expect to take up the challenge?
  - a. The tallest man in Israel
  - b. The king of Israel
50. Who was the tallest man in Israel's army?
  - a. Saul, by more than a foot. (1 Samuel 9:2)
51. Why didn't Saul go to fight Goliath?

52. David was too young to serve in the army. His father sent him to the battlefield with food for his older brothers who *were* in the army. When David arrived, he saw the spectacle of Goliath parading around, challenging the Israelites to battle. David was provoked that no one was willing to challenge Goliath.
53. Read 1 Samuel 17:26.
54. How did David perceive the situation?
- He saw Goliath directly challenging God
55. Read 1 Samuel 17:31-37.
56. What made David different than the other Israelite soldiers?
- He believed that God would deliver him (v. 37)
57. David went out to meet Goliath, and killed him with a stone from his sling. It was a great victory and the turning point in the long war against the Philistines.
58. Read 1 Samuel 18:6-16.
59. What did this do to David's status in Israel?
60. Was Saul grateful for David's help? Why not?
61. Some people read this story and conclude that Israel never should have desired a king. That is not right. The problem was not in desiring a king, but in desiring the wrong kind of king.

We saw that the problem during the period of the judges was that there was no king in Israel. Now, it's not really that there was no king. When the Israelites asked Samuel for a king, God said that they were rejecting *Him*, God, from being their king. God was the king of Israel. The problem was that they did not know God, and refused to obey Him. God was king, but the people did not recognize Him as king or obey Him. So on a practical, day-today level, there was no king.

But God planned all along that there should be a human king someday. That's why He gave Moses the law of the king. But before that, God promised Abraham and Jacob that kings would come from their descendants (Genesis 17:6, 16; 35:11). On his deathbed Jacob prophesied thus about Judah:

Judah is a lion's cub...

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,

Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet... (Genesis 49:9, 10)

The king will come from the tribe of Judah. But there's a huge problem. Judah's son Perez was illegitimate. According to Deuteronomy 23:2, "No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD." That meant that no legitimate king could rule in Israel until Jesse's sons – the tenth generation from Perez – were available.

Israel failed, not in desiring a king, but in breaking all the laws regarding the selection of a king. They picked their king from the wrong tribe. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. They picked a king too soon. David was too young. And they picked a king with the wrong qualities. They wanted a king like the other nations. But the other nations were wicked. Israel was supposed to be *better* than the other nations – not *like* the other nations. God called them to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6)

Israel was called to be a holy kingdom, but she failed. So God stepped in to save her. God appointed His own man to be the right kind of king. David was a man after God's heart, a man who loved and trusted God, a man who would die rather than allow God to be insulted by a Philistine. Such was the man God called to defeat His enemies and save His people. David – the seed of the woman who crushed the head of the giant. Isn't this who we've been waiting for? Is this the seed promised in Genesis 3?

**Lesson 18**  
***New Covenant II***  
2 Samuel, Psalms

1. Did Israel need a king? Why or why not?
2. What sort of king did Israel need?
3. Where would you turn in the Bible to learn what sort of king Israel would need?
  - a. Deuteronomy 17:14-20
4. What were the requirements of a king for Israel?
  - a. An Israelite, not a foreigner
  - b. May not acquire many horses
  - c. May not acquire many wives
  - d. May not acquire excessive gold
  - e. Must copy and meditate on the law
5. That is the sort of king Israel needed. But what sort of king did Israel *want*?
  - a. One like the other nations
6. Who did they pick?
  - a. Saul
7. How did he turn out?
8. Who did God pick instead?
9. God sent His Spirit upon David, but God removed His Spirit from Saul. David became a valiant warrior and was admired by all the people. Saul became increasingly jealous of David and attempted to kill him. Eventually David had to run for his life. With several hundred loyal followers, David fled from Saul for several years. Finally Saul was killed in battle.
10. Read 2 Samuel 2:1-4.

11. Now that Saul was dead, was David the king of Israel?
  - a. No, of the tribe of Judah only
12. Read 2 Samuel 2:8-11.
13. Soon war broke out between the followers of David and those of Ishbosheth.
14. Read 2 Samuel 3:1.
15. Eventually Ishbosheth was murdered.
16. Read 2 Kings 5:1-5, 10-13.
17. What is your evaluation of David's reign at this point?
18. Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17
19. What was God's evaluation of David's reign?
20. Did God permit David to build a house for Him?
21. Was God angry at David for suggesting it?
22. What did God promise David?
  - a. A great name (v. 9)
  - b. Peace for Israel (v. 10-11)
  - c. God will make a house for David (v. 11)
  - d. Offspring will rule forever (v. 12-13)
  - e. An eternal kingdom (v. 16)
23. We call this the Davidic Covenant – God's promise to David that His Kingdom should endure forever, and that His offspring should rule forever.

Israel had struggled from generation to generation during the period of the judges. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Often it was wrong, and occasionally it was horrible. They needed a king to lead them. God was their king, but they rejected Him. They turned to a promising warrior,

a man tall, handsome, and strong, but Saul turned out to be a failure. At last God called forth David to lead His people.

David was a wonderful king, and God promised that His kingdom should never fail. After hundreds of years of chaos and violence, this was unbelievably good news! The promise of the seed was coming true! Or was it?

24. Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5.
25. What do kings do in the springtime?
  - a. Go to battle
26. What was King David doing?
  - a. Stayed home
27. What must David do now?
28. What would you do?
29. Bathsheba's husband Uriah was out fighting with the army. David brought him home for a visit, but Uriah refused to sleep with his wife while his fellow soldiers were out on the battlefield.
30. Read 2 Samuel 11:14-21, 26-27.
31. What did David do?
  - a. Arrange for Uriah's death
32. What did God think of this?
33. Read 2 Samuel 12:1-15
34. What will happen as a result of David's sin?
35. What did David do when he heard this from Nathan the prophet?

36. David was the king. He was responsible for fighting for his people. We saw this principle in the encounter with Goliath. Goliath challenged Israel to send out a champion to fight him. That is the responsibility of the king. And besides, Saul was a head taller than all the other Israelites. Saul should have gone to fight Goliath. Instead David rose to the challenge, demonstrating royal character.

But now David was loafing at home. Laziness led to lust, adultery, cover-up, and murder. Now for the rest of his life, David will see incest, murder, and revolution within his own house. The worst was when his oldest son Absalom overthrew his rule and had sex with David's wives in sight of everyone in Jerusalem. In the ensuing battle David's forces won, but Absalom was killed – to David's great sorrow.

Is this who the seed is supposed to be – an adulterer and a murderer, a man whose own household was a place of violence? And if David is not the seed, is it perhaps his son – the one promised who shall reign forever?

37. One of David's most important legacies was all the worship songs he wrote. Many of them are collected in the book of Psalms, which takes its name from the Greek word for song. Let's look at a few.
38. Read Psalm 1:1-6.
39. Hebrew poetry is different than the poetry you are used to. It does not have rhyme or meter. Instead its two primary features are parallelism and imagery.
40. Notice that the psalms consist of pairs of lines, each saying the same thing in different terms. This is what we mean by parallelism. In Psalm 1 we read "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers." You see how the second half of the verse says the same thing as the first half, but uses different images.
41. This psalm uses a powerful image for the righteous man. What is it?
- a. A strong, well-watered tree, full of leaves and fruit.

42. What image is used for the wicked man?
  - a. Chaff – the worthless waste product of grain.
43. Perhaps the most famous and most loved psalm is the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Let's read it.
44. What images do you see here?

**Lesson 19**  
***Glory of Solomon***  
 1 Kings 1-11, Wisdom

*Main Point: Glory*

*Main App:*

1. Was David a good King? Why or why not?
2. What were David's good qualities?
3. What were his failings?
4. Was David the seed of the woman we've been looking for, promised in Genesis 3?
5. Did David save Israel?
6. David did save Israel. He saved Israel from the chaos and violence prevalent during the period of the judges. He saved Israel from the Philistines, the Amorites, and Israel's other enemies. He saved Israel from idolatry by leading the nation in worshiping the LORD. David united the tribes of Israel into one nation. He conquered or made alliances with all the nations around Israel. He brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem and organized the Levites to lead worship. David ushered in a golden age for Israel. He sure seemed like the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent and save the human race.

But he was not. After ascending the throne and securing his kingdom, David grew complacent and fell into terrible sin. He committed adultery with the wife of one of his best soldiers, then murdered the man to cover up his sin. This sin reverberated throughout his household, as incest, murder, and rebellion took their toll. David's reign was certainly a golden age, but there was rot under the gold.

What makes David stand out is not his performance as king, but the new covenant God made with him. God promised that He would establish Israel in peace in their own land, and that he would establish David's offspring as kings forever. As with all of God's covenants, it was not initi-

ated because of David's performance, or Israel's righteousness. God initiated it only out of love for His people. And the wonderful thing about it is that even David's terrible sin, or the sins of his descendants, could not cancel God's promise. It will stand forever. Now that God has promised that one of David's sons always will rule Israel, we know that this will be true forever.

7. David reigned 40 years. Toward the end of his life he appointed his son Solomon to be his successor.
8. Read 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12.
9. What do you notice about David's last words to Solomon?
  - a. They are similar to God's word to Joshua
10. After Solomon secured his kingdom, he met God in a vision.
11. Read 1 Kings 3:3-15.
12. What sort of man was Solomon?
  - a. Loved the LORD
  - b. Walked in the statues of his father
  - c. Made offerings at the high places
  - d. Sought wisdom rather than wealth or victory
13. What did God ask Solomon?
  - a. To make a request
14. How did Solomon respond?
  - a. He asked for wisdom
15. What does this show about Solomon's character?
16. If God offered to grant you any request, what would you ask?
17. Why did Solomon ask for wisdom?
18. Let's see how this turned out. Read 1 Kings 4:20-21.

19. What does this tell you about Solomon's reign?
  - a. Fulfilled the promise to Abraham (Genesis 22:17)
  - b. Fulfilled the promise to David (2 Samuel 7:10-11)
20. Let's keep reading. 1 Kings 4:22-34.
21. What do you think of this? Is this what you would expect of the promised seed?
22. David wanted to build a temple for God, but God would not permit him. Instead God said that David's son would build Him a temple. So after Solomon built his palace, he built a temple for God. When it was finished, Solomon brought the ark of the covenant into the temple.
23. Read 1 Kings 8:10-13.
24. What happened when the ark of the covenant was brought into the temple?
  - a. A cloud filled the temple
25. Why did a cloud fill the temple? What does that mean?
  - a. It was the cloud of God's presence, the glory cloud
  - b. God had come to live in His house
26. Solomon continued to grow in wisdom and wealth.
27. Read 1 Kings 10:1-9.
28. What did the Queen of Sheba think of Solomon?
29. What did she think was the reason for the magnificence of Solomon's kingdom?
  - a. God's love (v. 9)
30. Solomon was wise and wealthy beyond anything the world had ever seen. Israel was at peace and flourishing. Notice that none of these blessings are because of the righteousness of Solomon. The Queen of Sheba understood that Solomon was exalted merely because God loved him. In other words, Solomon did not "deserve" these blessings – they were by the grace of

God. And you would think that Solomon would have the wisdom to receive God's blessings according to God's word.

31. Read 1 Kings 10:14-17, 26-28; 11:1-3.
32. What do you notice?
  - a. Solomon violated the law of the king
  - b. 666 talents of gold (v. 14).
  - c. Many horses (v 26) from Egypt (v. 28).
  - d. Many women (11:1-3).
33. What do you think will happen next?
34. Read 1 Kings 11:4-8.
35. What do you think God is going to do now?
36. Read 1 Kings 11:9-13.
37. At the time of this prophecy Israel was the most wealthy and powerful nation in the Near East. But when Solomon began to lead Israel into idolatry, he set the stage for a steady decline. Next week we'll see how the glory of Israel tragically comes apart.
38. Solomon loved women who did not love the LORD, and they led him astray. But before that he wrote much of what we call the wisdom literature in the Bible. These are the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. These books are not the law. They are the reflections on the law by godly men, inspired by God. They help us to understand how the law works in everyday life. We only have time to take a brief sample of the wisdom literature.
39. Read Proverbs 1:1-9.
40. Who wrote these proverbs?
  - a. Solomon (v. 1)
41. Why did he write them?
  - a. To know wisdom (v. 2)

42. For whom did he write them?
  - a. His son (v. 8-9)
  
43. Verse 7 is the heart of the proverbs. Godly wisdom is not intelligence or education or knowledge. Godly wisdom is founded on the fear of the Lord. Without that, any intelligence, education, or knowledge you possess will be corrupted. The fool is one who does not fear the Lord. He may be intelligent, well-educated, and knowledgeable, but he despises real wisdom and refuses to learn wisdom.
  
44. Read Proverbs 3:1-12.
  
45. What are some promises you find in these verses?

**Lesson 20**  
***Breaking the Covenant III***  
1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings

1. Was Solomon a good King? Why or why not?
2. What were Solomon's good qualities?
3. What were his failings?
4. Was Solomon the seed of the woman we've been looking for, promised in Genesis 3?
5. Did Solomon save Israel?
6. Solomon was the king that David could not be. David was a glorious king. He took a fractured and demoralized nation and united and inspired it. He defeated the enemies that had tormented Israel for hundreds of years and brought peace to the land. But it took Solomon to lead Israel to the pinnacle of glory. Solomon brought unheard of wealth, power, and status to Israel. Kings and queens from all over the world came to Israel to learn the source of her glory, and they discovered the LORD. Under Solomon God fulfilled the promise to Abraham (Genesis 22:17) and the promise to David (2 Samuel 7:10-11). Israel became as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and she ruled over all the kings in the Near East. Could anyone doubt that this was the savior promised to crush the head of the serpent?

But then it all began to unravel. One by one Solomon violated the laws of the king. He multiplied gold, he multiplied horses, and he multiplied his wives. These sins were ominous, but the truly devastating sin was allowing himself to be led astray to idols by his foreign wives. Not only did Solomon fail to live up to his potential, he actively led Israel into idol worship. It was only a matter of time until disaster would strike.

Like his father David, Solomon reigned for forty years. Then his son Rehoboam became king.

7. Read 1 Kings 12:1-5.

8. What would you have done? Would you have made things easier for the people?
9. Read 1 Kings 12:6-11.
10. Which advice was better, that of the old men or the young men?
11. What would you have done had you been Rehoboam?
12. Read 1 Kings 12:12-15
13. If you had been among the people, how would you have responded to Rehoboam's message?
14. Read 1 Kings 12:16-20.
15. Are you surprised at this?
16. Was it right for Israel to reject Rehoboam as their king?
17. Why did God allow this to happen?
  - a. Judgement on Solomon (1 Kings 11:11-13)
18. So Rehoboam was king of Judah only, and Jeroboam was king over all the other tribes. In fact, several other tribes sided with Rehoboam. When the tribes were allotted their territories, Simeon and Levi were not given any because of the sins of their fathers, Simeon and Levi. The Simeonites were settled within the boundary of Judah. The Levites were settled throughout Israel, but since they served in the temple, they gravitated toward Judah. And the little tribe of Benjamin always sided with her larger neighbor Judah.
19. Jeroboam acted to solidify his grip on the throne.
20. Read 1 Kings 12:25-30.
21. Where have we seen this before?
  - a. Aaron made a golden calf for worship in the wilderness

22. What happened when Aaron did this?
23. Why did Jeroboam do this?
24. Was it an unfortunate necessity?
25. What did Jeroboam say the golden calves were?
  - a. The gods who brought Israel out of Egypt
26. Which commandment did he break?
  - a. 2<sup>nd</sup>
27. Why did he put one idol in Bethel and one in Dan?
  - a. The southern and northern boundaries of the kingdom
28. Jeroboam instituted idol worship in defiance of God, but it got worse quickly. After Jeroboam died the kings who followed him did evil. Several were assassinated, and eventually Ahab came to the throne of Israel.
29. Read 1 Kings 16:29-33.
30. What made Ahab so bad?
31. Notice that Jeroboam broke the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment, and now Ahab breaks the 1<sup>st</sup>. What do you know about Baal?
32. The word baal means master, but it is also the proper name of the principle god of the Canaanites. He was the god of thunderstorms, and his rain caused the earth to produce. Asherah was his woman, and when they were aroused and had sex, there were good crops. Baal and Asherah were aroused by watching humans have sex, so temple prostitution was central to Baal worship.
33. What do you think God thought about Baal worship?
34. God eventually wiped out the house of Ahab. The kings that followed did not worship Baal, but neither did they give up the golden calves. The nation prospered economically, but as she grew wealthy, she oppressed the poor. Finally God had enough.

35. Read 2 Kings 17:6-23.
36. How many of Israel's sins can you name?
37. Assyria carried the Israelites into other parts of their empire and settled other nations into the territory of Israel. These people intermarried, and a mixed race arose, that mingled other religions with the worship of the LORD. Samaria was the dominant city, and these people became known as Samaritans – a race of half-breeds with a heretical religion.
38. Meanwhile the kings of Judah generally followed the LORD. An exception was Jehoram, who married a daughter of King Ahab of Israel, and his son Ahaziah. When Joash took the throne, he cleansed and repaired the temple and set Judah to serving the LORD. But Judah reached a high point under the reign of Hezekiah.
39. Read 2 Kings 18:1-8.
40. Did you notice that he did something no other good king had ever done, not even Solomon?
  - a. Removed the high places.
41. Hezekiah was followed by Manasseh, the most evil king of Judah.
42. Read 2 Kings 21:1-9.
43. How evil was Manasseh?
44. Read 2 Kings 21:10-12.
45. Manasseh's son Josiah restored true worship in Judah, but the nation was too far gone. Zedekiah was the last king of Judah.
46. Read 2 Kings 24:18-20.
47. Read 2 Kings 25:1-7.
48. And so the curse of Moses came true.

49. Read Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 15-20, 47-57.

50. Israel got what she deserved. She should have seen it coming. Moses spelled it out plainly, but the people refused to believe. But for anyone who did believe, the haunting question still called, "Where is the seed?"

## Lesson 21

### *Early Prophets and the Prophetic Office*

Jude 14-15; 2 Peter 2:4-5; Genesis 20:7; 1 Kings 18:20-40; 2 Kings 2:1-15

1. Were the kings who followed Solomon good or bad?
2. Who was the worst? Why?
3. Who was the best? Why?
4. Which nation destroyed the northern kingdom, Israel?
  - a. Assyria
5. Which nation destroyed the southern kingdom, Judah?
  - a. Babylon
6. Why did God allow His people to be carried into captivity?
7. Now let's get our bearings here. God's promise to Adam was not that his children would be secure and prosperous. He did not promise a glorious kingdom. God did promise to *Abraham* that he would have many descendants and that they would inherit the land of Canaan, but that promise came later than Adam. When Adam sinned and the human race was under the death penalty, the solution was not prosperity. The promise was a child. Someday a child would be born to a woman, and he would rescue all mankind from death and misery.

So far we have seen many children. Some of them did save mankind – to an extent. Noah obeyed God and built an ark that saved him and his family. He became a new Adam and the human race started over. Abraham obeyed God and left his home, his family, and his idols to follow God to Canaan. He became the father of those who serve God. Joseph saved the world from death by starvation. Moses saved Israel from Pharaoh, David saved them from the Philistines, and Solomon brought glory to God's people. But everyone of these men fell short in one significant way. Each one died. Each one sinned. None of them were able to save the human race from sin and death. So the search goes on.

8. Through all these thousands of years God has never forgotten his people. When Adam sinned, God appeared soon after for judgement and promise. Ever since, God has been judging and blessing his people. This is the story of the prophets, those men especially chosen to announce God's decisions.
9. The first prophet mentioned in the Bible is Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam.
10. Read Jude 14-15.
11. Did you know that Noah was also a prophet? His account in Genesis might not make that clear, but Peter does.
12. Read 2 Peter 2:4-5.
13. Also Abraham.
14. Read Genesis 20:7.
15. Other prophets make occasional appearances. Nathan was the prophet who exposed King David's sin with Bathsheba. But in general, prophets keep a low profile until the reigns of the kings.
16. Elijah is the first major prophet, and in a book like the Bible where family background is so important, it is curious that Elijah just appears on the scene with virtually no introduction.
17. Read 1 Kings 17:1-7.
18. That's it. Elijah just shows up and announces a drought. God directs him to stay with a widow who is so poor that she is about to run out of flour and oil. But while Elijah is there, her jug of oil and jar of flour never become empty. Then her son died.
19. Read 1 Kings 17:17-24.
20. Hundreds of year later Jesus will come and raise the dead. What is different in the way Jesus raised the dead?

21. The drought lasted for three years, and the land suffered greatly. Finally God called for a showdown with Baal. Let's pick up the story where Elijah meets King Ahab.
22. Read 1 Kings 18:17-24.
23. How would you feel if you were in Elijah's position?
24. Why would Elijah propose a test in which the true God would rain fire from heaven?
25. Remember that Baal was the god of thunder, storm, and lightning. Fire from heaven should be his strong point. Wasn't this risky for Elijah?
26. Read 1 Kings 18:25-29.
27. How did Baal answer his prophets?
28. What did Elijah do?
  - a. Mocked the prophets of Baal
29. What did Elijah say?
  - a. Maybe Baal is musing
  - b. Using the bathroom
  - c. On a journey
  - d. Asleep
30. Wasn't that rude? Why would Elijah mock the prophets of Baal?
31. Read 1 Kings 18:30-40.
32. What did the fire from heaven burn up?
  - a. Burnt offering
  - b. Wood
  - c. Stones
  - d. Dust
  - e. Water

33. How could fire burn up water and stones?
34. What happened in this showdown? What was the result?
  - a. God publicly defeated Baal and made a mockery of him
35. Was it right for Elijah to kill the prophets of Baal?
36. How many did he kill?
37. The showdown on Mount Carmel was the turning point for Israel. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel were eventually killed and Baal worship was wiped out. Israel never gave up the golden calves, but they never returned to Baal either. Elijah was the great prophet who alone stood against the might of a powerful king and entrenched religion. He alone turned Israel back to following the LORD. But before he died, Elijah appointed a successor.
38. Read 2 Kings 2:1-8.
39. What places did Elijah go on his journey?
  - a. Bethel
  - b. Jericho
  - c. Jordan River
40. How did Elijah and Elisha cross the Jordan?
  - a. The water parted to let them through
41. Read 2 Kings 2:9-15.
42. What did Elisha ask for?
  - a. A double portion of Elijah's spirit
43. Why did he ask for a double portion of Elijah's spirit?
44. Did he get it?
45. How did Elisha return over the Jordan River?

46. The firstborn receives a double portion of the inheritance. Elisha was asking to be adopted as Elijah's firstborn. It was a bold request, and God honored Elisha's courage.

Israel had deteriorated to the condition of the Canaanites before her. She worshiped their gods and was morally bankrupt. The Spirit of God in Elijah retraced His steps out of the land, and then returned in Elisha. Elisha is reconquering the land, this time by raising up a whole army of prophets who will lead the people back to true worship.

47. Prophet, Priest, and King are all servants of the High King, but they serve him differently.

48. The priest is the palace servant. The temple is the palace of God, and in Hebrew the word for palace and temple are the same. The priest is like the White House staff. They show you how to conduct yourself in the temple.

49. The king is the regional governor. The High King rules over all, but the king rules over part of the world. He has ruling authority, but is subordinate to the high King.

50. The prophet is the messenger to the governor. He links the palace to the provinces. He stands in the palace and hears the decrees of the High King, and then travels to the regional kings to deliver those decrees. A prophet spiritually had access to the heavenly throne room. He heard the voice of God and the angels there. Then he delivered that message to the King on earth.

51. Since God is judge of His people, the prophet will also play the role of prosecuting attorney. When God's people go astray and God comes to judge them, the prophet lays out God's case against His people. We will see this in action next week.

**Lesson 22**  
***Covenant Lawsuit***  
Isaiah 1-39

1. Last week we began to read about how God spoke to His people in the Old Testament. We began by noticing the earliest prophet the Bible mentions. Who was he?
  - a. Enoch
2. Who are some other prophets we mentioned last week?
  - a. Noah, Abraham, Nathan
3. Who is the first major prophet?
  - a. Elijah
4. Who was his successor?
  - a. Elisha
5. Toward the end of our last class we looked at the difference between prophets, priests, and kings. How did we define a priest?
  - a. The palace servant
6. How did we define a king?
  - a. A regional governor
7. How did we define a prophet?
  - a. A messenger to the governor.
8. A prophet links the palace to the provinces. He stands in the palace and hears the decrees of the High King, and then travels to the regional kings to deliver those decrees. A prophet spiritually had access to the heavenly throne room. He heard the voice of God and the angels there. Then he delivered that message to the King on earth.
9. Elijah's glory was that he stood alone against 950 pagan prophets and all the might of a powerful kingdom. Elisha's glory was in raising up hundreds of prophets throughout Israel. Elijah and Elisha sparked a revival that bought the northern kingdom a hundred years until it fell to the Assyrians. It was a revival led by the prophets trained by Elisha.

10. This week we're going to read the greatest writing prophet – Isaiah. Last week we said that since God is judge of His people, the prophet will also play the role of prosecuting attorney. When God's people go astray and God comes to judge them, the prophet lays out God's case against His people. Today we are going to see Isaiah prosecuting God's case against his guilty people.
11. Read Isaiah 1:1-3.
12. Where did Isaiah live and work?
- Judah, the southern kingdom
13. Verses two and three state the case against God's people. What are they charged with?
- Rebellion, do not know God
14. What is the right punishment for rebellion?
- Death
15. Read Isaiah 1:4-15.
16. This passage presents the evidence to support God's case. What are some points that support the charges?
- Deal corruptly (v. 4)
  - Forsaken the LORD (v. 4)
  - Despised the Holy One of Israel (v. 4)
  - Sick (vv. 5-6)
  - Country is desolate (vv. 7-8)
  - Like Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 9-10)
  - Worthless sacrifices (vv. 11-14)
  - Hand full of blood (v. 15)
17. Why is Judah compared to Sodom and Gomorrah?
18. Read Isaiah 1:16-20.

19. These verses are a call to repentance. What images does Isaiah use to urge his countrymen to repent?
  - a. Wash (v. 16)
  - b. Reason (v. 18)
  
20. Read Isaiah 1:21-23.
  
21. This is God's concluding argument. To what does God compare His faithless people?
  - a. Whore (prostitute)
  
22. What are the chief sins summarized here?
  - a. Murder
  - b. Rebellion
  - c. Theft
  - d. Bribery
  - e. Injustice
  - f. Mistreating widows
  
23. Let's see what God's verdict is. Read Isaiah 1:24-31.
  
24. What does God declare?
  - a. "I will get relief from my enemies, and avenge myself on my foes."  
(v. 24)
  
25. What will be the result of God's action?
  - a. "Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." (v. 26)
  
26. What will happen to the wicked?
  - a. Broken, consumed, wither, burn (vv. 28-31)
  
27. But this is not the end of the story. There will be a future time, called "the latter days," when God will bless His people.
  
28. Read Isaiah 2:1-4.
  
29. What are some of the features of this future era?

30. Notice verse 4, which contains the famous passage about nations beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.
31. The opening of Isaiah provides the outline for all the prophetic messages. Let's review what we saw.
  - a. 1:1-3 – The charges
  - b. 1:4-15 – The evidence
  - c. 1:15-20 – Call to repentance
  - d. 1:21-23 – Concluding argument
  - e. 1:24-31 – Verdict and sentence
  - f. 2:1-4 – Future blessing.
32. There are several things we should notice here, qualities which set God completely apart from pagan deities.
33. First, God is intimately involved with His people. He's not too busy ruling the oceans, or settling disputes among the gods, or copulating with other gods and humans to see what is going on with His people. But God does more than see. He acts to save the weak and punish the wicked. God is actively involved with His people.
34. Second, He has reasons for His actions. God is not impulsive. He acts based on evidence, and judges based upon reason. You never have to fear that God will lash out. The pagan gods often acted like alcoholic parents, unpredictable and impulsive. But never our God. He always judges according to His law, and He always explains His judgments.
35. Third, God never punishes without calling His people to repentance. We always get a second, or third, or fourth, or many chances!
36. Fourth, punishment of the wicked leads to blessing for the righteous. God does not indiscriminately destroy everyone within reach. His judgment on the wicked brings relief to the oppressed.
37. Finally, God has prepared a future day of unmatched blessing. History is not an endless cycle of events, like the ever-turning seasons, but a march toward a final destiny – and it is a glorious destiny.
38. Now we're going to get an inside view of the prophetic office.

39. Read Isaiah 6:1-7.
40. Where did this take place?
  - a. In the temple / in the holy of holies / in heaven
41. What did Isaiah see?
  - a. God, angels
42. Was Isaiah a timid soul, or did he have reason to be afraid?
43. Read Isaiah 6:8-13.
44. This passage is typically understood to be Isaiah's commissioning into the prophetic office. What is the job he volunteered for?
  - a. Preach to the people of Judah
45. What will be the result of Isaiah's ministry?
  - a. Destruction of Judah
46. There are two points to notice in this passage. First, This is a description of the prophet in the heavenly council. As we said earlier, the prophet stands in heaven and sees and hears God and the angels as the heavenly court decides what to do. But more than that, he even participates in the discussion!
47. Second, the prophet not only announces the decision of the heavenly court – he implements it by his preaching. The prophet makes things happen through his message. Isaiah is not only going to warn of destruction, he is going to make it happen. It is not an exaggeration to say that Isaiah destroyed Judah by his preaching.
48. As you can see, most of the prophetic literature is poetry. This makes it hard for Americans, because we are not comfortable with poetry. Consequently you will find silly interpretations of prophecy, often due to a misunderstanding of poetry. Let's look at a poetic image which is frequently misunderstood.
49. Read Isaiah 13:9-10.

50. This is called “cosmic collapse imagery”. The sun, moon, and stars will be put out, and the universe will die. Often people tend to take this literally, as if the astronomical bodies will actually be destroyed. But look at the context of these verses. Read Isaiah 13:1.
  
51. This prophecy is about Babylon, the nation that will someday conquer Judah. When Isaiah wrote this, Babylon was a rising power in Mesopotamia. Babylon will grow stronger, become the most powerful empire in the world, and conquer Judah, but afterward will herself be conquered by Persia. Chapter 13 is about the eventual destruction of Babylon. The destruction of powerful Babylon, the ruler of the world, will be as catastrophic as the collapse of the universe. Everyone on earth will be affected by the fall of Babylon. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars is a poetic image for the darkening of the great city of Babylon.
  
52. Cosmic collapse imagery shows up in several places among the prophets, and is common in the book of Revelation. Remember that it is a symbol for the destruction of a great socio-political power – a fall so devastating that only the collapse of the universe is an adequate comparison.
  
53. Isaiah is a massive book, which contains judgments against all the nations surrounding Judah.
  - a. Moab – chapters 15-16
  - b. Syria – chapter 17
  - c. Ethiopia – chapter 18
  - d. Egypt – chapter 19
  - e. Babylon – chapter 21
  - f. Jerusalem – chapter 22
  - g. Tyre – chapter 23
  - h. Earth – chapter 24
  
54. The Old Testament has 39 books, and the New Testament has 27 books. It is curious that the first 39 chapters of Isaiah are God’s judgments on the nations, and the last 27 chapters are prophecies of future blessing. After 39 horrifying chapters of doom, Isaiah offers comfort to God’s people. And that’s where we’ll pick up next week.

## Lesson 23

### *New Creation, New Covenant*

Isaiah 40-66, Jeremiah, Lamentations

1. Quick review: how did we define a priest?
  - a. The palace servant
2. How did we define a king?
  - a. A regional governor
3. How did we define a prophet?
  - a. A messenger to the governor.
4. Remember, a prophet links the palace to the provinces. He stands in the palace and hears the decrees of the High King, and then travels to the regional kings to deliver those decrees. A prophet spiritually had access to the heavenly throne room. He heard the voice of God and the angels there. Then he delivered that message to the King on earth.
5. Last week we read the first part of Isaiah, the longest prophecy in the Bible. Isaiah opens with a covenant lawsuit – God’s case against His sinful people. What are the six elements of a covenant lawsuit?
  - a. The charges
  - b. The evidence
  - c. Call to repentance
  - d. Concluding argument
  - e. Verdict and sentence
  - f. Future blessing.
6. This is the pattern for all the prophecies against God’s people. We will see these elements in the other prophetic books.
7. We also discussed cosmic collapse imagery. What is that?
  - a. Darkening of the sun, moon, and stars as a symbol for the fall of the dominant world empire

8. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah are God's judgments on the nations, and the last 27 chapters are prophecies of future blessing. After 39 horrifying chapters of doom, Isaiah offers comfort to God's people. Let's move on to that happier topic.
9. Read Isaiah 40:1-5.
10. What are the first words in this second part of Isaiah?
  - a. Comfort, comfort (v. 1)
11. How does God speak in this passage?
  - a. Tenderly (v. 2)
12. What is God going to do?
  - a. Reveal His glory (v. 5)
13. What a contrast! The accusations and threats of the first part of Isaiah now give way to tender comfort. For the next 27 chapters God will encourage and give hope to His people.
14. This part of Isaiah contains several so-called "servant songs" – prophecies about a servant who will come with great blessing.
15. Read Isaiah 42:1-4.
16. What did God do to this servant?
  - a. Put His Spirit upon him (v. 1)
17. What will the servant do?
  - a. Bring forth justice
  - b. Not cry aloud
  - c. Not break a bruised reed
  - d. Not grow faint
18. The most famous servant song is Isaiah 52:13-53:12. It consists of five sections of three verses each.
19. Read Isaiah 52:13-15.

20. What impression does verse 13 give about the servant?
  - a. Shall be exalted
21. What do we learn about him in verse 14?
  - a. He will be “marred” beyond recognition
22. What does verse 15 tell us he will accomplish?
  - a. Sprinkle many nations
23. What does sprinkling accomplish?
  - a. Purification
24. So this first section tells us that the servant will be exalted, he will be scarred horribly, and he will purify the nations. The next four sections expand on these points.
25. Read Isaiah 53:1-3.
26. Tell me more about the servant. What impression do we get of this fellow?
27. Read Isaiah 53:4-6.
28. These verse explain the previous three. Why was he despised and rejected? What did he do?
  - a. Bore our griefs and sorrows
  - b. Wounded for our transgressions
  - c. Crushed for our iniquities
29. Read Isaiah 53:7-9.
30. Verses 1-3 tell us what the servant was like. Verses 4-6 tell us what he did. Now verses 7-9 tell us what other people did to the servant. Let’s list some of these things.
  - a. Oppressed and afflicted
  - b. Led to slaughter
  - c. Cut off, stricken
  - d. Killed

31. Read Isaiah 53:10-12.
32. This reveals the shocking truth about who is behind the servant's torture and death. Who wanted to crush this servant?
  - a. The LORD (v. 10)
33. But this passage quickly moves on to declare what the servant will accomplish by his death. What does it say?
  - a. See his offspring
  - b. Prolong his days
  - c. Make many to be accounted righteous
  - d. Divide the spoil
34. What does the phrase mean to "make many to be accounted righteous"?
35. Now we recognize this servant song as a prophecy of Jesus, who came to live among us, suffer at our hands, and die for us. The shocking truth about the servant of the LORD is that it was the LORD Himself who desired the cruel death of His servant. We learn that the reason for his death was to secure the righteousness of his children. By the death of the servant, the guilty children are called righteous.
36. Isaiah preaches the gospel!
37. Read Isaiah 61:1-3.
38. Isaiah preaches judgment!
39. Read Isaiah 63:1-6.
40. Finally, Isaiah preaches a new creation!
41. Read Isaiah 65:17-25.
42. In verse 17 what does God create?
43. We will encounter the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation, but we find it here first. What sort of things do people do in the new heavens and the new earth?

44. How long shall they live?
45. Is death conquered?
46. Are these new heavens and new earth ruled by the seed of the woman who will crush the serpent and defeat death?
47. Isaiah's ministry continued through the reign of Hezekiah, the greatest and most godly of Judah's kings. But Isaiah was called to destroy Judah by his preaching. As we saw, he was ultimately successful. But here at the end of his prophecy he sees past the destruction of Judah to something far better.
48. King Hezekiah was followed by his evil son Manasseh, and unfortunately Manasseh reigned for a long time – 55 years. His son Amon reigned for two years. Then Josiah came to the throne and Jeremiah began to prophesy in Judah. Josiah was a godly king, but Judah was so mired in wickedness, Josiah was unable to bring about permanent reformation. Jeremiah was the prophet who saw the final destruction of Judah.
49. Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. In anguish he lashes out against the evil in Judah, for he saw the horror of her coming final destruction.
50. Read Jeremiah 3:1-3.
51. What does Jeremiah accuse Judah of?
  - a. Whoredom (prostitution)
52. Isaiah also opened his prophecy calling Judah a whore. But notice how much more graphic Jeremiah's language is. Look at verse 2. Judah has been ravished by many lovers. She shamelessly sits along the road and throws herself at any Arab who comes along. Judah is a slut.
53. We don't have time to read much of Jeremiah. In this prophesy we find that Judah will be carried into captivity for 70 years.
54. Read Jeremiah 25:8-11.

55. But as with all the prophets, Jeremiah sees a bright future for God's people. Jeremiah is prosecuting Judah for breaking her covenant with the LORD, but there will come a day when that covenant will be re-established.
56. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34.
57. What will be new about the new covenant?
- Write the law on their hearts
  - "I will be their God, and they shall be my people"
  - They shall *all* know the LORD
  - God will forgive their sins.
58. The new covenant will actually be much like the old covenant. Perhaps the best summary is to say that it will be more effective. The flaw in the old covenant was the inability of the people to keep it. In the new covenant God will *make* His people able to know Him. The promise and longing of the covenant will realized.
59. The book of Lamentations is a long poem written by Jeremiah in which he mourns the destruction of Jerusalem.
60. Read Lamentations 1:1-3.
61. But in the midst of bitter tears the prophet sees the kindness and love of God.
62. Read Lamentations 3:22-27.

## Lesson 24

### *Pre-exilic Prophets*

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

1. Last week we studied the second half of the prophet Isaiah. How is the second part of Isaiah different from the first?
2. What is the first part of Isaiah about?
  - a. Judgement on Judah and all nations
3. What is the second part of Isaiah about?
  - a. Comfort, salvation, new creation
4. Who is the character that keeps coming up in the second part of Isaiah?
  - a. The servant of the LORD, the suffering servant
5. Which chapter of Isaiah gives a vivid picture of the death of the servant?
  - a. 53
6. Whose idea was it to kill the servant of the LORD?
  - a. The LORD.
7. What image do both Isaiah and Jeremiah use to convey the sinfulness of Judah?
  - a. Whore.
8. What did Jeremiah prophesy would be the solution to Judah's sinfulness?
  - a. A new covenant
9. What was going to be new about the new covenant?
  - a. God's law would be written on hearts
  - b. All God's people would know the LORD
10. Isaiah opened his prophecy saying, "How the faithful city has become a whore..." Jeremiah compares Judah to a donkey in heat (i.e. ready for mating), a vile whore who solicits lovers in the streets. We saw that when God came to Egypt to rescue His people from Pharaoh, He declared that Israel was His firstborn son. God was Father to His people, and Israel was

His son. The implication was that God would love and provide for His people, and that Israel would honor and obey God, like a good son.

11. Now we see God introducing another image. He is husband, lover of Judah – and Judah is God’s bride. God is pledging to be faithful to Judah and love her forever, like a good husband – and we expect Judah to be faithful to God and love Him, like a good bride.
12. The prophet Hosea takes this image and develops it to the fullest. Let’s learn more about God’s love for His people as we study this book.
13. Let’s read Hosea 1:1.
14. When did Hosea prophesy?
  - a. In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
15. What other prophet was working then?
  - a. Isaiah.
16. Read Hosea 1:2.
17. What is a “wife of whoredom?”
  - a. An unfaithful wife.
18. Why would God tell Hosea to marry a woman he knew in advance would be unfaithful?
19. Read Hosea 1:3-9.
20. What do you think of this?
21. What do you think of giving your children such wicked names?
22. Why is God refusing to have mercy upon His people?
  - a. Hosea will get to this in upcoming chapters.
23. Read Hosea 1:10-2:1.

24. Is God contradicting Himself? Didn't He just declare He would show no mercy to Israel? So why is He suddenly changing His mind?
25. This is the opening to Hosea's prophecy. Here he outlines his message, and in the following chapters he expands on it. He is bringing a message of judgment to unfaithful Israel, but a promise of future restoration. Remember the covenant lawsuit? This is a short version of it.
26. Read Hosea 2:2-7.
27. In verse 2 why does Hosea say that his children's mother is not his wife?
  - a. A wife has one husband. Gomer is having many men, so she is not acting like a wife.
28. What must Hosea's wife Gomer do? (v. 2)
  - a. Cease her adultery.
29. What will happen if she does not stop her adultery? (v. 3)
  - a. Strip her naked, make her a wilderness, kill her with thirst.
30. What will Hosea do to Gomer's children? (vv. 4-5)
  - a. Have no mercy.
31. Is this fair? Why should the children suffer for the sins of their mother?
32. Why did Gomer commit adultery? (v. 5)
  - a. Her lovers gave her bread, water, wool, flax, oil, drink.
33. What else will Hosea do? See verse 6.
  - a. Hedge her way with thorns, build a fence against her.
34. What will Gomer do eventually? (v. 7)
  - a. Return to her husband
35. Hosea is a prophet. So what is this drama all about?
  - a. Israel has been unfaithful to God.

36. Hosea is a living prophecy. He is acting out what is happening with God and Israel. God took Israel when she was worshiping idols in Egypt. He rescued her, washed her, fed her, loved her, gave her children, and provided a rich life for her. Israel was unfaithful from the beginning, but God chose her anyway. God was faithful to her forever, but Israel kept running after other gods. God loved Israel, but Israel loved other gods. So God is going to abandon Israel to her lovers so that she can see how brutal they are. Then Israel will return to God, but not because of her own wisdom or virtue. Israel only returns to God because again God seeks her and loves her.
37. Read Hosea 2:14-20.
38. What does verse 14 say God will do to His unfaithful people?
- Allure her, speak tenderly to her
39. Look at verse 16. Remember, the Hebrew word “baal” means master. Israel will call God “my husband” instead of “my master.” What is the difference between those two forms of address?
40. In verse 17 the word “baal” seems to be the proper name of the Canaanite god. Do you see the play on words here? While Israel was whoring after the god Baal, she was enslaving herself to a cruel master. By returning to the LORD, she was restored to a true husband – a man who would love and care for her. Notice in verse 19 the marriage terminology. Israel shall be engaged to be married to the LORD.
41. Read Hosea 3:1-5.
42. It seems that Gomer was living with another man. What was Hosea called to do? (v. 1)
- Again love an adulteress, an unfaithful woman.
43. What did Hosea do? See verse 2.
- Bought her.
44. Why would Hosea pay money to buy his wife?
- She had become enslaved to another master.

45. How does this illustrate the future of Israel? (vv. 4-5)
46. Hosea contains the elements of the covenant lawsuit, but not in the logical order we saw in Isaiah. In this book the call to repentance is issued repeatedly – as if God were a lover longing for His wife to return to Him.
47. Read Hosea 6:1-3.
48. Here Hosea calls Israel to return to the LORD. What does he call for in verse 3?
  - a. To know the LORD.
49. Knowing in the Bible is never just remembering facts or ability to perform a job. It always implies personal intimacy. Knowing in the Bible is not what you do with school work. It is how you love your husband or wife. So what is Hosea suggesting when he calls Israel to know the LORD?
  - a. To the most intimate relationship.
50. Hosea is filled with evidence of Israel's unfaithfulness and warnings of punishment. He closes his prophecy with a final call to repentance.
51. Read Hosea 14:1-7.
52. Notice the rich agricultural imagery. It recalls Isaiah's prophecy of a new creation.
53. Turning over to the next page, the prophet Joel opens his book with a shocking announcement. Locusts are coming!
54. Read Joel 1:1-4.
55. What would this prophecy mean to the people of Judah?
56. What are the consequences of a locust invasion?
57. Locusts eat foliage. A swarm of locusts can strip the leaves from trees and destroy all the crops. In an age where travel was slow and transport was difficult, a locust swarm could mean death by starvation. It was horrifying.

58. Read Joel 1:5-10.
59. What did the locust plague represent?
60. Read Joel 1:13-14.
61. What is Joel saying in these verses?
  - a. Repent.
62. Verse 15 gives a name to this calamity.
63. Read Joel 1:15.
64. Joel is about the Day of the Lord. Let's learn more about it.
65. Read Joel 2:1-2.
66. What is the Day of the Lord?
67. Does Joel call for a trumpet to blow in celebration?
68. What images does Joel use to show the horror of the Day of the Lord?
  - a. Darkness, gloom, clouds, thick darkness, blackness
69. Read Joel 2:3-11.
70. What is Joel describing?
  - a. Military invasion.
71. What sort of army is this? What words would you use to describe it?
72. What sort of imagery is in verse 10?
  - a. Cosmic collapse.
73. What does cosmic collapse imagery point to?
  - a. Destruction of an empire

74. How does verse 11 summarize the Day of the Lord?
  - a. Great, very awesome, who can endure it?
75. Verses 12-17 are another call to repentance, and verses 18-27 are a promise that God will hear and restore Israel.
76. Read Joel 2:28-32.
77. When will this take place?
  - a. “Afterward.”
78. After what?
79. What do you see in verses 30-31?
  - a. Cosmic collapse imagery.
80. What follows this event?
  - a. The Day of the Lord.
81. What sort of day is this?
  - a. Great and awesome.
82. These verses refer to an “afterward” time. In the book of Acts the apostle Peter quotes this passage as being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.
83. What we see in Joel is two Days of the Lord. The first Day of the Lord is a military invasion of Judah. A foreign army will utterly destroy Judah, like a swarm of locusts. The second Day of the Lord will come afterward. It will feature, not a military invasion, but an outpouring of God’s Spirit. It will not be dark and gloomy. It will be great and awesome.

**Lesson 25**  
***Renewed Covenant***  
Ezekiel

1. The prophets display two attitudes toward God's people. These two attitudes are demonstrated in the two parts of Isaiah's prophecy. What was God's attitude in Isaiah chapters 1-39?
  - a. Judgement, wrath, destruction
2. What was God's attitude in Isaiah chapters 40-66?
  - a. Salvation, comfort, tenderness
3. Which chapter of Isaiah prophesies that the LORD will kill his servant to pay for the sins of His people?
  - a. 53
4. How did the prophet Hosea show God's love for His people?
  - a. Marrying an adulterous/unfaithful woman
5. How does this show God's love for Israel?
  - a. God chose Israel and loved her even though He knew she was unfaithful and would continue to be unfaithful
6. What image did Joel use for the coming destruction of Judah?
  - a. A locust plague
7. What did this image stand for?
  - a. An invading army
8. What term did Joel use for God's judgment on Judah?
  - a. The Day of the Lord
9. Remember that in Joel we saw two Days of the Lord. The first Day of the Lord is a military invasion of Judah. A foreign army will utterly destroy Judah, like a swarm of locusts. The second Day of the Lord will come afterward. It will feature, not a military invasion, but an outpouring of God's Spirit. It will not be dark and gloomy. It will be great and awesome.

10. So far all the prophets we have read prophesied before the fall of Israel and Judah. They announced judgment on God's people and called them to repentance for their evil ways. If the nation did not repent, they would be destroyed. These prophets also promised a future time of restoration and blessing.
11. Ezekiel came after these prophets that we have studied. He began his ministry shortly before Judah fell to Babylon, and continued to prophesy through the destruction of Jerusalem and into the exile in Babylon. He spans the time of the first prophets and that of the following prophets. His prophesy includes important passages about the process of fall and exile.
12. Read Ezekiel 1:1-3.
13. The Babylonians invaded Judah three times. Jerusalem and the temple were not destroyed until the third time. Ezekiel and Daniel were carried to Babylon at the first invasion. Ezekiel's visions began when he was 30 years old – the age when priests entered their service in the temple.
14. Read Ezekiel 1:4.
15. What do you expect when you see a fire and cloud?
  - a. God
16. Where before have we seen God revealed in cloud and fire?
  - a. Abraham – Genesis 15
  - b. The exodus – Exodus 13, 19
17. What new elements are part of this vision?
  - a. Wind.
  - b. Gleaming metal
18. Read Ezekiel 1:5-14.
19. What was in the middle of the fiery cloud?
  - a. Four living creatures
20. Read Ezekiel 1:15-21.

21. What else did Ezekiel see?
  - a. Wheels
22. Read Ezekiel 1:22-25.
23. What was over the living creatures?
  - a. An expanse/firmament
24. Read Ezekiel 1:26-28.
25. What was over the expanse?
  - a. The likeness of a throne
26. What was on the throne?
  - a. The likeness of a man
27. What was this image? What does the end of verse 28 tell us?
  - a. It was the LORD
28. So putting all these images together, what is the complete picture that Ezekiel saw?
  - a. Heaven
  - b. God riding His chariot-throne across the earth
29. What did Ezekiel do when he saw this vision?
  - a. Fell on his face
30. Why did he fall on his face?
31. Read Ezekiel 2:1-5.
32. Who is speaking?
  - a. God
33. What made Ezekiel able to stand up?
  - a. The Spirit

34. This is Ezekiel's initiation into the office of a prophet. He was taken to heaven and allowed to see and hear God. He was then sent out with God's message to the people on earth.
35. Read Ezekiel 8:1-4.
36. Where was Ezekiel?
  - a. In his house
37. What did he see?
  - a. Vision of God
38. Where did the Spirit take Ezekiel?
  - a. Jerusalem
39. What did he see there?
  - a. The image of jealousy
40. In this chapter the Spirit is giving Ezekiel a vision of Jerusalem and of the temple. In the temple is some idol, called the "image of jealousy."
41. Read Ezekiel 8:5-13.
42. What word is used most frequently in this passage?
  - a. Abomination
43. Remember, what is the setting of this vision?
  - a. The temple
44. What abominations did Ezekiel see in the temple? Look in verses 5, 10.
  - a. Image of jealousy
  - b. Engravings of animals and idols.
45. Who was in the temple worshipping these idols? (v. 11)
  - a. The elders of Israel
46. If the elders of Israel are worshipping idols, what does that mean for the country as a whole?
  - a. Condemned

47. We saw in verse 4 that the glory of God Ezekiel saw in chapter 1 was present in the temple. But not for long.
48. Read Ezekiel 10:18-19.
49. What did the cherubim do?
  - a. They left the house
50. We skipped over chapter 9. Chapters 8-10 describe the current conditions in the temple. Nebuchadnezzar has invaded Judah once and carried Ezekiel and other young men captive to Babylon. Meanwhile, back in Jerusalem, the elders of Judah are engaged in vile idolatry. This is terribly offensive to God, so He leaves the temple. The people of Jerusalem thought that they would never be conquered because God was present in the temple. They did not realize that God had left the temple, driven out by their evil idolatry. The temple is now an empty building. God has abandoned His people because of their wickedness, and now they are defenseless. Ezekiel saw all this in the visions from the Holy Spirit.
51. Read Ezekiel 33:21.
52. This is the turning point in Ezekiel. Jerusalem has fallen. From now on Ezekiel will prophesy about the fate of Israel after the fall.
53. The central factor in the fall of Judah was the failure of her leaders. Ezekiel preached against the leaders of Israel who had led Israel to destruction.
54. Read Ezekiel 34:1-6.
55. What are the charges against the shepherds of Israel?
  - a. Feed themselves
  - b. Eat the sheep
  - c. Abandoned the lost and hurting sheep
56. Read Ezekiel 34:7-10.

57. What will God do about these predatory shepherds? (v. 10)
- He will be against them
  - He will stop them from feeding the sheep
  - He will stop them from feeding themselves
58. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16.
59. Who will God send to care for His people? (v. 11)
- Himself
60. What will God do for His people?
- Seek them out
  - Rescue them
  - Feed them
  - Seek the lost
  - Heal the sick
  - Care for the hurting
61. This pivotal passage reaches back to earlier shepherds of Israel. Moses and David were both shepherds who became godly leaders and protectors of God's people. It also points forward to future shepherds, as New Covenant pastors are called to be. But it is fulfilled in Jesus who is the Great Shepherd, because He is our God who Himself came to search for His sheep and feed them.
62. Read Ezekiel 36:24-30.
63. This passage is packed with promises of future blessings for Israel. What are some of them?
64. Jeremiah had promised that God would establish a new covenant with Israel. The most prominent feature of this new covenant was that the law would be written on the hearts of God's people. Ezekiel expands this and promises that God will give His people a new heart and put His Spirit within them. Is Ezekiel also promising a new covenant?
65. Read Ezekiel 37:26-28.

66. Notice that the central feature of this covenant will be that God will dwell with His people. That was the purpose of the temple. It was the place where God lived among His people. The temple is rubble now, but Ezekiel is promising that God will someday live among His people again.

**Lesson 26**  
***Restored Nation***

Nehemiah, Ezra, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

1. Which prophet did we read last week?
2. Did Ezekiel prophesy before the fall of Jerusalem or afterward?
  - a. Both
3. What did Ezekiel see in chapter one?
4. Why were the people of Judah certain that Jerusalem would never fall?
  - a. God was there in the temple
5. What did Ezekiel see God do in the temple?
  - a. Leave
6. Why did God leave the temple?
  - a. Abominations, vile idolatry
7. Whose idolatry caused God to leave?
  - a. The elders
8. What image did Ezekiel use later for the bad leaders of Judah?
  - a. Bad shepherds
9. What will be the solution to the bad shepherds of Judah?
  - a. God Himself will seek and shepherd His people
10. Did Ezekiel promise a new covenant for God's people?
11. This week we are going to sample some of the prophets who worked after the fall of Jerusalem.
12. Read Ezra 1:1.
13. When did this take place?

14. Who is Cyrus?
15. Judah was carried into captivity by the Babylonians, who destroyed the temple and Jerusalem. Seventy years later the Babylonian Empire was weak and vulnerable. Meanwhile, the Persians to the north had grown strong. Cyrus invaded and conquered Babylon. Let's see what was one of his first acts.
16. Read Ezra 1:2-4.
17. What did Cyrus decree?
18. Why did he do this?
19. Read Ezra 1:5-11.
20. Read Ezra 3:1-5.
21. What was one of the first things the people did when they returned to Jerusalem?
  - a. Built an altar to the LORD
  - b. Offer sacrifices
  - c. Kept the Feast of Booths
  - d. Resumed the regular sacrifices
22. Why did they do these things?
  - a. Obedience to the Law of Moses
  - b. Fear of their neighbors
23. Next they began to rebuild the temple.
24. Read Ezra 3:10-13.
25. How did the people react to the laying of the foundation of the temple?
  - a. Some rejoiced
  - b. Some wept
26. Why did some rejoice and others weep?

27. Ezra the priest supervised the rebuilding of the temple and saw it to completion. About the same time another man came on the scene to rebuild the city. Nehemiah was cupbearer to Cyrus. Cupbearer is a very important position. The cupbearer tasted the wine to ensure that it was not poisoned before handing it to the king. He was one of the king's most trusted servants.
28. Read Nehemiah 1:1-3.
29. This terrible report moved Nehemiah to fervent prayer. Next we see him before the king.
30. Read Nehemiah 2:1-8.
31. So Nehemiah journeyed to Jerusalem with the king's blessing and permission to use the king's materials to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem This book is about Nehemiah's struggle to complete this task. Eventually he was successful.
32. When the temple and the wall of Jerusalem were completed, Nehemiah and Ezra held a great assembly in which they read the Law of God. The people were overcome with emotion when they heard the scripture.
33. Read Nehemiah 8:9-12.
34. How did the people respond to the Law?
35. Why did they respond this way?
36. A few weeks later there was another assembly. The Levites led the people in a prayer of dedication.
37. Read Nehemiah 9:38.
38. What happened?
39. Is this the new covenant that Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied?
40. Read Nehemiah 13:15-16.

41. What does this tell us about the condition of the Jews?
  - a. Becoming prosperous
42. Rebuilding the temple and the city were difficult. Ezra and Nehemiah faced obstacles among the Jews and from outsiders. One of their problems was lazy and careless Jews. During this time God raised up Haggai to prophesy and urge the people not to neglect God.
43. Read Haggai 1:1-4.
44. Why were the people dragging their feet about rebuilding the temple?
45. Where were the people living?
46. What does this tell us about the people?
47. Not long after Zechariah began to prophesy.
48. Read Zechariah 1:1-6.
49. What is Zechariah reminding the people of?
  - a. God's anger toward their fathers.
50. Zechariah prophesied peace and prosperity for Judah.
51. Read Zechariah 8:1-8.
52. What has God done for Zion? (v. 3)
  - a. He has returned!
53. When did God leave?
  - a. Ezekiel saw God leave the temple before the final Babylonian invasion
54. Why did God leave?
  - a. Because of the abominable idolatry of Jerusalem's elders
55. Now God is back! What is happening now that God is back in Jerusalem?

56. What does verse eight contain?
  - a. The covenant promise – “They shall be my people, and I will be their God”
57. Read Zechariah 8:11-15.
58. What is God doing now among His people?
59. Can you see the prophecies of Isaiah coming to pass? Isaiah promised a new heavens and a new earth. Cosmic collapse imagery foretells the fall of great powers and of the social order. Likewise cosmic construction imagery foretells a renewal of society and the establishment of just rule. God’s prophets Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah built a new heavens and new earth. God’s people were once again settled in their land, Jerusalem was a bustling city, and worship was restored in the temple. Everything is good.
60. Or is it? We’ve been here before. David and Solomon presided over a peaceful and prosperous and worshiping nation, but it did not last. What happened? What is missing? Through all these centuries have you forgotten what we’re looking for? Have you forgotten what is the one thing we really need? Don’t you remember that our only hope of salvation from sin and death is the seed of the woman?
61. Many seeds have come, and many saviors. Most recently Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah performed the amazing feat of resurrecting the nation of Judah. But sin still plagues us, and death is the fate of all men.
62. Zechariah gives us glimpses of a seed yet to come.
63. Read Zechariah 3:8.
64. Who is the high priest?
65. What does the name “Joshua” mean?
66. Who is God going to bring?

67. The high priest has a name to show that God saves. This is the Hebrew name that will become “Jesus” in Greek. And here God promises to send His servant, the Branch. This calls upon Isaiah’s prophecy that God will bring forth a branch from the stump of Jesse who will rule in justice.
68. Read Zechariah 9:9.
69. Zechariah prophesies that Judah will once again have her own king. 400 years later this passage is fulfilled when the final Joshua – Jesus of Nazareth – rides into Jerusalem on a donkey.
70. But Zechariah also contains prophecies of terrible suffering. The book ends on a morbid note, and Zechariah prophesies judgment and destruction. His last word is a promise of mourning.
71. Read Zechariah 14:13-15.

**Lesson 27**  
***The Day of the Lord***  
Malachi-Matthew

1. Which king decreed that the Jews should return to their home?
  - a. Cyrus
2. What else did he tell them to do?
  - a. Rebuild the temple in Jerusalem
3. Who led the first exiles back to Jerusalem?
  - a. Ezra
4. What building project did Ezra lead?
  - a. The temple
5. Who helped Ezra by leading the effort to rebuild the wall?
  - a. Nehemiah
6. What did Ezra and Nehemiah do after the temple and wall were completed?
  - a. Call a great assembly and read the law
7. How did the people respond to hearing the law?
8. How well did the exiles fare when they returned?
9. What prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled?
  - a. New heavens and new earth
10. In the midst of all this prosperity, what was still missing?
  - a. The seed
11. Jerusalem was safe and secure. The temple was rebuilt and the sacrifices were being offered again. The Jews were prosperous. But Zechariah saw dark clouds rising in the future.
12. Malachi is the last prophet before John the Baptist, and he picks up where Zechariah left off.

13. Read Malachi 1:1-5.
14. How does God prove His love for Israel?
  - a. By hating Esau
15. What is the relationship between Esau and Edom?
  - a. Both are names for the brother of Jacob.
  - b. Edom is the nation settled by Esau's descendants
16. What is the future of Edom?
  - a. Destruction
  - b. Note that Edom has passed out of existence
17. Israel asks God, "How have you loved us?" What does this tell you about the relationship between Israel and the LORD?
18. Read Malachi 1:6-8.
19. What image did God use for His relationship with Israel in verses 2-5?
  - a. Lover
20. What new images does God use in verses 6-8?
  - a. Father and Master
21. What is God's complaint? (v. 6)
22. To whom does God specifically direct His charges?
  - a. The priests.
23. What is the proof that the priests despise God?
  - a. Offering polluted food on the altar
24. What should God do about this?
25. Read Malachi 2:1-9.
26. What is God going to do about the despicable priests?

27. What is the root of Israel's problems? Read Malachi 3:10-12
28. What is the root problem?
  - a. Profaning the covenant
29. God is not arbitrary. The LORD is not capricious. His judgements are not based upon momentary displeasure. They are based upon the covenant. God does not send His prophets to prosecute the nations, because God did not have a covenant with other nations. But Israel had sworn to be faithful to her God. She had entered into a covenant with the LORD, and now, like a despicable child, or a rebellious servant, or a whoring wife, she has been unfaithful to her Father, Master, Husband.
30. God kept all His promises to Israel. God found her in Egypt and rescued her from the hand of Pharaoh. God brought her through the desert and planted her in a land rich with milk and honey. God defeated all her enemies and gave her peace and prosperity. After the exile God restored her to her land – just as he had promised, 70 years after she was carried off. God again made Israel prosperous. And where are we now? Israel is no longer worshipping idols, but she is once again failing to love and serve the God who saved her and loved her. What can God do now?
31. Read Malachi 3:1-4.
32. Who is going to fix the problem of polluted sacrifices on God's altar?
  - a. The Lord
33. Who is going to come into God's temple and clean it?
34. What will that day be like?
  - a. Refiner's fire, fuller's soap
35. Explain the image of a refiner.
36. Explain the image of a fuller.
37. Do the people of Israel want the Lord to come to His temple? (v 1)
  - a. They say so

38. Are they sincere in saying they want the Lord to come into His temple?
39. What will happen before God shows up to clean house?
  - a. God's messenger will come first.
40. Read Malachi 4:1-6.
41. What will the day of the Lord be like?
42. Will it be a day of blessing or a day of cursing?
  - a. Both
43. Who will be blessed?
  - a. Those who fear God's name (v. 2)
44. Who will be cursed?
  - a. The wicked (v. 3)
45. What will happen before this day? (v. 5)
  - a. Elijah will come
46. Is this the same day as the day of chapter 3?
47. Is the messenger of chapter 3 verse 1 the same as Elijah?
48. This is the last word from God for 400 years. The last thing Israel heard from God was "lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." God never spoke again until John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness. These severe words echoed through the centuries as God's people struggled to remain faithful to Him.
49. When God's people turned on Him and became His enemies, God called Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to attack and destroy them. But because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, God preserved a remnant of faithful Israelites. When King Belshazzar of Babylon turned on God, God sent His servant Cyrus the Persian to conquer Babylon. Cyrus rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem and resettled the people in their land. Cyrus and his descendants nurtured and protected the Israelites, and the Jews prayed for the king and offered sacrifices in the temple. When

the Persians no longer feared God, God sent Alexander the Greek to conquer Persia.

50. Alexander died a young man, and his four generals divided his empire among them. Seleucus took the region of Syria and Persia. Ptolemy took Egypt and Palestine. These men established dynasties that lasted until Rome took over their territories.
51. For several centuries the Ptolemies ruled Palestine, and they were generally benevolent toward the Jews. But the strength of this dynasty steadily waned until 167 B.C. the Selucids expelled them. The Seleucid king, Antiochus IV, was an impetuous and profane man. He called himself Epiphanes, which means “God manifest.” He claimed that to see him was to see God.

Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the Ptolemaic Kingdom and conquered almost all of Egypt. Then he returned to Palestine and set about Hellenizing the country – introducing Greek culture. The Seleucid policy had always been to Hellenize their territories, whereas the Ptolemies had been more accepting of native cultures. Antiochus build gymnasia, where men exercised naked. He built temples to Greek gods. He outlawed Jewish traditions. But the worst thing he did was to sacrifice a pig on the altar in Jerusalem and dedicate the temple to Zeus.

The Jews were outraged, and finally there was an incident which set off a war. An old man refused to worship the Greek gods and killed a fellow Jew who attempted to do so. His son, Judah Maccabee, led a revolt against the Seleucid Kingdom, and against all odds expelled the Greeks. They cleansed and rededicated the temple. Although they had enough oil for only one day, the temple lamp burned for eight days until they obtained more oil. This is the basis of the feast of lights, or Hanukkah.

52. For the first time since the Davidic kings, Judah was free of foreign rule, but it was not a happy time. The next hundred years brought numerous revolts and changes of government until Rome stepped in to stabilize the territory. During this time the priesthood was a point of much contention, and finally the priest descended from Aaron was deposed and a rival was installed. This was in spite of the clear requirement that only Aaron’s descendants were eligible to be priests.

53. Rome allowed a half-Jew named Herod to become king. Herod the Great was a powerful and vicious man. He began a massive building campaign, including expansion of the temple in Jerusalem. But he also assassinated his own sons out of fear they would get to him first. People said it was better to be a pig in the household of Herod than a son. He would not kill a pig, out of deference to Jewish customs, but he would kill his sons to hang on to power.
54. By this time four parties had emerged in Judah. The Pharisees were the religious conservatives. They read and obeyed the law of God, and expected God to send His servant to establish His Kingdom among them. The Sadducees were the religious liberals. They did not take the Bible literally, they did not believe in the resurrection, and they embraced Greek customs. The Essenes were the monastics. They expected the servant of the Lord prophesied by Isaiah to come soon, so they withdrew to the desert to wait for Him. The Zealots were a political party. Their aim was to drive out the Romans – by armed revolt if necessary.
55. By the first century the Jews began to think that the time must be drawing close for God to fulfill the prophesies of Isaiah, Zechariah, Malachi, and the other prophets. Surely the Anointed One, the Messiah, must appear soon. So when a messenger appeared in the wilderness preaching repentance, Judah exploded with excitement.

**Lesson 28**  
*Son of David*  
Matthew 1-28

1. Israel prospered after the return from exile in Babylon, but all was not well. What was the problem? Did she return to worshipping idols?
2. What were some of the sins that Malachi prophesied against?
3. What did he foresee as the only real remedy for Israel's sin? (Malachi 3:1)
  - a. The Lord Himself would have to come and cleanse the temple
4. What would happen before the Lord appeared?
  - a. A messenger would prepare the way before him
5. What was the name of that messenger? (Malachi 4:5)
  - a. Elijah
6. Who were the rulers of Palestine after the fall of the Persian Empire?
  - a. Alexander the Greek
  - b. Ptolemaic Kingdom
  - c. Seleucid Kingdom
  - d. Jews
  - e. Herod the Great under the Roman Empire
7. What were the four main Jewish parties in the first century?
  - a. Pharisees – religious conservatives, literal interpretation of the law and the prophets
  - b. Sadducees – religious liberals, only accepted the Pentateuch as scripture, accepted Greek culture, controlled the temple
  - c. Essenes – monastics
  - d. Zealots – political revolutionaries
8. Which of these four parties does **not** appear in the New Testament? Why?
  - a. Essenes – they lived in the desert, far away from where Jesus ministered.

9. All the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi prophesied that a Messiah would come to deliver Israel. Isaiah's name for the Messiah was "the servant of the Lord." Other prophets used different terms. By the time we get to Malachi, the prophet predicts that the Lord Himself will come to His temple, and that Elijah will precede Him.

Faithful Jews began to look for this Messiah. They studied the scriptures and calculated the dates. The book of the prophet Daniel names specific time periods until certain events come to pass, but the book is cryptic. So there were many conflicting interpretation about when those events would happen, and about the coming of the Messiah. Nevertheless, by the time that Herod the Great took the throne of Judah, there was a growing feeling that the time must be near. Therefore you can imagine the excitement when Elijah suddenly appeared in the desert and began preaching the need to prepare to meet God!

10. Read Mark 1:1-8.
11. Verse two says the following quote is from Isaiah, and verse three is from Isaiah. But did you recognize that the quote in verse two is from Malachi?
12. Who is the fulfillment of these prophecies? (v. 4)
13. What sort of response did he receive?
14. Why is his clothing described in verse six?
15. John is wearing the distinctive garb of Elijah. If you turned to 2 Kings 1, you would find King Ahaziah identifying Elijah as the man who wore a leather belt and a garment of hair. John the Baptist would have been recognized instantly as an Elijah figure by anyone who had studied the scriptures.
16. What was John's message?
  - a. After me comes one mightier
  - b. Repent and be baptized

17. Mark captures the explosive excitement of John's ministry. To most people, this looked like the prelude to the coming of the Messiah. Faithful Jews had been looking for the Messiah for centuries. The times appeared to be converging about now. Then Elijah shows up, and the whole country goes wild.
18. Mark is the action-adventure gospel. It is the shortest and has the least amount of teaching. If you take a New Testament course at the university, you will almost certainly be taught that Mark was written first. Scholars think that Matthew and Luke took Mark and added to it to make their own gospels. This theory has been overwhelmingly dominant among unbelieving scholars, but there is not proof, and there are better proposals.

Tradition has always held that the gospels were written in the order in which they appear in the Bible. This is not proof either, but neither should tradition be lightly dismissed. In the ancient world there is no case where a short piece of literature was expanded, but there are several cases where longer pieces were shortened. Therefore it makes more sense that Matthew was written first, then Mark condensed it for a different audience, and finally Luke wrote in a different form altogether.

The order of composition does not matter greatly, but for our purposes, we will read the gospels in canonical order.

19. Read Matthew 1:1.
20. How is Jesus introduced here?
  - a. Christ
  - b. Son of David
  - c. Son of Abraham
21. Matthew was likely the first gospel written, and appears to be written for a Jewish audience.
22. "Christ" is English for  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , which is Greek for the Hebrew word "Messiah." The first thing Matthew tells us is that Jesus is the Messiah who had been promised by the prophets. He also tells us that He is descended from King David, and therefore has the right to rule God's people. He is also descended from Abraham, and therefore inherits the prom-

ises to Abraham. All three titles would have been profoundly compelling to a Jewish audience – and they are compelling to us also, who have traced the search for the Seed of the Woman for 4,000 years.

23. Read Matthew 1:18-25.
24. How is Joseph addressed?
  - a. Son of David
25. Why is this significant?
26. What are the two names given to the child?
  - a. Jesus
  - b. Immanuel
27. What is the significance of each?
  - a. Jesus – English form of Greek version of Joshua: “God is salvation”
  - b. Immanuel – “God with us”
28. Do you remember the promise of the covenant? God promised Abraham that he would be his God. Over and over God promised to be with His people and to be their God. God kept this promise in part. He was present in the fire and smoke, in the earthquake and storm, above the cherubim in the temple, in the still small voice to the prophets. But now God will come in the flesh, as a man, to live among us as a man. This is the ultimate fulfilment of the covenant promise.
29. Let’s keep reading. Read Matthew 2:1-6.
30. What were the wise men looking for?
  - a. The king of the Jews.
31. Why was Herod and everyone else troubled? Isn’t the birth of a king cause for celebration?
32. Read Matthew 2:7-12.
33. What was Herod’s intention regarding Jesus?

34. Read Matthew 2:13-18.
35. Why did Jesus' family flee to Egypt?
  - a. To escape Herod
  - b. To fulfill prophecy
36. Why did Herod kill all the babies in the area around Bethlehem?
37. Did you notice how in the short time we have been reading these passages are packed with Old Testament quotations. This is typical of Matthew, and adds to our theory that he had in mind a primarily Jewish audience. He is demonstrating that Jesus is the true Messiah, the authentic fulfillment of scripture.
38. As the true Messiah and genuine Son of David, Jesus was of royal blood and was destined to sit on the throne of His father David. The gentile rulers recognized this, and submitted to His rule by worshipping Him. The Jewish king rejected Jesus' claim to the throne and sought to kill Him. This sets the theme for the book of Matthew. Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel, who has come to rule the world, but will be rejected by His own people.
39. Matthew is organized topically. That does not mean it is untrue. It just means that he grouped the stories around themes rather than telling them chronologically. Here is a simple outline of Matthew:
  - a. Prologue – ch. 1-4
  - b. Vision of Jesus' Kingdom – ch. 5-9.
  - c. Mission of Jesus' Kingdom – ch. 10-12.
  - d. Nature of Jesus' Kingdom – ch. 13-17.
  - e. Conflict and Jesus' Kingdom – ch. 18-22.
  - f. Future of Jesus' Kingdom – ch. 23-25.
  - g. Epilogue – ch. 26-28
40. The first four chapters introduce the main characters and set up the conflict between Jesus and the Jews. The last three chapters resolve that conflict by showing the betrayal, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and His elevation to the universal throne. The five sections in between teach us different aspects of Jesus' Kingdom. Each section begins with a teaching by Jesus. This is followed by incidents in Jesus' life which illustrate that teaching. Let's have a look at the first section.

41. Read Matthew 5:1-11.
42. Who is Jesus speaking to?
  - a. His disciples
43. What commands does He give to His followers?
  - a. None
44. Matthew chapters 5-7 are commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus intended this sermon for His followers, but by the end a huge crowd had gathered. There are commands in this sermon, but its primary purpose is to provide a vision of the Kingdom Jesus is establishing. Here He describes the sort of people who will be in His Kingdom and how they will behave.
45. After the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew tells some stories to illustrate what this sort of life looks like.
46. Read Matthew 8:1-4.
47. What beatitude is Jesus illustrating in this event?
48. In the following events Jesus illustrates a Kingdom life of faith, love for others, care for the sick and hurting, and following Jesus.
49. Chapter 10 changes to the topic of the mission of Jesus' Kingdom.
50. Read Matthew 10:5-15.
51. Here Jesus is giving instructions to His disciples prior to sending them out on a preaching mission. What were some of His instructions?
52. Read Matthew 10:34-39.
53. How would you summarize Jesus' perspective on what it means to follow Him?

54. Jesus sent out His disciples. The next two chapters show Jesus involved in challenging situations where there is open hostility to His message.
55. In the next section we learn how Jesus' Kingdom operates. It begins with the parable of the sower. Jesus explains that He is the sower, sowing the word of the gospel in the world. But Jesus' message does not take root in everyone. Many people hear the gospel, but reject it. The problem is not the gospel – the problem is that those people are not spiritually receptive. They don't have "ears to hear." So we learn from this that Jesus' Kingdom is built by preaching the gospel, but that many will not accept it. The following chapters illustrate this principle of the Kingdom as Jesus preaches everywhere, but is often rejected.
56. The opposition gathers strength. In chapter 18 Jesus teaches about opposition, and we see a showdown in chapters 21-22. Jesus drives out the moneychangers in the temple, then humiliates the scribes when they try to trick Him.
57. Just before His death Jesus teaches the disciples about the future of His Kingdom, chapters 23-25. At this point, the final rejection, crucifixion and death of Jesus are inevitable.
58. The focal point of Matthew's gospel is 22:41-46. Let's read that.
59. Jesus claims to be not only the Son of David, but also the Lord of David. So at the end He claims the universal throne.
60. Read Matthew 28:18-20.
61. The theme of Matthew's gospel: Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel, who came to rule the world, but was rejected by His own people.

**Lesson 29**  
***Son of God***  
Mark 1-16

1. What were the four main Jewish parties in the first century?
  - a. Pharisees – religious conservatives, literal interpretation of the law and the prophets
  - b. Sadducees – religious liberals, only accepted the Pentateuch as scripture, accepted Greek culture, controlled the temple
  - c. Essenes – monastics
  - d. Zealots – political revolutionaries
  
2. How was Jesus introduced at the beginning of Matthew's gospel? (Three titles)
  - a. Christ
  - b. Son of David
  - c. Son of Abraham
  
3. Which people did Matthew likely write his gospel for? Why?
  - a. The Jews.
  - b. It focuses on the fulfillment of Old Testament scripture.
  
4. How did Matthew organize his gospel?
  - a. Topically
  
5. What is the theme of Matthew's gospel?
  - a. Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel, who came to rule the world, but was rejected by His own people.
  
6. Matthew was probably the first gospel, written when many of the believers in Jesus were Jews. He wrote to show that Jesus was indeed the Messiah promised by the prophets. Matthew was organized topically, so it is suitable for teaching people the message of Jesus. It's the textbook gospel, with an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion.
  
7. Mark's gospel is much different. It is the shortest gospel and has the least amount of teaching. It is like the Reader's Digest version of Jesus' life and ministry. It is probably the most chronological of the gospels.

8. Let's read Mark 1:1.
9. What titles are given to Jesus?
  - a. Christ
  - b. Son of God
10. What does "Christ" signify?
  - a. From Greek *χριστος*, which is from the Hebrew word "Messiah."
11. Mark calls Jesus the Son of God. How does this compare to Matthew's introduction to Jesus?
  - a. Calls Jesus "Son of Abraham" and "Son of David"
12. Why might Mark call Jesus the Son of God instead of Son of David?
13. David was the glorious king of Israel, and God had promised that a son of David's would always sit on his throne. The son of David was very important to the Jews. The gentiles, however, had little interest in an ancient Jewish king. But gentile kings and Pharaohs had often considered themselves sons of god. Shortly before Jesus' birth Augustus had seized power in Rome, and before he died he claimed divine status. All Roman emperors thereafter claimed to be divine. Mark is introducing Jesus as the true divine ruler – the genuine Son of God.
14. If Jesus is the Son of God, his birth and childhood are largely irrelevant, so Mark begins with Jesus as an adult. He introduces Jesus by way of John's ministry and gets right into Jesus' activity.
15. Read Mark 1:14-15.
16. This is the opening line to Jesus' ministry. It gives the summary of His message.
17. Read Mark 1:16-34. Look for a word that is repeated many times.
18. Did you find the often repeated word?
  - a. Immediately

19. What impression do you get from this passage?
  - a. Rapid-fire action
  
20. What did Jesus do in verses 16-20?
  - a. Call His disciples
  
21. When Jesus called them, what did they do?
  - a. Follow.
  
22. What did Jesus do in verses 21-28?
  - a. Cast out the unclean spirit
  
23. When Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, what happened?
  - a. It came out
  
24. What did Jesus do in verses 29-34?
  - a. Heal the sick
  
25. When Jesus lifted up Simon's mother-in-law, what happened?
  - a. She was healed.
  
26. What overall picture of Jesus emerges from these events?
  
27. Mark is the action-adventure gospel in which Jesus is God in the flesh. In this dizzying whirlwind of activity, Jesus displays authority over everything within reach: men, demons, disease, uncleanness. This is the overview of Jesus according to Mark. In the following chapters Mark focuses on specific displays of Jesus' authority to highlight different aspects of Jesus' ministry. Let's look at the objects of Jesus' authority in the next few chapters.
  - Leprosy
  - Sin
  - Rich, sinful man
  - Traditions
  - Sabbath
  - Cripple

28. Read Mark 3:1-6.
29. How would you have answered Jesus' question? Which should you do on the Sabbath? Save life or kill?
30. What did Jesus do?
  - a. Heal the man
31. What did the Pharisees do?
  - a. Plot to kill Jesus
32. The Herodians were people who supported King Herod. Herod was hated by the majority of the Jews, especially the Pharisees, but some people supported him. Why would the Pharisees form an alliance with the Herodians?
  - a. They hate Jesus more
33. So Mark now has set up the plot. It is clear that Jesus is no ordinary rabbi, and is therefore a threat to the status quo. Those in power are going to have to eliminate Him if they expect to keep control.
34. At this point Jesus withdraws with His followers and selects the twelve apostles. He then plunges back into ministry. Now Mark shows us another round of events, this time more astonishing than before. In chapters 4- 6 Jesus silences the deadly storm, overcomes 6,000 demons, heals a dying woman, and raises a dead girl.
35. Then it's time for the apostles to join the action. Jesus sends the twelve out to do these same things, and they are an astonishing success! Jesus attempts to get away for a break with His apostles, but over 5,000 people rush after them. They take a tour through gentile country and do even more miracles. Finally in chapter 8 Jesus begins to reveal His true identity to His apostles.
36. Read Mark 8:27-30.
37. This is the center of Mark's gospel, and it is the heart of Mark's message. But now we discover that the good news that super-hero Jesus is our own Messiah comes with a cost.

38. Read Mark 8:34-38.
39. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?
40. What did Jesus say will happen to you if you cling to life?
  - a. You will die
41. What is the only way to be sure you will live?
  - a. Deny yourself and die
42. In chapters 9-10 Jesus continues teaching His apostles what it means to live for Him. He will die, and so must they – if they wish to live. Chapter 11 is a turning point. This is the last week of Jesus’ life, and He begins it by riding into Jerusalem in triumph. But verse 11 casts an ominous shadow.
43. Read Mark 11:11-25.
44. What did Jesus see on His way to Jerusalem?
  - a. A fig tree
45. What did Jesus do to it?
  - a. Cursed it
46. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?
  - a. It bore no fruit
47. What did Jesus do next?
  - a. Drove the money-changers out of the temple
48. Do you think the money-changers were expecting Jesus?
49. Remember Malachi’s prophecy, that the messenger of the covenant would suddenly come into the temple, and no one could endure his coming?
50. What did Jesus’ apostles see the next day?
  - a. The fig tree withered to its roots

51. Do you have any idea why this incident of the fig tree is included in this story?
52. A fig tree is a common Old Testament symbol for Israel. Jesus has come to Israel looking for fruit. A fig tree is useless if it bears no fruit, and Israel is useless if it bears no fruit. Jesus curses the fig tree, then enters Israel's temple and cleans out the filth. This is the final battle, the beginning of the end. Before this is all over, Israel will be a smoking ruin.
53. Jesus explains this in chapter 13, but no one understands it. Most people even today do not understand this chapter. Israel will fall, the temple will be destroyed, and Jesus will come charging back to obliterate His enemies.
54. The story races to its conclusion. Jesus is betrayed, given a mock trial, tortured, and crucified. The sign over His cross said "The King of the Jews." The king is dead, and with it the Jewish nation. When Jesus took His last breath, the curtain of the temple tore open and a gentile realized what had happened. One of the Romans who crucified Jesus said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Indeed, just as Mark said as he began his gospel.
55. The theme of Mark's gospel: Pharaoh, Alexander the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, Caesar are imposters. Jesus is the true Son of God

**Lesson 30**  
***Son of Man***  
Luke 1-24

1. What were the four main Jewish parties in the first century?
  - a. Pharisees – religious conservatives, literal interpretation of the law and the prophets
  - b. Sadducees – religious liberals, only accepted the Pentateuch as scripture, accepted Greek culture, controlled the temple
  - c. Essenes – monastics
  - d. Zealots – political revolutionaries
  
2. How was Jesus introduced at the beginning of Matthew’s gospel?
  - a. Christ
  - b. Son of David
  - c. Son of Abraham
  
3. How was Jesus introduced at the beginning of Mark’s gospel?
  - a. Christ
  - b. Son of God
  
4. Which people did Matthew likely write his gospel for? Why?
  - a. The Jews.
  - b. It focuses on the fulfillment of Old Testament scripture.
  
5. Which people did Mark likely write his gospel for? Why?
  - a. The gentiles.
  - b. The title “Son of God” challenges the claims of Caesar.
  
6. How did Matthew organize his gospel?
  - a. Topically
  
7. How did Mark organize his gospel?
  - a. Chronologically
  
8. What is the theme of Matthew’s gospel?
  - a. Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel, who came to rule the world, but was rejected by His own people.

9. What is the theme of Mark's gospel?
  - a. Pharaoh, Alexander the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, Caesar are imposters. Jesus is the true Son of God
10. If Matthew is the textbook gospel that presents Jesus as a teacher, what is Mark?
  - a. The action-adventure gospel that presents Jesus as a god
11. Skeptics and unbelievers sometimes point to four different gospels as evidence that the Bible cannot possibly be trustworthy. It's not hard to find apparent contradictions in the gospels, which bolsters this case. But the closer you look, the more it becomes apparent that there are no real contradictions. Instead, what we have are four true accounts of Jesus' life and ministry.

Any event will be reported differently by different people. Let's say Benjamin tells lame jokes during Excelsior talent night and Jason interviews the audience to write a story about it. Andy reports that the jokes were terrible and the audience was bored. David Sampson was impressed that Benjamin could hold the audience for five whole minutes. Mrs. Green loved it and heard other mothers saying the same thing. Mr. Green thought the jokes were pretty good. Everyone told Jason the truth. Some people loved it, some were bored, some were impressed, etc. Each individual report was true, but you get a more complete picture by hearing all the reports.

This is why we have four gospels. Each gospel writer tells the truth about Jesus' life and ministry, but each is looking at different aspects of the story. By studying each gospel, we get a more complete picture of Jesus.

12. Luke wrote his gospel for a more literary audience. His is the longest and uses the most advanced vocabulary.
13. Read Luke 1:1-4.
14. Why did Luke write his gospel when apparently there were already other gospel accounts?
  - a. Write an orderly account (v. 3)
  - b. Provide certainty to the faith of believers (v. 4)

15. Where did he get the material for his book?
  - a. Eyewitnesses (v. 2)
  
16. Luke intended to write an orderly account. Most western readers will assume he means to write the story chronologically, but that is not necessarily the way a first century writer would have thought. In fact Luke organized his book the way any Greek author would write about an important person. Ancient biographies were written in four parts:
  - a. Remarkable childhood
  - b. Life story
  - c. Amazing exploits
  - d. Tragic death

This was the standard way of writing about kings, gods, and heroes. By using the standard biographical format, Luke is alerting his educated readers that Jesus was no ordinary man or passing crackpot. Jesus' importance ranks up there with Ulysses, Achilles, Socrates, Plato, and Alexander the Great. Jesus is a major historical figure worthy of a full literary treatment.

17. Mark focused on Jesus' divine power and authority. He was not so much interested in how Jesus came on the scene, but in what He did. But Luke knows that a serious treatment of Jesus has to include an explanation of His childhood.

Later writers will make up fictional accounts of Jesus' childhood and have Him doing things that range from implausible to foolish. Luke limits himself to the truth, and includes those events which help to add certainty to our faith. Luke covers Jesus' childhood in chapters 1-3.

18. You are familiar with the story of Jesus' birth, since we read Luke's account every year at Christmastime. He begins with a detailed account of Jesus' miraculous conception, complete with angelic announcements and songs by Mary and Zechariah. Luke records the trip to Nazareth, birth in a stable, visit by shepherds, singing of the angels, circumcision, and first visit to the temple. All these events are the acts of a human baby, but a very remarkable one.

19. Read Luke 2:39-40, 51-52.
20. Luke presents Jesus as a man, who was born the way all babies are born, did normal childhood things, and grew up into a man.
21. In chapter 3 Luke records the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew also recorded the genealogy of Jesus, but you will notice they are very different. For one thing Matthew begins at the beginning and moves to the end – to Jesus. Luke begins with Jesus and moves backwards. But this is not the real problem. From Jesus back to David, Luke’s and Matthew’s genealogies trace different people entirely! This is a glaring contradiction.

Most scholars believe that the reason for this difference is that one genealogy is the line of Joseph and one is the line of Mary. Both Mary and Joseph were descended from David, one through Solomon, and one through Nathan.

Another major difference is that while Matthew’s genealogy only goes back as far as Abraham, but Luke’s goes all the way back to Adam.

22. Why would Matthew’s genealogy stop at Abraham, but Luke’s goes all the way to Adam?
23. Luke ends his genealogy with Jesus as “the son of Adam, the son of God.” Mark began his gospel telling us that Jesus was the son of God, but there was nothing about His being the son of Adam. What we’re going to see is that, while Luke also recognizes Jesus as the divine Son of God, his focus is on Jesus’ humanity. Luke’s gospel is a biography of Jesus, the Son of Man. Luke makes us see that Jesus is the true Seed of the Woman.
24. So ends the account of Jesus’ remarkable childhood. The next section of this ancient biography is about Jesus’ life story. It includes Luke chapters 4-9:50.
25. Just as the first man, Adam, was initially confronted with a test, so Jesus is also confronted with a test right at the beginning of His ministry.
26. Read Luke 4:1-13.
27. Where was Adam tempted?
  - a. In a garden

28. Where was Jesus tempted?
  - a. In the wilderness
  
29. Why would Adam be tempted in a garden, but Jesus in the wilderness?
  - a. God created the earth beautiful, but sin has ruined it. The wilderness is a symbol of how sin has ravaged mankind
  
30. What was Adam's first temptation? Jesus?
  - a. Eat a fruit; eat bread
  
31. How did Adam do in his test?
  - a. Failure
  
32. How did Jesus do in His test?
  - a. Success!
  
33. God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. Jesus has won the first round. Soon Satan will be completely crushed.
  
34. Read Like 4:14-15.
  
35. Now Jesus, having triumphed in His initial battle with Satan, begins His ministry as a man empowered by the Spirit.
  
36. Read Luke 4:16-21.
  
37. No other gospel includes this event. Why would Luke include it? What is Luke showing us about Jesus?
  - a. Jesus is coming to help the poor, imprisoned, blind, and oppressed.
  
38. Read Luke 6:20-26.
  
39. Does this sound familiar? What scripture we read recently sounds like this?
  - a. The Sermon on the Mount
  
40. How is it different than the Sermon on the Mount?
  - a. Shorter, "poor" vs "poor in spirit", "now", woes.

41. What is the effect of these differences? How do they give Jesus' teaching a different cast?
42. This is another place where the gospel writers supposedly contradict themselves. The critics obviously don't know any traveling preachers. Such preachers use the same few sermons over and over, changing them somewhat to fit the audience. Jesus probably preached variations of this sermon dozens of times.
43. Read Luke 8:1-3.
44. This passage also appears only in Luke. Luke's gospel includes a wider cast of characters, including women more than the others.
45. Chapters 4-9 include much of the material found in Mark's gospel. But in 9:51 Luke ends the story of Jesus' life and begins an interlude comprised of stories about Jesus' astonishing exploits.
46. Read Luke 9:51.
47. Luke has briefly covered the outline of Jesus' life. Now he will collect and relate a series of stories to reveal the nature of Jesus. This section is the longest, and runs until Luke 19:17. Luke writes it as a travelogue – a story about Jesus' trip to Jerusalem. Some scholars believe that this is just a literary device to provide a means of telling these stories. My opinion is that all these stories probably did happen on the actual final trip to Jerusalem. There is no reason why the Holy Spirit couldn't arrange for these important events to fit into a pattern that would suit Luke's literary form perfectly.
48. Read Luke 10:1-4.
49. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the sending out of the twelve disciples on a preaching trip. Only Luke records the sending out of the 72. Again, more characters, wider influence.
50. Read Luke 10:25-37.

51. Luke includes a lot of parables, many not found in the other gospels. Who is the hero in this parable?
  - a. The Samaritan
  
52. Who were the villains?
  - a. The priest and the Levite
  
53. What would Jesus' Jewish audience have thought of this?
  
54. Notice again Luke's interest in real-life problems such as travel, robbery, medicine, and friendship.
  
55. The travelogue ends in Luke 19:27, and as Jesus enters Jerusalem, Luke begins the final section of his biography – the hero's tragic death.
  
56. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the words of the Roman soldier who crucified Jesus. In Matthew and Mark he says, "Truly this was the Son of God."
  
57. Read Luke 23:47.
  
58. What does the centurion say?
  - a. "Certainly this man was innocent."
  
59. This is the thread that runs through Luke's gospel. Jesus is the innocent man. Adam was created the head of the human race – and he is. And the sin of Adam permeates all humanity. As Paul says in Romans, quoting psalms, "No one is innocent, no, not one." But from His remarkable birth, through His temptation in the wilderness, to His torture and death – Jesus was innocent of any sin. Even the pagan soldier could see it. Luke's gospel is the biography of Jesus, the perfect man.
  
60. The theme of Luke's gospel: Jesus is the perfect man, the true hero.

**Lesson 31**  
***New Creator***  
**John 1-21**

1. Which people did Matthew likely write his gospel for? Why?
  - a. The Jews.
  - b. It focuses on the fulfillment of Old Testament scripture.
2. Which people did Mark likely write his gospel for? Why?
  - a. The gentiles.
  - b. The title “Son of God” challenges the claims of Caesar.
3. Which people did Luke likely write his gospel for? Why?
  - a. A literary audience.
  - b. It is the longest and uses the most advanced vocabulary
4. How did Matthew organize his gospel?
  - a. Topically
5. How did Mark organize his gospel?
  - a. Chronologically
6. How did Luke organize his gospel?
  - a. As an ancient biography
7. What is the theme of Matthew’s gospel?
  - a. Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel, who came to rule the world, but was rejected by His own people.
8. What is the theme of Mark’s gospel?
  - a. Pharaoh, Alexander the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, Caesar are imposters. Jesus is the true Son of God
9. What is the theme of Luke’s gospel?
  - a. Jesus is the perfect man, the true hero

10. Matthew is the textbook gospel that presents Jesus as a teacher. Mark is the action-adventure gospel that presents Jesus as a god. Luke is the biographical gospel that presents Jesus as a hero. Now we take up a gospel that is entirely different.
11. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels because they give a synopsis of Jesus' life. John's gospel does not. This gospel is an enigma. It has the simplest vocabulary and grammar in the New Testament, but expresses the most profound thoughts. It appears to be poorly organized, but is very complex. It relates teaching and events found nowhere else, and spends half of its space on Jesus' last few days. Let's just plunge in.
12. Read John 1:1-5.
13. Does this remind you of any other scripture?
  - a. Genesis 1:1-3.
14. What beginning is in mind here?
15. What is the subject of these verses?
16. What do you learn about the Word in these verses?
17. Why would a gospel account begin like this?
18. Read John 1:6-8.
19. What is the main idea in these verses?
  - a. Witness
20. What does "witness" mean?
  - a. Report what you have seen
21. Read John 1:9-13.
22. These verses are full of contrasts. What contrasts do you see?
23. Read John 1:14-18.

24. The first 18 verses of John's gospel introduce all the major themes of the book. We get a hint of the complexity of this gospel right away. In the simple words of these few verses are packed an impressive list of concepts. Here are the themes John will treat as his gospel unfolds.
- a. Word (λογος)
  - b. Creation
  - c. Life
  - d. Light and Dark
  - e. Witness/Testimony (μαρτυς)
  - f. World (κοσμος)
  - g. Believe
  - h. Birth: flesh, man, God
  - i. Glory
  - j. Only Son of the Father
  - k. Grace
  - l. Truth
25. John's gospel opens as an echo of Genesis, and thus presents itself as a new creation account. We saw the prophets promising a new heavens and new earth, and we saw a partial fulfillment of these promises in the restoration of Israel under the king Cyrus, the priest Ezra, and the governor Nehemiah. But this is different. This is a new creation on an entirely different scale.
26. A new world must have new people. But Jesus keeps encountering people of this old world. Let's see what Jesus says about mankind and his new creation.
27. Read John 2:23-25.
28. How did people respond to Jesus?
- a. Believed in His name.
29. Why did they believe?
- a. They saw the signs He did.
30. How did Jesus respond to the people?
- a. He did not entrust Himself to them.

31. Why didn't Jesus entrust Himself to the people?
  - a. He knew what was in man
  
32. What did Jesus know about what was in man? Let's do this scientifically. Let's examine a sample man.
  
33. Read John 3:1-8.
  
34. When did Nicodemus come to Jesus?
  - a. At night
  
35. What does this mean?
  - a. Man is in darkness; Jesus is the light come into the darkness
  
36. What does Nicodemus' reply in verse 4 reveal about him?
  - a. He is thinking literally, a man of the material world
  
37. What are the two births discussed here?
  - a. Of water, of Spirit; or
  - b. Of flesh, of Spirit
  
38. Read John 3:9-15.
  
39. Why doesn't Nicodemus understand Jesus?
  
40. Jesus did not trust the crowds because he knew what was in man. So what is that? Jesus gives us a case study of a man – Nicodemus.

Jesus is the light who comes to lighten the whole world. Man is a creature of the night. He comes to Jesus not knowing why. Jesus tells him how to enter the Kingdom of God, but Nicodemus does not understand. Jesus explains it again, and Nicodemus still does not understand. The light is shining in the night, but it has not yet penetrated the darkness.

When Jesus said, "unless one is born again," the Greek word also means "born from above." Jesus is talking about a heavenly birth, a spiritual birth, but all Nicodemus can think about is emerging from the womb. Jesus explains that flesh can only produce flesh. If man is to partake of the

Kingdom of God, which is spiritual, he will need a spiritual birth. But Nicodemus is a man of this earth. None of this makes sense to him. He is not yet born spiritually.

Jesus says, “we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony....No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” Jesus is the heavenly man who came to earth to bear witness to what he saw in heaven. Jesus is the true witness, but man will not receive him.

This is a pivotal passage in John’s gospel. John’s gospel, his letters, and his apocalypse are all about Jesus the man from heaven who came to earth to bear witness to all he saw and heard there. Jesus is the light who plunges into the dark world of human ignorance and sinfulness to create children of God among all who believe in Him.

41. John records the feeding of the 5,000, but he also adds the events of the following day.
42. Read John 6:22-29.
43. Why did the people go looking for Jesus?
  - a. Jesus fed them
44. Was that a good reason?
45. What did Jesus tell them they should be doing?
  - a. Laboring for the food that endures to eternal life
46. What do the people ask Jesus?
  - a. What works must we do?
47. What is the work of God?
  - a. Believing in Jesus
48. Read John 6:30-34.
49. Why do the people ask Jesus for a sign? Hasn’t He already performed many signs?

50. In verse 32 what does Jesus contrast with the bread of Moses?
  - a. True bread from heaven
  
51. In verse 33 Jesus explains what the true bread from heaven really is. What is it?
  - a. He who comes down from heaven
  
52. When the people ask Jesus to give them this bread, what are they asking?
  - a. They are asking Jesus to give Himself to them
  
53. At this point you should see that much of what John records about Jesus is metaphorical. Obviously the other apostles and followers of Jesus heard the same things that John heard. But obviously Matthew, Mark, and Luke thought it best to dwell on the more concrete teaching of Jesus. But John goes all-out for metaphor. In chapter 1 John introduced Jesus as the Word, the light, and the life – all metaphors. “He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” is obviously Jesus, but Jesus says this is the bread of God.
  
54. Why does Jesus use metaphors so much? What does he accomplish by this?
  
55. Read John 6:41-52.
  
56. Why did the people think that Jesus expected them to turn into cannibals and eat Him?
  
57. What did Jesus mean instead?
  
58. Why did the people misunderstand Jesus? What was their mistake?
  - a. They didn’t recognize that He was using a metaphor
  
59. It gets even more confusing. Read John 6:53-58.
  
60. The Roman church takes this passage literally. They believe that in the Lord’s Supper we eat Jesus’ flesh and drink His blood. It’s hard to deny, however, that what we hold in our hands is bread and wine. So the Roman church concluded that when a priest, ordained by a bishop in the line of

the apostle Peter, prays over the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper – that bread and wine turn into real flesh and blood, even though they still appear to be bread and wine.

The reformers called this nonsense. They properly recognized that Jesus is speaking metaphorically in John 6. Eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood are metaphors for intimate fellowship with Him. Jesus is as close to us as the food and wine we eat and drink. Later, in John 15, Jesus will say that we are the branches and He is the vine. That is another metaphor indicating that we draw our life and strength from Jesus, and we are in close fellowship with Him. Jesus will tell His disciples that the Holy Spirit will enter them. Then Jesus will be inside them, like bread and wine when eaten.

61. On Sunday after Jesus was crucified, women went to the tomb and discovered Jesus missing. They reported this to the men, who came and inspected, then left. John records what happened next.
62. Read John 20:11-18.
63. Who are the characters in this scene?
  - a. Jesus and Mary
64. Where are they? (John 19:41-42)
  - a. In a garden
65. Who did Mary think Jesus was?
  - a. The gardener
66. Where previously have we seen a woman meeting a gardener in a garden?
  - a. Adam and Eve
67. Read John 20:19-23

68. Jesus came to bring peace out of chaos, to breathe life into flesh, to give the Spirit to man. In the beginning Jesus sent His Spirit into the darkness to still the chaos and bring forth a peaceful garden. Jesus breathed life into dust and placed a spirit into man. That was the first world – the first heaven and earth. Now at the end of the ages, Jesus has come again into the darkness. He brings His Spirit to still the chaos and bring peace. He breathes His Spirit into man and creates a new man, a new world, a new heavens and earth.
69. The theme of John's gospel: Jesus is the man from heaven who creates a new heavens and earth.

**Lesson 32*****New Covenant III***

Mark 14:24; Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20

1. What are some differences between John's gospel and the other gospels?
2. What were the themes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke?
  - a. Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel
  - b. Jesus is the true Son of God
  - c. Jesus is the perfect man, the true hero
3. What was the theme of John's gospel?
  - a. Jesus is the man from heaven who creates a new heavens and earth
4. Jesus didn't entrust Himself to men, because he knew what was in man. What did Jesus know about man?
  - a. Born of flesh
  - b. Cannot understand spiritual things
  - c. Needs to be born again from above
5. What was unique about John's account of Jesus' resurrection?
  - a. Jesus' meeting Mary in the garden
6. Last week we saw that John's gospel presents Jesus as the heavenly man who creates a new heavens and earth. But what is more obvious in the gospels, and perhaps more important, is that Jesus introduced a new covenant.
7. We haven't talked about covenants for a while. Let's review a bit. How did we define a divine covenant?
  - a. A personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice
8. What do we mean by "a personal bond"?
  - a. Deep attachment between persons
9. What are some examples of personal bonds?
  - a. Marriage, children, secret societies, Mafia

10. What is a self-maledictory oath?
  - a. Promise of faithfulness to the other party, with a curse upon one's self if one fails to keep it.
  
11. What covenants have we encountered previously?
  - a. Adam
  - b. Noah
  - c. Abraham
  - d. Moses
  - e. David
  - f. Nehemiah
  
12. God killed animals to make clothes for Adam and Eve, and promised to send a savior. Noah offered animal sacrifices. God hung His bow in the sky and promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood. Abraham sacrificed a calf, a goat, a ram, and birds. God appeared and promised to make Abraham a great nation. Later God gave Abraham circumcision as a sign. Moses killed animals and sprinkled the blood over the children of Israel to seal the covenant with them. God promised David that his offspring would sit on the throne of Israel forever. Nehemiah led the people of Israel in renewing their covenant with God.

The circumstances of each covenant are different, but in every case, God takes the initiative. It was never man's idea to serve God. God always comes to helpless man and offers Himself as a savior. Blood is shed as a substitute for the death man deserves, and God promises to save His people.

13. Right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry there were indications that He would be a sacrifice for His people.
  
14. Read John 1:29.
  
15. What does John the Baptist mean by calling Jesus the Lamb of God?
  - a. Lambs were used for sacrifices for sin

16. Several times Jesus told His disciples that He would be put to death by the Jews, but the disciples never understood what He meant, and they had no idea that Jesus' death would introduce a new covenant. It is not until hours before His death that Jesus explained what His death would accomplish. Even then His disciples didn't understand Him.
17. Read Luke 22:7-13.
18. When did this take place?
  - a. Day of Unleavened Bread
  - b. Passover
19. Who remembers what Passover was?
  - a. Celebration of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt
20. What is the Day of Unleavened Bread?
  - a. The same as Passover. Unleavened bread was required as a reminder that the exodus from Egypt was in haste.
21. Read Luke 22:14-23.
22. Here in verse 20 Jesus explicitly claims that He is instituting a new covenant. This is so important, each of the synoptic gospels records this event almost *verbatim*.
23. Read Matthew 26:26-29.
24. Read Mark 14:22-25.
25. Why does Jesus say that this covenant is in His blood?
  - a. A covenant is made through a blood sacrifice. In the past the blood of animals was shed to make the covenant. Now Jesus will offer His own blood to make the covenant.
26. A covenant is a personal bond. How is the New Covenant a personal bond?
  - a. Jesus is bound to those who believe in Him

27. What did we read last week in John's gospel that suggests a personal bond?
  - a. Jesus' teaching that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood
28. I hope it is clear that the New Covenant was created by God alone. None of Jesus' disciples, the scribes, priests, or Pharisees had any idea what God was about to do. Everything that happened at the end of Jesus' life took everyone completely by surprise. The Jews, both devout and profane, all assumed that the Messiah would wage war and defeat His enemies, then rule the earth from Jerusalem. Like all the divine covenants before it, the New Covenant was initiated solely by God.
29. The New Covenant is a personal bond. It is not primarily an agreement to keep rules – it is a promise to be faithful to the other persons. The best analogy is marriage, where man and woman promise to love each other for life. In the New Covenant Jesus promises to love us forever. We are bound to Jesus as tightly as a husband and wife, as closely as food and drink that we eat and drink. We are together forever.
30. In the New Covenant God brings upon Himself the curse of death for all our unfaithfulness toward Him, and is Himself the substitute for the death we deserve. Before Jesus, animals were slain and their blood was a symbol of the death we deserve. But of course the death of an animal is not equivalent to the death of a human being. Animal sacrifices were only symbols of an effective sacrifice to come. Jesus' death is the sacrifice that is costly enough to cover human sins, all sins of the whole human race. Jesus is the new and perfect and final sacrifice, that covers all sins for all time.
31. Each covenant included a symbol that was a visible sign of the bond between God and man. Adam had the animal skins, Noah had the rainbow, Abraham had circumcision, Moses had the Passover, David had the throne. Jesus gave us two signs that remind us that we are His and that help us to understand the nature of our covenant. These signs are called sacraments.
32. Read Matthew 28:18-20.

33. Baptism is the entrance sign. It is like a pass for the Kingdom of Jesus. It shows that you belong to Jesus. Everyone who confesses that Jesus is Lord, and their children, is eligible to be baptized. Baptism does not save anyone, it does not mean that you are born again, and it does not mean that you are going to heaven. It does mean that you are different from the rest of the world because you belong to Jesus. Children of believers must be baptized because covenants are inter-generational. If your parents belong to Jesus, so do you – just as when your parents are citizens of the United States, so are you. And just as you can be a bad citizen of the U.S., so you can be a bad Christian – and just as you can become a traitor to your country, so you can be a traitor to Jesus by abandoning the faith. On the other hand, loving the United States does not make you a citizen – and loving Jesus does not make you a Christian. It takes both a heart and a sign to make you a Christian. Only those who both love Jesus and are baptized will make it to heaven.
34. The second sign, or sacrament, is the Lord's Supper – which was instituted in the passages we read earlier about the New Covenant. Baptism is the entrance sign. It is the sign that gets you into Jesus' Kingdom and shows that you are authentic. The Lord's Supper is the fellowship sign. It is the weekly symbol that Jesus is really in you and that you are in Jesus.
35. Jesus instituted the New Covenant on the night before His death, and His death substituted for ours. But there would be no New Covenant unless Jesus had risen from the dead. The reason is simple – you can't have a personal bond when the person is dead. You hear people say that we are saved by Jesus' death, but it's really His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and Holy Spirit that save us. All are necessary.
36. Read Luke 24:1-12, 36-43.
37. After Jesus paid the price for our sins, He rose from the dead. Now Jesus is alive and in fellowship with us. We are bound to Him in the New Covenant. But Jesus is not still walking around Galilee. Luke continued the story of what happened to Jesus after His resurrection in the book of Acts.
38. Read Acts 1:1-5.

39. How long was Jesus with His disciples after He rose from the dead?
  - a. 40 days
40. Why 40?
  - a. Common symbol for testing
41. What did they talk about during those 40 days?
  - a. The Kingdom of God
42. What were the disciples to wait for?
  - a. To be baptized with the Holy Spirit
43. Read Acts 1:6-11.
44. Where did Jesus go?
  - a. Heaven
45. What do you think Jesus is doing there?
46. At this point the New Covenant is not complete. Jesus has lived the perfect life that Adam failed to live. He died as a substitute for us. He rose and lives forever. He returned to the Father. But the New Covenant is a personal bond. It's not much of a marriage if the husband moves away and never sees His wife again, and it's not a covenant if there is no interaction between us and Jesus. But Jesus promised that He would never leave us. One thing more is required before the New Covenant is complete. We will pick up the story next week.

**Lesson 33*****New People***

Acts 2, Ephesians 2, 4

1. Last week we saw that Jesus instituted a new covenant. The gospels tell the story of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and that is where they end. But you cannot have a covenant with someone who is never present. The rest of the New Testament tells us how Jesus is always present with us, and how this new covenant works. But first let's make sure we understand what the gospels teach.
2. What is the theme of each gospel?
  - a. Matthew: Jesus is the Son of David, King of Israel
  - b. Mark: Jesus is the true Son of God
  - c. Luke: Jesus is the perfect man, the true hero
  - d. John: Jesus is the man from heaven who creates a new heavens and earth
3. The rest of the New Testament develops these themes by showing Jesus at work in the world. Jesus did take the throne of David, and the New Testament shows how He rules Israel. Jesus is the true Son of God, and the New Testament shows Him performing divine miracles in this world. Jesus is the true hero, and the New Testament shows Him defeating our vicious enemies. Jesus is the heavenly Creator, and the New Testament shows Him creating a new heavens and a new earth.
4. Let's review, what is a divine covenant?
  - a. A personal bond created by God alone through a self-maledictory oath and blood sacrifice
5. Last week we saw in the gospels the blood sacrifice of the New Covenant. What is it?
  - a. The death of Jesus
6. But what about the personal bond? The gospels end with Jesus returning to His Father, leaving His disciples stranded on earth. If this were a marriage, it would be like the husband abandoning his wife on their honeymoon and never returning. Furthermore, Jesus promised that He would not abandon His people.

7. Read Matthew 28:20.
8. What is Jesus promising here?
  - a. He will always be with us
9. But then the disciples saw with their own eyes Jesus leave them. Is Jesus going to come back? How is Jesus going to be with them?
10. Read John 14:16-18.
11. What is the central promise in verse 18?
  - a. Jesus will come to us
12. What do verses 16-17 tell us about *how* Jesus will come to us?
  - a. Jesus will come to us in the form of the Holy Spirit
13. The book of Acts reveals the final step in the establishment of the New Covenant. Minutes before Jesus ascended to the Father He gave the disciples some very explicit instructions.
14. Read Acts 1:4-5
15. What were the disciples supposed to do?
  - a. Return to Jerusalem and stay there
16. Why? How long?
  - a. Wait to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, in a few days
17. The disciples obeyed Jesus, and were joined by about 110 other disciples. They spent the next several days in prayer.
18. Read Acts 2:1.
19. What was the day of Pentecost?
  - a. The Jewish feast of first-fruits – offerings from the beginning of that year's harvest

20. When was it celebrated?
  - a. 50 days after Passover
  
21. Read Acts 2:2-13.
  
22. What is this? What is happening here?
  - a. Baptism of the Holy Spirit
  
23. What signs accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit?
  - a. Sound like a rushing wind
  - b. Tongues of fire
  - c. Speaking other languages
  
24. Why these signs?
  - a. These are typical signs of the presence of God
  
25. Can you think of other times in which God appeared in wind and fire?
  - a. Abraham (Genesis 15), Moses (Exodus 3, 19), Elijah (1Kings \_\_), etc.
  
26. What is the connection between signs of God's arrival and Jesus' promise to come to His disciples?
  - a. Jesus is God. The signs of God's coming are the signs of Jesus' coming.
  
27. What about speaking in other languages? What does this mean?
  - a. Overcoming the curse of Babel
  
28. What was the result of speaking in other languages? (v. 11b)
  - a. Many nationalities heard the mighty works of God
  
29. After the flood men gathered on a plain in Shinar and began to build a tower. The tower was a ladder into heaven and a monument to mankind. It was open rebellion against God. God had established the way to heaven through the son of a woman, and God expected man to make God's name great, not his own name. God destroyed man's evil plan by introducing many languages – confusing the people, breaking up the community, and bringing the project to a halt.

Now God is overthrowing the curse of Babel. He is creating a new community in which He is present and worshiped. This new divine community will embrace all tongues. All nations will once again collaborate, but this time it will be to serve God, not themselves. And it will be a community in which heaven comes down to earth, rather than man ascending to heaven.

30. What question did observers raise when this happened? (v. 12)
  - a. What does this mean?
31. Peter answers this question with perhaps the greatest sermon in the history of the church. He reminded the people that the prophet Joel predicted exactly this, that there would come a day in which all of God's people would prophesy. He reminded them that they heard Jesus preach and saw His miracles, but nevertheless they crucified Him. He quoted David to show that the Messiah would not remain in the grave. Now let's catch Peter's conclusion.
32. Read Acts 2:32-36.
33. The question from the crowd was, "What does this mean?" How does Peter answer that question?
34. What does it mean that Jesus is Lord and Christ?
35. This is an outrageous claim by Peter. Christ is the Greek word for Messiah. Peter is claiming that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied by the prophets – in spite of the fact that He died. Jesus is a strange sort of Messiah who failed to drive out the Romans, but died and rose again. Peter claims that this wind and fire comes from heaven sent by Jesus.

But Peter is also claiming that Jesus is Lord. The Greek word here, *κυριος*, is the imperial title. Peter is saying that the divine universal authority that Caesar claims for himself rightly belongs to Jesus. By announcing that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, Peter is claiming for Jesus all rightful authority in heaven and in earth. Jesus is in heaven, but He is ruling the earth. This means that both priest and emperor must submit to Him and worship Him.

Let's keep reading to see how the crowd responded to Peter's outrageous claims.

36. Read Acts 2:37-41.
37. What did the people do when they heard that Jesus was Lord and Christ?
  - a. Asked Peter what to do (v. 37)
38. How did Peter answer them? (v. 38)
  - a. Repent and be baptized
39. How did the crowd respond to this? (v. 41)
  - a. 3,000 people believed
40. In one day 120 scared believers turned into a 3,000 member church. Then what happened? What is this church going to look like?
41. Read Acts 2:42-47.
42. What are some features of the new church?
  - a. Devotion to apostles teaching
  - b. Devotion to fellowship
  - c. Devotion to breaking bread
  - d. Devotion to prayer
  - e. Wonders and signs
  - f. Shared possessions
  - g. Attendance in the temple
  - h. Numerical growth
43. Are these characteristics of our church?
44. Should these characteristics be true of all churches now? Why or why not?
45. Much of the New Testament explains what the church is and how it should function. We are going to sample a few passages from Paul's letter to the Ephesians to get a taste for what God has to say about the church. Paul opens his letter explaining how God has saved us through Jesus, then he explains how we have been changed.

46. Read Ephesians 2:11-22.
47. What sort of people were in the church at Officious? Do you know where Officious is?
48. Officious was a prominent Greek city on the coast of what is now Turkey. Paul established this church on one of his missionary journeys. As a Greek city, most of the members of this church would have been Greek.
49. What was the relationship between Jews and Greeks?
50. If Jesus is the Messiah of the Jews and the Lord of the Greeks, what does that mean for the church?
51. Look at verses 11-12. What was the original condition of these Greeks?
  - a. Separated from God
52. Look at verse 13. What has Christ done?
  - a. Brought the Greeks near to God
53. What do verses 14-15 say formerly divided Jews and Greeks?
  - a. The law
54. What are these Greeks now? See verse 19.
  - a. Fellow citizens of God's household
55. This passage is central to the teaching of the Bible about the church. The church embraces both Jews and gentiles. Jesus brings gentiles into the promises formerly given to the Jews only. Jesus has erased the barrier between Jews and Greeks and made them into one new community. From now on there will still be ethnic differences between peoples, but there is no religious difference between us. Both Jews and gentiles are saved by believing in Jesus and joining the church.
56. Let's read more about the church. Read Ephesians 4:1-6.

57. What does verse 3 say is a central feature of the church?
  - a. Unity
58. Paul lists seven aspects to that unity. What are they?
  - a. Body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father
59. Read Ephesians 4:11-14.
60. In verse 11 Paul lists the leadership gifts that Christ gives to the church. What are they?
  - a. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers
61. What is the purpose of these leaders? (v. 12)
  - a. Equip the saints for ministry
62. What does this mean, “equip the saints for ministry?”
  - a. Give God’s people the tools they need to serve others
63. When the saints are equipped for ministry, what is the result? (v. 13)
  - a. Unity in the church, growth in maturity
64. Why is this important? (v. 14)
65. Paul has much to say about Christian ethics – how to live a life worthy of Jesus.
66. Read Ephesians 4:17, 25-32.
67. These verses touch all aspects of our lives. It is good for us to read and think about these things so that we can learn to live the way Jesus wants us to live.

68. Jesus kept His promise. On the Day of Pentecost Jesus came to His disciples in the fire and wind of God. When the Holy Spirit came, Jesus came. He changed God's people from followers of Moses into followers of Jesus. He incorporated the gentiles into the people of God, and made Jew and gentile one people – a new people – no longer Jewish or gentile, but Christian. He made them into a people empowered by the Holy Spirit to convert unbelievers and live holy lives. He provided leaders who would make this new people into a mature community fit for a new world – new heavens and new earth.

**Lesson 34*****New Man***

Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Corinthians 15:12-58

1. What did Jesus do to save us?
  - a. Lived, died, rose, ascended, sent the Holy Spirit
2. Why didn't Jesus' death save us?
  - a. His death paid for our sins, but then we would have been helpless to live for God. Our own sin and the attacks of Satan would have ruined us.
3. Why was the coming of the Holy Spirit an essential aspect of salvation?
  - a. The Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus. We need Jesus with us!
4. Jesus promised to be with us always. Jesus in His body is seated on His throne in heaven, but Jesus in spirit is in the church and with believers always. Although Jesus is invisible to the eye, His presence is just as real as the wind which blew through the upper room.
5. What did the Holy Spirit do for the disciples when He showed up?
  - a. Gave power
  - b. Gave understanding
  - c. Enabled them to convert thousands
6. We read a summary of the characteristics of the new church. What were some of them? (Acts 2:42-47)
  - a. Devotion to apostles teaching
  - b. Devotion to fellowship
  - c. Devotion to breaking bread
  - d. Devotion to prayer
  - e. Wonders and signs
  - f. Shared possessions
  - g. Attendance in the temple
  - h. Numerical growth
7. What was the big new thing Paul taught that God did when He established the church?
  - a. Made Jews and gentiles into one body

8. What special gifts of the Spirit did Paul discuss in Ephesians chapter 4?
  - a. Leadership gifts: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher
9. What is the purpose of the leaders in the church?
  - a. To equip members for ministry so that the church becomes mature
10. Jesus came as the Son of David to rule His people. He came as God to care for His people. He came as the true hero to defeat Satan. And He came as Creator to make a new heavens and a new earth.

The church is the visible manifestation of the new heavens and the new earth. When Jesus came to the disciples, He came in the Spirit, and was invisible to the eye. Now Jesus is building a new heavens and a new earth, and it is mostly invisible. The only visible aspect is the church. The church is where you can hear God speak, feel God offer Himself in the sacraments, and see God love His people by watching us serve each other. Someday the old heavens and earth will pass away and all that will be left will be the new creation. And that new creation will look a lot like the church, although without its faults.

11. The church is where the Spirit lives on earth, and everyone who is in the church is blessed by the Spirit. To use the language of the apostle Paul, we are *in the Spirit* and *in Christ* when we are in the church. But the Spirit is also in us. And while God is making a new heavens and earth, He is also making new people. Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus? Anyone who enters the Kingdom of God must be born from above. You become a heavenly person through a heavenly birth. And when you are re-born, you become a completely new person – all of you. The heavenly birth includes more than just salvation of your soul. Let's see what Paul has to say about the salvation of whole people.
12. Read Ephesians 2:1-10.
13. How does Paul describe people before they are saved? (vv. 1-3)
  - a. Dead, following this world, following the spirit of this world, living by passions of the flesh, children of wrath
14. What is the first thing he says about them in verse 1?
  - a. Dead in sin

15. Obviously unbelievers are alive. How does Paul call them dead?
  - a. They are physically alive, but spiritually dead
  
16. What is the result of being spiritually dead? (v. 3)
  - a. Under God's wrath
  
17. Look at verses 4-6. How did this dreadful condition change?
  - a. God made us alive, raised us up, seated us with Christ
  
18. Who changed our status from dead to living? Look carefully for the subject of the sentence. (v. 5)
  - a. God
  
19. What did we do to make ourselves alive?
  - a. Nothing
  
20. Why did God do this? (v. 4)
  - a. Because of His love for us
  
21. In verses 8-9 Paul emphasizes God's role in our salvation. What word does He use that shows that God alone saved us?
  - a. Grace, gift
  
22. But although we did nothing to save ourselves, salvation does not mean we do nothing. What does verse 10 say about how we live as believers?
  - a. We are supposed to do good works
  
23. Paul teaches us that people are born physically alive and spiritually dead. No one can do anything to change that, any more than a corpse can bring himself to life. The first birth was a physical birth, what the Bible calls "in the flesh." Those born in the flesh are physically alive, but spiritually dead. If we are to become spiritually alive, we need a new birth, a second birth, a birth from above, a heavenly birth. And just as you cannot birth yourself – only your mother could give birth to you – so you are unable to give yourself a spiritual birth. Only God your heavenly Father can give you a heavenly birth. It is a wonderful thing that God was willing to do this for rebellious children. It shows how deep God's love for us is.

24. When you are reborn in the Spirit, you still live in your original body. This body came damaged by the sin of our original dead spirits. It is not suited to life in the spirit. Most obviously, this body will die, but our spirits live on. What will become of our eternal spirits when our bodies die? Putting a living spirit into a dying body is a bit like putting an automobile engine in a bicycle. This cannot be a permanent arrangement. If people are to be saved, they must be saved completely – body and spirit.
25. Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth addressed a lot of serious problems. Some were doctrinal problems, and some were moral issues. In chapter 15 Paul addresses a doctrinal problem.
26. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12.
27. What false teaching was circulating in Corinth at this time?
- There is no resurrection of the dead
28. In this chapter Paul is going to refute the error of saying there is no resurrection of the dead. Along the way he is going to teach us more deeply about what it means to be saved.
29. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-15.
30. What is the obvious reason why the resurrection of the dead has to be true?
- Jesus was raised from the dead
31. Why are we sure that Jesus was raised from the dead? Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-9.
- Hundreds of people saw Jesus alive after He was crucified
32. Read 1 Corinthians 15:16-19.
33. How important is the resurrection of the dead?
34. What are the implications of Jesus' not rising from the dead? (vv. 17-18)
- Our faith is futile
  - We are still in sin
  - We perish when we die

35. If Jesus is good for us only in this life, what does that make us? (v. 19)
  - a. Most pitiable
36. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.
37. What does Paul mean by saying that Christ is the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”?
  - a. He is the beginning of the harvest
38. Verse 21 is extremely important. Here we see that it took a man to save man, and that through a man death itself will be overcome. First Christ overcame death, then we all will overcome death.
39. Read 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.
40. When will Christ begin to reign? (v. 24)
  - a. He is reigning now!
41. What is Christ doing in His reign now?
  - a. Defeating all His enemies
42. When will death be defeated?
  - a. After all other enemies have been defeated
43. Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-41.
44. Now Paul begins to answer the question of what kind of bodies we have in the resurrection. What kinds of bodies does he mention in these verses?
  - a. Human, animal, fish, heavenly, etc.
45. Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-45.
46. Here Paul lists a lot of contrasts between the bodies we have now and the ones we shall have in the resurrection. What are they?
  - a. Perishable – imperishable
  - b. Dishonor – glory
  - c. Weakness – power
  - d. Natural – spiritual

47. This last point is critical. Notice that Paul does not say that our bodies are evil. The Greeks taught that anything physical was evil, and that only the spiritual is desirable. Sometimes Christians tend to fall into this sort of thinking, but this is not a Christian viewpoint. It is quite wrong and it is hugely disrespectful to God, who made our bodies. No, our bodies are amazing and wonderful. The only problem with them is that they are limited. They are great as long as they last, but they don't last. They would be fine if they were not worn out by sin, which was introduced into this world by Adam after God had made his body. So our original bodies are good, but not eternal. If we are to live for eternity, we need eternal bodies, and these can come only from the Holy Spirit.
48. In verse 45 Paul quotes Genesis about Adam. But who is this "last Adam"?
- Jesus
49. Why would Jesus be called the "last Adam"?
- Jesus is the beginning of a new human race, just as Adam was the first of the original human race
50. Read 1 Corinthians 15:46-49.
51. Another set of contrasts! Let's list them.
- Spiritual – natural
  - Man from earth – man from heaven
  - Man of dust – man of heaven
  - Image of man of dust – image of man of heaven
52. Paul really emphasizes the order of these things. Which man comes first?
53. Which man comes second?
54. Notice that the "last man" is also the "second man". What does this mean?
- There is no one in between. There are only two original men – Adam and Jesus
55. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-53.

56. So how is this all going to end?
57. What does this say about death?
- a. Death is not final. Death is a transformation
58. What does this say about the resurrection?
- a. We shall have a new eternal body
59. Paul teaches us that everyone descended from Adam inherits a dead spirit in an earthly body. He is subject to God's wrath and will perish, both body and spirit, in hell unless he is rescued. Dead in sin, he is incapable of rescuing himself, and in fact is unaware that he is dead and needs to be rescued.

God loved us so much that He made us alive. First He took out our dead spirits and gave us living spirits. But we are still unfit for eternity. We are not saved yet. The resurrection of Jesus demonstrates and proves that our bodies will also be saved. Someday we will be resurrected like Jesus and will be given new eternal bodies fit for heaven. These bodies are spiritual bodies, because they are created and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Our living spirits will be reunited with our spiritual bodies.

Adam was the first man, and he is the beginning of the human race. All who are descended from Adam inherit his characteristics. Adam was created good, but earthly, and he fell into sin. All who are descended from Adam are good, but earthly and sinful. Jesus is the second and last man – the beginning of a new human race. His descendants are born from heaven, receive a living spirit, and hope to receive a spiritual body. Then, body and spirit, we will be completely saved and live forever in covenant with our God.

60. Let's end by reading Paul's inspiring conclusion to 1 Corinthians chapter 15.
61. Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-58.

**Lesson 35**  
***New Worship***  
Hebrews

1. We've been learning that there's a lot more to salvation than Jesus' death for our sins. What else was necessary for us to be saved?
  - a. Jesus' life, resurrection, ascension, and sending the Holy Spirit
2. Why didn't Jesus' death by itself save us?
  - a. His death paid for our sins, but then we would have been helpless to live for God. Our own sin and the attacks of Satan would have ruined us. We need a savior who is alive and ruling from heaven.
3. Why was the coming of the Holy Spirit an essential aspect of salvation?
  - a. The Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus. We need Jesus with us!
4. Where in the Bible would you go to find a description of the new church, empowered by the Holy Spirit?
  - a. Acts 2:42-47
5. Where would you go to show that you have to be made new in order to be saved?
  - a. John 3:1-16, 1 Corinthians 15
6. Most people in America have heard something about being born again. When you are born again, what happens to you?
  - a. You receive a new spirit and become part of a new race
7. When we studied 1 Corinthians 15 last week, what did we learn about Jesus as he relates to Adam?
  - a. Jesus is the second and last Adam
8. What does it mean that Jesus is the second and last Adam?
  - a. He is the beginning of a new human race. Everyone who is born from above is born into this new heavenly race of people, of which Jesus is the head.
9. When is our salvation complete?
  - a. When we are resurrected and reunited with our new spiritual bodies

10. You see that there are two aspects to salvation – individual and corporate. Jesus saves individuals, but he also created a new race, a new community of people. Evangelicals tend to emphasize individual salvation and neglect the corporate, or community aspect. But no one is saved as an individual. Believing in Jesus does not save you. Lots of people believe in Jesus. Being a church member does not save you, either. Lots of people are church members.

What saves you is believing in Jesus and entering into the new human race that Jesus began. And when you are part of this new race, you live differently. You don't live in sin any more. You will fall into sin from time to time, but sin is incompatible with your new nature. So as the Holy Spirit works in you, He pushes sin out a little at a time. You become more holy as you participate in the holy community called the church.

The central characteristic of the new race is that they worship Jesus. Christians are moral people, and good morals are part of believing in Jesus. But good morals are not our primary characteristic. Our primary characteristic is that we worship Jesus, and the book of Hebrews teaches us about that.

11. The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. We do not know who was the author, and there is no explicit evidence as to who it was written for. But from the context we can tell it was written to Jewish Christians who were struggling in their faith.

Imagine that you are a Jewish Christian in A.D. 60, perhaps living in Rome. Twenty years ago you heard the gospel, and you believed that Jesus of Nazareth really is the Messiah. Jesus is the Son of David, Son of God. He entered in to battle against Satan and was victorious. Now ruling from heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit into the church and has saved you personally. For twenty years you have been worshipping Jesus, but lately it has seemed rather dull.

Every Sunday you gather in the morning with two dozen other believers in Simon's house. You pray to Jesus, sing hymns, read the writings of the prophets and apostles, and hear your pastor explain those writings. That evening you gather at John's house for the remembrance of Jesus' death.

You sing and pray to Jesus, then offer bread and wine to celebrate Jesus' death for our sins and resurrection for our salvation. You meet twice in two different places because it is dangerous to meet for very long in one place. Some Christians have been killed for following Jesus and refusing to acknowledge Caesar as supreme Lord.

You believe in Jesus and you are grateful for your salvation, but something is missing. This worship is so dull. The singing is off-key, the prayers are uninspiring, and the pastor is boring sometimes. You are longing for the worship in the temple. Now that was inspiring! The temple in Jerusalem was a stunningly beautiful building. The Levitical choirs were angelic. The prayers were poetic, and there was no sermon to tax you. And at the festivals, wow! Passover, Pentecost, Day of Atonement – thousands of Jews from all over the world crowded into Jerusalem, tens of thousands of animals sacrificed, the drama of the ancient rituals. And it is safe. Jewish religion is protected by the Romans. You look around again at the pathetic group in Simon's dinky little house, and you are discouraged. Maybe, you wonder – would it hurt to return to worship in the temple?

12. Read Hebrews 1:1-4.
13. What is the first verb in verse one?
  - a. Spoke
14. Why would the author begin by reminding us that God spoke to our fathers?
  - a. God didn't have to speak to us at all. It is wonderful and amazing that God speaks to His creatures.
15. How did God speak previously?
  - a. By the prophets
16. Who is God speaking now?
  - a. By His Son
17. Which is better?
  - a. This is what the author will demonstrate

18. What are the “last days”? The last days of what?
  - a. The author is going to show that these are the last days of the Old Covenant
19. What qualities does Jesus possess? (vv. 2-4)
20. In the rest of chapter one the author demonstrates that Jesus is superior to the angels.
21. Let’s read Hebrews 1:13-14. This is the conclusion that Jesus is superior to the angels.
22. Now let’s read Hebrews 3:1-6.
23. Who is Jesus compared to here?
  - a. Moses
24. Who is greater, Jesus or Moses?
  - a. Jesus
25. Why is Jesus greater than Moses?
  - a. A son is superior to a servant
26. If Jesus is greater than Moses, what does that say about the teaching of Jesus compared to the teaching of Moses? What about the worship commanded by Jesus compared to the worship commanded by Moses?
  - a. Jesus’ teaching and worship is greater
27. Now the author focuses on Jesus’ role as our high priest. Let’s review the role of a priest.
28. Read Hebrews 5:1-4.
29. What is the job of a priest? (v. 1)
  - a. Offer gifts and sacrifices for sins
30. If his offerings are to be accepted by God, what must he do first? (v. 3)
  - a. Offer sacrifices for himself because he also is sinful

31. How do you get to be a priest? (v. 4)
  - a. You must be called by God
32. Read Hebrews 5:5-6.
33. What sort of priest is Jesus?
  - a. After the order of Melchizedek
34. Who is Melchizedek?
35. Genesis 14 records the story of Abraham when he conquered four kings who had captured his nephew Lot. Abraham rescued Lot and all the loot. On his way home Abraham was met by Melchizedek, king of the city of Salem and a priest of God Most High. Melchizedek brought out bread and wine for Abraham and blessed him. Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the loot. What is unusual is that no ancestors were ever mentioned for Melchizedek and nothing is ever said about him again. So symbolically he is without ancestors or descendants.
36. Read Hebrews 7:11-19.
37. What two priesthoods are contrasted here? (v. 11)
  - a. Levitical vs. order of Melchizedek
38. What always happens when there is a change in the priesthood? (v. 12)
  - a. A change in the law
39. Jesus is from the tribe of Judah, but Jewish priests had always come from the tribe of Levi. What qualified Jesus to become a priest? (v. 16)
  - a. An indestructible life
40. What does this mean about the usefulness of the existing law? (vv. 18-19)
  - a. It is weak and useless
41. Read Hebrews 8:1-7.
42. Where does our high priest serve? (v. 2)
  - a. In the true tent in heaven

43. What were the tent in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem? (v. 5)
  - a. Copies of the heavenly tent
  
44. So what this says is that heaven is a sanctuary, a place of worship. When God commanded Moses to build the tent in the wilderness, and when Solomon built the temple, they copied the floor plan of heaven. When Jesus ascended to heaven, he entered the original temple, where God is. Furthermore, Jesus also instituted a new covenant.
  
45. Read Hebrews 9:11-14.
  
46. So for many centuries earthly priests have taken the blood of goats and bulls and entered the earthly temple, which is a copy of heaven. Now a perfect, eternal priest has entered the true, original temple – heaven itself – and He took His own blood as a sacrifice for sin. His blood is much more valuable, His priesthood is much more effective, and His temple is the real temple.
  
47. The bottom line is that this changes how we worship here on earth.
  
48. Read Hebrews 12:18-24.
  
49. What are verses 18-21 referring to?
  - a. Israel's meeting God at Mt. Sinai, Exodus 19:16-20; 20:18-21
  
50. Verse 22 shows the contrast. Notice the verb tenses. They are in the perfect tense. This is talking about a finished situation. This passage is talking about our situation now.
  
51. The reason Israel left Egypt was to worship God. That was the message Moses gave to Pharaoh, "Let my people go into the wilderness to worship me." When Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai, God came down for worship. That worship involved fire, smoke, trumpets, earthquake, and terror. That was the essence of worship under the Old Covenant established by Moses. But we have a New Covenant, established by Jesus. We do not go to Mt. Sinai. When we worship, we are not confronted with fire, smoke, trumpets, earthquake, and terror. Instead we are met by festival angels, by believers who went before us, by God, and by Jesus who presents His own blood for our purification.

52. Read Hebrews 12:25-29.
53. Who warned men on earth? (v. 25)
  - a. Moses
54. Who is warning us from heaven?
  - a. Jesus
55. What is the conclusion? (v. 28)
  - a. Let us offer acceptable worship
56. The temple ceremonies were undeniably spectacular. God intended them to be so, and as such they displayed the wonder, majesty, and beauty of our God. But they were based on a covenant that was limited and temporary. When Jesus came, the temporary had to give way to the permanent. The New Covenant under Jesus offers a better priesthood, with better sacrifices, in a better temple – which all adds up to better worship. There is only one small problem. It is invisible. The better temple is heaven itself. The better priest is Jesus. But all we can see is Simon’s ordinary living room and Pastor James who, frankly, is not all that impressive.
57. Compared to the temple, New Covenant worship is mind-blowingly better. But this worship is spiritual, not earthly, and you only enter spiritual worship by faith. By faith, when the elders call us together and the pastor issues the call to worship, heaven opens and we join the angels, the older saints, and Jesus around the throne. The singing is indescribably beautiful, the prayers are amazing. And then Jesus Himself speaks to us. It sounds like Pastor Stone, but it is not. By faith we know better. By faith we believe that we have come to Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and hear Jesus speak to us – and when Jesus speaks, it is better than any prophet.

**Lesson 36**  
***Jesus' Final Revelation***  
Revelation 1-11

1. Let's review. Are you saved only by believing in Jesus?
  - a. No. Lots of people believe in Jesus, but aren't saved.
2. Are you saved by being a member of the church?
  - a. No. Lots of people are church members, but aren't saved.
3. What is ordinarily required to be saved?
  - a. Believe in Jesus, be baptized, and become a member of the church.
4. Now if you quote me on this, you are going to get some strong objections. People are going to insist that we are saved by faith, apart from works, including the work of baptism. This is true, as far as it goes. But the Bible talks about different types of belief. Many people in the Bible believed in Jesus, but then turned against Him. There is a special type of faith – theologians call it “saving faith” – which is true and enduring. Those who are saved, are saved through this true faith, not by anything they do. But – and here's the important part – everyone who has such faith is baptized and part of a church. True belief in Jesus means doing what He tells you to do, and the beginning step is baptism. Those people who claim to believe in Jesus, but are not baptized or not part of a church, have a faith that will not save them. Saving faith always results in baptism and church membership.
5. The basic truth we are trying to establish here is that there are two aspects to salvation: individual and community. When Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, He sent Him into the church, and into individuals. The Holy Spirit lives in the church. If you are not in the church, you are not in the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that the church is perfect, or always right – but it does mean that the Holy Spirit is improving the church over time. The Holy Spirit also lives in each Christian. If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit is in you. This does not mean that you are perfect, or always right, but it does mean that the Holy Spirit is improving you over time.

6. What is the central characteristic of the church? Is it that its members are better than other people?
  - a. No. The central characteristic of the new race is that they worship Jesus. Christians are moral people, and good morals are part of believing in Jesus. But good morals are not our primary characteristic. Our primary characteristic is that we worship Jesus.
7. Last week we saw the book of Hebrews contrast worship in the Old Covenant with worship in the New Covenant. What are some features of Old Covenant worship?
  - a. Earthly temple
  - b. Levitical priests
  - c. Blood of goats and bulls
  - d. Frequent sacrifices
8. Who instituted Old Covenant worship? Who set up the tent/temple and sacrifices?
  - a. Moses
9. What are some features of New Covenant worship?
  - a. Heavenly temple
  - b. Priest like Melchizedek
  - c. Blood of Jesus
  - d. One sacrifice
10. Who instituted New Covenant Worship?
  - a. Jesus
11. What makes New Covenant worship seem so ordinary compared to Old Covenant worship and some other religions?
  - a. The temple and priest are invisible
12. What makes New Covenant worship living and exciting?
  - a. Faith – believing that we are in heaven, spiritually, participating in the heavenly worship.
13. Whether or not your church has a pipe organ, or a rock band, or a beat-up piano is irrelevant. Whether your pastor is eloquent or awkward is irrelevant. The beauty of your church building is irrelevant. What matters is

Jesus, and He has promised that when His appointed elders call us to worship, He will be present. Jesus opens heaven and brings us spiritually into heaven for worship. We look around, and our eyes of flesh see this material world. But by faith – by trusting the word of Jesus – we know that we are surrounded by angels and saints who have passed before us. We know that we are before the throne of God. We know that when scripture is read and the pastor preaches, Jesus is speaking to us. We believe that no one has ever worshiped like this before.

14. The last book of the Bible is a description of a worship service. Chapters four and five are clearly a worship scene, but it seems like the whole book is a worship service. Revelation 1:10 says, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...”
15. Read Revelation 1:1-3.
16. What is this book? Hint, look at the second word.
  - a. A revelation.
17. What is a revelation?
  - a. When something hidden is revealed, explained
18. Would you expect a revelation to be hard to understand, or easy?
19. When are the events of Revelation supposed to happen? (v. 1)
  - a. Soon
20. How soon is soon?
21. The Greek word used here (ταχος) is used elsewhere to refer to events that were coming up immediately. In verse three we read that “the time is near”. This Greek word (εγγυς) is used all over the New Testament and means something which is just about to happen. Then at the end of the book, this point is hammered home again. In Revelation 22:6, 7, 10, 12, and 20 these two words are used to ensure that we get the message – the things in this book will happen soon! OK, so what does “soon” mean? We are not given a specific year and day, but by looking at the other uses of this word it is certain that it must refer to something in the lifetimes of those receiving the message. That would make it some time in the second half of the first century.

22. One reason that people have trouble understanding this revelation is that they try to make it speak to events outside its scope. People think it must be about the end of the world, or the return of Jesus – some time in the future. If it is truly about events in the first century, that changes everything about its meaning.
23. Another reason people have trouble understanding Revelation is that they do not understand its language. They read about beasts and dragons, trumpets and fireballs, whores and brides – and think there is some secret symbolic code that has to be deciphered. They act as though it is some gigantic puzzle that God put here to trick us. They treat it as a *concealment* rather than a revelation.

Revelation does contain symbols, of course – but those symbols are not hard to understand. The “code book” for the symbols of Revelation is the rest of the Bible. Everything here is found in some other part of the Bible, and those earlier places show us the meaning of the symbols. For someone who knows his Bible well, the meaning of the book of Revelation is not that hard to see.

24. Read Revelation 1:4-8.
25. How is Jesus described in verse 5?
- Faithful witness
  - Firstborn from the dead
  - Ruler of kings
  - Freed us from sins by His blood
26. “Firstborn from the dead” refers to Jesus’ resurrection. He is the first, with many others to follow. Jesus is the second and last Adam, the head of a new race.
27. Notice how all the offices of the church are included here. The Westminster Shorter Catechism question 23 asks, “What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer? A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king...” Jesus is a prophet when He witnesses, He is a priest when He frees us from sins by His blood, and He is a king when he rules the kings of the earth.

28. What are we? (v. 6)
  - a. Priests
  
29. What does it mean that we are priests?
  - a. We come to God on behalf of others. In other words, we pray for the world.
  
30. Do you recognize the image in verse 7? Where did you read something like that before?
  - a. Matthew 24:30
  
31. Before Jesus was arrested, His disciples asked Him when the end would come, and the signs of the end. Jesus said many things, including this: “Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:30) Revelation is about the end, just as Jesus prophesied in the gospels. But the end of what?
  
32. John heard a voice commanding Him to write what he saw and send it to the churches in Asia. Let’s see what he saw first.
  
33. Read Revelation 1:12-20.
  
34. Do you see any familiar features in this vision of Jesus?
  
35. What was John’s reaction when he saw Jesus? (v. 17)
  - a. Fell over as dead.
  
36. The next two chapters are encouragements and warnings to the seven churches in Asia. Jesus encourages them to persevere through troubles, and to repent of their sins.
  
37. The scene changes dramatically in chapter four. Let’s read the whole chapter.
  
38. Read Revelation 4:1-11.

39. What symbols do you see here that you have seen before?
40. Do you see any that are unfamiliar?
41. What is the overall impression of this chapter? If you were to give it a title, what would you title it?
42. But there is a problem in heaven. Let's turn over to chapter five and see what it is.
43. Read Revelation 5:1-4.
44. What is the problem?
  - a. No one was worthy to open the scroll.
45. Why did John weep so loudly because of it? Why is this such a big deal?
46. Read Revelation 5:5-7.
47. Who did the elder say was able to open the scroll? (v. 5)
  - a. The Lion of the tribe of Judah.
48. What actually took the scroll? (vv. 6-7)
  - a. A lamb
49. What happened? Where is the Lion?
  - a. The Lion of the tribe of Judah *is* the Lamb who was slain.
50. Everyone is so excited! Let's read the rest of the chapter.
51. Read Revelation 5:8-14.
52. Chapters six and seven are about the Lamb breaking the seven seals one at a time and opening the scroll. Chapters eight to eleven are about seven angels who blow seven trumpets one after another. In the second half of Revelation there are seven angels who pour out seven bowls of God's anger on the earth. Three groups of seven, and each group of seven is very similar. Every time a seal is opened or a trumpet is blown or a bowl is poured out, disasters happen. Many scholars notice this and conclude that

the seals, trumpets, and bowls all refer to the same things. I think they are on to something, but let's think about this further.

53. What is a seal? Why would you write a scroll and then seal it? We don't use scrolls, but the equivalent would be writing a letter or paper, putting it into an envelope, and then sealing it. When you get an envelope in the mail, why do you break the seal?
  - a. To read what's inside
54. Where did the scroll come from? Where did the Lamb get it?
  - a. From the throne, from God
55. So opening the seals is opening the message from God. Now, apart from playing in a band or orchestra, what do we use trumpets for? When does someone play a solitary trumpet?
  - a. As a warning, or a call to arms
56. Trumpets are all over the Old Testament. They seem to be symbolic of announcing a message. And a cup or bowl of anger indicates God's judgment. Putting this together, we have first, Jesus opening the seven-part plan of God, then God's angels proclaiming that plan, then other angels implementing the plan.
57. The question remains – the plan for what? Next week we'll discover the answer, and also meet the beast, the dragon, the prostitute, the bride, and the hero of the story.

**Lesson 37**  
*All Things New*  
Revelation 12-22

1. We're reading the book of Revelation. What is this book?
  - a. A revelation, not a concealment
2. What time period is it about?
  - a. Second half of the first century
3. What is the "code book" for the symbols in Revelation?
  - a. The Old Testament
4. The main body of the book contains three groups of sevens. What are they?
  - a. Seals, trumpets, bowls
5. What do the seals mean?
  - a. Opening the plan
6. What do the trumpets mean?
  - a. Announcing the plan
7. What do the bowls mean?
  - a. Executing the plan
8. Who wrote the plan?
  - a. God
9. What's the plan? That's what we'll discover this week.
10. Seven times God announced His plan for the end, and seven times the people of the land ignored Him. When the seventh trumpet blew, all warnings were over and the time for action arrived. Let's read about the celebration at the last trumpet.
11. Read Revelation 11:15-19.

12. Now it is “the time... for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints... and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” Hooray! But before we get to the execution of the plan, we need to meet the characters who will play a role in the story.
13. Read Revelation 12:1-5.
14. Now we meet three new characters. Who are they?
  - a. Woman, dragon, child
15. Tell me about the woman. What is she like? Who is she?
16. What do twelve stars indicate?
  - a. Twelve tribes of Israel
17. Who is the child? How does verse five describe Him?
  - a. Rule all the nations of the earth, Jesus
18. Who is the dragon who seeks to destroy the child?
  - a. Satan
19. What happened to the child? What does this correspond to?
  - a. Caught up to God, Jesus’ ascension
20. What happened to the woman?
  - a. Fled into the wilderness
21. So far we seem to be positioned about the time of Pentecost. Let’s keep reading to see what happened next.
22. Read Revelation 12:7-17.
23. Where was Satan at the beginning of these events? (v. 7)
  - a. Heaven
24. Does it seem strange that Satan should be in heaven?
  - a. Job 1:6-12. Satan appears to have had access to heaven
25. What happened in heaven? (v. 7)
  - a. War

26. What was the result of the war? (vv. 8-9)
  - a. Satan was cast out of heaven
  
27. When Satan was cast out of heaven, where did he land? (v. 13)
  - a. Earth
  
28. What did he do there? (v. 13)
  - a. Pursued the woman
  
29. What does it mean that Satan pursued the woman?
  - a. Persecuted the church
  
30. Next we are introduced to two more characters.
  
31. Read Revelation 13:1-2, 11.
  
32. What are the next two characters?
  - a. Sea beast and land beast
  
33. How are these two beasts related to the dragon?
  - a. Allies
  
34. A lot of ink has been spilt trying to identify the beasts of Revelation. A long-time favorite among Protestants is the Pope in Rome, or the Catholic Church in general. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the leader of the Soviet Union and the European Union were primary candidates. But this is really not so hard to figure out. The sea beast and the land beast are allied with the dragon.
  
35. What is the dragon doing?
  - a. Persecuting the church
  
36. What two groups were persecuting the church in the late first century?
  - a. The Romans and the Jews
  
37. Rome was a maritime power. Her ships ruled the Mediterranean Sea. The Jews were a people of the land. Both the Romans and the Jews were persecuting the church. Rome is the sea beast, and unbelieving Jews are the land beast.

38. Revelation 14 includes a passage about the harvest. The harvest is God's gathering the good fruit into His barn. What looks like the tragedy of martyrdom – of Christians dying for their faith – is God's calling His children home.
39. In Chapter 15 the bowls of God's anger are distributed. The plan has been opened, warnings have been proclaimed, and now the real thing is about to happen. God's anger against Satan and the beasts who have tormented His children is about to come forth. This time the disasters proclaimed actually happen. Let's see how it all comes to a head.
40. Read Revelation 16:17-21.
41. This is the climax. And in the center of it all is the great city. What is the name of the great city? (v. 19)
  - a. Babylon
42. Read Revelation 17:1-6.
43. What do you think of this woman?
44. Look at verses three and four. What is she riding? How is she dressed?
  - a. A magnificent scarlet beast
  - b. Purple and scarlet; gold, jewels, and pearls
45. This is the woman of irresistible charms. She is wearing the finest clothes and jewelry. She is beautiful and alluring. No man can resist her. But what does she hold in her hand?
  - a. Cup of abominations and impurities
46. What is her name?
  - a. We already saw her name, in the previous chapter. It is Babylon.
47. Most people think the prostitute, Babylon, the great city of the first century – is Rome. But then what about the beast she is riding? What we have here is a composite picture of the enemies of God in the first century. The great city is the city where God dwells – or used to. Jerusalem is supported by Rome, and together they were persecuting the church. Jeru-

salem was a beautiful city, and the temple was brilliant. But she had become a vile whore who lured unsuspecting men and women with the promise of true religion, but in reality hated God and His children. For 40 years Jerusalem has been tormenting the church, and now she is about to pay for her crimes.

48. Read Revelation 18:1-3.
49. The rest of this chapter is a song of lament, of sorrow for the awesome destruction of the beautiful city. But bad news for God's enemies is good news for His children.
50. Read Revelation 19:1-2.
51. Now that the evil prostitute has been pulverized, the faithful can really celebrate. And with the evil woman out of the way, the vision focuses on the virtuous woman, the bride.
52. Read Revelation 19:6-8.
53. After the wedding the bride rides out with her groom.
54. Read Revelation 19:11-16.
55. Who is riding the white horse?
  - a. Jesus
56. Who are the armies of heaven?
  - a. The bride, Christians
57. How does the Lamb make war and defeat the nations? What is His weapon?
  - a. Sword
58. Where does the sword come from?
  - a. His mouth
59. What comes from your mouth? How is Jesus making war against the nations and subduing them?
  - a. His words, the gospel

60. Revelation 20 tells us that Satan is bound and Jesus will reign for 1,000 years, which is the biblical symbol for a long, long time. Then there will be a final judgment.
61. Revelation was written to the church in the first century that was suffering under persecution from Rome and Jerusalem. Year after year Christians were killed by Roman and Jewish authorities, with no apparent end in sight. It would be natural to become discouraged and lose faith under such circumstances.

Jesus sent this vision to His churches to encourage them to persevere. There is a plan! God has planned this all out, and everything is going according to plan. For several decades the pastors of the churches must warn everyone to repent and turn to Jesus. Then there is going to come a time when disaster strikes. Rome will be nearly destroyed, and barely survive, but Jerusalem will be destroyed completely. The temple and the Old Covenant which it represents will be gone, and all that will be left will be Jesus and his bride, the church, in the New Covenant. Then for a long, long time Jesus and the saints will rule the earth by preaching the gospel.

62. The end of all things is presented in Revelation 21-22.
63. Read Revelation 21:1-5.
64. John gave us the first hints in his gospel that Jesus came as Creator, to make a new heavens and a new earth. Jesus is doing that now. Eventually He will finish. Then the promise of the covenant will be fully realized, that God will dwell with His people. But this is not simply a return to the Garden of Eden. Our destination is a Garden City, where the potential for the earth will be realized. The old earth which was created good will be made new, and it will be a spiritual heavens and earth where God and man dwell in peace and happiness.

**Lesson 38**  
***The Present Age***  
text

1. Age of the Spirit
2. Jesus is ruling from heaven through the Holy Spirit
3. Jesus rules the world through the church
4. The church is growing into maturity
5. The glory of the New Covenant exceeds the glory of the old
6. *Telos*: the glory of God fill the earth
- 7.