

Genesis

Part One: Primeval History (1:1-11:9)

- I. The Creation 1:1-2:25**
 - A. Creation of the World 1:1-2:3
 - B. Creation of Man 2:4-25

- II. The Fall 3:1-5:32**
 - A. The Fall of Man 3:1-24
 - B. After the Fall 4:1-5:32

- III. The Judgment of the Flood 6:1-9:29**
 - A. Causes of the Flood 6:1-5
 - B. Judgment of the Flood 6:6-22
 - C. The Flood 7:1-8:19
 - D. Results of the Flood 8:20-9:17
 - E. After the Flood 9:18-29

- IV. The Tower of Babel 10:1-11:9**
 - A. Family Lines after the Flood 10:1-32
 - B. Judgment on Family Lines 11:1-9

Part Two: Patriarchal History (11:10-50:26)

- I. The Life of Abraham 11:10-25:18**
- II. The Life of Isaac 25:19-26:35**
- III. The Life of Jacob 27:1-36:43**
- IV. The Life of Joseph 37:1-50:26**

From Thomas Nelson Publishers

Overview of Genesis

Purpose of Writing: The Book of Genesis has sometimes been called the "seed-plot" of the entire Bible. Most of the major doctrines in the Bible are introduced in "seed" form in the Book of Genesis. Along with the fall of man, God's promise of salvation or redemption is recorded. The doctrines of creation, imputation of sin, justification, atonement, depravity, wrath, grace, sovereignty, responsibility, and many more are all addressed in this book of origins called Genesis.

Many of the great questions of life are answered in Genesis. Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Genesis appeals to the scientist, the historian, the theologian, the child, the teen and the man or woman of God. It is a fitting beginning for God's story of His plan for mankind. - From gotquestions.org

Exodus

Part One: Redemption from Egypt (1:1-18:27)

- I. The Need for Redemption from Egypt 1:1-22**
 - A. Israel's Rapid Multiplication 1:1-7
 - B. Israel's Severe Affliction 1:8-14
 - C. Israel's Planned Destruction 1:15-22

- II. Preparation of the Leaders of the Redemption 2:1-4:31**
 - A. Moses is Rescued 2:1-10
 - B. Moses Avenges a Wrong 2:11-22
 - C. Israel Calls upon God 2:23-25
 - D. God Calls upon Moses 3:1-4:17
 - E. Moses Accepts the Call 4:18-26
 - F. Israel Accepts Moses as Deliverer 4:27-31

- III. The Redemption of Israel from Egypt by God 5:1-15:21**
 - A. Moses Confronts Pharaoh by Word 5:1-6:9
 - B. Moses Confronts Pharaoh with Miracles 6:10-7:13
 - C. Moses Confronts Pharaoh Through Plagues 7:14-11:10
 - D. Israel Redeemed by Blood / Passover 12:1-13:16
 - E. Israel Redeemed by Power from Egypt 13:17-15:21

- IV. The Preservation of Israel in the Wilderness 15:22-18:27**
Thirst, Hunger, Defeat and Chaos

Part Two: Revelation from God (19:1-40:38)

- I. The Revelation of the Old Covenant 19:1-31:18**
 - A. The Ten Commandments 20:1-17
 - B. The Judgments 21:1-23:33
Social, Moral, Religious, War Regulations 21:1-23:33
 - C. The Formal Renewal of the Covenant 24:1-11
 - 1. Covenant Renewed through Blood 24:1-8
 - 2. God of the Covenant Revealed 24:9-11
 - D. The Tabernacle 24:12-27:21
 - E. The Priests 28:1-29:46
 - G. Institution of the Covenant 30:1-31:18

- II. The Response of Israel to the Covenant 32:1-40:38**

From Thomas Nelson Publishers

Leviticus

Part One: Laws of Acceptable Approach to God Sacrifice (1:1-17:16)

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|-------------|---|-------------------|
| I. | The Laws of Acceptable Approach to God | 1:1-7:38 |
| II. | The Laws of the Priests | 8:1-10:20 |
| III. | The Laws of Israel Regarding Purity | 11:1-15:33 |
| IV. | The Laws of National Atonement | 16:1-17:16 |

Part Two: Laws of Acceptable Walk with God Sanctification (18:1-27:34)

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|-------------|--|-------------------|
| I. | The Laws of Sanctification for the People | 18:1-20:27 |
| II. | The Laws of Sanctification for the Priesthood | 21:1-22:33 |
| III. | The Laws of Sanctification in Worship | 23:1-24:23 |
| IV. | The Laws of Sanctification in Canaan | 25:1-26:46 |
| V. | The Laws of Sanctification through Vows | 27:1-34 |

From Thomas Nelson Publishers

Overview of Leviticus

Author: Moses was the author of the Book of Leviticus.

Date of Writing: The Book of Leviticus was written between 1440 and 1400 B.C.

Purpose of Writing: Because the Israelites had been held captive in Egypt for 400 years, the concept of God had been distorted by the polytheistic, pagan Egyptians. The purpose of Leviticus is to provide instruction and laws to guide a sinful, yet redeemed people in their relationship with a holy God. There is an emphasis in Leviticus on the need for personal holiness in response to a holy God. Sin must be atoned for through the offering of proper sacrifices (chapters 8-10). Other topics covered in the book are diets (clean and unclean foods), childbirth, and diseases which are carefully regulated (chapters 11-15). Chapter 16 describes the Day of Atonement when an annual sacrifice is made for cumulative sin of the people. Furthermore, the people of God are to be circumspect in their personal, moral, and social living, in contrast to the then current practices of the heathen roundabout them (chapters 17-22).

From gotquestions.org

Numbers

Part One: Preparation of the Old Generation To Inherit the Promised Land (1:1-10:10)

- I. The Organization of Israel 1:1-4:49**
- II. Sanctification of Israel 5:1-10:10**

Part Two: Failure of the Old Generation To Inherit the Promised Land (10:11-25:18)

- I. The Failure of Israel En Route to Kadesh 10:11-12:16**
- II. The Climactic Failure of Israel at Kadesh 13:1-14:45**
- III. The Failure of Israel in the Wilderness 15:1-19:22**
- IV. The Failure of Israel En Route to Moab 20:1-25:18**

Part Three: Preparation of the New Generation (26:1-36:13)

- I. The Reorganization of Israel 26:1-27:23**
- II. The Regulations of Offerings and Vows 28:1-30:16**
- III. The Conquest and Division of Israel 31:1-36:13**

From Thomas Nelson Publishers

Overview of Numbers

Author: Moses was the author of the Book of Numbers.

Date of Writing: The Book of Numbers was written between 1440 and 1400 B.C.

Purpose of Writing: The message of the Book of Numbers is universal and timeless. It reminds believers of the spiritual warfare in which they are engaged. The Book of Numbers essentially bridges the gap between the Israelites receiving the Law (Exodus and Leviticus) and preparing them to enter the Promised Land (Deut. and Joshua).

Brief Summary: Most of the events of the Book of Numbers take place in the wilderness, primarily between the second and fortieth years of the wandering of the Israelites. The theme of obedience and rebellion followed by repentance and blessing runs through the entire book, as well as the entire Old Testament. The theme of the holiness of God is continued from the book of Leviticus into the book of Numbers, which reveals God's instruction and preparation of His people to enter the Promised Land.

From gotquestions.org

Deuteronomy

Part One: Moses' First Speech

"What God Has Done for Israel"

(1:1-4:43)

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|------------|--|-----------------|
| I. | The Preamble of the Covenant | 1:1-5 |
| II. | The Review of God's Acts for Israel | 1:6-4:43 |

Part Two: Moses' Second Speech

"What God Expects of Israel"

(4:44-26:19)

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|-------------|--|-------------------|
| I. | The Introduction to the Law of God | 4:44-49 |
| II. | The Explanation of the Ten Commandments | 5:1-11:32 |
| III. | The Explanation of the Additional Laws | 12:1-26:19 |

Part Three: Moses' Third Speech

"What God Will Do for Israel"

(27:1-34:12)

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|-------------|---|--------------------|
| I. | Confirming of the Covenant in Canaan | 27:1-28:68 |
| II. | Establishment of the Covenant in Palestine | 29:1-30:20 |
| III. | Changing of the Covenant Mediator | 31:1-34:12 |
| | A. The Song of Moses | 31:30-32:47 |
| | B. The Death of Moses | 32:48-34:12 |

From Thomas Nelson Publishers

Overview of Deuteronomy

Purpose of Writing: A new generation of Israelites was about to enter the Promised Land. This multitude had not experienced the miracle at the Red Sea or heard the law given at Sinai, and they were about to enter a new land with many dangers and temptations. The book of Deuteronomy was given to remind them of God's law and God's power.

From gotquestions.org

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Where</u>
Adam	Earth Created	Garden of Eden
Noah	Mankind Sinned	Ur
Abraham	Earth Flooded	Canaan
Isaac	Israel Conceived	Egypt
Jacob		
Joseph		

Time Covered: 2,200 years

Exodus

The Book of Deliverance

<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Where</u>
Moses	Israel Populated	Egypt
	10 Plagues	Red Sea
	10 Commandments	Mount Sinai
	Tabernacle	

Time Covered: 400 years

Leviticus

The Book of Holiness

<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Where</u>
Moses	Israel Instructed	Mount Sinai
Aaron	Laws	
	Day of Attonement	

Time Covered: 1 month

Numbers

The Book of Unbelief

<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Where</u>
Joshua	Census	Mount Sinai
Caleb	12 Spies	Wilderness
	Israel Sinned	Kadesh-barnea
	Wandering	Plains of Moab
	Census	

Time Covered: 40 Years

Deuteronomy

The Book of Obedience

<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Where</u>
Moses	Israel Prepared	Plains of Moab
	Enter the Land	
	Instructions Repeated	

Time Covered: 1 Month

Old Testament Challenge

the Pentateuch

Small Group *Meeting Schedule*

Meeting	Date	Readings complete	The Hope DVD - chapter
First	Oct 4	Gen 1-21	In the Beginning - 1
Second	Oct 11	Gen 22-42	The Choice - 2
Third	Oct 18	Gen 43-Ex 13	The Deadly Disease - 3
Fourth	Oct 25	Ex 14-34	Prelude to the Promise - 4
Fifth	Nov 1	Ex 35-Lev 15	Blessed to be a Blessing- 5
Sixth	Nov 8	Lev 16-Num 9	People of the Promise - 6
Seventh	Nov 15	Num 10-30	Called to Walk - 7
Eight	Nov 22	Num 31-Deut 15	~ optional chapters 8-10
Ninth *	Nov 29	Deut 16-34	~ optional chapters 9-12

* optional group – Thanksgiving weekend

~ optional The Hope DVD chapters on the New Testament

Web resources

www.gotquestions.org/Old-Testament-Survey.html

www.thehopeproject.com

Old Testament Challenge

the Pentateuch

Small Group **General Format**

Gather

- Welcome members
- Visit
- Refreshments (or at the end)

Share

- Quick updates
- Reading accountability
- General Reflections

Opening Prayer

- Leader or one member prays

The Hope DVD

- Watch the 4-6 minute segment
- Reflections

Discuss

- Read the **Observe and Consider**
- Discuss the **Ask and Reflect**
- Group members read scripture passages

Prayer time

- Prayer Requests
- Prayer

Fellowship

First Group Meeting – Oct 4

The Hope – DVD: "In the Beginning"

Creation

Observe and Consider

Many people have said that they feel closest to God in the midst of nature, in the mountains perhaps, or by the seashore. Sadly, this is as much of God as some will ever experience. Others miss seeing God because they begin to worship the creation (the mountains, the ocean, the heavens), rather than the Creator! And although glimpsing God through creation can be awesome, those fleeting experiences pale compared to the joy and satisfaction of knowing God Himself in a personal way. Determine never to settle for only a reflection of God as one might receive from nature. Don't be satisfied with anything less than an intimate personal knowledge of the Creator Himself. As J. I. Packer says, "A little knowledge *of* God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge *about* him."

"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

". . . by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed." (2 Peter 3:5)

God made everything that is out of nothing. When we humans create, we must utilize or draw upon things that existed before us. God, who created from nothing, is creative in the ultimate sense.

Ask and Reflect

It has been said that our view of the creation account in the Bible will determine our view of the rest of the Bible. How might this be true? If the biblical creation account is not true, then what would that say about God?

What indications do we have that God created the world and all it contains? (mathematical improbability of evolution, design, material comes from where, man's self awareness and sense of morality)

Made in the Image of God

Observe and Consider

When God breathed "the breath of life" into man, He transferred something that caused him to be made in the very image of God! This divine breath is what separates humans from all the rest of creation - and this is what gives incredible value to every man or woman.

Ask & Reflect

A piece of paper money has no value in and of itself. Its value is derived from the fact that it *represents* something valuable, usually gold or silver that is stored safely in a treasury vault. The paper money is, in a sense, the printed "image" of that gold or silver. Likewise people - all people - have value because they are made in the image of the God whose value is so great that it simply cannot be measured.

How are we made in the image of God? What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

Is there something other than God that causes you to feel valuable? What would happen to your sense of personal worth if that thing were taken from you?

Human history is full of examples of man's inhumanity to man: war crimes, genocide, terrorism, etc. What difference would it make if every person on earth believed that every other person on earth had immeasurable value having been made in the image of God?

How would a person's self-image be affected if he really believed that he was made in the image of God?

What difference does (or should) it make to you to know that you are made in the image of God?

The Fall

Ask and Reflect

Discuss the progression of temptation? How did Satan lure Eve into disobedience? Does temptation follow a similar progression each time? Read James 1:12-15

Do not engage or entertain evil. You will not win. Eve jumped right into an engaging conversation with Satan, and into his trap. Satan was far too crafty for Eve, and he is too crafty for us as well.

Ask yourself, "Am I waiting for God to show me more about who He is before I trust Him in a certain area?" If so, perhaps you should take a step of faith. "*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*" (Heb 11:6)

Second Group Meeting – Oct 11

The Hope DVD: "The Choice"

Noah

If we studied the Bible verses that detail the genealogy of Noah, we could deduce that Noah worked on the ark at least 70 years! Now, consider also that the Bible gives no record of rain prior to the flood. According to His story, the plants of the earth were watered by a mist that "*used to rise from the earth*" (*Genesis 2:6*). Think about it! Noah worked on a boat for at least 70 years in expectation of a flood, something that no man had ever seen.

What do you imagine the people of Noah's day thought about him?

Do you ever get discouraged in the face of adversity when you don't reach your goals in a timely manner?

What do you think you would have done if you had been in Noah's situation?

What is your response to 2 Peter 3:9?

When they finally stepped off the ark, what were they feeling? What on earth did they see after everything had been under water for nearly a year? Was it a strange, horrifying sight, perhaps even surreal?

Babel

In Genesis 11:5-9 we see God's response to their disobedience. He confused their language so that they did not understand one another's speech. Before God confused the languages, the whole earth spoke the same language and used the same words (Genesis 11:1). The introduction of multiple languages and the scattering of the people marked the beginning of the nations as we know them today. A nation in the Biblical sense of the word is not a geographic country, but a people group that is distinct from other people groups by virtue of language, culture, tribal affiliation, etc. Today there are thousands of nations in the world. And if we were to skip to the end of the Bible, we would see that the culmination and climax of God's story brings us to a heavenly scene (Revelation 7:9) in which people from every nation are gathered to worship God and to enjoy Him! Prior to the story we've studied today, the nations did not even exist - but one day people from every nation on earth will be gathered in unity to worship God!

What does it mean to preach the gospel to all nations? How is this practically being obeyed? What role does language have in world evangelism?

Abraham

Observe and Consider

Read Romans 4:1-3

What did the faith of Abraham lead to? What were the qualities of Abraham's faith? Discuss faith and righteousness in the Christian. How is Abraham truly our forefather? How are the faith and obedience of Abraham an example for us? Where is God leading us in faith?

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways" Hebrews 1:1

Do you think God called Abraham by an audible voice or an inner conviction? How does God lead us? What means does He use?

Ask and Reflect

What similarities do you see between the faith of Noah and the faith of Abraham?

If you were in Abraham's place, how do you think you would have responded to God's call? Why?

What does it take for someone to respond to God the way that Abraham responded to God?

Sarah knew what God had promised, but she probably wondered what part of His promise depended on her.

Could you see yourself doing the same thing that Sarah and Abraham did? Why or why not?

What do you think of the saying "God helps those who help themselves"? Do you agree or disagree?

Can you think of a situation where you knew that something had to be done, but you wrestled with knowing the difference between your part and God's part?

Third Group Meeting – Oct 18

Joseph - Submitted to His Purpose

The Hope DVD: "The Deadly Disease"

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

-Genesis 50:20

Observe & Consider

Many Bible students believe that Joseph's life foreshadows God's promised Deliverer. In fact, the similarities between Joseph and the promised Messiah are truly amazing. Consider that both Joseph and Jesus...

were sent by their fathers to their brothers (see Genesis 37:13ff, John 7:3.

had a robe that was taken from them (Genesis 37:23-24, John 19:24).

spent time in Egypt (see Genesis 37:25-28, Matthew 2:14-15).

were sold for the price of a slave (see Genesis 37:28, Matthew 26:15).

were bound in chains (see Psalm 105:18, Genesis 39:20, Matthew 27:2).

were tempted (see Genesis 39:7-10, Matthew 4:1-11).

were falsely accused (see Genesis 39:16-17, Matthew 26:59).

were placed with 2 prisoners, 1 was saved 1 lost (see Gen 40:2-22, Lk 23:32-43).

began their ministries at the age of thirty (see Genesis 41:46, Luke 3:23).

were exalted by God after suffering (see Genesis 41:41-43, Philippians 2:9-11).

forgave those who harmed them (see Genesis 45:1-15, Luke 23:34).

were sent by God to save many (Genesis 45:7, Matthew 1:21, Mark 10:45).

understood that God turned evil into good (see Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28).

As we study the lives of Joseph and Jesus, we see another similarity, one that allowed all the similarities listed above to be manifested. Both Joseph and Jesus were submitted to a purpose that was not their own. They understood that their lives were part of a greater plan, and they co-operated with that plan.

In Joseph we recognize the evidence of a purposeful divine influence guiding the events of his life. Like a leaf that has fallen into a great river, Joseph's life was moved by the powerful flow of a divine current. And with each event that came into his life (even the difficult ones), Joseph submitted to that flow rather than resisting it. God used Joseph's life to accomplish exactly what He had planned beforehand, bringing good to Joseph and to others, and glory to Himself.

Ask & Reflect

From Joseph's life, what can we learn about God and about our relationship with Him?

Why do you think God would orchestrate Joseph's life to have so many similarities with the life of God's promised Deliverer?

God creates every person with a purpose (Ephesians 2:10). In retrospect it is not difficult for us to recognize the purpose of Joseph's life, but what about Joseph himself? Do you think that Joseph always understood the purpose of his life, or the reason for the events that came into his life?

How do the events in the life of Joseph remind us of God's sovereignty? Recall an event or series of events in your own life where God cause all things to work together for good - Romans 8:28. How would life be different if we were always allowed to avoid the difficulties, trials, temptations, setbacks and suffering?

In the story of Joseph, we often think of God's hand of providence in his life. Talk about the other people and places that were affected by the sovereign will of God in the events of Joseph's life - his father, brothers, Pharaoh, Potiphar, fellow slaves, Egypt and Israel itself.

Decide & Do

You may not yet know the purpose of your life or the things that come into your life, but you can know the One who gives purpose to your life. And like Joseph, in every circumstance you can submit to the flow of His divine current in your life.

Has God brought a difficult circumstance into your life? If so, follow the example of Joseph. See it as an opportunity for God to work in and through you, bringing good to you and others and glory to Himself.

Fourth Group Meeting – Oct 25

Moses - Never Too Late for God

The Hope DVD: "Prelude to the Promise"

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law . . . And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed . . . God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." . . . Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey . . ."

-Exodus 3:1-8

Observe & Consider

One day when Moses was about 40 years old, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, so he killed the Egyptian. Fearing for his life, Moses fled into the wilderness. There he married a shepherd's daughter and lived in that place for another 40 years. It is at this point that our current lesson opens. The descendants of Abraham have been enslaved in a foreign land, just as God had said. And at 80 years of age Moses is about to encounter the covenant-making-God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Many people see in Moses' life a metaphor for their own spiritual journey. For the first 40 years of his life, Moses was well schooled in the ways of the world. But when he tried to get things done his way apart from God, he failed miserably. In the wilderness Moses was weaned from the ways of his former world. Moses was ready to submit his strengths to God rather than using them independently from God.

Ask & Reflect

What happened to Moses in the wilderness that changed him? Could Moses have fulfilled God's call on his life without this time? How could the later events in the life of Moses be understood in light of his wilderness experience? (struck the rock twice, prevailing in prayer while Israel battled, asking to see God's glory, frustration with Israel's grumblings etc.)?

For Moses the wilderness was more than a location; it was a place in his soul where he could not depend on the things that defined his identity in Egypt. Have you ever been in a similar place? If so, explain.

A person's weakness can often cause them to depend on God. But a person's strength can lead them to think they don't need to depend on God. Can you think of an area of strength in your life, one in which you find it easy to operate without depending on God? How can that be surrendered to God, allowing His strength to be demonstrated through us.

What do we see in Pharaoh's dealings with Moses? What did Pharaoh have to lose if he let Israel go out of Egypt? What did he lose anyway for holding back from Moses' request? Why does the scripture record that God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Could the same set of challenges or difficulties soften another leader's heart? Explain.

In light of all that Pharaoh saw in the way of miracles and the power of God, think about whether a person can be convinced to believe in God by signs and wonders, when their heart is hardened against belief.

Review the song of Moses found in Exodus 15. Discuss the attributes of God listed in Moses' song of praise. How did God show Moses and Israel Who He is in difficult circumstances? How does He do the same for us?

Notice the events that came about in Exodus 15:22 and following. Do time of joy and reflection upon God's goodness last long? What do subsequent difficulties following a time of joy cause us to do? Question God's plan or remind us that He ultimately will be faithful to us as He had been in the past? Notice the oasis that the Israelites eventually come to in Exodus 15:27.

Decide & Do

It is never too late for God to use you! Be ready when He says it is time to go.

Fifth Group Meeting – Nov 1

The Passover - Images of the Promised Deliverer

The Hope DVD: "Blessed to be a Blessing"

"Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. . . . Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.'

-Exodus 12:3,5,6

'And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.'

-Exodus 12:13

Observe & Consider

Through Moses, God instructed the Hebrew families to take an unblemished lamb into their households and to care for it for four days. Every element of the Passover meal was rich with special meaning. God also instructed the Hebrew people to place blood from the lamb over the doors of their houses. God said that He would send death to every first born in the land, passing over those dwelling in any house with blood over the door. And everything came to pass, just as God said. Just as God provided a covering for Adam and Eve, an ark for Noah, and a sacrificial substitute for Abraham's son, so also God provided the Passover lamb so that the Hebrew people might be saved.

Ask & Reflect

As we consider the "provisions" of God listed above, it seems clear that He has gone to great lengths to help us understand who and what the promised Deliverer will be to those who trust in God. What do these examples reveal about God's promised Deliverer?

Decide & Do

Moses' instructions to the Hebrew people may have seemed strange at the time. The same may have been true when God instructed Noah to build the ark to prepare for something called a flood.

Is God asking you do something that seems strange by the standards of the world around you? If so, then be like Noah, Moses and the Hebrew people. Trust and obey God. He will protect you and bless you.

Offerings and The Priest

Leviticus 1-15

Why do you think that God placed such a high priority on offerings and sacrifices? Why does God require an unblemished animal? Think about our human nature and how Israel would have been tempted to use animal less than acceptable. How does this speak to the future offering that God would make through Christ?

What did the sacrifice teach the people? Why do you think was there such detailed instruction regarding sacrifices? Consider the life of God's people in Egypt and how a new nation was forming. Why is yeast forbidden in the grain offering – Leviticus 2:11? Yeast is a bacterial fungus. How is this a representation of sin? Why is salt included in the offering – Leviticus 2:13?

What is the role of the priest? How were the priests prepared and what symbolism do we see? Leviticus 8:6, 8:7-9, 8:12.

Urim and Thummim

Not much is known about the Urim and Thummim. They were probably precious stones or flat objects that God used to guide His people. Scholars think that one may have been a "yes" and the other a "no" answer. They would be shaken out of the priest's pouch for an answer from God.

Why might God have used this method?

He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece. Leviticus 8:8

Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD. Exod 28:30

He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. 1 Sam 28:6

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways. Hebrews 1:1

Sixth Group Meeting – Nov 8

The Law - A Sacred Trust, A Holy Calling

The Hope DVD: "People of the Promise"

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.

-Exodus 19:3-8

Observe & Consider

What an honor! What a responsibility! Through trials and miraculous triumphs, the Hebrew people had been set apart from all the nations of the earth to enter into a covenant with God. This covenant was centered around the Law that God gave to the Hebrew people through Moses on Mount Sinai. Known as the Ten Commandments, this Law is recorded for us in Exodus 20:1- 7 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. In this covenant God promised that if the Hebrew people obeyed His Law, then they would become His people and He would bless them. If they disobeyed His Law, then He would punish them. The blessings and curses associated with this covenant are detailed in Deuteronomy 28.

Ask & Reflect

If you read the Biblical narrative carefully, you will see that the Hebrew people agreed to enter into the covenant with God before they had received the Law and. In other words, they committed to do whatever God asked before they actually knew what He was going to ask. Why do you think He would do this?

Would you be willing to commit to whatever God might ask of you before you knew what that might be? Why, or why not?

The New Testament teaches that everyone who trusts in and follows the God of the Bible is a priest (1 Peter 2:9) and an ambassador (Ephesians 6:20) of God. Like the Law given to the Hebrew people, this calling is a sacred trust. How are we living in obedience to this trust? Explain.

Purity

Leviticus 11 – 20 record many laws and instructions, commandments and punishments regarding purity. These include standards for health and hygiene. Various animals are identified as clean or unclean. Health practices for childbirth, infection, blood, skin diseases and mildew are described in detail. Eating of blood is forbidden. Numerous unlawful sexual practices are discussed.

What are some of these standards and commandments?

Why are they given? Are these just for Israel in the wilderness or for all people at all times?

Have things changed in our modern society because of improved health and hygiene to the point where some of these instructions can be disregarded? Has God given a new freedom regarding some of these under the grace of Christ? See Mark 7:19, Acts 10:15, Romans 10:4 and Galatians 3:24-26.

See especially Acts 15:19-20 regarding God's standard for the Christian believer in light of the Levitical law.

Festivals and Feasts

Review Leviticus 23

Why does God require us to rest? What is the role of the rest? How did the rest help a person individually and how did it help the nation congregationally?

Why does the Passover get remembered annually? What was the purpose of the festival of firstfruits? The festival of weeks is a celebration of a bountiful harvest. It came 50 days after the Passover. Thus it is also known as Pentecost. Is there any significance with this and the events of Acts 2?

What was the purpose of the Day of Atonement? Why does the statement - "this is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come" - appear so often in association with atonement?

Discuss the Year of Jubilee found in Leviticus 25:8 and following. This festival occurred once every 50 years. There is no indication that the Year of Jubilee was ever carried out. If Israel has obeyed the instruction to cancel all debts and free all slaves, what might have been the practical experience of this?

Seventh Group Meeting – Nov 15

A Covering for Sin

The Hope DVD: “Called to Walk in the Ways of God”

According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

-Exodus 25:9

And each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall purify the altar when you make atonement for it; and you shall anoint it to consecrate it.

-Exodus 29:36

And I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. And I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. And I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God.

-Exodus 29:43-45

Observe & Consider

When God gave the Hebrew people the Law, He knew that, because of the sin that had infected humankind they would not be able to keep the Law. It might appear to have been a cruel thing for God to give the Hebrew people a standard He knew they could not live up to. But let's look a little deeper. Man's greatest need is to have a healthy relationship with God. Because the Law represents the character of God, man cannot side-step the Law and be right with God. The Law represents who God is. Just as God is holy, righteous and good so also is the Law (Romans 7:16). Man must be rightly related to the Law if he is to be rightly related with God. The offerings made by the Hebrew people to atone for sin have been likened to a promissory note. When a man borrows a large amount of money, the lender may require him to sign an agreement (a promissory note) to repay the money by a certain time. The note does not take away the debt, but it does allow the man to go about life as usual until the time that final payment is due and the debt is satisfied. Similarly, these offerings allowed the Hebrew people to continue living in a right relationship with God. They did not remove sin, but they offered a temporary solution for the problem of sin until that time when the promised Deliverer would take away sin forever (John 1:29). These offerings pointed to a time when one perfect offering would become the final payment that completely cancels the debt of sin!

Ask & Reflect

The Bible says that God's Law is good (Romans 7:12, 1 Timothy 1:8). Does the thought of God's Law (or laws in general) evoke a good feeling or a bad feeling in you? Why?

A sinful act is not just a mistake; it is a violation of God's Law, and therefore a violation of God Himself. The power of sin that dwells in every person is not just a bad attitude; it is a dark power that will bring death unless it is dealt with. Taking the life of an animal may seem extreme to some, but the problem of sin is even more extreme. How do you feel about God's instructions to the Hebrew people to offer animal sacrifices as an atonement for sin? Explain.

The Nazirite – Leviticus 6

Discuss the special optional vow that a man or woman could make as a Nazirite. Why do you think fermented drink was forbidden for the Nazirite? Why do you think that cutting hair was forbidden? Why do you think a Nazirite could not go near a dead body?

Complaint

Review the various complaints that Israel raised about Moses and ultimately God. They complained about hardship (Numbers 11:1), a lack of meat (11:4), being in the desert (14:1-4), Moses' leadership (16:41), and a lack of water (20:2-3). What was the result of each complaint? What different sin was involved with each one? What was God's judgment in each case and how did people suffer further? What does complaining do to us? Our church? Our witness? Our community? Our health? Our family? Our marriages?

The Spies' Report

What was the report of the spies in Numbers 13:26-33? How did the subjective report change the objective report? (Everyone saw the same thing but most came to a conclusion of fear, not trust.) How is faith at work in our lives today in similar reports?

The Budding Staff

What happened in Numbers 17:1-12? What was the purpose? How did the people respond? What symbols can we find in the staff, the bud, the flower and the almonds?

Eight Group Meeting – Nov 22

The Law - God's Mirror

The Hope DVD: – optional chapters 9-10

. . . by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

-Romans 3:20

Observe & Consider

God promised that if the Hebrew people obeyed the Law they would be blessed, but if they disobeyed the Law they would be punished. We also saw that God, knowing the Hebrew people would not be able to fully and consistently keep the Law, provided a way to cover their sin through the offering of sacrifices.

But there is yet another important aspect of the Law we must consider. Many people have the idea that the Law was given as a means for man to be right with God. But the Bible is clear (Romans 3:20) that no person can gain right standing (be justified) with God by keeping the Law. Sin separates man from God.

As we study the Bible, we learn that the Law is like a mirror - for both God and man. In the Law we see a true reflection of God's character. That reflection reveals that God is holy and righteous. But in the Law, we also see a true image of ourselves. Our inability to keep the Law reveals our inadequacy, for the Law clearly reveals that we do not measure up to God's standard of holiness and righteousness. Something in us prevents us from measuring up, and according to Romans 3:20, that something is sin.

Ask & Reflect

Legalism is the belief that salvation (being made right with God) can be gained through keeping the Law. But if the Law is like a mirror, rather than a cleansing agent, does legalism make sense as a way to righteousness? Why do you think some people cling to it?

With regard to the Law there are perhaps two extreme positions. One is legalism as defined above. The other position, "license," tends to view the grace of God in such a way that the Law has little or no practical meaning. Legalism and license mark the opposite ends of a continuum which reflects the way that most people view the Law. Where would you place yourself on this continuum, closer to legalism or license? Why? What are the consequences of each position?

Decide & Do

Ideally, a person would find balance in the very middle of the continuum between the extremes of legalism and license. Perhaps that center point of balance could be defined by the term liberty. A person with true liberty before God is a person who is free to revere the Law as the holy and righteous standard of God (Romans 7:12) and at the same time free from being bound to it as a means of being made right with God.

The Ten Commandments

Read Deuteronomy 4:29-34 and discuss this question: "Who is God?"

Revisit the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. What new insights and reflections do we have on God's timeless guidelines? Do any of these commandments seem out of date? Have any not addresses the needs of our modern world? Do any miss an area of life? Are there any cultures, people groups or nations that would be exempt from these?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What are God's instructions for obedience to His commands? How is love related to obedience? What role does Godly instruction have in the home? Why are they to be a part of our sitting, walking, coming and going?

Ninth Group Meeting – Nov 29

From Blessing to Bondage

The Hope DVD: – optional chapters 9-12

For over a thousand years, the Hebrew people attempted to live as God had commanded them. But many times they drifted away from God, sometimes even following false gods. When they did not turn back to God, He would discipline them, often by sending a foreign nation to invade their land and rule over them. The Hebrew people would then acknowledge their unfaithfulness, and call to God for deliverance. God would then raise up a leader to free the people from their oppressors. And the people would renew their commitment to live according to the ways of God. From blessing to bondage to blessing to bondage, over and over, again and again, the Hebrew people had been called to show the world what God was like. But because of the sin that infected the world, they could not walk in the ways of God without falling.

-The HOPE, Chapter 7

Observe & Consider

The HOPE excerpt above describes what happened over a period of more than a thousand years. During this time numerous kings and prophets made their mark on Hebrew history. Their stories are recorded in many books of the Bible. However, if you had to describe this period of time in one paragraph, the excerpt above would be an accurate one. This excerpt describes a cycle that was repeated often in the history of the Hebrew people. One writer has described this cycle as follows:

from faith to obedience
from obedience to blessing
from blessing to abundance
from abundance to selfishness
from selfishness to judgment
from judgment to bondage
from bondage to brokenness
from brokenness to faith . . .

Ask & Reflect

Can you think of any specific situations with nations, groups of people, or individuals in which the cycle identified above have occurred? Explain. The critical shift in this cycle is from abundance to selfishness. Have you seen this shift in your own life? How do you think it might be avoided? Explain. Where would you place yourself in this cycle? Explain.