



**Old Testament Survey 2**  
**History and Writings**  
**Teaching Notes**

**Dr. Nathan H. Gunter**  
**Lusaka**

# Lesson 1

## Introduction

After the death of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy, Israel entered a completely new era of their history. From Joshua to the book of Esther, we have records of God's works among the people of Israel and records of many of the most important people and events in the history of Israel. From the conquest of the Promised Land to rise of the Judges, and from the first king to the worst kings, into exile and back to Jerusalem – this section of the Old Testament shows us the power and faithfulness of God to preserve his people and prepare the way for a Savior. We will see some of the greatest moments of faithfulness and victory that Israel has known, and we will see some moments of rebellion and unspeakable shame in the same group of people. At the end, we will understand more completely how God's faithfulness, mercy, and goodness invite us to put our faith in him alone to find hope and security in this world.

## Part 1 – Joshua

After 40 years of wandering in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt, the people of Israel were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, waiting for God's instructions to cross over and finally take possession of the land he had promised their ancestor Abraham so many years ago. But the people who were preparing to enter the land were not the same people who had exited Egypt. Because of their sin and rebellion against God, an entire generation of Israelites had died during those years in the desert. Even Moses – the greatest prophet Israel would ever know – would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. He would die on a mountain, east of the Jordan, seeing the Promised Land from a distance but never entering.

A new generation had risen, and they would enter the Promised Land under the guidance of a new leader, Joshua the son of Nun. The book of Joshua is named for this Joshua and written by him. It records the miraculous crossing of the Jordan river and all of God's mighty works as he led Israel into its new home and drove out those who were dwelling in the land. It also records the Israelites walking in faith to victory and occasionally suffering as they fall into sin. The new generation would learn that God is faithful in everything he promised them, but would they pass that faith on to the generations that followed them?

For each book we study in this course, we will explore the following areas: (1) key historical facts, (2) a basic outline of the book with key sections explained, (3) explanation of noteworthy passages, (4) important theological themes, and (5) the Christ focus of each book.

### (1) Key Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Joshua

Joshua had been a faithful assistant to Moses almost the entire time that the people of Israel had wandered in the wilderness. When Moses sent 12 spies to explore the Promised Land, Joshua and Caleb were the only two who came back believing that God would give the land to them. After the death of Moses, Joshua is appointed by God to become the new leader of Israel as they cross over the Jordan and begin their conquest of the Promised Land. Joshua's calling and the promises that the Lord spoke to him are recorded in Joshua 1.

- **When did it happen?**

Beginning around 1240 BC

More than 1200 years before Jesus would be born to save the nation of Israel, God led them into the land that he had promised to Abraham. The entire book of Joshua covers approximately 20 years of history as Israel enters Canaan and continues to spread out, conquer, and occupy all the land that the Lord was giving to them.

- **Where did it happen?**

In Canaan, also known as the Promised Land

Canaan – or the Promised Land – was the same area of land that the Lord promised to give Abraham in Genesis 12. The same land is still the country of Israel even today, just as God promised that it would belong to the descendants of Abraham for all generations.

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

The books of history in the Old Testament were written about the Israelites so that future generations of Israelites would learn about God's faithfulness and the need for them to listen to his words and obey him.

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Joshua?**

To record the history of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

The Lord is a faithful God who keeps all his promises and leads his people to rest.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Joshua
When did it happen?	Beginning around 1240 BC
Where did it happen?	In Canaan, also known as the Promised Land
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To record this history of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.
What is the most important theological theme?	The Lord is a faithful God who keeps all his promises and leads his people to rest.

## (2) Basic Outline

The book records the conquest of the Promised Land, beginning with the nation crossing the Jordan on dry land and conquering the first city they found, Jericho, and extending until they had taken possession of all the area that God had promised. <sup>1</sup>

- I. Calling of Joshua (1:1-9)
- II. Entering into the Promised Land (1:10-5:12)
  - A. Preparing to cross the Jordan (1:10-18)
  - B. Spies in Jericho (2:1-24)
  - C. Crossing the Jordan (3:1-4:18)
  - D. Camp at Gilgal (4:19-5:12)
- III. Conquering the Land (5:13-12:24)
  - A. The Commander of the Army of the Lord (5:13-15)
  - B. Fall of Jericho (6:1-27)
  - C. Fighting against Ai (7:1-8:35)
  - D. Treaty with the Gibeonites (9:1-27)
  - E. Conquering the South (10:1-43)
  - F. Conquering the North (11:1-23)
  - G. Summary of the Conquest (12:1-24)
- IV. Division of the Land (13:1-22:34)
- V. Joshua's Last Days (23:1-24:33)
  - A. Joshua's first message (23:1-16)
  - B. Joshua's second message (24:1-28)
  - C. Burial of Joshua and Joseph's bones (24:29-33)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in Joshua

- *God calls Joshua* (1:1-9)  
Moses had died, and the time had come for a new leader to rise up in Israel. God called Joshua to the task, and in the first verses of the this book he

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<sup>1</sup> The book outlines in this course are adapted from those published in *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, written by William Sanford LaSor, David Allen Hubbard, and Frederic Wm. Bush (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

spoke words of instruction and encouragement to the new leader of this nation. In many ways, our situation is very different from Joshua. He was preparing to lead a nation who had been wandering in the wilderness for a generation in a land promised to them by God. We do not have land promised to us in this world. Joshua knew that many fierce battles awaited him and the people of Israel in the days ahead. We live in a time of peace in Zambia. Joshua lived under Israel's old covenant with God, a relationship that was based upon laws and sacrifices. We live under the new covenant, and our relationship with God is secured by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our perfect and final sacrifice before God.

But we can still find truth and hope to help us in God's message to Joshua. God instructed Joshua to meditate on his Word continuously, knowing that Joshua could never lead God's people faithfully if he did not know God's Word in his heart. In the same way, those of us who are called to be leaders in the church today can only serve God's people well if we are committed to a lifetime of reading and meditating on the Word of God. God also encouraged Joshua for the work ahead of him, commanding him to be "strong and courageous" and assuring him that "the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." God's promise to be with his people is repeated often in the pages of the Bible. One of the names given to Jesus is Immanuel, which means "God with us." For those of us called to care for God's churches today, we can do this with confidence and hope, knowing that the God who promised to be with Joshua wherever he went is the same God who is with us everyday even now.

- *Choose whom you will serve (24:14-15)*

More than 20 years after God had stopped the Jordan River so that the people of Israel could cross on dry ground, the days of Joshua's leadership were coming to an end. Israel had conquered most of the Promised Land, and they were settling into their new lives in the place their ancestors had been dreaming of for generations. Before he died, Joshua called the people together to instruct them one final time. He knew that as they settled in their new places, they would be tempted to become too comfortable. He knew they would be tempted to compromise their faith in the Lord and to worship the gods of the tribes living near them. So Joshua gave the people one final charge: "Choose this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Every person who would belong to the Lord must make a choice of faith. In the same way that Joshua called the leaders of Israel to make a choice, each one of us must make a choice as well. Who will you serve? Will you worship and serve God through faith in Jesus Christ? Or will you try to add the Christian faith to other religions and traditional powers that you see your neighbors following? You cannot have both. God will not share his glory. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus – especially those of us who serve as church leaders – must completely reject and leave behind all

other forms of worship and loyalties to any other form of spiritual power.

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *The Lord is a faithful God who keeps all his promises and leads his people to rest.*

We know that sometimes we face difficult days as Christians. God has promised us an inheritance that is greater than we can imagine, but our true portion is not found in this world. So how can we be certain that what God has promised will truly be ours? How can we continue to live faithfully in a world where we cannot always see God's hand at work? One answer is that we can look backward and learn from the experience of Joshua and the people of Israel. God was calling them to enter into a land he had promised, but he did not tell them every detail about how or when he would give them everything. They had to trust in God's goodness and walk by faith. Today, we trust in God's goodness because we know he has been faithful to everyone who has ever put their faith in him. We see that fulfilled all the promises that he made to Israel, and we believe that he will also fulfill every promise he has made to us, even if we cannot see the end yet.

#### (5) Christ Focus in Joshua

- Joshua was called by God to lead the nation of Israel into the land he had promised to give them on earth. Jesus (whose name in Hebrew is the same as Joshua) leads God's people into our place of eternal rest – safe and at peace in the presence of God. Through his death on the cross and his victorious resurrection, Jesus is the leader who carries us into the perfect, eternal home that God has promised to all who will put their faith in him.

### **Part 2 – Judges**

The end of the book of Joshua brought another major transition in the history of Israel. With the death of Moses, a new generation and its new leader (Joshua) followed the Lord faithfully into the Promised Land and took possession of a land that still belongs to Israel today. God had proven himself faithful to the people of Israel many, many times. However, after the death of Joshua, Israel did not have a single leader to guide the nation anymore. Instead, a series of judges arose to rule at different times and in different parts of the land. None of them were rulers over all the tribes of Israel.

The generations that followed Joshua did not remember the great works that God had done, and they fell further and further into faithlessness, idolatry, and rejection of God. The book of Judges traces a downward spiral in Israel, describing a pattern in which the people would forget about God and sin deeply, then the Lord would send an outside nation to punish the people, then Israel would remember God and cry out for deliverance, then God would raise up a judge to save them from their enemies. The people would again enjoy peace for a short time. However, after a few years,

they would forget the Lord again, and the process would start over from the beginning. Even the judges we read about in this book – although they are chosen by God and save Israel – are not all perfect examples of faithfulness. Some are weak and timid, while others are proud and boastful. In spite of their flaws, God is faithful to his people because his is a faithful God.

### (1) Key Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Probably Samuel

Like most of the history books in the Old Testament, the book of Judges does not list an author. However, Jewish tradition suggests that the prophet Samuel is the likely author of this book.

- **When did this happen?**

Beginning around 1220 BC

Only 20 years after crossing the Jordan River and entering the Promised Land, Joshua had passed away and leadership of the nation was passed along to various judges in different parts of the country. The time of the judges ends with the prophet Samuel and the anointing of Israel's first king about 180 years later.

- **Where did it happen?**

In Canaan

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

The books of history in the Old Testament were written about the Israelites so that future generations of Israelites would learn about God's faithfulness and the need for them to listen to his words and obey him.

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Judges?**

To show that God will always bring judgment against sin, but his forgiveness and grace is also certain for all who repent.

The people of Israel sin greatly in the time of the judges. Each time the people rebel, their sin becomes more serious, and their punishment more severe. Yet God is always waiting for them to return to him. When Israel repents, God is faithful to rescue them every time.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

The Lord is faithful even when his people are not, and he will save them when they call out in faith and repentance.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Probably Samuel
When did it happen?	Beginning around 1220 BC
Where did it happen?	In Canaan
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To show that God will always bring judgment against sin, but his forgiveness and grace is also certain for all who repent.
What is the most important theological theme?	The Lord is faithful even when his people are not, and he will save them when they call out in faith and repentance.

## (2) Basic Outline

As stated at the beginning of this section, the book of Judges describes a downward spiral of sin and idolatry in the people of Israel. Every time the people rebelled, God allowed them to be oppressed by outside tribes. When the people suffered, they would cry out for deliverance, and God would raise up a judge to rescue them. The people would enjoy peace for a time until they fell into sin again. The outline of Judges follows this pattern, describing the darkness of unbelief among the Israelites and the brightness of God's grace and kindness to bring them back to himself.

- I. Summary of the Conquest of Canaan (1:1-2:5)
- II. The Beginning of the Period of Judges (2:6-9:15)
  - A. The death of Joshua and the rise of the new generation (2:6-10)
  - B. The reason for the judges (2:11-19)
  - C. Reason for leaving Canaanites in the land (2:20-3:6)
  - D. Delivered by Othniel (3:7-11)
  - E. Delivered by Ehud (3:12-30)
  - F. Delivered by Deborah and Barak (4:1-24)
  - G. Song of Deborah (5:1-31)
  - H. Delivered by Gideon (6:1-7:25)
  - I. Gideon's rule over Israel (8:1-32)
  - J. Brief reign of Abimelech (8:33-9:15)
- III. The Close of the Period of Judges (10:1-12:15)
  - A. Tola and Jair, minor judges (10:1-5)
  - B. Jephthah (10:6-12:7)
  - C. Other minor judges (12:8-15)
- IV. Philistine Oppression and Samson (13:1-16:31)
- V. Other Significant Events and Conclusion (17:1-21:25)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in Judges

- *Israel turns their back on the Lord* (1:11-15)  
The book of Judges records a series of tragic events in the history of Israel. In these verses, we read that almost immediately after the death of Joshua, the people of Israel began reject the Lord as their God. They chased after the



gods of other tribes, building altars and making sacrifices. The result is that God was angered, and each time the people rebel in Judges God sends another nation to oppress Israel as a punishment for their faithlessness. Even though the people of Israel had the Law that God had given them through Moses, the tabernacle to remind them of the presence of God in their midst, and the testimonies of the fathers and grandfathers who saw God work many miracles to save them in the desert, this new generation quit following God as soon as the miracles disappeared. Are we better than they are? Can we walk by faith and not by sight?

- *The downward spiral of sin and judgment (3:7-11)*  
This brief passage about the judge Othniel is a perfect example of the pattern that is repeated over and over in the book of Judges. We call it a downward spiral because every time the pattern repeats, the situation gets worse. This pattern has five basic steps:
  - 1 – The people of Israel rebel and do evil in the sight of the Lord (verse 7)
  - 2 – God sends another nation to attack and oppress Israel (verse 8)
  - 3 – After some time, the people cry out to God for deliverance (verse 9)
  - 4 – God raises up a judge in Israel to save them from their enemies (verse 10)
  - 5 – Israel lives in peace for a time, until they forget God and rebel again (verse 11).
- *A word of judgment against Israel (21:25)*  
The book of Judges is not a happy book. We read about God raising up powerful leaders and rescuing Israel in miraculous ways, but all of these bright moments are set against a dark background. Even the Judges who were used by God were often weak and flawed in serious ways. The last verse of this book summarizes the spiritual condition of Israel: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” This dark statement prepares us for the next step in the history of Israel, the rise of kings who would unite Israel and lead them to greater faithfulness (for a time).

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *The Lord is faithful even when his people are not, and he will save them when they call out in faith and repentance.*  
If you are feeling discouraged after hearing so much about Israel’s weakness, rebellion, and faithlessness, then consider this beautiful truth that is made even brighter because of Israel’s darkness. Even though his people were sinful and rebellious deep in their hearts, God did not abandon them. The Lord had made a covenant with Israel, and nothing they could do would cause him to be unfaithful to his Word. Yes, he disciplined Israel, and he allowed them to suffer for a time. But the Lord never turns his back on his people. And that truth gives us great hope and comfort when we wrestle with the sin and rebellion living in our own hearts.

## (5) Christ Focus in Judges

- God raised up many judges to save Israel in their times of sufferings, but all of those judges had problems of their own. Ehud was a deceiver; Gideon was a coward; Samson was proud and stubborn. And even when these judges saved Israel, the peace only lasted for a time. But each of these judges points forward to the one Judge who has come to make all things right, to lead God's people to perfect faithfulness, and to bring a peace and rest that will never end. Jesus Christ is the Judge who never fails, and those who follow him are kept in perfect peace in this world until we reign with him in the next.

## **Part 3 – Ruth**

Ruth is the only book in the Old Testament named after a Gentile. And not only that, it is named for a Gentile woman! So how does this book fit into a section of the Old Testament that records some of the great acts of judges, prophets, and kings? The book of Ruth stands out as a story of simple people who were faithful and righteous in a time when “there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). In other words, very few people were concerned with honoring God, and very few people were concerned with caring for their neighbor. The people of Israel were in a dark place spiritually, so God shines his light on the story of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz to show us what faithfulness looks like in the lives of regular people.

### (1) Key Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Unknown

This is another Old Testament book that does not list its author. Many teachers and scholars believe that Samuel also wrote down the book of Ruth, but we cannot be certain that it was him.

- **When did this happen?**

Around 1100 BC

The book of Ruth is set in the time of the Judges, probably close to the end of this period. If Saul was anointed as the first king of Israel around 1050, then these events probably happened no more than 50-70 years before that.

- **Where did this happen?**

Bethlehem in Judah

The book of Ruth begins with an Israelite man, Elimelech, leading his family out of Israel into the nearby country of Moab because of a famine in the land. After his death and the death of his son's, Elimelech's widow, Naomi, returns to Israel with her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Most of the story of Ruth happened in

and around the town of Bethlehem in Judah.

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Ruth?**

To show what true faithfulness looks like during dark spiritual times.

The longer the time of the Judges continued, the more the hearts of the people of Israel became rebellious and idolatrous. God’s judgement came upon them in many ways, including the famine that we read about at the beginning of chapter one. Yet even in rebellious times, we can find faithful people who continue to trust God and obey him, and God preserves these people in wonderful ways.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

God is the Sovereign Lord of all things in the world, preserving and guiding his people even when no miraculous presence can be seen.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Unknown
When did it happen?	Around 1100 BC
Where did it happen?	Bethlehem in Judah
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To show what true faithfulness looks like during dark spiritual times.
What is the most important theological theme?	God is the Sovereign Lord of all things in the world, preserving and guiding his people even when no miraculous presence can be seen.

## (2) Basic Outline

The book of Ruth is a short and simple story, but it displays God’s care and provision for those who trust in him during dark spiritual times. Even though the book does not mention dreams, visions, angels, prophets, or any other kind of divine intervention, it is clear that God is the one who is guiding all things to work for the good of those who love him.

- I. Introduction: Elimelech and his Family (1:1-5)
- II. Naomi’s Concern: Marriage of Daughters-in-law (1:6-18)
- III. Naomi’s Grief (1:19-22)
- IV. Conversations (2:1-3:18)
  - A. Naomi and Ruth (2:1-2)
  - B. Ruth and Boaz (2:3-17)
  - C. Ruth and Naomi (2:18-3:5)

- D. Ruth and Boaz (3:6-15)
- E. Ruth and Naomi (3:16-18)
- V. Legal Process (4:1-12)
- VI. Naomi's Fullness in a Newborn Son (4:13-17)
- VII. Genealogy: the family of David (4:18-22)

### (3) Noteworthy Passages in Ruth

- *Your God will be my God (1:15-18)*  
 "For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (verse 16). This verse is so well-known that it is often used in Christian weddings as the bride pledges her loyalty and commitment to her new husband. But what is happening in these verses? Remember that Elimelech had led his family out of Israel to live in the Gentile nation of Moab to escape a famine in their land. While there, his sons had married Moabite women (which violated the Law of Moses). When he and his sons died, Naomi prepared to return to Israel and tried to send her daughters-in-law back to their fathers' homes.

But Ruth would not agree. Rather than return to her pagan, she swore to stay with Naomi, move to Israel, and be faithful to the Lord. This is one of the most remarkable statements of faith from a non-Israelite in the entire Old Testament, and it is a very surprising statement to any Hebrew person who would read this (they believed that God would never want the non-Israelites to serve him).

- *The genealogy of David (4:18-22)*  
 Why does the story of Ruth matter in the Old Testament history books? It is more than just the story of a Gentile woman putting her faith in the God of Israel. At the end of the book, we read something very interesting. Because of the faithfulness of Ruth and Boaz, God blessed them by raising up a descendant who became the greatest king in Israel's history. The great-grandson of Boaz would become David, the great king of Israel.

### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *God is the Sovereign Lord of all things in the world, preserving and guiding his people even when no miraculous presence can be seen.*  
 The book of Ruth is one of only a few books in the Old Testament history that does not record miracles, vision, prophets, or any other powerful examples of divine intervention. Instead, what we see in this story is God's steady guiding hand preserving those who are faithful to him and blessing them as they honor him. This is a truth that gives us hope and peace today. We remember that Jesus said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for sign" (Matthew 12:39). Even though we live in a time when many people want to see miracles – and many false teachers claim that they have the power to do these –

we know that genuine miracles from God are still extremely rare. We find more help from the examples of Ruth and Boaz, ordinary people living ordinary lives with extraordinary faith.

#### (5) Christ Focus in Ruth

- The genealogy recorded at the end of the book of Ruth is important again later in the Bible. In Matthew chapter 1 – the genealogy of Jesus Christ – we find Ruth mentioned by name among the fathers who were earthly ancestors of Jesus. In fact, Ruth and Rahab are the only two women – and the only two non-Jews – included in the genealogy of Jesus. This is a powerful testimony that teaches us that God's plan for salvation is for all people in all nations – not only for Jews and not only for men. Christ is a Savior for all people.

## Part 4 –Interpretive Journey Practice

Explain to the students that we will continue using the five steps of the Interpretive Journey learned in the previous course to develop our skills in faithful and accurate biblical interpretation. Distribute copies of the full-page picture of the Interpretive Journey found at the end of this lesson, and lead students through the questions below to refresh their memory of the process.<sup>2</sup>

ASK: What are the five steps of the Interpretive Journey? What is the Key Question that goes with each step?

*Lead the students through this review of the 5 Steps and Key Questions quickly. They should be able to answer this with no problems.*

- Step One – Grasp the text in their town.
  - Key Question – What did the text mean to the original audience?
- Step Two – Measure the width of the river to cross.
  - Key Question – What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?
- Step Three – Cross the Bridge of Timeless Truth
  - Key Question – What is the unchanging biblical principle in this passage?
- Step Four – Consult the biblical map.
  - Key Question – How does our timeless truth fit with the rest of the Bible?
- Step Five – Grasp the text in our town.
  - Key Question – How should individual Christians and churches live out the timeless truth in this passage?



Now guide the students through the five steps of the Interpretive Journey to discover the meaning of Joshua 4:1-10. This is the second course in our Old Testament Survey, and students should be very familiar with the Interpretive Journey by now. Therefore, these notes do not provide as many answers as the practice studies in earlier courses. Encourage students to find the necessary information by reviewing

<sup>2</sup> The Interpretive Journey was developed by Drs. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays of Ouachita Baptist University and is used in this course with the authors' permission. A complete explanation of the Interpretive Journey can be found in their book, *Grasping God's Word*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Zondervan Academic: 2012.

their notes or by carefully studying the text of Scripture. Try to keep the class moving quickly through this practice. This should take about 30 minutes, and students will not be able to work out every detail or question they may have about the question. Help them focus on the most important points in this passage.

Read Joshua 4:1-10.

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.'" Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."

And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the Lord told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day. For the priests bearing the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua.

### Step One – Grasp the Text in Their Town

Instruct the group to look closely at the verses and answer as many of the following questions as possible just from reading the text. Refer to information from earlier in this lesson about interpreting the book of Joshua.

ASK

#### Observing the Text

- What is written in this passage? Describe the text.  
*Students should work together to rephrase the passage in their own words. Include as many details as possible, including specific explanations and instructions.*

- When is this happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Who wrote this book?
- Who is it written to?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is being spoken to?
- Exactly what is being said or taught? Be specific and note details and important words.
- Is there any response from the audience? If so, what is it?
- What does the author or speaker expect the hearers to do in response?

### Observing the Context

- Historical Context
  - What country or kingdom did this take place in?
  - Who was the king or ruler?
  - What was the situation of the people who received this message? Are they free or slave? Rich or poor? Male or female? Young or old? Jew or Gentile? Happy, unhappy, confused, hurting?
  - When did this passage take place in the history of the Old Testament and Israel? Before the fall of mankind or after? Before the covenant with Abraham or after? Before the Law was given or after? Before the Exile or after?
- Literary Context
  - What is the genre – or kind of writing – you are studying in this passage?
  - What happened or what is written immediately before and after the passage you are studying?
  - What is the main theme of the book you are studying? How does this passage relate to that theme?
  - Where does this passage fit in the flow and outline of the entire book? Is it part of the beginning? Is it a critical explanation in the middle? Is it a summary at the end?

### Create a Short, Simple Statement

- Explain the most important truth that is taught in this passage.  
*Example: In Joshua 4:1-10, the Lord instructs Joshua and the people of Israel to collect 12 stones from the midst of the Jordan river so that they can build a memorial to remind future generations of the miraculous power of God that stopped the river while the people of Israel crossed into the Promised Land.*



### Step Two – Measure the Width of the River to Cross

For this step, encourage the students to discuss what they know of each of the major categories listed below.

- Language –What language was this book written in originally? Do the differences between their languages and the language that we are speaking influence how we understand this?
- Time – When was all this happening? What do we know today that they did not know?
- Culture – What was important to the people of Israel in their culture that is not as familiar to us today?
- Situation – What are some significant ways that our situation is similar to or different from the situation the people of Israel were in?
- Relationship to God – What was Israel’s relationship to God in this story? How is their relationship to God like ours or different from ours?

ASK: What are the most important similarities between this story (their town) and our story (our town?) What are some important differences?

ASK: Would you consider the river between their town and our town to be extremely wide (major, important differences), narrow (small differences), or something in between? Why do you think that?

### Step Three – Cross the Bridge of Timeless Truth

Instruct the students to think carefully about everything learned about this passage in the first two steps. Re-read the passage once or twice if necessary.

ASK: Now work together to write a short sentence using present tense verbs that communicates that timeless truth taught in this passage. Remember the guiding questions for this step.

- Is this truth reflected clearly in the text?
- Is this truth timeless and not tied to a specific situation?
- Is this principle universal and not tied to a particular culture?
- Does this principle agree with the teaching of the rest of the Bible?
- Does this principle apply both the biblical audience in “their town” and today’s Christians in “our town?”

Write the Timeless Truth that is found in this passage:

- *Example: When God does a wonderful work, his people should take steps to ensure that future generations will hear the testimony and remember what he has done for them.*

Step Four – Consult the Biblical Map

At this time, help the students to compare their timeless truth to other verses and passages in the New Testament to see whether there are any problems with their interpretation.

ASK: What other verses in the New Testament can support or contradict the timeless truth we have discovered in this passage?

ASK: Based on these other verses you have suggested, does the timeless truth we discovered in this passage agree with the rest of God's Word?

Step Five – Grasp the Text in Our Town

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we believe?

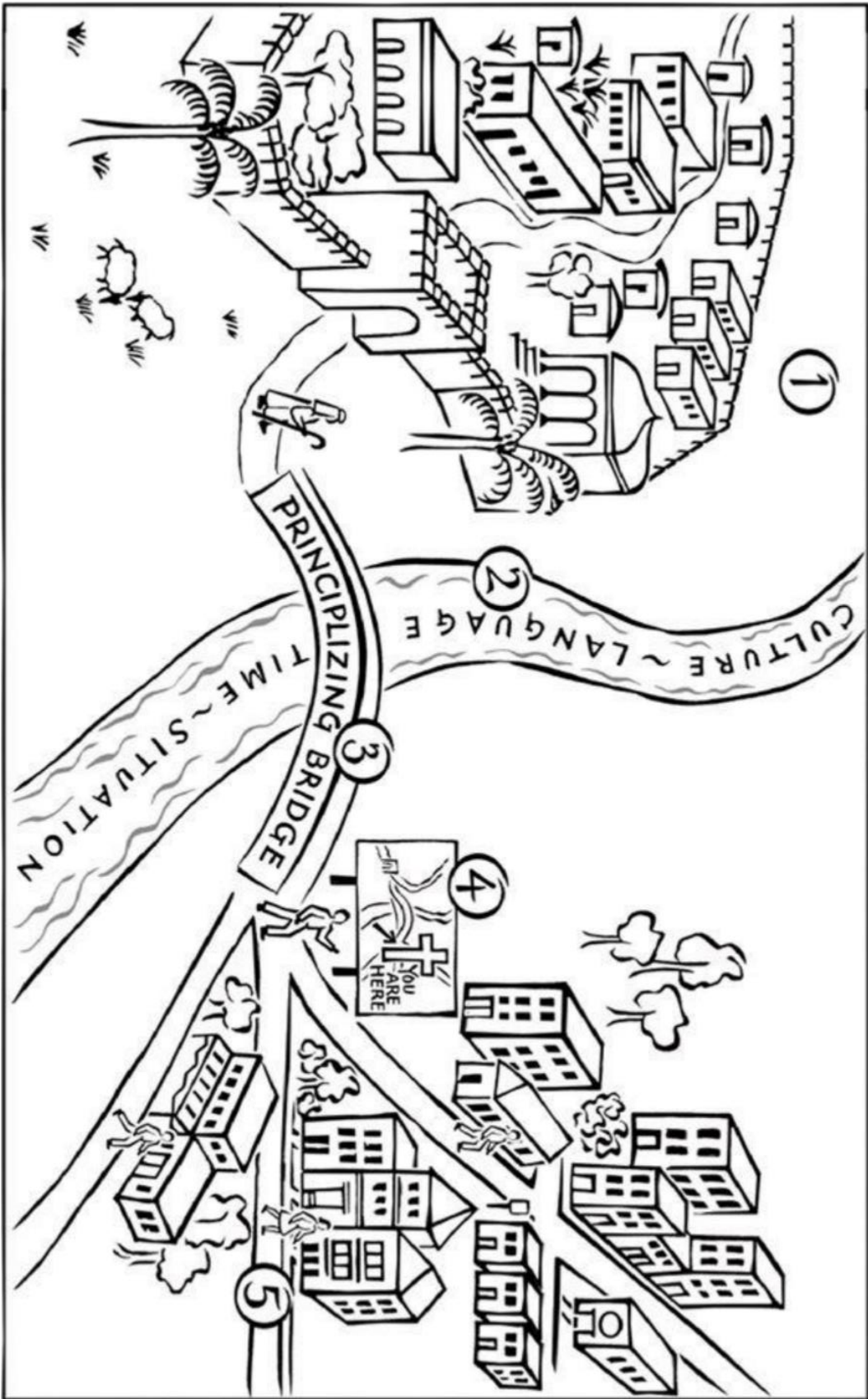
ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we do?

ASK: How can we begin to obey this biblical principle?

ASK: How does this biblical principle apply to the different relationships in our lives?

ASK: What would happen if everyone in our church believed and obeyed this biblical principle?

ASK: Look at all the suggested applications that we have found for teaching this timeless truth to people in "our town." If you were teaching a Bible study on this passage, which applications would you include in your lesson? Choose two or three and explain why you would want to include them.



## Lesson 2

### Part 1 – 1 and 2 Samuel

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel were originally written as only one book, and they were probably divided into two early in the history of the Christian church. For this reason, we will study the two books together as one in this course. The books of Samuel record a major transition in the life of Israel. First Samuel begins at the close of the period of Judges, when Israel was a collection of tribes with no single ruler or government. By the end of Second Samuel, Israel has changed and matured, and they are prospering under the rule of King Solomon as the strongest nation in their part of the world. The slow shift from judges to a powerful king is explained through the stories of four major characters: Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. Even as the leadership of Israel changes throughout these books, we can see clearly that God alone is the true King and Ruler of Israel, and those who trusted to rule the nation continue only as long as the Lord allows.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Samuel

The prophet Samuel is responsible for writing almost all of 1 and 2 Samuel. Small portions were also written by the prophets Nathan and Gad.

- **When did this happen?**

Between 1100-950 BC

The book of 1 Samuel begins with the birth of Samuel which probably happened around the year 1100 BC. By the end of 2 Samuel (150 years later), Solomon is the third king of Israel and the final king to rule over a united nation.

- **Where did this happen?**

In Israel

With the end of the time of the Judges, the area where all of these things happen is simply known as Israel. Canaan, or the Promised Land, has been fully conquered and is under the control of the people of Israel.

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing 1 and 2 Samuel?**  
To record the lives of Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as the period of change from the Judges to the kings in Israel.

Major change was happening in the nation of Israel during the times of 1 and 2 Samuel. Samuel was not only a prophet, he was also the final judge in Israel, and he was the only judge to gain leadership and respect from all of the tribes of Israel. His faithful and righteous leadership before God allowed for the peaceful anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel. And Saul's continued strength in faith allowed the country to stay united as God rejected Saul and anointed David to replace him as king.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**  
The Lord is the true King of Israel, and he demands faithfulness and righteousness from those who would lead his people.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Samuel
When did this happen?	1100-950 BC
Where did this happen?	Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To record the lives of Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as the period of change from the Judges to the kings in Israel.
What is the most important theological theme?	The Lord is the true King of Israel, and he demands faithfulness and righteousness from those who would lead his people.

## (2) Basic Outline

The division between the end of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel is not part of the way the books were originally written. They were probably divided due to the length of the book. Thus the outline below connects the two books into one outline.

- I. Early stories of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1-4:1)
- II. The ark as the centerpiece of Israel's life (4:1-7:2)
- III. The beginning of the Kingdom: Saul (7:3-15:35)
- IV. David's introduction and rise to power (1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 5:10)
- V. David gains power and begins a dynasty (2 Samuel 5:11-8:18)
- VI. David's struggles: maintaining power, personal failure, and enemies within the family (2 Samuel 9-20)
- VII. Conclusion: David's successes and failures; God's judgment and mercy (2 Samuel 21-24)

### (3) Noteworthy Passages in 1 and 2 Samuel

- *To obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:17-23)*

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel record the beginning of kingly rule in Israel. Early in 1 Samuel, God allows Samuel to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel, though he warned them that having a king would not be good for them in the end. Saul was everything the people wanted in a king – tall, handsome, and a strong leader. But Saul did not have the character to match his position. In chapter 13, Saul became impatient waiting for Samuel the prophet and priest to arrive, so he offered the sacrifice to the Lord before a battle with the Philistines, even though only a priest was allowed to make a sacrifice.

In chapter 15, God gave Saul a command to fight against and completely destroy the Amalekites. Saul was obedient to fight and defeat the Amalekites, but he kept the king alive and allowed the people to keep the best of the livestock. This passage is the response to Saul's disobedience, as the Lord sends Samuel to inform Saul that he has been rejected as king. When Saul tried to defend himself, Samuel responded with these famous words: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams." God's Word is clear that he is seeking people who have the faith to listen to him and obey, not to simply apologize after mistakes and ask for grace.

- *God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:1-17)*

Years after God had anointed David as the king to replace Saul and David had defeated his enemies to reign as the unchallenged king in Israel, God made a special covenant with David, just as he had done with Noah and with Abraham many years before. God said, "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (12, 16).

With this covenant, God established David's line as the rightful kings of Judah for all of history. Every king of Judah from Solomon to Jehoiachin were direct descendants from that. Also, with this covenant, God established a prophecy that the Messiah, the final king of Israel, would also be a descendant from David's line.

### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *The Lord is the true King of Israel, and he demands faithfulness and righteousness from those who would lead his people.*

God will not tolerate leaders who will not live faithfully and righteously before him. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel allow us to see the godly leadership of Samuel and the ungodliness that led to Saul's fall from power. It shows us that David was often a righteous king with a true heart for God's people, but even when he fell into sin he turned back to God to be restored. And we see

the introduction of Solomon who would initially lead as a great and godly king before slipping into sin later in his own life. Each one of these men teaches us the same lesson in a different way. God demands that those who would be leaders of his people must have a heart to listen to him and follow his ways.

#### (5) Christ Focus in 1 and 2 Samuel

- Jesus is the King of kings and the only One who can satisfy our soul's longings. When the people of Israel asked Samuel to give them a king (because they wanted to be like the nations around them), Samuel was grieved. He knew that no earthly king would bring them the peace that they desired. Yet even in this asking, God is showing us that we have a longing for a true and righteous King who will lead us. In 1 and 2 Samuel, David is the main character; he is the greatest and most righteous king that Israel would know. But even David is only a shadow of the great King who would come after him. Jesus is the descendant of David, but he is David's superior in every way. Every longing that we have for a King to lead us and care for us is fulfilled perfectly in Jesus Christ.

### **Part 2 – 1 and 2 Kings**

If 1 and 2 Samuel are the record of the rise of Israel from a small and unknown group of tribes to a powerful nation under righteous kings who were anointed and led by God himself, then 1 and 2 Kings is the record of the fall of that nation into sin, idolatry, and division. Beginning with the transfer of power from David to his son Solomon, we read about the rise and glory of Solomon, followed by his own fall from grace. After Solomon, the kingdom is divided into two. Ten tribes united to form the northern kingdom of Israel with one king, and Judah and Benjamin united to form the southern kingdom of Judah with their own king. Similar to 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings were originally written as one book and were divided later due to length.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Unknown

The actual writer of 1 and 2 Kings is not certain. Some traditions have taught that the prophet Jeremiah or an unnamed group of prophets or priests worked together to write these books.

- **When did this happen?**

Between 970-586 BC

The book of 1 Kings begins with the end of King David's reign and the transfer of power to his son Solomon. This was a time of Israel's greatest glory and power in world history. The book of 2 Kings ends with the humiliation and exile of both kingdoms in the year 586 BC, as well as the fall of Jerusalem

and the destruction of the temple. This was the point of Israel's greatest shame in their national history.

- **Where did this happen?**

In Israel

While almost all of the events recorded in 1 and 2 Kings happen within Israel, we must remember that the nation divides into two kingdoms part of the way through this section of history. The narrative moves back and forth between the histories of Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom), so we must be careful when reading to keep track of where each event happens.

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing 1 and 2 Kings?**

To show the difference between those who honored God and those who refused to follow him in the history of Israel.

It is difficult to remember every single king, prophet, priest, or military leader mentioned in the books of 1 and 2 Kings, but it is easy to understand how God saw each one of them. These books clearly show the difference between the kings and leaders who were faithful and honored God in their lives and those who forgot God and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

Judgment is unavoidable for those who reject the Lord and live for sin, but God's plan to redeem his people cannot be stopped even by our sin.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Unknown
When did this happen?	970-586 BC
Where did this happen?	Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To show the difference between those who honored God and those who refused to follow him in the history of Israel.
What is the most important theological theme?	Judgment is unavoidable for those who reject the Lord and live for sin, but God's plan to redeem his people cannot be stopped even by our sin.



## (2) Basic Outline

The division between the end of 1 Kings and 2 Kings is not part of the way the books were originally written. They were probably divided due to the length of the book. Thus the outline below connects the two books into one outline.

- I. David's transfer of kingship (1 Kings 1:1-2:46)
- II. Solomon in all his glory (3:1-11:43)
- III. The kingdom torn in two: Rehoboam and Jeroboam (12:1-14:31)
- IV. Building a new capital in the north (16:1-34)
- V. Elijah vs. Ahab and Jezebel (17:1-22:53)
- VI. The ministry of Elisha (2 Kings 1:1-8:29)
- VII. Trouble in Israel: the house of Jehu (9:1-14:29)
- VIII. The last days of Israel (15:1-18:12)
- IX. The last kings of Judah (18:1-23:30)
- X. The fall of Jerusalem (23:31-25:30)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in 1 and 2 Kings

- *Solomon's prayer for wisdom (1 Kings 3:1-15)*  
Solomon's reign as king began with great promise as he showed godliness and wisdom even from his first days. When God spoke to Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for anything he desired, Solomon answered, "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" (verse 8).

The Lord was very pleased with this request, and he chose to give Solomon not only a wisdom that no one on earth could match, but he added to it wealth and honor to establish Solomon as the greatest king on earth in those days. Because of Solomon's request for wisdom, he ruled the nation of Israel and led them into prosperity and glory above the other nations around them. Solomon oversaw the building of the temple, and he wrote the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and also some of the Psalms.

- *Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40)*  
King Ahab was perhaps the most godless and wicked king to rule over the northern kingdom of Israel, and Elijah was the true prophet of God who refused to stop speaking the truth. After confronting the king yet again, Elijah challenged Ahab to send more than 400 prophets of the false god Baal to meet him at Mount Carmel where they would finally decide who was following the true God. On the day of the confrontation, Elijah commanded that both he and the prophets of Baal would construct an altar and lay a sacrifice upon it, then each would pray to see whose god would consume the sacrifice. The prophets of Baal went first – praying, chanting, shouting, dancing, and even cutting themselves to compel Baal to respond – but nothing happened. Then

Elijah prayed a simple, direct prayer, and the Lord responded with such intense fire from heaven that the sacrifice, the altar, and everything around it was completely consumed.

This dramatic story teaches some very powerful lessons that God's people needed to know. First and most importantly, it was perfectly clear to every person that day that the God of Israel is the only true God, and Baal is no god at all. Second, they learned that God is not impressed by loud, wild, or powerful-sounding prayers to get him to respond. Elijah's example shows us that the power belongs to God, not us. God does not struggle to hear us, and we do not need to show him that we are serious by being loud or strong. We can speak to God in clear words with true faith, knowing that he hears us and receives us when we pray.

- *The Falls of Israel and of Judah (2 Kings 17:5-18; 25:1-21)*  
No one in Israel believed it could happen. God had been calling his people to repentance through the words of the prophets for generations, but no one listened. The people of Israel believed that they would always be protected because of their covenant with God, even though they were unfaithful to him at every opportunity – worshipping false gods, oppressing the poor and weak in their midst, and only giving half-hearted honor to the Lord. God had told them that if they did not repent, they would fall, but they did not listen. And then it happened. First, it was the northern kingdom of Israel, the kingdom that never had a righteous king. Judah and Jerusalem fell much later (partly because they had a few godly kings who tried to lead the people back to the Lord), but they also fell to God's judgement. All of Israel was taken into exile in a foreign land. Jerusalem was captured and the temple was destroyed. These were the darkest days in the history of Israel, but the things that happened were exactly what the Lord had told them. God did not abandon his covenant with the people of Israel at that time, and his plan to send a Savior for the world was never in doubt. But the people suffered for sin, and they learned that God's holiness should never be treated lightly.

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *Judgment is unavoidable for those who reject the Lord and live for sin, but God's plan to redeem his people cannot be stopped even by our sin.*  
God is patient and merciful far beyond what any human can completely understand. The people of Israel rebelled in their hearts against the Lord for generation, for hundreds of years, and yet God continued to call them back to repentance, promising to forgive them and restore them. But God will not always tolerate sin. Eventually, he brought a judgement against his people that no one could believe. Israel was shamed as God allowed them to be defeated and captured by pagan armies. Today God is still patient and merciful. We must be careful not to make the same mistake as the people of Israel. "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and

patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4). God is patiently waiting to see who will turn to him in faith and repentance, but one day his patience will be finished. On that day, the Lord Jesus will return as King and Judge to punish all who would not listen to him.

#### (5) Christ Focus in 1 and 2 Kings

- Jesus is the Righteous King who saves us, AND he is the One who has taken the punishment for our sin. Under the old covenant, Israel was promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. When their disobedience could no longer be tolerated, God brought the curse and shame of exile, allowing them to be captured and removed from their promised inheritance. But Jesus brought us a new covenant. He knew we could not obey God perfectly, so he became our righteous obedience. He knew that we could not bear the weight of God's judgment for our sin, so he took that wrath on himself and gave his righteousness to us. As it is written in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

### **Part 3 – 1 and 2 Chronicles**

The book of 1 and 2 Kings ends on a very dark note in the history of Israel. Both kingdoms have fallen, Jerusalem and the temple have been destroyed, and the people have been captured and sent into exile in a foreign land. But 1 and 2 Chronicles helps the people of Israel to see the hand of God preserving them and leading them into a future. Written after the return from exile, this book (1 and 2 Chronicles were originally composed as one book) summarizes the history of Israel, reminding the people of Israel of their heritage as God's chosen people as they work to unite and form a new nation back in the Promised Land. Reading 1 and 2 Chronicles can encourage us to learn and celebrate our own history of faith as Christians, a history that is not traced through families or nations but through the testimonies of those passed along the true gospel of Jesus Christ to those of us living today.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Ezra

The book of 1 and 2 Chronicles does not list an author by name, but old Jewish tradition has taught the Ezra is responsible for recording the history of Israel in these pages.

- **When did this happen?**

Between 1000-538 BC

These books review a long period of Israel's history, from the early days of King David all the way to the decree of Cyrus that the Jews may return from their exile to rebuild Jerusalem.

- **Where did this happen?**

In Israel

Although written after the exile, 1 and 2 Chronicles focuses on the historical events that happened within Israel before their fall and exile.

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing 1 and 2 Chronicles?**

To unify the people of Israel and to remind them of all that God has taught them about living faithfully through worship and obedience.

It is true that Israel and Judah lived through some days of spiritual darkness and rebellion against the Lord, and he sent judgment on them as he said that he would do. But as the exiles were returning to Jerusalem, they were hoping for better days and a future. The book of 1 and 2 Chronicles helped the returning exiles to remember what was important and to renew their commitment to live as God's chosen people in the land that he had given them.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

God will be faithful to restore his people and fulfill all of his promises when his people turn from sin to worship and serve him in faith again.

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land." - *2 Chronicles 7:14*

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Ezra
When did this happen?	1000-538 BC
Where did this happen?	Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To unify the people of Israel and to remind them of all that God has taught them about living faithfully through worship and obedience.
What is the most important theological theme?	God will be faithful to restore his people and fulfill all of his promises when his people turn from sin to worship and serve him in faith again.

## (2) Basic Outline

The division between the end of 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles is not part of the way the books were originally written. They were probably divided due to the length of the book. Chronicles can be summarized in the simple outline given below.

- I. Genealogies from Adam to post-exile Judah (1 Chronicles 1-9)
- II. The reigns of David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 10 – 2 Chronicles 9)
- III. Judean kings during the divided kingdom (2 Chronicles 10-28)
- IV. Judean kings during the single kingdom (2 Chronicles 29-36)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in 1 and 2 Chronicles

- *The Lord's covenant with David and David's prayer (1 Chronicles 17:3-27)*  
Written after the return from exile, much of the history recorded in 1 and 2 Chronicles is arranged to encourage the people of Israel to renew their faith and commitment to God, remembering all the good that he had done for them. Chapter 17 of 1 Chronicles records the covenant that God made with David, and the words written here are almost exactly the same as we read in 2 Samuel 7. This is an important moment in the minds of God's people, reminding them that God had made a promise to establish the throne of David and that their Messiah would come from David's lineage.

The prayer of David in 1 Chronicles 17 helps us to understand the true heart and faith of this great king. His words are humble and focused on exalting the glory and greatness of God alone. David refuses to talk about himself or his accomplishments. Instead, he rejoices to recite the great works of God as he rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt. Just as God had rescued Israel from Egypt, now he had rescued Israel from exile in Babylon and Assyria. David prays to give glory to God, and all who read it are expected to adopt the same attitude that David had.

- *If my people humble themselves (2 Chronicles 7:12-22)*  
When Solomon dedicated the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, it was a moment of great joy and pride for all of Israel. It was also a moment that exposed Israel's greatest weakness. That night, the Lord spoke to Solomon, assuring him that he would dwell in this temple and calling Solomon to walk before him in obedience as David had walked.

In the midst of this message, God spoke these famous words to Solomon, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (7:14). Unfortunately, we know that Israel did not remain humble. They did not seek God's face, and ultimately he brought judgment instead of healing on them, sending them into exile. These verses in 2 Chronicles are written as both a reminder and a promise. As the Jews began a new life in Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple, they had a new

opportunity to do what their ancestors did not do. Would they be humble? Would they seek the Lord? Or would they make the same mistakes again?

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *God will be faithful to restore his people and fulfill all of his promises when his people turn from sin to worship and serve him in faith again.*

This theme is taken directly from 2 Chronicles 7:14 which is written in the above paragraph. Through all of the history books in the Bible, this theological theme is repeated in various ways over and over. God is faithful, even when we are not faithful. He will never abandon his people, and he will never forget his promises. Knowing God in this way should inspire us to return to him to worship and seek his face. No matter how far we may fall or how great our sin may be, we can be certain that God has mercy for us when we humble ourselves and turn away from our sin to seek him again.

#### (5) Christ Focus in 1 and 2 Chronicles

- Prepare the way of the Lord. The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are a series of genealogies, tracing the family histories of all the tribes of Israel. If you look at these genealogies closely, though, you will notice something interesting. They emphasize the tribes of Judah and Levi. Why would these two be the focus of the genealogies? The explanation is quite simple – Judah is the royal line of Israel, and Levi is the priestly line. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are the end of the Old Testament history books, and they are written to prepare Israel and help them look for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus the Messiah would be both priest and king, fulfilling the lines of Judah and Levi. Knowing this, we can see that even a long list of family histories has the purpose of pointing us to the arrival of Jesus Christ.

### **Part 4 –Interpretive Journey Practice**

Now guide the students through the five steps of the Interpretive Journey to discover the meaning of 2 Kings 5:1-14. This is the second course in our Old Testament Survey, and students should be very familiar with the Interpretive Journey by now. Therefore, these notes do not provide as many answers as the practice studies in earlier courses. Encourage students to find the necessary information by reviewing their notes or by carefully studying the text of Scripture. Try to keep the class moving quickly through this practice. This should take about 30 minutes, and students will not be able to work out every detail or question they may have about the question. Help them focus on the most important points in this passage.

Read 2 Kings 5:1-14.

Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had

given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothing. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." And when the king Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me now, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand of the place and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned away in a rage. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

### Step One – Grasp the Text in Their Town

Instruct the group to look closely at the verses and answer as many of the following questions as possible just from reading the text. Refer to information from earlier in this lesson about interpreting the books of 1 and 2 Kings.

ASK

#### Observing the Text

- What is written in this passage? Describe the text.  
*Students should work together to rephrase the passage in their own words. Include as many details as possible, including specific explanations and instructions.*
- When is this happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Who wrote this book?
- Who is it written to?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is being spoken to?
- Exactly what is being said or taught? Be specific and note details and important words.
- Is there any response from the audience? If so, what is it?
- What does the author or speaker expect the hearers to do in response?

#### Observing the Context

- Historical Context
  - What country or kingdom did this take place in?
  - Who was the king or ruler?
  - What was the situation of the people who received this message? Are they free or slave? Rich or poor? Male or female? Young or old? Jew or Gentile? Happy, unhappy, confused, hurting?
  - When did this passage take place in the history of the Old Testament and Israel? Before the fall of mankind or after? Before the covenant with Abraham or after? Before the Law was given or after? Before the Exile or after?
- Literary Context
  - What is the genre – or kind of writing – you are studying in this passage?
  - What happened or what is written immediately before and after the passage you are studying?
  - What is the main theme of the book you are studying? How does this passage relate to that theme?
  - Where does this passage fit in the flow and outline of the entire book? Is it part of the beginning? Is it a critical explanation in the



middle? Is it a summary at the end?

### Create a Short, Simple Statement

- Explain the most important truth that is taught in this passage.  
*Example: In 2 Kings 5:1-14, Naaman the Syrian learns that the Lord will not serve him or heal him in the ways that he expects to be healed, but that his healing comes only when he carefully obeys the word of the Lord spoken to him.*

### Step Two – Measure the Width of the River to Cross

For this step, encourage the students to discuss what they know of each of the major categories listed below.

- Language –What language was this book written in originally? Do the differences between their languages and the language that we are speaking influence how we understand this?
- Time – When was all this happening? What do we know today that they did not know?
- Culture – What was important to the people of Israel in their culture that is not as familiar to us today?
- Situation – What are some significant ways that our situation is similar to or different from the situation the people of Israel were in?
- Relationship to God – What was Israel’s relationship to God in this story? How is their relationship to God like ours or different from ours?

ASK: What are the most important similarities between this story (their town) and our story (our town?) What are some important differences?

ASK: Would you consider the river between their town and our town to be extremely wide (major, important differences), narrow (small differences), or something in between? Why do you think that?

### Step Three – Cross the Bridge of Timeless Truth

Instruct the students to think carefully about everything learned about this passage in the first two steps. Re-read the passage once or twice if necessary.

ASK: Now work together to write a short sentence using present tense verbs that communicates that timeless truth taught in this passage. Remember the guiding questions for this step.

- Is this truth reflected clearly in the text?
- Is this truth timeless and not tied to a specific situation?
- Is this principle universal and not tied to a particular culture?
- Does this principle agree with the teaching of the rest of the Bible?

- Does this principle apply both the biblical audience in “their town” and today’s Christians in “our town?”

Write the Timeless Truth that is found in this passage:

- *Example: Obedience to God’s Word always means doing exactly what God has instructed, even when we do not understand or think that another way is better.*

Step Four – Consult the Biblical Map

At this time, help the students to compare their timeless truth to other verses and passages in the New Testament to see whether there are any problems with their interpretation.

ASK: What other verses in the New Testament can support or contradict the timeless truth we have discovered in this passage?

ASK: Based on these other verses you have suggested, does the timeless truth we discovered in this passage agree with the rest of God’s Word?

Step Five – Grasp the Text in Our Town

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we believe?

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we do?

ASK: How can we begin to obey this biblical principle?

ASK: How does this biblical principle apply to the different relationships in our lives?

ASK: What would happen if everyone in our church believed and obeyed this biblical principle?

ASK: Look at all the suggested applications that we have found for teaching this timeless truth to people in “our town.” If you were teaching a Bible study on this passage, which applications would you include in your lesson? Choose two or three and explain why you would want to include them.

## Lesson 3

### Introduction

At the end of 1 and 2 Chronicles, we find another major shift in the historical records of Israel. Everything from Joshua through 2 Chronicles recorded the rise and fall of the people of Israel until the time that they were invaded by the Babylonians, captured, and taken into exile. But the remaining books of history – Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther – tell us about God’s continuing work through his people during their time of exile and their return to Jerusalem. These books remind us that even when God brings judgment on his people, his promises are not forgotten and his grace is not gone. God disciplines his children so that they can learn to trust him and obey him. Even today, God may bring times of testing and discipline into our lives. He even tells us that every true child is disciplined; it is a sign that God is at work in our lives. When we endure these times of struggle and difficulty, we can find encouragement by remembering the stories of the people in Israel. They returned from exile to rebuild their city and their temple, but more than that, they returned from exile to rebuild their faith and to restore true worship of their God.

### Part 1 – Ezra and Nehemiah

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are centered on the promise that God gave through Jeremiah to return and restore Israel in the land that he had given them. Although he is not mentioned among the most famous men of God in the Old Testament, Ezra is one of the most important leaders in the history of Israel. He is the likely author of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Psalm 119 (the longest chapter in the Bible). He was also a man who deeply devoted to God and his Word, and he committed his life to helping God’s people restore their relationship with the God of grace and power.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Ezra

These books do not say that they were written by Ezra, but Jewish tradition teaches that Ezra is the true author of both books.

- **When did it happen?**

Between 538-450 BC

Ezra begins where 2 Chronicles ends, with a group of Jews returning from exile to Jerusalem. Ezra was not part of this first group, but a little more than 50 years later he returned to Jerusalem with a second group of exiles.

- **Where did it happen?**

Jerusalem

Although Ezra and Nehemiah describe events that took place in Jerusalem even when he was still living in exile in Persia, the books were most likely written after Ezra came to Jerusalem.

- **To whom was it written?**

The Jewish exiles who were returning from captivity in Persia

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Ezra and Nehemiah?**

To show that God is faithful to fulfill all his promises as he restored the people of Israel to their land.

After decades of exile that was their punishment for many years of disobedience and idolatry, God kept his promise to return his people to their land. Even though they had sinned greatly, God is committed to his plan to bring salvation to the world, and that plan included redeeming and sustaining Israel as the people through whom he would send his Son.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

The return from exile is a second Exodus pointing to God's great plan of redemption for his people.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Ezra
When did it happen?	Between 538-450 BC
Where did it happen?	Jerusalem
To whom was it written?	The Jewish exiles who were returning from captivity in Persia
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To show that God is faithful to fulfill all his promises as he restored the people of Israel to their land.
What is the most important theological theme?	The return from exile is a second Exodus pointing to God's great plan of redemption for his people.

## (2) Basic Outline

Similar to all of the books we studied in lesson 2, Ezra and Nehemiah were considered a single book long before they were separated into two. In fact, the notes at the end of the original Hebrew text of Nehemiah lists a total verse count for the book that includes both Ezra and Nehemiah as one. The books are closely related and record the leadership and works of both Ezra and Nehemiah as they labored to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple and to restore the people of Israel to their right worship and relationship to God.

- I. The story of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6)
- II. The first half of Ezra's records; his arrival in Jerusalem; the problem of mixed marriages (Ezra 7:1-10:4)
- III. The first half of Nehemiah's records; his arrival in Jerusalem; the building of the wall (Nehemiah 1:1-7:73)
- IV. The second half of Ezra's records; reading of the Law; feast of booths; covenant (Nehemiah 7:73-10:39)
- V. The second half of Nehemiah's records; dedication of the wall; second governor (Nehemiah 11:1-13:31)

### (3) Noteworthy Passages in Ezra and Nehemiah

- *Prayer and confession of sin (Ezra 10:1-5)*

When Ezra returned to Jerusalem to oversee the renewed worship of the people, he was shocked and grieved to find that many of the Jews had already married wives from the surrounding pagan peoples. In his grief, Ezra cried out to God, confessing the sin of the people and asking if there is still a way that God can show mercy. As the people heard Ezra pray and weep, many gathered around him and joined in the time of prayer and mourning. The people were cut to the heart when their sin was made plain to them. They knew that God had already shown them mercy by allowing them to return from the exile to live in Jerusalem, yet they were already disobeying him and breaking the covenant again. In their confession, they spoke words that suggested they had learned something about God's willingness to forgive those who repent. They said, "We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this" (verse 2).
- *Ezra reads the Law (Nehemiah 8:1-8)*

These verses record a moment that had been waiting for more than a generation. When construction of the new wall around Jerusalem had been completed, the people of Israel gathered around Ezra to hear him read the book of the Law out loud. Everyone understood that this was a solemn moment; the Law had not been read aloud in Jerusalem since before the Exile. A special platform was built for Ezra to stand upon, and as he prepared to read all the people stood to their feet to listen. (Even today, many Christian churches stand to their feet whenever Scripture is read to show their respect and their willingness to listen.) Ezra did more than read the words on the page that day, this passage says that he also "gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading" (verse 8).

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *The return from exile is a second Exodus pointing to God's great plan of redemption for his people.*

The return to Jerusalem was a new beginning for the people of Israel. Their parents had suffered the pain and humiliation of being taken captive and forced to leave their country to live in a foreign land. Now God was giving them a second chance to live as his people. God has always been working to draw his people back to himself, redeeming them when they have fallen. Those returning from exile would try to live according to the laws of the old covenant, but eventually they would also fail like the generations before them. But God's great plan for redemption was not yet complete, and the true salvation of Israel was yet to come.

#### (5) Christ Focus in Ezra and Nehemiah

- When the Law of Moses was read aloud in Jerusalem, it was a moment of great joy and hope for Israel. The words of God were the basis of their relationship to him. But Israel could never live by the words of the Law. This why Jesus came. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Old Testament Law was a written word from God to guide his people, but Jesus is the Living Word, God in human flesh who spoke to us, lived among us, and finally gave his own life to save ours. In the book of Nehemiah, the people of Israel understood that hearing the words of the Law read to them was a holy privilege. We should recognize that it a much higher privilege and joy to hear the words of Christ himself who gives us life.

### **Part 2 – Esther**

Esther is a unique book in the Old Testament. It is one of only two books named after a woman. It is the only book that is set entirely in the Exile. It feature a young Jewish woman who is chosen to be the new wife of the king who is keeping the entire nation of Israel captive. It includes dramatic plot twists, politics, and romance. In the end, God works through the courage of a young woman and the wisdom of her older cousin to preserve the Jewish people. God is a faithful protector, and in the story of Esther he shows again (as he did in Ruth) that he does not always rely on miracles and divine intervention to save his people. But he is always in control.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**  
Unknown

It is not certain who actually wrote the book of Esther. Some have suggested that it was her cousin, Mordecai. Others have said that Ezra is the likely

author.

- **When did it happen?**

Around 470 BC

The story of Esther most likely happened about 30 years before the events that are recorded in the book of Nehemiah.

- **Where did it happen?**

Susa, the capital of Persia

Susa was the capital city of Persia, and many of the Jewish people were living there in their exile. All of the story of Esther happens in Susa, especially within the king's palace.

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Esther?**

To display God's sovereign power and control, even in a foreign land, as he cared for and protected his people.

Israel was in exile. A hateful and powerful enemy plotted to have them destroyed. But God had promised to protect his people. In this book where no miracles are recorded, we see that God works through the wisdom of his people and his control of circumstances to keep his people safe from harm and fulfill all of his promises.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

God is the faithful and sovereign protector of his people, no matter the dangers that they may face.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Unknown
When did it happen?	Around 470 BC
Where did it happen?	Susa, the capital of Persia
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To display God's sovereign power and control, even in a foreign land, as he cared for and protected his people.
What is the most important theological theme?	God is the faithful and sovereign protector of his people, no matter the dangers that they may face.

## (2) Basic Outline

The book of Esther is very difficult to summarize in an outline because of its smooth storytelling. The outline below reveals a few major sections in the story and points of transition from one section to the next.

- I. Esther's rise to be queen in Persia (Esther 1-2)
- II. The threats of Haman against the Jews (Esther 3-4)
- III. Esther's acts to intervene for the Jews (Esther 5-8)
- IV. The deliverance of the Jews and the destruction of Haman (Esther 9-10)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in Esther

- *Praying and fasting for such a time as this (Esther 4:12-17)*  
As the pressure of and danger of Haman's scheme against the Jews was growing, Mordecai speaks words of wisdom to his cousin, Esther. He warns her that if Haman is successful, even her position in the king's palace will not keep her safe. Then he asked a famous question, "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (verse 14). Mordecai understood that God is the one who controls the times and places of our lives, and he guides us according to his perfect wisdom and plans. Mordecai reasoned that if a Jewish woman (who was his cousin) was brought into the king's palace at the same time that a plan was advanced to kill the Jewish people, then God must be moving in all of this to protect his people. For her part, Esther understood that she could not act in her own power or wisdom in this situation. When Mordecai encouraged her to act to save her people, her response was to instruct him to call all of the Jews to pray and fast on her behalf. She knew that if her presence in the palace would help to save the Jews, it was only because God himself was working through the situation. Both Mordecai and Esther displayed true faith and understanding of God's goodness and power to act in the lives of his people.

## (4) Important Theological Theme

- *God is the faithful and sovereign protector of his people, no matter the dangers that they may face.*  
We do not often face threats like the Jews did in the days of Esther. But God's people have known serious threats at many times in our history. Even today, there are places in the world where our Christian brothers and sisters are at risk of being killed for their faith in Christ. For those living in danger of being killed – and for those of us facing fears of different kinds – the story of Esther is a comfort and an assurance. God is faithful to us, and he will never forsake us. He has sovereign and unchallenged power over everything that happens in this world. When we know this, we can live with peace instead of fear. As Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, nothing "in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).



## (5) Christ Focus in Esther

- The connection to Christ from the story of Esther is easy to see. Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, and without the Jews, there could be no Jewish Messiah. By protecting and preserving the Jewish people through Esther, God preserved the very nation that would receive the long-awaited Savior of the world.

## **Part 3 – Job**

Many people believe that God blesses those who are good and curses those who have done evil. But is this true? Throughout history – and probably even in your own life – we have seen good and righteous people who suffer, and we have seen people we know to be sinful who appear to prosper in everything they do. So how do we explain this? Where can we find wisdom to help us think clearly about suffering, righteousness, and how God is involved in these things? If you have ever wondered about these things, then the book of Job is a gift for you. Even if these questions have not troubled you, someone in your church has struggled with them, and they will look to church leaders to help them find understanding and peace. The book of Job is not the easiest book in the Bible to read, but with a little bit of background knowledge we can understand its message and find the true wisdom that God gives us.

### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Unknown

The book of Job does not list an author. Some have suggested that Job himself might have written it. Others believe that Moses or Solomon are responsible.

- **When did it happen?**

Around 2000-1800 BC

The exact time when the events of Job happened is not known, but there are clues in the book which tell us that it happened early in the history of the Old Testament, probably around the time of Genesis.

- **Where did it happen?**

The land of Uz.

Most of the books in the Old Testament happen in the land of Israel, but Job is an exception. The exact location of Uz is not clear, but it is somewhere north of Israel near the Euphrates River.

- **To whom was it written?**  
The people of Israel
- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Job?**  
To answer the question of why righteous people suffer.

Job is a complex book of poetry and wisdom, and we must read the entire book to understand its parts. But those who read it carefully will learn important lessons: that suffering does not mean a person has sinned, that Satan is not free or powerful to do any harm he desires, and that God has sovereign power over all people and even Satan, carefully watching and guiding our lives at every moment.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**  
God’s wisdom and ways of guiding this world and the lives of his people exceed the limits of human understanding.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Unknown
When did it happen?	Around 470 BC
Where did it happen?	The land of Uz
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To answer the question of why righteous people suffer.
What is the most important theological theme?	God’s wisdom and ways of guiding this world and the lives of his people exceed the limits of human understanding.

## (2) Basic Outline

The book of Job is a dramatic and complex story of the suffering of a righteous man and his struggle to understand how and why these things had happened. At the very beginning of the book, we get to peek into heaven itself as we see Satan challenge God concerning Job, and God permits the devil to test Job through suffering. Then, we read the speeches of Job and his friends for several chapters. The friends mean well and they share the best wisdom the world has to offer, but they cannot give a true or satisfying answer to Job’s suffering. Finally, at the end of the book, the Lord speaks and reminds Job that he is the sovereign, all-powerful king of all the universe, and his wisdom is beyond human understanding. Yet everyone who trusts in him and believes in his goodness will find the peace and protection that can only be found in God himself. The outline below organizes the major sections of Job to help us understand how the book develops.

- I. Introduction to Job and his suffering (1-2, narrative)
- II. Speeches within a group (3-28, poetry)
  - A. Job’s opening lament (3)

- B. Between Job and his friends (4-27)
- C. Poem about Wisdom (28)
- III. Speeches from one person (29-41, poetry)
  - A. Job declares his innocence (29-31)
  - B. Elihu's speeches (32-37)
  - C. God's speeches in response to Job (38-42:6)
- IV. Conclusion (42:7-17, narrative)

### (3) Noteworthy Passages in Job

- *Satan on a chain (1:6-12)*  
 In most parts of Africa, many people live in fear of the power of the devil. It is common to find people who think of Satan as the rival of Jesus in a way that his evil power is almost equal to the holy power of Jesus. But that is not what the Bible shows us at all. In chapter one of Job, we get to look into the throne room of heaven and see what happens when Satan approaches God. First, these verses say that Satan came to "present himself" before the Lord. This is a clear way of showing that Satan is a subject and servant of the King of Heaven. Even more than this, we learn that Satan cannot harm Job unless God himself gives permission. These two things make it clear to us that Satan is not free to destroy and kill at any time. Even he must obey God, and he can only bring harm to God's people if God allows and to the extent that God allows. God does not always tell us why he allows us to suffer or what his purpose might be, but these verses in Job help us to understand that even if we are in pain, God keeps our enemy on a chain. He cannot destroy us, because God has promised us that he will not allow those who belong to Christ to be lost.
- *True faith in the moment of suffering (1:20-22)*  
 By the end of chapter one, Job has lost all of his wealth and all of his children. Everything he owned in the world to give him status and security was gone in only one day. (Job did not know that even his health and strength would soon be taken from him as well.) So how did he respond? In his grief, he tore his robe and shaved his head, then he fell to the ground and worshiped God, saying, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." This statement is a summary of Job's faith, his integrity, and his unshakeable hope in the goodness of God, even when he suffered in a great way. The rest of the book of Job explores the question of why Job is allowed to suffer. But Job refuses to curse God, and he refuses to seek comfort, power, or protection from any other source. Instead, he worships and waits to see what God will do.
- *Job's final confession of faith and repentance (42:1-6)*  
 After many days (maybe even weeks) of suffering, questioning, and even challenging God, the Lord spoke to Job and reminded him of the difference

between the two of them. He told Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” Also, “Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?” And, “Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand... Then I will also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can save you” (38:4; 40:9, 12, 14). In other words, God is telling Job clearly that no man has the right to question the Almighty God. As Job heard these words, he was humbled. His final words in the book of Job reflect the same faith that he spoke in chapter one, but now his words carried the weight of wisdom and experience in them. Job knew that God could be trusted, and his story is written to help other suffering saints find the same unshakeable hope in God.

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *God’s wisdom and ways of guiding this world and the lives of his people exceed the limits of human understanding.*

Chapters 38-41 of the book of Job are some of the most powerful and humbling words found in the entire Bible. God has been patient while Job and his friends questioned and even challenged God’s wisdom and goodness as the righteous man suffered. Finally, God could not keep his silence any longer, and we finally are reminded just how great and awesome our God truly is. We will never understand God completely, and we will experience things in this world that we cannot understand. But when we read God’s Word, we find more than enough evidence to convince us that God is in control of all things, and that he is working God for us if we love him. And that knowledge is enough to strengthen our faith for whatever suffering may come to us.

#### (5) Christ Focus in Job

- Christ is God’s perfect solution for our salvation and our peace. Job’s friends could not let go of the idea that Job’s suffering must be caused by his sin or some other problem in him. They could not imagine that God’s plan was any deeper than rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. But Isaiah 55:9 says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Or as Paul wrote, “For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25). God’s greatest wisdom was sending Christ to take the punishment of our sin on himself. He took God’s wrath, so that we could receive grace. He took unspeakable shame, so that we could lift our eyes to God. He died, so that we could live. He lost everything, so that we could gain everything. Because of Jesus, we know that any suffering we endure in this world is not the end of our story, and it is always in God’s perfect power and plan.

## Part 4 –Interpretive Journey Practice

Now guide the students through the five steps of the Interpretive Journey to discover the meaning of Job 19:23-27. This is the second course in our Old Testament Survey, and students should be very familiar with the Interpretive Journey by now. Therefore, these notes do not provide as many answers as the practice studies in earlier courses. Encourage students to find the necessary information by reviewing their notes or by carefully studying the text of Scripture. Try to keep the class moving quickly through this practice. This should take about 30 minutes, and students will not be able to work out every detail or question they may have about the question. Help them focus on the most important points in this passage.

Read Job 19:23-27

Oh that my words were written!  
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!  
Oh that with an iron pen and lead  
they were engraved in the rock forever!  
For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.  
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
My heart faints within me!

### Step One – Grasp the Text in Their Town

Instruct the group to look closely at the verses and answer as many of the following questions as possible just from reading the text. Refer to information from earlier in this lesson about interpreting the book of Job.

ASK

#### Observing the Text

- What is written in this passage? Describe the text.  
*Students should work together to rephrase the passage in their own words. Include as many details as possible, including specific explanations and instructions.*
- When is this happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Who wrote this book?
- Who is it written to?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is being spoken to?
- Exactly what is being said or taught? Be specific and note details and important words.

- Is there any response from the audience? If so, what is it?
- What does the author or speaker expect the hearers to do in response?

### Observing the Context

- Historical Context
  - What country or kingdom did this take place in?
  - Who was the king or ruler?
  - What was the situation of the people who received this message? Are they free or slave? Rich or poor? Male or female? Young or old? Jew or Gentile? Happy, unhappy, confused, hurting?
  - When did this passage take place in the history of the Old Testament and Israel? Before the fall of mankind or after? Before the covenant with Abraham or after? Before the Law was given or after? Before the Exile or after?
- Literary Context
  - What is the genre – or kind of writing – you are studying in this passage?
  - What happened or what is written immediately before and after the passage you are studying?
  - What is the main theme of the book you are studying? How does this passage relate to that theme?
  - Where does this passage fit in the flow and outline of the entire book? Is it part of the beginning? Is it a critical explanation in the middle? Is it a summary at the end?

### Create a Short, Simple Statement

- Explain the most important truth that is taught in this passage.  
*Example: In Job 19:23-27, Job professes his unwavering confidence that even though he is suffering without understanding why, he knows that God is his Redeemer who will restore his life in the end.*

### Step Two – Measure the Width of the River to Cross

For this step, encourage the students to discuss what they know of each of the major categories listed below.

- Language –What language was this book written in originally? Do the differences between their languages and the language that we are speaking influence how we understand this?
- Time – When was all this happening? What do we know today that they did not know?
- Culture – What was important to the people of Israel in their culture that is not as familiar to us today?
- Situation – What are some significant ways that our situation is similar to or different from the situation the people of Israel were in?

- Relationship to God – What was Israel’s relationship to God in this story? How is their relationship to God like ours or different from ours?

ASK: What are the most important similarities between this story (their town) and our story (our town?) What are some important differences?

ASK: Would you consider the river between their town and our town to be extremely wide (major, important differences), narrow (small differences), or something in between? Why do you think that?

### Step Three – Cross the Bridge of Timeless Truth

Instruct the students to think carefully about everything learned about this passage in the first two steps. Re-read the passage once or twice if necessary.

ASK: Now work together to write a short sentence using present tense verbs that communicates that timeless truth taught in this passage. Remember the guiding questions for this step.

- Is this truth reflected clearly in the text?
- Is this truth timeless and not tied to a specific situation?
- Is this principle universal and not tied to a particular culture?
- Does this principle agree with the teaching of the rest of the Bible?
- Does this principle apply both the biblical audience in “their town” and today’s Christians in “our town?”

Write the Timeless Truth that is found in this passage:

- *Example: God’s saints hold tightly to a true hope that God is a perfect Redeemer, and no trial or suffering in this world can destroy the eternal life that he gives.*

### Step Four – Consult the Biblical Map

At this time, help the students to compare their timeless truth to other verses and passages in the New Testament to see whether there are any problems with their interpretation.

ASK: What other verses in the New Testament can support or contradict the timeless truth we have discovered in this passage?

ASK: Based on these other verses you have suggested, does the timeless truth we discovered in this passage agree with the rest of God’s Word?

### Step Five – Grasp the Text in Our Town

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we believe?

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we do?

ASK: How can we begin to obey this biblical principle?

ASK: How does this biblical principle apply to the different relationships in our lives?

ASK: What would happen if everyone in our church believed and obeyed this biblical principle?

ASK: Look at all the suggested applications that we have found for teaching this timeless truth to people in “our town.” If you were teaching a Bible study on this passage, which applications would you include in your lesson? Choose two or three and explain why you would want to include them.



## Lesson 4

### Introduction

People love songs, and many appreciate hearing good wisdom spoken in a clever proverb. Today's lesson is an opportunity to begin thinking about some of the greatest poetry, songs, and wisdom found in the Bible. In the last lesson, we considered the book of Job which is the first major book of wisdom writing in the Old Testament. Today, we will explore the remaining books of poetry and wisdom – Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. We learned a little about how to read and interpret these books in our course on Interpreting the Old Testament, and it will help if you review some of the rules we learned for interpreting these books before beginning this session. The books of wisdom and writings are treasures for your faith. Read them again and again. Meditate upon the truth you find there. Use the Psalms to form your prayers to God. And above all, when you have understood the truth contained in these books, worship God. He is the giver of truth and wisdom that we find in the Scriptures.

### Part 1 – Psalms

For almost 3000 years, God's people have been reading and singing the Psalms together. The book of Psalms has been called the hymn book of ancient Israel, and we know that both Jews and Christians have used its songs as a central part of worship since the time they were written. The Psalms describe almost every human emotion we can imagine, and they teach us how to hold onto truth and trust God through joy and grief, through victory and defeat, and through doubt and strongest faith.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Multiple authors – David, Asaph, Solomon, and others

Seven different authors are noted for writing one or more of the psalms. And 51 of the psalms claim no author at all! David is the best-known author in Psalms; he wrote 73 of the 150 psalms in the book. Asaph wrote 12 psalms, and no one else wrote more than 9.

- **When was it written?**

Between 1440-586 BC

The oldest psalm was written by Moses (Psalm 90) during the time of the Exodus. The newest psalm was written at the time that Israel was taken into exile. Most of the psalms were written during the time of David's reign as king.

- **Where was it written?**  
In Israel
- **To whom was it written?**  
The people of Israel
- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Psalms?**  
To express praise, worship, and prayers to God in the form of songs.

The Psalms were the songs of Old Testament worship. From the earliest days of church history, Christians have continued to sing these songs to help us give words to our deepest emotions and our highest worship.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**  
God alone is worthy of the truest and most heartfelt worship that his people can offer.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Multiple authors
When was it written?	Between 1440-586 BC
Where was it written?	In Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To express praise, worship, and prayers to God in the form of songs.
What is the most important theological theme?	God alone is worthy of the truest and most heartfelt worship that his people can offer.

## (2) Basic Outline

Each of the 150 psalms in the book of Psalms stands by itself. There is no clear relationship between most of the different Psalms that would allow us to create an outline of the book. However, the book divides itself into five different “books” of Psalms that are listed below.

- I. Book 1 (Psalm 1-41)
- II. Book 2 (Psalm 42-72)
- III. Book 3 (Psalm 73-89)
- IV. Book 4 (Psalm 90-106)
- V. Book 5 (Psalm 107-150)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in Psalms

- *Psalm 1*  
The first psalm is an invitation to the people of God to choose the way of the righteous over the way of the wicked. In over six short verses, we read that

the righteous one is like a well-watered and mature tree, prosperous and unshakeable. But even more important than this, the very first verse tells us that the righteous is “blessed” in the eyes of God. This is what the people of Israel would desire, to know that their way of life has found favor in God’s sight. And what is the mark of the one is righteous and blessed? According to verse 2, “his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” The way to righteousness and blessing is through a deep understanding of God’s Word.

- *Psalm 23*

Probably the most famous psalm in the Christian churches around the world, Psalm 23 is an intimate and warm description of God’s care and provision for his people. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” From this beginning, David describes how the Lord has acted like a shepherd in tending his soul, leading him to refreshment, nourishment, and rest, while also protecting him from enemies in this world. The psalm ends with a statement of simple and innocent faith. David (and all who read this psalm and make its words their own) is assured that God’s goodness and mercy will accompany during his days in this world, and when those days are finished he will find his final rest in the presence of God himself.

- *Psalm 139*

In this psalm, David is opening his heart to God, confessing what he knows to be true of the Lord. He declares that the Lord’s knowledge is perfect and complete, knowing even the intimate details of the moments in his day and the thoughts in his heart. He declares that the Lord is inescapable, present in every hidden corner of creation and always seeing his people. He declares that the Lord is the all-powerful creator; not only is he the maker of all creation, but he is the One who has formed even David himself, forming the psalmist in his mother’s womb long before he took his first breath. In response to these attributes of God, David can only exclaim, “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” (verse 17). David finishes with a plea to the One who knows and controls all things, asking that the Lord would search him completely and “lead me in the way everlasting.” This psalm is a beautiful prayer and excellent example of how to confess our faith in God as we come to him in prayer.

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *To express praise, worship, and prayers to God in the form of songs.*

The Psalms reviewed above are only a small sample of the variety of different songs recorded in this book. There are psalms of praise, psalms of lament, psalms of confession, and even psalms that beg God to punish our enemies. The psalms help us to speak our greatest joy and our deepest pain in a way that honors the Lord and gives him glory. As the hymn book for Israel (and for many Christians throughout history), the book of Psalms is a gift from God to

help us worship in a way that is fitting to praise the King of Heaven.

### Christ Focus in Psalms

- The book of Psalms points to Christ in many powerful ways. Perhaps the most powerful is through the messianic prophecies. These are verses found in several of the Psalms that directly predict details from the life of Jesus. For example, Psalm 22:1 says, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” These are the exact words that Jesus spoke when he was hanging on the cross. The rest of the Psalm is picture of what was happening to Jesus as he was being crucified. Another example is Psalm 110:1, which says, “The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Jesus himself quoted this Psalm to the Pharisees, explaining that the verse is about him and showing that he is the One who is even greater than David (Matthew 22:41-46). These and several other verses in the book of Psalms predict the coming and the life of Jesus, showing him to be the promised Messiah and Davidic King that the people of Israel were expecting.

### **Part 2 – Proverbs**

Life is complicated, and everyone is looking for help to find peace and success in this world. For the people of Israel, the book of Proverbs was a gift of wisdom to guide them toward a life that was wise, righteous, and just in God’s eyes. Today, we receive the same gift of wisdom in the pages of this book. Proverbs includes rules for living well – including what to do and what not to do. Remember what we learned in our Interpreting the Old Testament course, though. The Proverbs are not guaranteed rules to make everything in life work for you. They are guidance for wise living in normal times. We all understand that sometimes we can do everything the right way, and the results are still not what we wanted. The Proverbs do not promise success or good results all the time, but they do show us a way that will help us live wisely and righteously in a world that is often foolish and sinful.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**  
Solomon

Solomon had the reputation of being the wisest man in the ancient world, and the book of Proverbs is his gift to the generations that followed him. A few of the writings in the book of Proverbs come from other authors, but the greatest portion are the wisdom and sayings of the great king Solomon.

- **When was it written?**  
Between 960-930 BC

Most of the proverbs come Solomon, and most of these were written during the first part of his reign as king over Israel. Solomon stumbled in his

faithfulness before God toward the end of his life, so his greatest contributions to faith and wisdom were written early in his reign.

- **Where was it written?**  
In Israel
- **To whom was it written?**  
The people of Israel
- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Proverbs?**  
To apply godly wisdom to the normal situations of daily life.

Reading the Proverbs is like listening to a wise uncle who is willing to show you the way to a good life. The rules and wisdom contained in this book will help any Christian live an upright life before God. Even though they are not unyielding rules for success, those who live by them will find the way of peace and prosperity more often than failure.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**  
God's wisdom is a gift to guide the steps of the faithful toward peace and spiritual prosperity in this world.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Solomon
When was it written?	Between 960-930 BC
Where was it written?	In Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To apply godly wisdom to the normal situations of daily life.
What is the most important theological theme?	God's wisdom is a gift to guide the steps of the faithful toward peace and spiritual prosperity in this world.

## (2) Basic Outline

Like the book of Psalms, Proverbs is difficult to organize into a clear outline that shows the advancement of ideas in the book. However, similar and related Proverbs are often grouped together, and some of those sections are shown in this outline.

- I. The importance of wisdom (1:1-9:18)
- II. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16)
- III. Words of the wise (22:17-24:34)
- IV. Proverbs of Solomon copied by Hezekiah's men (25:1-29:27)
- V. Words of Agur (30:1-33)
- VI. Words of Lemuel (31:1-9)
- VII. Description of an excellent woman (31:10-31)

### (3) Noteworthy Passages in Proverbs

- *Lean on the Lord for true wisdom (Proverbs 3:5-6)*  
The entire book of Proverbs is summarized in these two verses. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Solomon’s proverbs are written to provide guidance and insight for the faithful to live wisely in this world. The people of Israel would have known that these were not intended to be guaranteed rules that would assure them of prosperity and success. The world is far too unpredictable for that. But the way of wisdom is clear in this book. Listen to the words of the Lord. Live righteously among your neighbors and be careful with your speech. Do not follow the ways that the world says are clever or lead to easy success, they almost always end in loss and destruction. Those who truly desire to walk wisely in this world will commit themselves to hearing and meditating on the ways of the Lord, and when they do that they can be assured that God himself will guide their way.

### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *To apply godly wisdom to the normal situations of daily life.*  
We understand that the world does not always go according to plan. The book of Proverbs is not intended to give a guaranteed rule for every situation we will face. But it is full of wisdom to guide us on a path of wisdom for the life that we live every day. The proverbs are a gift to those who desire to live in a way that truly honors the Lord.

### Christ Focus in Proverbs

- John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” This verse is just one that teaches that God has made a way of life for anyone in the world who will simply believe him. Salvation in Jesus is an open invitation for anyone who will turn from sin and believe in him. In a similar way, the book of Proverbs is an open invitation to anyone who will listen. God makes his wisdom available to both the wise and the foolish. The only way to know who is wise and who is not is to watch and see who is listening to what God has spoken.

## **Part 3 – Ecclesiastes**

Are you looking for a challenge in reading and understanding biblical wisdom? If so, Ecclesiastes is what you are looking for! Pastors and scholars have been studying and debating this book for centuries, trying to understand exactly what its words of wisdom are pointing us toward.

It will help us to see the book of Ecclesiastes as a companion to Proverbs. The book of Proverbs gives wisdom and sound guidance for normal life. But we know that life is not normal, and many times things do not happen the way that we think they should. The righteous suffer, the wicked prosper, wise advice fails us, and foolish plans succeed. What should we think then? These are the times that Ecclesiastes helps us. It is a book written to give us wisdom for when life is not normal. Ecclesiastes helps us when we have tried to do what is right, but somehow things are still going wrong. What can we hold onto when the world does not make sense to us? The conclusion and the greatest point of the book is clear. It is written at the very end of Ecclesiastes 12:13, "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**

Solomon

Solomon had the reputation of being the wisest man in the ancient world, and the book of Ecclesiastes is another book of his God-given wisdom to help people live well in a broken world.

- **When was it written?**

Around 930 BC

Most of Solomon's proverbs were written early in his reign as king, but the book of Ecclesiastes was probably written toward the end of his life. Solomon made many mistakes and walked down many foolish paths, but God gave him wisdom to see where he had gone wrong and what is ultimately important. Ecclesiastes shows us the emptiness of chasing worldly promises and the only unchanging truth in God himself.

- **Where was it written?**

In Israel

- **To whom was it written?**

The people of Israel

- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Ecclesiastes?**

To apply godly wisdom to the times when life is not normal and does not make sense.

Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes to help people avoid the foolish mistakes that he made in his life and to point them toward a greater hope and truth. When we realize we have made poor decisions or taken a wrong turn, Ecclesiastes helps us find the way of wisdom again.

- **What is the most important theological theme?**

Human wisdom cannot explain the ways of God, but God gives grace to those who trust him and follow his ways.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Solomon
When was it written?	Around 930 BC
Where was it written?	In Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To apply godly wisdom to the times when life is not normal and does not make sense.
What is the most important theological theme?	Human wisdom cannot explain the ways of God, but God gives grace to those who trust him and follow his ways.

## (2) Basic Outline

Ecclesiastes is a difficult to book to read. It requires us to go slowly and think carefully about what is being said in each part of the book and also in the book as a whole. This outline shows the most basic sections we can observe in the book of Ecclesiastes.

- I. Solomon's lessons from experience (1:1-2:26)
- II. Solomon's lessons from observing the world (3:1-5:20)
- III. Solomon's practical advice for life (6:1-8:17)
- IV. Solomon's conclusion for wisdom in this world (9:1-12:14)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in Ecclesiastes

- *Fear God and keep his commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)*

These verses are written in the introduction of this section, and we are covering them here again for a good reason. Ecclesiastes is difficult to read and understand if you look at only one piece at a time. The book must be read as a whole so that its message can be understood. Solomon understood that life is often frustrating and disappointing. We can do everything we believe to be right (or we can do everything we believe to be wrong!) and still not know what to expect. So how can we avoid getting discouraged and losing all hope? This is where Ecclesiastes is helpful. It reminds us that there is a time for everything in life, both good and bad (3:1-8). Knowing this, we need a solid foundation for our souls so that we are not easily shaken. After considering all the pleasures and philosophies that the world has to offer, Solomon settles on this wise conclusion: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Beginning from this first point of wisdom, we can find a path of faithfulness and righteousness no matter what situations we might face.



#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *To apply godly wisdom to the times when life is not normal and does not make sense.*

The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes work together as partners to show us true wisdom in every moment the world brings to us. With our eyes set on the Lord, we can endure suffering and shine as lights in a dark work, knowing that the Lord is our trusted Rock and our faithful Guide each day.

#### Christ Focus in Ecclesiastes

- Ecclesiastes is the book we turn to when life does not make sense. Ecclesiastes is also the book that tells us the place to begin when we are looking for answers is to “Fear God and keep his commandments.” So how do we know God so that we may honor and obey him? In John 14:9, Jesus says to his disciple Philip, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” Colossians 1:15 says, “[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God,” and Hebrews 1:3 says that he is “the exact imprint of his nature.” All of this means that if we want to look to God as Ecclesiastes directs us, then we must begin by looking to Jesus himself. The book of Ecclesiastes is a road sign pointing desperate people straight to Jesus.

#### **Part 4 – Song of Solomon**

Song of Solomon – also known as the “Song of Songs” – is unlike any other book in the Bible. It is not a book of religious laws, instructions for godly living, or even songs of praise. It is a love song. It is similar to songs of romantic love that men and women have sung in every culture for all of human history, but it is also different from all the songs that came before it and after. The Song of Solomon is a celebration of godly love. It is the story of a man and a woman pursuing joy and intimacy together within the secure commitment of a pure marriage before the eyes of God. It is a book that teaches us on two levels. First, it is an example of beautiful and pure love between man and wife. It is a model for Christian marriages to follow and learn from. Second, it is a poetic and creative picture of God’s deep and unfailing love for his people. In both cases, we learn that passion and intimacy are good things, and we are taught to pursue these things in the way that God has shown us is right.

#### (1) Historical Facts

- **Who is the author?**  
Solomon
- **When was it written?**  
Around 970-950 BC

The Song of Solomon was likely written early in Solomon’s time as king.

- **Where was it written?**  
In Israel
- **To whom was it written?**  
The people of Israel
- **What was the purpose or reason for writing Song of Solomon?**  
To celebrate godly love in marriage and provide a picture of pure intimacy between husband and wife.
- **What is the most important theological theme?**  
Pure love in a Christian marriage is a good gift from God that reflects a love which is greater and purer than our own.

<b>Key Historical Facts</b>	
Who is the author?	Solomon
When was it written?	Around 970-950 BC
Where was it written?	In Israel
To whom was it written?	The people of Israel
What was the purpose or reason for writing?	To celebrate godly love in marriage and provide a picture of pure intimacy between husband and wife.
What is the most important theological theme?	Pure love in a Christian marriage is a good gift from God that reflects a love which is greater and purer than our own.

## (2) Basic Outline

Song of Solomon is written as a series of 6 different poems, each one presenting a different aspect of the romantic relationship between husband and wife.

- I. Poem 1: Longing and Discovery (1:1-2:7)
- II. Poem 2: Invitation, Suspense, and Response (2:8-3:5)
- III. Poem 3: Ceremony and Satisfaction (3:6-5:1)
- IV. Poem 4: Frustration and Delight (5:2-6:3)
- V. Poem 5: Pomp and Celebration (6:4-8:4)
- VI. Poem 6: Passion and Commitment (8:5-14)

## (3) Noteworthy Passages in Song of Solomon

- *A commitment of pure love (8:6-7)*  
The entire book of Song of Solomon is written as a series of poems or love songs. Because of this, the book is not intended to teach lessons that we can examine and explain in great detail. Instead, these poems paint a picture using words, and the picture is one of pure, intimate, and committed love. The words in these verses of chapter eight describe the strength and depth of love

that is shared between a man and a woman who know the peace and security that comes from their faithful and exclusive commitment to one another. This is the model of love that God has presented for us to pursue in Christian marriage, and when we find it we discover a fountain of joy and peace unlike anything else in this world.

#### (4) Important Theological Theme

- *To celebrate godly love in marriage and provide a picture of pure intimacy between husband and wife.*

Song of Solomon is not about prayer or doctrine or worship. It is about real love between a man and a woman. Understanding and pursuing this kind of purity in love is an expression of our trust in God's words and wisdom, showing that we believe that his ways are better than the ways of the world. The world teaches us to pursue love for our own benefit and pleasure, then to leave when we are no longer happy with the situation. But God gives us a better picture. This picture is a reflection of the perfect love that he has for each one of us. In a healthy and pure marriage, each person is known and loved completely, finding peace and security in an unpredictable world.

#### Christ Focus in Song of Solomon

- Christ is the fulfillment and perfection of all of the good that is described in the Song of Solomon. Purity, trust, faithfulness, protection. In a strong Christian marriage, we can experience these things at a human level. In Christ, we find the completion of these desires. Song of Solomon describes the greatest and most fulfilling form of human relationship that we can enjoy, but even this can never compare to the perfect love and life that we will find in knowing Christ and being with him forever.

### **Part 5 –Interpretive Journey Practice**

Now guide the students through the five steps of the Interpretive Journey to discover the meaning of Psalm 67. This is the second course in our Old Testament Survey, and students should be very familiar with the Interpretive Journey by now. Therefore, these notes do not provide as many answers as the practice studies in earlier courses. Encourage students to find the necessary information by reviewing their notes or by carefully studying the text of Scripture. Try to keep the class moving quickly through this practice. This should take about 30 minutes, and students will not be able to work out every detail or question they may have about the question. Help them focus on the most important points in this passage.

Read Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us,  
that your way may be known on earth,  
your saving power among all nations.  
Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!  
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations upon earth.  
Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!  
The earth has yielded its increase;  
God, our God, shall bless us.  
God shall bless us;  
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

### Step One – Grasp the Text in Their Town

Instruct the group to look closely at the verses and answer as many of the following questions as possible just from reading the text. Refer to information from earlier in this lesson about interpreting the book of Psalms.

ASK

#### Observing the Text

- What is written in this passage? Describe the text.  
*Students should work together to rephrase the passage in their own words. Include as many details as possible, including specific explanations and instructions.*
- When is this happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Who wrote this book?
- Who is it written to?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is being spoken to?
- Exactly what is being said or taught? Be specific and note details and important words.
- Is there any response from the audience? If so, what is it?
- What does the author or speaker expect the hearers to do in response?

#### Observing the Context

- Historical Context
  - What country or kingdom did this take place in?
  - Who was the king or ruler?

- What was the situation of the people who received this message? Are they free or slave? Rich or poor? Male or female? Young or old? Jew or Gentile? Happy, unhappy, confused, hurting?
- When did this passage take place in the history of the Old Testament and Israel? Before the fall of mankind or after? Before the covenant with Abraham or after? Before the Law was given or after? Before the Exile or after?
- Literary Context
  - What is the genre – or kind of writing – you are studying in this passage?
  - What happened or what is written immediately before and after the passage you are studying?
  - What is the main theme of the book you are studying? How does this passage relate to that theme?
  - Where does this passage fit in the flow and outline of the entire book? Is it part of the beginning? Is it a critical explanation in the middle? Is it a summary at the end?

### Create a Short, Simple Statement

- Explain the most important truth that is taught in this passage.  
*Example: In Psalm 67, the people of God call out in prayer for God to bless them so that all the nations of the earth might see and praise God for his goodness and justice.*

### Step Two – Measure the Width of the River to Cross

For this step, encourage the students to discuss what they know of each of the major categories listed below.

- Language – What language was this book written in originally? Do the differences between their languages and the language that we are speaking influence how we understand this?
- Time – When was all this happening? What do we know today that they did not know?
- Culture – What was important to the people of Israel in their culture that is not as familiar to us today?
- Situation – What are some significant ways that our situation is similar to or different from the situation the people of Israel were in?
- Relationship to God – What was Israel’s relationship to God in this story? How is their relationship to God like ours or different from ours?

ASK: What are the most important similarities between this story (their town) and our story (our town?) What are some important differences?

ASK: Would you consider the river between their town and our town to be extremely wide (major, important differences), narrow (small differences), or something in

between? Why do you think that?

### Step Three – Cross the Bridge of Timeless Truth

Instruct the students to think carefully about everything learned about this passage in the first two steps. Re-read the passage once or twice if necessary.

ASK: Now work together to write a short sentence using present tense verbs that communicates that timeless truth taught in this passage. Remember the guiding questions for this step.

- Is this truth reflected clearly in the text?
- Is this truth timeless and not tied to a specific situation?
- Is this principle universal and not tied to a particular culture?
- Does this principle agree with the teaching of the rest of the Bible?
- Does this principle apply both the biblical audience in “their town” and today’s Christians in “our town?”

Write the Timeless Truth that is found in this passage:

- *Example: When God’s people ask for his blessing over their lives, it should always be so that others may see God’s goodness and give him the praise he deserves.*

### Step Four – Consult the Biblical Map

At this time, help the students to compare their timeless truth to other verses and passages in the New Testament to see whether there are any problems with their interpretation.

ASK: What other verses in the New Testament can support or contradict the timeless truth we have discovered in this passage?

ASK: Based on these other verses you have suggested, does the timeless truth we discovered in this passage agree with the rest of God’s Word?

### Step Five – Grasp the Text in Our Town

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we believe?

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we do?

ASK: How can we begin to obey this biblical principle?

ASK: How does this biblical principle apply to the different relationships in our lives?

ASK: What would happen if everyone in our church believed and obeyed this biblical principle?

ASK: Look at all the suggested applications that we have found for teaching this timeless truth to people in “our town.” If you were teaching a Bible study on this passage, which applications would you include in your lesson? Choose two or three and explain why you would want to include them.

## Lesson 5

### Introduction

The final lesson of this course is committed to reviewing the information learned in the first four lessons and preparing for the final exam. In Part 1, use the questions provided plus any additional questions you would like to include to help the students review the facts they have learned about all the books of History and Writings in the Old Testament. Direct the students to review their notes, and focus on the historical facts, the important theological themes, and the Christ Focus related to each of the books we have studied. In Part 2, students will practice using the steps of the Interpretive Journey again to study a selected passage from the book of Psalms. Finally, Part 3 gives students a preview of what they will be expected to know for the final exam.

### Part 1 – General Review

1. Who is the author of the book of Judges?
2. What is the most important theological theme found in the book of Joshua?
3. What was the purpose or reason for writing the book of Judges?
4. Where did the events recorded in the book of Ruth happen?
5. Which Old Testament book includes a Christ Focus that reminds us that Jesus leads God's people into our promised place of eternal rest – safe and at peace in the presence of God?
6. Which Old Testament book was written to record the lives of Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as the period of change from the Judges to the kings in Israel?
7. Who is the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles?
8. What is the most important theological theme in the book of 1 and 2 Kings?
9. What is the Christ focus in 1 and 2 Samuel?
10. Which Old Testament book includes a Christ Focus with genealogies that emphasize the royal family lines and the priestly family lines in Israel?
11. What is the most important theological theme of Ezra and Nehemiah?
12. Where did the events recorded in the book of Esther happen?
13. When were the books of Ezra and Nehemiah written?
14. What was the purpose or reason for writing the book of Job?
15. Which Old Testament book includes a Christ Focus that shows God protecting and preserving the Jewish people who are the very nation that would receive the long-awaited Savior of the world.



16. Which Old Testament book has multiple authors, including David, Moses, and Solomon?
17. Which Old Testament book is organized into six different poems or love songs?
18. What was the purpose or reason for writing the book of Proverbs?
19. What was the purpose or reason for writing Ecclesiastes?
20. Which Old Testament book of History or Writings has a Christ Focus which includes many messianic prophecies that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus?

## **Part 2 –Interpretive Journey Practice**

Now guide the students through the five steps of the Interpretive Journey to discover the meaning of Psalm 51. This is the second course in our Old Testament Survey, and students should be very familiar with the Interpretive Journey by now. Therefore, these notes do not provide as many answers as the practice studies in earlier courses. Encourage students to find the necessary information by reviewing their notes or by carefully studying the text of Scripture. Try to keep the class moving quickly through this practice. This should take about 30 minutes, and students will not be able to work out every detail or question they may have about the question. Help them focus on the most important points in this passage.

Read Psalm 51.

Have mercy on me, O God,  
 according to your steadfast love;  
 according to your abundant mercy  
 blot out my transgressions.  
 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
 and cleanse me from my sin!  
 For I know my transgressions,  
 and my sin is ever before me.  
 Against you, you only, have I sinned  
 and done what is evil in your sight,  
 so that you may be justified in your words  
 and blameless in your judgment.  
 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
 and in sin did my mother conceive me.  
 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,  
 and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.  
 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
 Let me hear joy and gladness;  
 let the bones that you have broken rejoice.  
 Hide your face from my sins,  
 and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.  
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.  
O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise..  
For you will not delight in sacrifice, or else I would give it,  
for you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem;  
then you will delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

### Step One – Grasp the Text in Their Town

Instruct the group to look closely at the verses and answer as many of the following questions as possible just from reading the text. Refer to information from earlier in this lesson about interpreting the book of Psalms.

ASK

#### Observing the Text

- What is written in this passage? Describe the text.  
*Students should work together to rephrase the passage in their own words. Include as many details as possible, including specific explanations and instructions.*
- When is this happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Who wrote this book?
- Who is it written to?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is being spoken to?
- Exactly what is being said or taught? Be specific and note details and important words.
- Is there any response from the audience? If so, what is it?

- What does the author or speaker expect the hearers to do in response?

### Observing the Context

- Historical Context
  - What country or kingdom did this take place in?
  - Who was the king or ruler?
  - What was the situation of the people who received this message? Are they free or slave? Rich or poor? Male or female? Young or old? Jew or Gentile? Happy, unhappy, confused, hurting?
  - When did this passage take place in the history of the Old Testament and Israel? Before the fall of mankind or after? Before the covenant with Abraham or after? Before the Law was given or after? Before the Exile or after?
- Literary Context
  - What is the genre – or kind of writing – you are studying in this passage?
  - What happened or what is written immediately before and after the passage you are studying?
  - What is the main theme of the book you are studying? How does this passage relate to that theme?
  - Where does this passage fit in the flow and outline of the entire book? Is it part of the beginning? Is it a critical explanation in the middle? Is it a summary at the end?

### Create a Short, Simple Statement

- Explain the most important truth that is taught in this passage.  
*Example: In Psalm 51, David is confessing his sin against the Lord from the time that he went in to Bathsheba. He proclaims that he has sinned directly against God and pleads with the Lord to wipe away his sin and make him clean again, expressing his understanding that God is pleased by “truth in the inward being” and “a broken and contrite heart” more than sacrifices and burnt offerings.*

### Step Two – Measure the Width of the River to Cross

For this step, encourage the students to discuss what they know of each of the major categories listed below.

- Language –What language was this book written in originally? Do the differences between their languages and the language that we are speaking influence how we understand this?
- Time – When was all this happening? What do we know today that they did not know?

- Culture – What was important to the people of Israel in their culture that is not as familiar to us today?
- Situation – What are some significant ways that our situation is similar to or different from the situation the people of Israel were in?
- Relationship to God – What was Israel’s relationship to God in this story? How is their relationship to God like ours or different from ours?

ASK: What are the most important similarities between this story (their town) and our story (our town?) What are some important differences?

ASK: Would you consider the river between their town and our town to be extremely wide (major, important differences), narrow (small differences), or something in between? Why do you think that?

### Step Three – Cross the Bridge of Timeless Truth

Instruct the students to think carefully about everything learned about this passage in the first two steps. Re-read the passage once or twice if necessary.

ASK: Now work together to write a short sentence using present tense verbs that communicates that timeless truth taught in this passage. Remember the guiding questions for this step.

- Is this truth reflected clearly in the text?
- Is this truth timeless and not tied to a specific situation?
- Is this principle universal and not tied to a particular culture?
- Does this principle agree with the teaching of the rest of the Bible?
- Does this principle apply both the biblical audience in “their town” and today’s Christians in “our town?”

Write the Timeless Truth that is found in this passage:

- *Example: True repentance is found in those who come before God with a broken and contrite heart, openly confessing their sin against God and trusting in his grace and mercy to make them clean again.*

### Step Four – Consult the Biblical Map

At this time, help the students to compare their timeless truth to other verses and passages in the New Testament to see whether there are any problems with their interpretation.

ASK: What other verses in the New Testament can support or contradict the timeless truth we have discovered in this passage?

ASK: Based on these other verses you have suggested, does the timeless truth we discovered in this passage agree with the rest of God’s Word?

### Step Five – Grasp the Text in Our Town

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we believe?

ASK: According to this biblical principle, what must we do?

ASK: How can we begin to obey this biblical principle?

ASK: How does this biblical principle apply to the different relationships in our lives?

ASK: What would happen if everyone in our church believed and obeyed this biblical principle?

ASK: Look at all the suggested applications that we have found for teaching this timeless truth to people in “our town.” If you were teaching a Bible study on this passage, which applications would you include in your lesson? Choose two or three and explain why you would want to include them.

### **Part 3 – Final Exam Preview**

Explain to the students what will be required for their final exam. The exam includes two parts.

The first part is a written exam. Each student will take the written exam individually. The written exam will include 20 questions worth 2 points each. A score of 50% is needed to pass.

For this exam, students should carefully review all the notes that have been covered throughout this course. They should know all of the historical facts (see the informational tables in this section of each lesson) for all of the books of History and Writings in the Old Testament. They should be familiar with the important theological themes as well as the unique Christ Focus found in each of the 17 books. Also, students should be able to explain in one or two sentences at least one significant truth found in each of the following key passages studied in this course:

- Choose whom you will serve (Joshua 24:14-15)
- Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40)
- Satan on a chain (Job 1:6-12)
- Psalm 139

The second part of the exam is a group project. The group will work together for 30-45 minutes to follow the steps of the Interpretive Journey to the best of their ability. You will assign them a specific passage from one of the books of History and Writings to study and interpret. They can talk, use their Bibles and study Bibles, or use their class notes to complete the study. Smart phones and computers should not be allowed. The instructor will observe how well the group follows the five steps and assign a grade of “Pass” or “Fail.”

Each student must pass both the written exam and the group project to complete this course successfully.

## Old Testament Survey 2

### Final Exam

1. Who is the author of the book of Judges?
  - a. Joshua
  - b. Probably Samuel
  - c. Job
  - d. Ezra
  
2. What is the most important theological theme found in the book of Joshua?
  - a. The Lord is a faithful God who keeps all his promises and leads his people to rest.
  - b. God's people will always receive miracles and deliverance.
  - c. The Law of God is holy and righteous.
  - d. Joshua is an anointed man of God who was given great power to do the Lord's work in the Promised Land.
  
3. Where did the events recorded in the book of Ruth happen?
  - a. The land of Uz
  - b. Jerusalem
  - c. Bethlehem of Judah
  - d. Unknown
  
4. Which Old Testament book includes a Christ Focus that reminds us that Jesus leads God's people into our promised place of eternal rest – safe and at peace in the presence of God?
  - a. Joshua
  - b. Nehemiah
  - c. Job
  - d. Psalms
  
5. Which Old Testament book was written to record the lives of Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as the period of change from the Judges to the kings in Israel?
  - a. Judges
  - b. 1 and 2 Samuel
  - c. 1 and 2 Chronicles
  - d. Ecclesiastes

6. Who is the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles?
  - a. Moses
  - b. David
  - c. Ruth
  - d. Ezra
  
7. What is the most important theological theme in the book of 1 and 2 Kings?
  - a. Judgment is unavoidable for those who reject the Lord and live for sin, but God's plan to redeem his people cannot be stopped even by our sin.
  - b. God gives good kings and bad kings, but we must always obey him.
  - c. God only reveals his true messages through prophets.
  - d. Grace is given to everyone who admits their sin and asks for forgiveness.
  
8. Which Old Testament book includes a Christ Focus with genealogies that emphasize the royal family lines and the priestly family lines in Israel?
  - a. Ruth
  - b. 1 and 2 Chronicles
  - c. Esther
  - d. Job
  
9. What is the most important theological theme of Ezra and Nehemiah?
  - a. The return from exile is a second Exodus pointing to God's great plan of redemption for his people.
  - b. Reading the Law out loud is God's plan to bring revival to his people.
  - c. The new temple is place where God's glory will dwell forever.
  - d. God calls his people to repent of their sin and serve him with true hearts.
  
10. Where did the events recorded in the book of Esther happen?
  - a. Jerusalem
  - b. Bethlehem
  - c. Babylon
  - d. Susa
  
11. What was the purpose or reason for writing the book of Job?
  - a. To show that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked.
  - b. To answer the question of why righteous people suffer.
  - c. To show God's victory over Satan.
  - d. Unknown

12. Which Old Testament book includes a Christ Focus that shows God protecting and preserving the Jewish people who are the very nation that would receive the long-awaited Savior of the world.
- Joshua
  - 1 and 2 Kings
  - Esther
  - Psalms
13. Which Old Testament book has multiple authors, including David, Moses, and Solomon?
- Genesis
  - Job
  - Psalms
  - Proverbs
14. Which Old Testament book is organized into six different poems or love songs?
- Esther
  - Job
  - Psalms
  - Song of Solomon
15. What was the purpose or reason for writing the book of Proverbs?
- To apply godly wisdom to the normal situations of daily life.
  - To give a perfect answer for every situation of life.
  - To teach Christians how to prosper and become wealthy.
  - To collect important sayings from Israel's history.
16. Which Old Testament book of History or Writings has a Christ Focus which includes many messianic prophecies that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus?
- Joshua
  - Psalms
  - Proverbs
  - Unknown



Write one or two sentences to explain at least one important truth taught in each of the following passages:

17. Joshua 24:14-15 | Choose whom you will serve

18.1 Kings 18:20-40 | Elijah and the prophets of Baal

19. Job 1:6-12 | Satan on a chain

20. Psalm 139

## Old Testament Survey 2

### Final Exam – MASTER COPY

Correct answers are in **bold letters**. Each correct answer is worth two points. This exam is worth a total of 40 points.

1. Who is the author of the book of Judges?
  - a. Joshua
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  - c. Job
  - d. Ezra
  
2. What is the most important theological theme found in the book of Joshua?
  - a. The Lord is a faithful God who keeps all his promises and leads his people to rest.**
  - b. God's people will always receive miracles and deliverance.
  - c. The Law of God is holy and righteous.
  - d. Joshua is an anointed man of God who was given great power to do the Lord's work in the Promised Land.
  
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14. Which Old Testament book is organized into six different poems or love songs?
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  - c. Psalms
  - d. Song of Solomon**
15. What was the purpose or reason for writing the book of Proverbs?
- a. To apply godly wisdom to the normal situations of daily life.**
  - b. To give a perfect answer for every situation of life.
  - c. To teach Christians how to prosper and become wealthy.
  - d. To collect important sayings from Israel's history.
16. Which Old Testament book of History or Writings has a Christ Focus which includes many messianic prophecies that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus?
- a. Joshua
  - b. Psalms**
  - c. Proverbs
  - d. Unknown

Write one or two sentences to explain at least one important truth taught in each of the following passages:

17. Joshua 24:14-15 | Choose whom you will serve

**More than 20 years after God had stopped the Jordan River so that the people of Israel could cross on dry ground, the days of Joshua's leadership were coming to an end. Israel had conquered most of the Promised Land, and they were settling into their new lives in the place their ancestors had been dreaming of for generations. Before he died, Joshua called the people together to instruct them one final time. He knew that as they settled in their new places, they would be tempted to become too comfortable. He knew they would be tempted to compromise their faith in the Lord and to worship the gods of the tribes living near them. So Joshua gave the people one final charge: "Choose this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Every person who would belong to the Lord must make a choice of faith. In the same way that Joshua called the leaders of Israel to make a choice, each one of us must make a choice as well. Who will you serve? Will you worship and serve God through faith in Jesus Christ? Or will you try to add the Christian faith to other religions and traditional powers that you see your neighbors following? You cannot have both. God will not share his glory. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus – especially those of us who serve as church leaders – must completely reject and leave behind all other forms of worship and loyalties to any other form of spiritual power.**

18. 1 Kings 18:20-40 | Elijah and the prophets of Baal

**This dramatic story teaches some very powerful lessons that God's people needed to know. First and most importantly, it was perfectly clear to every person that day that the God of Israel is the only true God, and Baal is no god at all. Second, they learned that God is not impressed by loud, wild, or powerful-sounding prayers to get him to respond. Elijah's example shows us that the power belongs to God, not us. God does not struggle to hear us, and we do not need to show him that we are serious by being loud or strong. We can speak to God in clear words with true faith, knowing that he hears us and receives us when we pray.**

19. Job 1:6-12 | Satan on a chain

**In chapter one of Job, we get to look into the throne room of heaven and see what happens when Satan approaches God. First, these verses say that Satan came to "present himself" before the Lord. This is a clear way of showing that Satan is a subject and servant of the King of Heaven. Even more than this, we learn that Satan cannot harm Job unless God himself gives permission. These two things make it clear to us that Satan is not free to destroy and kill at any time. Even he must obey God, and he can only bring harm to God's people if God allows and to the extent that God allows. God does not always tell us why he allows us to suffer or what his purpose might be, but these verses in Job help us to understand that even if we are in pain, God keeps our enemy on a chain. He cannot destroy us, because God has promised us that he will not allow those who belong to Christ to be lost.**

## 20. Psalm 139

In this psalm, David is opening his heart to God, confessing what he knows to be true of the Lord. He declares that the Lord's knowledge is perfect and complete, knowing even the intimate details of the moments in his day and the thoughts in his heart. He declares that the Lord is inescapable, present in every hidden corner of creation and always seeing his people. He declares that the Lord is the all-powerful creator; not only is he the maker of all creation, but he is the One who has formed even David himself, forming the psalmist in his mother's womb long before he took his first breath. In response to these attributes of God, David can only exclaim, "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" (verse 17). David finishes with a plea to the One who knows and controls all things, asking that the Lord would search him completely and "lead me in the way everlasting." This psalm is a beautiful prayer and excellent example of how to confess our faith in God as we come to him in prayer.

## **Old Testament Survey 2**

### **Group Project**

For this part of the final exam students must work as a group to study a passage from the Old Testament following the steps of the Interpretive Journey. Select one of the passages listed below for the student project. Instruct them to talk through all five steps of the Interpretive Journey together. The group should be allowed 30-45 minutes to complete this study. They should write down the following notes to show the work they have done:

- (Step One) Write a short, simple statement to summarize the message that God was revealing to the original audience.
- (Step Three) Write the timeless truth (or truths) that you discovered from studying this passage.
- (Step Five) Write two or three specific applications of your timeless truth that you would teach to others in your church.

Passages for Interpretive Journey Group Project:

- God calls Joshua – Joshua 1:1-9
- Your God will be my God – Ruth 1:15-18
- The Lord is my Shepherd – Psalms 23

#### **How to grade the group project:**

After giving the students full instructions, watch them closely for the entire time of the project. Try to give as little help as possible; encourage them to follow the steps of the Interpretive Journey as they have learned. You should be able to see that the group has learned all five steps of the Interpretive Journey, the key questions for each step, and how to complete each step in the process. They are free to use their Bibles and any notes they have, but no cell phones or computers are allowed. The group should submit the statements they have written for steps 1, 3, and 5 as noted above.

The group will be graded as a whole with either a 'pass' or 'fail.' If you see that everyone in the group has learned the steps, understands how to follow the Interpretive Journey process, and shows some ability to interpret the passage in a faithful and accurate way, then award them a grade of 'pass' for their work on this project.