

SEE  FOR YOURSELF

GIGANTIC TRUTHS

YEAR A **1** TERM 1

TEACHER'S BOOK



GOD'S MASSIVE PLAN



biblical teaching for young people

Year A: Gigantic Truths

Term 1: God's Massive Plan

Published by:

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YEAR A **1** TERM 1

GOD'S Massive PLAN

See For Yourself is a four year course in Scripture teaching, written, within the Reformed and Evangelical understanding, for students in junior and middle high school years. It is designed to be used in a variety of situations such as church groups, Christian schools, home schools. Indeed wherever there is a young person who desires to learn more of God's ways this course is for them. The course is suitable for ages approximately twelve to seventeen years.

Year A (Published 2005): Gigantic Truths

- Term Topics
1. God's Massive Plan
 2. God's Plan Fulfilled
 3. Secrets of the God who Talks
 4. The God who Rules

Year B (in preparation): Saving Truths

- Term Topics
1. How the Lord Jesus saves his people
 2. God's Spirit in us
 3. Being a Disciple
 4. Christians in the Church and the world

Year C (in preparation): Meet the Truth

- Term Topics
1. His truth is marching on
 2. Christ's Church and Sacraments
 3. Christian Assurance
 4. Loving the Lord and keeping his commands

Year D (in preparation): Living the Truth

- Term Topics
1. The Christian and the Lord: Union with Christ
 2. The Christian and the Lord: Tough questions for a tough world
 3. Loving the Lord and keeping his commands 1
 4. Loving the Lord and keeping his commands 2

WHY THIS STUDY?

This series of year 7 & 8 Sunday School lessons is provided by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria to meet the need for Presbyterian based material for our young people. We believe other Christian people will also find it valuable.

The lessons are designed to give the students a growing understanding of the main teachings of the Bible. Focused on topics from the Westminster Confession, the aim is to build a solid knowledge of the Christian faith that is so important for young teenagers in meeting Christ for themselves and building their own Christian world view.

THE ALLAN BEQUEST

The Christian Education and Nurture Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria takes this opportunity to acknowledge the benefactor, Robert Allan, by whose generous financial legacy this project has been made possible.

Unfortunately, not a great deal is known about the man himself, his life, connections, profession, and so on. We do however, know that he was a man of considerable Christian conviction who desired that “our people [i.e. Victorians] may... become noted as a Bible reading, Bible-living community”. This inspired in him a passionate vision that children should be taught about Jesus Christ through the “Sabbath School” system of the day and, to this end, he devised “a syllabus of two years course of religious instruction” and tested it very successfully in various Presbyterian churches. It is lamentable that there are no known examples of the course material for us to see for ourselves but Allan did, in his will, describe it as “a systematic course of instruction in Bible proofs, covering a period of two years, at the end of which the same course is repeated, but with different Scriptural illustrations and testimonies [using]... a method of instruction which embraces daily and quarterly written examinations on the subjects which have been taught”.

Allan did not intend that what he had started would falter after he had died. Accordingly, in his will he settled upon the Presbyterian Church of Victoria what he regarded as sufficient funds to continue and even expand this program, both in Victoria and in the other colonies. Allan, in his attention to detail in the mode of teaching, scope and doctrinal content of his syllabus, reflected on God’s own method of instructing the wise unto salvation: “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.” [Isa.28:10]

Despite his considerable foresight, Allan could not have known (let alone planned for) the changes that have taken place in our society which have conspired to ensure that his godly aspirations would never be realised. Over a period of years, the Presbyterian Church of Victoria has made several attempts to access the funds that had accumulated in Allan’s bequest but legal opinion constantly frustrated such efforts. At the 1997 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the CENC (as custodians of Allan’s bequest) reported its intention to “investigate some way of altering the terms of the will to allow its use for the wider contemporary needs in children’s Christian education.” The following year, the CENC, after having received positive legal opinion on a proposal, was gratified to receive the Assembly’s assent to the following deliverance: “Approve the use of the Allan bequest to develop an integrated Sunday School curriculum for use from primary through to secondary years, covering the doctrines laid down by Mr. Robert Allan in his bequest.”

What you now hold is, we believe, entirely compatible with the spirit of Allan’s intentions and, in many respects, faithful to the teaching method Allan himself laid out. It is the product of a significant and sustained effort of a number of contributors, whose desire to teach today’s children and youth about the saving work of Jesus Christ approaches that of Allan himself. We thank God for raising up Robert Allan, a man of such rich faith, and for the financial provision that has come down to us through him and which we have devoted to produce what you see today.

Our prayer is that God would bring about the widest possible blessing through the use of this material.

The Christian Education and Nurture Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria

ASSEMBLY APPOINTMENT

The Christian Education and Nurture Committee of the PCV has, through the Assembly, established a team of writers, graphic artists and other helpers, to produce a series of lessons covering the first four years of secondary school. In the writing process, the lessons have been discussed, edited, trialled and the art work added.

The material has been through the approval processes of the Committee, and is a Committee publication.

TO THE TEACHER

Teaching young people the Bible is one of the greatest privileges and most challenging tasks in God's Kingdom. On the success of your work, humanly speaking, depends the Christian development of numbers of young men and women.

Are you registered? In Victoria, to be a teacher in school, you must be registered with a government agency. To be a teacher in God's Kingdom, you must also be registered – this time by a much higher authority. Before you begin teaching, ask yourself whether you are registered in the Lamb's Book of Life. Do you know the Gospel taught in these studies?

Each teacher needs to have full agreement with the material, representing as it does the accepted teaching of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. Where you find yourself in disagreement, or perhaps find the material hard to understand, you are requested to discuss this with your minister.

Teaching the Bible is a spiritual work, a mental work, and a caring work. To teach successfully we need to love God and his word, understand the Bible, and love the students. This will lead us to teach with conviction and joy and with good results. May God bless you as you pursue this great work.

THE PLAN OF THE SERIES

The series will eventually cover all secondary years. Each year is designed to be flexible in its use. Studies are titled Year A and Year B because this avoids labeling with school grade levels which may prejudice some students. You can use the studies at any level you judge suitable for your students. But they have been written with the following plan in mind.

Year A & B for the first two years of secondary school.

Years C & D for the third and fourth years.

Because church youth groups vary so much, you can be flexible in the use of these studies. However, you will get the best from the lessons if they are taught in the order of the series, A through D.

The series begins in Year A with a rapid survey of the Bible's plan in the Old and New Testaments. This takes about half of Year A. It is designed to help students form their miscellaneous knowledge of Bible stories into a sense of God's unfolding plan through the Bible. It serves as a helpful bridge from the primary years to secondary level understanding. Older students who lack this knowledge will also benefit from these lessons.

After the Bible survey, Year A then follows the topics of the Westminster Confession, which is the Presbyterian Church's doctrinal statement. This plan is followed in sequence more or less with the topics of the Confession, through to Year D.

Current relevance is critical to young students and every effort has been made to present these great teachings in a way that will come across as fresh and related to life. Particular emphasis has been given to the need for young people to understand the Gospel, to find Christian assurance based on Christ's work for them, and to grapple with the ethical issues that confront them.

MATERIALS IN THE SERIES

For each Year level, there is:

1. The teacher's wire bound handbook. This includes the teacher's copy of the student worksheets.
2. One wire-bound set of student worksheets. You may purchase more bound sets or photocopy the enclosed set.
3. A CD ROM with all the series on it.
4. A copy of the Westminster Confession for the 21st Century.

A NOTE ABOUT PHOTOCOPYING

Presbyterian Churches in Victoria which purchase and use the series in their churches are free to photocopy all materials for their own use within their own congregation. Other parties wishing to use the material should contact the Chairman of the PCV Christian Education & Nurture Committee.

HOW TO USE THIS SERIES

1. THE FORMAT OF EACH SESSION

Each lesson plan includes the teacher's notes, followed by the student worksheet.

Each lesson gives the main idea to be taught and includes Scripture memory of key verses, prayer, Scripture reading, explanation for students, with discussion questions and activities. Further activities are listed in case you have the lesson time, or keen students will follow these up at home.

2. HOW TO PREPARE A LESSON

- Proper preparation needs an evening or 2-3 hours. Preparation is best done a few days ahead, to give you time to think and pray about the lesson.
- Pray, because without the Lord's help we teachers can do nothing!
- Read the Scripture passages before you read the lesson plan.
- Fix the main ideas/aims clearly in your mind as you go through the lesson.
- Tell the lesson story, including re-capping on past lessons if that's appropriate. Telling is always better than reading lesson notes – it's easy with a little practice!
- You can involve the students in the story, perhaps through the questions, or through getting the students' comments so you can build on these.
- You can use visual aids, drama or other lessons helps, but remember these must not become the dominant feature in your lesson, because activity can become counter-productive and actually block out the importance of the main aim. Some weeks, no aids will be needed.

3. USING THE BIBLE

- Each student must have a Bible. Learning to be familiar with the Bible is a key purpose of teaching young people.
- We suggest you don't give them page numbers to find texts, so that if they don't already know the books in order, they'll begin to learn.
- Have students read the Scripture passages where this is possible. Try to avoid embarrassing the weak readers. Also the meaning may be lost if the passages are read badly, so this calls for your judgment.
- Encourage respect, care, and love for the Scriptures.
- Have the students talk about the text itself, with the Bible open in front of them. Ask them questions to clarify meanings. All this trains them to use the Bible for themselves – the ultimate aim.

4. MANAGING THE TIME

- Time available varies from church to church. The lessons are planned for about 40 minutes if you keep moving. Too many student distractions will make this harder. Forty-five minutes to an hour is ideal.
- If your time available is only 30 minutes we suggest this is not enough for the weekly teaching, and you'll have to make careful choices before each lesson about what you will omit.
- Deciding to do half a lesson each week may or may not work depending on the group. A decision to do that will affect the whole tempo of the series, and mean these students will learn only half as much in four years!

5. COVERAGE IS IMPORTANT

- The series gives coverage of the teachings of the church only once in the four years. All children should meet all these important teachings, so the writers appeal to teachers to make every effort to keep the series moving for the good and regular students who put in the commitment on Sundays.
- Missing parts out at one point will affect the students' grasp of later ideas – Christian teaching is a system with interdependent parts.

A FEW TEACHING TIPS

- **Memory Verses:** just saying these together two or three times may be as much as you can do in class. Some churches print the memory verses in the congregational bulletin, so parents can encourage their children to learn them.
- **Helping shy students:** try to avoid pressuring the shy student to read or answer against their wishes. Talking to the student encouragingly in private, or asking parents for help may be part of the answer. This is usually a situation that changes only slowly – so be patient.
- **Students who “know it all”:** there's one in most classes! Take the student aside after class and appeal to the need for everyone to have a fair go – please don't always answer the questions because other students need to be able to think about it! If appeal doesn't work, try getting a parent's help. But the situation needs to be dealt with or a whole year's teaching can have the edge taken off it for everyone.

FURTHER READING AND REFERENCE BOOKS

We suggest you or your church buy the following books for reference for each teacher:

Douglas Milne (Ed.), *The Westminster Confession*, PCV

Noel Weeks, *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth.

G. Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, Paternoster.

THE GREAT CHANGE

Entering Year 7 is one of the most significant steps in the school life of a young person. Even if a student has attended a P-12 school where the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 is less noticeable, a student may still be subject to family and community pressures as they take the leap from primary to secondary education. The expectation imparted to children is that they are now “growing up” and that school work will be harder and more extensive. Compounding all of this, the student is also in the midst of personal changes related to puberty. Therefore at a time when the child is facing the challenges associated with physical, social and emotional changes they encounter the added challenges of possibly a new school, adjustments to new teachers and developing new friendships.

Bear in mind that a young adolescent is grappling with the big issues of “Am I normal?” and “Who am I?” in the often unhelpful peer group environment of a humanistic educational institution.

THE CHALLENGE

Although Year 7 students are well and truly embarking on the early adolescence stage, we who interact with them should not be deterred on the grounds of horror stories sometimes associated with this stage of development. Nevertheless, in the light of the personal upheaval that many are undergoing is it any wonder that emotional changes will be obvious as one week they can appear mature and emotionally stable and the next week they may be moody or even immature in their responses to life? Unpredictable, sometimes erratic behaviour may be demonstrated in response to the changing moods experienced by these youngsters. The degree of social acceptance within the peer group is often a source of frustration, or conversely of enthusiasm. Some adolescents feel the imminent loss of childhood intensely and demonstrate a corresponding sadness together with a sense of fear; wondering how they will cope with the future and its associated responsibilities and expectations. Their response to these insecurities may be to show angry and moody behaviour. In contrast, others eagerly grasp the new challenges and opportunities held out to them and rise to new heights of achievements not previously demonstrated by them.

This period of dramatic personal change merits appropriate responses from educators who seek to cater for the particular concerns of these young people. Broadly speaking, young adolescents have certain developmental needs which a wise educator (of day or Sunday School) will bear in mind when engaging in lessons and in casual interactions.

Whilst not unique to this group, these needs and characteristics take on greater importance in early adolescence because of the fundamental changes associated with pubertal development.

- the need for acceptance and belonging
- the need for security
- the need for independence and self-assertion
- the need for recognition and significance
- the need for challenge through new experience
- the need for achievement and mastery

SOME GUIDELINES TO ENCOURAGE YOU

A word or two of encouragement and advice may be helpful for those who have the privilege of working with Year 7 students. Despite the obvious difficulties facing young adolescents, especially in a pluralistic society where boundaries shift and standards are often blurred, the Sunday School teacher of Year 7 aged students is in a prime position to be of immense importance in assisting the students to charter a worthwhile and positive course through the muddled waters of the pressures which surround them. To impart objective Christian teaching from God's Word week by week in a non threatening, loving environment is of inestimable value.

It is widely recognised that at this turbulent stage of development young adolescents need suitable guides and mentors who can give them security and help them to feel valued, whilst at the same time carefully tempering their excesses of behaviour or judgements about the world. Who better to turn to than adults in the church; mature Christian people who can provide advice or act as role models? At this critical developmental stage it is vital that objective Christian standards are held out to them and that they make sense in this world of contradictory social values and youth alienation. Furthermore, they need people who will understand and accept them yet not be offended when they occasionally want to distance themselves from you. They need people who will respond sensitively to physical and mood changes and make encouraging comments which increase their self esteem and recognise their talents. They need emotional support and empathy as they try to cope with the stresses related to their educational challenges; reassuring them that it is not necessary to be the most academic student in their school yet still encouraging them to apply diligence to all their endeavours. They need to have the opportunities to develop skills in abstract and reflective thinking and to hone their argumentative skills, seeking to avoid over-generalising and jumping to conclusions about other people and the world around them.

A FINAL WORD

It is to be hoped that this brief document does not give the impression that young adolescents need to be handled extremely delicately! A consideration of the significance of their stage of development is necessary but an overemphasis on their "problems" could lead to undue introspection and self absorption. A clearly challenging, constructive and well controlled approach to the subject matter of each lesson is desirable. Year 7 students respond to clear directions and parameters. Remember that at Year 7 level the students actually enjoy producing "work" and attractive visual presentation is valued by them.

With God's grace, the weekly Sunday School class can be a haven of peace and meaning for those who attend. May the Year 7 students find their teachers to be godly mentors who can prayerfully lead them to a knowledge and appreciation of biblical truth and a realisation that all of their personal needs can be met through a relationship of faith in Jesus Christ.

GOD'S MASSIVE PLAN – BIBLE OVERVIEW

Lesson 1 – God creates the world

Lesson 2 – The good life in the garden.

Lesson 3 – Sin and death.

Lesson 4 – The flood and the tower of Babel.

Lesson 5 – The covenant

Lesson 6 – Blood on the doorposts

Lesson 7 – God sets the standard.

Lesson 8 – The people of God living in the promised land.

Lesson 9 – A King in Israel.

Lesson 10 – Meeting God in the temple.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO TEACHERS

It is not the purpose of the Bible overview section to cover all of the Bible's history or main individuals. You may wonder why some important events are completely ignored. We assume the students will generally come to us with some prior knowledge. However many Christian young people don't seem to have an overall picture of how the Bible fits together as one unfolding plan. Our hope is that by the end of the overview they will have a clear idea of **the Bible as one message** that points to God's plan to fix the problem of sin and restore us to a relationship with him through Christ Jesus.

Each lesson has four components:

- The main ideas
- Teacher background information
- The lesson plan
- The student sheets (altogether at the end)

LESSON MATERIALS

Prayers for opening and closing the classes are given, but we would strongly suggest that you use these as a guide only and pray using your own words. Likewise, words to be spoken by the teacher are written in italics. It would be better if you used these as a guide rather than reading them directly from your teacher's manual.

A summary sentence is given at the end of each lesson. It is written in full in the teacher's notes and provided as a "fill in the blanks" sentence in the student sheets. It is intended that the teacher will read out the sentence and the students fill it in as a record of the main idea covered by the lesson.

A memory verse is given for each week and if you have a motivated group you can set this as homework for the next lesson. Extension activities are also provided if you have a longer lesson time.



GOD CREATES THE WORLD

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: God is the creator and as creator has the right to rule his creation.

Other main ideas

- God was before creation and separate to the creation (as opposed to New Age philosophy where the force behind the universe is included as part of the universe).
- The creation was *ex nihilo* – out of nothing – and by his own Word.
- The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were all present at creation.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: Genesis 1:1 – 2:3.

That God is the creator of the world is an essential doctrine. Christians might disagree as to the length of time the creation took. But that God was the sole author and maker of the world, and that he made it through conscious action and design, is a foundational truth. To deny this is to deny not only this passage of Genesis, but also the plain witness of Scripture throughout the Bible. Genesis should not be approached as a mythical tale, but as God's own account of his work.

The emphasis in this lesson is on the fact that God created the world and therefore is the rightful ruler of it. Do not be too concerned if students do not remember the order of the creation or what was created on each day. It is important to do some background reading if you are not confident in defending the Biblical theory of creation against evolutionary theory as this may be an area the students are eager to discuss. Your minister will be able to suggest some helpful books in this area.

As the main books of the Bible taught this term are Genesis and Exodus, an excellent homework project would be to ask students to read through the whole of Genesis and/or Exodus over the course of the term.

Further Reading

- De Graaf, S. G. (1978), *Promise and Deliverance: Volume II The Failure of Israel's Theocracy*, Paideia Press, Ontario.
- Weeks, N. (1995), *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.
- Wilkinson, T.L. (2000), *The Westminster Confession Now*, T. L. Wilkinson, Melbourne.

1. GOD CREATES THE WORLD

LESSON PLAN

Prayer

Gracious Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for your word and ask now that you will grant us a better understanding of it. Please help us to learn more of you, and give us grace to live out your Word in our daily lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.



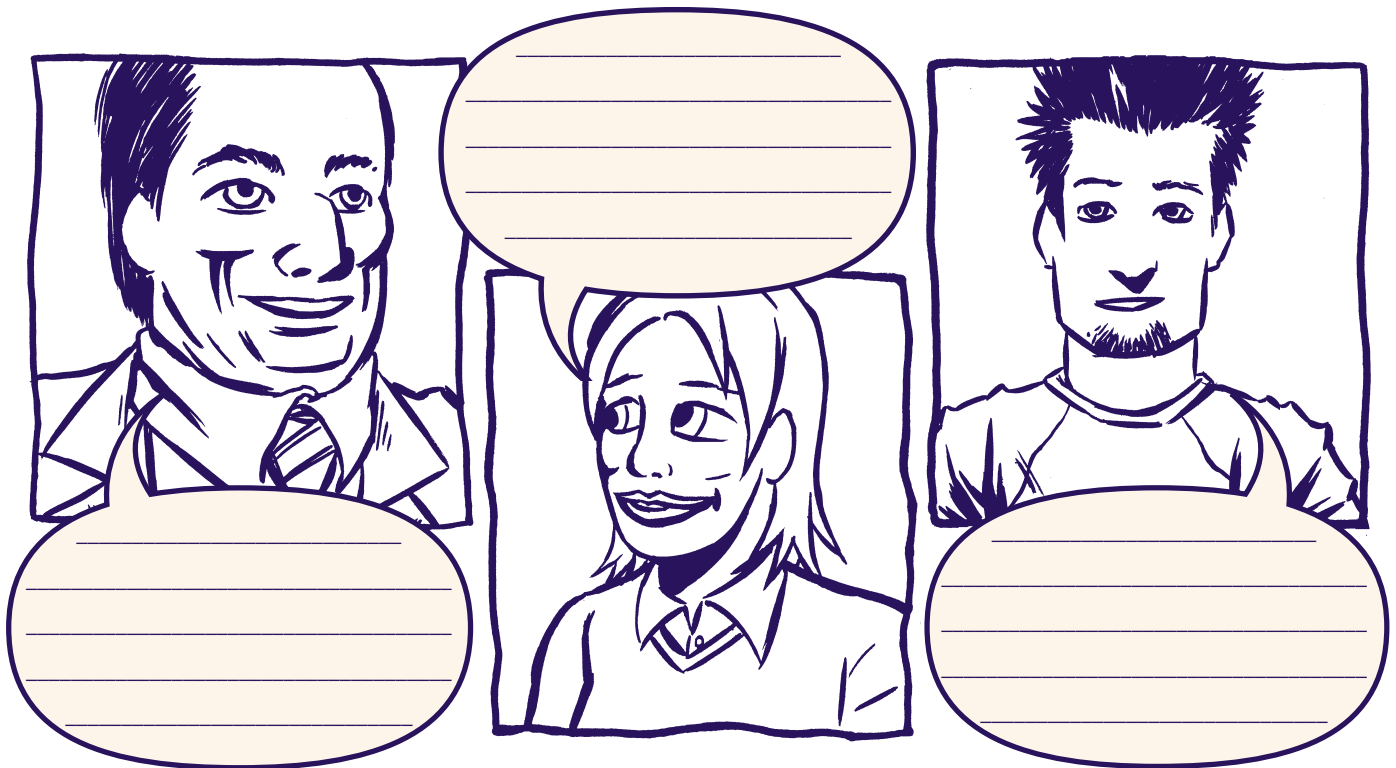
We begin a new challenge this term. We are going to look at the Bible as a whole over the next few weeks and see how God's purpose and plan is developed through both the Old and New Testaments. This will give us a good idea of how the Bible fits together as one message from God, about himself, and how we can know him.

Introduction

- 1 Ask students to fill in the speech bubbles for the cartoon. Allow students to share their answers as a group.

How might each of these people answer the question:

HOW DID THE WORLD COME INTO EXISTENCE?



- 2 Discussion - What are some of the different ideas about how the world came to be? What do your friends at school believe? What about you? Let's see what the Bible says.



Ask students to read **Genesis 1:1-3; 1:24-28; 1:31 - 2:3.**

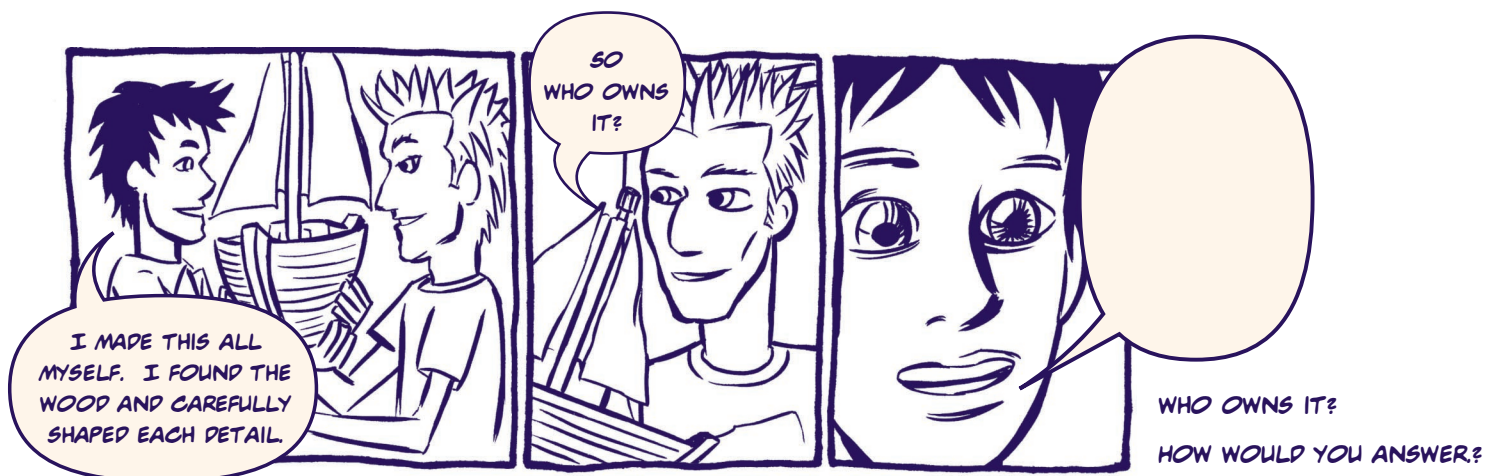
Activities

Now go through these key questions. Firstly, ask the students to work individually or in pairs. Then discuss the questions as a group. Students should state the verse where they found their answer.

- 1** Who was there prior to the earth's creation?
Only God (implied in 1:1).
- 2** Who is involved in the earth's creation?
God – Father, Son and Spirit (1:26 and John 1:1-5).
- 3** How long did it take?
Six days. On the seventh day he rested, not because he was weary, but because it was complete just as he wanted it (1:36 to 2:3).
- 4** How was it created?
By his Word. He spoke and it was done (1:3, 6, 9, etc).
- 5** What special features/attributes did man have that the other creatures did not?
Made in God's image. Made to rule (1:26-28).
- 6** What was the quality of the creation like? What was God's opinion of it?
It was good (1:4, 10, 12, 18 etc.).

In summary, read Hebrews 11:3 aloud to the students.

Have the students look at the next cartoon about the ownership of the boat. Discuss what answer might be given. Have the students fill in the speech bubble.



Emphasise that God's creation of the world gives him the right to rule it. Point out that man is given dominion over the animals in verse 28. It was a delegated authority, and a right to rule cannot be bestowed unless God is already in charge.

1. GOD CREATES THE WORLD



Read together Psalm 24:1-2.

What does this tell us about God's role as Creator?

God's rule as Creator extends to us today. We all are rightfully his and should be living under his rule and by his laws.

Read also Romans 1:20.

What does God's creation make plain to us?

God's creation shows us his eternal power and divine nature. We have no excuse for not recognising and obeying God as his creation is part of his revelation to us.



The world when created by God was under his loving rule and everything was as it should be – it was good! In the next couple of lessons, we find out what went wrong and why it can no longer honestly be called good. However, we still see the evidence of God's beautiful work of creation and we should give thanks as well as be reminded that he is King.

Have students fill out the summary sentence:



God made *the universe* by *his word* and he is the *rightful King*.

Pray

Gracious Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the wonderful and amazing world that you created. We thank you for making us too, and we ask for your help to live joyfully in a way that pleases you as our King. In Jesus' name, Amen.



For next week: Genesis 1:1.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Extension activities

Create a simple poster that would explain the creation story to younger students. Make sure you get the elements in the correct order.

Create role plays in pairs. Have one student play the part of a Christian and the other a non-Christian. They should create a typical discussion about how the world began. Show to the class and discuss the possible response that the Christian could give and how she/he could defend his/her beliefs.



THE GOOD LIFE IN THE GARDEN

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: The original creation was good and perfect.

Other main ideas

- Adam was our representative. In him all the generations to come were contained.
- Adam's place in the creation was conditional on his obedience.
- A relationship with God, work, and a relationship with family, were all part of the original perfect creation.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: Genesis 2.

In this lesson, the focus is on what man's existence was like before sin entered the world. Adam is not a mythical figure in an ancient story about how life came to be – he was a real, individual, historical person. We see that he had a perfect relationship with God, useful work (v. 15), he was in harmony with his environment (v. 19-20) and had a human relationship which was fulfilling and beautiful (v. 24-25). At this stage, death is not part of God's creation – it is a result of the fall – and not even the animals eat each other (1:29 – 30).

From this explanation of what life was like before the fall, we get some foundations for living. Marriage and sex are God-given and a close relationship with other human beings is part of God's design for men and women (v. 18). Work is also part of a full life (v. 15). After the fall, man's work is cursed and Adam has to earn his food by the sweat of his brow. However, work before the fall was part of a perfect life and was God-given. It was not hard drudgery, but creative and fulfilling. Man wasn't destined to be in conflict with his environment, but rather the steward of the creation God had made (1:28, 2:15, 19-20).

It is important for students to get a good picture of life in the garden as it not only has important implications for us today (marriage, relationships, work), but also sets the scene for the disaster about to take place in the next chapter. The terrible rebellion of sin takes place against the backdrop of God's good creation.

It is also important that Adam's position as the representative head of all people is clearly understood in this lesson. Adam is given a specific command from God and also told the consequence of disobedience to God's command. In short, his happiness in the garden is conditional on his obedience. Adam's decision to disobey was his own, but he included all mankind under the curse of disobedience. This idea is introduced in this lesson and developed more fully in the next lesson, and also explored further in the later lessons that deal with the doctrine of original sin. Adam failed this test of obedience, but Christ, as our second representative, lived in obedience to God's commands and succeeded where Adam failed.

2. THE GOOD LIFE IN THE GARDEN

Students may ask why God would allow sin to happen if he knew what would happen in advance. Why didn't God stop Adam when he must have known what would happen in the future? The Westminster Confession 6.1 is helpful on this point.

Further Reading

De Graaf, S. G. (1978), *Promise and Deliverance: Volume II The Failure of Israel's Theocracy*, Paideia Press, Ontario.

Weeks, N. (1995), *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.

Wilkinson, T.L. (2000), *The Westminster Confession Now*, T. L. Wilkinson, Melbourne.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Prayer

Gracious Heavenly Father, we praise you as the maker and creator of all things, including ourselves. We ask now that you would shine your truth into our hearts and minds, through your Holy Spirit, as we read and study your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.



If learning a **memory verse**, have the students say last week's verse individually or as a group. Last week's memory verse is printed near the end of this week's student sheet.



Read out the **summary statement** for last week and briefly review what was learnt.

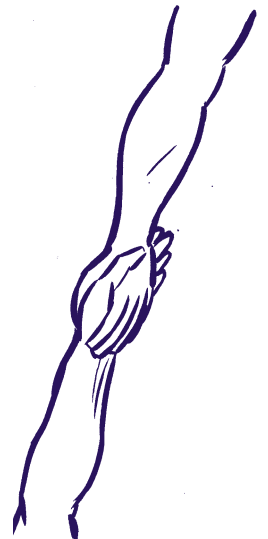
On a large piece of paper, or whiteboard, brainstorm what would be the perfect life. You will probably get answers that include unlimited money and lots of material possessions. It's amazing how our sinful nature even distorts our view of perfection! Allow them to include these things in their list initially but then ask them whether lots of money and possessions are a guarantee of happiness. Ask them then to think a little harder. If it is hard to get the group to move beyond money and possessions, try asking them what the perfect life (or a perfect world) would **not** have. You should get some answers like sickness, disease, death, war, teasing, bad tempers, greed, etc.



Emphasise that *the perfect life is the life without sin. In Genesis 2 we get a picture of life as it was meant to be. Life in the garden was life without sin. Let's take a look at what that was like.*



Ask students to read **Genesis 2**.



Activities

In the big box on the student sheet, ask each student to write in dot points the main elements of the perfect life in the garden. Then ask them to share their answers and create a combined list. The four main points you want to get are, 1) **work**, 2) **harmony with the environment**, 3) **good relationship with another human** and 4) **perfect relationship with God**. You may or may not get 5) **conditional on Adam's obedience**. It will be discussed later and is not essential for introduction at this point if it is not brought up by the students themselves.

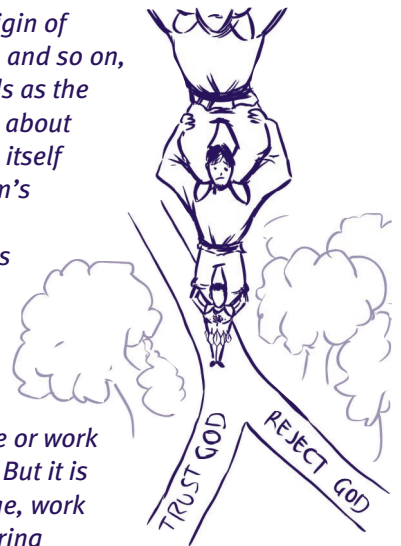
Ask students to read again God's command to Adam in verses 16 and 17.

LIFE IN THE GARDEN: _____



Point out that *Adam is a real human person (not a mythical idea of the origin of humans). He will be the father of the first children born and their children and so on, and is therefore the father of all the human race. Adam at this point stands as the representative head of all people. He is given a specific command by God about one tree in the garden – that he must not eat from it. It is not that the tree itself represents some danger to Adam or God or the garden. It is a test of Adam's obedience – he is required to trust and obey God in this matter. Adam's knowledge of good and evil is to be solely determined by God's commands to him. If Adam chooses to disobey God, he will face death. This is not because of the tree, but rather the judgment that comes from God is focused on man's rebellion and disobedience to his specific command.*

All of those elements of a perfect life before the fall were affected by sin, as we will see in the next chapter. This means that when we view marriage or work today we may only see the negatives that are part of life in a sinful world. But it is helpful to get a glimpse of what God had intended life to be like – marriage, work and relationships were made to be enjoyed. They were not supposed to bring discouragement and pain. They were part of God's good world.



Students should fill in the summary statement:



God made man and woman in **his own image** and placed them in the world to **rule over and care for it**. Adam and Eve were to **obey God** and so enjoy **him and his provision for them**.

Pray

Gracious Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that we can still enjoy the world that you created, and work and family. We thank you too for the relationship that we can have with you through Christ, our second and perfect representative. In Jesus' name, Amen.



For next week: **Genesis 1:27.**

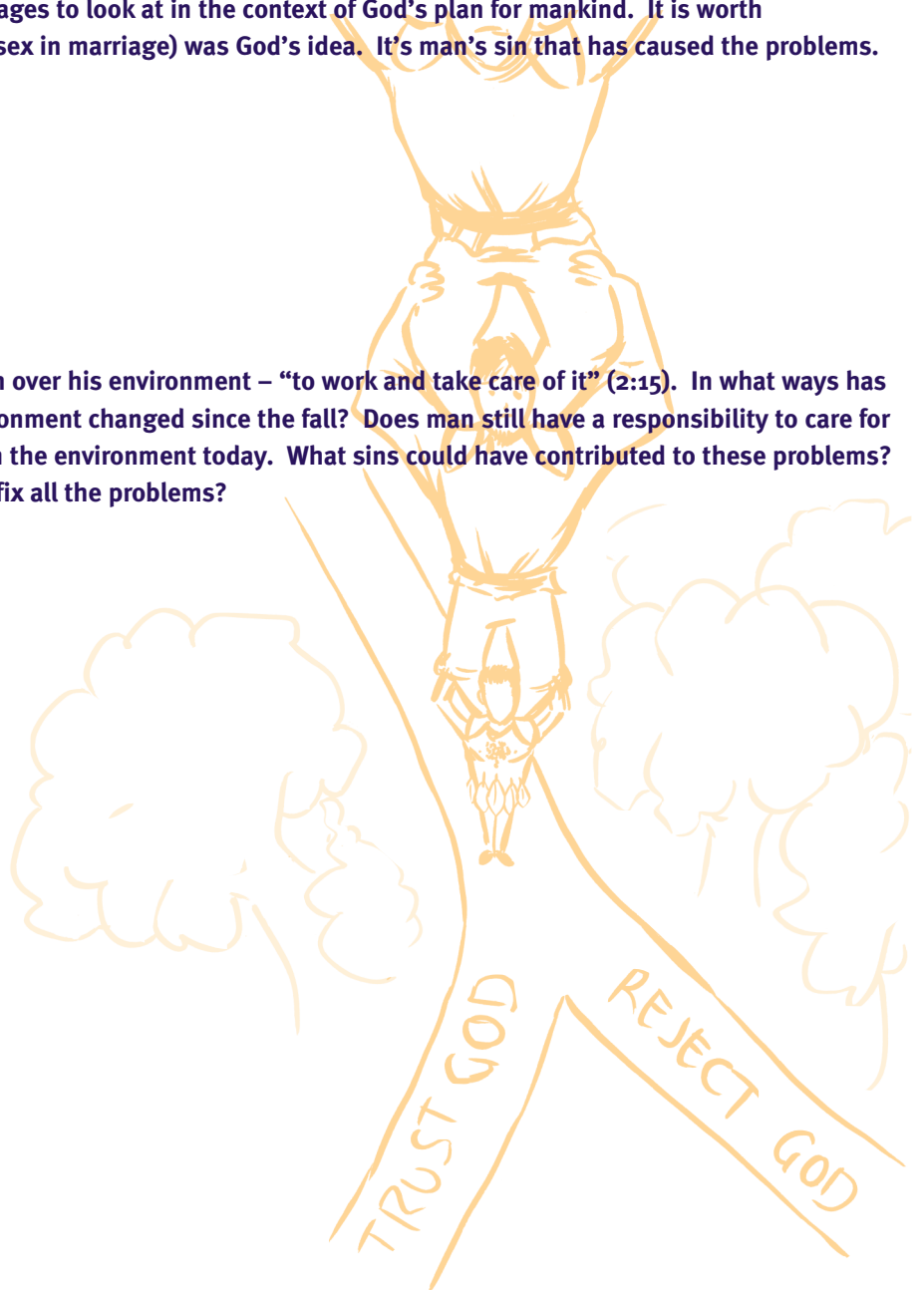
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

2. THE GOOD LIFE IN THE GARDEN

Extension activities

The following key questions are intended for discussion rather than individual work.

- 1** Are you surprised to find work as part of the perfect life? Why? What do you think work was like for Adam?
- 2** Since God created marriage and sex (one flesh), how should that affect our view of it? The concept of marriage is becoming increasingly devalued in current society. Mark 10:6-9, 1 Cor. 6:16 and Eph. 5:31-33 all quote Gen. 2:24 and would be valuable passages to look at in the context of God's plan for mankind. It is worth emphasising that marriage (and sex in marriage) was God's idea. It's man's sin that has caused the problems.
- 3** Man was meant to have dominion over his environment – “to work and take care of it” (2:15). In what ways has man's relationship with his environment changed since the fall? Does man still have a responsibility to care for the earth? List some problems in the environment today. What sins could have contributed to these problems? Can laws about the environment fix all the problems?





Sin and Death

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: Adam, as the representative of the human race, sinned and rebelled against God. Sin entered the world and separated us from God.

Other main ideas

- Man confronts Satan – our adversary – and fails.
- Other elements of life – work, the environment and relationships with other humans – were also damaged in the fall.
- God judged Adam and Eve, but he also indicated a promise that one day victory over Satan would come (3:15).
- We share in Adam's rebellion both by his representation and also through our own rebellion.
- Death enters the world.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: Genesis 3.

A solid understanding of the origin and effects of sin is essential to understanding salvation. This lesson not only deals with sin's entrance into the world, but is also aimed at showing students that they too are under the curse and rule of sin and need a saviour.

It is important that students understand that Adam and Eve's sin was not essentially about a piece of fruit. It was more fundamental. It was a rejection of God's care and provision and a rebellion against his lawful rule. The attitude comes before the action. Sin is a heart condition, not just a set of outward actions.

An essential idea in this lesson is that of original sin. Adam's sin was his own, but, as our representative, Adam also sinned on behalf of the whole human race. As a result, none of us are born pure and sinless, but we are all products of our parents – sinners from the beginning. This is the terrible extent of the fall! We all fell in Adam and are all sinners in need of a saviour. This lesson contrasts with the picture of life in the garden that was explored last lesson.

“We acknowledge that man has all the marks of a majestic temple about him – a temple in which God once dwelt, but a temple which is now in utter ruins – a temple in which a shattered window here, and a doorway there, and a column there, still give some faint idea of the magnificence of the original design, but a temple which from end to end has lost its glory and fallen from its high estate.” J.C. Ryle.

If our students are ever to seek the Saviour, they must be clear of their position and desperate plight as sinners before a holy God. As this lesson's emphasis is on sin, we do not deal in detail with salvation through Christ. However, you

3. SIN AND DEATH

may feel it important to briefly explain God's solution to sin in the person of the Lord Jesus at the end of the lesson if you have concerns about the students going home having learnt about sin but not its remedy.

Further Reading

Chapter 6 of the Westminster Confession is helpful background reading. Also recommended is the chapter on sin in J.C. Ryle's book *Holiness*.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Gracious Heavenly Father, you are the only living God and deserve all our praise and worship. Give to us willing and eager hearts to hear your word and obey. In Jesus' name, Amen.



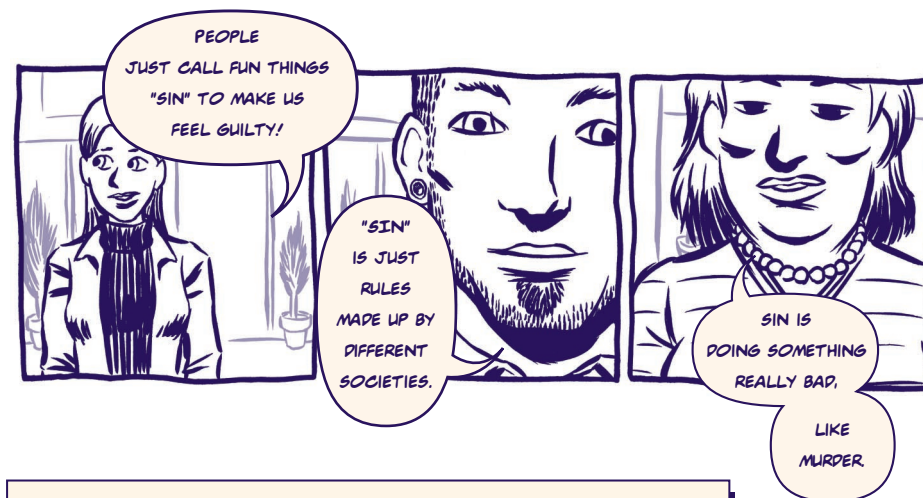
Revise last week's **memory verse** and **summary sentence** together.



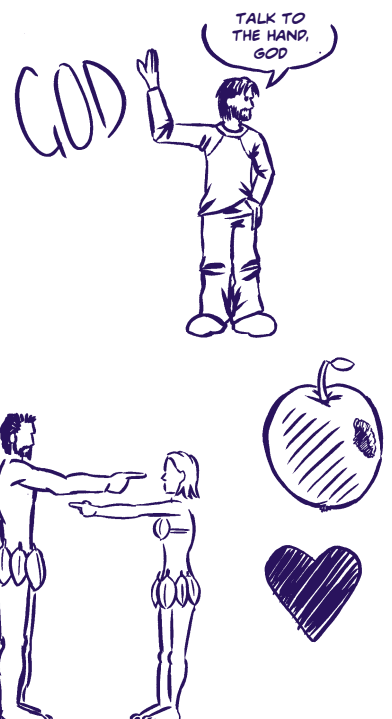
The perfect world was a world without sin. This week sin enters the picture.

Have students view the cartoon entitled, "What is sin?" Discuss the different ideas presented in the speech bubbles. Ask students to write their own definition of sin in the space provided, and then share as a group.

What is sin?



SIN IS... _____





Read together Genesis 3:1-19.

Activities

Have the students complete and discuss the following questions to help them focus on the passage.

- 1** What was God's specific command in 2:16-17?
"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
- 2** How does Satan misrepresent what God had commanded?
See 3:1 and in 3:4. Satan questions what God's word actually says, the outcomes of God's statement and also God's motives.
- 3** How does Adam respond to God when confronted about his sin?
See 3:12. He refuses to take responsibility and tries to blame someone else. Notice that Eve does the same.
- 4** Who is the serpent?
The devil is the serpent – see Revelation 12: 7 – 9. The name Satan means adversary.



What was sinful about what Adam and Eve did? The problem wasn't the fruit. It was that they chose to go against God's command. God had given them every tree in the garden – all that they could want. He made this command as a test and condition of their continuing to enjoy his good world and a perfect relationship with him. Their choice to take the fruit was a rejection of God's care and provision and a rebellion against his lawful rule. The attitude came before the action. Sin is a heart condition, not just a set of outward actions.

At this point, you should revisit the opening discussion about sin and fill in the first half of the summary sentence:



Sin is *our rebellion against* God's rule and *authority* in our lives.



What were the long term consequences of Adam's sin? Have students look at Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23 and Psalm 51:3. The aim is to emphasise that every person has been affected by Adam's sin and that the students personally are also sinful and deserve God's judgment.

3. SIN AND DEATH



So sin entered the world through Adam, and this was carried on to his children, and his children's children, and so on all the way down to us. As a result death entered the world and we too stand as guilty sinners before a holy God.

Man is now completely incapable of restoring the perfect world or of restoring his relationship with God. His only hope is that God himself will put into action a solution to the problem of sin.

Complete the second half of the summary sentence:



Because of Adam and Eve's rebellion, sin *entered the world* and everyone is *born a sinner*.

Pray

Gracious Father, we acknowledge that we are sinners. We often disobey your commands and live as though we deserve to rule ourselves. We ask your forgiveness through Jesus Christ who was sent by you to purchase our freedom and restore us to yourself. In Jesus' name, Amen.



For next week: Romans 5:19

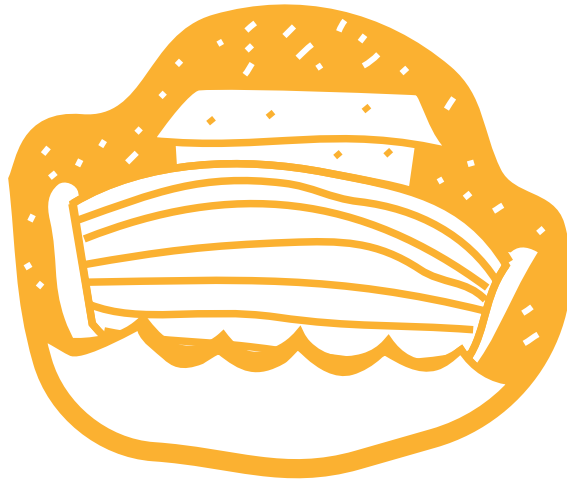
For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Extension activities

- 1 Discuss: Is it fair that God blames us for Adam's sin? Yes – God deals with us as a human race. Was it fair that Jesus should have to die for us? God deals with us through two representatives: Adam and Jesus Christ.
- 2 Role play a discussion between two people in which a Christian is asked to explain what sin is and to convince the other person that they are a sinner in need of a Saviour.
- 3 In the three boxes provided, have the students list the curses given to the man, woman and the serpent. Note especially the breakdown in work, environment and relationships that come as a result of the fall. These form the immediate consequences of the fall.

List the judgement God passed on each:

Man	Woman	Serpent



THE FLOOD & THE TOWER OF BABEL

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: Sin is abhorrent to God and he will judge sinners. He will also save his people.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: Teachers should read **Genesis 6-9**. The student passage is **Genesis 6:5-22**.

It is difficult to cover the whole of Noah's story in detail in your lesson as it runs for three chapters. The student passage deals with the situation of Noah's time and God's specific commands to Noah.

By the time of Noah, sin's effects were clearly seen in the character and behaviour of the earth's people. God's sorrow at the scene before him reminds us that sin is not in any way trivial to God. He does not "turn a blind eye" nor does he excuse rebellion. God's judgment of the earth was fair and just. And yet, for his own purpose, he chose to save one man and his family. Noah is clearly commended in Scripture for his righteousness, but it should not be reasoned that he was saved because of his good works. The New Testament makes it clear that Noah's actions were the result of his faith and that he was the heir of the righteousness that comes by faith (Hebrews 11:7). Noah was saved from a physical and temporal judgment, but he was also saved in the spiritual sense.

The ark is a picture of salvation – both literal and symbolic. In the ark, Noah and his family were kept safe from God's judgment. Noah was not sinless – the Bible tells us that all have sinned (Romans 3:23) – but he was saved through God's provision of a way of salvation. In Noah, we see God's initiative in salvation, and that it is he who acts to save men and women.

The Tower of Babel is the secondary topic for this lesson. God once again judges sin, this time by the confusion of languages. Even in the "new start" after the flood, the tower was man's attempt to gain glory for himself – to "make a name" verse 4. When God speaks in verses 6 and 7 and says that "nothing will be impossible for them", he is not speaking as a rival who is somehow in danger from men. Rather, God knows man's fall into sin will know no limits, so in judgment, he punishes their self-centredness and denies them security in themselves. In these events the nature of sin is revealed again, this time in the cultivation of a society in which men rest in their own glory and achievement.

Further Reading

Kidner, D. (1967), *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Genesis*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester.

Weeks, N. (1995), *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.

4. THE FLOOD & THE TOWER OF BABEL

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Gracious Heavenly Father, we give you praise for your eternal grace and mercy, shown to us in Christ Jesus. We also thank you for your word through which you have revealed yourself to us. Please grant to us a true understanding of your word and lead us into faithful obedience to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Review last week's **memory verse**.



Today we look at Noah and the way God judged the world through a catastrophic flood.



Read together Genesis 6:5-22



Activities

It is a good idea to give students a chance to work through the key questions printed on the student sheet on their own before discussion. This ensures that all students have at least attempted to engage with the passage and also allows students who find it difficult to be “on the spot” to have an answer prepared before they are called upon. Encourage students to add to, or change, their answers during the discussion.

- 1** What was mankind like at this time? (6:5)
- 2** Do you think that has changed? Read Genesis 8:21 and Romans 3:10-18.
- 3** Have a look at Hebrews 11:7. Why did Noah obey God? What therefore saved Noah?
- 4** Why did God send the flood? What does this show about how God feels about sin?
*God takes sin very seriously. He doesn't just ignore it. It is offensive to him.
God will judge sin.*





The ark is a picture of salvation – both literal and symbolic. In the ark, Noah and his family were kept safe from God’s judgment. Noah was not sinless – the Bible tells us that all have sinned (Romans 3:23) – but he was saved because God provided a way of salvation. In Noah, we see that God is the one who acts to save men and women.



Read together: Genesis 11:1-9



The motive behind the building of the city and the tower is the problem in this passage. God is not under threat from the project. Rather, man is rebelling once again from God’s lawful rule.

Direct students to use verse 4 to contrast the worship of God with the ideas of the builders of Babel.

True Worship of God	The builders of Babel
God is the Supreme King and deserves all praise and glory.	The people wanted to build this city and tower in order to “make a name” for themselves. They have no interest in glorifying the Creator. They wish to glorify themselves.
God’s people trust in him to care and provide for them.	They did not want to be scattered. They wanted security in each other and the city they would build. They wanted to be self-sufficient without reference to God.

Have the students fill in the summary sentence:



Sin is *offensive to God* and he will *justly judge it*. He also provides *a way of salvation* for those who *have faith in him*.

4. THE FLOOD & THE TOWER OF BABEL

Pray

Heavenly Father, we too are sinful and do not worship you as we should. Forgive us and continue to change our hearts so that we worship you willingly and in ways that please you. In Jesus' name, Amen.



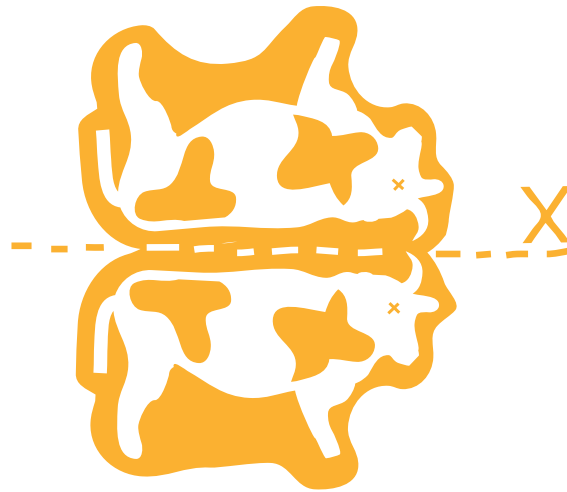
For next week: Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Extension Activities

More of the passages concerning Noah could be read, especially 8:20 – 9:17 in which God makes a covenant with Noah and his descendents.

Draw a scale drawing of the ark according to the approximate dimensions given in the footnotes for Genesis 6:15-16. Alternatively, chalk out the real dimensions in the car park.



THE COVENANT

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: God establishes a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a forerunner to the later covenant made through Jesus.

Other main ideas

- God establishes a nation to demonstrate his covenant through law and grace.
- God's promise of a land, family, name and future blessing to all nations.
- Meaning of a covenant.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: Genesis 15:1-21.

This lesson covers a lot of wonderful stories that we can't go into. Yet, students should get an idea of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and understand the history leading up to the Israelites' time in Egypt. They will also meet the covenant promises given to Abraham. As a chosen text, we will focus on when God declares his covenant with Abraham in Genesis chapter 15. The students can read this passage directly from the Bible or you may choose to retell the story dramatically.

In Old Testament times, a covenant was an agreement or contract between two parties. The covenant made by God with Abraham in chapter 15 resembles a typical process for making a covenant or treaty of Abraham's day. Animals would be sacrificed and cut into halves. These halves would then be laid out opposite to each other and the two parties would walk between the animals to seal the covenant. In doing this, they declared that the other party may do to them what had been done to the animals if they did not keep their part of the covenant. In the case of God's covenant, God not only stipulates the terms and conditions, but he alone passes between the animals taking on the burden of fulfilling the covenant and his promises to Abraham. If you would like to know more about this style of covenant or treaty making in Old Testament times, some suggested sources are listed in the further reading section.

The concept of covenants is essential when understanding the way God chose to deal with the human race, not only in the Old Testament, but also the New, as Jesus talked about "the new covenant" in his blood. We come to God on his terms and through the way that he has graciously made for us. In the sacrifices of the animals, we see that sin's seriousness dictates the death penalty for sin. This requires that blood be shed for the forgiveness of sins and for restoring our relationship with God. The sacrifice of the animals in this covenant mirrors the sacrifice that Christ himself made to bring about the new covenant.

5. THE COVENANT

In chapter 15, verse 6, it is very clear that Abraham's salvation, and the covenant that God makes with him, is based on faith and is given by grace, not because of works. Abraham believed God's promise and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. So the covenant made is a covenant of grace, not works, countering the misunderstanding that in the Old Testament God somehow dealt with his people on a different basis to that which he chose in the New Testament after Christ's death and resurrection.

Further Reading

Baldwin, J. (1986), *The Message of Genesis 12 – 50: From Abraham to Joseph*, BST series, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester.

Kidner, D. (1967), *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Genesis*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester.

Weeks, N. (1995), *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Heavenly Father, guide us as we read and study your word. Teach us your ways and direct us so that we might live in accordance with your will and good pleasure. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Revise last week's **memory verse**.

What do the students already know about Abraham? Do a quick brainstorming exercise to get as many ideas down as possible. Conclude by reading Genesis 12:1-5.



Abraham was a man chosen by God to begin a new nation – the people of God – and to enter into a special relationship with God.

Read the summary paragraph of the history of Abraham (also on student sheet).



History of Abraham

Abraham and his wife Sarah were called to leave his family and country and travel to a new place God had promised to show him. Abraham and Sarah lived most of the rest of their lives dwelling in tents, as strangers in the land God promised to give them.

God made a number of specific promises – covenants – with Abraham that were promises not just for him, but for his descendants also. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, many descendants, a great name, and that all peoples on earth would be blessed through his offspring. Abraham did not know it, but his offspring, Jesus, would bring the greatest possible blessing to the earth. Abraham did not see all of these promises fulfilled in his own lifetime but he trusted that God would keep all his promises.

One of the promises given to Abraham was that he would have a son. Sarah was already quite old and had not been able to have any children. Abraham and Sarah did have a child, Isaac, when Sarah was about 90 years old. To Isaac were passed down all the special promises made to Abraham. These promises then continued down to one of Isaac's sons, Jacob.



Read together Genesis 15:1-21



Activities

Read together the explanation paragraph about the symbolism in the cutting in half of the animals (also printed on the student sheet).

Making a covenant

The word covenant means an oath-bound relationship or agreement. God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15.

This process was a well-known method for making a treaty or covenant in Abraham's day. Animals would be sacrificed and cut into halves. The halves would then be laid out opposite each other and the two parties making the agreement would walk between the animals to seal the covenant. This symbolised that the other party may do to them what had been done to the animals if they did not keep their part of the covenant.

With Abraham, God set all the conditions for the covenant and he alone passed between the animals showing that he was taking full responsibility for ensuring that the covenant promises were fulfilled. To Abraham, this must have been an awesome sign of how serious God was about his promises to Abraham and his descendants.

Answer the key questions either as a group discussion, or individually and then revised as a group.

- 1 What is Abraham promised in verse 4?
- 2 What is Abraham promised in verse 6?
- 3 What is Abraham promised in verses 7 and 18?
- 4 What do we learn about Abraham's relationship with God in verse 6?



Abraham's right standing before God (credited as righteousness) was based on his faith.

The Bible teaches that salvation, or a right relationship with God, comes through faith in him. We enter into a relationship with God through faith and our response to God is then obedience.

5. THE COVENANT



Read: Genesis 22:17-18



God promised Abraham that through his seed or offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Ask the students how they think this promise was fulfilled.

- 5** How was the promise fulfilled that all nations would be blessed through one of Abraham's offspring?
Jesus was the fulfilment of the promise. When God made the covenant with Abraham, he was putting into effect the plan he had for bringing people from all nations into a relationship with him through Jesus.

Have the students fill in the summary sentence:



Abraham, Isaac and Jacob entered into a **covenant relationship** with God **through faith**.



For next week: Genesis 15:6

Abram believed the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Pray

Gracious Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we could never come to you if you hadn't provided a way for us through Jesus' obedient life and death on the cross for our sins. We thank you that, through faith in your promises given to us in your word, we can know you and be a member of your covenant family. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Extension activities

Ask students to investigate one of the following pages each and report back to the group using the questions below as a guide.

Genesis 17:1-11; Genesis 26:2-6; Genesis 28:10-17; Genesis 35:9-13

- 1** Who was the promise(s) given to?
- 2** What does God promise to do?
- 3** What (if anything) was required of the receiver of the covenant?
- 4** Was there anything in the passage that revealed something about God and his nature?

Read together the summary of Abraham's life given in Hebrews 11:8-13. Notice that Abraham's relationship with God was by faith, not works.

Read about the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 and look at the parallels to Christ's sacrifice for us.



BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: In the Exodus, God kept his covenant promises and saved his people. In the Passover, we can see a picture of the ultimate way God would save his people.

Other main ideas

- The spotless lamb sacrificed to save God's people from judgment is a picture of the Lamb of God and the salvation from that comes through his blood.
- Formation of the nation of Israel and understanding of the history of this period.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: 12:1-16, 21-30

The events of the Exodus, like those of Noah, are an act of redemption and salvation. Through the Exodus, God saved his people from bondage and continued to order events towards the fulfilment of the covenant promises regarding the land of Canaan. And, at the same time through the Passover, God was also revealing more of his ultimate plan of salvation in the person of Jesus Christ. This is a key moment in God's progressive revelation about himself and his plan of salvation. We see the idea of the blood of an innocent sacrifice turning aside the divine judgment of God and saving those sheltering under its provision.

Some students will be aware of the parallels between the Passover and the death of Jesus and will have discussed it before. It is important that they see this not as an isolated act of God's revelation, but part of their growing understanding of how the whole of God's revelation points to Christ, the ultimate mystery now revealed.

Students need to see the Passover and the Exodus not just in terms of the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. They must see God's redemptive act as both saving his people at that time, and also in setting in place a lasting ceremony that would help believers recognise the true and final salvation that would one day come. If we understand the events of Exodus, this shines a light for us when we read about Jesus sitting at the Passover table on the night he was betrayed, breaking the bread and sharing the wine, and saying to his disciples, "This is the new covenant in my blood."

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Heavenly Father, teach us now we pray, through your word and your Spirit working in our hearts. Give us ears to hear and hearts eager to obey. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Revise last week's **memory verse**.

Read the summary passage of the history of Isaac and Jacob (also printed on student sheet).



Isaac and Jacob

The child of God's promise was Isaac. He inherited the covenant relationship with God and the promises that had been given to Abraham. Isaac had twin boys, Esau and Jacob. Normally, Esau, who the first born, should have inherited the promises and the covenant. However, God had decided it would be Jacob who would continue the line of the promise from Abraham. Esau first sold his birthright to Jacob and then was also tricked out of the blessing for the firstborn by Jacob.

Now Jacob had to escape from Esau and live for many years with his uncle, Laban. Eventually, Jacob returned to the land of Abraham and Isaac. One the way back, God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Israel had 12 sons and their descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel.

One of Jacob's sons was Joseph. He was Israel's favourite, and because of this earned the jealousy of his brothers. They sold him, without his father's knowledge, to be a slave in Egypt. But God had a special purpose for Joseph. Joseph eventually became second in command of all Egypt and through God's revelation to him was able to arrange for grain to be stored in preparation for a devastating famine.

The famine affected not only Egypt, but Jacob's land as well. As a result, Joseph's brothers were sent to buy food in Egypt, not knowing that the man they were purchasing food from was actually the brother they assumed was dead. When it was all finally revealed, Jacob and his sons came to live in Egypt with Joseph, and were provided for and protected from the famine. It would be 430 years before Jacob's descendants would go back to the land God had promised them.

God's people were now slaves in Egypt. God had not forgotten his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and set about rescuing his people. The Egyptians would not let the Israelites go, and so God sent plagues and punishments upon them. Each time the Pharaoh would agree to let the people go and then, once the plague had stopped, he would change his mind again. Finally the Lord sent a terrible judgment on the Egyptians – the plague of the death of the firstborn. However, God made a way for the Israelites to be saved from this punishment – the Passover.



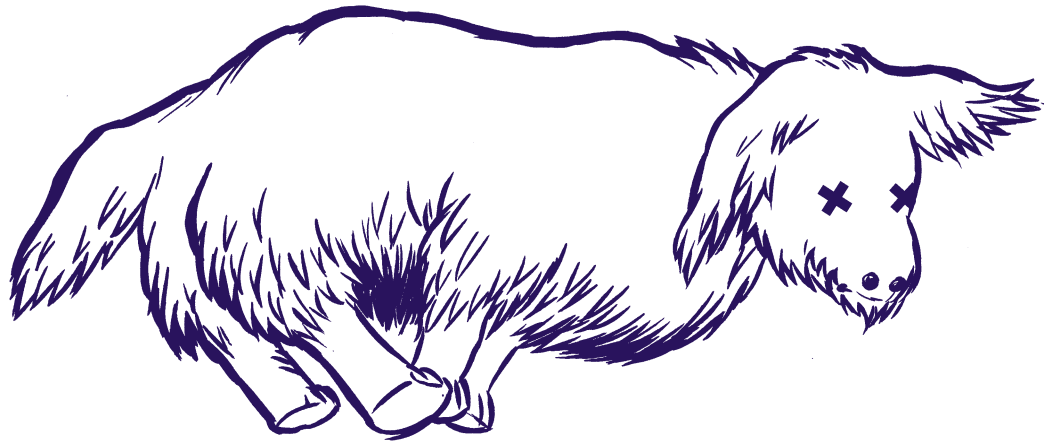
ISAAC



ABRAHAM



JACOB



Read together Exodus 12:1-14, and 12:21-30.

Activities

Have the students work through the following key questions and then discuss together.

1

What special qualities did the animals used for the Passover have to have (12:5)?

Must be year-old males and must be without defect or blemish.

2

What was done with the blood of the sacrificed animal? Why?

The blood was to be brushed on to the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses of the Israelites.

The blood was a sign those in the house were trusting in God, and they would be spared from judgment.

3

Why was it called the “Passover”?

Because the LORD passed over those houses with the blood.



God saved his people from the plague of the death of the first born by providing a way of escape for them. He also saved them from slavery in Egypt. The Egyptians finally let them go and all of Israel's descendants headed back towards the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God did not want them to forget that he had rescued them so he instructed the people to eat the Passover meal once every year. This not only reminded the people of how God had saved them, it also was a picture for them of the final salvation that God would one day bring.



Read together: Mark 14:12-26.

6. BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS



When Jesus shared the Passover with his disciples on the night before his death, he broke the bread and shared the wine and said, “This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.”

Ask the students to discuss the ways in which Jesus’ death was symbolised in the Passover.

Jesus was a lamb without blemish – he had no sin. Jesus’ death was a sacrifice on behalf of others. Jesus’ blood shed on our behalf saves us from God’s judgment in the same way as the lamb’s blood saved the Israelites sheltering under it from death.

The students are to pick out three points:

- a lamb without blemish
- in our place
- to turn away God’s punishment

They should write these points on the “doorframe” around the edge of the student sheet.

Ask the students to fill in the summary sentence:



The Passover is a picture of **God saving his people.**
Jesus was **our sacrifice** to save us from **God’s judgment.**

Pray

Thank you, Father, for providing Jesus to die in our place and to save us from the penalty for sin. Thank you for providing a way for us to be saved and to be your people. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



For next week: Hebrews 9:27-28a

Just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.

Extension activities

Have the students read these passages and note how and why Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God: 1 Peter 1:18-21; John 1:29-31; Revelation 5:5-14.

Students could design a poster depicting the blood being spread on the door posts of the house with Jesus’ words “This is my blood of the new covenant” written underneath.

You may want to share some of the elements of a traditional Passover meal with your students and investigate the feast in more detail.



GOD sets the standard

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: God strengthens his covenant with his people to make them a holy nation.

Other main ideas

- The giving of the Ten Commandments as a summary of God's law for his people.
- The whole law taught Israel how to worship, how to govern, how to be safe and healthy and how to love their neighbour.
- The need for God's people to be holy.
- The law does not save – it was given to an already saved people
- The law points out our sinfulness and we look to Christ as the ultimate sacrifice to deal with our sin.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: Exodus 20:1-21

The descendants of Jacob (Israel) are now a distinct nation, set apart by God, to be a blessing to the other nations. God's people were saved in fulfilment of the promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The covenant made at Mt Sinai is not a new covenant – it is an extension and reaffirmation of the earlier one. As God's own household, the people of Israel will need rules to live by. A summation of these is given in Exodus 20:1-21.

A detailed study of the Ten Commandments or the whole of law is not the intention of this lesson. As part of our overview of the Bible, we will concentrate on the giving of the law in the broader context of the progressive revelation of salvation, and we will not investigate the details of that law. Instead, we will look at the fact that the law was given to an already redeemed people, not as a means of redemption but as a consequence of their redemption. Secondly, we will look at the law's position in God's plan for his people.

It is important that the students notice when the giving of the law takes place. It is not given while Israel is still in Egypt. Israel is not told, "Keep these laws and if you are obedient I will save you." Rather, the law is given **after** the Exodus when they have **already** been saved and become God's people – "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." The law therefore does not represent salvation by works. The law represents rules for God's own people – already saved and redeemed – and is part of their sanctification, not their justification. The law becomes the basis for Israel's life – land, economy, government, health, safety, foreign policy and prosperity.

Secondly, the people are asked to commit themselves to keeping the law as their duty under the covenant arrangements. However, we know that they will not be able to keep this law perfectly and so we also see the setting

7. GOD SETS THE STANDARD

up of the tabernacle to deal with the sins of the people that will be ongoing. Paul, in Romans, makes it clear that the law in itself was powerless to deal with sin and so we look to Jesus, who as the final sacrifice, deals with the sins of God's people once and for all.

Further Reading

Wilkinson, T.L. (2000), *The Westminster Confession Now*, T. L. Wilkinson, Melbourne. (sections 7.5 and 19.2).

Weeks, N. (1995), *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

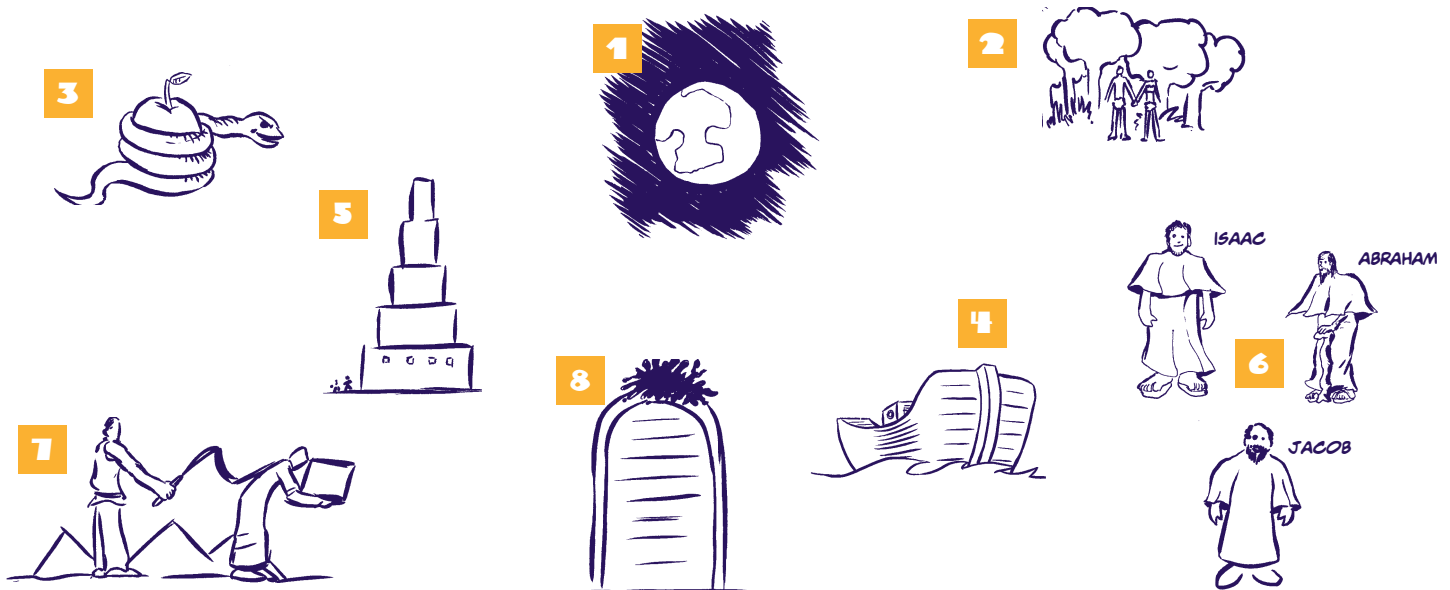
Gracious and loving Father, guide us as we read and study your word. Teach us to know you better and love you more. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Revise last week's memory verse.

Revise the lessons so far by having the students order the cartoon of the Bible events leading up to today's lesson. Briefly discuss and remind students of the key sentence summaries so far.

Can you remember the order?



God has saved his people – for what purpose? To be his own holy nation.



Through the Exodus, God has saved his people and is leading them towards the promised land. However, as well as fulfilling his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God has a special purpose for the Israelites. They are to be his special people, a nation holy to him. As God's people and household, they will need to know how to live as pleases him.



Read: Exodus 20:1-21.

Activities



God has saved Israel and now initiates a contract with them in which he will be their God and they will be his people. As such, they need guidelines with which to order their worship, their personal lives and their life as a nation.

Together discuss the following questions:

- 1** In verse 2, what motivation does God give the people for obeying his law?
He saved them out of slavery. Their obedience is to be a response of love and thankfulness.
- 2** How hard would it be to keep this law perfectly?
- 3** Read Jesus' words in Matthew 5:21-22 and 27-28. What does this indicate about how the law was to be kept?
Not just external obedience to the letter of the law, but God requires internal obedience to the spirit of the law as well.
- 4** Now, how hard would it be to keep this law perfectly?
- 5** Read Leviticus 1:1-5 What does God set up for the people of Israel to deal with the sin that will go on?
A system of sacrifices, where an innocent, unblemished animal bears the punishment that provides atonement (literally "covers") for their sin.



So the law does not fix the problem of sin. The law does not save them – God has already done that and they will be saved if they believe the promises. And they are not able to keep the law – God sets up the tabernacle and the sacrifices to deal with that. So why does God give them the law?

Firstly, God says, "I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy because I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45). As God's representative people, they are to imitate God's holiness. If we have trusted in Jesus and are part of God's covenant family then we too ought to be holy because he is holy.

But secondly, God's law had another purpose – that of making sin more obvious.



Read: Romans 5:19-21.

- 1** Did the giving of the law solve the problem of sin?
No, the trespass increased.

7. GOD SETS THE STANDARD



Read: Galatians 3:21-24.

2

What was the purpose of the law?

Not to bring the solution to sin, but to lead us to Christ so that we might be justified by faith.



So the law shows up our sinfulness and makes us realise how far we are from obeying as we should. The law was not intended to be instead of a Saviour. It points away from itself as the solution to sin and directs us to Jesus who fulfilled the law on our behalf.

Ask students to fill in the summary sentence:



The law was given to **God's people** after **their salvation** to show them how **they ought to live in holy obedience** to the LORD.

Pray

Heavenly Father, we know that we fail to live as a holy people and fall far short of an obedient life. Thank you for sending Jesus to pay for our sins and to live an obedient life on our behalf. Please help us to strive to be holy as you are holy and to take sin seriously. In Jesus' name, Amen.



For next week: 1 Peter 1:15.

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

Extension activities

To look at the law in a larger context than the summary given in the Ten Commandments, use a whiteboard or large sheet of paper to draw a box like this. Have the students find different laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and sort them into the three categories given. Three examples have been given to start with.

Try to sort these laws;

Lev. 7:2-4; Lev. 11:42; Lev. 19:31; Lev. 19:36; Deut 12:5-6; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 20:20.

Ceremonial/Religious	Civil	Moral
Leviticus 2:14-16	Deuteronomy 22:8	Deuteronomy 5:21



THE PEOPLE OF GOD Living in the Promised Land

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: The blessings and curses are given in the context of an already saved people. Obedience to the law cannot save us because our obedience is never perfect.

Other main ideas

- God's grace is found even in the curses – see the prophecy of Israel's failure and God's promise to be faithful still.
- In Judges we see the failure of the people of God.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passages: Deuteronomy 28:1-8,15-20, 45-50; 30:1-10; Judges 2:10 – 19; 21:25.

Deuteronomy occurs at a climatic moment in Israel's history. The previous generation defied the LORD's command to go and enter the land. They died in the wilderness. Their children now stand in their place ready to enter Canaan. At this point, God reaffirms and renews his covenant with his people and sets before them the holy way he requires them to live. They are asked to bind themselves to this covenant and to seek to obey the LORD in the land they are going to possess. Two options are set before them – blessings and curses. They are reminded of what God has done for them in rescuing them from slavery in Egypt and providing for them all through their wilderness experience. If they stay faithful to him, he will bless them. If, having been redeemed and brought out as his own special people, they now choose to depart from him and follow other gods, they will face judgment.

A misunderstanding of this passage would be to assume that God is instituting a covenant of works and to contrast this with God's free grace in Christ Jesus. But the context clearly shows that Israel is not being asked to earn their relationship with God through obedience. Rather, they are being asked to be obedient because God has already saved them and brought them into relationship with him by his sovereign grace. It is important for the students to see that salvation and a relationship with God is always a work of grace, both in the Old and New Testaments. You might want to remind them of Abraham's righteousness being credited to him through faith not works. True obedience is a result of a right relationship with God.

Sadly, Deuteronomy also forecasts Israel's disobedience and future judgment. In Judges we see a cycle of sin and disobedience that continues in spite of God's mercy. That Israel could not obey tells us much about the sinfulness of man. Even with all that God had done for them, the miracles they had seen and the deliverance he brought them

8. THE PEOPLE OF GOD LIVING IN THE PROMISED LAND

time and time again, they still persisted in their sin. The outward circumcision was fruitless unless combined with an inward circumcision of the heart (Deut. 30:6). Even in the face of this rebellion however, God still signals his mercy. In Deuteronomy 6:4-8 we see God's promise to gather back his own people, even after severe judgment. It is important that the students understand that the law was powerless to bring about true righteousness because of sin. This does not mean that the law was a failed experiment on God's part. It was never intended as the basis of righteousness; the sacrificial system already pointed to the one that was to come and be the ultimate atonement.

A problem that may arise when studying the blessings and curses passages, relates to the promise of material blessings for obedience. Is the Christian who is not financially well-off a disobedient Christian? Should we expect to gain material blessings for obedience in this life? Clear teaching in the New Testament contradicts this view. The material blessings promised to the children of Israel have spiritual parallels for us in New Testament times but we must remember that we are not the nation of Israel. While there are many relevant applications of this passage to the Christian, to apply it as a direct promise to us today is a misapplication of Scripture.

Further Reading

Weeks, N. (1995), *Gateway to the Old Testament*, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for your enduring word and ask for your help today as we seek to understand it and apply it to our own lives. Give us hearts that are ready to hear your word and eager to obey. Help us not to forget what we learn, but to put it into action. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Review last week's **memory verse**. Today would also be a good time to ask them how they are going in their long-term homework assignment of reading Genesis and Exodus (if you have set this). Some students may even be ready to commence Deuteronomy.

Ask students to think back to the promises made by God to Abraham. Ask them to name them if they can (many descendants, a great name, a land, all people on the earth would be blessed through him) and list them on a board or large sheet of paper.



Having been rescued from Egypt, God's people, who are now a very numerous nation, are about to enter the land of Canaan to possess it. Before they do this, God stops them at the edge of the desert and renews his covenant with them. Israel was told to enter the land forty years earlier but refused to obey God's command. As a result, God had them wander in the desert for forty years until that generation had passed away and their children had taken their place. Now God reminds them of all he has done in saving them and asks them to commit themselves to following his ways and worshipping him alone.



Read: Deuteronomy 28:1-8, 15-20; 30:19-20.

Activities

Answer the following questions together as a group.

- 1** What were the two ways Israel could choose?
Obedience or disobedience (unfaithfulness).

- 2** What was the result of obedience?
Blessing in everything they did.

- 3** What was the result of disobedience?
Curses – things would go badly for them.

- 4** Turn to Deuteronomy 5:5-6. Notice that here God restates the commandments he gave them earlier. Note in verse 6 the opening to the commandments. What does this tell us about the people's motivation for obedience?
A response to all God had already done for them.



So it is important for us to recognise that God was not asking these people to obey him in order to earn the position of belonging to him or being saved by him. He had already done that for them. God was asking them to obey as a response of love and because they were already his special people.



The people of Israel crossed the Jordan River and went into Canaan. You can read about it in Joshua 3 – 4. They take possession of the promised land and begin to live in it as God's special nation.



- 5** How well does the nation of Israel end up following God's way?

8. THE PEOPLE OF GOD LIVING IN THE PROMISED LAND



Read Judges 2:10-19, 21:25.

God already knew that this would be the outcome.

Examine what God says to Moses in Deuteronomy 31:16 -18. God's plan does not rest in the law as the solution to sin. He plans to be merciful even after the people have been rebellious. Read Deuteronomy 30:1-6.



So the people of Israel fail to be faithful. The promises made to Abraham are in some way completed but there is more to come. Through the ongoing sacrificial system we see glimpses of something that is still incomplete. God's plan is still proceeding.

Have students fill in the summary sentence:



God's people Israel did **not obey** and **failed to keep** God's covenant.

Pray

Heavenly Father, through our own disobedience we fail you and do not live as your word requires. Forgive us because of Jesus' work for us and teach us, through your word and by your Spirit, to obey you and love you with our whole heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.



For next week: Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Extension activities

Further reading in book of Judges to see the cycle of Israel's obedience and disobedience would be great. For example, choose from Judges 3:12-15; 3:30-4:3; 6:1-10; 8:28, 33-34; 10:6-16. Notice the recurring themes of disobedience, punishment, repentance and deliverance.



A King in Israel

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: David as King was a picture of the Messiah to come, and the blessings of life under God's kingdom.

Other main ideas

- David was a sinful person even as God's King. Jesus is the perfect King.
- God's people were safe, happy and blessed as they obeyed God's laws.
- Israel reached her height of victory, power and prosperity under David and Solomon.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Passage: 2 Samuel 7:8-16

Throughout the Old Testament, God foreshadows his plan of salvation in Christ in various ways. In the sacrificial system (which we have looked at briefly in the Passover and will look at in more detail when we focus on the temple next week) we see the use of an atoning sacrifice to teach that God's wrath must be turned aside. In King David, we see a person who is a type of Christ in a number of ways. He is a deliverer, a prophet, and a king. It is not possible to cover all the different aspects of how David foreshadows Christ in one lesson. In this lesson, we will focus on his kingship and rule over Israel, and its representation of Jesus' rule as King.

Israel had been in possession of the land of Canaan for many years. They asked God to give them a king so that they would "be like all the other nations" (1 Samuel 8:20). Saul is appointed first, but was eventually rejected as king by God because of his sin. David was anointed as the new king and is called by God, "a man after my own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). David was of course a human person, sinful and fallible, but yet in many ways his role in Israel's history and his actions were pictures of what Jesus would do as the true King of Israel.

What was it about David's time as king that makes him a picture, or a type, of Jesus? Firstly, he stands in contrast to the king before him, Saul, and the kings that come after him beginning with Solomon. Saul did not submit to God and was disobedient when tested by God. David is tested and humiliated and yet is faithful and obedient. Israel looked to Saul as a political king who would make them like the nations around them. David came as a king who ruled under God and was obedient to the LORD. Through David, Israel gained victory over their enemies, and David's rule although not sinless or perfect, put Israel on the right track. David's time was looked back on as the best time for Israel – as good as it gets. It represents God's people living in obedience under God's King. Jesus comes as the obedient King who is victorious and calls God's people to live in obedience.

In 2 Samuel 7:8 -16, God tells David that David's kingdom would be established forever and that one of his own

9. A KING IN ISRAEL

offspring would sit on the throne. However, that promise is not fulfilled in terms of political power. In fact, David's kingdom eventually separates and falls into the hands of invaders as part of God's judgment. The offspring spoken of is Jesus, and the kingdom is not a political but a spiritual kingdom. Jesus is this descendant of David who will rule forever. That Jesus is from David's house is important – in Matthew chapter I, Jesus is called, "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham". And the angel tells Mary about her son, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" Luke 1:32-33.

Further Reading:

De Graaf, S. G. (1978), *Promise and Deliverance: Volume II The Failure of Israel's Theocracy*, Paideia Press, Ontario.

Kaiser, W.C. Jnr (1978), *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, Zondervan, Michigan.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Heavenly Father, we praise you for your never-failing love and compassion towards us as sinners. We thank you for your word that teaches us about you and tells us how we can be part of your family. Help us today as we study your word to think, speak and act in ways that are pleasing in your sight and help us to understand more about you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ask the students to tell you what they already know about David. Compile a combined list on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard. Include things like:

- the son of Jesse
- a shepherd before he was king
- fought Goliath
- could play an instrument
- best friends with Jonathan
- Saul tried to have him killed
- became king of Israel
- a good soldier
- committed adultery with Bathsheba
- had a number of wives
- wrote most of the Psalms.

In doing this you should aim to get the students to remember and create an overview of David's life as the background to today's lesson.

An alternative to this, would be to come prepared with a large sheet of paper with a drawn symbol for each of the above mentioned things, for example, a shepherd's crook, a slingshot, a crown, a musical instrument, etc. Then ask the students to identify the part of David's life that the symbol might represent. You could do a few and then ask the students to suggest other things and add them to the pictorial list.



We learnt last week that God's people took possession of the land promised to Abraham. The nation of Israel eventually asked God for a king to rule over them. The first king was Saul, but he was rejected by God because of his sin. God then called David to be king over Israel. In today's lesson we will look at God's promise to David that David's descendent would be king forever. The passage takes place after David has been established as king of Israel and has decided to build a temple as a permanent place for the worship of God. In this passage, God tells David that rather than David building a house for him, God will build David an everlasting kingdom.



Read: 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Activities

1

What does God mean in v 12 when he says he will, “establish a house” for David?

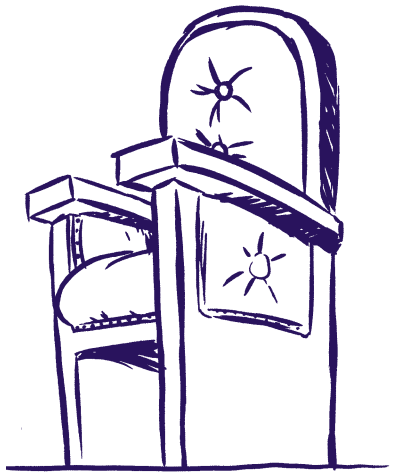
A “house” when applied to a king means a dynasty or people from the same family ruling for generations, for example, “The House of Windsor”.

God is promising that David's family will be rulers.

2

How long does God say this kingdom of David will last (v12 – 13)?

Forever.



God promises David that his throne will be established forever. But David's kingdom doesn't last! His son Solomon does take the throne but, in the next generation, the nation of Israel is divided into two. Eventually, God judges Israel and Judah and the country is taken over and the descendants of Israel taken into captivity. Did God break his promise? Where is this kingdom of David's today and where is the promised descendant who will sit on the throne forever?



Read: Luke 1:26-33

1

What is Mary told about the child she will bear?

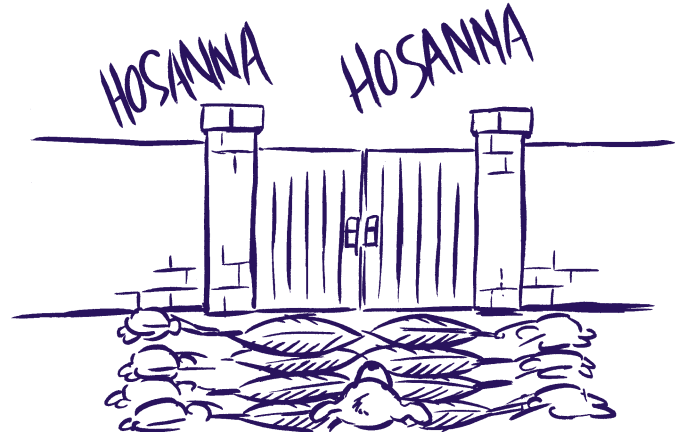
Mary is told that the child she will bear will have the throne of his father David and rule forever.

9. A KING IN ISRAEL



Read together Matthew 21:4-11 and Mark 11:8-11

- 1** In what way is Jesus welcomed into Jerusalem?
Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem as the king (Matt. 21:5 and Mark 10). He is the fulfilment of the promise to David that someone from his family would rule forever. Jesus is no ordinary king – he is the ultimate King who will rule perfectly and save his people from their sins.



Challenge the students by asking them to consider the following: Jesus is Saviour and King. Is he king in your life? Discuss as a group what it means to have Jesus as our king now.

Have students fill in the summary sentence:



God promised *David* that one of his descendants would be *king* forever.

Pray

We recognise that you are King over all. You have the right to rule our lives and we ask your forgiveness for the times that we have rebelled against You. Thank you for always keeping your promises to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



For next week: 2 Samuel 7:28.

O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy and you have given this good promise to your servant.



MEETING GOD in the temple

MAIN IDEAS

Main point: The temple worship shows us a picture of Jesus' work for us.

Other main ideas

- The temple's structure tells us about human sinfulness and the need for cleansing before we can stand before a holy God.
- We learn that we need a mediator to approach God.
- Christ has interceded for us by his sacrifice once and for all.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

The main thrust of this lesson is to show that the sacrificial system pointed to Christ. A common misunderstanding of the Old Testament is that it represented a different way of salvation to the one found in the New Testament. In other words, people sometimes think that sacrifices and the ten commandments were God's "Plan A" and that Jesus was the "Plan B" that was put into effect when "Plan A" did not work. However, the truth is that salvation has always been by faith alone (as we saw with Abraham) and the sacrifices and other institutions set down for the Israelites were all shadows of Christ and pointed to him as the final solution.

The temple is one of the most important of these "shadows" as it has a great deal to teach us about the nature of God and his relationship to sinful man. The temple's pattern was based on the tabernacle design given to the Israelites in the desert under Moses. A number of important aspects of the tabernacle/temple will be dealt with in this lesson but perhaps the most critical is that God chose to dwell there in the midst of his people. That represents the final destiny of God's saved people – "Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." Revelation 21:3.

Further Reading

De Graaf, S. G. (1978), *Promise and Deliverance: Volume II The Failure of Israel's Theocracy*, Paideia Press, Ontario.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Pray

Heavenly Father, be with us now as we seek to understand your holy word and, through your word, to know more of you. Keep our hearts humble and eager to obey. In Jesus' name, Amen.

When Adam and Eve were in the garden, they walked and talked with God. But after they sinned, they could no longer enjoy that close communion with God. Sin separates us from God because he is pure and holy and our sin requires his judgment. But God's desire is to make a way for our sin to be dealt with so that we can once again live with him. In the desert, God was with the Israelites and Moses in a very special way. He chose to dwell in a tent that was among the tents of the people. Once the people were settled in the promised land, God allowed Solomon to build a temple based on the design of the tent as God's own house. His presence was in the temple and God was with his people. Today, we will begin by reading about the temple Solomon built.



Read: **2 Chronicles 3:1-17**

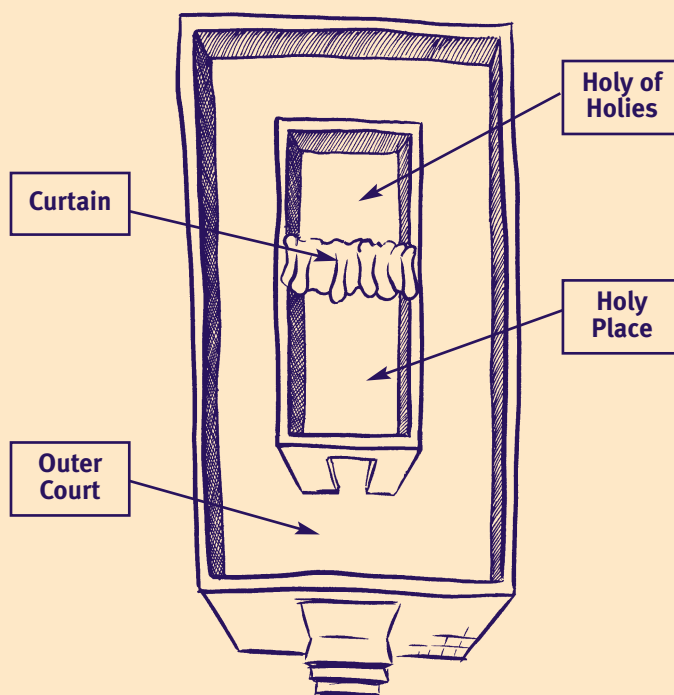
Activities

Draw the students' attention to the diagram in the student sheet. Ask them to fill in the names of the areas in the temple as you discuss them. The words in bold are the labels for the diagram. Become familiar with this material so that you don't have to read it.



The back area was a room that formed a cube. This area was known as the **Holy of Holies**. In it was the ark of the covenant which contained the tablets of stone on which the ten commandments had been written, the rod of Aaron that had budded and a jar of manna. The Holy of Holies was the place in the temple where God's personal presence was. This did not "restrict" God to the temple - he is everywhere. But he chose to be especially present in that place.

Only the high priest was ever allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and only once a year. On that special day, he would enter carrying the blood of an animal sacrifice for the sins of the people. The blood was sprinkled on the gold cover of the ark of the covenant and this blood was to atone for the sins of the people. In this case, to atone means to die in the place of someone else.



The Holy of Holies taught the people about God. It taught them that he was pure and perfect and holy. For God to live in their presence, literally in the middle of their tents or homes, their sin must be dealt with. A holy God cannot live in the midst of sinful people. Of course the blood of the animal did not actually take away or pay for sins. It was rather a picture of the redeemer who was coming, who would offer himself as the one true sacrifice to take away sin.

To separate the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, a **curtain** was hung. This thick curtain was beautifully woven and kept the Holy of Holies in darkness. It completely closed off the Holy of Holies from the priests and the people. Because the true sacrifice had not yet been given, God was still separated from his people. When Jesus died on the cross, this heavy curtain was torn in two from top to bottom, showing that the way to God's presence was now open through Jesus' sacrifice.

The front two-thirds of the temple was known as the **Holy Place**. Only the priests were allowed in there and only after cleansing themselves in the basin outside. The priests would come each day, morning and evening, to offer prayers for the people. They were the mediators – that is they stood between God and his people and interceded with God on the people's behalf.

Then outside the temple was the **outer court**. Here the people could come provided they were clean. Here they could offer sacrifices – for sins, of thanksgiving and to consecrate themselves to God. If a person brought a thank offering to the LORD, then the fat of the animal would be burned on the altar, but most of the remainder of the animal would be eaten by that person in the court, with his family, and in the presence of God.

Ask the students each of the questions listed on the student sheet (and listed with answers below). Have them discuss them as a group, but be sure that their answers reflect the key ideas below.

1 Why did God have all those boundaries?

To teach the people that their sin was serious and that it separated them from him.

2 Why did God have all those sacrifices?

To teach the people that sin can only be dealt with by the death of a substitute.

3 Did the sacrifice actually get rid of sin?

No. It was a symbol that the Israelites were supposed to trust in God's mercy by faith. Only Jesus was the true sacrifice. He was punished for our sins in our place when he died.

4 Should we still be making sacrifices today?

No. Jesus' death dealt with our sin completely. That's why the temple curtain ripped in two when Jesus died.

Much of the book of Hebrews deals with the relationship of the things in the old covenant to Jesus. One passage has been chosen that sums up the ideas covered in this lesson. However, if you have more time, there are several passages listed in order in the extension activities which would be very useful for your students to read.



Ask the students to read Hebrews 10: 1-4, 11-14.

10. MEETING GOD IN THE TEMPLE



So the “shadow” of the temple was fulfilled in Jesus. He is the new and living way into God’s presence because he sacrificed Himself for our sin. Through him as our mediator and high priest we have received the privilege of being accepted by God. Now, if we have trusted in Jesus, God lives in us by his Holy Spirit and one day we will live with him in eternity in the way he had planned from the beginning.

Have the students fill in the **summary sentence**:



The temple showed that God was **holy** and that **sin** needed to be dealt with through a **sacrifice**.



For next week: **Romans 5:8**

*But God demonstrates his love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Pray

We thank you, Lord, for sending Jesus to be our sacrifice. We admit that we sin and that without Jesus we have no way to enter your presence. We ask you to cleanse our hearts and trust in you to make us clean through Jesus’ blood. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Extension activities

These passages from Hebrews deal with most of the ideas taught in this lesson. Have the students read them with you and discuss them as you go.

Hebrews 8:1-6

Hebrews 9:1-14

Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-14

You may also like to read with your students the account of the tearing of the curtain from Matthew 27:50-54.



SEE FOR YOURSELF is a four year course in Scripture teaching, written, within the Reformed and Evangelical understanding, for students in junior and middle high school years. It is designed to be used in a variety of situations such as church groups, Christian schools, home schools. Indeed wherever there is a young person who desires to learn more of God's ways this course is for them. The course is suitable for ages approximately twelve to seventeen years.

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