

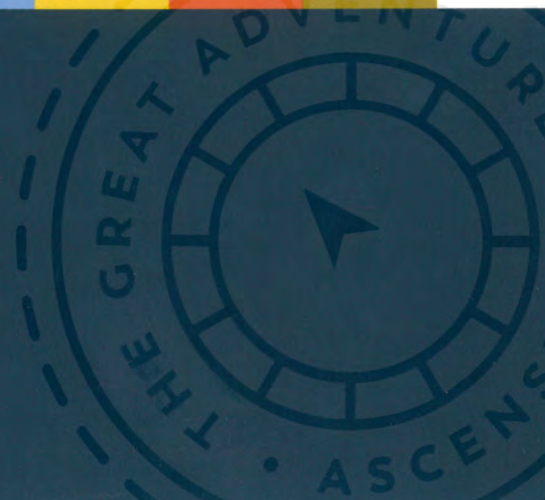


# Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible



JEFF CAVINS and  
SARAH CHRISTMYER

A Quick Journey  
Through Salvation  
History







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A **Quick Journey** Through Salvation History

JEFF CAVINS and SARAH CHRISTMYER





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## Welcome to *The Great Adventure*<sup>™</sup>



*“To fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; to seek him, the greatest adventure.”*  
– St. Augustine of Hippo

The Bible is at the heart of our faith and our relationship with God. Much more than just another book, it is a “place” where our heavenly Father comes down to meet us and speaks to us with love.<sup>1</sup> Millions of people have found it to be a rich source of wisdom, encouragement, instruction, and solace.

Reading the Bible should bring us closer to Christ, but many people find it hard to even begin. *The Great Adventure*<sup>™</sup> Catholic Bible Study Program and *The Bible Timeline*<sup>™</sup> Learning System aim to make the complex simple—to give people a way to read the Bible and understand it ... and so experience its life-changing power.

Since 2002, I have worked with Jeff Cavins in bringing *The Bible Timeline* Learning System to Catholics through various Bible studies and seminars. We are excited to offer this new *Great Adventure* study, *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*. Like its predecessor, *A Quick Journey Through the Bible*, this study seeks to draw you into God’s marvelous plan of salvation as it unfolds throughout Sacred Scripture. It is my prayer that Jeff’s dynamic teaching, in conjunction with the thought-provoking discussion questions and home Bible reading, will open the door to a newfound understanding of God’s Word and his plan for your life.

**Jeff Cavins**, creator and president, *The Great Adventure*  
**Sarah Christmyer**, co-developer and author, *The Great Adventure*

<sup>1</sup> See Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* (DV) 21.



## About *The Great Adventure*

At the core of *The Great Adventure* Catholic Bible Study Program is *The Bible Timeline* Learning System. *The Bible Timeline* presents a simple way of focusing on the story that runs throughout Scripture so that we can see the “big picture” of the Bible. This story is God’s plan as it has unfolded in history and continues to unfold today. When we grasp this story, the Mass readings begin to make more sense, our Scripture reading and study come to life, and we see how our lives fit into God’s loving plan.

Every *Great Adventure* study is designed to foster:

- Familiarity with the Bible and ease of reading it
- Bible study habits consistent with the guidelines of the Catholic Church
- Personal engagement in the Word of God
- Faith-sharing based on the Word of God
- Growth in knowledge about Scripture and the Catholic Faith

## About *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*



*Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* is the starting point of *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible Study Program*. In eight compelling videos, Jeff Cavins presents the story of salvation history from Creation and the Fall through the coming of Christ and the establishment of the Church. In this study, you will learn the story with the aid of an easy-to-use, color-coded *Bible Timeline Chart* and small-group discussion questions, which reinforce the video presentations and help you apply the message to your life.

Building on the basic understanding gained from this study is a series of Bible studies that explore the biblical narrative in light of Catholic teaching. Studies of individual books are supplemented by a growing number of studies on various themes and studies tailored for life application.

*Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* replaces *A Quick Journey Through the Bible*. Because the content has been revised substantially, the workbooks and videos for *A Quick Journey Through the Bible* study are not compatible with *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*.

### Materials

Materials for *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* include:

- **Workbook:** contains engaging discussion questions and responses, home preparation material, Talk Notes, and *The Bible Timeline Chart* and Bookmark. (You will need one workbook for every participant, study leader, and small-group facilitator.)
- **Video Presentations** (eight 30-minute sessions): presented by Jeff Cavins, these eight video presentations provide an overview and explanation of the twelve time periods of biblical history.

In addition, every participant, leader, and small-group facilitator should have a Catholic Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We recommend *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible*. It incorporates the same color-coded *Bible Timeline Learning System* that you will use throughout this program.



## How the Study Works

Each session of *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* study includes three steps:



**NOTE:** A general explanation of each step follows. Because the first session is slightly different from the others, it is described separately.

### Step 1 – Session One: Video Presentation (30–35 minutes)

After your leader welcomes you and introduces you to the study, you will watch a video presentation in which Jeff Cavins explains why we often find it hard to read the Bible and describes how *The Bible Timeline Learning System* will “make the complex simple.”

### Step 2 – Session One: Small-Group Discussion (30–40 minutes)

During the first small-group discussion, you will first review the “Ten Commandments of Small-Group Discussion.” Next, you will go through the discussion questions, which review the main points covered in the video presentation and will help you get acquainted with *The Bible Timeline Chart*. Finally, facilitators will introduce the home preparation required for the next session.

### Step 3 – Session One: Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The workbook provides simple exercises for you to complete at home in preparation for the next session. The exercises for Session One will help you practice using *The Bible Timeline Chart*, guide you as you begin reading the biblical narrative on your own, and provide a preview of Session Two.



### Step 1 – Sessions Two through Eight: Video Presentation (30–35 minutes)

Each session begins with the leader’s welcome and opening review followed by a video presentation. In Sessions Two through Eight, the mystery of the Bible is unpacked as Jeff Cavins tells the story of the Bible, connects it to the Catholic Faith, and reveals how it relates to our lives. Session Eight concludes the program with ways to continue the journey of getting to know God through Scripture.

### Step 2 – Sessions Two through Eight: Small-Group Discussion (30–40 minutes)

You will break into small groups to discuss the video presentation using the discussion questions. In Sessions Two through Eight, these questions draw upon key points made in the video presentations or on Scripture



passages covered in that session. The small-group discussion gives participants a chance to share what they have learned and consider how the Scripture applies to their lives. This life-application focus makes the small-group discussion one of the richest parts of the study.

### Step 3 – Sessions Two through Eight: Home Preparation

For Sessions Two through Eight, your workbook provides simple exercises for you to do at home in preparation for the following session. These exercises provide practice using *The Bible Timeline Chart*, guide you as you begin reading the biblical narrative on your own, and look ahead to the next time period using *The Bible Timeline Chart*. Several passages from the Bible that tell the story of the next time period are offered for those who would like to read ahead.

**NOTE:** Session Eight does not include a “Looking Ahead” component. Instead, ideas are offered to help you “Continue The Great Adventure” of getting to know Jesus in the Bible (see page 64).

## Session Outline and Reading Guide

Session (Video Times)	Title	Narrative Book(s)*
Session One (30:21) (3:24)	Introduction <i>The Bible Timeline Chart</i>	
Session Two (33:01)	Early World	Genesis 1–11
Session Three (36:42)	Patriarchs	Genesis 12–50
Session Four (34:06)	Egypt and Exodus, Desert Wanderings	Exodus; Numbers
Session Five (31:03)	Conquest and Judges Royal Kingdom	Joshua; Judges 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1–11
Session Six (30:49)	Divided Kingdom Exile Return	1 Kings 12–22; 2 Kings 2 Kings 17, 25 Ezra; Nehemiah
Session Seven (33:51)	Maccabean Revolt Messianic Fulfillment:Part 1	1 Maccabees Luke 1–21
Session Eight (34:20)	Messianic Fulfillment:Part 2 The Church Continuing the Journey	Luke 22–24 Acts

\* In *The Bible Timeline*, the term “narrative books” refers to fourteen books of the Bible that tell the story of salvation history from Creation through the establishment of the Church.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Which Bible should I use?

For this study, you will want to use a Catholic edition of the Bible, such as:

- Revised Standard Version–Second Catholic Edition (RSV-2CE): a literal translation recommended for serious Bible study. The verses in this study are consistent with the wording in the RSV-2CE. We recommend *The Great Adventure* Catholic Bible, an RSV-2CE Bible that incorporates the same color-coded *Bible Timeline* Learning System that you will use throughout this program.
- New American Bible (NAB): a less literal, more “dynamic” translation that strives for readability; used in the lectionary at Mass.
- New Jerusalem Bible (NJB): a “dynamic equivalent” translation that is less literal yet strives to be faithful to the original meaning.

### 2. How do I find a Scripture reference in my Bible?

Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters, and each chapter is made up of a series of numbered verses. To aid readers in finding a particular biblical verse, each Scripture passage has an “address,” a location reference made up of the name of the Bible book, followed by the chapter and verse numbers. For example:

- 1 Samuel 7 refers to the entire seventh chapter of the book of 1 Samuel (pronounced “first Samuel” because there also is a 2 Samuel, or “second Samuel”)
- Genesis 1:1 refers to the book of Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 1
- Numbers 5:2-6 refers to the book of Numbers, Chapter 5, verses 2 through 6
- I Corinthians 3:2-6, 7-10 refers to the book of 1 Corinthians (“first Corinthians”), Chapter 3, verses 2 through 6 and verses 7 through 10

Abbreviations are often used in Scripture references. For example, “Jn 3:16” means “John, Chapter 3, verse 16.” A list of abbreviations is found in the front of your Bible. To locate a particular book, use your Bible’s contents page. As a general rule, *Great Adventure* Bible studies do not use Bible book abbreviations.

### 3. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the written expression of the Word of God. Although it contains seventy-three books written over many centuries by many different human authors in several languages, it is also a unified whole because all its books are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and together, they reveal God’s plan of salvation.

Because God inspired the Bible’s human authors, he is the principal Author of Scripture. As such, the Bible is inerrant (“without error”). As the Second Vatican Council’s document on Sacred Scripture, *Dei Verbum* (“Word of God”), states:

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For more on canonicity, inspiration, and inerrancy, see the resources listed on page xii.



## 4. What are the Old and New Testaments?

The books of the Bible are grouped under two headings—the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word *testament* can also be translated “covenant,” which clarifies the meaning of these titles. The Old Testament tells how God made a series of “covenants” (i.e., binding agreements) with his people Israel in which he promised blessing in return for loving obedience. The New Testament tells how God fulfilled this promise of blessing by means of a new and everlasting covenant in his Son, Jesus Christ.

## 5. Why are Catholic and Protestant Bibles different?

Both Catholic and Protestant versions of the Bible contain the same twenty-seven books of the New Testament. It is the Old Testament that differs. The books of the New Testament are arranged in the following order:

- Four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and the Acts of the Apostles
- St. Paul’s letters (or “epistles”) to the early Christian churches – Romans; 1 and 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 and 2 Thessalonians
- “Pastoral letters” – 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews
- “Catholic letters” (James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; Jude) and the book of Revelation

In the early days of the Church, two versions of the Old Testament were used by the Jewish people. One, written entirely in Hebrew, contained thirty-nine books. The other, a Greek translation known as the Septuagint, contained forty-six books—the same thirty-nine as the Hebrew version plus another seven.

In AD 393, the bishops of the Church, with the authority given them by Christ, determined the list of inspired books of Scripture. This list contained the forty-six books of the Septuagint, which had been used by Christians since the first century. So the Old Testament of the Church had forty-six books for more than a thousand years.

During the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the reformers chose to follow the shorter Hebrew collection of thirty-nine books. At the Council of Trent in 1546, the Septuagint’s list of forty-six books was declared by the Catholic Church to be the “canon” (or “authoritative list of inspired books”) of Scripture.

Here are the books of the Old Testament as found in Catholic versions of the Bible, listed by type of literature. The seven “deuterocanonical” books (which Protestants refer to as the “apocryphal books” or “the Apocrypha”) are listed in italics:

- Pentateuch – Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy
- Historical books – Joshua; Judges; Ruth; 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings; 1 and 2 Chronicles; Ezra; Nehemiah; *Tobit*; *Judith*; Esther; *1 and 2 Maccabees*
- Wisdom books – Job; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon (Song of Songs), *Wisdom of Solomon*; *Sirach*
- Prophets – Isaiah; Jeremiah; Lamentations; *Baruch*; Ezekiel; Daniel; Hosea; Joel; Amos; Obadiah; Jonah; Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi

Some deuterocanonical portions of Esther and Daniel are not included in Protestant versions.



## 6. What are the notes that appear in some Bibles?

The explanatory notes that appear in many versions of the Bible reflect the theological stance of their editors and the scholarship at the time of publication. All notes published in Catholic Bibles have received the *imprimatur* of a bishop, which is an official permission to publish that carries with it the assurance that nothing in the book is contrary to the faith or morality of the Church. (An *imprimatur* does not imply that the bishop who granted it agrees with the notes' content or that they are official Church teaching, however.) The notes are not considered part of Sacred Scripture and therefore are not divinely inspired.

## 7. Where can I find answers to my other questions about the Bible?

We recommend the following books and resources:

- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For information about Sacred Scripture, its relationship to Sacred Tradition, and its inspiration and interpretation, see paragraphs 50 through 141. (The *Catechism* is available online and in published editions.)
- *Catholic Bible Dictionary*, Scott Hahn, general editor
- *The Bible Compass: A Catholic's Guide to Navigating the Scriptures*, by Edward Sri
- *Praying Scripture for a Change: An Introduction to Lectio Divina*, by Tim Gray
- *Walking with God: A Journey Through the Bible*, by Tim Gray and Jeff Cavins

### Ten Commandments of Small-Group Discussion<sup>1</sup>

1. Enjoy yourself!
2. Speak with respect and charity.
3. Do not ridicule or dismiss what others say. Keep comments positive.
4. Come prepared.
5. If you were not able to prepare, let others speak first.
6. Stick to the topic and questions at hand.
7. Start and end on time.
8. Allow silence. Give people a chance to think.
9. Listen to others without interrupting.
10. Keep personal matters within the group.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Thomas Smith's original "10 Commandments of a Small Group."

## Staying Focused

As you progress through *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*, you will probably come across things you want to know more about. It is exciting to learn how to read the Bible and explore its riches, but if you try to understand it all at once, you will become frustrated. The Bible is too big to understand all at once.

*Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* makes the complex simple by initially setting aside many of the details to focus on the overall story—the “big picture”—of the Bible. Once you have this “big picture,” you will have a framework to help you understand the entire Bible in its proper context.

The Bible is not a subject to master; it is a place to meet the living Word of God! Approach it with the goal of meeting God, and prepare to be transformed.

## Planning for the Future

When the mystery of the Bible has been “unlocked” and people learn how to read it, they usually find they have more questions. You can feed this new hunger for Scripture by planning your next study now. Consider continuing with *The Great Adventure* foundational study series: *The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation*, *Matthew: The King and His Kingdom*, and *Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom*. These studies are designed to take participants deeper into the Bible while teaching them how to read the Bible as Catholics. Additional studies are offered on various books of the Bible, as well as on biblical themes and people.

For more information about how to plan and promote a Bible study and how to facilitate a small-group discussion, visit [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com) or call 1-800-376-0520.





# Session One – INTRODUCTION



Still Life with Bible by Vincent Van Gogh

**Facilitators:** Welcome participants to your small group and ask them to introduce themselves.

- Explain your role as facilitator.
- Watch the video presentation.
- Review the “Ten Commandments of Small-Group Discussion” and “Staying Focused.”
- Discuss the questions for Session One.

## Introduction Talk Notes

### I. Welcome

**A.** About *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*

**B.** Catholics and the Bible

1. “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them.”<sup>1</sup>
2. Two keys: knowing God’s heart and knowing his ways
3. The Church “exhorts” us to read the Bible (CCC 133)

### II. The Problem ...

**A.** The problem of the “heap”: Catholicism can seem “big”

1. Four “pillars,” or parts, of the *Catechism* help to organize the “heap”
  - a. The Creed

<sup>1</sup> DV 21.

- b.** Sacraments and Liturgy
  - c.** Life in Christ
  - d.** Prayer
- 2.** The Creed (story) comes first
- B.** The Bible is not a book but a library
- C.** Other difficulties

### III. ... And the Plan

- A.** Our need for a story
- B.** The key to reading the Bible: discovering the story
- C.** Making the complex simple
  - 1.** Sorting the “pile”: twelve periods
  - 2.** Keeping it simple: fourteen narrative books
  - 3.** Making it memorable: *The Bible Timeline Chart*

## T • A • K • E • A • W • A • Y • S

- 1.** The Bible tells a love story of God reaching out to you.
- 2.** Get a Bible. Get away. Get together with God.

## Discussion Questions

1. The Church tells us, “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them.”<sup>2</sup> Have you experienced this? In the video presentation, Jeff mentioned common difficulties people have when they start to read the Bible. What has been your experience with Scripture?
2. Many Catholics today feel as though they have received a “heap of Catholicism,” a random pile of separate Bible stories and facts about the Church’s teachings. What solution to this problem do the four “pillars” of the *Catechism* offer?
3. Why is it important to get the “big picture” of salvation history before reading or studying the Bible?

---

<sup>2</sup> DV 21.



4. The “narrative books” section of *The Bible Timeline Chart* gives you the names of fourteen books of the Bible that tell the story of salvation history from beginning to end. They are arranged across the top of the chart immediately below the period names, so you can see the historical time periods they describe. List the narrative books here.

5. Fifty-nine “supplemental books” make up the rest of the Bible. These books are not designated “supplemental” because they are less important than the narrative books, but in this study, we will set them aside to focus on the “big picture.” Once you have learned the chronological story told in these narrative books, you will be better equipped to read the remaining books of the Bible in their historical context.

Look at the top of the purple Royal Kingdom period on your Chart. The books of 1 Samuel 9–31, 2 Samuel, and 1 Kings 1–11 tell the story of this time period, during which God established a kingdom under David and Solomon. What are the “supplemental books” for this time period? (You can find these listed in the Royal Kingdom period on your *Bible Timeline Chart*.)

6. God’s formation of his family through covenants with various people is central to the story of the Bible. These covenants are listed in the Chart in a section called “God’s Family Plan.” You will learn more about these later, but notice the type of family group name with each (“One Holy Couple,” for example). What do you notice about the change in this family group as you move from left to right across the Chart?

7. Key people and events in salvation history are arranged in chronological order along the center of the *Timeline Chart*. This section is divided into three horizontal bands representing different aspects of the Middle East. The central area represents the land of Canaan, where most of the events in the story take place. When the action moves out of Canaan—to the northern countries like Babylon, for example, or to the south and Egypt—the events appear above or below the center area. Look at your Chart: What examples of geographic movement do you see?

8. Check out the events in secular history that are arranged across the bottom of the Chart. Find one you are familiar with. What is going on in the development of God’s plan during this period?

## Overview of Salvation History

The stories in the Old and New Testaments are not disconnected, random events in the history of a people. Rather, each story presents a crucial part of God’s plan. By the end of this study, you will see the “narrative thread” that runs throughout Scripture and continues in your life today.

*The Bible Timeline* Chart groups the stories into twelve consecutive historical periods that are color-coded to help you remember them. Look at each period on *The Bible Timeline* Chart while someone reads the story in outline form as follows:

In the **EARLY WORLD**, God created the heavens and earth and tested Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This period is represented by the color turquoise, which is the color of the earth as seen from space.

In the time of the **PATRIARCHS**, God called Abraham and promised his children land, a royal kingdom, and worldwide blessing. The color burgundy helps us remember the blood covenant God made with him.

In **EGYPT AND EXODUS**, God freed his people from slavery so they could worship him. Red reminds us of the crossing of the Red Sea.

God taught Israel to trust him through forty years of **DESERT WANDERINGS**. What better way to remember those miles of sand than by the color tan?

In **CONQUEST AND JUDGES**, God led Israel triumphantly in the Promised Land, which is represented by green for the lush hills of Canaan.

In Canaan, God established Israel as a **ROYAL KINGDOM** under David and promised him an eternal throne. The color purple represents the royal throne.

Israel soon split into rival kingdoms and fell into idolatry. Black represents the darkness of this **DIVIDED KINGDOM**.

God punished both kingdoms with **EXILE**. Baby blue recalls the people of Judah “singing the blues” in Babylon.

The brighter days of **RETURN** are shown by yellow. God brought the exiles home to make a fresh start.

Years later, the Maccabees stood up against the threats of hellenization in the **MACCABEAN REVOLT**. The color orange calls to mind the oil lamps lit in the purified Temple.

Gold represents the first New Testament period—**MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT**—when at last God sent his only Son, the Messiah, to fulfill his promises. Remember this period’s color by the gold brought by the Magi at Jesus’ birth.

Finally, the **CHURCH** carries on God’s work in the world. Its color is white, for the spotless bride of Christ.

## Closing Prayer

God’s plan unfolded through history and gives us the “story” for our lives. Let us pray in the name of Jesus:

*R: Speak to us as we read your Word!*

## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. The story of salvation history begins at the dawn of time. In the **EARLY WORLD** period, you will learn how the world began, what went terribly wrong, and how God promised to provide a solution.

Use your Chart to fill in the following information:

Period name: **EARLY WORLD** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

List four key people from Jesus’ genealogy:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_

List five key events:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_ 5) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

Name one concurrent event in secular history: \_\_\_\_\_

The story of the **EARLY WORLD** is found in Genesis 1–11. You probably know these stories already, although you may not know how they are connected. We will explain that in the next session. In the meantime, read one or more of them ahead of time, in preparation.

- EARLY WORLD:**
- Genesis 1–3 Creation, Adam and Eve, the Fall
  - Genesis 4 Cain and Abel
  - Genesis 6, 9 Noah and the Flood
  - Genesis 11:1-9 The Tower of Babel



## Understanding *The Bible Timeline Chart*


- Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the parts of the Chart by reading the “Key to Understanding *The Bible Timeline Chart*” on the inside front cover of your Chart, and following along with *The Bible Timeline Chart* video in *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible* video series.
- Review the twelve historic periods by filling in their names and the meanings of their associated colors in the chart below.

Period Name	Color	Color Meaning
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

- Find the Contents page in your Bible. Using your *Bible Timeline Chart* or *Bookmark* as a reference, highlight the fourteen narrative books. If you are not accustomed to finding books in your Bible, take time to locate each narrative book before you continue.



## Session Two – EARLY WORLD



### SETTING THE PLOT FOR THE REST OF THE STORY

### Session Two Talk Notes

- I. Introduction**
  - A.** The Early World on the Chart
  - B.** Reading Genesis 1–11, “a certain type of history”
  
- II. Creation (Genesis 1–2)**
  - A.** The earth
    - 1.** Days 1-3: God brings form
    - 2.** Days 4-6: God fills the void
  - B.** Humanity
    - 1.** Image and likeness (reason, will, capacity for love)
    - 2.** Male and female
    - 3.** Stipulations
  
- III. The Fall (Genesis 3)**
  - A.** The lie of the Enemy: You can be like God without God
  - B.** The first sin: lack of trust in God (CCC 397)
    - 1.** St. Thomas Aquinas: Pride is disordered self-trust
  - C.** The “DNA” of sin (Genesis 3:6-7)



1. Good for food, a delight to the eyes, makes one wise
  2. Focus on the creation versus the Creator
  3. St. Augustine's example of stolen pears
- D.** Original sin: intellect darkened, will weakened, concupiscence
- E.** God has a plan: Genesis 3:15 (Protoevangelium, "first gospel")
- F.** Do you trust God?
1. St. John Paul II: "practical atheism"<sup>1</sup>
- G.** Exile "East of Eden," guard on the Tree of Life
1. John 6: The Cross becomes the Tree of Life, its fruit the Eucharist
  2. KEY: the pattern of exile
- H.** The results of sin
1. Changed relationship with God
  2. Changed relationship with each other
  3. Changed relationship with the earth
- IV.** After the Fall (Genesis 6–11)
- A.** The Flood (Genesis 6–9)
1. God "repents"
  2. A new beginning: covenant with Noah
- B.** The world is populated (Genesis 10)
- C.** The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)
- V.** Conclusion
- A.** There is hope: God has a plan
- B.** Genealogies focus the story

## **T • A • K • E • A • W • A • Y • S**

1. **God does not give up on broken lives.**
2. **God has a plan, and it includes you.**

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, General Audience, April 14, 1999.

## Discussion Questions

1. The story of the Early World is told in Genesis 1–11. Locate the Early World period on your *Bible Timeline Chart*. Who are the main characters, and what are the main events?
2. What does mankind's first sin consist of?
3. What are the consequences of the Fall for Adam and Eve and for us?
4. How do you see those consequences in the lives of the people that follow?
5. Turn to Genesis 3:15 in your Bible. At the outset of the story, what hope is given that the situation will be redeemed?





## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

By the end of the **EARLY WORLD** period, Adam and Eve's descendants have spread throughout the known world. For the rest of the book of Genesis, which narrates the period of the **PATRIARCHS** the story focuses on the family of one man, Abraham, with whom God will establish an everlasting promise of blessing. His descendants will be God's Chosen People, Israel, and through them, God will bless the entire world.

Use your Chart to fill in the following information about this time period:

Period name: **PATRIARCHS** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

List four key people from the Patriarchs period:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the most important event? \_\_\_\_\_

What nation is the current world power? \_\_\_\_\_

The story of the Patriarchs period is full of action and many memorable stories, some of them central not just to Israel's history but to the history of the Church as well. If you do not have time to read Genesis 12–50, try reading one or more of the following passages.

<b>PATRIARCHS:</b>	Genesis 12:1-9	God calls Abraham
	Genesis 15, 17, 22	God's covenant with Abraham
	Genesis 25:19-34	Jacob and Esau
	Genesis 29:1–30:24	Jacob gets married; Jacob's children
	Genesis 32:22-32	Jacob wrestles with God and gets a new name
	Genesis 37–50	Joseph and his brothers: to just get the gist of the story, focus on Genesis 37 and 41–44



## Session Three – PATRIARCHS



### GOD'S EVERLASTING PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

*Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio*

### Session Three Talk Notes

- I. Introduction: Patriarchs on the Chart
- II. God Calls Abram Out of Ur (Genesis 12)
  - A. Significance of the land
  - B. God's promise to Abraham
    1. Three promises (Genesis 12:1-3)
    2. Problem: childlessness (Genesis 15)
    3. Abraham's faith
      - a. Abraham: our father in the Faith (Galatians 3:7)
    4. The meaning of covenant
- III. Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 16–22)
  - A. Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22)
  - B. KEY: Looking for God's lamb
- IV. Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27–36)
  - A. Birthright and blessing



1. Esau sells his birthright
    - a. Esau is a “profane” man (Hebrews 12:16, NAB)
    - b. What is your “lentil soup”?
  2. Jacob steals the blessing
- B.** Exile and marriage
- C.** Wrestling and name change: “Jacob” to “Israel”
1. **KEY:** Twelve sons become twelve tribes
- V.** Joseph and Judah (Genesis 37–50)
- A.** Joseph is sold into slavery
- B.** Joseph in prison
- C.** Joseph is raised to power
1. *al ha-bayit*, “over the household”
  2. New Testament connection: Peter
- D.** Judah’s story (Genesis 37): contrast with Joseph
- E.** Two visits to Egypt
1. Judah’s transformation
  2. What they mean for evil, God means for good
- VI.** Jacob Blesses His Sons (Genesis 49)

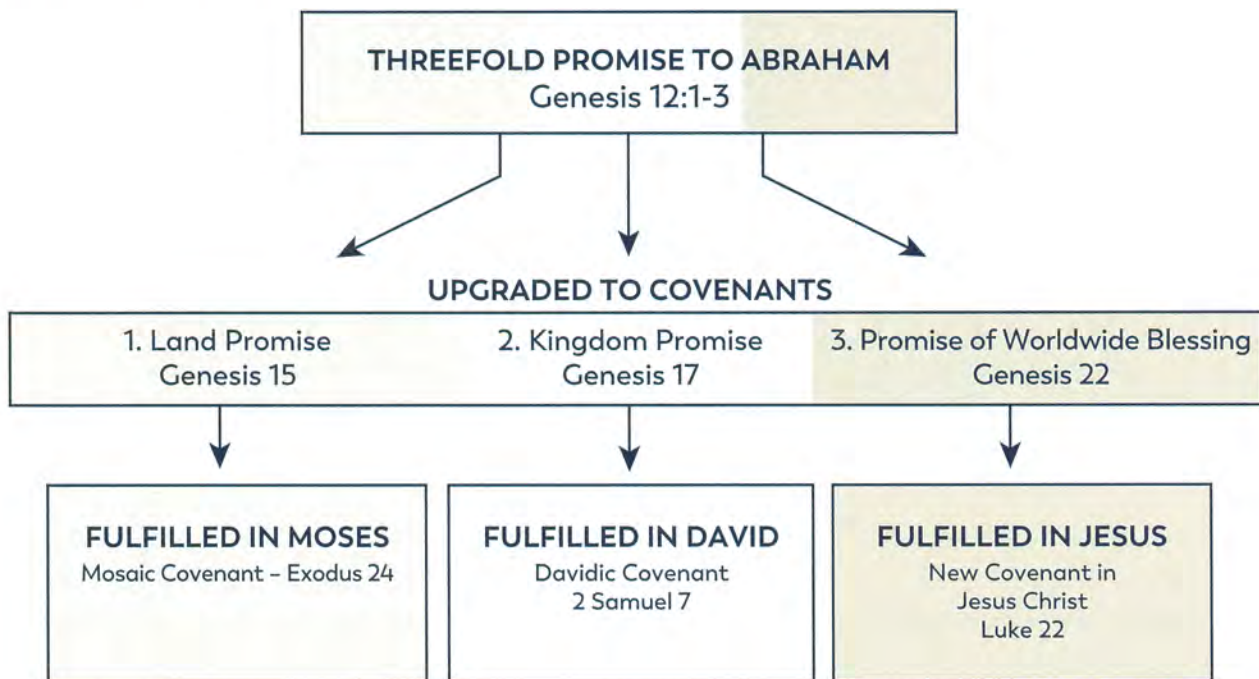
**T • A • K • E • A • W • A • Y • S**

1. You can believe and trust God.
2. God uses difficult circumstances to do marvelous things.

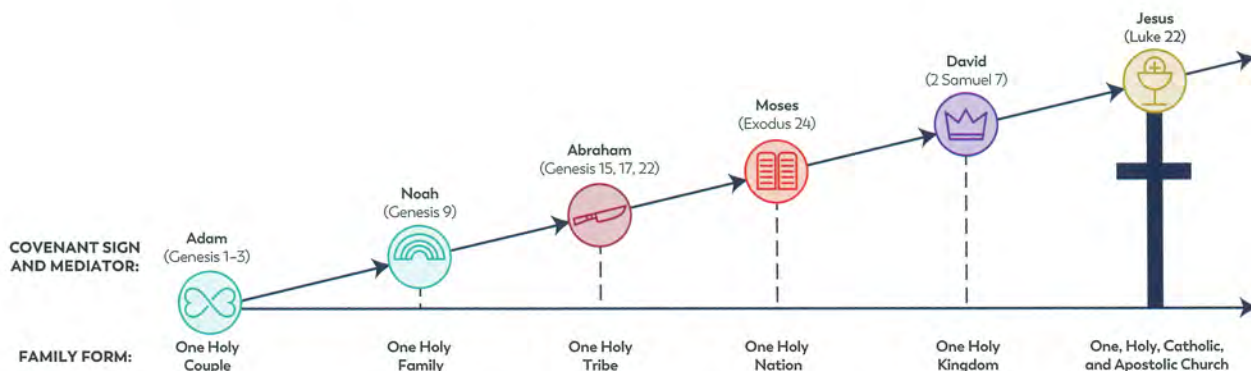
## The Covenantal Structure of Salvation History

The charts below diagram the way salvation history unfolded through a series of covenants God made with his people. Adam and Eve were created in a close relationship with God that was shattered at the Fall. This relationship with God would later be imaged by families and bonds of kinship created through covenantal promises. God moved to restore humanity to relationship with himself by means of a series of covenants.

The first diagram shows how God expands on aspects of the initial promise he made to Abraham in Genesis 12. Each of these covenantal promises to Abraham and his descendants (of land, kingdom, and worldwide blessing) would be fulfilled in a future covenant: the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant in Jesus Christ.

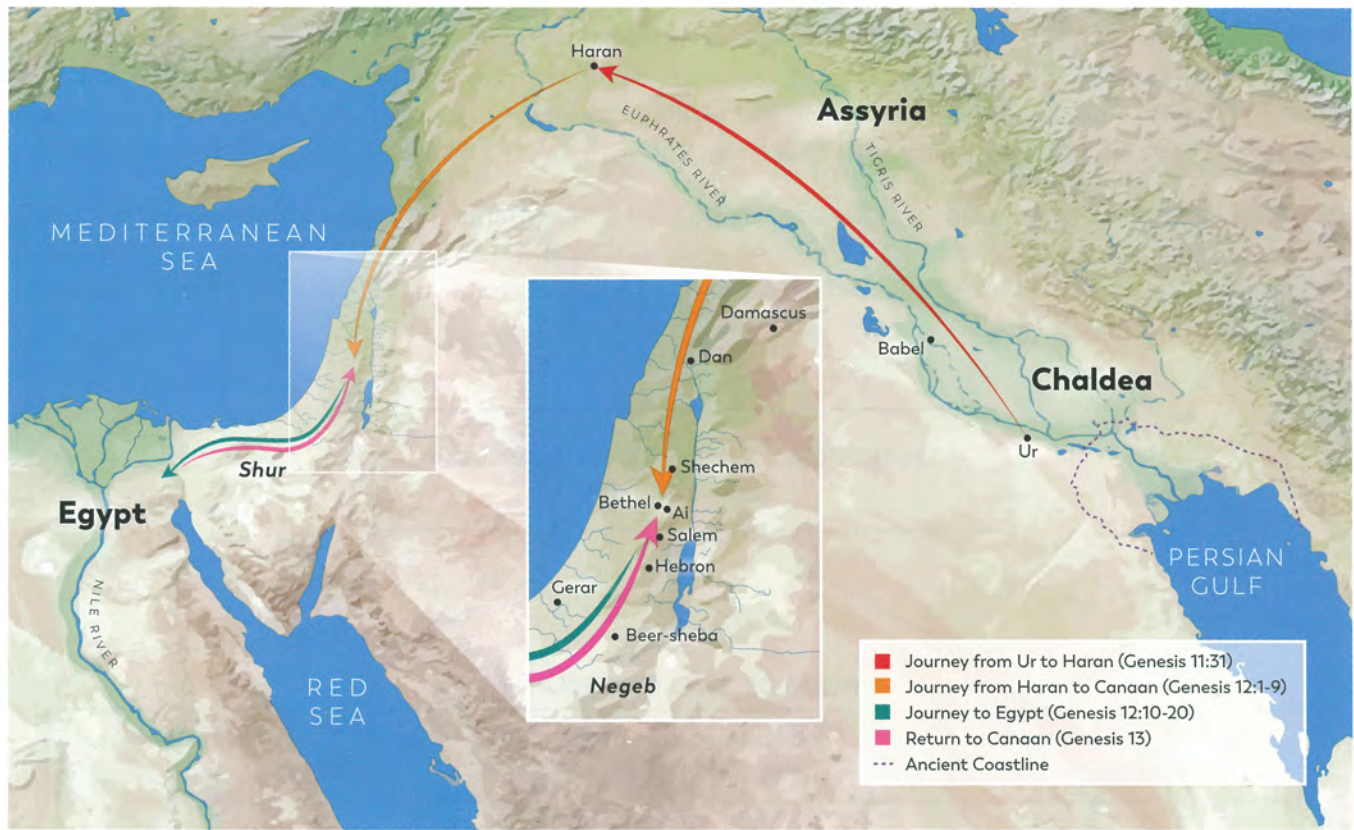


The following diagram shows the progressive growth of God’s family from “One Holy Couple” to “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church,” illustrated by means of these same covenants.





### The Journeys of Abraham



### Discussion Questions

1. Mankind has been scattered and their languages confused after they tried to build a name for themselves rather than calling on the name of the Lord. What is God’s first step toward restoring them to himself? (See Genesis 12:1-13.)
  
2. “Patriarchs” means literally “fathers” in the same sense we use the terms “forefathers” or “Founding Fathers.” This period tells of the patriarchs—the “founding fathers”—of the nation of Israel. Who are they?



3. Why is the color burgundy used to represent this time period?

4. Read Genesis 12:1-3. What promises does God make to Abraham?

5. To whom do the promises pass in the following generations?

#### WHAT IS A COVENANT?

In Scripture, a covenant is a binding oath that forms an unbreakable bond between God and his people. God's help is invoked to help his people be faithful to the covenant, which is established by means of a solemn oath sealed with blood. There are blessings promised for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it.

6. God's three covenant promises to Abraham are elaborated in Genesis 15, 17, and 22. In this three-part covenant (also called the "Abrahamic Covenant"), God promises to give Abraham's descendants a land, to establish them as a kingdom, and to make them a source of worldwide blessing. This covenant gives us a blueprint for understanding the rest of the Bible, which is basically the story of God making good on those promises. Look at the Patriarchs period on your Chart to get an idea of where the story is headed. Each time God fulfills one of the promises, he makes yet another covenant with his people. Find the "Abrahamic Covenant" box on your Chart, and identify the people through whom God will make future covenants with his people and fulfill the three promises he made to Abraham.

**Land Promise:**

**Kingdom Promise:**

**Promise of Worldwide Blessing:**

7. Throughout salvation history, God repeatedly poses the same question to mankind: “Will you trust me?” What does trust in God look like, as demonstrated in the life of Abraham?

8. How might God be calling you to trust in him today?

### *Closing Prayer*



God’s plan unfolded through history and gives us the “story” for our lives. Let us pray in the name of Jesus.

In the time of the Patriarchs, you called Abraham and promised his children land, a royal kingdom, and worldwide blessing:

*R: Help us to always hope in your promises.*

*Our Father ...*



## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The next session will cover two time periods. On your Bible Timeline Chart, you will notice that the first time period covered, **EGYPT AND EXODUS**, spans approximately three hundred fifty years. Little is known about much of this time. When our story opens, Jacob's family (also called "Israel") has been in Egypt for generations. When a new pharaoh comes to power and enslaves them, they cry out to God for deliverance. God takes them out of Egypt and in the process punishes the Egyptians and demonstrates his power through the dramatic events of the Passover. He then establishes Israel as his own people, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Despite the many miracles God works to free Israel from slavery, his people refuse to trust him. The following forty-year period of **DESERT WANDERINGS** is both a punishment and an opportunity for them to learn to trust God in preparation for conquering and living in the land of Canaan.

Use your Chart to fill in the following information about these time periods:

Period name: **EGYPT AND EXODUS** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Supplemental book for this period: \_\_\_\_\_

What key person does God send?: \_\_\_\_\_

Name a current event in secular history: \_\_\_\_\_

Period name: **DESERT WANDERINGS** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

List two key events: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative book for this period: \_\_\_\_\_

In the future, you may want to read all of the books of Exodus and Numbers. For now, choose one or more of the following passages to read before the next meeting to give you a feel for these time periods.

<b>EGYPT AND EXODUS:</b>	Exodus 3	Moses and the burning bush
	Exodus 7–10	Plagues on Egypt
	Exodus 11–14	The last plague (Passover), the Exodus, the Red Sea
	Exodus 32	The golden calf
<b>DESERT WANDERINGS:</b>	Numbers 13–14	Rebellion and forty years of wandering
	Numbers 25	Israel's apostasy with the Baal of Peor





## Session Four – EGYPT AND EXODUS

### and DESERT WANDERINGS

**GOD LEADS ISRAEL OUT  
OF BONDAGE**

**ISRAEL MUST LEARN TO  
TRUST GOD**

Crossing of the Red Sea by Jacques Courtois

#### Session Four Talk Notes

- I. Egypt and Exodus and Desert Wanderings on the Chart
- II. Egypt and Exodus
  - A. Release from Egypt (Exodus 1–15)
    1. Israel cries out to God (Exodus 1)
    2. God raises up Moses (Exodus 2)
      - a. “Moses” is from the Hebrew *moshe*, “to draw out” (of water)
      - b. Moses flees to the desert
    3. Burning bush (Exodus 3)
      - a. “I AM” – “I AM WHO I AM” (tetragrammaton, *YHWH*, or “Yahweh”)
      - b. God sends Moses to Pharaoh
    4. Plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7–10)
    5. The Passover
      - a. The central redemptive event in Israel’s history
        - i. Freedom
        - ii. Provision
        - iii. God’s presence
        - iv. Liturgy and worship, intimacy with God

- v. “Boot camp”
      - b. The lamb
    - 6. The Exodus
      - a. Crossing the Red Sea
      - b. Heading south to Sinai (three months)
        - i. God demonstrates faithfulness
        - ii. God provides *manna* (“what is it?”)
  - B. Covenant at Sinai
    - 1. “One Holy Nation” (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9)
    - 2. The broken covenant: Someone has to die
    - 3. One year of formation
      - a. Tabernacle: a pattern of worship
      - b. Law (in context of covenant)
      - c. Levitical priesthood (after the golden calf incident)

### III. Desert Wanderings

- A. Kadesh-barnea: twelve spies sent out (Numbers 13)
  - 1. Failure to trust God
  - 2. Forty years in the desert, learning to trust (Numbers 14–36)
- B. Moses strikes the rock
- C. Moses’ last words: Deuteronomy
  - 1. *Shema Israel* – “The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4)
  - 2. Teach your children

### IV. Conclusion: God Has Been Raising His “Firstborn Son,” a “Holy Nation”

## T • A • K • E • A • W • A • Y • S

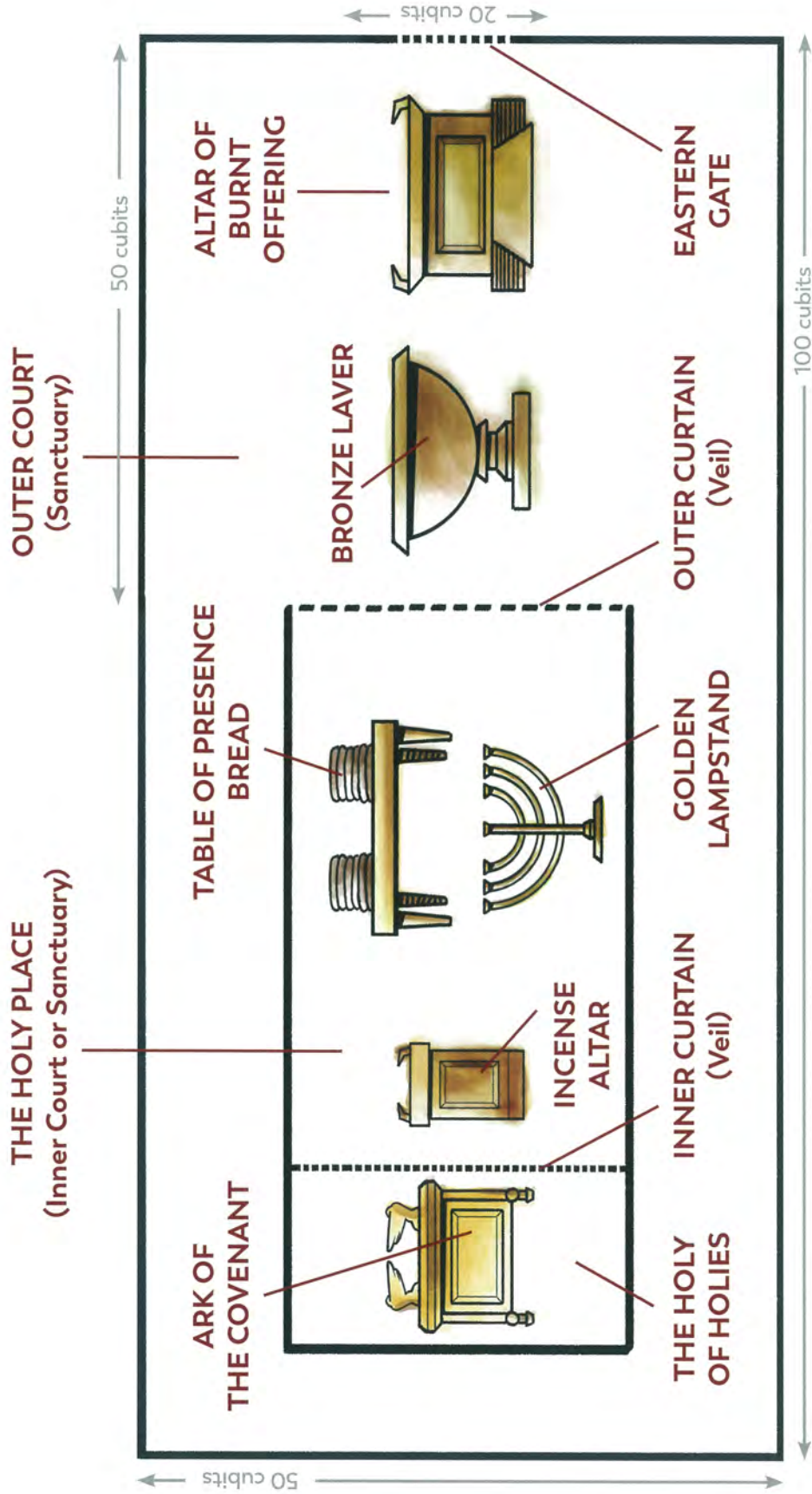
1. We need to teach our children.
2. Scripture was written for our instruction to give us hope (see Romans 15:4).
3. God hears your cry.



### The Exodus and Desert Wanderings



Diagram of the Old Testament Tabernacle



## Discussion Questions

1. In the episode of the burning bush, God introduces himself to Moses as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6). What does that tell Moses about God?
2. What important message do the ten plagues send to Egypt and Israel?
3. God tells Pharaoh that if he does not free Israel, God’s firstborn son, then he will kill the firstborn sons of Egypt. How does the LORD accomplish this? What is the name of the annual remembrance of this event?
4. **Think About It:** In the Red Sea crossing, the children of Israel are freed from their enemy by passing through water. What sacrament of the New Covenant does this event prefigure? Explain.
5. The first terms of the Sinai Covenant are what we know as the Ten Commandments. St. John Paul II called the Ten Commandments “the law of freedom: not the freedom to follow our blind passions, but the freedom to love, to choose what is good in every situation, even when to do so is a burden.”<sup>1</sup> Think about the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20). What kinds of “false gods” do they free us from?

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, “Celebration of the Word at Mount Sinai,” St. Catherine’s Monastery, February 26, 2000.



6. Jeff describes the year at Mount Sinai as a “hinge point” for Israel, during which God gives the people three things. What are those three things?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What does the Tabernacle signify to Israel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why does God make Israel wander for forty years in the desert? What is he trying to teach the people?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. St. Paul tells us that these stories have been “written down for our instruction” (1 Corinthians 10:11). What message do these stories hold for you today?

### *Closing Prayer*



God’s plan unfolded through history and gives us the “story” for our lives.  
Let us pray in the name of Jesus.

You freed your people from slavery in Egypt so they could worship you:

*R: Free us from sin so we can serve and worship you.*

You taught Israel to walk in faith through forty years’ wandering in the desert:

*R: Help us to trust in you, O God.*

### *Our Father ...*



## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The next session will cover two periods, **CONQUEST AND JUDGES** and **ROYAL KINGDOM**. After forty years in the desert, Israel enters Canaan, the Promised Land. God's first promise to Abraham is fulfilled. However, Israel's failure to keep God's commandments leads to sin, oppression, and an incomplete possession of the land.

The people of Israel grow weary of being led by judges and demand a king "like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). God's second promise to Abraham—that of an everlasting royal kingdom—is fulfilled in King David.

Use your Chart to fill in the following information about these time periods:

Period name: **CONQUEST AND JUDGES** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative books: \_\_\_\_\_

List any names familiar to you and tell what you know about them:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period name: **ROYAL KINGDOM** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Key people: \_\_\_\_\_

What would you say is the key event? \_\_\_\_\_

It is difficult to narrow down the reading because so many wonderful stories take place during the periods of **CONQUEST AND JUDGES** and **ROYAL KINGDOM**. Read some or all of the following passages to get an overview of these two time periods. Make sure to return to this important stage in God's plan sometime in the future.

<b>CONQUEST AND JUDGES:</b>	Joshua 2	Rahab and the spies
	Joshua 6	The Fall of Jericho
	Judges 1:1–3:6	Conquest; overview of sin cycle
	Judges 13–16	Samson and Delilah

<b>ROYAL KINGDOM:</b>	1 Samuel 8	Israel asks for a king
	2 Samuel 7	God makes a covenant with David
	1 Kings 9, 11:1-13	Solomon's reign and folly

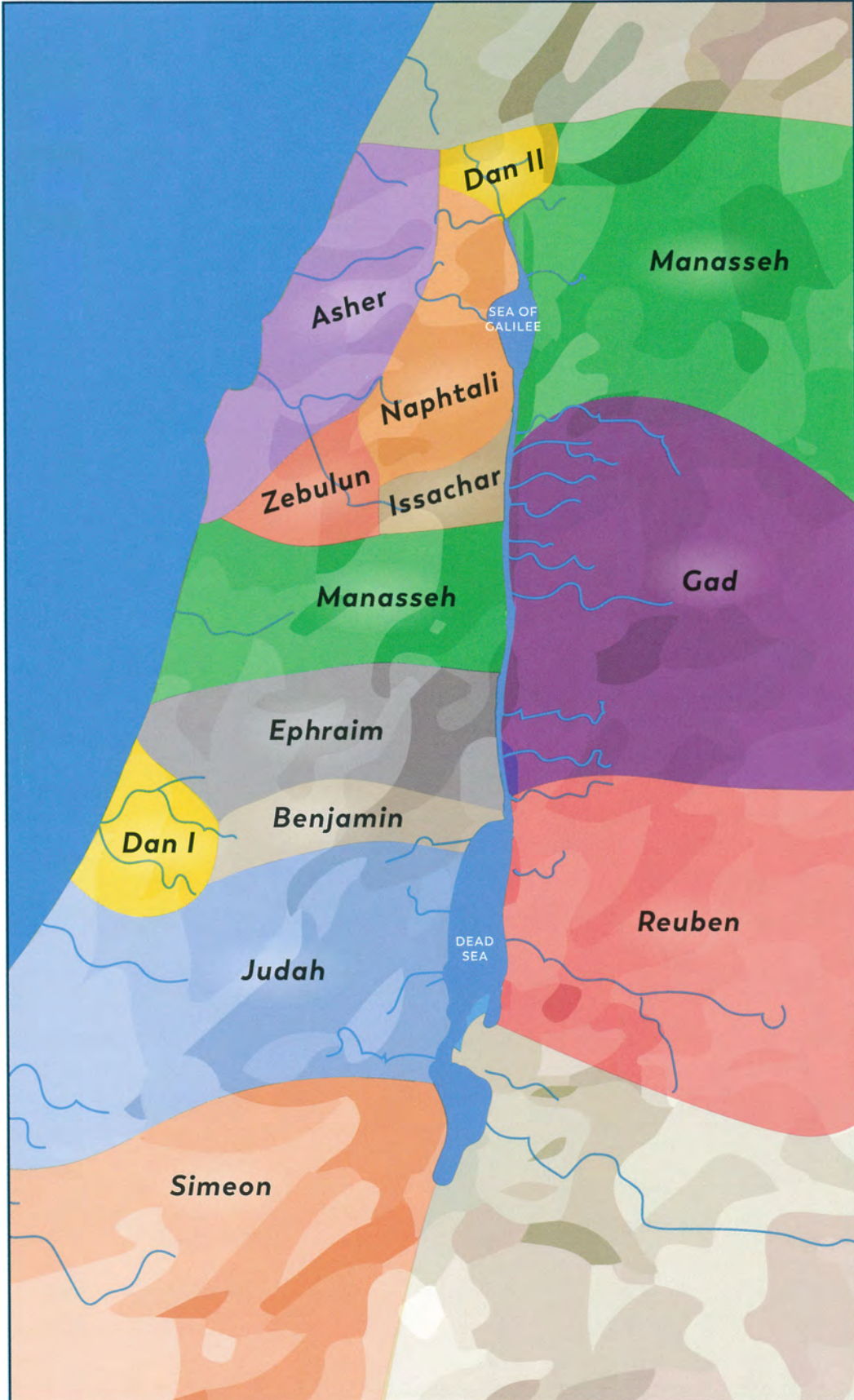


### The Conquest of Canaan





**The Tribal Allotment of Israel (Twelve Tribes of Israel)**





# Session Five – CONQUEST AND JUDGES

## and ROYAL KINGDOM

### ISRAEL ENTERS THE PROMISED LAND GOD ESTABLISHES A KINGDOM IN ISRAEL

Hill country of Judea

#### Session Five Talk Notes

- I. Review: The Story So Far
- II. Conquest and Judges
  - A. Conquest and Judges on the Chart
  - B. The Conquest of Canaan (Joshua)
    1. Israel crosses the Jordan (Joshua 3)
    2. The fall of Jericho (Joshua 6)
      - a. *Herem* warfare
    3. Covenant renewal
    4. Conquest strategy: divide and conquer
    5. Incomplete conquest
    6. Tribal allotment
    7. “Every man did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25)
  - C. Judges (book of Judges)
    1. Death of Joshua
    2. Sevenfold cycle: sin – servitude – supplication – salvation – silence
    3. Twelve judges



- a. Deborah
- b. Samson: microcosm of the macro reality
- 4. Supplemental book for Judges: Ruth
- 5. The last judge: Samuel
  - a. Israel asks for a king (1 Samuel 8:4-5)
  - b. Consequences
  - c. What they need, wrapped in what they want

### III. Royal Kingdom

- A. Royal Kingdom on the Chart
- B. Saul unites the kingdom
  - 1. Saul from the Hebrew *Sha'ul* ("asked for"), tribe of Benjamin
  - 2. Saul sins, loses the kingdom (1 Samuel 13:13-14)
- C. David expands the kingdom
  - 1. David is anointed
  - 2. David kills Goliath
  - 3. David sins, repents (Psalm 51)
  - 4. God's Covenant with David (2 Samuel 7)
    - a. I will make *your* name great (royal dynasty)
    - b. **KEY:** Jesus will assume the throne of David
- D. Solomon builds the kingdom
  - 1. Supplemental books: 1 and 2 Chronicles and the wisdom literature
  - 2. First Temple is built
  - 3. Solomon becomes a tyrant
    - a. Deuteronomy 17:14-17
    - b. 1 Kings 10-12
- E. Ahijah's prophecy to Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:29-32)
- F. The kingdom will be torn in two
  - 1. A portion will remain for David's line

### IV. Use *The Bible Timeline Chart* to Find Your Place in the Story



4. At the close of the period of Conquest and Judges, what plea does Israel make?

5. Who is the first king of Israel? How does he fare?

6. Read 2 Samuel 7:1-16. How does the Davidic covenant fulfill and expand upon God's second promise to Abraham?

7. King Solomon is the wisest man who ever lived. What causes him to turn away from God?  
(See 1 Kings 11:4-6.)

8. God says David is "a man after his own heart" (see 1 Samuel 13:14). Based on this description, what qualities do you think David has?



## *Closing Prayer*



God’s plan unfolded through history and gives us the “story” for our lives.  
Let us pray in the name of Jesus.

You led Israel triumphantly into the Promised Land. They failed to teach their children and instead did what was right in their own eyes:

*R: Help us to keep our eyes on you and bring up our children in your way.*

You established a kingdom on your servant David and promised him an eternal throne:

*R: Establish your kingdom in our midst.*

*Our Father ...*



## **Home Preparation: Review**

*We are now halfway through The Bible Timeline Chart. Take a moment to review the periods you have covered so far, using your Chart or Bookmark. What are the period names? What does each color stand for? Record a simple phrase you can use to remember what each period is about. (You may use titles from each session or make up your own.) Fill out the chart below. If you need help, see page 5 for ideas.*

	Period Name	Color	Color Meaning	Phrase
1.				
2.				

	Period Name	Color	Color Meaning	Phrase
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

### Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

King Solomon’s son Rehoboam increases the oppressive policies of his father, and the people revolt. The kingdom divides into two separate kingdoms—Israel in the North, Judah in the South—and the kingdom of Israel is irrevocably changed.

The **DIVIDED KINGDOM** leads to idolatry and wickedness. Israel and Judah’s spiritual separation from God leads to physical separation from their land in a period of foreign **EXILE**. A remnant of God’s people will return to the Promised Land after seventy years in exile. In the **RETURN**, they will work hard to rebuild what they lost through sin and idolatry.

Use your Chart to fill in the following information about these three time periods:

Period name: **DIVIDED KINGDOM** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

The two kingdoms are represented on the *Timeline Chart* by two horizontal bars: the Northern Kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_, its capital at \_\_\_\_\_; and the Southern Kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_, its capital at \_\_\_\_\_.

Period name: EXILE Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

New world power: \_\_\_\_\_

List three events found in the gray-colored boxes during the Exile period on your Chart:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

Period name: RETURN Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Apart from the actual return to the land itself, what important events characterize this time? (Read events 49, 50, and 52.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Prophets during this time (*hint: look at Supplemental Books*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

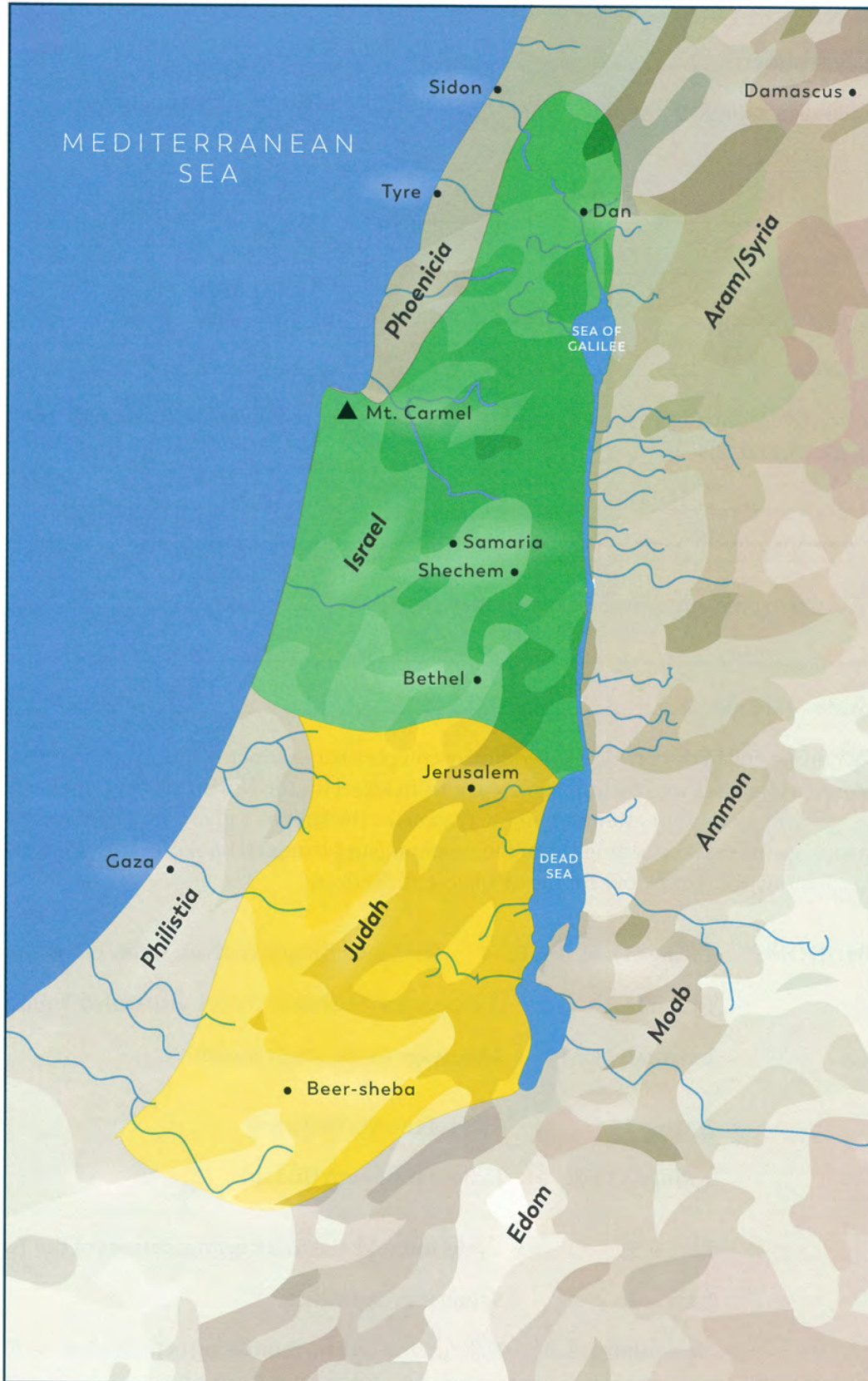
Two new world powers: \_\_\_\_\_

The readings for the period of the Divided Kingdom are complex because of the number of people involved and because the story swings back and forth between events in Israel (in the North) and Judah (in the South). The following passages will focus your attention on the reason for the split and give you an understanding of why and how the people go into exile. Readings from the prophets (supplemental books for this period) are included. These prophets demonstrate God’s love for his disobedient children.

<b>DIVIDED KINGDOM:</b>	1 Kings 11:26–13:10, 14	The Royal Kingdom divides; sins of the North
	Hosea 11, 14	A message to the North (Israel; also called “Ephraim”)
	Jeremiah 31:1-14	A message to the South (Judah)
<b>EXILE:</b>	2 Kings 17	Exile of the North (Israel)
	2 Kings 25:1-21	Exile of the South (Judah)
<b>RETURN:</b>	Ezra 1, 3	Cyrus foretold; the Return; foundations of the Temple laid
	Ezra 4–6	Samaritan opposition
	Nehemiah 1, 2, 6	Nehemiah’s return; rebuilding of Jerusalem walls



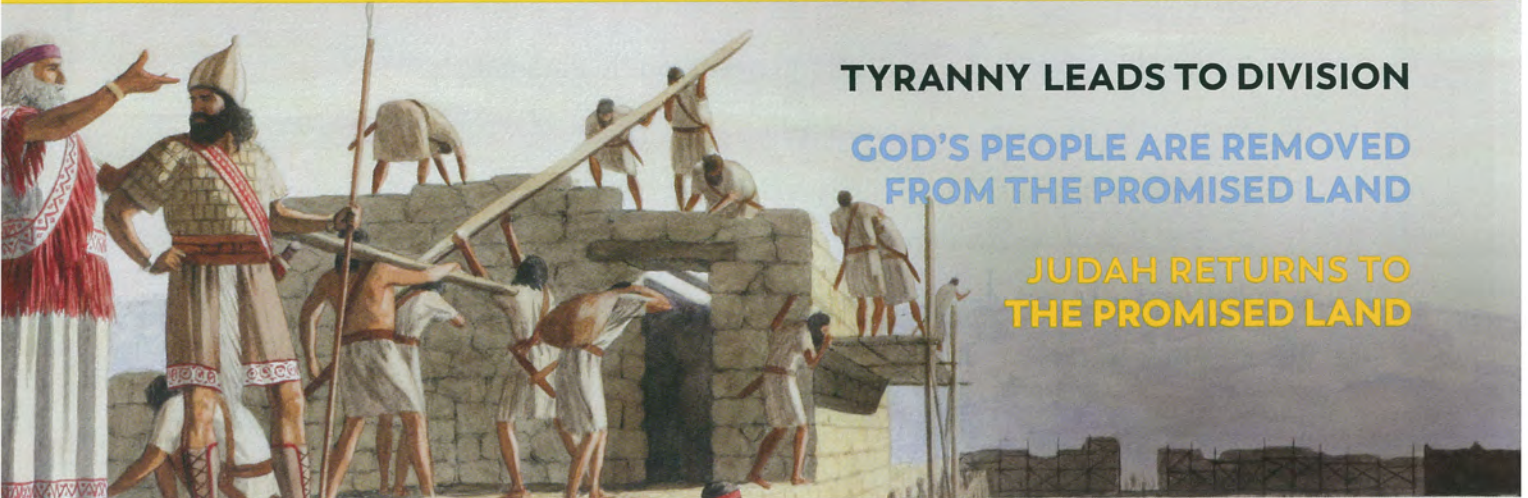
### The Divided Kingdom



# Session Six – DIVIDED KINGDOM

## EXILE

### and RETURN



### Session Six Talk Notes

- I. Overview of Session Six: Three Periods on the Chart
- II. Divided Kingdom
  - A. Everything changes here
    1. Israel divides
    2. The prophets begin here
  - B. 930 BC – The kingdom divides (1 Kings 12:6)
    1. Rehoboam's decision
    2. Jeroboam leads the North to separate from the house of David
    3. How to read the Chart
  - C. Two kingdoms
    1. Ten tribes to the North, two to the South
    2. Israel (North)
      - a. Capital: Samaria
      - b. King: Jeroboam
    3. Judah (South)
      - a. Capital: Jerusalem
      - b. King: Rehoboam (Solomon's son)



- 4.** Prophets move people to obey God's Word
- D.** Jeroboam's dilemma: no access to Temple
  - 1.** A new religion
  - 2.** Result: nine dynasties in the North (versus one in the South)
- E.** Keeping the kings and prophets straight
  - 1.** Kings of Israel and Judah (see charts on pages 47 and 48)
  - 2.** Prophets of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms (see chart on page 49)
- F.** Key prophets to the Northern Kingdom
  - 1.** Amos
  - 2.** Hosea: You have been unfaithful
- G.** Key prophets to the Southern Kingdom
  - 1.** Isaiah warns of exile
  - 2.** Jeremiah prophesies exile for seventy years
- H.** How to read 1 and 2 Kings
  - 1.** Supplemental books: 1 and 2 Chronicles

### III. Exile

- A.** The Exile on the Chart
- B.** Remembering the world powers: Eat A Big Purple GRape
  - 1.** Assyria: world power when Israel is exiled
  - 2.** Babylon: world power when Judah is exiled
- C.** Focus on the North (Israel)
  - 1.** 722 BC – exile by Assyria
  - 2.** Assyria settles Samaria with captives from five other nations
- D.** Focus on the South (Judah)
  - 1.** Jeremiah 34: unfaithful
  - 2.** 587 BC – Babylon destroys Jerusalem
- E.** Three waves of exile to Babylon
  - 1.** 605 BC – Daniel
  - 2.** 597 BC – Ezekiel, Baruch
  - 3.** 587 BC – destruction of Jerusalem



**IV. Return: Brighter Days Ahead**

- A.** The Return on the chart
- B.** Cyrus of Persia is foretold by Isaiah (Isaiah 45): allows Judah to return
- C.** Three “waves” of return
  - 1.** 537 BC – Zerubbabel rebuilds the Temple
  - 2.** 458 BC – Ezra returns and teaches the Law
  - 3.** 444 BC – Nehemiah returns and rebuilds Jerusalem walls
- D.** Spiritual lessons: ingredients to rebuild your life
  - 1.** Eucharist (worship)
  - 2.** Word (teaching)
  - 3.** Community
- E.** Ahead: a new return from sin

**T • A • K • E • A • W • A • Y • S**

- 1. God provides the Eucharist, the Word of God, and the Church to heal our brokenness.**
- 2. There is always hope of restoration.**

**Discussion Questions**

- 1.** Shortly after Solomon’s death, the glorious Royal Kingdom splits in two. (Look at the map on page 40. The line of division is just north of Jerusalem.) What precipitates this division? (See 1 Kings 12:6-11.)
  
- 2.** What are the two resulting kingdoms called?
 

Northern Kingdom: \_\_\_\_\_

Southern Kingdom: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What grave sin does King Jeroboam commit soon after the Northern Kingdom is formed? (See 1 Kings 12:26-30.) Why does he do this?
  
4. **Think About It:** In what sense is Israel and Judah's punishment for their sin a physical reflection of their spiritual state?
  
5. The dark period of the Divided Kingdom is represented by the color black. What color is used to help recall the period of the Exile, and why?
  
6. Read Jeremiah 31:31-33. God says that Israel has broken the covenant they made with him. Look along the top of your Chart where the covenant icons in "God's Family Plan" appear. What is this "new covenant" Jeremiah announces? When will it be made?
  
7. How might looking to "other gods" in our culture result in a spiritual exile from God? Search your heart to see if you have any idolatrous attachments in your life.

What color is used to characterize the period of Return? Why?





## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

After a number of generations, a new foreign power comes on the scene, and the Jews are faced with a new threat. Will they succumb to a pagan culture and religion, or will they be faithful to God? The Maccabean Revolt tells this stirring story of faith and courage.

The Old Testament is finished, and the time for fulfillment of God's promises has come. God's people have been waiting for the Messiah for centuries, and the long years of spiritual exile end at last in the period of **MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT**. Will the Jews recognize the Son of Man and the kingdom he has come to establish on earth?

Use your Chart to fill in the following information about these time periods:

Period name: **MACCABEAN REVOLT** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

List two main events: \_\_\_\_\_

Name the new world power: \_\_\_\_\_

Period name: **MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT** Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative book: \_\_\_\_\_ Supplemental books: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: The four Gospels are of equal importance. Luke was chosen as the narrative book for this session because it includes the infancy narrative and provides a more complete story of the history covered in The Bible Timeline Learning System.)*

Read the following passages to get a summary of the period of the Maccabean Revolt and some key events in Messianic Fulfillment:

### MACCABEAN REVOLT:

1 Maccabees 1-2 Maccabean revolt

2 Maccabees 7 Seven martyrs and their mother

### MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT: PART I:

Luke 1-4 Announcement of the birth of the Messiah; temptation in the desert

Luke 6:12-36 The twelve apostles; the Sermon on the Plain

Luke 9:1-36 Sending out of the Twelve; feeding of the five thousand; Peter's confession of faith; the Transfiguration

## KINGS OF ISRAEL (NORTHERN KINGDOM)\*

930–722 BC

No.	King	Date BC	Bad/Good	Years Reigned	Relation to Predecessor	End of Reign	Scripture Reference
1	Jeroboam I	930–910	Bad	22	First King of Israel	Stricken by God	1 Kings 11:26–14:20
2	Nadab	910–909	Bad	2	Son	Killed by Baasha	1 Kings 15:25-28
3	Baasha	909–886	Bad	24	Son of Ahijah	Died	1 Kings 15:16–16:7
4	Elah	886–885	Bad	2	Son	Killed by Zimri	1 Kings 16:6-14
5	Zimri	885	Bad	7 days	Captain of Chariot	Suicide by Fire	1 Kings 16:9-20
6	(Tibni)**	885–880	Bad	6	Son of Ginath	Died	1 Kings 16:21-22
7	Omri	885–874	Bad	12	Captain of Army	Died	1 Kings 16:15-28
8	Ahab	874–853	Bad	22	Son	Killed in Battle	1 Kings 16:28–22:40
9	Ahaziah	853–852	Bad	2	Son	Died of Sickness	1 Kings 22:4–2 Kings 1:18
10	Joram (Jehoram)	852–841	Bad	12	Brother	Killed by Jehu	2 Kings 2:17–9:25
11	Jehu	841–814	Bad	28	None	Died	2 Kings 9:1–10:36
12	Jehoahaz	814–798	Bad	17	Son	Died	2 Kings 13:1-9
13	Jehoash (Joash)	798–782	Bad	16	Son	Died	2 Kings 13:10–14:16
14	Jeroboam II	782–753	Bad	41	Son	Died	2 Kings 14:23-29
15	Zechariah	753	Bad	6 months	Son	Killed by Shallum	2 Kings 14:29–15:12
16	Shallum	752	Bad	1 month	None	Killed by Menahem	2 Kings 15:10-15
17	Menahem	752–742	Bad	10	None	Died	2 Kings 15:15-22
18	Pekahiah	742–740	Bad	2	Son	Killed by Pekah	2 Kings 15:22-26
19	Pekah	740–732	Bad	20	Captain of Army	Killed by Hoshea	2 Kings 15:25-31
20	Hoshea	732–722	Bad	9	None	Exiled to Assyria	2 Kings 15:30-17:41

\* Dates are approximate and indicate years of sole reign. “Years Reigned” reflects official reigns, which were occasionally longer because of overlap. Shading indicates the divisions between the nine dynasties that ruled the Northern Kingdom.

\*\* Tibni, who unsuccessfully contended with Omri for the throne after Zimri’s death, does not count as a separate dynasty. His name is in the chart because his reign is mentioned in the Bible and because he is included in some lists of kings of Israel.



**KINGS OF JUDAH (SOUTHERN KINGDOM)\***  
**930-586 BC**

No.	King	Date BC	Bad/Good	Years Reigned	Relation to Predecessor	End of Reign	Scripture Reference
1	Rehoboam I	930-913	Bad	17	Son	Died	1 Kings 11:42-14:31
2	Abijah	913-911	Bad	3	Son	Died	1 Kings 14:31-15:8
3	Asa	911-870	Good	41	Son	Died	1 Kings 15:8-24
4	Jehoshaphat	870-848	Good	25	Son	Died	1 Kings 22:1-50
5	Jehoram (Joram)	848-841	Bad	8	Son	Stricken by God	2 Kings 8:16-24
6	Ahaziah	841	Bad	1	Son	Killed by Jehu	2 Kings 8:24-9:29
7	Athaliah	841-835	Bad	7	Mother	Killed by Army	2 Kings 11:1-20
8	Joash (Jehoash)	835-796	Good	40	Grandson	Killed by Servants	2 Kings 11:1-12:21
9	Amaziah	796-767	Good	29	Son	Killed by Court	2 Kings 14:1-22
10	Uzziah (Azariah)	767-740	Good	52	Son	Stricken by God	2 Kings 15:1-7
11	Jotham	740-732	Good	16	Son	Died	2 Kings 15:32-38
12	Ahaz	732-715	Bad	16	Son	Died	2 Kings 16:1-20
13	Hezekiah	715-686	Good	29	Son	Died	2 Kings 18-20
14	Manasseh	686-642	Bad	55	Son	Died	2 Kings 21:1-18
15	Amon (Amos)	642-640	Bad	2	Son	Killed by Servants	2 Kings 21:19-26
16	Josiah	640-609	Good	31	Son	Killed in Battle	2 Kings 22:1-23:30
17	Jehoahaz	609	Bad	3 Months	Son	Exiled to Egypt	2 Kings 23:31-33
18	Jehoiakim	609-598	Bad	11	Brother	Died in Seige	2 Kings 23:34-24:6
19	Jehoiachin	598-597	Bad	3 Months	Son	Exiled to Babylon	2 Kings 24:6-17
20	Zedekiah	597-586	Bad	11	Uncle	Exiled to Babylon	2 Kings 24:17-25:7

\* Dates are approximate.



**PROPHETS OF THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS\***

No.	Prophet	Date BC	Pre/Post-Exile	Audience	World Ruler	Scripture Reference
1	Elijah	870–845	Pre-Exile	Israel	Assyria	1 Kings 17–2 Kings 2:15
2	Elisha	845–795	Pre-Exile	Israel	Assyria	1 Kings 19:19–2 Kings 13:21
3	Jonah	800–753	Pre-Exile	Assyria	Assyria	Jonah
4	Amos	760–753	Pre-Exile	Israel	Assyria	Amos
5	Hosea	750–715	Pre-Exile	Israel	Assyria	Hosea
6	Isaiah	740–680	Pre-Exile	Judah	Assyria	Isaiah; 2 Kings 19–20
7	Micah	735–700	Pre-Exile	Judah	Assyria	Micah
8	Joel	722–701	Pre-Exile	Judah	Assyria	Joel
9	Nahum	664–654	Pre-Exile	Assyria	Assyria	Nahum
10	Zephaniah	632–628	Pre-Exile	Judah	Assyria	Zephaniah
11	Jeremiah	632–628	Pre-Exile	Judah	Assyria/Babylon	Jeremiah
12	Habakkuk	610–605	Pre-Exile	Judah	Babylon	Habakkuk
13	Daniel	605–535	Exile	Exiles	Babylon/Persia	Daniel
14	Ezekiel	590–571	Exile	Exiles	Babylon	Ezekiel
15	Obadiah	586	Exile	Edom	Babylon	Obadiah
16	Haggai	520	Post-Exile	Judah	Persia	Haggai; Ezra 5–6
17	Zechariah	520–480	Post-Exile	Judah	Persia	Zechariah; Ezra 5–6
18	Malachi	432–424	Post-Exile	Judah	Persia	Malachi

\* Dates are approximate.



## Session Seven – MACCABEAN REVOLT

### and MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT

**FAITHFUL JEWS FIGHT TO PRESERVE THEIR IDENTITY**  
**CHRIST JESUS FULFILLS GOD'S PROMISES**



*The Flight Into Egypt* by Edwin Long

### Session Seven Talk Notes

#### I. Maccabean Revolt

- A. The Maccabean Revolt on the Chart
- B. Remembering the world powers: “Eat A Big Purple GRape”
- C. Historical background
  - 1. 336 BC – Alexander the Great
  - 2. 301 BC – The Ptolemies begin rule from Egypt
    - a. Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures)
    - b. Tolerance
  - 3. 200 BC – Seleucid rule begins – enforced hellenization
- D. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrates the Temple
- E. Mattathias’ revolt
- F. Purified Temple (Hanukkah, Feast of Dedication or Lights)
- G. Judas Maccabeus, a “type” of the Messiah
- H. Simon Maccabeus and sons: Hasmonean rule
- I. Rome rises as the new world power



## **II. Transition to Messianic Fulfillment**

### **A. Developments in Judaism**

### **B. Setting the stage: the Roman Republic**

- 1.** Rule of Julius Caesar
- 2.** Octavian defeats Mark Antony
  - a.** Caesar Augustus: “son of God,” bearer of good news for the world
  - b.** At this time: The real “God-man” is born in Bethlehem

## **III. Messianic Fulfillment: Part 1**

### **A. The Bible is Christocentric**

### **B. Who is Jesus?**

- 1.** A Jew (tribe of Judah)
- 2.** A rabbi
- 3.** The promised Messiah
- 4.** One person, two natures (“hypostatic union”)
- 5.** The only-begotten Son of God

### **C. Jesus recapitulates the “story” and fulfills it in his life**

- 1.** Matthew 3–4
- 2.** Early World
  - a.** The first Garden, Eden; last garden, Gethsemane
  - b.** First and last Adam, the woman and her seed
- 3.** Patriarchs: Abraham will sacrifice his son; God offers his Son
- 4.** Egypt and Exodus: Passover lamb; God’s Paschal Lamb, Jesus
- 5.** Desert Wanderings: Israel wanders forty years; Jesus in desert forty days
- 6.** Conquest and Judges: Joshua enters Canaan from Jordan; Jesus begins public ministry there
- 7.** Royal Kingdom: God establishes his throne through David; Jesus assumes the throne of David
- 8.** Divided Kingdom: Israel loses access to the Temple; Jesus becomes the new Temple
- 9.** Exile – Ezekiel: God himself will shepherd his sheep; Jesus is the Good Shepherd
- 10.** Return: Israel returns from exile; Jesus leads people back from exile and sin
- 11.** Maccabean Revolt: Judas Maccabeus leads revolt against enemy Greece; Jesus leads final revolt against true enemy, Satan and sin



5. The period of the Maccabean Revolt concludes the Old Testament story. At this point, what positive progress has been made in God's plan to restore his children to himself? Refer to God's promises to Abraham and "God's Family Plan" on *The Bible Timeline Chart*.

6. What remains to be done?

7. Open your Bible to the first book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, and read the first verse. Imagine you are a first-century Jew who knows the story. What does this verse mean to you?

8. How does Jesus fulfill the following promises of the Old Covenant in the New Covenant?  
*(Optional: Can you name the period and books of the Bible that describe each of these promises? Can you explain the context in which each promise was given?)*

- The seed of the woman will crush the head of the Serpent.

- God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice.



- God's people will have a land, nation, and kingdom.
  
- The kingdom will be ruled by one who sits on the throne of David forever.
  
- Israel will be a source of blessing for the entire world.

7. Based on Jeff's presentation, what are six things Jesus has come to do?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

## Closing Prayer

God’s plan unfolded through history and gives us the “story” for our lives. Let us pray in the name of Jesus.

Mattathias and his sons stood up against the threats of hellenization:

*R: Help us resist worldliness in our culture and follow only you.*

You sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to fulfill all your promises:

*R: Give us new life in him.*

## Our Father ...

### Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

At the close of his earthly ministry, Jesus commissions his apostles to spread the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. The seed of Abraham, bearing fruit in the Church, will now become a blessing to the world.

Use your Chart to fill in the following information about this final period:

Period name: THE CHURCH Approximate dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Period color: \_\_\_\_\_ Color meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

Name the three “waves of witness” that form the structure of this period:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read the following passages to prepare for the periods of **MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT: PART 2** and **THE CHURCH**:

<b>MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT: PART 2:</b>	Luke 22–24	The Last Supper and the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus
<b>THE CHURCH</b>	Acts 1:1-11	The Ascension
	Acts 2	Pentecost
	Acts 7–8	Stephen’s martyrdom; the message begins to spread
	Acts 9–11	Saul’s conversion; Peter’s vision

## Home Preparation: Review

Using your Chart or Bookmark, review the *The Bible Timeline* period colors and meanings. Have you memorized the colors yet? Complete the list that you started on page 37:

	Period Name	Color	Color Meaning	Phrase
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				





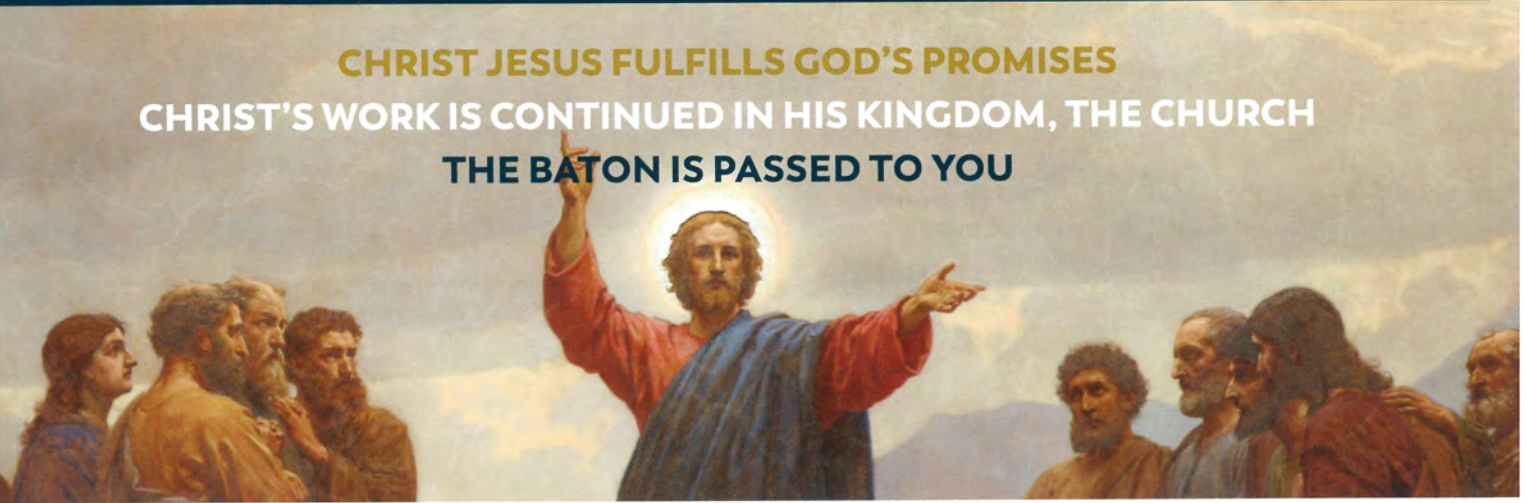
# Session Eight – MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT

## THE CHURCH

### and CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

#### CHRIST JESUS FULFILLS GOD'S PROMISES

CHRIST'S WORK IS CONTINUED IN HIS KINGDOM, THE CHURCH  
THE BATON IS PASSED TO YOU



#### Session Eight Talk Notes

- I. Messianic Fulfillment: Part 2
  - A. Passion week
    1. Last Supper
      - a. Institution of the Eucharist
      - b. New Testament priesthood
    2. Garden of Gethsemane
    3. Jesus is sentenced to death
    4. Crucifixion and burial
    5. Resurrection
  - B. All sacrifices will cease except the *todah* (“thanksgiving”) offering
    1. Eucharist = “thanksgiving”
    2. Eucharist fulfills all Old Testament offerings
  - C. Jesus pays the price of the broken covenant
  - D. Jesus takes the place of sinners
    1. Barabbas, “son of the father,” is freed

- 2.** Who is Barabbas?
- E.** Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem houses Golgotha and the Tomb
- F.** Jesus establishes the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
  - 1.** Our faith consists in following Jesus (Galatians 2:20)
  - 2.** His mission is carried out in us: to call others back to the Father
  - 3.** He empowers us to live the gospel
  - 4.** “As the Father has sent me ... so I send you” (John 20:21)

## **II. The Church**

- A.** The Church on the Chart
- B.** The focus of Acts: the body of Christ (Church) living the life of Christ
  - 1.** **KEY:** Acts mirrors the life of Christ
    - a.** Acts 1–12: Peter
    - b.** Acts 13–28: Paul mirrors Peter
    - c.** We walk in their footsteps
- C.** How is this possible?
  - 1.** “By my spirit” (Zechariah 4:6)
  - 2.** “I will not leave you orphans” (John 14:18, NAB)
  - 3.** “You shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8)
- D.** The Ascension (Acts 1)
- E.** Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2)
  - 1.** Our day of Pentecost: confirmation (CCC 1285)
  - 2.** Evidence of disciples’ changed lives
- F.** The blueprint for reading the rest of the story – three waves of witness
  - 1.** Acts 1:1–8:3
    - a.** Witness in Jerusalem
    - b.** Pentecost
  - 2.** Acts 8:4–12:25
    - a.** Witness in Judea and Samaria
    - b.** Saul’s conversion



3. Acts 13:1–28:31
    - a. Witness to the ends of the earth
    - b. Paul’s missionary journeys
    - c. Peter and Paul, “super apostles”
  4. Read the New Testament letters in the context of Acts
- G.** Conclusion of Acts
1. Abrupt ending: Is this purposeful or not?
  2. A story without an end: You are in the story now

### III. Continuing the Journey: The Baton Has Been Passed to You

- A.** Personal reading of the Bible
1. Ninety-Day Reading Plan (see page 65), *The Bible Timeline* Guided Journal (see page 64)
  2. Read the supplemental books in the context of the narrative
  3. Live in your Bible! Develop intimacy with God

## T • A • K • E • A • W • A • Y • S

1. You are called to be a disciple, not just a believer.
2. You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

## Discussion Questions

1. In describing Jesus' trial, Jeff says, "I am Barabbas" and "you are Barabbas." What does he mean by that?
2. What is the "Great Commission" Jesus gives his first disciples and us? (See Matthew 28:18-20.)
3. After his death and resurrection, how is Jesus able to live on in his Church?
4. **Think About It:** Based on what you know about the early days of the Church, what difference does the descent of the Holy Spirit make in the lives of the apostles?
5. How are Pentecost and the sacrament of confirmation related?





## Continue the Journey

- If you want a quick review of the “story,” turn to Acts 7, and read about Stephen defending his belief in Christ as the Son of God to the Sanhedrin before he was stoned and became the first Christian martyr.
- Continue to memorize the twelve time periods, and review the key people and events of each period using *The Bible Timeline Chart* as a guide.
- Start reading the story on your own. The first time through, stick to the narrative books. Later, read the supplemental books in context of their time periods and narrative books. Keep your *Bible Timeline Chart* and *Bookmark* in your Bible for reference.
- Use the “Ninety-Day Reading Guide” on the next page to track your progress through the fourteen narrative books. If you read four chapters a day, you will read through the entire story in about three months.
- Once you have a good grasp of the story, read at a slower pace, and meditate on what God is saying to you in his Word. Try to make Scripture reading part of your daily routine—even if it is only for a few minutes a day.
- Consider keeping a journal as you read. Each day, record the passages you read, and write about what they mean to you. Pray first, listen while reading, and offer a response to God. *The Bible Timeline Guided Journal* can help you read through the fourteen narrative books in this way.

**Blessings on you as you continue *The Great Adventure!***



# Reading Through the Bible Historically

## Ninety-Day Reading Plan

### MONTH #1

#### EARLY WORLD

- 1. Genesis 1–4
- 2. Genesis 5–8
- 3. Genesis 9–11
- 9. Genesis 33–36
- 10. Genesis 37–40
- 11. Genesis 41–45
- 12. Genesis 46–50
- 18. Exodus 21–24
- 19. Exodus 25–28
- 20. Exodus 29–32
- 21. Exodus 33–36
- 22. Exodus 37–40
- 26. Numbers 13–16
- 27. Numbers 17–20
- 28. Numbers 21–24
- 29. Numbers 25–28
- 30. Numbers 29–32
- 31. Numbers 33–36

#### PATRIARCHS

- 4. Genesis 12–16
- 5. Genesis 17–20
- 6. Genesis 21–24
- 7. Genesis 25–28
- 8. Genesis 29–32

#### EGYPT AND EXODUS

- 13. Exodus 1–4
- 14. Exodus 5–8
- 15. Exodus 9–12
- 16. Exodus 13–16
- 17. Exodus 17–20

#### DESERT WANDERINGS

- 23. Numbers 1–4
- 24. Numbers 5–8
- 25. Numbers 9–12

### MONTH #2

#### CONQUEST AND JUDGES

- 32. Joshua 1–4
- 33. Joshua 5–8
- 34. Joshua 9–12
- 35. Joshua 13–16
- 36. Joshua 17–20
- 37. Joshua 21–24
- 38. Judges 1–4
- 39. Judges 5–8
- 40. Judges 9–12
- 41. Judges 13–16
- 42. Judges 17–21
- 43. 1 Samuel 1–4
- 44. 1 Samuel 5–8

#### ROYAL KINGDOM

- 45. 1 Samuel 9–12
- 46. 1 Samuel 13–16
- 47. 1 Samuel 17–20
- 48. 1 Samuel 21–24
- 49. 1 Samuel 25–28
- 50. 1 Samuel 29–31

- 51. 2 Samuel 1–4
- 52. 2 Samuel 5–8
- 53. 2 Samuel 9–12
- 54. 2 Samuel 13–16
- 55. 2 Samuel 17–20
- 56. 2 Samuel 21–24
- 57. 1 Kings 1–4
- 58. 1 Kings 5–8
- 59. 1 Kings 9–11

### MONTH #3

#### DIVIDED KINGDOM

- 60. 1 Kings 12–15
- 61. 1 Kings 16–19
- 62. 1 Kings 20–22
- 63. 2 Kings 1–4
- 64. 2 Kings 5–8
- 65. 2 Kings 9–12
- 66. 2 Kings 13–16
- 71. Nehemiah 1–4
- 72. Nehemiah 5–8
- 73. Nehemiah 9–13

#### MACCABEAN REVOLT

- 74. 1 Maccabees 1–4
- 75. 1 Maccabees 5–8
- 76. 1 Maccabees 9–12
- 77. 1 Maccabees 13–16

#### EXILE

- 67. 2 Kings 17–20
- 68. 2 Kings 21–25

#### RETURN

- 69. Ezra 1–5
- 70. Ezra 6–10

#### MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT

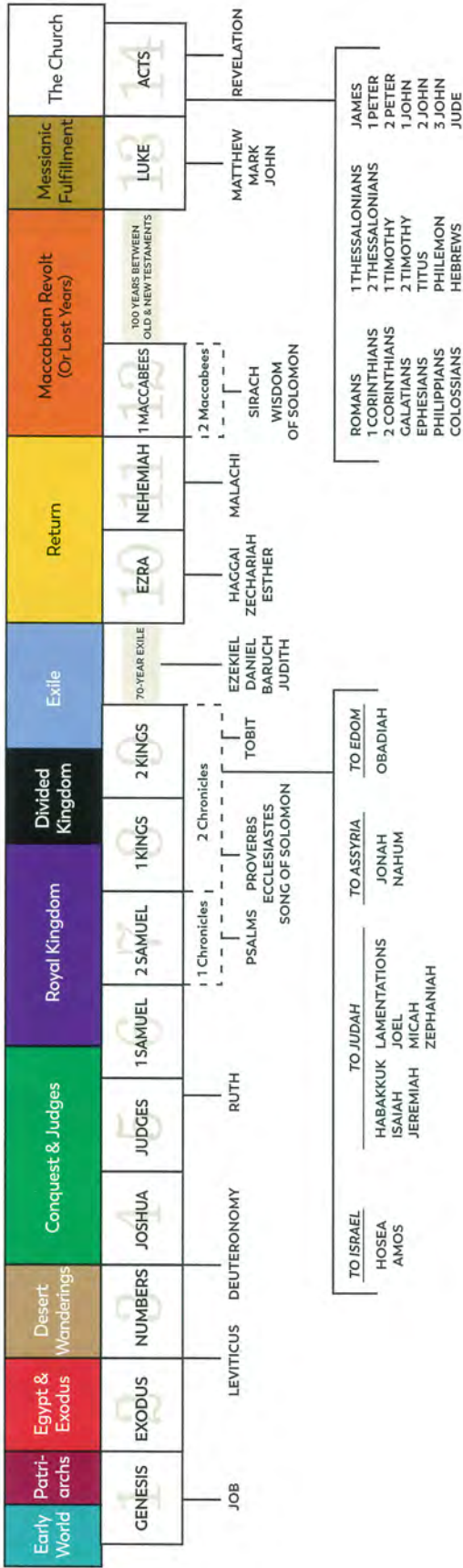
- 78. Luke 1–4
- 79. Luke 5–8
- 80. Luke 9–12
- 81. Luke 13–16
- 82. Luke 17–20

#### THE CHURCH

- 83. Luke 21–24
- 84. Acts 1–4
- 85. Acts 5–8
- 86. Acts 9–12
- 87. Acts 13–16
- 88. Acts 17–20
- 89. Acts 21–24
- 90. Acts 25–28



# Narrative and Supplemental Books\*



## Key to Period Colors

- The color of the earth viewed from space
- God's blood covenant with Abraham
- The Red Sea
- The color of the desert
- The green hills of Canaan
- The color of royalty

- Israel's darkest period
- Juddah "singing the blues" in Babylon
- Juddah returning home to brighter days
- Fire in the oil lamps in the purified Temple
- Gifts of the Magi
- The spotless Bride of Christ

\*To read Scripture in the context of the underlying narrative of God's plan, fourteen of the Bible's narrative books have been arranged chronologically in *The Bible Timeline™* Learning System so that they tell the entire story from the beginning to the end. The remaining books, called "supplemental" books on *The Bible Timeline™* Chart, are no less important than the narrative books but are arranged on the Chart and in this diagram in such a way that their relationship to particular time periods can be seen easily.



# Outline of Bible Periods

Each numbered event corresponds to a numbered event on *The Bible Timeline Chart*.

## EARLY WORLD (TURQUOISE) Creation to 2200 BC

1. Creation . . . . . Genesis 1:1–2:24
2. Fall . . . . . Genesis 3:1–24
3. Curse and promise . . . . . Genesis 3:8–24
4. Flood . . . . . Genesis 6:1–9:17
5. People scattered at Babel . . . . . Genesis 11:1–9

## PATRIARCHS (BURGUNDY) 2200–1800 BC

6. God calls Abram out of Ur . . . . . Genesis 12:1–4
7. Melchizedek blesses Abraham . . . . . Genesis 14:18–20
8. Covenant with Abraham
  - First covenant (Land Promise) . . . . . Genesis 15:1–21
  - Second covenant (Kingdom Promise) . . . . . Genesis 17:1–11
  - Third covenant (Promise of Worldwide Blessing) . . . . . Genesis 22:1–9
9. Sodom and Gomorrah . . . . . Genesis 18:16–19:39
10. Binding of Isaac . . . . . Genesis 22
11. Jacob steals blessing and flees . . . . . Genesis 27:1–46
12. Jacob wrestles with God . . . . . Genesis 32:22–31
13. Joseph sold into slavery . . . . . Genesis 37:12–36
14. Jacob's family moves to Egypt . . . . . Genesis 46

## EGYPT AND EXODUS (RED) 1800–1446 BC

15. Israel enslaved in Egypt . . . . . Exodus 1:8–22
16. The burning bush . . . . . Exodus 3:1–6:30
17. Ten plagues . . . . . Exodus 7:1–11:10
18. Exodus and first Passover . . . . . Exodus 12:1–14:31
19. Crossing of the Red Sea . . . . . Exodus 13:17–15:21
20. God provides manna . . . . . Exodus 16
21. Covenant with Moses . . . . . Exodus 24
22. Golden calf . . . . . Exodus 32:1–35
23. Appointment of Levites . . . . . Exodus 32:25–29
24. Tabernacle . . . . . Exodus 36–38

## DESERT WANDERINGS (TAN) 1446–1406 BC

25. Twelve spies sent out . . . . . Numbers 13:1–33
26. Aaron's rod . . . . . Numbers 17
27. Moses strikes the rock . . . . . Numbers 20:1–13
28. Bronze serpent . . . . . Numbers 21:4–9
29. Covenant in Moab . . . . . Deuteronomy 29:1–29

## CONQUEST AND JUDGES (GREEN) 1406–1050 BC

30. Israel crosses the Jordan . . . . . Joshua 3–4
31. Fall of Jericho . . . . . Joshua 5:13–6:27
32. Covenant renewal . . . . . Joshua 8:30–35
33. Southern campaign . . . . . Joshua 9–10
34. Northern campaign . . . . . Joshua 11
35. Tribal allotment . . . . . Joshua 13–21
36. Israel asks for a king . . . . . 1 Samuel 8:1–22

## ROYAL KINGDOM (PURPLE) 1050–930 BC

37. David kills Goliath . . . . . 1 Samuel 17:1–31
38. Ark moved to Jerusalem . . . . . 2 Samuel 6
39. Covenant with David . . . . . 2 Samuel 7:1–29
40. First Temple built . . . . . 1 Kings 5:1–8:66

**DIVIDED KINGDOM (BLACK) 930–722 BC**

41. The kingdom divides..... 1 Kings 12:16-20  
 42. Jezebel leads Israel astray ..... 1 Kings 18–21; 2 Kings 9  
 43. Elijah defeats the prophets of Baal ..... 1 Kings 18:20-40

**EXILE (BABY BLUE) 722–538 BC**

44. Israel falls to Assyria..... 2 Kings 17:1-23  
 45. Foreign possession of Samaria ..... 2 Kings 17:24-41  
 46. Image of the five kingdoms ..... Daniel 2  
 47. Judah falls to Babylon..... 2 Kings 25:1-30  
 48. First Temple destroyed..... 2 Kings 25:8-17

**RETURN (YELLOW) 538–167 BC**

49. Zerubbabel rebuilds the Temple ..... Ezra 3–6  
 50. Ezra returns and teaches ..... Ezra 7:1–8:36  
 51. Esther saves her people..... Esther  
 52. Nehemiah returns and rebuilds Jerusalem walls..... Nehemiah 3:1–4:23

**MACCABEAN REVOLT (ORANGE) 167 BC – AD 1**

53. Antiochus desecrates the Temple ..... 1 Maccabees 1:20-62, 4:43  
 54. Purification of the Temple..... 1 Maccabees 4:36-61

**MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT (GOLD) AD 1–33**

55. Annunciation ..... Luke 1:26-38  
 56. Baptism of Jesus..... Luke 3:21-22  
 57. Sermon on the Mount ..... Matthew 5–7; Luke 6:20-46  
 58. Wedding at Cana ..... John 2:1-12  
 59. Keys to Peter ..... Matthew 16:13-20  
 60. Transfiguration ..... Luke 9:28-36  
 61. Last Supper ..... Luke 22:7-38  
 62. Passion ..... Luke 22:39–23:56  
 63. Jesus gives his mother to the Church..... John 19:25-27  
 64. Resurrection..... Luke 24:1-12

**THE CHURCH (WHITE) AD 33–**

65. Ascension ..... Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:6-11  
 66. Witness in Jerusalem ..... Acts 1:1–8:4  
     • Pentecost..... Acts 2:1-13  
     • Choosing of the seven (diaconate) ..... Acts 6:1-7  
     • Stephen martyred ..... Acts 6:8–7:60  
 67. Witness in Judea and Samaria ..... Acts 8:4–13:1  
     • Saul's conversion ..... Acts 9  
     • Peter's vision ..... Acts 10  
     • Peter's arrest and deliverance..... Acts 12  
 68. Witness to the ends of the earth..... Acts 13:1–28:31  
     • Paul's three missionary journeys  
         First journey..... Acts 13:1–14:28  
         Second journey ..... Acts 15:36–18:22  
         Third journey ..... Acts 18:23–21:16  
     • Council of Jerusalem..... Acts 15  
     • John's Apocalypse ..... Revelation  
 69. Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple  
 70. The Second Coming of Christ



## RESPONSES to the Discussion Questions



*The Flight of the Prisoners* by Jacques Joseph Tissot

### How to Use These Responses

These responses are provided to help facilitators prepare for the small-group discussion and for participants to review after the small-group discussion.

Participants should not review the responses for each session until after the session is completed. Although it might be tempting to look at these responses in advance, it is important to wait for these reasons:

1. Bible study is not about simply watching a video presentation or reading a Bible commentary. It is just as important to immerse yourself in the Word of God itself and engage it with your heart and mind. The questions in this study are designed to draw you into Scriptures so that the Word of God will be planted and grow in your heart. Reading a response written by someone else may satisfy your mind for a moment, but it will not result in the kind of growth that will occur if you attempt to answer the question on your own first.
2. The success of a small group depends on a good discussion. A group of participants who have spent time pondering the Scripture passages on their own will have more varied insights to discuss.

When you follow the steps of this study as intended, you will be more than fed; you will learn to feed yourself.





## Session One Responses – INTRODUCTION



Still Life with Bible by Vincent Van Gogh

1. *The Church tells us: “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them.”<sup>1</sup> Have you experienced this? In the video presentation, Jeff mentioned common difficulties people have when they start to read the Bible. What has been your experience with Scripture?*

Answers will vary.

2. *Many Catholics today feel as though they have received a “heap of Catholicism,” a random pile of separate Bible stories and facts about the Church’s teachings. What solution to this problem do the four “pillars” of the Catechism offer?*

The Church Fathers followed a “narrative approach” to teaching the Christian Faith that is built upon the biblical story of God’s interactions with his people. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which you might think of as containing a “heap of Catholicism,” reflects this in its structure. All the information in the “heap” the *Catechism* divided into four “pillars”:

- The Creed. St. Augustine tells us that this first “pillar,” the Creed, is the story of salvation history “in tightly wound form.” It is the first pillar for a reason: It is the foundation of the biblical story, and the second, third, and fourth pillars are built upon it.
- Sacraments and Liturgy. The second pillar addresses how each of us is brought into the story of salvation.
- Life in Christ. This third pillar is where we find our place in the story: how we live it.
- Prayer. This fourth pillar is where intimacy with God develops; this is the goal of the story.

<sup>1</sup> DV 21.



**3.** *Why is it important to get the “big picture” of salvation history before reading or studying the Bible?*

Each book of the Bible is linked to the other books by the “narrative thread” of God’s plan. If we do not understand this plan—which includes why we have been created, what went wrong at the beginning, and how God set about making things right—it is difficult to make sense of the Bible as a whole.

From the very beginning, God taught his people to pass down the story of all he had done for them. As the story continued, his people would refer back to past events and look forward to things God had promised. If we enter the story in the middle, the importance and meaning of many people, places, and events may be unclear. Reading the Bible without knowing the larger story makes it difficult to understand the intended meaning of the text. The *Catechism* reminds us that we must be “attentive to the content and unity of the whole” when reading the Bible (CCC 112), as well as to “the way the truths of faith hang together among themselves and within the whole plan of divine Revelation” (CCC 114).

**4.** *The “narrative books” section of The Bible Timeline Chart gives you the names of fourteen books of the Bible that tell the story of salvation history from beginning to end. They are arranged across the top of the Chart immediately below the period names, so you can see the historical time periods they describe. The list of narrative books is below:*

- Genesis 1–11 (Early World)
- Genesis 12–50 (Patriarchs)
- Exodus (Egypt and Exodus)
- Numbers (Desert Wanderings)
- Joshua and Judges (Conquest and Judges)
- 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1–11 (Royal Kingdom)
- 1 Kings 12–22; 2 Kings (Divided Kingdom)
- 2 Kings 17, 25 (Exile)
- Ezra and Nehemiah (Return)
- 1 Maccabees (Maccabean Revolt)
- Luke (Messianic Fulfillment)
- Acts of the Apostles (The Church)

**5.** *Fifty-nine “supplemental books” make up the rest of the Bible. These books are not designated “supplemental” because they are less important than the narrative books; but in this study, we will set them aside to focus on the “big picture.” Once you have learned the chronological story told in these narrative books, you will be better equipped to read the remaining books of the Bible in their historical context.*

Look at the top of the purple Royal Kingdom period on your Chart. The books of 1 Samuel 9–31, 2 Samuel, and 1 Kings 1–11 tell the story of this time period, during which God established a kingdom under David and Solomon. What are the “supplemental books” for this time period? (You can find these listed at the bottom of the Royal Kingdom period on your *Bible Timeline Chart*.)

1 and 2 Chronicles, the “supplemental” books, provide a parallel historical account of the period. The “wisdom literature,” including Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon (also called Song of Songs), reflects God’s covenant with David and thus is placed in the Royal Kingdom period. Solomon is considered the “father” of wisdom literature, and David most likely wrote or inspired many of the Psalms.



6. *God’s formation of his family through covenants with various people is central to the story of the Bible. These covenants are listed in the Chart in a section called “God’s Family Plan.” You will learn more about these later, but notice the type of family group name with each (“One Holy Couple,” for example).*

The family group grows from One Holy Couple (Adam and Eve) to One Holy Family (Noah, his wife, and their sons) in the Early World and to One Holy Tribe (under Abraham) in the time of the Patriarchs. It then grows to One Holy Nation (under Moses) after the Exodus, to One Holy Kingdom (under David) in the Royal Kingdom, and finally to One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church (in the New Covenant with Jesus Christ). Notice how God’s family grows! God starts with a couple and gradually builds a worldwide family.

7. *Key people and events in salvation history are arranged in chronological order along the center of The Bible Timeline Chart. This section is divided into three horizontal bands representing different aspects of the Middle East. The central area represents the land of Canaan, where most of the events in the story take place. When the action moves out of Canaan—to countries like Babylon, for example, or to the south and Egypt—the events appear above or below the center area. Look at your Chart: What examples of geographic movement do you see?*

The major movements are:

- God calls Abram out of Ur (event 6; from the northern countries into the land of Canaan; beginning of the Patriarchs period). There is another minor move during this time when Jacob flees into the North and has his sons.
  - Jacob’s family moves to Egypt (event 14; from Canaan into the South and Egypt at the close of the Patriarchs period).
  - Israel’s move from Egypt to Canaan at the start of Conquest and Judges (event 30; “Israel crosses the Jordan”).
  - Israel goes into exile in Assyria, and Judah falls to Babylon (events 44 and 47; see the four arrows in the Exile period).
  - Judah returns to Canaan in the Return period (see the three arrows pointing to events 49, 50, and 52).
8. *Check out the events in secular history that are arranged across the bottom of the Chart. Find one you are familiar with. What is going on in the development of God’s plan during this period?*

Answers will vary. What is most important for people to know and understand is that biblical history is written about real people to whom real things happened in real time. As the weeks go on, it will become clear that we cannot study the Bible in a vacuum. The situations in surrounding countries have a dramatic effect on the Bible narrative.

## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: EARLY WORLD Approximate dates: Creation – 2200 BC

Period color: Turquoise Color meaning: The color of the earth viewed from space

List four key people from Jesus' genealogy:

1) Adam 3) Noah

2) Seth 4) Shem

List five key events:

1) Creation 4) The Flood

2) The Fall 5) People scattered at Babel

3) Curse and promise

Name a concurrent event in secular history: Great pyramids built, c. 2685 BC; Stonehenge begun, c. 2000 BC



## Understanding The Bible Timeline Chart

The names of the twelve historic periods with their associated colors are in the chart below:

Period Name	Color	Color Meaning
1. Early World		The color of the earth viewed from space
2. Patriarchs		God's blood covenant with Abraham
3. Egypt and Exodus		The Red Sea
4. Desert Wanderings		The color of the desert
5. Conquest and Judges		The green hills of Canaan
6. Royal Kingdom		The color of royalty
7. Divided Kingdom		Israel's darkest period
8. Exile		Judah "singing the blues" in Babylon
9. Return		Judah returning to brighter days
10. Maccabean Revolt		Fire in the oil lamps in the purified Temple
11. Messianic Fulfillment		Gifts of the Magi
12. The Church		The spotless bride of Christ

- Find the Contents page in your Bible. Using your Bible Timeline Chart or Bookmark as a reference, highlight the fourteen narrative books. If you are not accustomed to finding books in your Bible, take time to locate each narrative book before you continue.





## Session Two Responses – EARLY WORLD



1. *The story of the Early World is told in Genesis 1–11. Locate the Early World period on your Bible Timeline Chart. Who are the main characters, and what are the main events?*

The main people are Adam and Eve; Cain, Abel, and Seth; Noah; Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The main events are Creation, the Fall, curse and promise, the Flood, and the people scattered at Babel.

2. *What does mankind's first sin consist of?*

The following quote from the *Catechism* describes mankind's first sin: "Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness" (CCC 397).

3. *What are the consequences of the Fall for Adam and Eve and for us?*

When they fail to trust God and follow the Serpent instead, Adam and Eve make a decision to go their own way instead of God's way. This has the logical consequence of removing them from God's friendship. Their intellects are darkened, their wills are weakened, and they suffer from concupiscence (the tendency to sin). The Fall brings sin, corruption, pain, toil, and death into the world.

4. *How do you see those consequences in the lives of the people that follow?*

From Cain grows a civilization that is violent and vengeful. By the time of Noah, the world is full of wickedness. Immediately after the Flood, Noah gets drunk, his sons sin, and his grandson is cursed. The people who build the Tower of Babel exemplify the choice Adam and Eve made in the garden. They choose not to follow God, but to go their own way instead.



5. Turn to Genesis 3:15 in your Bible. At the outset of the story, what hope is given that the situation will be redeemed?

In Genesis 3:15, God announces that the “seed of the woman” will crush the head of the “seed of the serpent”—in other words, there will one day be a battle in which a human being will deal the devil a death blow. The fact that God bars further access to the Tree of Life (see Genesis 3:24) actually offers a second ray of hope to the situation: His children will not be allowed to remain in their separated state permanently.

6. In the story of Noah, we see God deal with the mounting wickedness by destroying the earth with a flood. Does that “solution” to the problem work? Why, or why not?

The consequences of the Fall are so ingrained that not even wiping out the “bad guys” and starting over with a righteous man (Noah) makes a difference. The post-Flood population is no better than the people who preceded it. The effects of the Fall will not be limited to those who caused it. This is original sin—the consequences of which are passed on to every succeeding generation. Something more will need to be done.

7. Describe the condition of mankind at the close of the Early World period, following the Tower of Babel incident.

The desire of the people of Babel to “make a name for themselves” sets them against those who call on God’s name (like Noah). As a consequence, God confuses their languages and scatters them across the earth. Their inability to communicate and their scattered state are a vivid physical manifestation of their spiritual reality.

8. Do you trust God, or are you tempted, like Adam and Eve, to put your trust in yourself or in created things? What did you learn from Jeff’s talk that challenges or helps you?

Answers will vary.

### Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: **PATRIARCHS** Approximate dates: 2200–1800 BC

Period color: Burgundy Color meaning: God’s blood covenant with Abraham

List four key people from the Patriarch’s period:

1) Abraham, Sarah, Melchizedek

2) Isaac, Ishmael

3) Jacob, any of Jacob’s sons

4) Judah or Joseph, Perez

What is the most important event? Abrahamic Covenant

What nation is the current world power? Egypt



## Session Three Responses – PATRIARCHS



*Sacrifice of Isaac* by Caravaggio

1. *Mankind has been scattered and their languages confused after they tried to build a name for themselves rather than calling on the name of the Lord. What is God's first step toward restoring them to himself? (See Genesis 12:1-3.)*

God's first step toward restoring his scattered people to himself is to call one man, Abram, to leave everything behind in Ur (interestingly, this is near the location of the Tower of Babel and, even today, is known for the remains of its *ziggurats*) and follow him to a new land. The restoration God will accomplish for his people is implicit in the blessing he gives Abram, by whom "all the families of the earth will bless themselves" (Genesis 12:3).

2. *Patriarchs means literally "fathers" in the same sense we use the terms "forefathers" or "Founding Fathers." This period tells of the patriarchs—the "founding fathers"—of the nation of Israel. Who are they?*

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the main patriarchs of Israel. Some also consider Jacob's sons to be patriarchs—particularly Joseph, whose story takes up the final third of the book of Genesis.

3. *Why is the color burgundy used to represent this time period?*

Burgundy is the color of blood, the blood that sealed the covenant God made with Abraham.

4. *Read Genesis 12:1-3. What promises does God make to Abraham?*

Genesis 12:1-3 says, "Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.'"

This promise can be divided into three parts: (1) a promise of land for Abram's many descendants; (2) a promise of a nation and a great name; and (3) a promise of worldwide blessing. The "Abrahamic Covenant"



box on the *Timeline Chart* lists the second promise as a promise of “royal kingdom” because later in Genesis, God tells Abraham that this is his plan for the nation.

**5.** *To whom do the promises pass in the following generations?*

The promises of God passed down from Abraham to his son (by Sarah) Isaac; to Isaac’s son Jacob; and from Jacob to his twelve sons, with particular emphasis on Judah and Joseph (through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh). Eventually, the promise would extend to all mankind.

**6.** *God’s three covenant promises to Abraham are elaborated in Genesis 15, 17, and 22. In this three-part covenant (also called the “Abrahamic Covenant”), God promises to give Abraham’s descendants a land, to establish them as a kingdom, and to make them a source of worldwide blessing. This covenant gives us a blueprint for understanding the rest of the Bible, which is basically the story of God making good on those promises. Look at the Patriarchs period on your Chart to get an idea of where the story is headed. Each time God fulfills one of the promises, he makes yet another covenant with his people. Find the “Abrahamic Covenant” box on your Chart, and identify the people through whom God will make future covenants with his people and fulfill the three promises he made to Abraham.*

*Land Promise:* Moses

*Kingdom Promise:* David

*Promise of Worldwide Blessing:* Jesus Christ

**7.** *Throughout salvation history, God repeatedly poses the same question to mankind: “Will you trust me?” What does trust in God look like, as demonstrated in the life of Abraham?*

Those who trust God act on his promises. Abraham is known as our “father in faith.” Jeff explains how Abraham’s faith is shown when God takes him outside to look at the stars, and again when he offers up Isaac. Consider the following passages from Hebrews 11:8-12 and 17-19:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. ...By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your descendants be named.” He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence he did receive him back and this was a symbol.

**8.** *How might God be calling you to trust in him today?*

Answers will vary.

## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: **EGYPT AND EXODUS** Approximate dates: 1800–1446 BC

Period color: Red Color meaning: The Red Sea

Supplemental book for this period: Leviticus

What key person does God send?: Moses

Name a current event in secular history: Building projects of Pharaohs Seti I & Ramses II,  
Code of Hammurabi, First urban civilization in China, Greek language first written

Period name: **DESERT WANDERINGS** Approximate dates: 1446 –1406 BC

Period color: Tan Color meaning: The color of the desert

List two key events: Covenant in Moab, Twelve spies sent out, Aaron's rod,  
Moses strikes the rock, Bronze serpent

Narrative book for this period: Numbers





## Session Four Responses – EGYPT AND EXODUS

### and DESERT WANDERINGS



Crossing of the Red Sea by Jacques Courtois

1. *In the episode of the burning bush, God introduces himself to Moses as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6). What does that tell Moses about God?*

For about three hundred fifty years, God’s people have been slaves in a foreign land, Egypt. Where is God? What about the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan? By telling Moses that he is the “God of Abraham ... Isaac ... and Jacob” at the burning bush, the LORD confirms that he is the same God who spoke to Abraham and made a covenant with him; the same God who miraculously gave Abraham and Sarah their son Isaac in their old age; the same God who watched over Jacob. By these words, God reassures Moses that his covenant promises will be fulfilled—that he has seen the plight of his people and is ready to make good on his Word.

2. *What important message do the ten plagues send to Egypt and Israel?*

Again and again, God says he performed a miracle so that both the Israelites and the Egyptians will know that he is the LORD. The original word that is here translated “LORD” is *YHWH* (or “Yahweh”), “I AM,” the name God revealed to Moses at the burning bush; the same God who made the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the plagues, the LORD reveals that he is greater than any of the “gods” of Egypt (i.e., that he is the Almighty God and that all other gods are nothing). Each of the ten plagues shows that a particular Egyptian god has no power at all.

3. *God tells Pharaoh that if he does not free Israel, God’s firstborn son, then he will kill the firstborn sons of Egypt. How does the LORD accomplish this? What is the name of the annual remembrance of this event?*

In the tenth and final plague, God sends the angel of death to strike down the firstborn sons of Egypt while “passing over” those whose doorways are signed by lamb’s blood in accordance with God’s command. This event is remembered every year in the Jewish feast of Passover.



4. **Think About It:** *In the Red Sea crossing, the children of Israel are freed from their enemy by passing through water. What sacrament of the New Covenant does this event prefigure? Explain.*

The crossing of the Red Sea prefigures the sacrament of baptism, in which we are freed from sin through the pouring (or immersion in) water. In baptism, we enter into Christ's death and rise again with him to new life.

5. *The first terms of the Sinai Covenant are what we know as the Ten Commandments. St. John Paul II called the Ten Commandments "the law of freedom: not the freedom to follow our blind passions, but the freedom to love, to choose what is good in every situation, even when to do so is a burden."<sup>2</sup> Think about the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20). What kinds of "false gods" do they free us from?*

Answers will vary. The Ten Commandments free us from the false gods of self, lust, power, money, and revenge. They free us to live as God created us to live, as his children, created in his image and likeness.

6. *Jeff describes the year at Mount Sinai as a "hinge point" for Israel, during which God gives the people three things. What are those three things?*

During the people's year of "formation" at Mount Sinai, God gives Israel three things that will mark their relationship with him: the Law (the Ten Commandments, given in the context of covenant); the Tabernacle and a pattern of worship; and the Levitical priesthood.

7. *What does the Tabernacle signify to Israel?*

The Tabernacle signifies the presence of God dwelling among his people. This is the first time we have seen this since God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is a sign of—and a step toward—restoration of the broken relationship between God and mankind.

8. *Why does God make Israel wander for forty years in the desert? What is he trying to teach the people?*

When Moses sends twelve spies into the land of Canaan, they bring back a report that it is a fertile land and full of giants. Ten of these spies think the people living there are too mighty to defeat, while only two stress the bounty of the land and say that God will lead them. Despite the miraculous way God delivered them from Egypt, the people listen to the ten and do not trust God. As a result of their lack of faith, the LORD makes them wander a year in the desert for every day the spies spent in the land. This allowed a generation to grow up learning to trust God's providence entirely.

9. *St. Paul tells us that these stories have been "written down for our instruction" (1 Corinthians 10:11). What message do these stories hold for you today?*

Answers will vary.

<sup>2</sup> John Paul II, "Celebration of the Word at Mount Sinai," St. Catherine's Monastery, February 26, 2000.



## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: **CONQUEST AND JUDGES** Approximate dates: 1406 –1050 BC

Period color: Green Color meaning: The green hills of Canaan

Narrative books: Joshua, Judges, the beginning of 1 Samuel

List any names familiar to you and tell what you know about them:

Answers will vary. Some of the familiar names are Deborah, Gideon, and

Samson among the Judges; Samuel and Jesse, Rahab and Ruth.

Period name: **ROYAL KINGDOM** Approximate dates: 1050–930 BC

Period color: Purple Color meaning: The color of royalty

Key people: Saul, David, Solomon

What would you say is the key event? God's covenant with David



## Session Five Responses – CONQUEST AND JUDGES

### and ROYAL KINGDOM



Hill country of Judea

1. *Before he dies, Moses tells Israel how to live in order to receive God's blessing in the Promised Land. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (see the green box on page 35). Observant Jews today pray this passage, known as the Shema, every morning and evening. In Israel's conquest of the land, do they follow Moses' instructions? What happens?*

With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the generation that entered the Promised Land consists of the children of those who crossed the Red Sea. The original generation has died out during forty years of wandering in the desert. Even though this new generation has spent their entire lives experiencing God's providence, they will be tempted in the Promised Land to forget the LORD and follow pagan gods instead. Remembering the true God and obeying his commands is crucial to their success and well-being. Unfortunately, they do not teach their children to obey God, and an entire generation grows up not knowing the LORD or what he has done for Israel. They abandon worship of God, do evil in his sight, and serve other gods. As a result, God delivers them over to their enemies.

2. *How well does Israel follow God's command to possess the land of Canaan?*

Under Joshua, Israel does as the LORD has commanded Moses and successfully conquers the majority of the land. At the death of Joshua, all that remains for Israel is to force out the remaining native inhabitants, cleanse the land of pagan altars, and occupy its inheritance. But the new generation do not obey God's command. They not only allow the Canaanites to remain but begin worshiping pagan gods and doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Note:** It may be hard to understand and accept the story of the Canaan conquest. You might wonder how a good God could command his people to entirely destroy the Canaanites. As with the entire Bible, this narrative needs to be read in the context of the larger story. In the period of Egypt and the Exodus, God showed himself greater than the false gods of the world. Now he commands his Chosen People to claim for him territory that has been taken over by the enemy. In turn, the LORD will establish Israel as his people and they will live as witnesses of his righteous rule. The necessary prerequisite to this is a cleansing of the land. If they fail to follow God's ways, they will lose their place in God's land (which, in fact, does happen later in the story).



**3.** *Explain the sevenfold cycle Israel experiences during the time of Conquest and Judges.*

We have already seen how those who stand against God are prone to sin and wickedness. Violence, polygamy, slavery, sorcery, and human sacrifice are the hallmarks of the cultures Israel has been commanded to dispossess. Those who are squeamish about destroying them might read the book of Judges right to its horrifying close. It shows vividly how Israel, who has failed to destroy the Canaanites, falls under their influence and becomes like them.

Israel's sin in forsaking God leads to defeat at the hands of its enemies and servitude. In anguish, the people cry out to God (supplication), and he raises up judges to deliver them (salvation). A period of peace (silence) is soon followed once again by sin, and the cycle begins again. This happens seven times during the time of the Judges.

**4.** *At the close of the period of Conquest and Judges, what plea does Israel make?*

Tired of the endless cycle of subjection to other nations, Israel cries out for a king "like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5).

**5.** *Who is the first king of Israel? How does he fare?*

Saul is the first king of Israel. God tells Saul that he is not to be like other kings but is to be subject to God. Saul's greatest contribution is to unite the kingdom. He does well to begin with, but ultimately fails to trust God. He is disobedient on two occasions: He sacrifices when he is not supposed to, and he spares the life of an evil king God tells him to destroy. As a result, the kingdom is torn away from Saul, and it will be given to David, a man "with a heart after God."

**6.** *Read 2 Samuel 7:1-16. How does the Davidic covenant fulfill and expand upon God's second promise to Abraham?*

God's second promise to Abraham was one of kingdom. God reiterates this promise to David and makes a covenant with him, promising to build a royal dynasty upon him that will last forever. (A *dynasty* is a succession of kings in the same bloodline.)

**7.** *King Solomon is the wisest man who ever lived. What causes him to turn away from God? (1 Kings 11:4-6.)*

Solomon makes the mistake of taking seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, who ultimately turn his heart away from God. He follows other gods and builds altars to Chemosh and Molech so his wives can worship them.

**8.** *God says David is "a man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). Based on this description, what qualities do you think David has?*

People will have varying answers to this question. Saul lost the kingdom for his sins, while David sins with Bathsheba yet receives an everlasting promise because he repents (see Psalm 51).

## Home Preparation: Review

The answers to the Home Preparation questions are listed below:

	Period Name	Color	Color Meaning	Phrase
1.	Early World	Turquoise	The color of the earth viewed from space	God created heaven and earth and tested Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
2.	Patriarchs	Burgundy	God's blood covenant with Abraham	God called Abraham and promised his children land, a royal kingdom, and worldwide blessing.
3.	Egypt and Exodus	Red	The Red Sea	God freed his people from slavery in Egypt so they could worship him.
4.	Desert Wanderings	Tan	The color of the desert	God taught Israel to walk in faith through forty years of wandering in the desert.
5.	Conquest and Judges	Green	The green hills of Canaan	God led Israel into the Promised Land. They failed to teach their children and instead did what was right in their own eyes.
6.	Royal Kingdom	Purple	The color of royalty	God established a kingdom on his servant David and promised him an eternal home.



## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: **DIVIDED KINGDOM** Approximate dates: 930–722 BC

Period color: Black Color meaning: Israel's darkest period

The two kingdoms are represented on the Timeline Chart by two horizontal bars: the Northern Kingdom of Israel, its capital at Samaria; and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, its capital at Jerusalem.

Period name: **EXILE** Approximate dates: 722–538 BC

Period color: Baby blue Color meaning: Judah "singing the blues" in Babylon

New world power: Babylon

List three events found in the gray-colored boxes during the Exile period on your Chart:

- 1) Israel goes into exile
- 2) Judah goes into exile
- 3) Babylonian captivity (70 years of exile)

Period name: **RETURN** Approximate dates: 538–167 BC

Period color: Yellow Color meaning: Judah returning home to brighter days

Apart from the actual return to the land itself, what important events characterize this time? (Read events 49, 50, and 52.)

Zerubbabel rebuilds the Temple, Ezra returns and teaches,

and Nehemiah returns and rebuilds the Jerusalem walls

Prophets during this time (hint: look at Supplemental Books): Haggai, Zechariah,

and Malachi

Two new world powers: Persia Greece



## Session Six Responses – DIVIDED KINGDOM

### EXILE

### and RETURN



1. *Shortly after Solomon's death, the glorious Royal Kingdom splits in two. (Look at the map on page 40. The line of division is just north of Jerusalem.) What precipitates this division? (See 1 Kings 12:6-11.)*

Solomon's son Rehoboam follows the advice of his fellows instead of his father's advisors and refuses to lighten the heavy load Solomon has laid on his subjects. In response, the ten tribes to the North denounce David's line and form their own kingdom.

2. *What are the two resulting kingdoms called?*

Northern Kingdom: Israel; Southern Kingdom: Judah

3. *What grave sin does King Jeroboam commit soon after the Northern Kingdom is formed? (See 1 Kings 12:26-30.) Why does he do this?*

Worried that the people will return to Judah to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, Jeroboam sets up golden calves at two cities and announces that these are the gods that brought Israel out of Egypt. He also appoints priests who are not Levites to serve at these altars. In effect, he starts his own religion. It is not long before the people fall into idolatry and follow the wicked practices of their neighbors.

4. *Think About It: In what sense is Israel and Judah's punishment for their sin a physical reflection of their spiritual state?*

By rejecting God's rule and following other gods, the people of Israel and Judah choose to remove themselves from God's presence. This spiritual exile is manifested physically when God removes them from the Promised Land.



5. *The dark period of the Divided Kingdom is represented by the color black. What color is used to help recall the period of the Exile, and why?*

Baby blue recalls the sorrow of the exiles as Judah spends seventy years “singing the blues” in “Babylon.”

6. *Read Jeremiah 31:31-33. God says that Israel has broken the covenant they made with him. Look along the top of your Chart where the covenant icons in “God’s Family Plan” appear. What is this “new covenant” Jeremiah announces? When will it be made?*

Jeremiah 31:31-33 reads, “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, and I showed myself their Master, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Jeremiah announces the New Covenant that will be made in Jesus Christ. It will be made during the time of Messianic Fulfillment.

7. *How might looking to “other gods” in our culture result in a spiritual exile from God? Search your heart to see if you have any idolatrous attachments in your life.*

Answers will vary.

8. *What color is used to characterize the period of Return? Why?*

The Return is characterized by the color yellow, representing brighter days as Judah returns to the land of Canaan after seventy years of exile.

9. *What unlikely person does God use to return his people to the Promised Land? How is the Return accomplished? (See Ezra 1:1-4 for help with this question.)*

God calls on a foreign king, Cyrus of Persia, and he is “stirred up by the LORD” to send back to Judah those who wish to return and rebuild the Temple. Those who stay behind are told to help with silver, gold, and other freewill offerings. Cyrus provides building materials and returns the Temple treasures taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. The prophet Isaiah foretold this very event many years before, including Cyrus’ name.

10. *What three kinds of rebuilding are necessary when the Jews return?*

Everything has been destroyed. So the returning exiles have to rebuild the Temple, the city itself, and their lives. Rebuilding their lives includes instruction in God’s Law. Each “return” tackles a different aspect of this rebuilding (see the numbered events on *The Bible Timeline Chart*).

## Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: **MACCABEAN REVOLT** Approximate dates: 167 BC - AD 1

Period color: Orange Color meaning: Fire in the oil lamps in the purified Temple

List two main events: Antiochus desecrates the Temple Purification of the Temple

Name the new world power: Rome

Period name: **MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT** Approximate dates: AD 1-33

Period color: Gold Color meaning: The gifts of the Magi

Narrative book: Luke Supplemental books: Matthew, Mark, and John





## Session Seven Responses – MACCABEAN REVOLT

### and MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT



*The Flight Into Egypt* by Edwin Long

1. *What kind of crisis confronts the Jews at the beginning of the Maccabean period when Greece becomes the world power?*

A policy of radical hellenization threatens their Jewish identity. The Greeks—Antiochus Epiphanes in particular—impose the worship of their gods and ban not just worship but all practices that separate Jews from others (e.g., the Sabbath and circumcision) under penalty of death. Many Jews are killed until Mattathias and his sons stand up against this repression and launch an all-out campaign to fight for their faith. Ultimately, they are successful in pushing back the Greeks, and they even enjoy a brief period of self-rule before the Romans come.

2. *Based on the story of the Maccabees, what evidence do you see that Israel is learning to trust God?*

Rather than conforming to Greek ways and abandoning their religion, many of the Jews resist and fight back, risking their lives in the process. The two books of Maccabees are full of heroic stories of resistance and martyrdom. Clearly, the Jews have learned the lessons of the exile and now would rather follow God than abandon him.

3. *The period of the Maccabean Revolt concludes the Old Testament story. At this point, what positive progress has been made in God's plan to restore his children to himself? Refer to God's promises to Abraham and "God's Family Plan" on The Bible Timeline Chart.*

One way to look at this question is to see what has been fulfilled of God's covenant with Abraham. He has indeed had many descendants, who have inherited and inhabited the Promised Land of Canaan, lost it in exile, and ultimately returned. They have become a royal kingdom but are now under foreign rule. It has been hundreds of years since a king of David's line has sat on the throne. The promise of worldwide blessing was fulfilled in a limited sense in Egypt, when Joseph saved many nations from starvation, and again under David and Solomon, but this promise seems to have foundered.



Another way to look at it is to follow “God’s Family Plan” on *The Bible Timeline* Chart. What begins as a covenant with a couple, Adam and Eve, grows into a covenant with Noah’s family, then to a tribe under Abraham, a nation under Moses, and a kingdom under David. Progress has been made, yet something still separates God from his children.

**4.** *What remains to be done?*

The problem of sin remains; man’s fallen nature still separates him from God. Even with all the benefits, advice, and help God has given Israel, they still cannot persevere in serving him faithfully.

The problem of the broken covenant remains. How can God demand a strict following of the terms of the covenant, which demand death for sin and infidelity to his commands, and at the same time keep his promises to his people?

The way God solves these problems is the subject of the next period, Messianic Fulfillment.

**5.** *Open your Bible to the first book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, and read the first verse. Imagine you are a first-century Jew who knows the story. What does this verse mean to you?*

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”—a son of David has finally come to sit on the throne.

**6.** *How does Jesus fulfill the following promises of the Old Covenant in the New Covenant?*

*(Optional: Can you name the period and books of the Bible that describe each of these promises? Can you explain the context in which each promise was given?)*

Jesus fulfills the Old Covenant promises in the New Covenant:

- The seed of the woman will crush the head of the Serpent.

Jesus is the seed (child) of Mary, the second Eve, who comes to defeat Satan, the Serpent, on the Cross. The original promise was given in the Early World to Adam and Eve after the Fall in the context of God’s curse on the Serpent (see Genesis 3:15).

- God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate Passover Lamb who takes the place of all the others and makes the one sacrifice needed to atone for sin. We have been looking for the Lamb since the Patriarchs and Genesis 22, when Abraham told Isaac that God would provide the lamb for the sacrifice.

- God’s people will have a land, nation, and kingdom.

The original promise came to Abraham in the Patriarchs period (see Genesis 12, 15, 17, and 22), and it referred to his descendants. In Jesus, it is a spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth, which will find its ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom of God in heaven. The promise is not just for the blood descendants of Abraham but for all who are his children by faith.

- The kingdom will be ruled by one who sits on the throne of David forever.

Jesus Christ rules from the heavenly throne over a kingdom established on the twelve tribes and twelve apostles, successor to the kingdom of David. The original promise of David’s everlasting throne was made in 2 Samuel 7 (Royal Kingdom).



- Israel will be a source of blessing for the entire world.

Through her son, Jesus Christ, Israel blessed the entire world and provided a way for all God’s scattered children to return to him. This was part of God’s original covenant promise to Abraham (Patriarchs; see Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22).

**7. Based on Jeff’s presentation, what are six things Jesus has come to do?**

He redeems us, he reveals how much God loves us, he shows us how to live, he gives us power to become children of God, he reconstitutes Israel around himself, and he establishes his authority in the Church.

### Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: THE CHURCH Approximate dates: AD 33 – present day

Period color: White Color meaning: The spotless bride of Christ

Name the three “waves of witness” that form the structure of this period:

Witness in Jerusalem Witness in Judea and Samaria

Witness to the ends of the earth

## Home Preparation: Review

The answers to the Home Preparation questions are listed below:

Period Name	Color	Color Meaning	Phrase
7. Divided Kingdom	Black	Israel's darkest period	Israel split into rival kingdoms and fell into idolatry.
8. Exile	Baby blue	Judah "singing the blues" in "Babylon"	God punished first Israel, then Judah, with exile. Prophets brought a message of hope.
9. Return	Yellow	Judah returning home to brighter days	God brought the exiles back to Canaan; they rebuilt the Temple and Jerusalem and were taught from the Law.
10. Maccabean Revolt	Orange	Fire in the oil lamps in the purified Temple	Mattathias and his sons stood up against the threats of hellenization.
11. Messianic Fulfillment	Gold	The gifts of the Magi	God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to fulfill all his promises.
12. The Church	White	The spotless bride of Christ	The Church carries on God's work in the world.



### THE CHURCH

### and CONTINUING THE JOURNEY



1. *In describing Jesus' trial, Jeff says, "I am Barabbas" and "you are Barabbas." What does he mean by that?*

Jeff said, "I am Barabbas" and "you are Barabbas" because in taking the place of the condemned criminal, Barabbas, the innocent Jesus also took the place of each one of us.

2. *What is the "Great Commission" Jesus gives his first disciples and us? (See Matthew 28:18-20.)*

After his resurrection, Jesus appears to his apostles and gives them what has traditionally been called the "Great Commission." As the Gospel of Matthew states, "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20). We too are called to witness to the gospel, preaching it both with words and in the way we live as followers of Christ.

3. *After his death and resurrection, how is Jesus able to live on in his Church?*

Christ lives on in the Church through the Holy Spirit, which lives in the hearts of Christian believers and which animates and unifies the body of the Christ, the Church.

4. *Think About It: Based on what you know about the early days of the Church, what difference does the descent of the Holy Spirit make in the lives of the apostles?*

Before the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples huddled, afraid, in the Upper Room. Afterward, they were bold and joyful witnesses even to the point of death.



**5.** *How are Pentecost and the sacrament of confirmation related?*

On Pentecost, which is recounted in Acts 2:1-31, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles fifty days after Christ's resurrection, granting them "power from on high." They began to preach and bear witness to Jesus, as the risen Christ, the King, and the Lord. In the sacrament of confirmation, the Holy Spirit is imparted to us to give us strength to give witness to and live in accord with the gospel of Christ.

**6.** *Name the "three waves of witness" that propel the gospel message outward from Jerusalem (see Acts 1:8).*

The gospel message is preached first in Jerusalem. Persecution pushes the disciples to witness in Judea and Samaria. From there, they take the "Good News" to the "ends of the earth." This process is described at the beginning of Acts (1:8), providing a structure for the entire book.

**7.** *Jeff points out that Acts is like a story without an ending. So this story includes you. How can you live the life of Christ today?*

Answers will vary.

**8.** *Jesus calls you to be more than a believer; you are called to be a \_\_\_\_\_. How will you live your life differently because of that?*

We are called to be followers, not merely believers.

## Responsive Prayer

Pray this Responsive Prayer with your groups, reading up to and including the period you are studying each week, to help you learn the periods and take them to heart.

God's plan unfolded through history and gives us the "story" for our lives. Let us pray in the name of Jesus:

***R: Speak to us as we read your Word!***

In the Early World, you created the heavens and earth and tested Adam and Eve in the Garden:

***R. Help us to always choose the life you offer.***

In the time of the Patriarchs, you called Abraham and promised his children land, a royal kingdom, and worldwide blessing:

***R. Help us to always hope in your promises.***

You freed your people from slavery in Egypt so they could worship you:

***R. Free us from sin so we can serve and worship you.***

You taught Israel to walk in faith through forty years wandering in the desert:

***R. Help us to trust in you, O God.***

You led Israel triumphantly into the Promised Land. They failed to teach their children and instead did what was right in their own eyes:

***R. Help us to keep our eyes on you and bring up our children in your way.***

You established a kingdom on your servant David and promised him an eternal throne:

***R. Establish your kingdom in our midst.***

Israel split into rival kingdoms and fell into idolatry:

***R. Help us to choose your kingdom over other loves.***

You punished first Israel and then Judah with exile. Prophets brought a message of hope:

***R. In our exile due to sin, show us the way home.***

You brought the exiles back to Canaan; they rebuilt the Temple and Jerusalem and were taught once more from your Law:

***R. Rebuild our broken hearts and lives as we return to you.***

Mattathias and his sons stood up against the threats of hellenization:

***R. Help us resist worldliness in our culture and follow only you.***

You sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to fulfill all your promises:

***R. Give us new life in him.***

The Church carries on your work in the world:

***R. Make us faithful ambassadors of your love.***

*Our Father ...*



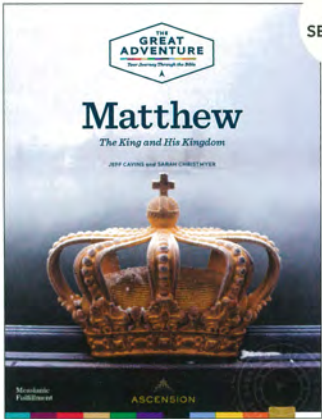


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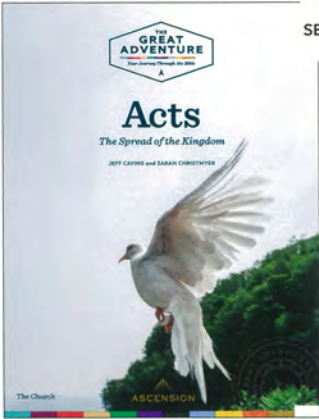
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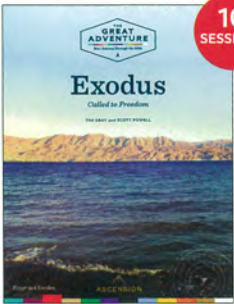


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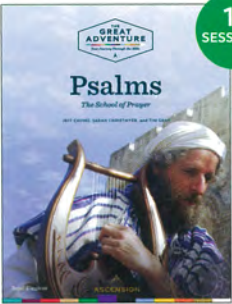
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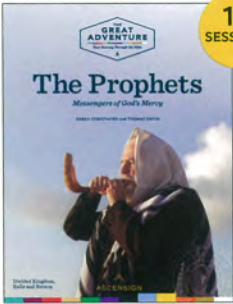
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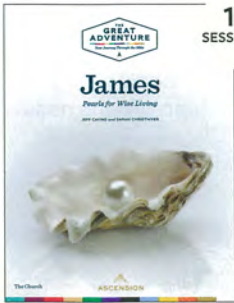
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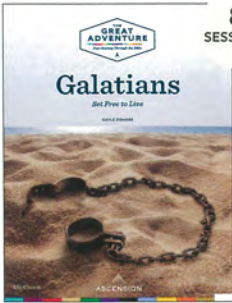
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8 SESSIONS



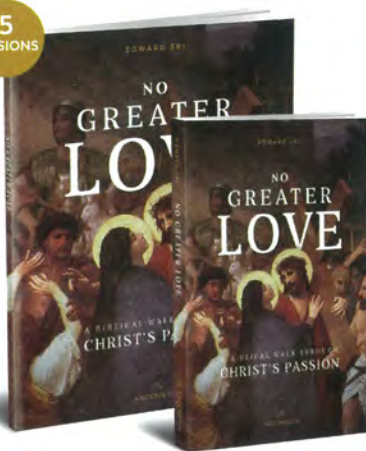
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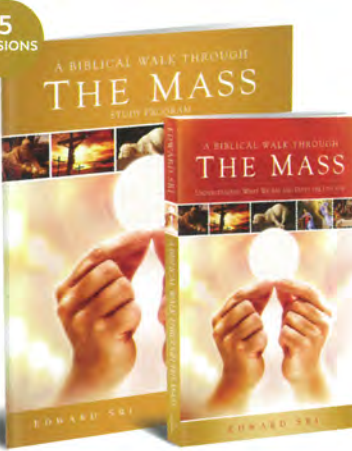
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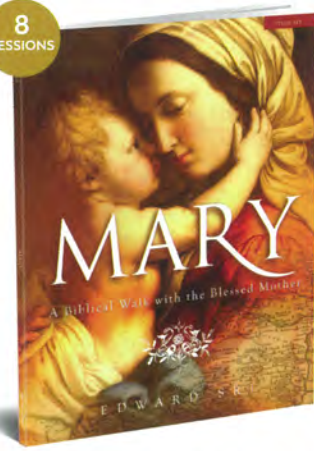
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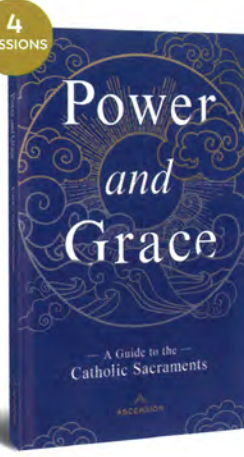
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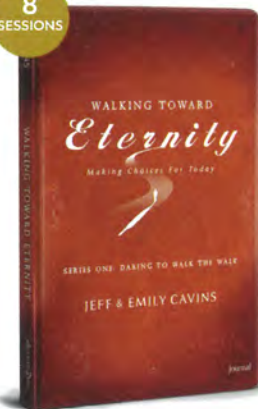
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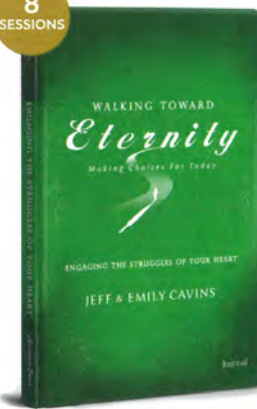
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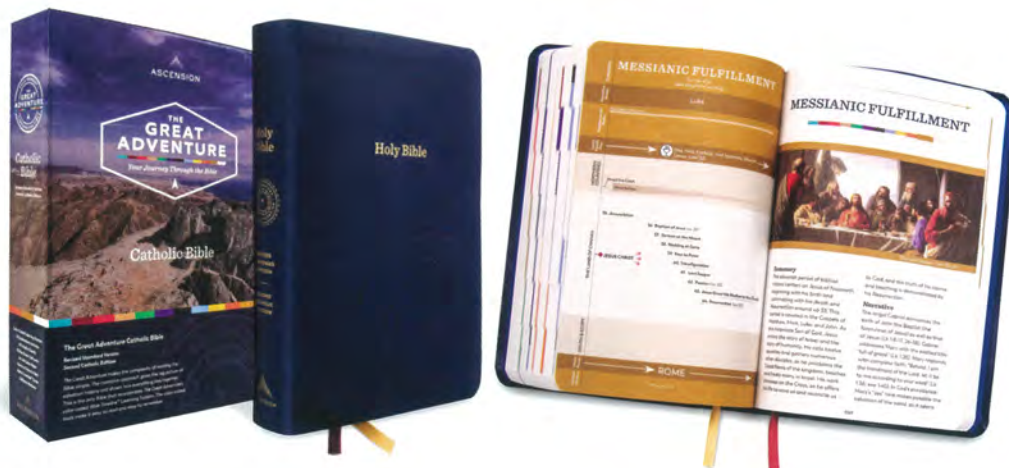


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