

# E100 Study Helps

## **INTRODUCTION >**

“The E100: The Essential One-Hundred Bible Reading Plan” consists of fifty Old Testament and 50 New Testament passages (Scripture Union, Valley Forge, PA, 2011). The 100 stories give a foundational overview of the Bible’s central message. Augustine of Hippo wrote, “In the Old Testament the New is concealed, in the New the Old is revealed” (*Seven Questions Concerning the Heptateuch*, AD 420–21). These Study Helps are intended to assist those using the E100 reading plan to see connections between individual Bible stories and between the Old and New Testaments.

Many casual readers of the Bible mistakenly conclude that the Old Testament describes God as judgmental and wrathful, but then in the New Testament, God had a change of heart to become merciful and loving. Throughout the 100 stories of the E100, we will see that in the midst of God’s judgment and wrath in the Old Testament, He was also demonstrating mercy and love. In the New Testament stories, we will see God put His mercy and love on display in Jesus. However, we will also see that God’s judgment and wrath are never demonstrated more clearly than on the cross where Jesus bore God’s wrath and judgment against sin.

The first Christians came from a Jewish background and more easily saw those links between God’s judgment and mercy, between His wrath and His love. For example, in 1 Corinthians 15:3, the Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians about the gospel he had preached to them. He wrote, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.” “The Scriptures” that Paul referred to were the Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians often call the Old Testament. The books of Genesis through Malachi were the only Scriptures the earliest church recognized.

Paul is not the only one to call attention to how the Old Testament Scriptures pointed to the gospel of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus, himself, challenged religious leaders of his day by saying, “For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.” The gospel-writer, Luke, describes Jesus’ encounter with two men along the road after his death and resurrection. Luke writes, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself ... Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled’” (Luke 24:27,44). For other examples of Christians in the New Testament using Old Testament Scriptures to explain the gospel of Jesus, see Acts 7; 8:25; 26:22, and 28:23.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE E100 >

- Read the passage from the E100 in your Bible before reading the Study Helps.
- Read the Study Helps, looking back at your Bible to clarify or substantiate any points that you missed in your first reading or that are still not clear to you.
- Familiarize yourself with the passage to the point that you can tell a summary of it in your own words. Actually, sharing your summary of the passage with someone will reinforce it for you, and it might help someone else learn something new about God's word.
- Note any questions and/or personal applications you may have related to the passage.
- If you are going through the E100 and Study Helps alone, consider asking someone else to go through it with you or perhaps even gather with a small group.

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## IN THE BEGINNING >

### #1 – Genesis 1:1 – 2:25 – Creation

- God spoke the universe into existence by the power of his word (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). Later in John 1 we see God beginning a new creation. To accomplish that new creation, God himself becomes the incarnate Living Word in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.
- We find two of the three persons of the Trinity referenced on the first page of the Bible. In addition to the word “God,” we see “the Spirit of God” hovering over the waters. In the New Testament, we also find passages that present Jesus as active in the original Creation (John 1:1–3, 14; Col 2:16). Since we have the advantage of possessing the complete canon of the Bible, we can see, in ways previous generations could not, that the plural, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness” (Gen 1:26), is arguably the first evidence of God as a Trinity in the Bible.
- God created humans as male and female with the capacity and purpose of procreation, just as he did other creatures. However, Adam and Eve in particular, and other human beings by extension, were created in the image of God, setting them apart from every other classification of living beings (Gen 1:27).
- God gave the first humans a mission: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (1:28). This verse is known as the “cultural mandate.” Essentially, God was instructing Adam and Eve to create culture throughout the world that reflected His image as His sub-rulers over the rest of creation.
- The example of God resting from His work on the 7<sup>th</sup> day (Gen 2:2–3) becomes the example and basis for Sabbath rest later in Scripture, as seen as in the fourth commandment (Exo 20:8–11).
- God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with instructions to “work and keep it” (Gen 2:15). They were free to eat from any tree except for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Eating from that tree would bring death to the humans (Gen 2:16–17).
- At that time, Adam and Eve were both naked and unashamed. (Gen 2:25).

### #2 – Genesis 3:1–24 – The Fall

- The sin of Adam and Eve came as a result of distrusting God's word and character (Gen 3:1–6). Instead of trusting God, Eve allowed Satan, in the form of a talking serpent, to deceive her (Gen 3:13). Adam then listened to the voice of Eve rather than God's voice (Gen 3:27). They both followed their appetites and ate the fruit God forbade them to eat (Gen 3:6). The root of all sin is rebelling against God's rule in our lives. When we trust other voices instead of God's word, we usurp His role as the arbiter of truth and ruler of our lives. We are then likely to follow our appetites, seeking our pleasure more than we seek His pleasure.

- Adam and Eve were ashamed. They covered themselves with fig leaves and hid when they heard the Lord coming near. (Gen 3:7–10)
- The curses and consequences of sin impacted all of creation (Gen 3:14–19). Adam and Eve suffered spiritual death (having an estranged relationship with God) and later both physically died. Yet, this is an example of God showing mercy in the midst of judgment. God was merciful in not having Adam and Eve die immediately, which would have snuffed out the human race.
- In Genesis 3:15, God promised that a descendant of Eve would kill Satan, represented by the serpent. The serpent would bite the descendant’s heel but the descendant would bruise/crush the serpent’s head is known as “The Proto-Evangelium” or the Proto-Gospel.” This is the first hint of the gospel that foreshadows Jesus suffering on the cross and His resurrection that conquers death and Satan who was the original enemy of God and humanity.
- God clothed them with animal skins in place of fig leaves (Gen 3:21). God’s kind act foreshadowed that the covering of sin required a substitutionary death and the shedding of blood. We’ll see this both in the story of Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22), the priestly sacrificial system (Exodus \* Leviticus), and ultimately in Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
- The Lord cast Adam and Eve out of the garden following their distrust and rebellion. It was as much an act of mercy as it was of punishment so that they would not eat from the tree of life and live forever in their fallen state. (3:24)

### #3 – Genesis 6:5–7:24 – The Flood

- We see a dramatic decline from Genesis 1:31 where God saw all that He had made and that “it is very good” (Gen 1:31), to Genesis 6:5 where God saw “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
- Because of sin’s corrupting and violent effects, God chose to destroy all terrestrial life with a catastrophic flood (6:5–7, 11–13).
- Noah was not sinless but he did “find favor in the eyes of the Lord” (6:8). The word “favor” may also be translated as “grace.” God also shows favor to Abraham (Gen 18:3, 10, 33) and Moses (Exodus 33:12–13, 16–17).
- Noah’s three sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. God chose to bring the Messiah through the lineage of Shem. Shem’s descendants are known as “Semitic,” deriving from his name. Although “Semitic” is popularly used today as synonymous with Jewish peoples, technically, Muslim peoples who trace their lineage through Abraham’s son Ishmael are also Semitic peoples.
- Noah trusted God and obeyed all that God commanded him (6:22 & 7:5), which was a stark contrast to those around him.
- In this most catastrophic judgment of God against humanity’s sinful rebellion, God demonstrates His grace and extends salvation to and through Noah and his family.
- God commanded Noah to construct an ark which He used to save Noah’s family and terrestrial wildlife, allowing creation to survive.
- Genesis 7:11 mentions the “fountains of the great deep burst[ing] forth” and “the windows of the heavens opened.” The vast amount of water came from below the earth as well as from the rains from above. It took 150 days for the waters to recede.

### #4 – Genesis 8:1–9:17 – God’s Covenant with Noah

- Noah and his family’s fresh start as the only human beings on earth was essentially a “new creation.”
- In 9:1 & 7, God essentially gave Noah and his family the same instructions He gave Adam and Eve in the cultural mandate of Gen 1:26 --to be fruitful and multiply, filling the earth as God’s image bearers and ruling over it as His sub-rulers.

- Perhaps in light of the violence that was epidemic before the flood, God instituted human retribution for bloodshed that took the life of another human. God based the punishment on the fact that He had created human beings “in his own image,”(Gen 9:6), referring back to the original creation in Gen 1:27.
- God gave the rainbow to be a sign (9:8–13) of His covenant promise that He would never destroy all living creatures again with a flood.

#### **#5 – Genesis 11:1–9 – Tower of Babel**

- Up to this point everyone had been a descendant of Noah. They comprised one people with one language (11:1).
- The people wanted to make a name for themselves rather than spreading out as God commanded to make His name known (11:4). Their explicit reason for building the tower and city was that they would not have to be “dispersed over the face of the whole earth” as God had told Noah and his descendants to do back in Gen 9:1 & 7.
- God turned the one people with one language into many peoples with many languages. They dispersed over the earth and left off building the city (11:6–9).
- The place was called Babel which sounds like the Hebrew word for “confused.”

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## **ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB >**

#### **# 6 – Genesis 12:1–20 – The Call of Abram**

- Abram was living in Haran when God called him to leave his family and homeland to go to a place that He would show Abram. It doesn’t appear that Abram knew the destination (12:1).
- We find that Abram grew up in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen 11:31). A later passage, Joshua 24:2 reveals, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.’” God’s call to Abram was not based on his previous worship of the LORD God YHWH. God’s revelation of Himself and call to Abram was a result of God’s election and grace, not Abram’s merits.
- God did not make any rule-keeping or stipulations necessary to Abram, only to leave his family to follow God, which would require sacrifice and trust (12:2–3).
- God promised to bless Abraham, his family, and all the families of the earth through him. (12:3).
- Although God promised Abram offspring that would form a nation, Abram was 75 years old with no children when he left his homeland with his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and his servants to follow God’s direction (12:4).
- God appeared to Abram at Shechem in the land of Canaan at that time. Shechem corresponds to modern-day Nablus, about 34 miles north of Jerusalem. The Lord declared that Shechem was part of the land that He would give Abram and his descendants (12:6–7).
- Abram and his companions went to Egypt due to a famine in Canaan (12:10)
- Abram had Sarai pretend she was his sister instead of his wife because he was afraid someone in Egypt might kill him to have Sarai if they knew she was his wife. Abram’s deception allowed Sarai to be taken by Egypt’s king as one of his wives (12:19). Although Abraham is known for his great faith, his faith wasn’t always consistent.
- God plagued the king and his household because of taking Sarai for his wife so the king gave Sarai back to Abram and sent them away (12:17–20)

## # 7 – Genesis 15:1–21 – God’s Covenant with Abram

- Abram was questioning God because even though God had promised Abram many descendants, he and his wife still didn’t have any children. When God reiterated His promise to give Abram and Sarai innumerable descendants, Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted Abram’s trust as righteousness (Gen 15:2–6). We saw back in Genesis 12 that Abraham had been both untrusting and unrighteous in sacrificing his wife’s well-being for his own, but God considered Abram righteous because of his faith to trust God’s promise. This truth will be referred to in the New Testament (Romans 4:3–9; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23).
- After Abram trusted God about descendants, he still had questions about how he would inherit the land that was still filled with Canaanites. In response, God made a covenant with Abram that involved the sacrifice and blood of animals (Gen 15:7–11).
- God foretold to Abram that his descendants would spend 400 years in Egypt where they would be slaves. However, at the end God would bring them out with many possessions. We will see this promise/warning played out in the Book of Exodus.
- God himself walked between the cut halves of the animals and promised Abram the land. This was an unconditional covenant backed by God’s word and actions. All Abram had to do in this covenant was watch and believe.

## #8 – Genesis 21:1–22:19 – Isaac’s Birth and Sacrifice

- We want to note that Abram is now called Abraham and Sarai is now called Sarah. We can look back to Gen 17:1–5 and Gen 17:15–16 to see when God changed their names. Abram means “exalted father” and Abraham means “father of a multitude.”
- When Abraham was 100 years old, God enabled Sarah and Abraham to have a son they named Isaac. That was 25 years after God called Abraham to leave his home to follow Him (Gen 12 in story #6)
- Abraham had a son named Ishmael by Sarah’s Egyptian servant Hagar. (You can find that story in Genesis 16.) Here in Genesis 21, God protected Ishmael when Sarah demanded that Hagar and Ishmael be sent away. Hagar found a wife for Ishmael in Egypt. Muslim peoples trace their ancestry back to Abraham through Ishmael. There will be an interesting Egyptian connection later in the Joseph story. Sarah likely acquired Hagar during her and Abraham’s stay in Egypt that we read about earlier in Genesis 12.
- God tested Abraham’s faith by asking him to sacrifice Isaac, his one and only son. We see two important truths here.
  - Abraham trusted that God would do something to save his son. In Gen 22:5 Abraham says, “I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” Hebrews 11:19 looks back on this event and explains, Abraham “considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.”
  - In response to Abraham’s faith, God provided a substitute ram in place of Isaac. We now know that this substitutionary sacrifice pointed to God’s sacrifice of his one and only Son--the “Spotless Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36). Jesus became the God-provided substitute for us, and God did raise him from the dead.

## #9 – Genesis 27:1–28:22 – Jacob and Esau Compete

- Isaac’s wife Rebekah led her youngest Son Jacob to deceive Isaac in order to get the blessing intended for the first-born son. This reversed the natural order, allowing the greater blessing to go to the youngest son. God chose Jacob’s lineage to bring the promised Messiah, not because of Jacob’s righteousness but because of God’s grace. The Apostle Paul will make a major point of this truth in Romans 9.
- In Gen 28:36 Esau mentioned his brother cheating him two times. In Gen 25:29–34, we see that Esau traded his birthright as firstborn to his younger brother Jacob for a bowl of porridge.
- Rebekah sent Jacob away to protect him from Esau who wanted to kill him.
- Esau married a descendant of Ishmael. His descendants became the Edomites who later had ongoing conflict with Jacob’s descendants--the Israelites.
- The Lord appeared to Jacob and gave him the promise of land and descendants along with the promise that through him all families of the earth would be blessed. This is the same promise given to his grandfather Abraham (Gen 12).

## #10 – Gen 32:1–33:20 – Jacob and Esau Reconcile

- We are led to believe that Jacob’s wrestling match “a man” (Gen 32:24) was actually with the Lord Himself in some incarnate form. The superior being says as much in giving Jacob the new name, Israel, which means “he strives with God” or “God strives” (Gen 32:28). Jacob also conclude that he was wrestling with God: “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered” (Gen 32:30).
- Jacob and Esau met and were reconciled.
- Jacob arrived safely in Shechem. Shechem was the city where God first promised Abraham the land of Canaan (Story #6). Here, Jacob bought his first tract of land in the Promised land at the very place God had promised to give it to his grandfather.

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## THE STORY OF JOSEPH >

### # 11 – Gen 37:1–36 – Joseph Sold Into Slavery

- By this time, Jacob had 12 sons who are also known as the 12 Tribes of Israel.
- Joseph was the next to the youngest and the favorite of his father Jacob. The Bible shows the human and relational costs that occur when parents favor one child over others. Jacob had been the favorite of his mother and Esau the favorite of his father. Here, the pattern continued with Joseph being the favorite of Jacob.
- This passage describes the first two of a number of dreams associated with Joseph.
- Joseph’s brothers sold him to a band of Ishmaelites. We don’t want to miss that these Ishmaelites were sons or grandsons of Ishmael--the son of Abraham by the slave Hagar. Abraham had been the owner of Hagar and had allowed Sarah to send her and Ishmael away where they both would have died without the LORD rescuing them. Here, we see descendants of the slave woman Hagar ended up purchasing the great-grandson of Abraham for 20 shekels of silver.
  - It seems the Midianites were a subset of the Ishmaelites, or the two were used interchangeably.
- Potiphar, the captain of the guard serving the Egyptian King Pharaoh, bought Joseph as his slave from the Ishmaelites. God would use Joseph’s proximity to power during his slavery to place Joseph exactly where He wanted him.

#### **#12 – Gen 39:1–41:57 – Prison and a Promotion**

- The Lord was with Joseph and gave him favor with his master so that he became overseer of the entire household, second in command to the owner himself.
- Joseph’s behavior displays integrity and faithfulness to his master but he is falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and imprisoned as a result.
- We see an almost instant replay of Joseph’s early experience with Potiphar. The Lord was with Joseph in prison and gave him favor with the keeper of the prison so that Joseph became second in command of the prison.
- We see three more dream descriptions that God used to give Joseph favor with the King Pharaoh. Those dream interpretations gave Joseph favor with the King and set Joseph up to become second in command over all of Egypt.
- Three times we see Joseph displaying integrity and faithful service to those who rule over him and all three times the Lord God gives him favor with his masters, causing Joseph to become second in command in a household, in the prison, and in the nation.

#### **#13 – Gen 42:1–38 – Ten Brothers Go to Egypt**

- God used the famine about which Joseph had foretold through a dream interpretation.
- Joseph devised a plan of storing extra grain to prepare Egypt for the coming famine, which gave him favor with Pharaoh, leading Joseph to become second in command over all of Egypt.
- When the famine came it also plagued the Promised Land of Canaan, leading Joseph’s brothers to seek food from Egypt. God led the brothers before Joseph who recognized them. However, they did not recognize him.
- Joseph kept one of his brothers, Simeon, as a sort of collateral to get the other brothers to return with his younger brother Benjamin. He sent the other brothers back with food and also returned their money to them.

#### **#14 – The Brothers Return – Gen 43:1–44:34**

- The brothers returned to Egypt with Benjamin to get more food and gain the release of Simeon. They brought twice the amount of money they owed to make up for the money that had been returned to them in their bags the previous time.
- Joseph planted a silver cup in the youngest brother Benjamin’s bag as a ploy to get them to leave Benjamin with him.
- However, Judah offered to substitute himself for Benjamin so that Benjamin could return to his father who would have been devastated without him. Judah was one of the older brothers who had earlier tried to prevent the other brothers from killing Joseph (Story #11, Gen 37:26).
  - Jesus would later be born from the line of Judah and would substitute himself to save others that they might be with their heavenly Father.

## #15 – Gen 45:1–46:7 – Joseph Reveals His Identity

- Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and showed them mercy and grace. He credited God for sovereignly using their evil against him for a greater plan: “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt” (Gen 45:4–8).
  - Joseph’s father, brothers, and entire household moved to Egypt where they received both food and pasture lands. Unbeknownst to any of them at the time, this move would play a pivotal role in fulfilling the prophecy God gave Abraham (Story #7, Gen 15:13) that his descendants would spend 400 years in Egypt.
  - Later in Gen 50:20 Joseph tells his brothers, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” Joseph suffered repeated injustices over many years—sold into slavery, carried to a foreign land with foreign gods, falsely accused, and imprisoned. God used the unjust sufferings of Joseph for His saving purposes. The LORD showed grace to Joseph in the middle of his suffering and placed him in positions of responsibility to save many people from death. Joseph’s life pointed ahead to Jesus as One who suffered unjustly for sins he did not commit so that many would be saved.

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## MOSES AND THE EXODUS >

### #16 – Exodus 1:1–2:25 – Birth of Moses

- We hear echoes of God’s commands to Adam and Noah to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” The family of Jacob “multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them” (Exodus 1:7).
- The passage doesn’t tell us how long the Israelites had been in Egypt, but we see that both Joseph, and the Pharaoh whom he served as second in command, had died. A new Pharaoh came to power “who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8).
- Fearing that the growing numbers and strength of the Israelites might result in their uprising against the Egyptians, Pharaoh forced them into slave labor. He took them out of their primary vocations as shepherds and made them field workers and brick fabricators.
- Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all males that were born, but to let the girls live (Exodus 1:16). At risk to their own lives, the midwives honored God and disobeyed the Pharaoh’s order. Therefore, God blessed them.
- When the midwives did not kill the baby boys, Pharaoh enlisted the Egyptian people to do the job by throwing baby boys into the Nile River.
- Descendants from the Tribe of Levi gave birth to a son and named him Moses, which means “from the water” (Exodus 2:10). When Moses was 3 months old, his mother placed him in a floating basket at the end of the Nile where God led Pharaoh’s daughter to find him. In God’s providence, he arranges for Moses’ mother to become his nursemaid with compensation.
- After being raised in the household of Pharaoh, Moses killed an Egyptian for beating a fellow Hebrew. Moses had grown up as an Egyptian of privilege and even royalty. He looked like an Egyptian in his dress and hair, and he spoke like an Egyptian. However, in killing the Egyptian he sided here with his own oppressed Hebrew people.

- So Moses fled Egypt and went to Midian, a region along the Sinai peninsula. The Midianites were known to be descendants of Abraham through his second wife Keturah. Midianites were also associated with descendants of Ishmael in Gen 37 (Story # 11)

### **#17 – Exodus 3:1–4:17 – The Burning Bush**

- When the Lord called Moses, He identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Exodus 3:2 refers to the “angel of the LORD,” which many Bible scholars believe to be a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.
- In the previous story, Moses tried to intervene and help a mistreated Hebrew slave. However, Moses had been operating in his own anger and strength. Now God called Moses to go back to Egypt to serve as His leader in delivering the Hebrew people from their Egyptian slavery.
- The Lord not only promised to deliver the Israelites. He also promised to return them to the Land of Promise they left 400 years earlier during a famine (Story 13). By this time, the Promised Land was not suffering famine but was “good and broad” and “flowing with milk and honey.” (Exo 3:8)
- The Lord called to Moses out of a burning bush on Mt. Sinai. The Lord promised Moses that he would serve the Lord at this same spot with the people of Israel after they were set free from Egypt.
- The Lord further identified Himself to Moses as “I AM WHO I AM” (Exo 3:14). This is God’s special name he used with His covenant people. It is literally four Hebrew letters, YHWH. Anytime we see the word “LORD” in all capital letters in our Bibles, it translates this special name of YHWH.

### **#18 – Exodus 6:38–11:10 – The Ten Plagues**

- The Lord made clear to Moses that He was in the process of forming a new covenant people for Himself. He had previously revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as “God Almighty” but He had never identified Himself to them as YHWH --THE LORD. God was doing something new with Moses.
- The Lord emphasized to Moses and the people that they would be His people, in His place, under His rule (Exodus 6:7–8). This will be a recurring theme throughout the Bible--God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule. We will see various degrees of that reality in the Bible and throughout history, but it will not be perfectly realized until heaven. Only God’s people will be in heaven, and they will be in perfect accord with His rule.
- Pharaoh’s magicians seemed to be able to reproduce the first two plagues, but not the following 8.
- To make a clear distinction between God’s people and the people of Egypt, the LORD God spared the Hebrew people from plagues 4–10.
- The Lord actually told Moses back in Exodus 4:22–23 that He would send the 10th plague on all the firstborn in Egypt.

### **#19 – Exodus 12:1–42 – Passover and Exodus**

- The Hebrew people spread the blood of an unblemished lamb over their doorways as a sign for the angel of death to not touch any of the Israelite firstborn. The angel would “pass over” those who were under the sign of the lamb’s blood. This event was the basis for the celebration of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
  - Passover was a celebration of deliverance and salvation and the LORD commanded, “You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast” (Exo. 12:14).
  - John the Baptist later refers to Jesus as “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 36). The Apostle Paul writes, “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (2 Cor 5:7).

- The 10th plague on the firstborn became the basis for Israel’s Passover and unleavened bread celebrations. Again we see the Lord wanting the Egyptians to know that the LORD makes a distinction between His people Israel and the Egyptians (Exodus 12:7).
- Again, we see the Lord giving favor to His people. In this case the Egyptians gave the Israelites whatever they asked for so that the Hebrew people “plundered the Egyptians” (Exo 12:36) without a battle.
- “A mixed multitude also went with them” (Exo 12:38) indicates that non-Hebrew people accompanied the Israelites out of Egypt. Having seen the works of the LORD in the plagues, they cast their lot with the Israelites and their God YHWH.

## **#20 – Exodus 13:17–14:31 – Crossing the Red Sea**

- Exodus 13:15 explains that the LORD killed all of the firstborn in Egypt because, “Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go.” We repeatedly see the LORD demanding that Pharaoh let His people go to worship Him and offer sacrifices to Him in the wilderness (Exo 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 8, 20, 21; 9:13, 17; 10:3).
- The LORD manifested His presence as a cloud that shielded and guided the Israelites by day and a pillar of fire that lit their path by night. During the crossing the Lord gave light to the Israelites and kept the Egyptians in darkness.
- Before leaving Egypt, Moses retrieved Joseph’s bones (Exo 13:19) and carried them back to Israel to honor Joseph’s directive recorded in Gen 50:24–25.
- Pharaoh’s army thought they had the Israelites trapped with their backs to the sea. However, the LORD was actually enticing the Egyptians into a trap.
- The LORD demonstrated His sovereign power over nature by parting the sea so that the Hebrew people could cross on dry land. Then He released the seas to drown the ensuing Egyptians.
- We read that after this event, the people of Israel “believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses” (Exo 14:31).
- All the Hebrew people had to do to be saved was trust God enough to walk on the dry ground and watch Him work salvation on their behalf.

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## **THE LAW AND THE LAND >**

### **#21 – Exodus 19:1–20:21 – The Ten Commandments**

- After the Passover and up to this point, the main thing the Israelites had to do was to follow the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night wherever the Lord led them. It was an act of trusting faith that He would lead them to safety.
- It’s important to see that the Ten Commandments and the Law came after God had already saved his people from their slavery in Egypt. They did not have to obey the commandments in order to be saved or to be the people of God. Rather the commandments laid out for them how the people of God were to live in a way that honored and pleased Him. Obeying the commandments was one way the LORD’s people were to worship Him as their Savior and Ruler.
- There were times the Lord called Moses to meet Him on the mountain to receive words to later deliver to the people at the bottom of the mountain. However, God spoke the 10 commandments audibly from the mountain so all of the people heard them directly without an intermediary.
- The first 5 commandments of the 10 revolve around the people’s relationship with God. The next 5 commandments deal with their relationships among themselves.

## **#22 – Exodus 32:1–34:35 – The Golden Calf**

- Exodus 24:18 tells us Moses was on the mountain for 40 days. That means within a 40-day period of hearing God speak the 10 commandments directly to them, the people made a golden calf idol and worshiped it.
- The bottom of the mountain is the area of worship where the people had worshiped the Lord. Now they were worshiping the golden calf at that place of worship. That is the place Moses smashed and broke the tablets with the commandments.
- Moses called out asking who would be for the Lord and all of the Levites stepped forward. Moses called them to kill some within the camp. It is clear that Aaron and some of the Levites were involved in the golden calf incident, yet not all of them were killed. It seems some were spared because they turned to the Lord and again promised to be faithful to Him. We are left to think that the 3,000 who were killed did not repent of their idolatry. The LORD was making it clear how serious an offense idolatry is to Him, an offense worthy of the death penalty.
- The LORD renewed His covenant of the Law with the people, gave them new tablets with the commandments, and promised to go before them in giving them the Promised Land.
- Even after their idolatry, the Lord did not forsake them as His people. However, He did bring a judgment on those who refused to repent to keep unrepentant sin from further harming the group.

## **#23 – Joshua 1:1–18 – Joshua Succeeds Moses**

- Joshua was the leader to succeed Moses and the people recognized him as such. The LORD reassured Joshua that He would be with him just as He had been with Moses.
- The LORD promised to fulfill promises about the land made to Joshua's forefathers.
- The first land upon crossing the Jordan River was allocated to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Upon arrival, the men from those tribes could leave their families and livestock there, but they needed to continue on to fight for the land of the other tribes. They were not to return to their own families and land until the land had been secured for everyone.

## **#24 – Joshua 3:1–4:24 – Crossing the Jordan**

- Priests carried the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing the presence of the LORD, before the people. As the priests entered the waters of the Jordan with the Ark, the LORD parted the waters of the river in a way reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea with Moses (Story #20 – Exodus 13:17–14:31).
- The priests kept holding the Ark of the Covenant as they were in the middle of the river until all of the people had crossed over on dry ground.
- The LORD commanded a member from each of the 12 tribes to carry a stone from the middle of the riverbed to set up as a memorial of what God had done in parting the waters of the Jordan and leading them into the Promised Land. Parting the waters of the river, with Joshua as their human leader, was a clear reminder of the LORD parting the Red Sea 40 years earlier when Moses was their human leader. "On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life" (Josh 4:14).

## #25 – Joshua 5:13–6:27 – The Fall of Jericho

- After crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the LORD ordered all of the men who had not already been circumcised to be circumcised as a sign of the covenant that they belonged to Him.
  - It was necessary to camp there for a time while the men healed from their circumcisions. The LORD said at that time and place He had “rolled away the reproach of Egypt” from His people (Josh 5:9). They named that place Gilgal which sounds like the Hebrew word for “rolled.”
- While at Gilgal, the people also celebrated their first Passover meal in the Promised Land.
- From that point on the Israelites began to eat the produce of the Promised Land and God stopped providing the manna they had received for the previous 40 years in the desert.
- The Commander of the Army of the Lord that Joshua encountered outside of Jericho was an angel. The angel instructed Joshua to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. This is just what the LORD had said to Moses when He spoke to him from the burning bush (Story # 17). Readers should note this event as a confirmation that Joshua was the successor to Moses as the earthly leader/deliverer of God’s people.
- The Israelites followed the LORD’s command and marched around the walled city of Jericho for seven days. On the 7th day, the walls fell and the Israelites entered to plunder the city.
  - It’s important to note that when the Israelites conquered Jericho, they spared a woman named Rahab and her household. Rahab was a prostitute who had helped Israelite spies on an earlier expedition to spy out Jericho (Josh 2:1–24). Rahab later figures into the genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:5).

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## THE JUDGES >

### # 26 – Judges 2:6–3:6 – Israel’s Disobedience

- The LORD had commanded the Israelites to drive out and destroy the various peoples who were occupying the Promised Land. The “What is this you have done?” in Judges 2:2 refers to how God’s people did not destroy all the inhabitants of the land as the LORD had instructed them to do (See Judges 1). Because they failed to obey the LORD’s command, the LORD said, “So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you” (Judges 2:3).
- After Joshua and the elders around him died, “there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel» (Joshua 3:10). These people did evil and worshipped the Baals--idols of the Canaanite peoples.
  - Baal was considered a storm god, responsible for bringing rain. Along with the rain was the secondary idea of Baal being a fertility god. Baal would die during the dry season and needed to be resuscitated by Baal’s sister god, Anat, to begin the rains again.
- Baal worship among the Israelites would not have occurred if they had destroyed the idolatrous inhabitants of the land as God had instructed them and as Moses had the Israelites do to their own idolatrous members in the desert (Story #22– Exodus 32).
- Because of the Israelites’ idolatry, the LORD did not support them in battle, but allowed them to be defeated by their enemies. Even so, God did not abandon them. Instead, He raised up “judges”--leaders of the various regions. The LORD empowered these judges to deliver the people from their enemies. Yet, when the judges died, the people “turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them” (Joshua 2:19).

- Because of the Israelite unfaithfulness, people from the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites remained in the land (Judges 3:5). As a result, the Israelites intermarried with them and served their gods (Judges 3:6).

#### **#27 – Judges 4:1–5:31 – Deborah Leads Israel**

- We see a pattern: The people of Israel did evil, the LORD allowed their enemies to oppress them until they cried out to Him, and He raised up a Judge/Deliverer to defeat Israel’s enemies.
- The LORD raised up and called out a woman named Deborah to be the Judge or deliverer of Israel. Judges 4:4 describes Deborah as “a prophetess and the wife of Lappidoth.”
- Deborah called out Barak to go up against their oppressor. We don’t know much more about Barak other than his name and the name of his father, but Hebrews 11:32 in the New Testament names him in a list of people who displayed great faith.
- Barak said he would not go against his enemies without Deborah also going with him so she also went. However, she declared that a woman would get the credit for the victory rather than Barak (Judges 4:9).
- The LORD Himself fought on behalf of the Israelites, routing the enemy army. As Deborah had announced to Barak, a woman received the glory for the victory as a woman named Jael drove a tent stake through the temple of the enemy general Sisera.

#### **# 28 – Judges 6:1–7:25 – Gideon Defeats the Midianites**

- We see the pattern from earlier repeated: the Israelites did evil, God allowed their enemies to oppress them until they cried out to Him, and He raised up a Judge/Deliverer to defeat Israel’s enemies.
- This time the enemy was the Midianite people. We recall the Midianites were descendants of Abraham through his wife Keturah, whom he married after Sarah died. Joseph’s brothers had sold him as a slave to a group of Midianites (Story #11– Gen 37) and Moses tended sheep for 40 years among the Midianites after he had fled Egypt for killing an Egyptian (Story #17 – Exodus 3).
- The LORD called Gideon as the Judge/Deliverer, but Gideon was reluctant and uncertain of his calling. Gideon came from the weakest of the 12 tribes--Manasseh. Gideon asked for repeated signs to make sure he was hearing the LORD correctly and the LORD granted him the signs he requested.
- Gideon had an encounter with the “angel of the LORD” which may be a preincarnate appearance of Jesus. We have seen the “angel of the LORD” in previous stories:
  - Calling to Abraham when he was about to sacrifice Isaac (Story #8 – Gen 22).
  - Visiting and calling Moses (Story #17 – Exodus 3:2).
- The LORD had Gideon pare down the size of his army three times to make the Israelites vastly outnumbered by the Midianites. Under Gideon, the reluctant warrior leader with an outnumbered army, the LORD caused the Israelites to defeat the Midianites.
- We’ll see this theme repeated throughout the history of Israel--God repeatedly chose to show His might and grace through the weakness and inability of His people so that only He could receive the credit and the glory.

#### **# 29 – Judges 13:1–16:31 – Sampson Defeats the Philistines**

- We see the same pattern again. The Israelites did evil, God allowed their enemies to oppress them until they cried out to Him, and He raised up a Judge/Deliverer to defeat Israel’s enemies.
- This time the enemy was the Philistines and Sampson was the Judge/Deliverer. Sampson was a miracle baby to a barren mother.
- Once again, we see the angel of the LORD appearing, this time to Sampson’s parents.

- Sampson was to live his whole life observing a Nazirite vow. Part of that vow was to never cut his hair, drink alcohol, or eat anything unclean. He broke his Nazirite vow by eating honey from the carcass of a lion.
- Sampson had supernatural strength and killed many Philistines with very unorthodox weapons, such as the jawbone of an ass and foxes with their tails lit on fire. Again, the LORD was showing His power to fight on behalf of His people.
- The secret to Sampson’s supernatural strength was tied to his long hair from the Nazirite vow. Sampson gave that secret away to his love interest named Delilah. Delilah then cut his hair, which took away his strength, and betrayed him to the Philistines who were enemies of Israel.
- The Philistines bound Sampson, blinded him, and mocked him. By this time, Sampson’s hair had grown out again and his strength returned. Although blind and mocked, Sampson pushed apart two pillars of the building, causing it to collapse on himself and about 3,000 Philistines celebrating his capture. Sampson killed more Philistines by his death –than he did in his combined battles during his life. There is a possible image in Sampson’s death victory that foreshadows how Jesus conquered His and our primary enemy through His death on the cross.

### # 30 – Ruth 1:1–4:22 – The Story of Ruth

- Ruth was a Moabite. Moab was a son by Lot’s incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter (Genesis 19:37 – Not one of the E100 stories but you may want to check it out).
- Ruth trusted her Jewish mother-in-law Naomi and Naomi’s God--the LORD YHWH.
- Boaz was a relative of Naomi’s deceased husband Elimelech as well as of their deceased son who had been married to Ruth. Boaz followed the Jewish role of a “redeemer kinsman” to sire a child for his dead relative. Boaz married Ruth and together they would become grandparents of King David.
- Although Ruth did not have Jewish blood lines, she was named in the genealogy of Jesus along with Boaz (Matthew 1:5). We see in Ruth as with Rahab earlier, a sort of grafting in of Gentiles into God’s people, not because of their bloodlines but because of their trusting faith in the LORD YHWH.

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## THE RISE OF ISRAEL >

### # 31 – 1 Samuel 1:1–3:21– Samuel Listens to God

- Once again we see God allowed a couple to conceive and have a child together who had previously been infertile. Samuel’s special birth was linked to the fervent prayers and commitment of his mother, Hannah. Samuel would become a pivotal leader in Israel’s history.
- Samuel served as bridge between the period of Israel’s judges and the period of the monarchy.
  - Samuel acted as a priest serving the LORD in the tabernacle and was Israel’s final Spirit-empowered judge. In his role as a priest, he was called to anoint Israel’s first and second kings.
  - Samuel was also God’s prophet, and all that he prophesied was fulfilled.
  - As both prophet and priest, Samuel served the LORD YHWH as his ultimate King. However, the LORD used Samuel to identify and anoint earthly kings that the LORD selected. Samuel’s various roles as Prophet, Priest, and Judge foreshadowed the coming of Jesus who was the ideal Prophet, Priest, and King in perfect submission to God the Father.

### # 32 – 1 Samuel 8:1–10:27– King Saul

- In Story 31, we saw the Priest Eli’s sons did not honor the LORD (1 Sam 2:12–36). Similarly, Samuel’s sons did not honor the LORD (1 Sam 8:1–3).

- The Israelites demanded a king like the other nations.
- The LORD declared their demand for a human king to be a rejection of Him as King (1 Sam 8:7–9; 10:18–19).
- The LORD directed Samuel to anoint Saul as King. Saul was an extremely tall and handsome son of a wealthy man named Kish. Although, Saul was reluctant to take on the responsibility and protested that he was from the tribe of Benjamin, “the least of the tribes of Israel” (1 Sam 9:21), he became Israel’s first king.

### #33 – 1 Sam 16:1–18:16 – David and Goliath

- Because of Saul’s disregard for the LORD’s instruction, the LORD rejected Saul as King of Israel and then instructed Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Jesse from Bethlehem, as Israel’s future King.
- Samuel met Jesse’s sons and the LORD confirmed that the youngest son, David, was His choice to be Israel’s future King.
  - We will later see that Jesus was a descendant of King David and was also born in Bethlehem. In Romans 15:2, the Apostle Paul teaches that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise in Isaiah 11:1 --”There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.”
- Samuel anointed David as king, “And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13).
- David entered the service of Saul as his armor bearer (1 Sam 16:21). David also played the harp to give Saul relief from harmful spirit’s that sometimes plagued him (1 Sam 16:23).
- The young David accepted the challenge of the Philistine giant warrior Goliath and stepped forward to fight the giant on behalf of the Israelites. David had only a slingshot and five smooth stones when he faced Goliath and he declared that it would be the LORD, not David’s superior weaponry or skill, that would deliver Goliath into David’s hand (1 Sam 17:45–47).
  - We need to recognize that this is not the story of David’s exceptional bravery. It is the account of David’s faithful God who had earlier “rushed His spirit upon David” (1 Sam 16:13). The LORD YHWH goes before His people to fight on their behalf just as He had done against the Egyptians in the Exodus event (Story # 20), the Canaanites in the Promised Land (Stories 24 & 25), and the stories of Deborah, Gideon, and Sampson (Stories 27, 28, & 29).
- David’s relationship ties with Saul and his family are complicated.
  - Saul’s son Jonathan would have normally been heir to the throne of his father Saul. However, “the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1 Sam 18:1). Jonathan recognized God’s hand upon David. Essentially, Jonathan willingly ceded what would have been his throne to David.
  - Note David and Jonathan’s covenant in 1 Sam 18:3–4. Jonathan’s gift of his armor, sword, bow, and belt to David was a literal disarmament and figurative surrender. Jonathan’s act symbolized handing his power to rule over to David.
  - Saul became jealous of David’s successes and the resulting adulation from the Israelite people. Saul found himself conflicted in his jealousy of David. He wanted David to continue winning battles against Israel’s enemies; however he also had an inward desire for David to be taken down by those enemies (1 Sam 18:17, 21, 25).
- In spite of Saul’s behind the scenes efforts to harm David, David enjoyed growing success in battle and esteem from the people.

### # 34 – 1 Sam 23:7–24:22 – David and Saul

- The ephod referred to in 1 Sam 23:9 was a priestly garment, probably similar to the one described in Exodus 28:6–35. If so, it contained something called the “Urim” and the “Thummim,” which was the only God-approved physical apparatus for discerning God’s direction (Num 27:21).
- Saul moved beyond simply hoping that his enemies or someone else would kill David. Here, Saul began with his first of many all-out attacks on David (1 Sam 23:15–24:22).
  - Rather than fighting back against Saul, “And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.” (1 Sam 23:14).
- We repeatedly see both Jonathan, David, and others coming to David’s aid.
  - “Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, ‘Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.’” (1 Sam 23:16–17)
  - “As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them, a messenger came to Saul, saying, ‘Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land’” (1 Sam 23:26–27).
- David honored Saul as God’s anointed king even when Saul was trying to kill him. Saul demonstrates an example of “confession” without “repentance.” Even though Saul announces the truth, he does not surrender his will or change his behaviors to align with that truth.
  - “And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, ‘You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands’” (1 Sam 24:16–18).
- We see Saul asked David to agree to not cut off his offspring once David is king.
  - “‘And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father’s house.’ And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold” (1 Sam 24:20–22).
  - However, in 1 Sam 26 we find that Saul again tried to kill David and David again had opportunity to kill Saul but spared his life (1 Sam 26:1–25)

### # 35 – 2 Sam 5:1–7:29 – King David

- In preceding chapters, we find that Saul, Jonathan, and two others of Saul’s sons were killed in battle on the same day (1 Sam 31:1–4).
- The people of Judah, comprised of the southern tribes, chose David as Saul’s replacement rather than following Saul’s family line (2 Sam 2:4). However, Saul’s son, Ish-bosheth, set himself up as king over the northern tribes of Israel.
- David sought the LORD’s guidance and followed Him. The LORD went before David in battle and gave him victory (2 Sam 5:22–25). This episode of following God and seeing him intervene is reminiscent of God going before the Hebrew people and fighting on their behalf in the Exodus and with Gideon in Judges.
- David wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing the presence of the LORD among His people, to Jerusalem. The ark had remained in a private residence near the Philistine border since the time of Samuel--about 20 years (1 Sam 7:1–2).
- However, there was a serious hiccup and delay in the process of retrieving the ark.
  - Uzzah meant well, but by touching the Ark he disregarded the holiness of the LORD and the fact that he was not authorized to touch the holy things of the ark (Numbers 4:15). Actually, the ark was not meant to be carried on a cart (Exo 25:13–14).

- David was then afraid to take the Ark to Jerusalem, fearing the LORD, so he left it at the house of Obed for 3 months.
  - Seeing that God blessed Obed, David went back for the Ark and brought it to Jerusalem. This time David had the ark carried rather than transporting it on a cart (1 Chronicles 15:15).
- David's wife, Saul's daughter Michal, ridiculed David for his uninhibited worship she thought unbecoming a king.
- David desired to build a temple for the LORD in Jerusalem. However, the LORD answered that God would build David a house--not a physical structure but a kingdom that would endure forever.
  - "Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam 7:11-13).
- God said one of David's sons would be allowed to build Him a temple.
  - David trusted the LORD's promise and offered a prayer of thanks as he worshipped the LORD.

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## THE FALL OF ISRAEL >

### # 36 - 2 Sam 11:1-12:25 - David and Bathsheba

- Instead of going out and leading his soldiers in battle as he normally did, David sent his soldiers to fight, but he stayed at home.
- David abused his power by having relations with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of David's soldiers out fighting battles.
- When David found out Bathsheba was pregnant, he tried to cover his sin by inviting Uriah back to be with Bathsheba. However, in stark contrast to David's ignoble behavior, Uriah nobly refused to enjoy physical relations with his wife while his colleagues were at battle.
- In trying to cover up his initial sin of adultery, David committed another sin that amounted to murdering Uriah by contract.
- After Uriah's death, David took Bathsheba as his wife.
- Nathan the prophet used a sort of parable to indirectly confront David about his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. Upon hearing Nathan's parable, David became enraged at the injustice of the man in the parable who turned out to represent David himself.
- God did not allow David's sins to go unpunished and brought judgment on David's family.
  - 2 Samuel 12:10 -- Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.
  - 2 Samuel 12:13-14 -- David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die."
  - The child born to Bathsheba died as the LORD said would happen.
- Later, as a married couple, David and Bathsheba became parents of Solomon. Solomon was also called Jedidiah, which means "beloved of the Lord" (2 Sam 12:25).

### # 37 – 1 Kings 2:1–3:28 – King Solomon

- Before David died, he gave some parting advice to his son Solomon, warning Solomon to stay faithful to the LORD and His commands. David sought to instruct Solomon about some threats to his kingdom, as well as to inform him of some promises David had made. These are some of the individuals David discussed with Solomon.
  - Joab, the son of Zeruah
    - Joab had deceitfully killed Abner (2 Sam 3:27–30) and later killed David's son Absalom (2 Sam 18:14).
    - As we recall David, committed adultery with Bathsheba and then ordered that her husband, Uriah, be left alone on the front line of battle to be killed. After Uriah's death, David married Bathsheba. From Scripture, we are only aware of four persons who knew about those grievous sins of David--David, Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan, and Joab who had been the commander of the army who ordered the front line to retreat so that Uriah would be killed.
  - Abner, son of Ner
    - Abner was the Commander in Chief of Saul's army. After King Saul's death, instead of supporting David, Abner supported Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, as king among the northern tribes (2 Sam 2:8).
  - Amasa, son of Jether
    - Amasa was one of David's nephews (1 Chr 2:17). Amasa supported David's son Absalom (2 Sam 17:25), but later was appointed as one of David's army commanders (2 Sam 19:13–14). Joab later killed Amasa (2 Sam 20:9–10).
  - Barzilai, the Gileadite
    - Barzillai was hospitable to David during his stay in Gilead, and he refused to receive any compensation (2 Sam 17:27–29).
  - Absalom
    - Absalom was David's son, born to Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur (2 Sam 3:3).
  - Shimei, the son of Gera
    - Shimei had publicly cursed David for killing members of Saul's family (2 Sam 16:5–13).
- David's son by Haggith, Adonijah, was older than Solomon, which meant by normal lines of succession, Adonijah would have been thought to be in line for the throne before Solomon. However, the LORD had said Solomon would be the next King over Israel.
- Solomon followed through on each person about whom David had spoken to him, solidifying his kingdom in the process.
- Solomon prayed for God to give him wisdom to govern over the people. God not only honored Solomon's prayer for wisdom but also promised to give him riches and honor. Solomon went on to be known as one of the wisest and wealthiest men on earth.

### # 38 – 1 Kings 8:1–9:9 – Solomon’s Temple

- Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant into the temple as the LORD’s permanent localized residence. The ark would no longer be carried around by men on poles as it had in the times of the tent-like tabernacle the priests transported from place to place.
- The LORD warned Solomon and the people that if they did not faithfully worship Him exclusively, He would allow the temple to become a heap of ruins.
  - “But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ Then they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore, the LORD has brought all this disaster on them.’” (1 Kings 9:6–9).
    - This warning later became a reality when the temple was destroyed in 586 BCE.

### # 39 – 1 Kings 16:29–19:18 – Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

- Note that the united kingdom, over which David ruled, had now been divided into the southern kingdom of Judah, under King Asa, and the northern kingdom of Israel, under King Ahab.
  - Ahab worshipped the idol Baal and other false gods.
    - You may recall from the Study Helps for Story #26, Baal was considered a storm god, responsible for bringing rain. Along with the rain was the secondary idea of Baal being a fertility god. Baal would die during the dry season and needed to be resuscitated by Baal’s sister god, Anat, to begin the rains again.
      - Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, was a princess from the land of Tyre that worshipped Baal. Ahab built a temple for Baal worship for Jezebel.
    - Asherah were Canaanite “mother goddesses” often represented by poles. The idolatrous King Ahab joined his wife in worshipping Baal and Asherah.
- 1 Kings 16:33 says, “Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.”
- Elijah the Prophet confronted Ahab with a warning that the LORD was going to withhold both rain and dew for a period (1 Kings 17:1–2).
  - When Elijah called for there to be no rain until God said there would be rain, he was confronting the false notion that Baal controlled the rain.
- The LORD then led Elijah to a remote area near a brook where the LORD sent ravens to take him bread and meat to sustain him.
- The LORD then led Elijah to seek the hospitality of a widow with a son in Zarephath. Her supplies were down to a small quantity of oil and flour, but the LORD supernaturally multiplied her resources for many days so that they all had food.
- While Elijah was there, the widow’s son became ill and died. When God used Elijah to resuscitate the widow’s son, the LORD demonstrated that He was the God who had power over death, not the pagan goddess Anat.
- Obadiah, who was over Ahab’s household, “feared the Lord greatly” (1 Kings 18:3). Obadiah hid and fed 100 prophets of the LORD when Jezebel began having the LORD’s prophets killed.

- When the time of drought had extended to three years, the LORD told Elijah to go to Ahab.
  - He gathered 400 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. Elijah was the only prophet of the LORD present because the others had been killed or were in hiding.
  - When everyone was gathered at Mt. Carmel, Elijah asked a question that is relevant to many of us today: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”
    - The people did not respond, but Elijah set up a test between the false gods and the LORD God that proved that the LORD is dominant over all the other gods.
- Once the people believed, they gathered and killed the prophets of Baal (1 King 18:40).
- The LORD brings rain once again to the drought-stricken land. Throughout the event, the LORD is shown to be powerful and concerned for the people. He can send rain or fire. In contrast Baal is proven to be weak and unconcerned for the people’s wellbeing.
- After such an enormous victory and manifestation of God’s power and care, Elijah seemed to have a dip in his confident faith. He ran away when Jezebel threatened to have him killed.
  - Elijah was so tired and discouraged that he said he wanted to die: “I have had enough, Lord,’ he said. ‘Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.’ Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.” 1 Kings 19:4–5).
- The LORD addressed Elijah’s concerns with a gentle renewal of his call and told Elijah to go back the way he came with a three-fold mission:
  - To anoint Hazael as king of Syria
  - To anoint Jehu as King of Israel.
  - To anoint Elisha as Elijah’s successor prophet.
- The LORD also announced that He had preserved 7,000 people in Israel who had been faithful to Him and not worshipped Baal.

#### # 40 – 2 Kings 25:1–30 – The Fall of Jerusalem

- Babylon’s siege against Jerusalem began in late 589 BCE and was complete in 587 BCE. During that siege, Jerusalem ran out of food after a year.
- Once the city was defeated, Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar’s representative, supervised the burning of the temple, palace, homes, and important buildings in the city.
- The loss of the temple was more than the loss of a building. It was the loss of worship as the Israelites understood it through the Torah. The temple was the place of offerings, sacrifices, and festive gatherings for worshipping the LORD and receiving forgiveness of sins.
- With the destruction of the city and exile of the people, the line of Davidic kings seemed to have been completely cut off. It appeared that God’s promise to always have a king from David’s line on the throne was no longer possible to keep.

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## PSALMS AND PROVERBS >

#### # 41 – Psalm 23:1–6 – The Lord is My Shepherd

- Psalm 23 is attributed to David, the shepherd-boy-turned-king. It is perhaps the most familiar Psalm in the Bible.
- Psalm 23 is normally categorized as a “psalm of confidence” or a “trust psalm.”
- David presents the LORD God as both a shepherd and a host who shows His care for His “sheep.”
- The path where the LORD the Shepherd leads includes restful green pastures as well as difficult places portrayed as the “valley of the shadow of death.” Yet, even in those dark places, the psalmist didn’t fear because the “LORD was with” him.

- As a host, the LORD protects His guests, making it safe for them to eat in the presence of their enemies.
- The LORD generously provided more than the Psalmist needed, giving him confidence that he would dwell in the presence of the LORD forever.

#### # 42 – Psalm 51:1–19 – Have Mercy on Me

- Psalm 51 is also attributed to David. It is categorized as an “individual lament psalm” (in contrast to a “corporate lament psalm”).
- Psalm 51 describes David’s repentance after his sins against Bathsheba and her husband Uriah (Story 36).
- David based his request for forgiveness and restoration from God on the LORD’s covenant faithfulness, love, and grace.
- David recognized that he could not cleanse himself of his sin and therefore asked the LORD to cleanse him.
- David referred to God using “hyssop” to cleanse him. Israelites used hyssop branches to apply the blood of the Passover lamb to their doorposts (Exo 12:22, Story 19).
- David recognized that God was more pleased by genuine repentance that demonstrated a contrite heart than by mere religious sacrifices of animals.
- David recognized that his true joy would not be restored until he was forgiven by God.
- David knew that without the Holy Spirit empowering him, he would be unable to lead God’s people.
- David promised that after he had been restored to a right relationship with God, he would help lead other sinners like himself to repentance.

#### # 43 – Psalm 103:1–22 – Praise the Lord

- Psalm 103 is categorized as a psalm of praise and it is also attributed to David.
- David gives the command to “Bless the LORD” six times. In this instance, “bless” has the idea of praising the LORD for his character and deeds.
- The psalmist lists several praiseworthy acts of LORD’s.
  - He forgives ... heals ... redeems ... crowns with steadfast love and mercy ... satisfies with good. He works righteousness for the oppressed. We will see these attributes literally fleshed out in the person of Jesus the Messiah in the New Testament.
- The LORD does not do these deeds because of our righteousness or merits. Rather His acts stem from His mercy, grace, and steadfast love to those who reverence Him as God. He knows “we are dust.” In contrast to our brief lives, His love and grace are everlasting.
- Recognizing his mercy, grace, and steadfast love that forgive and redeem us, in spite of our inability to deserve such treatment, calls us to “bless the LORD.”

#### # 44 – Proverbs 1:1–4:27 – Godly Wisdom

- David’s son, King Solomon, who had asked God for wisdom, wrote most, but not all of the Book of Proverbs. He is thought to have written chapters 1–4 in today’s reading.
- Chapter 1 calls readers to listen to wisdom and knowledge which begins with “the fear of the LORD.” Otherwise, sin will entice us and lead us to destruction.
  - There is a promise related to repentance in Proverbs 1:23 – “If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.”
  - In contrast, those who turn away from the LORD (Prov 1:32) will receive the consequences of their foolishness.
- Chapter 2 promises wisdom to those who listen to and heed God’s words. There is also a promise that the “upright” and “those with integrity” will remain in the land God promised (Prov 2:21).
- Note all of the “do not” instructions in Chapter 3.

- Proverbs 3: 5–6 are great verses to memorize if you do not have them committed to memory already.

#### # 45 – Proverbs 16:1–18:24 – Proverbs of Solomon

- Proverbs 16 emphasizes that the LORD is all-power--the sovereign King over all. He can overrule man's plans and see where man's heart is impure when he himself is blind to it.
- Pride and arrogance are denounced as deadly and abominable sins (Prov 16:5, 18)
- Much in these chapters addresses how wisdom impacts our speech. In the New Testament, we see Jesus modeling the wisdom of speech that Proverbs encourages.

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## THE PROPHETS >

#### # 46 – Isaiah 51:1–53:12 – The Suffering Servant

- It is helpful to know a little about the context of this passage. When we match events in Isaiah to the historical record, we find that the Prophet Isaiah received his call as God's prophet around 742 years before the birth of Jesus and he died 681 years before Jesus. Isaiah's prophecies were so remarkable that more-liberal scholars deny that Isaiah could have foretold events with such accuracy. They argue that the book, especially chapters 40 –66, had to have been written at a later time, after the fulfillment of the events he prophesied. Even so, Isaiah's prophecies that Christians see as referring to Jesus, such as this passage, were written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth and no serious scholars disagree.
- Throughout the book, Isaiah accused God's people of sin and idolatry and called them to turn away from their sins and back to him (repent). Isaiah warned of future judgment of their sin, but he also promised a future salvation of redemption and restoration. Our reading today is about that future redemption and restoration.
- In our reading, Isaiah is using language reminiscent of the Exodus. Yet, he is talking about a future redemption that has not yet occurred.
- In their time of despair when all signs were pointing to imminent hardship, Isaiah exhorted his hearers/readers to recall how God brought them forth as His people through Abraham and Sarah--two individuals, who at the time of God's calling, thought their fruitful days had passed them by. Isaiah declared that the LORD can make the wilderness like the idyllic Garden of Eden.
- God's redemption of His people does not involve a purchase with money -- "You were sold for nothing and will be redeemed without money" (Isa 52:3).
- Isaiah's language in 52:6--"My people shall know my name" and "They shall know that it is I who speak; here I am"--parallels the language of Exodus.
  - Exo 3:15 - "The LORD ... this is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."
  - Exo 6:3 - "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty but by my name the LORD, I did not make myself known to them."
  - Exo 9:16 - "... so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."
- In Isaiah 52:10: "All the nations and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," we hear an echo of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:18: "... and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice"
- "You shall not go out in haste" (Isaiah 52:12) is a sharp contrast to the way the LORD instructed the Israelites to leave Egypt in haste after they ate the first Passover meal (Exo 12:11,33).
- Isaiah 52:13–53:12 describes one who brings salvation through his suffering, sometimes known as "the suffering servant." Several New Testament passages see those Isaiah passages as pointing to Jesus.

- Isaiah 53:1 referenced in John 12:38; Rom 10:16.
- Isaiah 53:4 referenced in Matt 8:17.
- Isaiah 53:6–8 referenced in Acts 8:28, 32–33.

## # 47 – Jeremiah 1:1–3:5 – Jeremiah’s Call and Message

- Intro and Context of Jeremiah
  - Jeremiah was born and raised in Judah under Assyrian domination during the reign of wicked King Manasseh (687–642 b.c.). (F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, vol. 16, *The New American Commentary* {Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993}, 21.) Assyria was in the process of decline while Babylon was on the rise. Jeremiah warns the people of Israel about impending conquest by Babylon as a discipline for the idolatry and unfaithfulness of Israel’s priests. Because Jeremiah’s message was of doom and gloom if Israel failed to repent, his teaching was often unpopular, and his life was endangered a number of times. He was vindicated when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BCE, and exiled survivors back to Babylon.
- Jeremiah’s clear and memorable experience of God’s call to him prepared him for a career of prophesying to people who often did not welcome his words.
  - Jeremiah initially resisted God’s call with two excuses, not unlike the way Moses initially resisted God’s call in Exodus 3 (Story 17).
    - “I do not know how to speak.”
    - “I am only a youth.”
  - The LORD reassured Jeremiah not to be afraid because the LORD would be with Jeremiah to deliver him (Jer 1:8).
- Jeremiah’s vision of the almond tree branch was a sign that God was “watching over” his previous words of judgment against Israel’s unfaithfulness. It was to say the LORD had not forgotten His words of judgment and He would “perform” them or bring them to pass.
- Jeremiah’s vision of the boiling pot represented an invading force from the north that would pour out on Israel like a boiling pot. This would be a judgement against Israel’s idolatry--“worshiping the works of their own hands” (Jer 1:16).
- The LORD warned Jeremiah that his prophetic ministry would face opposition and attack, but from his own people rather than the invading forces. Yet, the LORD would make Jeremiah like a fortified city with iron pillars and bronze walls and would rescue him.
- Jeremiah 2 rebuked the people for their many acts of unfaithfulness to the LORD and invited them to accuse God of any unfaithfulness toward them that would justify their behaviors.
  - The general accusation against the people was that they had forsaken the LORD as the spring of living water and had dug their own cisterns that could hold water (Jer 2:13).
    - They no longer had awe of the LORD but had worshipped other gods that were really no gods at all. Their priests did not know the LORD and their prophets prophesied by the Canaanite idol Baal.
- Jeremiah 3 exhorted the people to “turn” or “return” to the LORD. This is the word we often translate “repent.” “Turn/repent” occurs 125 times in the Book of Jeremiah.

- The image of divorce in 3:1 is best understood in light of the divorce law instruction found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. That law forbade a divorced person from marrying someone else and then returning to his/her first spouse. Jeremiah accuses Israel of not even marrying someone else but simply prostituting herself. Who would take back such a spouse? Yet, the LORD is not your average spouse -- “Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD. Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion” (Jer 3:12-14).

#### **# 48 – Dan 6:1-28 – Daniel and the Lion’s Den**

- Darius was the King of Persia who ruled over Babylon where Daniel and the people of Israel had been exiled.
- A “satrap” was a regional leader – literally a “protector of the kingdom” – who helped govern one of 20 areas known as “satrapies” in the Persian Empire.
- Although Daniel was essentially a Jewish servant exiled in Persia, the LORD gave him authority and influence to be one of three men over all of the satraps. In fact, the king planned to give Daniel charge, under the king himself, of the entire kingdom. This display of God’s power and calling in the life of Daniel reminds us of Joseph, another Jewish servant whom the LORD called and empowered to be second in command over Egypt. Only the king had more authority.
- Other satraps and high officials were jealous of Daniel’s favor with the king, much like Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him. Like Joseph’s brothers, they sought to get the object of their jealousy out of their lives.
- The only avenue the jealous satraps and high officials saw to rid themselves of Daniel was to take advantage of his faithfulness to God. Daniel would not pray to the king, or to another god, and he would not stop praying to the LORD.
- When King Darius found out that Daniel had been caught praying to the LORD, Darius had regrets about the decree he had issued saying that no one could make petition (or pray to) to any god or man beside him for thirty days. He sought a way to deliver Daniel, but to no avail. The king even fasted and prayed for Daniel. Assumedly, King Darius was not praying to himself and thereby violated his own decree. We will see how King Herod in the New Testament regretted a rash decision he made that would take the life of John the Baptist.
- The LORD rescued Daniel, preventing the lions from doing him harm.
- King Darius sent out a decree about the Kingdom of Daniel’s God being greater than his own kingdom: “In all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end” (Dan 6:26).

#### **# 49 – Jonah 1:1-4:11 – The Story of Jonah**

- The LORD called Jonah to “arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil.” However, instead of arising to go to Nineveh, Jonah arose and fled in the opposite direction to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD” (Jonah 1:1-13).

- Nineveh was situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, opposite the modern city of Mosul, north of the city of Zab. It was an old city, dating back to approximately 4500 B.C.E. and one of the principal cities of ancient Assyria ... They were well known in the ancient world for brutality and cruelty. (Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, vol. 19B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 224–25).
  - In spite of Nineveh’s evil and violent ways, the LORD called Nineveh “an exceedingly great city” (Jonah 1:2; 3:3; 4:11). There is a word play in the Hebrew that means both “great in size” and “a city great to God.”
- We might think Jonah was reluctant to preach to Nineveh because he feared the violent Ninevites. However, in Jonah 4:2, we find his real fear and motive for fleeing was that he feared the Ninevites would repent and God would show them mercy.
- In his getaway, Jonah boarded a ship with pagan sailors. Jonah was willing to die to avoid his mission. Ironically, the pagan sailors ended up worshiping the LORD while Jonah continued to rebel against Him.
- We see that the LORD has dominion over all creation. He even rules over the fish of the sea. The LORD “appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jon 1:17). Then the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land” (Jon 2:10).
  - The big fish served the LORD by swallowing Jonah and depositing him where the LORD instructed him.
  - Jonah’s being swallowed by the big fish was not an act of God’s judgment as much as it was God’s saving grace for both Jonah and the Ninevites.
- The LORD then called Jonah again with the same initial call, “Arise go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you” (Jon 3:2).
- Jonah reluctantly obeyed the LORD and went to preach at Nineveh (Jon 3:3). However, his message was very incomplete. He only warned of impending judgment from God in 40 days--No mention of Sin ... No mention of repentance ... No mention of God.
  - In spite of Jonah’s lackluster effort, “the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them” (Jon 3:5).
    - Sackcloth was a rough cloth made of goat’s hair, worn as a sign of mourning or penitence. Wearing sackcloth was often combined with putting ashes on one’s body as a sign of death (Jon 3:6).
- The LORD did not destroy the Ninevites, but He responded to their repentance and belief with mercy.
  - In Luke 11:32, Jesus mentioned Nineveh’s repentance as a contrast with the way the people of Israel were responding to Him, “The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”
- Jonah became so angry that he said he would rather die than see his enemies forgiven by God: “for it is better for me to die than to live” (Jon 4:3).
- Jonah went out to a vantage point where he could watch what would happen.
- The Lord used a plant as an object lesson to reveal that Jonah cared more about his plant and his own comfort than he cared about 120,000 people separated from God and facing His judgment.
  - As LORD over all creation, God “appointed” a plant to give Jonah shade and comfort just as earlier He had “appointed” a big fish to swallow and rescue Jonah.
    - When the LORD also “appointed” a worm to destroy the plant, Jonah was again incensed and said he’d rather die than live.

- Hundreds of years later, Jesus referred to Jonah and the Ninevite repentance as historical facts (Luke 11:32). The gospel of Matthew also records Jesus saying, “For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt 12:40).

#### #50 – Malachi 1:1–4:6 – The Day of Judgment

- Written about 400 years before the birth of Jesus, Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament. It serves as a wonderful bridge to the gospel of Jesus as it looks back to God’s faithful covenant love in forming a people for Himself and looks ahead to the coming of both John the Baptist and Jesus. It reminds us that God’s choice of Israel had nothing to do with their moral superiority or faithful obedience to the LORD, because they had neither. The Lord’s treatment of Israel was a demonstration of His covenant love and grace.
- 47 of the 55 verses in Malachi record the LORD speaking to Israel in the first-person.
- Although the E100 title for the Book of Malachi is “The Day of Judgment,” God’s faithful love to an unfaithful people is just as present a theme as His eventual judgment.
- One of Israel’s major errors in Malachi was that they failed to recognize God’s love and grace. By doubting His love, they fell into beliefs and practices that disregarded the LORD.
- They were unfaithful to God in their marriages. They married heathen wives who did not worship the LORD, and they were unfaithful to their Hebrew wives, divorcing them unjustly (Mal 2:14–16).
- They failed to give their tithes and offerings and often gave inferior offerings when they did give.
- Their priests were corrupt (Mal 1:6–2:9)
- They were indifferent to social wrongs and injustices, but they accused God of being unjust (Mal 2:13–16; 3:13–14).
- When the LORD accused His people of sin, they asked questions that indicated they were clueless as to His love and their own sin.
  - The LORD: “I have loved you (and continue to love you.)”
    - The People: “How have you loved us?”
  - The LORD: The priests have despised My name (Mal 1:6a)
    - The people: “How have we despised your name?” (Mal 1:6b)
  - The LORD: “By offering polluted food on my altar.”
    - The people: “How have we polluted you?”
  - The LORD: no longer accepts their offerings (Mal 2:13).
    - The people: “Why does He not?” (Mal 2:14).
  - The LORD: has been wearied with their words (Mal 2:17a).
    - The people: “How have we wearied him?” (Mal 2:17b).
  - The LORD: “Return to me and I shall return to you” (Mal 3:7a)
    - The people: “But how shall we return?” (Mal 3:7b)
  - The LORD: “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me” (Mal 3:8a).
    - The people: “How have we robbed you?” (Mal 3:8b).
  - The LORD: “Your words have been hard against Me” (Mal 3:13a).
    - The people: “How have we spoken against you?” (Mal 3:13b).
- Mal 1:1–4 refers back to Jacob and Esau (Gen 27–33, Stories 9 & 10).
- Edom refers to the descendants of Esau and the land they possessed. “Edom, a pagan nation noted in the Bible for its pride, treachery, greed, and violence. They had made themselves especially odious to the Jews when Babylon had conquered and plundered Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> Edom’s actions that had brought about God’s destruction of their nation are not mentioned here, but they would have been common knowledge.” (Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, vol. 21A, The New American Commentary {Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004}, 250.)

- The idea of God hating Esau should be understood in the context of God’s choice to form His people through the lineage of Jacob rather than Esau. Walter Kaiser helps us understand this love-hate language.
  - “‘To love’ is, in effect, to prefer or be faithful to one while ‘to hate’ is to slight or think less of another. In two parallel lists in the NT, Matt 10:37 uses the formula *ho philon huper eme*, ‘He who loves ... more than me,’ while Luke 14:26 parallels it by saying, ‘if anyone comes to me [*kai ou misei*] and does not hate ... In Jacob’s case, God’s love signaled his election and his call for service 9i.e., to be a blessing to all the nations on the earth--including Esau’s nation of Edom.” (Walter Kaiser, *Malachi: God’s Unchanging Love*, p. 27 )
- The LORD makes a number of promises in Malachi that reinforce covenant promises He made earlier to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David.
- The LORD will make Himself known among the nations (Gentiles)
  - Mal 1:11 – “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.”
  - Mal 1:14 – “For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.”
- The LORD will send a messenger before the LORD (Jesus) comes.
  - Mal 3:1 – “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.”
  - Mal 4:5-6 – “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
- The LORD will receive those who repent.
  - Mal 3:7 – “Return to me and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”
- Summary – Despite the unfaithfulness of Israel’s priests and the people of Israel as a whole, God still loved them. Their sin had ruptured their intimacy with the LORD and that breach led them to the mistaken conclusions that He did not love them and was not just. The first words the LORD spoke in Malachi were, “I have loved you” (Mal 1:2). It was not the LORD unloving and unjust. It was the people of Israel who had been unfaithful and unjust.

The Israelites’ unfaithfulness in their marriage covenants both reflected and affected their lack of faithfulness in their covenant relationship with the LORD. The LORD declared that He had not changed: “For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts” (Mal 3:67). The LORD’s love was the only reason His wayward people had not destroyed. A dreadful time of judgment – The Day of the LORD – was to come, but before that day, the LORD would send a forerunner to prepare the way of the coming Messiah. Once the Messiah had come, the LORD’s name would be great, not just among Israel but among all peoples of the earth (Mal 1:11,14). The stage is set for the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Now that you have concluded the fifty E100 Old Testament passages, you’re ready to embark on the fifty E100 New Testament passages.