

# origins

*A Journey Through  
the Bible Jesus Read*

A Leader's Guide for InterVarsity's  
Old Testament Survey Experience



By Lindsay Olesberg

# WHAT IS *ORIGINS*?



*Origins: A Journey Through the Bible Jesus Read* is an Old Testament survey curriculum created by InterVarsity to help strengthen biblical literacy and theological formation in college students. Its thirteen two-hour sessions are designed to be used at chapter camps. It can also be abbreviated to eleven sessions if needed (sample schedules can be found on page 11 of the Leader's Guide).

*Origins* is not effective in a week-to-week setting as the sessions are designed to build on each other.

*Origins* is intended to be a unique experience not readily available in college or seminary classrooms. Manuscript Bible study, not lectures, is at its core. The material is designed to engage participants creatively, experientially, and intellectually. Humor and story are woven throughout for a more intimate and substantive experience than a typical high school Sunday school class. *Origins* aims to provide an environment in which students encounter the living God, grow in their discipleship, learn the big picture of God's work of redemption, and deepen their desire to read and study the Old Testament on their own.

## ELEMENTS

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### MANUSCRIPT BIBLE STUDIES

- Genesis 2
- Genesis 3
- Jeremiah 7:1-11
- Isaiah 11

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

- Ancestor stories around the campfire
- Tribal identification
- Temple offering
- Rejection of the prophets
- Character presentation
- Israel's exile



## VISUAL TOOLS

- “Shape of Israel’s History” outline
- Animated map of Israel in history
- Video clips from *The Bible: The Epic Miniseries*

## READING & DISCUSSION

- Deuteronomy 6
- Genocide
- Topical studies (references for studying sexuality provided)

## REFLECTION

- Selah exercises
- Theological reflection
- Personal reflection and application
- Personalized reading plan

In designing any Old Testament survey, choices must be made about what to include. *Origins* spends little time on some of the Bible’s well-known stories (e.g., Samson, David, Jonah, and Daniel), while going into more depth with different lessons than most Old Testament surveys. Selections have been made to depict the overall story line of the Old Testament and provide enough orientation and theological insight for participants to become lifelong learners of the Old Testament, while at the same time facilitating encounters with God. Creation and the Fall are provided special attention within this curriculum since they provide the theological foundation for understanding the rest of the Bible. One consequence of curriculum choices is that there is no session devoted to the Wisdom Literature. A resource is provided at the end of the Participant Guide for exploring Wisdom Literature independently.

## CHALLENGES IN TEACHING *ORIGINS*

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Participants bring a wide variety of perspectives and questions to this journey through the Old Testament. The leader is not responsible for answering every question or for winning the participants over to a particular viewpoint about controversial topics. In preparation, it is useful to anticipate the kinds of issues that might arise in light of the particular group of students, the influential theological streams in that part of the country, etc.



Potential challenges include:

- Authorship and dates of biblical books
- Historicity issues (e.g., Adam and Eve, the Flood, Job, and Jonah and the whale)
- Dating of Abraham and the Exodus
- Handling various genres of the Old Testament
- Theological positions on the applicability of Old Testament law to Christians (e.g., Seventh-day Adventists)
- “Hot” topics such as sexism, violence, polygamy, and rape

The goal is to create an environment where participants can ask honest questions and wrestle with real issues, while not allowing controversy and disagreement to undermine deeper work of the heart as people encounter God through his Word. At the same time, it serves students to be exposed to the issues raised in biblical scholarship, particularly around authorship and dating, so they are prepared for encounters in university and seminary classes. Leaders are encouraged to go beyond the baseline preparation process to personally deepen their theology and biblical studies. The more leaders understand the big picture and some of the arguments around controversial topics, the more smoothly they will be able to handle the group dynamic when issues arise. Additional recommended resources are listed at the end of the Participant Guide. A good place to start is *The Lost World of Scripture* by John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, IVP: 2013.

## ROLE OF THE LEADERS

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Leading *Origins* can be compared to leading a Global Project; leaders guide and shepherd a group of students as they engage with a challenging environment. The leaders have learning goals for the participants but cannot control the participants’ experience or the work of the Spirit. In addition to teaching the manuscript Bible studies and other activities, the leader is responsible for:

- Creating the atmosphere (community, humor, seriousness, etc.)
- Pacing the study
- Explaining how the pieces fit together
- Discerning the work of the Spirit

*It is recommended that Origins be led by two staff in light of its complexity.* At least one of these should be a seasoned manuscript Bible study teacher who is qualified to lead the more challenging studies (i.e., Genesis 2 and 3) and handle “hot” topics as they arise.



# FEATURES OF LEADER'S GUIDE

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## PRESUPPOSITIONS BEHIND *ORIGINS*

The underlying assumptions behind *Origins*.

## COMMON RESPONSES TO INITIAL QUESTIONS

Answers to inquiries made in the opening session about the Old Testament from *Origins*' pilot are shared here to help leaders anticipate likely responses.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULES FOR *ORIGINS* FOR CAMP

Options for five- and six-day camps.

## PREPARATION

Lists of teaching resources and supplies.

## INTRODUCTION TO INTERVARSITY'S INTERPRETATIVE COMMITMENTS

A handout orientating participants to our approach to understanding the Bible.

## "SHAPE OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY"

A key to labeling parts of the time line graphic used throughout *Origins* (only undisputed dates are included).

## SESSION NOTES

An overview of each session including its significance, a recommended schedule, and notes for teaching with a sample script for framing elements or making links between elements. The content in these scripts is important to the overall learning, though the leader is encouraged to put it in their own words. Suggestions for adjusting the experience to the size of the group are included where relevant.



## TEACHING NOTES FOR MANUSCRIPT STUDY

An aid in the leader's preparation, not a substitute for preparation. Each set of notes gives sample framing comments, key interpretive questions a sample summary, and application questions. As in any manuscript study, the participants' questions should be gathered and interspersed with questions from the leader. The interpretive questions in the teaching notes provide a solid path of interpretation, but should be replaced with similar questions in the participants' words whenever possible. The application questions in the teaching notes are printed in the Participant Guide. Select the one or two application questions that best fit your discernment of how the Holy Spirit is working in the group. Let the participants know that the other questions are available for them to go back to and consider on their own.

## MATERIALS TO BE COPIED OR ENLARGED

### "SHAPE OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY" OUTLINE

Enlarge to poster size or draw on poster/plain paper. The leader will fill in the labels progressively according to instructions in the session notes (page 16).

### STARTING POINT QUESTIONS

Print as half sheets for use in the opening session (page 25).

### TRIBAL NAMES

Print on card stock and fold into table tents. These tribal markers will be used in a variety of ways during the sessions, starting with "Abraham's Family." Each session's teaching notes give detailed explanations of how to use them (pages 41-52).

### "MORAL ASSESSMENT OF KINGS"

Enlarge to poster size for use during the "Divided Monarchy and Prophets" session (page 70).



# FEATURES OF PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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## WORKSHEETS

A place to take notes or answer questions.

## CHARTS & MAPS

Not all of the material included will be covered explicitly in *Origins*. The Participant Guide is rich with reference material for future use.

## “SHAPE OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY”

A blank time line graphic to be labeled progressively during the journey.

## CHARACTER STUDIES

References and instructions for the group project.

## ARTICLES & CULTURAL INFORMATION

Reading material that can be incorporated into the session or read independently.

## READING LISTS

Reading assignments for group reading experiences (“Abraham’s Family,” “Listening to the Prophets,” “Renewing the Covenant”).

## MANUSCRIPTS

Enable looking deeply at the text.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

A broad range of questions for applying manuscript study for use during and after *Origins*.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space for journaling, praying, and discerning God’s voice.



## **SESSION SUMMARY**

A reference page at the end of each session that lists key events and characters, iconic places and objects, and notable lines for the biblical material covered in that session. These reference sheets provide more information than can be covered in the session and are helpful tools for independent reading in the Old Testament. The notable lines included are a sample of phrases or sentences from the Bible that are known in culture or used in English literature. They are not necessarily the most important lines from that part of the Bible.

## **SELAH**

A reflection page at the end of each session to summarize the “big idea” of the session, promote theological reflection, and note points of interest for further reading and exploration. The leader should provide time for Selah reflection at the end of most sessions or encourage its usage in personal devotions. This will aid memory and theological reflection in the closing session. The “big idea” should be stated in the participant’s own words rather than given from up front.

## **TOPICAL STUDY REFERENCES**

List of Scripture references on sexuality for use in a topical study session.

## **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

A page to coalesce the theological reflections from the Selah exercises.

## **WISDOM LITERATURE**

Material to be used independently.

## **REFERENCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

Bibliography and online resources for studying the Old Testament.

## **POCKET**

For holding optional handouts from leaders.

## **POWERPOINT TEMPLATE**

Available by request. Contact [kevin.boyd@intervarsity.org](mailto:kevin.boyd@intervarsity.org).





# PRESUPPOSITIONS BEHIND *ORIGINS*

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## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE OLD TESTAMENT

They are interested, but only know classic stories from Sunday school, children's Bibles, or television. When they attempt to read through the Old Testament on their own, much of it doesn't make sense because they lack knowledge of the chronology and significance of key points in the development of Israel's history. Additionally, they have very little sense of how the Old and New Testaments relate. They have a vague notion that the God of the Old Testament is different than Jesus. They assume the Jewish laws are about religious legalism. They know very little about ancient Middle Eastern culture and history, which is the backdrop of the Old Testament.

Therefore, they need information, orientation, and a demonstration of the value of the work involved to study the Old Testament in order to be deeply motivated to read and apply it.

## THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

The Old and New Testaments are a continuum (i.e., the nature of salvation by faith through grace has always been true). The law was a gracious gift meant to lead Israel in a dependent relationship with God, never as a means of self-justification. The covenant of God with humankind and Abraham is a constant thread throughout the Old Testament that witnesses to God's faithfulness and sovereignty in history. The Old Testament creates a yearning for the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

## VALUE OF NARRATIVE

The Scripture comes to us in narrative (God's work in real time and space with real people), rather than as a systematic theology. As we enter into the story of God's redemptive work, he speaks to us powerfully about our own lives and Christian communities. Strong historical and contextual teaching will help the biblical narrative come alive for those who study it and will keep them from reading into the story what they want to hear.



# COMMON RESPONSES TO INITIAL QUESTIONS

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How would you describe your attitude toward the Old Testament?

- Often bogged down in reading by time you reach the Minor Prophets
- Stories are interesting
- Much of it is no longer relevant
- Do not understand why some of the stories in God's Word are challenging and confusing
- Viewed as "second best"—not as good as New Testament
- Easy to read selectively
- Confused by cultural context
- Just Sunday school stories, not relevant
- Boring and repetitive
- Skeptical
- Not very familiar
- Outdated literature

What questions do you have about the Old Testament?

- To what extent should parts (e.g., the Flood, Job) be taken literally?
- How do you understand and draw meaning from the uncomfortable stories?
- What does "Israel is chosen by God" mean?
- How do we decide which laws still matter? How do we know what is relevant (e.g., Ten Commandments) and what is not (e.g., mixed fibers)?
- Why is it so violent? Why does God promote genocide?
- Why is polygamy apparently acceptable?
- How do you reconcile the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New Testament?
- Why are the books not in chronological order?
- What parts of the Old Testament have to do with culture? Which parts reflect biblical living?
- Did some of the purity laws marginalize people?
- Why is it so chauvinistic?
- How should I read and study it with knowledge of the New Testament?
- How does someone reconcile the genocide, rape, polygamy, etc., of the Old Testament with a loving God?



# SAMPLE SCHEDULES FOR *ORIGINS* FOR CAMP

ARRIVAL	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DEPARTURE
	Creation	Exodus and the Law	Divided Monarchy and Prophets	Return to the Land	Looking Back, Moving Forward
	Fall	Settling in the Land	Recreation (or Wisdom Lit)	Topical Study	
Getting Oriented	Abraham's Family	United Monarchy and the Temple	Exile	Promise of Restoration	

(Add an afternoon of extended recreation or a session on Wisdom Literature.)

ARRIVAL	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DEPARTURE
	Creation	Exodus and the Law	Exile	Looking Back, Moving Forward
	Fall	United Monarchy and the Temple	Topical Study	
Getting Oriented	Abraham's Family	Divided Monarchy and Prophets	Promise of Restoration	

(Skip "Settling in the Land" and "Return to the Land.")

ARRIVAL	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DEPARTURE
	Creation	Exodus and the Law	Divided Monarchy and Prophets	Looking Back, Moving Forward
	Fall	Settling in the Land	Exile	
Getting Oriented	Abraham's Family	United Monarchy and the Temple	Promise of Restoration	

(Skip "Return to the Land" and "Topical Study.")



# PREPARATION

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## SUGGESTED TEACHING RESOURCES

- *Imperial History* video (available at [mapsofwar.com/ind/imperial-history.html](http://mapsofwar.com/ind/imperial-history.html))
- *The Bible: The Epic Miniseries*—episodes 2, 3, 5 (instant download episodes available for \$1.99 at Amazon.com)
- *The Year of Living Biblically* by A. J. Jacobs (available at most public libraries)
- Papyrus scroll (available for purchase on eBay)

## SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Blank “Shape of Israel’s History” time line enlarged as poster
- Poster/plain paper
- Tape or pins for hanging poster
- Wide-tip markers
- Tribal table tents printed on card stock
- Wall decorations (optional)
- Character studies sign-up sheet
- “Questions about the Old Testament” printed on half sheets
- “Moral Assessment of Kings” chart enlarged as poster
- Flashlights for reading at fire pit
- Extra paper for making signs, giving reading assignments, etc.
- Art supplies for “Promise of Restoration” session
- Wooden toy blocks (at least two per person)
- Newspaper
- Tablecloth for a small table
- One candle
- Lighter
- Bible Study bookmarks: [store.intervarsity.org/bible-study-bookmark-bundle-of-25/](http://store.intervarsity.org/bible-study-bookmark-bundle-of-25/)



## SUGGESTED ELEMENTS FOR RESOURCE TABLE

- Papyrus scroll
- Book of Old Testament art
- *God Behaving Badly* by David T. Lamb
- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart
- *The Story of God, the Story of Us* by Sean Gladding
- *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*
- Question box
- Casket Empty time line (available for purchase at [casketempty.com](http://casketempty.com))
- *Manga Mutiny, Manga Melech, and Manga Messengers* (available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com))
- Bible dictionary and atlas



# INTERVARSITY'S INTERPRETIVE COMMITMENTS



We all naturally have a set of “lenses” through which we view and understand the Bible. Since InterVarsity brings together Christians from a broad range of churches, ethnicities, and cultures, a core set of commitments when interpreting Scripture provides unity in the midst of diversity:

1) Seek God, 2) Focus on the text, 3) Honor history and culture, 4) Receive the whole Bible

## SEEK GOD

We come to the Bible with a desire to know and be transformed by God.

- Are we approaching this text with a posture of faith in God’s goodness, willingness to trust God’s Word, and openness to correction or redirection?
- How does this text call me to love God and neighbor?

## FOCUS ON THE TEXT

We seek to let the Scriptures speak for themselves and welcome them exposing and changing our preconceptions. We wrestle with questions that arise from a close reading of the text.

- What are the questions the text is raising or addressing?
- How open am I to the text challenging my assumptions and life choices?

## HONOR HISTORY & CULTURE

We seek to understand how biblical writers and original audiences saw the world, rather than reading the text through the assumptions of our time and culture.

- What taken-for-granted knowledge do we need in order to understand this text?
- Where might my cultural perspective help or hinder a faithful reading? What other cultural perspectives will help me gain a more faithful reading?

## RECEIVE THE WHOLE BIBLE

We read each section of the Old and New Testament within the context of the larger story of God’s creation, the disfigurement of the fall, God’s mission of redemption, and the promise of a new creation.

- How does the larger biblical story shape the meaning and significance of this particular section?
- Is our reading true to the vision, plots, values, and trajectory of the entire Bible?



# INTRODUCTION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

BY LINDSAY OLESBERG



## GOALS

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1. Discover what a biblical author intended to communicate to his original audience.
2. Encounter Jesus and be transformed by his Word.

## IMPLICATIONS

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1. God works through human authors who made choices of words, phrases, illustrations, etc.
2. Studying the Bible is a cross-cultural experience for us because we don't live in the ancient world of the original audience.
3. It takes effort and humility to think about the author and audience rather than expect the Bible to be written directly for us.

## THREE STEPS

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### OBSERVATION

What does the text say?

### INTERPRETATION

What does the text mean?

### APPLICATION

How does the text speak to my life?



# OBSERVATION

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Look for **7 fact-finding questions**—questions to determine...

1. The **setting** or **context**—Who? Where? When?
2. The **event** or **idea**—What? How? Why?
3. The **result** or **consequence**—So?
4. Word **relationships**—repetitions, similarities, contrasts, cause and effect, general to particular, particular to general, etc.
5. **Logical connectors**—but, for, therefore, so that, because, if . . . then
6. **Units** of thought—change in location, time, theme, characters, thought, or actions
7. Identify Old Testament **quotes** or allusions

# INTERPRETATION

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1. Ask good questions:
  - Use the language of the text.
  - Include the issue that troubles or intrigues you in your question.
  - Refer to the original audience.
2. Answer your questions from the text:
  - Use the immediate context to define meanings.
  - Develop theories that hold multiple observations together.
  - Use cultural and historical background to answer through the lens of the author and original audience.
3. Summarize the core message.

# APPLICATION

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- Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you.
- Turn the main point(s) into questions for reflection.
- Look for places in your life that are similar to one of the characters or the situation.
- Look for promises, commands, and/or examples to follow or avoid.
- Be specific.
- Choose an action that you can take in the next two days.
- Share your insights/plans with another.





# SHAPE OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

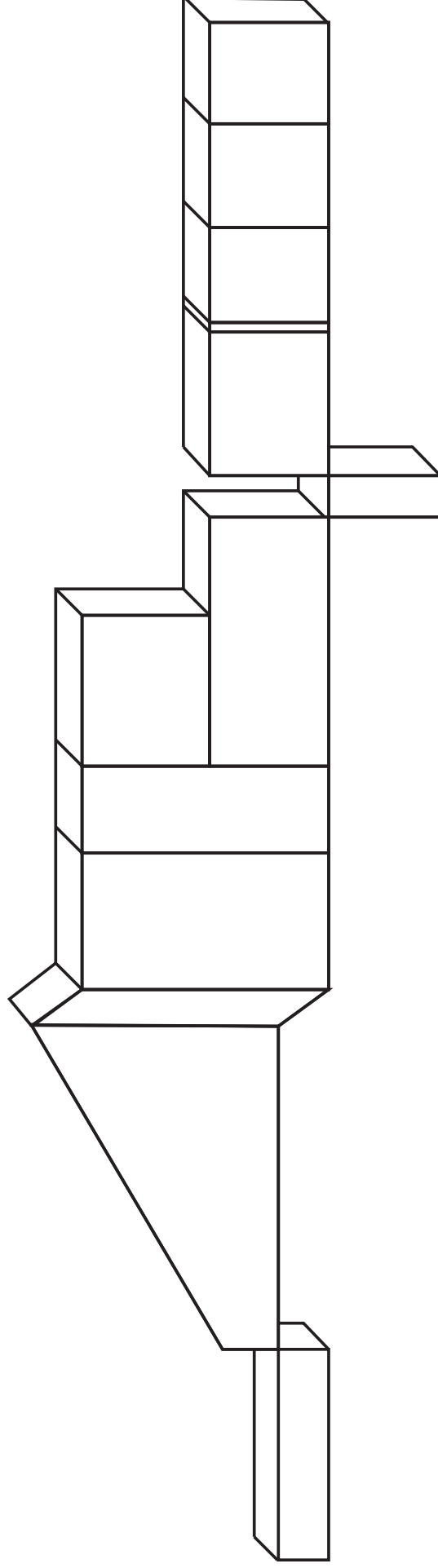


Labels to be added in by session. Use one color when labeling blocks, another when adding points, and another for dates.

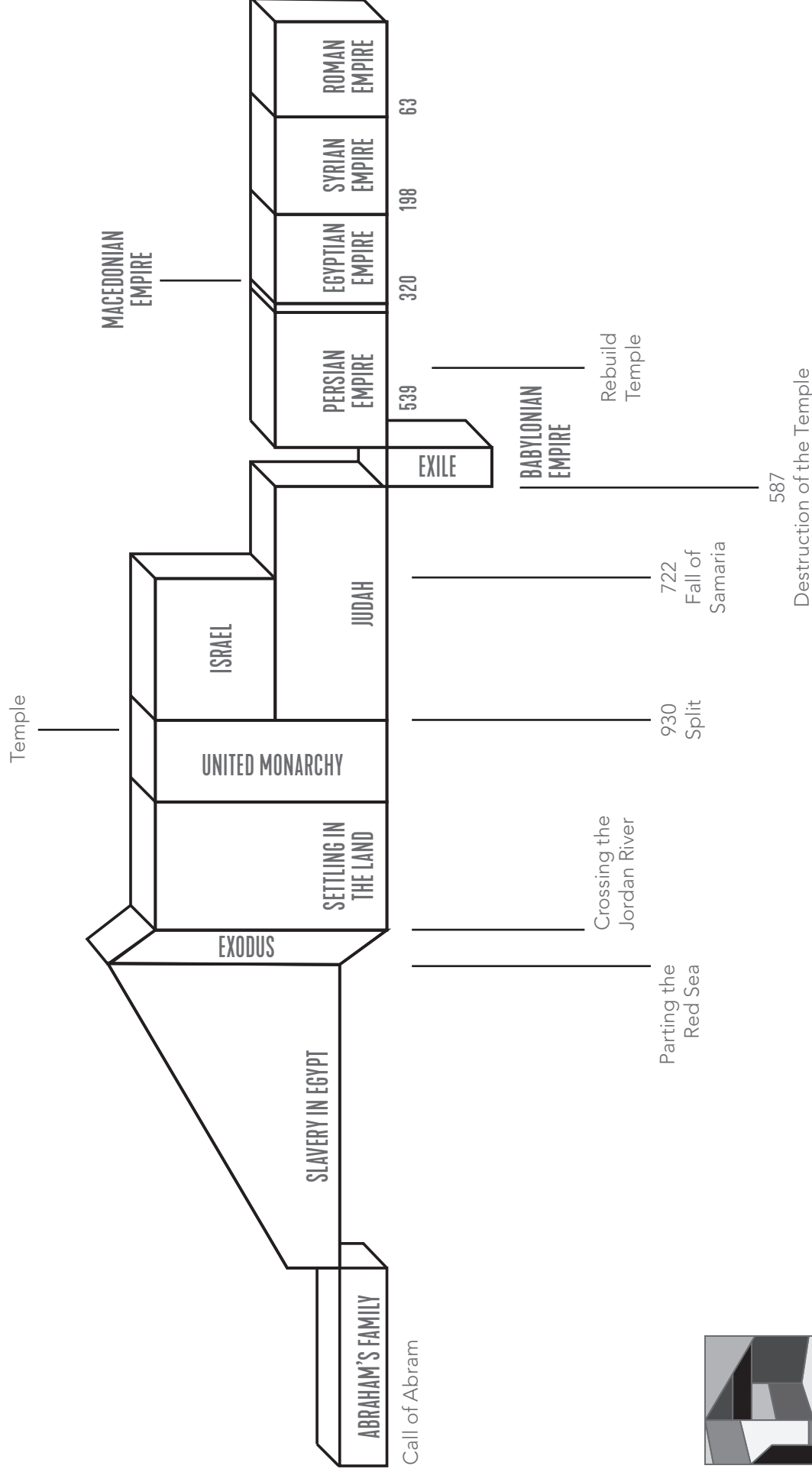
SESSION	BLOCK	POINT	DATES
Exodus and the Law	Abraham's Family	Call of Abram	
	Slavery in Egypt	Parting the Red Sea	
	Exodus	Crossing Jordan River	
Settling in the Land	Settling in the Land		
United Monarchy and the Temple	United Monarchy		
		Temple	
Divided Monarchy and the Prophets		Split	930 <<write by Split>>
	Israel		
	Judah		
		Fall of Samaria	722 <<write by Fall of Samaria>>
Exile		Destruction of Temple	587 <<write by Destruction of Temple>>
	Exile		
	Babylonian Empire		
Return to the Land	Persian Empire		539 <<write by seam of Exile and Persian blocks>>
		Rebuild Temple	
	Macedonian Empire		
	Egyptian Empire		320 <<write by seam of Macedonian and Egyptian blocks>>
	Syrian Empire		198 <<write by seam of Egyptian and Syrian blocks>>
	Roman Empire		63 <<write by seam of Syrian and Roman blocks>>



# SHAPE OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY



# SHAPE OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY



# GETTING ORIENTED

## LEADER NOTES



The purpose of the opening session is to set the tone, raise expectations, and provide big picture orientation. Where possible, weave the metaphor of a journey throughout. There is a lot to cover, so be concise and keep it moving.

## PREPARATION

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- Put up the “Shape of Israel’s History” poster in a place everyone will be able to see.
- Decorate the room (optional).
- Post a sign-up sheet for the character studies. (To shorten material for Ahab group, cross off 20:1-43 and 2 Chronicles 18.)
- Set up the resource table.
- Have “Starting Point” half sheets ready for distribution.
- Set aside papyrus scroll (if you have one).
- Let the person running projection know when you will be showing the “Imperial History” map.

## 90-MINUTE SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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If you have more time than this, add in worship, add another mixer, or give people time to pray in small groups at the end.

### 5 MINUTES: WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY

Your opening comments should be engaging and brief.

- Introduce yourself. Include a humorous or interesting story about your experience with the Old Testament as a child or an adventurous travel experience.
- Share why you are excited about this track and that you anticipate meeting God as we dive into his Word.



## 20 MINUTES: MEETING YOUR TRAVELING COMPANIONS

Do a mixer that gets people moving around the room and interacting with one another while having a good time. (For example, in “speed dating” style, have them share about a time they were farthest from home.) If the group has less than 15 members, have everyone share their name. If the group is larger, have them introduce themselves at tables but not as a large group.

## 25 MINUTES: STARTING POINT

### 5 MINUTES

Start by acknowledging the weirdness of the Old Testament, saying, for example, “The Bible is a strange book.” Give some illustrations of this, such as examples of odd names and customs or unfavorable views of the Bible in the media or culture. Doing this helps set the expectation that in this study it is OK to acknowledge things that bother you or that you don’t like. Students with church backgrounds may feel that they always need to talk about the Bible reverently without admitting how weird the Old Testament is, even if they think so. Students from secular backgrounds will be relieved to know the teacher recognizes that the Bible is odd. Reading a few pages of A. J. Jacobs’ *The Year of Living Biblically* (e.g., pages 3-4) captures this humorously. You could also point out David T. Lamb’s *God Behaving Badly*. At this point, you are just acknowledging the tension, not resolving it.

### 15 MINUTES

Ask them to take a few minutes to write their answers to the questions on the half sheet handouts. If they want, they can transfer their answers to their Participant Guide, page 6. Then have them share in groups of three or four. When the small groups are over, ask them to pass in their sheets and tell them you will try to incorporate their questions into your experience together, though you may not be able to cover all of them. It is their choice whether they add their name or keep it anonymous. Acknowledging their attitude and questions about the Old Testament from the start will help their posture throughout the experience. It will also help you anticipate potholes or adjust your plans.

### 5 MINUTES

Why study the Old Testament? Briefly teach through the points in the Participant Guide on page 6:

- **To deepen relationship with God.** We aren’t here to primarily learn information. We’ve come because we want to meet God in his Word.

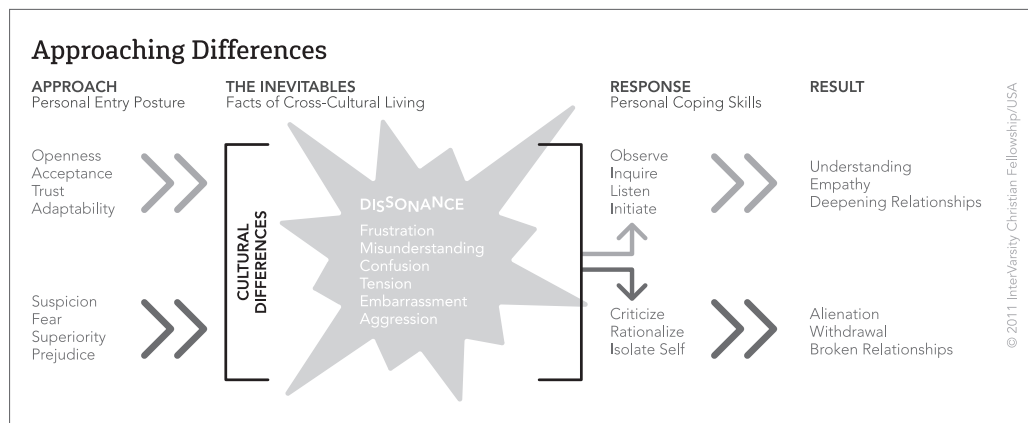


- **To develop a biblical worldview.** The Christian view of the world, ethics, the relationship between the spiritual and material sides of life, and the meaning of life all come from the Old Testament. We can't develop a biblical worldview without it.
- **To understand the New Testament.** The New Testament is the sequel to the Old Testament. It is hard to really grasp the power of what is happening in the New Testament without having a good foundation in the Old Testament. The more you learn of the Old Testament, the more you will understand and enjoy the New Testament.
- **Israel's story is our story.** Christians are the spiritual descendants of Abraham (Galatians 3:29). The story of the nation that came from him is our story as well. In the Old Testament, we are given paradigms for the life of faith, for example, crossing the Red Sea or entering the Promised Land. From these stories we learn about God and how he works in our world.
- **Helps us figure out how to live faithfully in our context.** Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope." During *Origins*, I hope you will discover that the Old Testament is even more relevant than you thought.

## 5 MINUTES: HOW?

We are calling this survey of the Old Testament a journey because we are going to be exploring a foreign land. It is about very ancient people experiencing things that most of us will never experience: animal sacrifices, slavery, goat herding, invading armies, etc.

Use the Approaching Differences Diagram on page 7 of the participant guide to briefly explain the importance of staying open and asking questions when you encounter things you don't understand or like.



As we explore the Old Testament, there will be times when you are uncomfortable or bothered. That's OK. It is a normal part of a cross-cultural experience. Hopefully you will be intrigued. There are so many interesting and unusual things to discover and explore. During our time together, let's lean into being curious people. Be prepared for moments where you encounter breathtaking beauty and wonder. This is a journey you won't forget.

So, how will we go about this journey? The first thing I want you to know is that tonight is the longest I will talk. This will not be like sitting in a college class. We will be interacting with the Scripture in a variety of ways. We'll be reading, doing manuscript study, watching videos, listening, reflecting, and reenacting. There will also be time to explore a theme or topic. There is a lot to cover, so at times we will just point out important things as we drive by and other times we will get off our camels and sit down for a while.

It's going to be a great trip.

## 5 MINUTES: WHAT?

Let's stop a minute and ask ourselves, "What is this thing we call the Bible?" What's the first thing that comes to mind when we hear the word "Bible"? Usually it is a black, leather-bound book with a name engraved in gold or a great big family Bible on the shelf or podium.

- Its original form was a series of papyrus scrolls, written in Hebrew. *If you have one, pass around a papyrus scroll so everyone can feel it.*
- It's more accurate to say it is a portable library rather than a book. It contains 39 books, 939 chapters, and more than 700 pages. Reading it all the way through is the equivalent of reading *Gone with the Wind* or *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.
- This portable library groups books together, just as our libraries do. Jews and Christians arrange it slightly differently. The Jewish groupings are The Law or Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), The Prophets (includes Historical Books and books that record the prophets), and Writings (covers a variety of other books). Point out the graphic on page 8 of the Participant Guide. In Christian Bibles, the arrangement is the Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets.



- It is the sacred scripture for Jewish people then and now, and was the Bible used by Jesus and the apostles. In fact, when New Testament writers refer to “the scriptures,” this is what they have in mind. The Bible was preached and studied by the early church.
- The name “Old Testament” is a term coined by Melito of Sardis in AD 180 and is used by Christians. Jews just call it “The Bible.” Scholars usually refer to it as the “Hebrew Bible.”

## 10 MINUTES: WHERE?

When studying the Bible, it really helps to learn the geography. All of the events recorded in the Old Testament happened in the Ancient Near East. (Point out map on page 9.) There will be maps included in many of our sessions. It’s always useful to take a few minutes and find the locations we are discussing. The land the Israelites eventually settled in is called Canaan. *Note: It may be helpful to show participants a modern-day map of the nation states in the Middle East.*

It is part of a larger region at the east end of the Mediterranean Sea called “the Levant.” To give you a sense of how important this real estate is in world history, I’d like you to watch an animated map that goes from the time of Abraham to the present. *Show the “Imperial History” map: [mapsofwar.com/ind/imperial-history.html](http://mapsofwar.com/ind/imperial-history.html).*

## 10 MINUTES: WHEN?

The Old Testament is a very old book. It contains things written down between 2000 and 450 BC. In fact, some of the stories were passed along orally even earlier than that. It is an epic—a story that covers many generations. Like any good epic, you can return to it again and again.

But Israel’s story is part of something larger—the story of God’s work of redeeming the world. To get the really big picture, it is helpful to think of world history as a five-act play:

- Act 1 introduces Creation and the Fall; it sets up the rest of the story.
- Act 2 is about Israel.
- Act 3 is the turning point of the play: Jesus.
- Act 4 is about the Church. The fourth act starts with Pentecost and continues to this day. We are part of Act 4. There is one more act to come: New Creation.
- In Act 5, Jesus will return and set everything right, evil and death will be vanquished, and redemption of the heavens and earth will be complete. The largest amount of material in the entire Bible covers Act 2, Israel.





During our time together, I want you to learn the shape of Israel's history. It isn't so important that you learn the dates of events, but that you learn their order. This will help you immensely when reading different sections. To do that, we'll be filling in this time line of Israel's history as we go through our journey. You'll want to keep returning to page 11 and labeling the different parts until it is complete. It will be easier to pick up and read at any part of the story once you can easily identify where it fits in Israel's history.

On any long journey it helps to learn the major landmarks so that you know roughly where you are at any point. *For example, when my husband and I moved from Los Angeles to Iowa City, IA, these are the landmarks that marked our progress: Las Vegas, Bryce Canyon, Moab, Denver, Omaha, and Des Moines. By the time we got to Des Moines, we knew we were only two hours from our new home. Substitute your own route and landmarks. It's good to pick a geographical area that most participants would be familiar with.* By the end of our time together, you will know the major landmarks in the Old Testament and what order they come in:

- Call of Abraham
- Crossing the Red Sea
- Crossing the Jordan River
- Building the Temple
- Split Between Judah and Israel
- Assyrians Conquer Israel
- Babylonians Destroy the Temple
- Rebuilding the Temple

## 5 MINUTES: WHO?

Because the Old Testament is an epic story, there are hundreds of significant characters and thousands of minor roles. We'll be meeting a variety of these characters in the next few days, but it is important that you learn "the Big Three": Abraham, Moses, and David. Abraham is the father of the nation of Israel, the one with whom God made his initial covenant. Moses is the man God used to lead the Israelites out of slavery from Egypt, and through whom he gave the Ten Commandments and the rest of his law. David was the greatest king. The Messiah is to come from his line.

One of the ways we'll be meeting some of the characters is through small group presentations. In your guide on page 13 there is a list of characters. When we are done tonight, you will sign up for the one you want to work on with your friends.



Your assignment is to write a five-minute presentation to perform as a group. It can be a spoken word piece, a song, a monologue, play, etc. You'll study the passages listed for your character, work through the questions on the worksheet, and then put together a creative way for the rest of us to learn about him or her. It is a group presentation (spoken word, song, monologue, play, etc.) of the story from the character's perspective.

## 5 MINUTES: ORIENTATION TO GUIDE

This guide is divided in sections and ordered chronologically. Each section has more information in it than we will cover because it is meant to serve as a reference for you in the years to come. You'll be able to keep it with your Bible and flip back to the maps and charts whenever you need them. At the end of each section, starting with Abraham's Family, is a summary sheet which lists where the particular era is found in the Bible, major events, characters, and iconic places and objects. *Have them turn to one.*

At the bottom of the summary sheet you'll find some notable lines. These are phrases or sentences from the Bible that are found in English literature or general culture. We won't be reading through these summary sheets together, but you might want to take a look at them as we go or come back to them in the weeks to come.

Finally, at the end of each section is a "Selah" page. "Selah" is a Hebrew musical term that is used in the Psalms. It is thought to mean "interlude" or "pause." For us, "Selah" will represent a point to pause on the journey and reflect on what we've just learned. We will be covering a lot. Making notes on the "Selah" pages will be like keeping a travel diary. It'll help you remember what you've seen, and you'll be able to make notes about places you'd like to return to for further exploration.

## CLOSING

Pray for the week. If you've set up a resource table, briefly mention what is available there. As people leave, encourage them to sign up for the character study.



# STARTING POINT



How would you describe your attitude toward the Old Testament?

What questions do you have about the Old Testament?



# STARTING POINT



How would you describe your attitude toward the Old Testament?

What questions do you have about the Old Testament?



# CREATION

## LEADER NOTES



The foundation for all of redemption history is the goodness of God and the goodness of his purposes. Genesis 2:4-25 paints a vivid picture of the shalom (peace) God intended for creation and his profound care for Adam and Eve. This session is both wonderful and complex. For many participants, this is their first introduction to the concept of genre in the Bible. It is important that they learn to interpret Genesis 2 from the perspective of the original audience.

*Note: There will be questions about historicity and science that will not be answered in this session.*

*Consider offering a table discussion at a meal for those who would like to explore those questions. **In light of the session's complexity, it is recommended that it be led by an experienced manuscript teacher.***

## PREPARATION

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- Post a schedule for the character performances.
- Confirm with the worship leader the number and placement of songs.
- If you have been using *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* during your preparation to teach about genre, return it to the resource table.
- Ask three different people to each read out loud one of the traditional stories.

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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If you have longer, take more time in the large group interpretation and add a set of worship to the end of the session.

### 5 MINUTES: OPENING SONG

Participants will enter this session still wondering what *Origins* will be like and if it'll be worth their time and attention. Thus, the tone set in the first 10 minutes of the session impacts their expectations. Select a song that is energetic and enjoyable.



## 5 MINUTES: READING FROM *THE YEAR OF LIVING BIBLICALLY* (PAGES 56-57)

The reading from *The Year of Living Biblically* is a great way to introduce the session topic using humor.

## 5 MINUTES: INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL GENRES

More information about biblical genre is available in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* and chapter 15 of *The Bible Study Handbook* by Lindsay Olesberg.

- In Christian Bibles, the Old Testament is divided into five clusters: The Pentateuch, History Books (of the nation of Israel), Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets.
- On page 16, you can see what books are included in each cluster. It is important to know that only the first two clusters are arranged chronologically. The other three clusters come from various periods in Israel's history and are not in a specific order.
- Within the Bible you will find many different forms of writing. This is why when you make a New Year's resolution to read all the way through the Bible, you start to slow down in the middle of Exodus. Up until then, you have been reading narratives with a few genealogies thrown in, but at Exodus you run into laws and architectural design. You push through, but by the time you hit Leviticus with all its instructions, you grind to a complete halt and go back to playing "Bible roulette" for your morning devotions.
- In literature studies, forms of writing are called genres. The rules for reading and interpreting a passage change with the genre, so it is important to learn how to recognize them. You already know how to adjust your understanding based on genre. You read an adventure novel from front to back, but you look up information from a car owner's manual as you need it. Instinctively, you have different expectations of a tweet compared with a blog. We all know to take advertisements that say "the world's best hamburger" as a way of communicating "buy our hamburgers" and not, "A scientific study has proven the superiority of flavor and nutrition of our hamburgers over all others."
- The original audience also instinctively recognized different genres in the Bible and made the appropriate adjustments. So, one of the first steps in studying a passage of the Bible is to identify the genre and adjust the rules of interpretation accordingly. One of the best books you can buy to help you grow in understanding the Bible is *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. It explains the various biblical genres



in the Old and New Testaments, and explains how to interpret them. You can take a look at my copy on the resource table.

- On page 17 of your guide, there is a summary of the genres found in the Old Testament and strategies for reading them. We will only be talking about one of those genres today, but the chart will be a helpful resource to you throughout the Origins experience and afterwards.

## 15 MINUTES: READING TRADITIONAL STORIES

The genre for Genesis 1-11 is traditional story. Traditional stories answer the question, “How did the world get like this?”

- Traditional stories are set in the remote past and help us make sense of our place in the cosmos. All cultures have them. Their purpose is to express transcendent truth in a memorable form. They are not intended to be journalistic, as if written by an eyewitness. They aren’t historical in the way that we think of history. Traditional stories don’t communicate facts; they communicate ultimate meaning.
- For some of you, the idea that not everything in the Bible is historic fact may be a new idea and different than what you’ve heard in church. *Make yourself available to talk about this outside of the session.*
- Traditional stories start in oral form and are passed down through the generations. Traditional stories about creation are the foundation of a culture’s worldview. How you understand your beginnings will often determine how you view yourself, how you view your relationships to others, how you interact with your environment, and how you act. Listen to these two stories, a Native American one and a modern one. Have the stories on pages 18 through 21 read out loud.

- **Debrief**

How would you describe the perspective on the world from the Native American story?

How would you describe the perspective on the world from the modern story?

- The Bible has two different stories about creation. There is so much to say about who God is and the nature of his relationship to the world that one story couldn’t contain it all. The first story, found in Genesis 1, communicates God’s grandeur, power, and transcendence. The second story reveals his intimacy and closeness (what theologians call imminence). We will be studying the second story. It is



important to remember that each of these stories stand on their own, so we won't attempt to answer questions we have about Genesis 2 using Genesis 1.

- Before we jump in, I'd like you to hear one of the stories that Israel's neighbors told about creation. *Have the Babylonian story read out loud. (Visual option: A claymation version of the Babylonian myth can be found at [vimeo.com/6666152](https://vimeo.com/6666152) from 2:00–3:45.)*

- **Debrief**

How did that story make you feel? What does it say about why people were made?

- Now, listen to the story from Genesis 2. Close your eyes and notice how it makes you feel. *Read Genesis 2:4–25.*

- **Debrief**

How does it make you feel? What's different than the Babylonian story?

- Summarize, emphasizing God's goodness.

## 80 MINUTES: MANUSCRIPT STUDY OF GENESIS 2:4-25

See teaching notes for Genesis 2:4-25.

### 10 MINUTES

Individual study

### 12 MINUTES

Large group observation and questions

### 10 MINUTES

Small group interpretation

### 45 MINUTES

Large group interpretation

### 3 MINUTES

Summary

## 10 MINUTES: APPLICATION

Personal application and Selah reflection.



# GENESIS 2:4-25

## TEACHING NOTES



### SETTING THE CONTEXT

---

In order to study the Bible on its own terms, we must look at it from the perspective of the original audience. Some of the questions we bring with us to the text aren't things the ancient people would be asking. We'll lay those questions aside for later and use our time now focusing on understanding how this story would have impacted the people of Israel. At points, I'll be sharing some background and cultural information that will help us do that.

*Note: Learning how to interpret Scripture as the author intended for the original audience is a foundational skill of inductive study. To reinforce this skill, regularly ask "How would the original audience have heard this?" When comments or questions are beyond the scope of the text, acknowledge that and then table them for a discussion outside the session. If the group is relatively new, walk through the goals on the "Introduction to Inductive Bible Study" handout.*

### INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

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#### CREATION OF MAN

1. Why is there such an emphasis on the ground and earth? How would this sound to ancient Israelites?
2. Use your imagination to describe God creating the man. What do you see? *God as artist; forming a figure out of mud; intimacy and tenderness. It is effective for the teacher to summarize the human as "a mud-creature loved by God."*

*Note: The Hebrew word for "man" (אָדָם adam) sounds like and is related to the Hebrew word for "ground" or "earth" (אֲדָמָה adamah).*

3. How is this depiction of the creation of humanity different than the Babylonian one? What does that say about God?





## CREATION OF GARDEN

4. Describe the garden. Why include the various details?
5. When we imagine a garden, we often envision a formal English garden with hedges and rows, or we envision a vegetable garden in Grandma's backyard with tomatoes and cucumbers. The garden depicted here is a tree park, the kind of garden owned by Mesopotamian kings. Why does God create the garden?
6. What is the significance of the man working in the garden? What does that say about work?
7. What is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why did God put it there? Knowledge of good and evil is a Hebrew idiom for independence. In the Old Testament, children (Deuteronomy 1:39) and very old people (2 Samuel 19:35) are described as not having the knowledge of good and evil. Both are dependent on others for their care.

## CREATION OF WOMAN

8. Why is it not good for the man to be alone? What does that say about God and creation?
9. What's the significance of the man naming the animals?
10. Why is the creation of woman unique? What is her purpose? The Hebrew word for helper is עֵזֶר "ezer." It means "one who aids." The Lord is described as a "ezer" in Psalm 33:20 and Hosea 13:9.
11. What is the purpose of the concluding comments?

## SUMMARY

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God is good, generous, and loving. The man is just a mud-creature, but he is loved by God, who knows exactly what he needs. God provides everything the man could desire: a garden fit for a king, abundant food, purposeful work, and a companion who makes his heart sing with joy. Unlike the Babylonian creation story, there is no conflict, no violence, and no subjugation. The Hebrew word for this state of peace, harmony, and wholeness is "shalom"—it's what God intended for the world from the beginning and the longing of every human heart. Everything in this passage demonstrates the goodness of God, even his command to not choose independence. He is out for our good and knows that life is only available through connection to him.



# APPLICATION QUESTIONS (CHOOSE ONE AREA)

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## THE SHALOM LIFE

Give time for individual reflection. Have them share in groups of two or three if there is time.

- How does my ideal world differ from Eden?
- What do I think is necessary for happiness and wholeness? How does this passage affirm or challenge my thinking?
- Do I believe I am a part of God's good creation? How would I live differently if I believed that more fully?

## SHALOM WITH GOD

Give time for individual reflection. Have them share in groups of two or three if there is time.

- In which areas of life are you aware of your dependence on God? How do you feel about your frailty or smallness?
- How deeply do you trust that God anticipates your needs and moves to meet them? What will it look like for you to live in that kind of trust?
- Where do you need healing in your relationship with God? What will help you deepen your intimacy with God?

## SHALOM WITH OTHERS

Give time for individual reflection. Have them share in groups of two or three if there is time.

- What prevents vulnerability between you and others? How will you respond to God's invitation to community?
- What does God intend for relationships between men and women? What needs to change in your relationships with those of the opposite sex?
- To what degree does God's design reflect your expectations and experience? Where do you need healing?

## SHALOM WITH CREATION

Give time for individual reflection. Have them share in groups of two or three if there is time.

- What is the attitude toward work in your family and/or culture? How has it affected the way you engage your own work?
- What does God intend for relationship between humanity and the rest of creation?
- How is God inviting you to respond to our original call to be stewards of His good creation?



# FALL

## LEADER NOTES



This manuscript study of Genesis 3 is the linchpin to the *Origins* journey. Unless students come to really understand the nature and impact of sin, they won't grasp God's plan of redemption. Genesis 2 reveals God's goodness, that humans are "mud-creatures loved by God," and the state of the shalom that God intended. In Genesis 3, we come to understand how the tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolizes independence from God, the psychology of sin, and the nature of broken shalom. This session is pretty intense, both in terms of a rigorous manuscript study and the depth of its application.

## PREPARATION

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- Tidy up the tables to create a good learning environment.
- If there are intercessors at your camp/conference/retreat, ask for their prayers during this session.
- If you plan to include worship in the time of confession, clarify the timing with worship leaders.
- If wifi is unavailable or unreliable, download The Bible Project video Genesis Part 1:  
[https://dc1okrw7mut6n.cloudfront.net/SD/torah/genesis\\_part1.mp4](https://dc1okrw7mut6n.cloudfront.net/SD/torah/genesis_part1.mp4)

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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**5 MINUTES: READING FROM *THE YEAR OF LIVING BIBLICALLY* (PAGES 20-21)**

**6 MINUTES: SHOW THE BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO GENESIS PART 1**

[youtu.be/KOUV7mWDI34](https://youtu.be/KOUV7mWDI34)

**90 MINUTES: MANUSCRIPT STUDY OF GENESIS 3**

See Genesis 3 teaching notes.

**3 MINUTES**

Read passage out loud



**12 MINUTES**

Individual study

**15 MINUTES**

Large group observation and questions

**12 MINUTES**

Small group interpretation

**45 MINUTES**

Large group interpretation

**3 MINUTES**

Summary (encourage them to take notes on the Selah sheet)

**10 MINUTES: PERSONAL REFLECTION & APPLICATION**

**7 MINUTES: COMMUNAL PRAYER & CONFESSION**

**6 MINUTES: SHOW THE BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO GENESIS PART 1**

[youtu.be/KOUV7mWDI34](https://youtu.be/KOUV7mWDI34)

**2 MINUTES: ANNOUNCE WHERE TO MEET FOR NEXT SESSION, WHAT TO WEAR, ETC.**



# GENESIS 3

## TEACHING NOTES



### SETTING THE CONTEXT

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In Genesis 2 the goodness of God is demonstrated through his actions. He lovingly brought the mud-creature to life and created a wonderful environment for him and his family to enjoy. In our study, we learned that the knowledge of good and evil was a Hebrew idiom for independence. The one requirement for the humans was that they stay connected to God and dependent on him.

*Note: This passage warrants hours of study and discussion. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you discernment about how much time to spend on the different subjects.*

### INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS PART 1

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1. What is the serpent's motive?
2. Why does the woman eat? What does she believe about God?
3. What is the significance of the man and woman making coverings for themselves from fig leaves?

### TEACHING MOMENT THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SIN

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Sin is more than just wrong actions. At its heart is a distrust of God's goodness and our declaration of independence from him. It is important that we learn to recognize the progression of the psychology of sin. (*Write the list below on the board as you talk through them.*)

1. Suspicion of God's authority
2. Distorted thinking (about God, self, others, situation)
3. Believing God is withholding something good
4. Defining for yourself what is good
5. Choosing disobedience



## INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS PART 2

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4. Why do they hide themselves when God comes for his evening walk?
5. What is the purpose of God's questions to them?
6. How does life change because of their disobedience?
7. What does not change?
8. Why does God make clothes for them? "Garments of skin" are a gracious gift of God that helps to alleviate the pain and consequences of the Fall. God continues to give humanity garments of skin (e.g., fertilizer and tractors make it easier to grow food, ibuprofen and antibiotics lessen the severity of physical pain and illness).
9. Why are they banished from the Garden of Eden?

## SUMMARY

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Adam and Eve were recipients of God's generous and loving rule, but they let doubts about God's character and motives take root in them. Their distorted thinking leads them to take life into their own hands—a declaration of independence. What happens is tragic. Awareness of their vulnerability and weakness leads to shame. Self-protection, fear, and blame enter into their relationship with God and with each other. The consequences of their sin were enormous, affecting the creation, gender relationships, procreation, and work. Hostility and violence became a constant reality. The shalom that God intended for our world was shattered. Yet, God continues to show himself as completely good and committed to them. He graciously provides covering for their shame and blocks them from the tree of life so that they won't stay in this state of brokenness indefinitely.



# APPLICATION QUESTIONS (CHOOSE ONE AREA)

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## NATURE OF SIN

- Which step of the psychology of sin progression am I particularly vulnerable to? Why?
- What changes in my life or spiritual disciplines would strengthen me in that area?
- How do I blame others for my own mistakes, poor choices, or sin?
- For which areas of sin do I have a hard time accepting responsibility?
- In what ways have I experienced consequences of my sin?

## BREAKING OF SHALOM

- How do I experience the consequences of the Fall?
- What situations do I regard as unredeemable?\*
- What would it look like to seek God for healing and redemption in those situations?

## GRACE OF GOD

- How have I experienced God's grace in the midst of sin and its consequences?
- What garments of skin do we have today that help alleviate the pain and consequences of the Fall?
- Are there particular garments of skin that I am susceptible to putting my trust in rather than regarding them as a gift from God?

*\*Jesus came to redeem creation from the Fall and its consequences. See:*

*Mark 10:45*

*John 1:29*

*Romans 8:19-23*

*Ephesians 1:7-10*

*Revelation 21:1-5*



# ABRAHAM'S FAMILY

## LEADER NOTES



After intensive study of Genesis 2 and 3, your group will be ready for a change of pace. This session is designed to be conducted around a campfire and works great at the end of the first full day.

*Note: If you don't have access to a campfire, choose a location other than your meeting room, preferably outside.*

## PREPARATION

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- Make 12 table tents of card stock and print the name of one of the 12 sons of Israel on each card (pages 41-52).
- Gather flashlights if you will be reading after sundown.
- Ask someone who plays guitar to lead one or two familiar worship songs.

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 15 MINUTES: DIVIDE INTO TRIBES, SELECT TRIBAL LEADERS, WALK TO CAMPFIRE SITE IN TRIBES

For a group of 12, begin inside (so that you can be better heard) and have participants pair up. Combine three pairs to make one group of six. You should have four groups (6, 2, 2, 2). Tell the groups that they are now the tribes of Israel descended from Jacob through Leah (6), Rachel (2), Bilhah (2), and Zilpah (2). Point to the family tree on page 34. Give each group their corresponding signs with the names of the tribes born to that mother. The tribal sign for Joseph's line is Ephraim/Manasseh.

*Note: This is especially fun with a big group. If you have more than 12 participants, increase the size of the four groups proportionally.*

Encourage them to imagine they are a member of that tribe once they are settled in the land, hearing old family stories around the campfire. Ask them to assign one person to be head of the tribe for each of the 12. In a bigger group, have them pick the oldest.





Pull the 12 tribal heads aside and tell them to bring a Bible and their Participant Guide. They will be reading according to the assignments on page 38. Ask them to encourage group spirit in their tribe.

Walk to the campfire.

Assemble around the campfire with the *Origins* leader and the 12 tribal heads in the center.

The rest of the tribes should stand behind their tribal head.

## 10 MINUTES: WORSHIP

## 90 MINUTES: TRIBAL LEADERS READ SELECTIONS OF GENESIS

Read the assigned passages loudly (see page 38). There will probably be a fair amount of laughter and jeering, especially once Jacob's wives enter the story.

## 5 MINUTES: CLOSING PRAYER

Make sure to collect the tribal signs; they will be used throughout the experience.

If you have more than two hours, return to the room to debrief the experience as a group. Ask, "How did you hear the stories differently by listening as if you were a member of one of the tribes?" If the group is larger than 15, start sharing in small groups before large group sharing.

The article on covenant can be read at this time or on their own. Then give them approximately ten minutes to make notes on their Selah sheet. If there isn't time for this, or the group just needs to relax and linger around the campfire, begin the next session with a time of debriefing.





**Reuben**

**Reuben**





**Simeon**

**Simeon**





**Levi**

**Levi**





יבנה

Judah





unlunqəz

Zebulun





**Issachar**

**Issachar**





Dan

Dan







ppg

Gad





**Asher**

**Asher**





**Naphtali**

**Naphtali**





**Ephraim/Manasseh**

**Ephraim/Manasseh**





**Benjamin**

**Benjamin**



# EXODUS & THE LAW

## LEADER NOTES



Moses, the parting of the Red Sea, and the Ten Commandments are some of the best-known Bible stories, even for non-Christians. The Exodus is the central act of God's salvation in the Old Testament. It is as important as Jesus' death and resurrection are to the New Testament. However, in this session, the narrative of the Exodus will be covered rather quickly in order to leave space for a manuscript study about God's law. To understand the rest of the Old Testament, students must understand that the law was a great gift and meant to be kept as an expression of faith and trust in God's love and goodness. Faith that leads to obedience is nurtured by remembering, especially Israel's deliverance from slavery. Hopefully, participants will find resonance between Genesis 2, Genesis 3, and Deuteronomy 6.

## PREPARATION

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- Print copies of the Law Selections (found at end of this chapter) so that each group of participants (4-5) has one of the four pages.
- If wifi is unavailable/unreliable, download The Bible Project video Exodus Part 2: [https://dc1okrw7mut6n.cloudfront.net/SD/torah/exodus\\_part2.mp4](https://dc1okrw7mut6n.cloudfront.net/SD/torah/exodus_part2.mp4)
- Let the group giving the Miriam performance know where they come in the schedule.
- Communicate with the person running the video where to begin and end.
- Set out tribe table tents.
- Fill in the time line poster with the first three blocks ("Abraham's Family," "Slavery in Egypt," "Exodus") and the first three points ("Call of Abram," "Parting of the Red Sea," "Crossing the Jordan River").

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 5 MINUTES: SUMMARY OF WHERE WE'VE BEEN

- Read out loud Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 50:22-26, and Exodus 1:8-14.



- Point out that we are seeing how God’s mandate to humanity (“be fruitful and multiply” Gen. 1:28) and his promise to Abraham (“I will make you into a great nation” Gen. 12:2-3) is being fulfilled. “Just as our father Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, the people of God are now called Israelites.” Explain how political changes in Egypt resulted in 400 years of slavery and oppression for God’s people. God raised up a tri-cultural man named Moses to confront Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the land God had promised to Abraham.

## **10 MINUTES: WATCH THE SCENES ABOUT ISRAEL CROSSING THE RED SEA IN *THE BIBLE: THE EPIC MINISERIES*** (STARTS IN DISC 1, CHAPTERS 9-10, EPISODE 2; ENDS WITH “WE MUST FOLLOW HIS PATH”)

Frame the viewing by saying, “We are picking up the story shortly after Moses confronts Pharaoh for the final time.”

## **5 MINUTES: MIRIAM PRESENTATION**

Set the stage for the group presenting Miriam by saying: “We’ll hear now from Moses’ sister Miriam.”

## **5 MINUTES: SHOW THE BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO THE BOOK OF EXODUS, CHAPTERS 19-40**

- Frame the viewing by saying, “In Exodus we see more of God’s character: he rescues and saves. He’s the one who brings Israel out of slavery.”
- Play The Bible Project video: [thebibleproject.com/videos/exodus-19-40/](http://thebibleproject.com/videos/exodus-19-40/)
- Stop video after: “Even though He knows it’s going to cost Him.” (4:01)
- Explain: “The first video shows what the Israelites were saved from: the dehumanization and oppression of unchecked sin. The second video shows what the Israelites were saved for: to be a kingdom of priests for the rest of the world.”

## **30 MINUTES: READINGS ABOUT THE LAW**

Give each table one of the four handouts to read about the Law:

- Exodus 20:2-17
- Exodus 21:2, 12-13, 33-34, Exodus 22:1-3, 21-27
- Leviticus 13:40-46, Leviticus 14:33-42
- Leviticus 25:1-13, 25-28

After reading, have table groups discuss these questions:

- What do we learn about the Law?
- What do we learn from the law about God and His character?



Summarize: “What we call the Ten Commandments are a condensed version of all the laws laid out in Exodus 19-24 and Deuteronomy 12-26. Of the Ten Commandments, the first five are about loving God; the next five are about loving others. There are over 600 other laws that show the specific ways of living out these two kinds of laws. The Law was a gift to form and shape God’s people, and help them carry out their vocation as a kingdom of priests, representing God to the nations.”

### **10 MINUTES: BREAK** (OPTIONAL, IF SCHEDULE ALLOWS)

### **50 MINUTES: DEUTERONOMY 6 REFLECTIVE READING**

This a guided group discussion, not a manuscript study. We hope to change participants’ view of the Law by clarifying the context in which it was given and its value in shaping and forming God’s people. See Deuteronomy 6 teaching notes.

#### **7 MINUTES**

Set the context (Canaanite gods and Deuteronomy background)

#### **3 MINUTES**

Read the passage out loud

#### **7 MINUTES**

Personal sharing in small or large group

#### **30 MINUTES**

Large group discussion

#### **3 MINUTES**

Summary

### **10 MINUTES: APPLICATION**

- Individual reflection
- Confession and prayer in pairs





# DEUTERONOMY 6

## TEACHING NOTES



### SETTING THE CONTEXT

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God's intention is to reveal himself to the world through his people, the nation of Israel. To become a unique nation, they need a permanent land and set of laws to form their culture and national identity. For the past 400 years, the Israelites lived as slaves surrounded by Egyptian culture. They knew very little about God and what it meant to worship him. The law Moses gives (found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy) is intended to train and form them. God is particularly concerned that they do not imitate the worship practices of the people who live in Canaan. *Have the participants read Canaanite Gods on pages 46 and 47 of the Participant Guide.*

Today, we will look at a section of Deuteronomy that highlights a speech Moses gives at the end of his life, just before the Israelites cross over into Canaan.

### READ DEUTERONOMY 6

Discuss in small or large group:

- What stood out to you as you heard this speech read?
- How did it make you feel?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

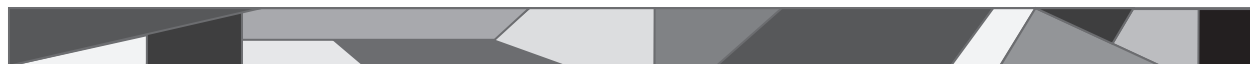
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1. What temptations does Moses anticipate they will face once they are settled in the land?
2. What was at the heart of “testing” God at Massah?
3. How does Moses motivate the Israelites to obey God and stay faithful to him?
4. What is the relationship between loving God and keeping his commandments?

### SUMMARY

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God requires obedience—not because he is asking us to earn his love, but because his ways alone lead to life. The Canaanite gods are false and cannot offer the life, security, and blessing we need. God wants Israel to thrive and flourish in their new home, but this can only happen if they stay



connected to him, the source of all life, and follow his commandments. “We don’t just keep the commandments; the commandments keep us. They safeguard us. They are like little lights that help us stay on the right path” (Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, *Abide*). Like Israel, God is calling us to love him with our whole hearts, to remember what he did in saving us, and to pass on his Word to the next generation. Our obedience to God is an expression of our love for God and trust in his goodness.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS (CHOOSE ONE AREA)

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### LOVING GOD

The battle of the life of faith is a battle of the heart—to continually love and trust God above all other things. This passage describes three ways your heart can shift from complete love for God:

- Forgetting him when life is good
  - Going after other “gods” for blessing and security
  - Distrusting God’s care
- 
- Which of these are you most tempted by presently?
  - How will you repent concretely?

### OBEDIENCE

- What is your attitude toward the Bible’s commandments? What does your attitude reveal about how you view God?
- To what extent do you believe that God is utterly good and his commandments are an expression of his commitment to your well-being?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how diligent are you at learning and obeying God’s Word? How can you grow in diligence?
- What practical things can you do to keep God’s Word before you and with those you live with?

### IDOLATRY

- What are the “gods” on campus or in your context that people look to for security and blessing?
- Which most tempt you? Why?
- What stories can you recount (from the Bible, your life, and the lives of other believers) that will help you and your Christian community be faithful to God?



# LAW SELECTIONS



## EXODUS 20

<sup>2</sup>"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

<sup>3</sup>You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup>but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

<sup>8</sup>Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

<sup>12</sup>Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."



## EXODUS 21

<sup>24</sup>If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything.

<sup>12</sup>Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death. <sup>13</sup>However, if it is not done intentionally, but God lets it happen, they are to flee to a place I will designate.

<sup>33</sup>If anyone uncovers a pit or digs one and fails to cover it and an ox or a donkey falls into it, <sup>34</sup>the one who opened the pit must pay the owner for the loss and take the dead animal in exchange.”

## EXODUS 22

<sup>14</sup>Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

<sup>2</sup>If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; <sup>3</sup>but if it happens after sunrise, the defender is guilty of bloodshed.

<sup>21</sup>Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

<sup>22</sup>Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. <sup>23</sup>If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. <sup>24</sup>My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.

<sup>25</sup>If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest. <sup>26</sup>If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset, <sup>27</sup>because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.”



## LEVITICUS 13

<sup>40</sup>“A man who has lost his hair and is bald is clean. <sup>41</sup>If he has lost his hair from the front of his scalp and has a bald forehead, he is clean. <sup>42</sup>But if he has a reddish-white sore on his bald head or forehead, it is a defiling disease breaking out on his head or forehead. <sup>43</sup>The priest is to examine him, and if the swollen sore on his head or forehead is reddish-white like a defiling skin disease, <sup>44</sup>the man is diseased and is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean because of the sore on his head.

<sup>45</sup>Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ <sup>46</sup>As long as they have the disease they remain unclean. They must live alone; they must live outside the camp.”

## LEVITICUS 14

<sup>33</sup>The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>34</sup>“When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mold in a house in that land, <sup>35</sup>the owner of the house must go and tell the priest, ‘I have seen something that looks like a defiling mold in my house.’ <sup>36</sup>The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mold, so that nothing in the house will be pronounced unclean. After this the priest is to go in and inspect the house. <sup>37</sup>He is to examine the mold on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, <sup>38</sup>the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days. <sup>39</sup>On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mold has spread on the walls, <sup>40</sup>he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. <sup>41</sup>He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town. <sup>42</sup>Then they are to take other stones to replace these and take new clay and plaster the house.”



## LEVITICUS 25

<sup>1</sup>The Lord said to Moses at Mount Sinai, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the Lord. <sup>3</sup>For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. <sup>4</sup>But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. <sup>5</sup>Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. <sup>6</sup>Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, <sup>7</sup>as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

<sup>8</sup>Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup>Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land.

<sup>10</sup>Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. <sup>11</sup>The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. <sup>12</sup>For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. <sup>13</sup>In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

<sup>25</sup>If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold. <sup>26</sup>If, however, there is no one to redeem it for them but later on they prosper and acquire sufficient means to redeem it themselves, <sup>27</sup>they are to determine the value for the years since they sold it and refund the balance to the one to whom they sold it; they can then go back to their own property. <sup>28</sup>But if they do not acquire the means to repay, what was sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and they can then go back to their property.”



# SETTLING IN THE LAND

## LEADER NOTES



Stories from this section are often used in Sunday school (e.g., Rahab, Jericho, Gideon, Samson, Ruth). In general, these stories have been sterilized for children by ignoring or glossing over their gritty context. Concern about violence and genocide in the Bible is one of the common questions participants bring with them into an Old Testament survey. Some students will have heard this addressed in college classes or in discussions with atheists as an example of God's barbarism. Most will not have had an opportunity in an evangelical setting to consider the issue of Israel's violence toward other nations. This session provides an opportunity for important teaching about the reality and justice of God's judgment, both past and future.

*Note: In a setting with a shorter schedule, this is one of the sections that can be skipped. If you have less than two hours, skip the article, summary of Judges, and Selah.*

## PREPARATION

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- Read chapters four and five in *God Behaving Badly* to deepen your own understanding of these issues. Pages 76-80 and 100-101 are particularly helpful.
- Let the group presenting the performance about Joshua know when they come in the schedule.
- Download or cue The Bible Project video on Joshua ([thebibleproject.com/explore/joshua](http://thebibleproject.com/explore/joshua)). Communicate with the person running the video on when to begin and end.
- Create slides or handouts of the quotes about Puritans and Manifest Destiny (page 68 of Leaders Guide) for use in "Facing Up to American History" section.
- Set out tribe table tents in deliberate order to represent the tribes settled in the land. If there will be more than one tribe at a table, make sure Benjamin and Judah sit together. (Order: Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Zebulun, Issachar, Ephraim/Manasseh, Gad, Reuben, Benjamin, Judah, Simeon. Do not place Levi.)
- Add "Settling in the Land" to the time line poster.



## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 5 MINUTES: INTRO TO SESSION

As participants enter the room, remind them to sit with their tribe. Instruct the Levites to stand together off to the side.

Start the session by briefly recapping our history as the people Israel: the call of Abraham, the covenant, enslaved in Egypt 400 years, deliverance from slavery, provision in the wilderness, and receiving the Law. After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, we are finally going to settle in the land promised to Abraham, Issac, and Jacob! (Encourage them to add “Settling in the Land” to page 11.) This period is covered in three books: Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. We are seated in roughly the way the 12 tribes were distributed once they settled, starting with Asher in the far north and Simeon in the south. (Invite the Levites to spread themselves out among the other tribes, explaining that the Levites were not given land of their own because the priestly service was their inheritance: Joshua 18:7.)

Note that Moses has passed away and his successor is Joshua.

### 5 MINUTES: JOSHUA PRESENTATION

It is likely that this will provide some humor as well.

### 5 MINUTES: WATCH THE FIRST HALF OF THE BIBLE PROJECT VIDEO ABOUT JOSHUA (STOP AT 5:05, AT “WHY THE CANAANITES?”)

### 50 MINUTES: GENOCIDE DISCUSSION

- Read out loud some of the relevant questions collected during the first session.
- Together read the three Scripture passages on page 56 of the Participant Guide. Discuss in pairs: What do you think of God’s command to wipe out the Canaanites?
- Divide Israelites into three groups. Assign each group one of the three passages under “Why Did God Command Israel to Wipe Out the Canaanites?” (pages 56 and 57). Have each group discuss their passage from two different perspectives and then report back to the whole group.
  - Group 1: Abram; an Israelite during the Exodus
  - Group 2: God; a Canannite witnessing the destruction of their worship sites
  - Group 3: A son/daughter being taken to be sacrificed; God





- Note these reasons for destroying the Canaanites:
  - Judgment. God delayed delivering his people from slavery for 400 years, waiting until the judgment of the Canaanites was fully justified. A holy and just God cannot let wickedness like child sacrifice go on forever (see info on Canaanite gods on pages 46 and 47). This judgment prefigures the eschatological judgment Jesus will bring on all the nations of the earth (e.g., Revelation 20:11-15).
  - Intermarriage
  - Idolatry
- The Creator of the universe is also the righteous judge of the nations (Psalm 9:5, 7-9). He sent plagues on Egypt and destroyed their army for enslaving and oppressing the people of Israel. In the Scriptures, he often judges wicked nations through warfare with other nations. At this point in history, God judged the Canaanites using the Israelites. Later, God judges Israel using Assyria and Babylon. After that, he uses Persia to judge the Babylon empire. None of these judgments are ethnically motivated.
- Watch remainder of Joshua video.
- Wrap up group discussion by saying, “Much of the Old Testament must be read with tension and sorrow over the consequences of sin. We must remember the story of God’s goodness in creation, the catastrophic choices of humanity, and God’s commitment to ultimately bless the nations.”

*Note: Your goal is not to settle this question once and for all, but to create a place for honest discussion and offer sound biblical perspective. Not everyone will leave this session in agreement.*

## 25 MINUTES: FACING UP TO AMERICAN HISTORY

One of the reasons it’s difficult to approach this topic is because the huge role it plays in the history of the United States and how we came to be on this land. It is part of the history of our church—Catholic and Protestant—not just here but in different places around the world. We can’t give it the time and nuance it deserves in the amount of time we have, but we want to be honest about this part of our history. Scripture, especially the Old Testament stories of the Promised Land and Israel conquering Canaan, were used to legitimize the colonization of lands outside of Europe. With the discovery of the New World came competition for land, natural resources, and forced labor. The indigenous people of the Western hemisphere suffered unspeakable terror and hundreds of tribal groups were completely wiped out.



Puritans viewed themselves as a covenantal people, God's new Israel. "The Puritans generally took the New World as a whole to be ... the stage on which God was about to bring fulfillment to all of history. The New World was Canaan, the Old World Egypt." John D. Wisely, *American Exceptionalism and Civil Religion*, 44.

Similarly during the period of rapid territorial expansion in America (1830s–1850s), Christian theological themes and images were applied to political ideals to legitimize killing, displacing, and subjugating Native Americans. The term "Manifest Destiny" captured the idea that God had chosen the United States to bring civilization to North America. "...the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." John O'Sullivan, July 1845.

## 5 MINUTES: DISCUSSION

Discuss in small groups: What do you think of this use of Biblical stories and themes in America's history?

"Most of us have questions about God's violence. It's important to consider both the tensions involved in the story, and the many different angles felt by the people at the time. Given the ways these passages have been used in our own history, we need to wrestle not only with the use of violence in the Bible, but also the ways in which we read and apply Scripture today."

## 15 MINUTES: READ THE ARTICLE

Give them time to read the article starting on page 58: "Gentiles in the Hand of a Genocidal God."

- Write down a major thing you learned
- Write down a major question you have
- Write down a step you will take to explore that question

## 5 MINUTES: CLOSE THE DISCUSSION

We've just scratched the surface of this sobering topic. There is so much scholarship, theologizing, and debate surrounding these passages. How should we understand them? Hyperbole? Limited destruction (i.e., most displaced rather than killed)? God putting limits on the violence of ancient world? This topic calls us to mature by wrestling alone and together with Scripture and with history. We are providing tools not answers. The Interpretative Commitments shared at the beginning of *Origins* help to set us on the right path.



Resources to explore further:

- YouTube: Mark Charles and the Doctrine of Discovery
- Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel From the Cowboys*
- Dave Lamb, *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist, and Racist?*

## 10 MINUTES: BRIEF SUMMARY OF CYCLE OF JUDGES

- Explain that Israel was not obedient in driving out the other nations and abandoned the Lord to worship Canaanite gods (e.g., Judges 2:11-13).
- The book of Judges describes various political-military leaders, referred to as judges, who delivered God's people from oppressors. These judges were regional figures, not national ones. Many operated concurrently, not sequentially.
- Briefly teach through the cycle of sin. Main point: disobedience has consequences, but God is still gracious and forgiving when we turn back to him.
- Mention that if they choose to come back and read Judges, the outline on page 62 of the Participant Guide will be a useful reference.

## 8 MINUTES: SELAH

Give a few minutes for participants to write their reflections on the Selah sheet.

## CLOSE IN PRAYER



# UNITED MONARCHY & THE TEMPLE

## LEADER NOTES



This is a spiritually and emotionally powerful session. It works particularly well as an evening session. Most of the time will be spent working in small groups, with a worship service following. It won't be as heavy as the "Settling in the Land" session, but there should be a sense of weightiness during worship that matches the atmosphere of 1 Kings 8. The main activity is writing a vision statement for the Temple. *Note: Limited time is spent on David—via the Jonathan presentation—in order to make space for the Temple exercise.*

Some examples of Temple vision statements:

- Where God hears, forgives, and acts on behalf of people
- House of prayer for Israel and all nations
- One God, One House, Many Nations, Together in Prayer
- God's character displayed
- Bridging the gap between God and man

## PREPARATION

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- Set up a small "altar" near the front of the room. A card table with a cloth and a plant or vase of flowers is sufficient.
- Let the group presenting the performance about Jonathan know when they come in the schedule.
- Set out tribe table tents.
- Set aside one large piece of poster/plain paper for each table group. Put out the wide-tip markers and tape or pins.
- Add "United Monarchy" and "Temple" to the time line poster.
- Confirm with the worship leader the number and type of songs for the Temple dedication.
- If you have prayer ministers, ask them to be available during the time of dedication.



## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 10 MINUTES: INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED MONARCHY

- Have the group turn to the first two pages of the “United Monarchy and the Temple” session.
- Frame this portion with: “We come now to the period of the United Kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as the construction of the Temple.” Point to the time line poster. “Just prior to this was the period of the judges, a time that was a lot like the Wild West—without order or rule of law. God confirmed Samuel as a prophet at the end of this period, but Israel continued to be buffeted by the armies of the surrounding people, especially the Philistines. As Samuel became old, the people cried for a king. (Have the group chant, “We want a king! We want a king!”) The first king, Saul, turned out to be a disaster because of his lack of submission to God. The next king, David, was a successful military leader and expanded Israel’s territory and wealth.” Point out the map. “He moved the capital of Israel to Jerusalem, a more central location.”

### 5 MINUTES: JONATHAN PRESENTATION

Frame with: “We’ll hear now from Jonathan, Saul’s son and David’s best friend.”

### 60 MINUTES: TEMPLE VISION STATEMENT

- Frame this time with: “Once Israel had peace, wealth, and stability, David wanted to honor the Lord by building him a proper temple.” Have someone read out loud 2 Samuel 7:1-17 and someone else read “God’s Covenant with David” on page 67. Share with students: “Solomon, David’s son, fulfilled David’s dream of building a temple for the Lord. The high watermark of Israel’s history was the dedication of the Temple. Today we will write a Temple vision statement by looking at Solomon’s prayer of dedication. At the end we will have a longer block of worship dedicating ourselves to God.”
- Capturing the scene: Instruct the group to close their eyes and use their imagination to picture a magnificent, glorious building (like a cathedral). While their eyes are closed, read 1 Kings 8:1-13 out loud.
- Give these instructions: “In your table groups, I’d like you to read out loud 1 Kings 8:22-53 (in your guide starting on page 68).”



Divide the table groups evenly. To half of the groups say, “As you read together, pay attention to what Solomon says about God.” To the other groups say, “Pay attention to what Solomon asks for.” Explain that you’ll be passing around poster paper for them to make a list of their findings. When they are done, they should post their paper on a designated wall for everyone to see.

- Table groups: Give the groups about 20 minutes to complete their assignment. Walk around the room, listening in on their conversations and providing guidance as needed. Encourage them to title their sheet “What God Is Like” or “Solomon’s Request,” respectively, if they haven’t already titled the paper. As groups finish, encourage them to post their paper.
- Poster session: Give the students about five minutes to walk around the room and read each other’s posters.
- Large group: Lead the group in filling in the first two parts of “The Temple” worksheet on page 72 by sharing with each other what they found. Keep this time moving and don’t make a lot of commentary. Tell them that you want them to get back into table groups to write a vision statement for the Temple in light of what they have learned from each other. A vision statement is a short, memorable statement that expresses the desired outcome of an organization. Reiterate InterVarsity’s vision statement, which is on the bottom of the worksheet.
- Table groups: Give the group 10 minutes to write a vision statement. The statement must be “tweetable.”
- Large group: Ask each table to read their vision statement. Optional: Write the statements on a poster as they share them. This only works well if the groups have come up with concise statements. Ask the group, “Why was it important to have a physical Temple?” Follow-up questions might include, “What did having a temple do for Israel? What did it do for the surrounding nations?” Use the remainder of your hour discussing this. If you run out of time, it’s fine to only discuss the first question.

## 15 MINUTES: PREPARING THE OFFERING

Give the group some time for silent reflection before sending them out to find an object. (*Note: Don’t put out art supplies on tables as this can direct attention away from engaging with God.*) Frame your time with: “In 15 minutes, we will have a worship service dedicating ourselves to the Lord, just as Solomon and the people of Israel dedicated the Temple to the Lord. To prepare for that, prayerfully select a symbolic object.



We want to devote ourselves completely to our good and faithful God. This object might be a possession that is meaningful to you, something you find outside, a drawing, writing on a piece of paper an area of sin you are turning away from, or a way you want to trust Jesus more fully. Please come back at (specific time) with your object.”

### **30 MINUTES: WORSHIP**

- Four songs (songs about God’s greatness and majesty are appropriate)
- Read 1 Kings 8:56-61 as a blessing over the group.
- Invite them to lay their offering on the altar.
- Two songs (songs of commitment or trust are appropriate)



# DIVIDED MONARCHY & THE PROPHETS

## LEADER NOTES



This is a tragic phase of Israel's history as the kingdom breaks apart and the nation deteriorates under bad leaders and idolatry. Many participants will not have realized that much of the Old Testament literature is about two different kingdoms. This session is designed to be experiential and connect participants emotionally to Israel's rejection of the prophets; it should be somewhat jarring to match the topic.

## PREPARATION

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- Prepare pieces of paper/newspaper (four times as many participants as you have), crumpled into balls for participants to throw at Prophets after each prophet speaks.
- Straighten up the altar used during the Temple dedication service. Hopefully many participants will have left their offerings there. There is no need to draw attention to it, but it should stay up until it is knocked over in the next session.
- Let the group performing the Ahab presentation know when they come in the schedule.
- Rearrange the tribe table tents so that half of the tables represent the nation of Judah in the south (Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon), and the other half represent the nation of Israel in the north (rest of the tribes). Do not put a table tent on the table farthest away from the front of the room.
- Set out wooden blocks on table, one per participant before session starts.
- Add "930," "Split," "Israel," and "Judah" to the time line poster.
- Hang the "Moral Assessment" poster up where it can be easily seen. Divide the kings listed on the "Moral Assessment" chart by the number of tables. Set out a few thick markers.





- Just before the session, as people are taking their seats, discreetly talk to the participants at the far table. Tell them that they are the prophets and will be taking turns delivering God's message to the people. Have them divide the six readings listed on page 80 of the Participant Guide between themselves. When you give the cue for each, they are to stand up before the group of tables representing Israel or Judah and read the passage emphatically.

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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If you have a longer block of time, add some worship to the beginning of the session, ask the group to share how God has been meeting them, or read something humorous from *The Year of Living Biblically*.

### 5 MINUTES: SELAH REFLECTION ON UNITED MONARCHY & THE TEMPLE

#### 10 MINUTES: THE DIVIDED MONARCHY

Frame this time with: "Israel's glory under David and Solomon was short lived. Solomon consolidated his power by marrying 700 wives. This led to trouble." Read out loud 1 Kings 11:1-13. "True to God's word, when Solomon died and his son Rehoboam came to power, there was a rebellion that led to a split into two kingdoms: the kingdom of Judah in the south and Israel in the north." Motion to the two sets of tables. "The southern kingdom had control of Jerusalem and the Temple. David's line continued to reign there. The northern kingdom established the city of Samaria as its capital and quickly built other altars to discourage people from traveling to Judah to worship at the Temple." (*Point out the period on the time line poster, noting that the northern kingdom came under God's judgment earlier than the southern. Also point out the map and chronology of the kings of Israel on pages 76-77.*)

#### 15 MINUTES: MORAL ASSESSMENT OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

Assign each table a set of kings to read about and rate as "good," "bad," or "mixed." When they are done, a representative should add their assessment to the wall chart. Ask a participant to total up the number of good kings for each nation. Then ask, "What makes a king good or bad?"

#### 5 MINUTES: AHAB PRESENTATION

Introduce Ahab as a particularly bad king before the presentation.



## 35 MINUTES: LISTENING TO THE PROPHETS

- Throughout the time of the kings, God raised up prophets to speak on his behalf to the kings and to the people. When reading the prophetic books of the Old Testament, it is important to remember that there is a story behind each one. Each spoke into a specific situation and a specific audience. The chart on page 79 lists the prophetic books in chronological order and shows which king(s) they spoke to. On the right side you will find the Old Testament history references that provide the context for understanding what you are reading.
- Many of the prophets were not solitary figures, but members of a community of prophets called a band. We have our own band of prophets in the back of the room. As they speak to us, put yourselves into the shoes of your tribe. When each is finished, we will respond in unison by yelling, “Forget you!” and throwing paper balls at them.
- Signal to the prophets to deliver their messages in the order listed on “Listening to the Prophets” (page 80). Lead the group in yelling, “Forget You!” after each one. Don’t make any additional comments or explanation. This is to be a dramatic and sobering experience.
- After the second Amos reading, read 2 Kings 16:1-16 from up front, without comment. Then have the Joel passage read.
- After the Joel reading, read 2 Kings 21:1-16 from up front, without comment. Then have the Isaiah passage read.
- Debrief with a large group discussion:
  - What themes did you hear?
  - What was the purpose of the prophets?
  - To the prophets ask, “What was that experience like for you?”
  - Close by saying, “Prophets are a gift.” (Share a short illustration of a modern day prophet who helped a community to see systemic sin or idolatry.)



## 15 MINUTES: ACTIVE RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- Remind participants that idols are false gods that are looking for our worship, and that worshipping leads them to destruction. That is why God is jealous and angry against the idols; He seeks to free humanity, His beloved mud creatures that He created for shalom, for Eden.
- Show artistic renderings of Idols to give participants a visual sense of what an idol / false god does to humanity. For example:
  - “Mammon. Dedicated to his Worshippers” 1885 painting by George Frederic Watts
  - “The Worship of Mammon” 1909 oil painting by Evelyn De Morgan
- Ask, “What are the idols / false gods worshipped in your community or on your campus?” Let participants observe their contexts and write down the things they see worshipped in their context. After five minutes, have participants come up to a flip chart and write down the idols they observe.
- Hold up one wooden block, and share about how idols tempt us for our worship. Share a story of idol worship from your own life. Then instruct, “In front of each of you is a wooden block. Take a marker, look at the list of idols and false gods we’ve named, and then write down on your block three to four idols that most tempt you for worship.”
- Allow participants five minutes to discern and write on blocks, then instruct, “Come up to the altar/temple, and place your block on the altar.”

## 15 MINUTES: APPLICATION & WORSHIP

- Ask, “Who are the prophets in our society? In your community?” Give people a few minutes to reflect on the “Listening to The Prophets” page (page 80). This is done individually.
- Then ask the follow-up question, “What idols are being exposed through the scriptures and through our modern-day prophets?”
- Give some more time for individual reflection.
- Direct people to start sharing in groups.

## 10 MINUTES: WORSHIP

Close time with a time of worship that focuses on repentance and lament.

- Suggested worship song: “Can a Nation be Changed” by Matt Redman



# MORAL ASSESSMENT OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL



KINGS OF JUDAH	MORAL ASSESSMENT		KINGS OF ISRAEL	MORAL ASSESSMENT
Rehoboam 1 Kings 14:21-31			Jeroboam I 1 Kings 12:25-33, 14:1-20	
Abijah 1 Kings 15:1-8			Nadab 1 Kings 15:25-32	
Asa 1 Kings 15:9-24			Baasha 1 Kings 15:33-16:7	
Jehoshaphat 1 Kings 22:41-50			Elah 1 Kings 16:8-14	
Jehoram 2 Kings 8:16-24			Zimri 1 Kings 16:15-20	
Ahaziah 2 Kings 8:25-29			Omri 1 Kings 16:21-28	
Athaliah 2 Kings 11:1-20			Ahab 1 Kings 16:29-34	
Joash 2 Kings 12:1-21			Ahaziah 1 Kings 22:51-53	
Amaziah 2 Kings 14:1-21			Joram 2 Kings 3:1-3	
Uzziah (Azariah) 2 Kings 15:1-7			Jehu 2 Kings 9:1-10:35	
Jotham 2 Chron 27:1-9			Jehoahaz 2 Kings 13:1-9	
Ahaz 2 Kings 16:1-20			Jehoash 2 Kings 13:10-24	
Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:1-8 (-20:21)			Jeroboam II 2 Kings 14:23-29	
Manasseh 2 Kings 21:1-18			Zechariah 2 Kings 15:8-12	
Amon 2 Kings 21:19-26			Shallum 2 Kings 15:13-16	
Josiah 2 Kings 22:1-23:30			Menahem 2 Kings 15:13-16	
Jehoahaz 2 Kings 23:31-35			Pekahiah 2 Kings 15:23-26	
Jehoiakim 2 Kings 23:36-24:7			Pekah 2 Kings 15:27-31	
Jehoiachin 2 Kings 24:8-17			Hoshea 2 Kings 17:1-6	
Zedekiah 2 Kings 24:18-25:30			Exile to Assyria 2 Kings 17:7-41	722 BC
Exile to Babylon 2 Kings 24:1-25:30	587 BC		TOTAL GOOD KINGS:	
TOTAL GOOD KINGS:				



# EXILE

## LEADER NOTES



This session hearkens back to “The United Monarchy and the Temple” session. By looking at Jeremiah, the judgment of the Temple, and the Babylonian exile, participants will understand the reality and appropriateness of God’s judgment. Some astute participants may perceive resonance with Genesis 2 and 3 (God’s desire to dwell with his people, people choosing independence, and the consequences of being kicked out of the garden/land). The tone will be sober.

## PREPARATION

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- Move the altar with whatever offerings are left on it to the front of the room where it can be seen. Clear enough space around it so that it won’t hit anything when you knock it over.
- Let the group performing the Mordecai presentation know when they come in the schedule.
- Place the tribe table tents in the same configuration as the last session. Incorporate the “prophets table” into one of the nations.
- On half sheets of paper, make signs that say “Assyria,” “Babylon,” “Cuth,” “Avva,” “Hamath,” and “Sepharvaim.” Place the “Assyria” sign on a table or seating area some distance outside the room. Set aside the other signs for use during the session.
- Add “Fall of Samaria,” “722,” “Destruction of the Temple,” “587,” “Exile,” and “Babylonian Empire” to the time line poster.
- Let the person running projection know when *The Bible Miniseries* will be shown in the schedule and when to stop.
- Pull aside three to six large guys (depending on the size of your group). Tell them they will represent the Assyrian army. They are to wait outside the room for the first few minutes of the session. When you say “Assyrian” loudly, they will burst into the room and aggressively grab two people each from the Israel part of the room. They should be intimidating as they drag them off to the area marked “Assyria” outside the room. They will stay there with their captives until you call them.



## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 10 MINUTES: ENACT THE FALL OF SAMARIA

Jump into the session by saying, “Though God sent the prophets over and over again to call for repentance, the people and leaders of the northern nation, Israel, would not turn from their wickedness and idolatry. Eventually, God brought the Assyrians against them.” As the guys rush in and take people into exile, encourage some of the folks in Israel to escape to Judah. Then interpret what has happened. “The Assyrian army conquered Israel and took control of its capital, Samaria. Many of its inhabitants were marched off to exile, never to return. Some of the people were able to flee to Judah and take refuge there. A remnant of farmers and poor people were left to work the land on behalf of the Assyrians. To repopulate the area, the Assyrians sent other conquered peoples to settle in Israel.” Go to the door and invite those waiting in “Assyria” to come back. As they walk through the door, hand them the remaining signs you have made. “These new settlers came from Babylon, Cuth, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim. They intermarried with the remaining Israelites and became the Samaritans who were so despised in the time of Jesus.”

Point to the time line, showing the end of the “Israel” block and the “Fall of Samaria” in 722. Explain that the same thing happened about 150 years later to Judah and is the beginning of the “Exile.” In 587, Judah was conquered by the Babylonians and the Temple was destroyed. It was during the Exile that the people of God were first called “Jews” (i.e., from Judah). Before that time, they were referred to as “Israelites.” From the Exile through the time of the New Testament and beyond, they are called Jews. “Israelis” is the term used for citizens of the modern nation-state of Israel.

### 75 MINUTES: JEREMIAH 7:1-15 MANUSCRIPT STUDY

See Jeremiah 7:1-15 teaching notes.



## **10 MINUTES: WATCH THE SCENES ABOUT JEREMIAH & THE FALL OF JERUSALEM ON *THE BIBLE: THE EPIC MINISERIES* (EPISODE 5, “HOPE PART 1”; STARTS ON DISC 2, CHAPTER 13, AT 3:00 WITH JEREMIAH & GOES THROUGH THE BURNING OF THE TEMPLE)**

After you summarize the Jeremiah study, and before moving into application, show *The Bible: The Epic Miniseries* selection. Stop with the scene where the people in Jerusalem are looking at the Temple on fire. When the video ends, knock over the altar you have been using as the representation of the Temple. There is no need to comment. After a moment of silence, read Lamentations 2:1-7, 17-19; 5:20-22.

## **10 MINUTES: APPLICATION & PRAYER**

Frame this time with, “Let’s move into a time of application...” See Jeremiah 7:1-15 teaching notes. Include a time of prayer, as is appropriate for your group.

## **5 MINUTES: PREACH & EXHORT**

As participants reflect on the application questions, listen to the Holy Spirit and confer with other *Origins* leaders, to discern what the Spirit wants to specifically impress upon this group at this time. Exhort the group with the message the Spirit gives you.

## **5 MINUTES: MORDECAI PRESENTATION**

Transition to Mordecai’s presentation by saying, “Similar to what happened when the Assyrians conquered Samaria, the Babylonians deported the wealthy and educated. Some people were able to flee to Egypt. Those who remained were mostly poor farmers who worked the land and paid tribute to the Babylonians. The books of Daniel and Esther are about Jews who sought to be faithful to the Lord in the midst of captivity.”



# JEREMIAH 7:1-15

## TEACHING NOTES



### SETTING THE CONTEXT

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The “Meet Jeremiah” page is a reference for this session but doesn’t need to be read out loud. Here’s what they need to know for this study: Jeremiah was quite young when God called him to be a prophet. He was from a family of priests and thus very familiar with the religious establishment. By this time, the role of prophets had become institutionalized. It was a cushy job with a good income as long as you told the king what he wanted to hear. Jeremiah regularly called the other prophets “false,” resulting in abuse and persecution. Even Jeremiah’s family stood against him. The passage we are studying today comes later in Jeremiah’s ministry, shortly before the Babylonian invasion. *Note: Before reading the passage out loud, comment that Ephraim is another name for the Northern Kingdom and provide cross references for Shiloh (1 Samuel 4:1-22, Psalm 78:56-62).*

### INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

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1. Imagine yourself as an Israelite coming to the Temple to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and seeing a man on the steps shouting. Describe the scene.
2. Why would Jeremiah be delivering this message outside of the Temple?
3. What seems to be the situation in the Temple?
4. How is the refrain “The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord” being used?
5. What is deceptive about these words?
6. Let’s list the sins Jeremiah is confronting.
7. How is going after other gods “to their own hurt”?
8. Describe a den of robbers. (A safe place for thieves.) In what way had the Temple become like a den of robbers? How does this image of a den of robbers compare to the vision statement of the Temple?
9. What’s the significance of God referring to the Temple as “the house which is called by my name”?
10. What happened in Shiloh?
11. Why do they think they are safe?
12. What response is God looking for?
13. What can we learn about God’s judgment from this passage?





# SUMMARY

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The Temple was to be God's dwelling place on earth where the Israelites and nations could meet with him, enjoy his presence, and receive forgiveness. For years and years, the people turned away from him, worshiping other gods, sacrificing their children to Molech, and treating one another unjustly. God continually sent prophets to call them to repentance. One might think that, after seeing his judgment on Israel under the Assyrians, they would turn back to him. But even then, they persisted in their wickedness. They presumed that God would never destroy his own house, and that they would be safe in the Temple. Jeremiah brought a clear warning: "You are trusting in false security. God will not be mocked by your outward show of religiosity." In his goodness and holiness, God does not let injustice, evil, and false religion go on indefinitely. They were trusting in a religious building, not in God himself.

Show the scenes about Jeremiah and the fall of Jerusalem on *The Bible: The Epic Miniseries*.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS (CHOOSE ONE AREA)

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### FALSE SECURITY

- What are current deceptive religious messages that breed a false sense of security in Christians?
- What forms of religious hypocrisy are most common in your life and Christian community?
- Where have you seen modern-day idolatry hurt people? Are there idols God is calling you to turn from for your own good?

### JUSTICE

- Why does God care as much about justice as religious devotion? Do you?
- In what ways are foreigners, orphans, and widows not treated justly on your campus or in your city?
- What can you and your Christian community do to stand up for them?

### JUDGMENT

- Why is belief in the judgment of God important?
- How is the truth that God will bring his righteous judgment on false religion and systemic injustice good news?
- Is this news you share freely on campus or in your context? Why or why not?



# RETURN TO THE LAND

## LEADER NOTES



This session is an extended response to the “Exile” session. The Israelites’ return to the land was a period of repentance and rededication to the Lord after experiencing his punishment and discipline. The session is composed primarily of listening to Scripture, personal prayer and reflection, and a service of rededication. The tone will not be somber like the last one, but seriousness and circumspection is appropriate.

*Note: In a setting with a shorter schedule, this is one of the sessions that can be skipped. If you choose to do this, make sure to move the Ezra presentation, the Imperial History video, and your comments about the time line to the end of the “Exile” session to the beginning of the “Promise of Restoration” session.*

## PREPARATION

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- Set the room up like it was in the Creation and Fall sessions OR remove all the tables and have people sitting in a circle (this works if the group size does not exceed 30 or 40).
- Put away all the objects that were used to construct the altar that represented the Temple.
- Have on hand a small table, one candle, and the tablecloth used for the altar to set up later during this session to symbolize the second temple that the people rebuilt after returning from Exile.
- Remove the tribe table tents.
- Let the group performing the Ezra presentation know when they come in the schedule.
- Add “Persian Empire,” “539,” “Rebuild Temple,” “Macedonian Empire,” “Egyptian Empire,” “320,” “Syrian Empire,” “198,” “Roman Empire,” and “63” to the time line poster.
- Communicate with the person running the projection about when to show the *Imperial History* video ([mapsofwar.com/ind/imperial-history.html](http://mapsofwar.com/ind/imperial-history.html)). Instruct them to stop the video when it gets to the Roman Empire.
- Ask someone to be prepared to read Isaiah 45:1-7 out loud from the Participant Guide on page 90.
- Plan a short service of rededication with the worship leader to end the session.
- Hang a blank poster-size paper in the front of the room. Lay out a few large markers for signing.



## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 5 MINUTES: RECALLING JEREMIAH

“Jeremiah, who condemned the Temple and prophesied its destruction, continues to prophecy for his people in exile.” Read Jeremiah 29:1-14 to the group.

### 10 MINUTES: *IMPERIAL HISTORY* VIDEO & TIME LINE

Begin the session by reshowing the *Imperial History* video. This will make more sense to them now than the first evening. Stop when it gets to the Roman Empire. Comment, “From the point Judah was conquered by the Babylonians, they were never a free and independent country again. One empire after another subjugated, ruled, and taxed them. By the time of the New Testament, the people of Israel had been living in this state for over 500 years.” *On the time line, point out the succession of empires that controlled the land and the point when the Temple was rebuilt.* “This session covers the early part of the Persian Empire when the exiles were allowed to return to the land and rebuild the Temple.”

### 10 MINUTES: KING CYRUS

Read Ezra 1:1-11 to the group. Then ask them to turn to page 90 and listen as Isaiah 45:1-7 is read. Comment, “When the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians in 539 BC, everything changed for the exiles. God had moved the heart of a pagan king, Cyrus, to commission and fund the rebuilding of God’s Temple. The period of their exile was 70 years, just as Jeremiah had prophesied (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10).” Ask, “How might you feel if you were part of this initial group?” *Have the group share in tables or as a whole.*

*Note: “Weal” in v. 7 means “that which is best for someone.” It is a translation of the Hebrew word “shalom” (which we’ve already encountered), meaning peace or wholeness.*

### 5 MINUTES: EZRA PRESENTATION

Preface the presentation with, “The key figures during this period were Ezra, a priest and scribe from the line of Aaron and Nehemiah, who led the effort to rebuild Jerusalem. We’ll hear now from the Ezra group.”

### 35 MINUTES: RENEWING THE COVENANT

“While we’re tempted to think of it as irrelevant, the Old Testament has tremendous value in helping us figure out how to live faithfully now. Scholars note that many



of the books of the Old Testament were most likely gathered together during this period of time. We'll be doing a lot of reading out loud and listening to Scripture, just as the returned exiles did."

"Once the Temple was built, Ezra led the people in a process of renewing their covenant with the Lord. As we listen to parts of that process, listen for themes from earlier sessions." *Have them take turns reading the passages listed on page 91 aloud. Encourage them to take notes on the themes as they listen. After the readings, lead the group in discussing the themes.* Then ask, "What was the significance of the people renewing the covenant at this time?"

## **40 MINUTES: MAKING EZRA'S PRAYER OUR OWN**

"Read the passages for Nehemiah 9 out loud in your small groups. Find a quiet place to work together. On the half-sheets of paper, write your own prayer as a group using the pattern of Ezra's prayer listed on page 92."

"When you get back, we'll have a time of sharing and rededicating ourselves just as God's people did."

## **10 MINUTES: SHARING**

Ask each group to read their prayers out loud to the whole group. Then have a representative from each group post the prayers on the larger sheet of paper on the wall.

## **10 MINUTES: SIGNING OF THE COVENANT**

Set up the small table with tablecloth and candle to represent the second Temple. Play some music and ask participants to pray with their group over the things that were shared. When they are ready, they can come up and sign the sheet.



# PROMISE OF RESTORATION

## LEADER NOTES



This session focuses on one of the many passages promising the coming of the Messiah. By now, participants should understand how far Israel is (and how far we are) from all that God intended for creation and his relationship with people. Though the people have returned to the land and the Temple has been rebuilt, their nation is just a shadow of what it was under David and Solomon. The people of Israel long for a king to set things right, and the participants in this journey long for some resolution and a happy ending. Through a manuscript study of Isaiah 11, hope in God and in his power to bring full restoration to our world should come through loud and clear. It is a perfect launch pad into thinking about our mission on campus.

## PREPARATION

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- Straighten up the tables to create a good environment for studying the Scripture.
- Communicate with the worship leader about the number and types of songs you'd like for worship.
- Assemble art supplies if you have chosen to include artistic response in the application.
- Arrange for background music to play during application.

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 15 MINUTES: WORSHIP

### 5 MINUTES: LONGING FOR A KING

"In this session, we will look at God's promise of restoration. Even in the midst of Israel's sin, their experience of judgment, and their ongoing subjugation to the empires of the world, God continued to send messages of hope to his people. The prophets called for repentance and brought warning of God's judgment, but they also spoke tenderly to the people and promised that God would restore and comfort them. These messages of hope are scattered throughout the prophetic books. One of the recurring promises is of a king from the line of David who would save and



restore the nation. Throughout their sufferings, God's people longed for this king." *Have participants take turns reading Scripture on page 101 in "Longing for a King."*

## **80 MINUTES: ISAIAH 11 MANUSCRIPT STUDY**

See teaching notes.

## **20 MINUTES: APPLICATION & PRAYER**

"Artists use their skill to awaken our imagination for what restoration could look like. We will be creating a mural together that everyone will contribute to. In response to the Application questions about Restored Shalom, work with your small group to create an image or symbol that you want to contribute to this mural." Have a representative from each group add to the mural when their group has finished their design. Be sure to leave enough time to display the finished mural and invite reflection.



# ISAIAH 11

## TEACHING NOTES



### SETTING THE CONTEXT

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Isaiah was a major prophet during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He lived in Jerusalem and preached to the southern kingdom of Judah. During his ministry, 740-700 BC, Israel was taken into exile and Judah felt the threat of the Assyrian Empire on their borders. In the passage, the northern kingdom, Israel, is referred to as Ephraim.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDY

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This passage is written as poetry, so studying it may feel a little different than studying the other passages on this journey has felt. Lead your time by saying, “Hebrew poetry uses parallelism, pairing two lines to say the same thing with slightly different words. As we study, look for images and use your imagination to fill them out. Close your eyes and listen as I read the passage. Pay attention to the emotional impact of the passage.”

### INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

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1. Let's divide the passage into major sections. How would you break it up? Come up with a label for each section.
2. How is this character described?
3. What does it mean that his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord?
4. What is significant about how he will rule?
5. What do the images of animals and children communicate? How do they make you feel?
6. What is God promising to do?
7. Why does the passage include a promise of triumph over their enemies?
8. How would this message bring hope to its hearers?
9. How does this passage give us hope?



# SUMMARY

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Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of the kingdom of God that Jesus came to inaugurate. The center of the kingdom is the king himself, a descendant of David who is completely righteous and just. Through his reign, the curse of Genesis 3 will be reversed and the shalom God intended for creation will be restored. This king will gather the scattered people of Israel from the ends of the earth and reunite the nation. Just as he brought Israel out of Egypt from slavery, so God will again deliver his people from their enemies. This was a message of tremendous hope to Isaiah's audience and continues to be a great source of hope to us today. All that is wrong in our world, all that we long to see changed, Jesus will indeed make right. King Jesus is who our world needs. We have a great message of hope to share with our campuses and communities.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS (CHOOSE ONE AREA)

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Option: Provide art supplies and invite people to answer the questions about restored shalom through drawing or painting. If time, pray in campus groups for this message to be heard on our campuses and contexts.

### RESTORED SHALOM

- Which aspects of Jesus' future kingdom are you most looking forward to? Why?
- Which aspects of this picture of restored Shalom would be most appealing to your campus or context?
- How can you and your community participate in God's plan of restoration? Pick one thing you can do in the coming week, or one thing you can bring to your community.
- How can this vision of God's future influence how you view your studies and career plans?

### HOPE

- In what area does your campus or context most need hope? How does this passage speak to the need? How can your community share and embody this hope within your broader context?
- In what area of life are you most in need of hope?
- How does this passage speak to your need?
- What truths about God do you need to focus on to grow as a person of hope?

### GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

- To what extent do you believe that God is faithful to his promises?
- How might greater confidence in God's faithfulness impact your growth as a disciple of Jesus?





# TOPICAL STUDY

## LEADER NOTES



*Note: The material for this session comes at the end of the Participant Guide, just before the final session. However, because the material isn't tied to the overall narrative, it can be done anywhere in the schedule. It works particularly well in an afternoon slot because most of the time is spent in small working groups.*

This session's purpose is to train participants to engage with the Bible another way: by looking at a topic that appears in several parts of the Scripture. This training experience can be done with many different topics (money, work, rest, etc.). In the Participant Guide, materials are provided for looking at the Old Testament perspective on sexuality, a topic students are keenly interested in. If you choose to use a different topic, create a separate handout that lists the relevant passages using the same format used in the Guide. Comment briefly about why you have picked the new topic, but also encourage the participants to do their own studies of some of the sexuality subtopics in the months to come. Whatever topic you choose for the training experience, do some outside reading on your own (e.g., IVP books or articles on the Collegiate Ministries website) to deepen your own understanding and aid in preparing a summary.

*Note: In a setting with a shorter schedule, this is one of the sessions that can be skipped. If you choose to do this, during the "Looking Back, Moving Forward" session, point out the template and reference sheet so that those who wish can work with it on their own later.*

## PREPARATION

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- Decide how you will divide the group. If you choose to let people self-select the subtopic group they will join, make signs or table tents marked "Marriage," "Romance," etc., and set them up around the room.
- Assemble poster paper and markers for the small groups so that they can present their work.



## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 5 MINUTES: SELAH REFLECTION ON LAST SESSION

If it hasn't already been done, give the participants a few minutes to fill out the Selah reflection sheet from the previous session. Alternately, have table groups identify the big idea from the previous session. Or, check in with the group's experience by asking, "How has your perspective on the Old Testament changed this week?"

### 5 MINUTES: INTRODUCTION TO SESSION

- In this experience we have been engaging with the biblical narrative in a variety of ways: reading and listening, manuscript study, and character studies. Today I'd like to teach you another way of interacting with the Old Testament: topical study. Topical studies help us synthesize the Bible's perspective on a given topic. Following a topic throughout the Scripture is important in developing a biblical worldview. Doing topical study on a subject is the first step of developing theology. In *Origins* you have been learning to do biblical studies; this session will help you begin to do theological studies.
- This kind of study can be done with almost any topic. We'll learn to use it on the topic of sexuality, since sexuality is such a significant part of our human experience and there is so much confusion around the topic in our culture. We'll take this opportunity to ask, "What is the perspective on sexuality that Jesus would have had, based on his reading of the Old Testament?"
- Sexuality is such a large topic that I have broken it down into five subtopics: marriage, romance, divorce, polygamy, and homosexuality. In a few minutes I will give you the opportunity to pick which one you want to work on.
- Turn to the "Topical Study" worksheet (page 104). This is a process you can use over and over again on any topic you are curious about. When you get into smaller groups to work, here are the steps you will take.
  - First, think about your motive for studying this topic. Are you curious because it is a topic that is discussed a lot on campus? Are you bothered by what you've heard Christians say about this topic? Are you looking for personal guidance in this area of life? Being honest about your motivation will help you engage with more awareness and integrity.



- Then brainstorm your initial questions. This will help get your mental juices flowing and might make you more alert to various elements as you read the passages. As always, it is great to study in community because other people ask questions you might not have considered.
- I am providing for you a list of relevant Scriptures about this topic. I've tried to be thorough, but the Old Testament is big and I'm no expert on this topic, so it is possible you will find some references I have missed. If so, add them to your sheet. As with any other Scripture references, make sure to note the context.

- Notice that the references are arranged by types of biblical material: Creation, Fall, Law, Narrative, Prophets, and Wisdom Literature. These are divided like this because there are different rules for how we regard and combine what those sections show about the topic.

- **Creation**

Always start by looking at God's original intention for this area of life. Using Genesis 1 and 2, try to describe in as much detail as you can what shalom would look like in this area.

- **Fall**

Knowing how the Fall has impacted this area of life is critical for interpreting what you see in the rest of the Old Testament. Just because Old Testament characters act a certain way, it doesn't mean it is good and right. They may just be demonstrating the reality of broken shalom.

- **Laws and commandments**

Take a look at what the Old Testament law specifically requires or prohibits. Now think about what those laws show about God's values. How would obeying those laws have made Israel different from the surrounding nations?

- **Narrative**

When you find Old Testament characters engaging in this area, are they depicted in a positive or negative light? How would the original readers have assessed the actions of the characters in light of the biblical laws?

- **Prophetic books**

Is the topic used by the prophets in warnings, promises, or both? Are they addressing it directly, or using it as an image? What are the values reflected in their statements?



- **Wisdom Literature**

We haven't talked much about this part of the Bible. Wisdom Literature is non-narrative based material that deals with the thoughts, emotions, perspectives, and musings of the Israelites. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon make up the Wisdom Literature. In the "Digging Deeper" section on page 115 of your guide, there are materials to help you explore the Wisdom Literature on your own. For topical study, it's important to know that the statements and emotions about life in Wisdom Literature aren't necessarily God's perspective. A theology about any topic can't be built primarily on Wisdom Literature. You want to ask, "Does what's presented here resonate with other parts of Scripture?"

- Once you have read and taken notes on all the pertinent references, you should begin the process of synthesis. In your groups discuss: What primary values can be gleaned? How does God intend to limit the impact of sin? How does the biblical perspective on this topic safeguard the vulnerable? These questions will help you grapple with how God's intention in creation and the reality of the Fall impact how we understand the rest of the Old Testament material on this topic. Reading about the topic in a Bible Dictionary is helpful at the synthesis stage.

## **70 MINUTES: SMALL GROUP STUDY**

Have the group divide themselves up. If there is a lot of interest in a particular subtopic, assign the subtopic to two small groups. As the groups work, float between them, listening in and offering help and guidance. Ask questions that might help them to think deeper, but don't do the synthesis work for them. Ask the Romance group to consider why the Song of Solomon is included in the Bible. (They may need a reminder to deal with it on its own terms, as an erotic love poem, rather than allegorize it as the relationship between Christ and the Church. Jewish readers don't understand it as an allegory.) When there is 10 minutes left, hand each group a piece of poster paper and markers. Ask them to summarize their findings to share with the rest of the group.



## 20 MINUTES: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Invite each small group to hang their poster and share with the whole group what they learned. Encourage participants to ask questions of each other. At the end, weave the subtopics together by giving a short (two-to-three-minute) summary of the topic. The goal is not to win every participant over to a particular view but to give people tools for grappling with Scripture.

*Note: You do not need to be an expert in this topic, but you should have done the topical studies yourself ahead of time and should be able to tie together how God's goodness is manifested in his restrictions or parameters on this topic.*

*If there is time, give the group a few minutes to read the article "Sex in Leviticus." It is a good model of integrating specific laws with the rest of the Scripture.*

## 10 MINUTES: PERSONAL APPLICATION

Ask the group questions such as, "How is what we've learned today different than what you have thought about this topic? How does it change your view of God or the Bible? How can you bring this area of life more in line with God's will, trusting in his goodness and the goodness of his commands?" These questions can be reflected on personally or discussed in pairs or triads. In closing, reiterate that this template can be used to study any topic.

*Note: If the discussion is particularly volatile or emotional for some participants, make sure to follow up with them outside the session.*

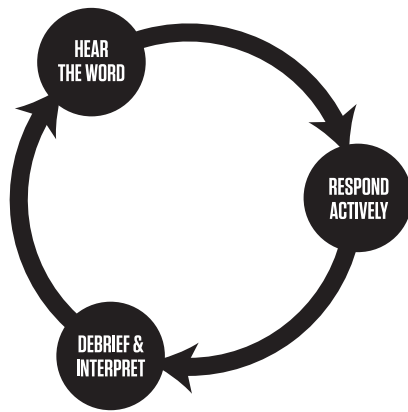


# LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

## LEADER NOTES



This final session is important in stepping back to see the big picture, synthesizing the themes, and promoting ongoing learning.



The invitation to come to camp and take *Origins* was how your students heard the Word. Participating in the *Origins* experience has been their active response. This session is designed to help them debrief and interpret. Participants should leave from *Origins* with concrete plans for hearing more of God’s Word by continuing to read and study the Old Testament for themselves.

## PREPARATION

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- Hang four poster sheets in the room. Label them “God,” “Humanity,” “The Problem,” and “The Solution.”
- If using PowerPoint for Mark 1:1-15 or Matthew 1:1-17, make sure slide is ready to display.
- Communicate with the worship leader about the opening song and final worship set.
- If prayer ministers are available, invite them to come to the closing worship.

## 2-HOUR SESSION OUTLINED WITH HELPS

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### 5 MINUTES: OPENING

A lively worship song is a good way to gather and focus the group. We recommend you cover any departure announcements at the beginning to avoid breaking the mood of the final worship and commissioning.

OR



If you have been reading from *The Year of Living Biblically*, people might enjoy a final reading about how A. J. was impacted by submerging himself in biblical living. The story of his sons' circumcision works well (pages 316-321). Consider shortening the reading by skipping paragraphs while still maintaining the overall story. Project images of A.J. Jacobs with robe and beard (found on Google Images) if you like.

## 5 MINUTES: DEPARTURE ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 10 MINUTES: SETTING UP THE SEQUEL

Explain to participants that this journey helps us read the New Testament. The cliffhanger ending of the Old Testament is like watching “Avengers: Infinity War” (or another pop culture reference where the audience and characters are left waiting and longing). That posture and attitude of waiting and longing for restoration and deliverance prepares us for the New Testament.

Show a slide of the first 15 verses of Mark 1 and/or the first 17 verses of Matthew, helping connect participants to the earthshaking story that culminates in the Gospels. Remind them that the Jewish people waited for 400 years from the end of Malachi to the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

## 45 MINUTES: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

This is like an inductive study of the entire experience.

### 5 MINUTES

Select 10 participants to stand cross the front of the room with their participants guides. In order, have them display the artwork at the beginning of each chapter, starting with Creation. Invite a participant to retell the story of Israel's history using the 10 images from Creation to Promise of Restoration. By now, they should be able to see the big picture and understand how it fits together. Comment on how the Old Testament story leaves us hanging, waiting for the sequel. Their reading of the New Testament will be enriched now that they have the context for it.

### 10 MINUTES

Individual reflection. Encourage them to use the Selah sheets from each section to fill out the “Theological Reflection” worksheet on page 111 of their guide. The “Reviewing the Journey” page next to it provides a quick reminder of the main activities in each session. Comment that theology is reflection on who God is. Growing theologically is important for followers of Jesus, in part because how you act and feel is determined by how you think.



## 10 MINUTES

Large group sharing. Go through each topic in turn, asking participants to share what they learned (and where they saw it). Take notes of their sharing on large poster paper but don't feel the need to capture every last word. Only comment as is needed.

## 10 MINUTES

Small group summary statements. Have the participants break into groups of three or four. Ask them to write the core message of the Old Testament in three sentences or less. The core message is more than a summary of the plot; it provides an interpretation of the meaning of the grand narrative. (As the group prepares their summary statements, prepare your own. Try to use key phrases that have resonated with the group during the week.)

## 10 MINUTES

Large group summary. Have the groups each share their summaries. Take notes as the groups share their theological summaries. Listen and discern what core message the Holy Spirit wants you to drive home for this community. Take the time you need to preach the crux of the Old Testament message as it applies to this community of participants.

## 25 MINUTES: PERSONAL REFLECTION & READING PLAN

Before sending the participants into individual time, acknowledge that there is so much more to learn and experience in the Old Testament than what you all have been able to cover. In the final section of the Guide, "Digging Deeper," there are exercises on engaging with the Wisdom Literature. As they make plans for continuing their exploration of the Old Testament, they may want to consider using some of that material, as well as going back to some of the places they noted for themselves on the bottom of their Selah sheets. "Digging Deeper" also has book recommendations and URLs for online resources. (Highlight a few, e.g., *The Story of God*, *The Story of Us* by Sean Gladding and The Bible Project videos. You might also recommend *The King Jesus Gospel* by Scot McKnight or *How God Became King* by NT Wright.)

Instruct the participants to take 25 minutes alone to work through the personal reflection sheet and tool for creating a personalized reading plan. Explain to them that the more specific they get, the more lasting the impact of this journey will be on their lives.

## 15 MINUTES: SHARING IN SMALL GROUPS

Send them back into the groups they worked with on their theological reflection summary to share their reflections and commitments.





## 15 MINUTES: WORSHIP & COMMISSIONING

Songs of surrender and commitment are appropriate here. Have the prayer ministers stand on the edges of the room and invite the participants to get prayer at any point. To close, read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 over the group and then pronounce words of commission that resonate with your theological summary. For example, “Go onto campus as dearly loved mud-creatures, dwelling with God and calling the campus to love God and worship him alone.”

