

10 LESSONS BY MARSHALL McDANIEL

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

כִּם וְנָתַתִּי מִטֶּר אֶרֶץ
דָּגָן וְתִירֹשׁ וְיִצְהָר
וְאֶכְלֵת וְשִׁבְעַת הַשָּׁמַיִם
סָרְתֶם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְהֵאדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת
אֶרֶץ הַטֶּבֶל אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה
עָלָה לְבַזְכֶּם וְעַל נַפְשֵׁיכֶם



JESUS IS THE PROMISED SEED OF ABRAHAM

■ PRIMARY TEXT

Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.... Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (Galatians 3:6–9, 16 NASB)

■ PREVIEW

Perhaps one of the most significant promises in the Bible is the promise(s) that God made to Abraham, specifically the promise of a coming descendent of Abraham who would bless all nations. This study will focus on passages dealing with the promises of God to Abraham—specifically the so-called Seed Promise, the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and the significance of the promise for Christians.



■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What promises did God make to Abraham? (Genesis 12:1–3) How many families (nations) would be blessed through Abraham and his seed (descendent)? (Genesis 12:3; 18:8; 22:18)

Abraham had many sons, the first two being Ishmael and Isaac.

2. Which of Abraham's sons had the promises extended to him by God? (Genesis 26:1, 4) Which of Abraham's grandsons? (Genesis 28:10–14)

3. What was being preached to Abraham by the phrase, "All the nations will be blessed in you"? (Galatians 3:8) (Be ready to discuss why this is significant.)

4. When did God initially fulfill the nation and land promises? (Genesis 46:3; Deuteronomy 26:5; Joshua 21:43–45)

5. Who ultimately fulfills the so-called Seed Promise? (Galatians 3:16) Who claims to be the Christ (Messiah), and what does "Christ" mean? (John 4:25–26; see Matthew 1:1–16)

The promise that all families (nations) would be blessed through Abraham's seed is applied to the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles (see Galatians 3:8) and further to people of every race, class, and gender (see 3:28; Romans 4:16–17).

6. What is first required of people to become sons of Abraham and God? (Galatians 3:7, 22, 26)

7. Those who are Abraham's (and God's) descendants are heirs of what? (Galatians 3:29)

8. How does Jesus fulfill the Seed Promise? (Acts 3:25–26) To accomplish this, what did the Christ have to do? (Acts 3:18) What is required of those who would be blessed by him? (Acts 3:19)

9. At what point are believers put into Christ to become sons of Abraham (and God) and to be blessed by Jesus? (Galatians 3:27; see vv. 26, 29; Acts 2:38)

■ REVIEW

It should be obvious that the promises made to Abraham are central to God's eternal plan. The Old Testament story focuses on preparing for the New Testament fulfillment of the Seed Promise in Jesus the Messiah. It is by faith in Jesus that all people are blessed with the forgiveness of sins. The promise is received not by law but by grace. If we believe and are baptized, we will be saved, adopted by God, and made heirs of the promise (see Galatians 3:1–29).

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

Since everyone becomes "one in Christ Jesus," there is no room for exalting ourselves and disdain others (see Galatians 3:26–29; 1 Corinthians 12:12–26). Before the next class, then, complete one of the following assignments:

1. Make an opportunity to invite someone "not like you"—possibly a person of another race, gender, or class—to the assemblies or to a personal Bible study. (If you need assistance with an in-home study, contact any of the elders, teachers, or preachers.)
2. Find a way to encourage another member—preferably someone with whom you are not well-acquainted and who is "not like you." Let them know that you appreciate them and the work they do for the Lord. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways (e.g., visit, card, e-mail).

■ PRIMARY TEXT

Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, “On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household.... Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.... Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD’s Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:3, 5–7, 11–13 NASB)

**■ PREVIEW**

The deliverance from Egypt is a pivotal event in the history of Israel. God sent ten plagues on Egypt, the last (the killing the firstborns) being the most severe. It was during the night of that final plague that an important Jewish memorial, the Passover, finds its origin. This lesson examines the first Passover, follows it through history as an annual memorial for the Israelites, and then recognizes its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, our Passover.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Following the final plague, what did the Lord promise Moses the Egyptians would do? (Exodus 11:1, 8) What was God going to do in the land of Egypt? (vv. 4–5)

2. Though there would be great mourning in Egypt, the Lord said the Israelites would be free from any harm (see vv. 6–7). Why is this? (v. 7)

When the Passover was first instituted, the people were still in the land of Egypt (see Exodus 12:1). This marked the beginning of Israel’s national calendar, and on the tenth of the first month, the Israelites were to take a lamb for each household or, depending on the size of the family, for each “community” of appropriate size (see vv. 2–4).

3. What was to be the quality, gender, age, and species of the lamb? (Exodus 12:5) Four days later, what was the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel to do with the lambs? (v. 6) Then what? (vv. 7–10)

4. In what manner were the people to eat the Passover (Exodus 12:11) Why? (v. 12)

5. What would the blood of the lamb be for the Israelites? (Exodus 12:13, 22) What would the Lord do when he saw the blood? (v. 23)

Closely connected with the Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread (see Exodus 12:14–20). Both feasts commemorated the Exodus of the people from Egypt. All Israelites were expected to keep these memorials.

6. What consequences were to come to those who refused to observe Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread? (Numbers 9:13; Exodus 12:15, 19)

7. What were the Israelites to tell their children as they kept the Passover? (Exodus 12:26–27) Describe what happened when the sons of Israel observed the first Passover (vv. 28–41).

Even at the institution of the Passover, God indicated his desire for his people and their descendants to observe the feast in the Promised Land (see Exodus 12:24–25). Thus, following the Exodus, Israel began observing the Passover as an annual feast, just as the Lord had commanded.

8. Where did they keep the second Passover? (Numbers 9:1–5)

At the second Passover, there were some who were unclean and could not observe it (see Numbers 9:6).

9. What did the unclean request of Moses, and, after inquiring of the Lord, what did Moses permit them to do? (Numbers 9:7–12)

This concession was not meant to be abused by those who simply refused to keep the Passover on the appointed day, see Numbers 9:13–14. The consequences for disobedience remained unchanged from earlier revelation.

(For additional study, the following passages record instances of the Passover being observed throughout Israel's history: Joshua 5:10–12; 1 Kings 9:25; 2 Chronicles 8:12–13; Isaiah 1:10–15; 30:29; 2 Chronicles 30:1–27; 2 Kings 23:21–23; 2 Chronicles 35:1–19; Ezekiel 45:21–24; Ezra 6:19–22.)

Probably due to the influence of Ezra, along with his contemporaries Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Passover was observed regularly by Jews in the first century (see John 2:13–25; 11:55).

10. As an example of first century Jewish faithfulness to keep the Passover, how often did Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, do so? (Luke 2:41)

(Likewise, it appears that Jesus kept the Feast annually throughout his earthly life.)

11. What New Covenant memorial was instituted by Jesus in connection with the Passover? (Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:1–23; John 13:1–14:31)
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Jesus was crucified (sacrificed) during the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (see Matthew 26:2; John 18:28)

12. In fulfillment of the Old Testament type, what is Jesus to Christians? (1 Corinthians 5:7; see 1 Peter 1:17–19)
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(For an interesting parallel between the Passover lamb and Jesus, compare Exodus 12:46 with John 19:36.)

■ REVIEW

The Passover originated during the Exodus, when God supernaturally delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. As a perpetual memorial, the feast reminded them and their descendants of the Lord's grace and mercy toward them and of his judgments on those who oppress his people. Though it was probably not readily understood in the Mosaic Age, the Passover was actually a type of the one who was to come, Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God that Jesus is our Passover, he having willingly become the lamb of God and shedding his blood so that God would pass over our sins!

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

The next time we observe the Lord's Supper, think carefully about the connections between the Old and New Covenant memorials, the Passover and the Lord's Supper. Specifically, consider that Jesus is our Passover (lamb), that he fulfilled the old memorial, and that now we remember him (see 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

■ PRIMARY TEXT

Now it came about on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without defect, and offer them before the LORD. Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both one year old, without defect, for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you.'" So they took what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the whole congregation came near and stood before the LORD. Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you." Moses then said to Aaron, "Come near to the altar and offer you sin offering and your burnt offering, that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people; then make the offering for the people, that you may make atonement for them, just as the LORD has commanded." (Leviticus 9:1–7 NASB)

**■ PREVIEW**

The word "mediator" comes from the Latin for "middle" and is used throughout English translations of the Bible, though more frequently in the New Testament than the Old. Mediators in the Bible interceded in human-human and divine-human relationships. In reference to the connection between God and mankind, the holiness of God and the sinfulness of people requires a mediator. God, therefore, used a variety of messengers—angels, wisdom, and people. Regarding the last of these (people), prophets (see Deuteronomy 18:15–19) and kings (see Psalm 72:1–4) have served as mediators, but the most obvious examples are priests. This lesson will focus on this final group of mediators, with special emphasis on the Levitical (Aaronic) priesthood of the Old Covenant, the inadequacy of this order of priests, and the perfection of the priesthood of Christ (and of Christians).

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The English word "priest" comes from the Old English term "proest," meaning "presbyter" or "elder." This special class of people in the Old and New Testaments were the officiators of religious rites, primarily of sacrifices.

1. Who is the first recorded priest in the Bible? (Genesis 14:18) For whom did he serve in this position? (Though other priests are mentioned in the latter part of Genesis, these did not serve the Lord, see 41:25; 47:22.)

With the exception of Moses' father-in-law Jethro (see Exodus 3:1; 18:1), much of the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) focuses on the priesthood of Israel.

2. There is a sense in which the entire nation of Israel was a priesthood (see Exodus 19:6), but the official order came from which tribe? (Hebrews 7:5) Whose family? (Numbers 3:10; see Exodus 28:1) What would these men do for themselves and the people? (Leviticus 9:7; see Exodus 28:30; Deuteronomy 10:8–9)

3. Though there may be several reasons why the Aaronic priesthood was found to be inadequate, why, according to the New Testament, was a "new" order of priest needed? (Hebrews 7:11, 18–19, 23, 27–28; 8:4–5; 9:6–10, 25; 10:1–4, 11)

One of the main themes of Hebrews is that the priestly order of Melchizedek is better than that of Levi (Aaron).

4. What do we know about Melchizedek, and why is his priesthood better? (Genesis 14:18–20; Hebrews 7:1–10)

5. Who came and replaced the Levitical priesthood with a new, Melchizedekian priesthood? (Hebrews 5:5–6, 10; see Psalm 110) Why is he a better priest than all others before him? (see Hebrews 4:14–10:25)

6. Having been sanctified by the blood of Christ, what have we (Christians) become, and what do we offer? (1 Peter 2:4–10; see 1:13–25)

■ REVIEW

The priests of the Old Covenant were the intermediaries between God and Israel. Not only did they—along with the Levites—teach the people, serving as spokesmen for the Lord but they also made atonement for themselves and for the nation when they offered the prescribed sacrifices. The priests, thus, made access to the holy God possible. They were a holy priesthood working in a holy place to create a holy people. This group of men prefigured the perfect mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ (see 1 Timothy 2:5–6). Jesus is of a superior order of priesthood. And, like our high priest, we (Christians) also serve as priests offering up spiritual sacrifices.

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

As priests, we offer up spiritual sacrifices, which are pleasing to the Lord. While there are a variety of sacrifices we offer (see Romans 12:1–2), God loves “the fruit of lips” (Hebrews 13:15). This phrase may incorporate several ideas, but singing is, no doubt, one of them (see Ephesians 5:19). Before the next class, try to sing at least one hymn each day. Then, the next time the church gathers together, enthusiastically sing with your fellow priests.

■ PRIMARY TEXT

“This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father’s place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.” And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so he did. (Leviticus 16:29–34 NASB)

■ PREVIEW

The concept of blood sacrifices (and burnt offerings) did not originate in the mind of man but of God (see Genesis 3:21; Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17). Throughout the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages, these were continually offered. The word “atonement” is often connected with sacrifice and offering, but too often this term seems to be misunderstood (or even abused). This lesson will examine the Old Testament portrait of atonement, the New Testament application of it, and its necessity for righteousness.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Using an English dictionary, define “atonement.”

- According to the Law, what makes atonement? (Leviticus 17:11)

- Read the following passages: Leviticus 16:1–34; 23:26–32; Numbers 29:7–11. Summarize what occurred on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and how it was connected to the concept of atonement.

- How often did the high priest make atonement for the people? (Exodus 30:10) What did he do with the sacrificial blood, and for what reason? (Leviticus 16:14–15) Who was at the mercy seat? (v. 2)



The Hebrew word "kapporeth," typically translated "mercy seat," means "place of atonement" and comes from the root "kaphar" that means "to cover," "to expiate," or "to make atonement."

5. What do you think is means that sin is covered? (see Psalm 32:1–2; 85:2; Romans 4:7–8)

6. After making atonement, what did the high priest present? (Leviticus 16:20–22) Why? What would the high priest then do? (vv. 23–25)

In the New Testament, the Greek word "hilasmos," translated "atonement," is defined as "an atoning sacrifice" or "propitiation." A similar term "hilasterion" means "atonement cover" or "sacrifice of atonement" and is used almost exclusively in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) to translate the Hebrew word for "mercy seat." (These definitions are important below.)

In Luke 18:13, the verb form of "propitiation" (Greek "hilaskomai") is used. It is variously translated as "be merciful," "be reconciled," "turn your wrath," etc.

7. What did the tax collector in Luke 18:13 realize about himself that led him to request propitiation?

8. What justifies sinners? (Romans 3:24) What did Jesus become when he was presented by God, and what did this demonstrate? (v. 25) Because of Jesus's sacrifice, God remains what and is able to do what for sinners? (v. 26)

9. Jesus was made like his brethren so that he could become what? (Hebrews 2:17) As such, what can Jesus do for his people?

10. As Christians, what do we have with the Father? (1 John 2:1) Who is this? Regarding sins, what is Jesus? (v. 2) For whom? Since God sent his son to be the propitiation, what does this say about the character of God? (4:10)

The Greek word for "propitiation" is rendered "mercy seat" in Hebrews 9:5. The mercy seat was merely a symbol of what Jesus did when he came to the world.

11. Read Hebrews 9:23–26. Compare the Old Testament Day of Atonement with the true Day of Atonement fulfilled in Christ.

12. What are the wages of sin? (Romans 6:23) What is the punishment for sins that reach into eternity? (Revelation 21:8; see Mark 3:29) What words are used to describe the Lord's judgments? (see 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9; Revelation 16:7)
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13. Did Jesus know sin? (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22–24) Did Jesus ever become a sinner? What did he bear in his body? What did Jesus become for us? Why? Where did he accomplish this work?
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14. For whom did Jesus die? (Romans 5:6–8) In view of what was being accomplished for sinners, what was the Lord pleased to do? (Isaiah 53:5–6, 10–12)
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The word "ransom" carries the idea of exchange.

15. What did Jesus give as a ransom for many/all? (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6) What was exchanged in the offering of Jesus?
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■ REVIEW

Like the Old Testament sacrifices, the innocent (Jesus) was put to death for the sins of the guilty, his life given for ours. In this way, we can be declared righteous and saved from divine wrath by Jesus's blood. The Lord lived a perfectly sinless life, and his sacrifice satisfies the justice of God, appeasing his wrath against us (sinners). Jesus died for us; he gave his life-blood so that we can live; and, by his resurrection from the dead and his ascension to heaven, he ever stands as our advocate, interceding for us before the face of the Father. The question we must ask ourselves is this: Are we washed in the blood of the Lamb?

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

The following assignment is optional (and can be adapted from what is suggested). If you choose, diagram the Old Testament Day of Atonement ceremony on half a sheet of paper, and on the other half show its spiritual fulfillment in Christ. Meditate on this the next time you prepare for the Lord's Supper.

■ PRIMARY TEXT

You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. (Leviticus 25:8–10 NASB)

■ PREVIEW

The English word "jubilee" often connotes "celebration" or "festival." "Jubilee" is a transliteration of the Hebrew "yowbel," but the latter does not denote this English definition. "Yowbel" literally means "ram's horn" and carries the idea of the "blasting of a trumpet." The Old Testament event was so named, as will be further discussed below, because of the action at its commencement—the sounding of a ram's horn (see Leviticus 25:9). The following lesson will examine the instructions given to the Israelites, subsequent references to "the year of liberty" in the Old Testament, and the fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

**■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

The key word associated with the year of Jubilee is "release" or "liberty" (Hebrew "darowr"). It literally means "release," "flow," or "freedom." This adequately summarizes the events of Jubilee—rest for the land, redemption of the land, and release of indentured servants.

1. How often was the land to be given a sabbath rest? (Leviticus 25:2–4) What were the people not to do? What were they to eat? (vv. 5–7)

2. One the seventh of the sabbath rests, what were the people to sound? (Leviticus 25:8–9) On what day? What were they to proclaim? (v. 10) What would this be for them?

This year would be like the septennial sabbatical years in that the people were not to sow, reap, or gather (see Leviticus 25:11–12, 18–22).

3. If the Israelites observed these statutes, would they go hungry? (Leviticus 25:18–19) Why, or why not? (vv. 20–22)

4. During the year of liberty, the people were to redeem what? (Leviticus 25:10, 24) Why were they not allowed to sell their property permanently? (v. 23)

5. Read Leviticus 25:23–34. Summarize what happened to sold property (land) in the year of Jubilee.

Jubilee was a time of release for servants (see Leviticus 25:10). Foreseeing that in the Promised Land there might be poor individuals who would indenture themselves to other Israelites, God forbade permanent slavery and made provision for their release.

6. Servants had to be released because the sons of Israel already belonged to whom? (Leviticus 25:42–43, 55) Read Leviticus 25:35–55. Describe what happened to tenants and slaves at Jubilee.

(For further study of the sabbatical years, read Leviticus 26–27.)

Apart from the instructions given in Leviticus, the word “release” or “liberty” (Heb. “darowr”) is used in three Old Testament passages seemingly in reference to the Jubilee (Isaiah 61:1; Jeremiah 34:8, 15, 17; Ezekiel 46:17). (These passages will be examined in order of relevance.)

The word “release” or “liberty” (Heb. “darowr”) occurs four times in the prophecy of Jeremiah, and while it does match well the concepts in Leviticus 25, it does not contribute much to our understanding of the year of liberty. (It is interesting that the final use of the word in this passage is symbolic; since Zedekiah failed to release servants, God determined to release punishment on him.)

There is more of a connection to the year of Jubilee in Ezekiel. In a highly Messianic context, the prophet envisions an idealized temple and kingdom in which the Prince would provide gifts to his servants.

7. When would the Prince’s gifts return to him? (Ezekiel 46:17)

The final passage that uses the word “release” or “liberty” (Heb. “darowr”) is in Isaiah. Again, this is an obviously Messianic passage.

8. What (or who) would be on the Anointed? (Isaiah 61:1) What would the Anointed bring and proclaim? (vv. 1–2)

(That this is a reference to Jubilee is apparent from the use of the word “liberty” and of the phrase “the favorable year of the LORD.”)

The connection between Christ and Jubilee is understood by Jesus's quotation and application of the passage from Isaiah (see Luke 4:18–19; Isaiah 61:1–2; 58:6).

9. When Jesus returned from the wilderness, he came to Galilee in the whose power? (Luke 4:14) Where did he begin teaching? (v. 15) Jesus read from Isaiah specifically and said what concerning the passage? (v. 21; see vv. 16–20)

Though there was obviously literal and immediate fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in the miraculous work of Jesus, it seems to find its ultimate fulfillment later.

10. What, in all probability, does the year of liberty illustrate from the Messianic Age? (see Romans 6:16–18; 1 Peter 2:16; Revelation 1:4–6)

■ REVIEW

The Old Testament year of liberty (Jubilee), especially when viewed in connection with the Day of Atonement, prefigures the atonement and spiritual release provided by Jesus Christ. Those taken captive by sin find true freedom only through the blood of the Lord. The favorable year of the Lord is, thus, the Messianic Age, and it will be consummated in eternity, when God's people experience liberty from all enemies in heaven.

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

Make a list of entanglements that have caused you to be held captive to Satan. Then, ask God to forgive (release) you from these things, and then make a commitment to meditate on Scripture—because God and his truth set us free (see John 8:32, 36).

■ PRIMARY TEXT

All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."... The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they." But Moses said to the LORD,... "Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." So the LORD said, "I have pardoned them according to your word; but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea." (Numbers 14:2-4, 11-13, 19-25 NASB)

**■ PREVIEW**

There are few direct references to Jesus in the Old Testament, though it is evident from the New Testament that he was with the Father in eternity past, that he played a major part in the creation of the world, and that he existed throughout the time before his incarnation (see John 1:1-3). Jesus's person was hidden, however, until he came in the flesh (see v. 14). Yet, with the completed message of the New Testament, it is easier to see his influence and involvement in the events of the Old Testament. This lesson will examine the providence of Jesus for the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness. We will highlight the pessimism of the nation of Israel, the punishment of the nation, and the providence of Jesus.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the reasons Israel complained against God? (see Exodus 5:21; 14:10-12; 15:23-24; 16:2-3; 17:1-3; Numbers 11:1, 4-6; 13:31-14:3, 36-40; 16:1-3, 12-14, 31-35, 41; 20:2-5; 21:4-5; Deuteronomy 1:26-28)

2. What does the word “complain” mean? Is it possible to “complain” and not sin? (see Job 1:22; Psalm 142:2; 1 Peter 5:6–7) Explain. What is the difference between accepted “complaints” and what the Israelites were doing in the wilderness?

3. What can we (Christians) learn from the wicked complaining of the Jewish nation? (1 Corinthians 10:9–10) What can we do to avoid the sin of grumbling?

God refused a generation of Israelites entrance to the Promised Land because of their unbelief (and subsequent murmuring). The Lord had instructed Moses to send spies from each of the tribes of Israel to examine the land, yet the majority returned with a negative report.

4. How many of the spies (tribal leaders) thought conquest was impossible? (Numbers 13:31–33) How many believed that with the Lord’s help the land was theirs? What are the names of those in the latter group? (see Numbers 14:30) How did the congregation respond to these reports? (Numbers 14:1–10)

5. How did the Lord respond to the congregation’s rebellion? (Numbers 14:11–38) What was the wicked generation’s punishment?

In the New Testament, after affirming that he had to discipline himself to avoid spiritual disqualification (see 1 Corinthians 9:24–27), Paul reminded the Corinthians of the Israelites and their failures recorded in Exodus and Numbers (see 1 Corinthians 10:1–11).

6. Throughout their travels and wanderings, who, according to Paul, was actually providing for the Israelites? (1 Corinthians 10:3–4) What did he give them? Were the Israelites thankful? (v. 5; see Romans 1:21) In what ways did they spurn the providence of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:7–10)

7. Why have the tragic events of Numbers been preserved? (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11)

8. Should we (Christians) think we are better than the Israelites? (1 Corinthians 10:12–13) Why, or why not?

Learning from the example of the Israelites, we must take heed and endure temptation, fleeing from like sins (see 1 Corinthians 10:12–14).

■ REVIEW

The book of Numbers relates the tragic consequences of unbelief. We need to learn from the example of the Israelites and guard against hardness of heart. This is possible when we, unlike the wicked generation of Israel, acknowledge and appreciate the providence of Christ (see Ephesians 5:20; Hebrews 3:12–4:16).

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

This week, make a list of good things Jesus had done for you. This can include his spiritual and his physical providence. After taking inventory of these blessings, pray at least one prayer daily that does not make any requests, a prayer that only gives thanks. Take note of how this affects your communication and relationship with God.

■ PRIMARY TEXT

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, "Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die." The LORD said to me, "They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in His mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die." You may say in your heart, "How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:15–22 NASB)

**■ PREVIEW**

Though the descriptions of the coming prophet, mentioned in Deuteronomy, are few are far between in the Old Testament, the promise of one like Moses was significant to the Jewish people. This concept was integral to the Messianic hope and should not be ignored in the study of God's plan for the redemption of man. This lesson will examine the biblical definition of the word "prophet," Moses's description of the prophet, the fulfillment in Christ, and the authority of Jesus the prophet.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The word "prophet" literally means "spokesmen" or "speaker" but implies inspiration—a messenger whose message is God-breathed.

1. Read the following passages: Exodus 4:16; 7:1. Provide a working definition of a prophet (see also Matthew 1:22; Luke 1:70).

2. Who was guiding prophets when they spoke or wrote? (2 Peter 1:20–21; see Acts 28:25; 1 Corinthians 2:10–13; Ephesians 3:3–5)

3. Concerning the prophet described by Moses, for whom would the Lord raise him up? (Deuteronomy 18:15) From whom (or where) would the prophet arise? (v. 18) Why? (v. 16) What would be required of the people? (v. 15; see v. 19) What would the prophet receive and speak? (v. 18)

4. In contrast to the prophet, false prophets would speak how (or what)? (Deuteronomy 18:20) What would be their end? How were the people to discern between the true prophet and the false? (vv. 21–22; see 13:1–5)
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Priests, kings, and prophets were anointed at their ordination. Jesus, then, as the Messiah (Christ, Anointed), fills all three offices. However, as it relates to this study, he is the messianic prophet predicted by Moses.

5. Did Jesus acknowledge himself as the prophet? (Luke 13:33; Matthew 13:57) Who else recognized him as the prophet—or, at least, realized that others viewed him as such? (John 4:19, 25–26; 6:14; 7:40; Matthew 21:11, 46)
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6. Read Acts 3:12–26. Whom does Peter quote in his sermon about Jesus? (vv. 22–23)
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God had promised to raise up a prophet, and he did so when he raised up Jesus his servant (see Acts 3:22, 26).

7. What had the Jewish people done to God's prophet, Jesus? (Acts 3:13–16) What did God do to Jesus? (v. 13) Why was Jesus raised up and sent? (v. 26)
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8. Since all people must listen to the prophet to be blessed (saved), what does this say about the authority of Jesus? (see Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:1–4) Whose message does Jesus proclaim? (see Hebrews 1:2; John 7:16; 14:24)
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9. Read the following passages: Mark 1:14–15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:18–19; see Mark 16:15–16; Matthew 28:18–20; Luke 24:44–49; Romans 1:16–17; 1 Corinthians 15:1–11. Be ready to discuss the essential message given by Jesus the prophet.
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10. What will happen to those who do not hear and obey Jesus? (see Acts 3:23; Matthew 7:21–23)
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■ REVIEW

Jesus is the prophet (mouth, spokesman) of God in these last days (see Hebrews 1:1–2). Anticipated by Jews and Samaritans, he reveals to mankind all things through his apostles and prophets by the Spirit (see John 4:25–26; 14:25–26; 16:12–15; Ephesians 3:3–5). We must listen to him lest we be destroyed. His message of truth bids us come to him for salvation, and only by learning and doing his will can we receive his grace and have hope of eternal life.

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

Moses was a type of Jesus. Think about (or you may even want to create a written list) how Moses compares and contrasts with Jesus.

■ PRIMARY TEXT

Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.... As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. (Isaiah 42:1–4; 53:10–12 NASB)

■ PREVIEW

The word “servant” (Hebrew “‘ebed”) is found forty times in Isaiah. Typically, it refers to one of three referents—the physical nation of Israel (see Isaiah 42:19), the faithful remnant (see 41:8), or the Messiah (see 42:1). For reasons that will become apparent later, the servant of God Isaiah 42:1–7 and 52:13–53:12 can only be the Messiah (Jesus). This study will begin with the prophecy of God’s chosen servant in Isaiah 42 and its fulfillment in the New Testament and will then turn to God’s suffering servant in Isaiah 53 and its fulfillment in the New Testament.

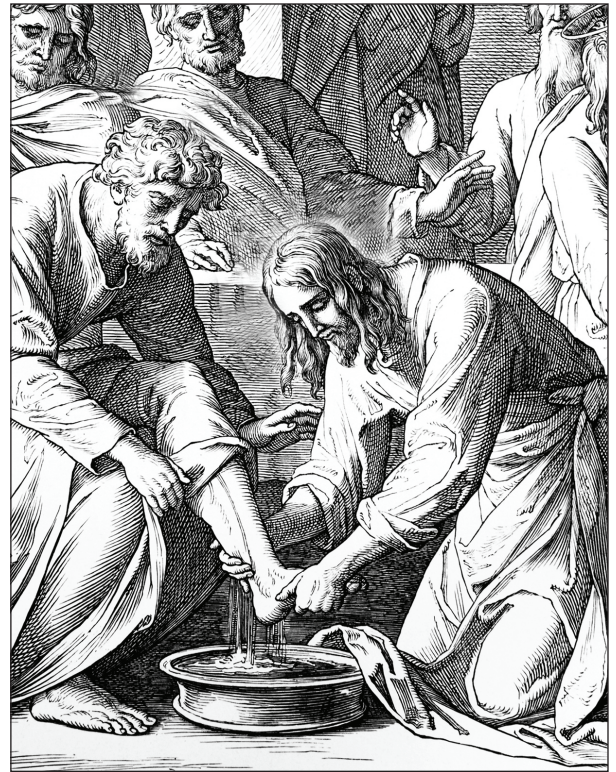
■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would God feel about his servant? (Isaiah 42:1) What (or who) would be put on God’s servant? What would the servant bring forth? To whom?

2. Describe the servant of God (vv. 2–3). (Be prepared to explain the metaphors.) What would be the servant’s purpose? (vv. 4, 6–7) Who guaranteed that the servant would be able to fulfill his mission? (vv. 5, 8–9)

This prophecy of Isaiah is directly applied to Jesus in the New Testament.

3. Compare and contrast the wording in the Old Testament with the translation-interpretation in the New Testament (Matthew 12:17–20). From the context, what are some of the specific ways in which Jesus fulfilled the role of the servant? (see 11:25–28; 12:1–16)



The theme of Isaiah's prophecy—especially Matthew's interpretation of it—is that the servant fully accomplished the will of God, triumphing over condemnation and providing victory for his people.

4. How has the Lord shown that he has been (and will be) victorious? (Please provide specific passages to substantiate your answer.) Since God has promised that we (Christians) too gain victory with Christ (see Romans 8:1, 31, 37; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 John 5:4; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), how should we respond?

5. Returning to Isaiah, what did the Lord want readers to behold? (Isaiah 52:13) Prior to his exaltation, what would happen to the servant? (v. 14) What would he do for the nations? (v. 15) How would kings respond, and why?

6. Why are the questions "Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" asked? (53:1) To what natural objects is the servant compared? (v. 2) Would the servant's appearance draw people to him? How would he be viewed or treated? (v. 3)

(For additional study, consider the significance of the Messiah being described as a tender shoot and a root, see Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 6:12; Romans 15:12; Revelation 5:5; 22:16.)

7. In the servant's humiliation, what would he bear and carry? (Isaiah 53:4) How would people respond? Why would the servant be pierced, crushed, chastened, and scourged? (v. 5) What have all of us done, and what would God do? (v. 6)

8. Though oppressed and afflicted, how would the servant respond? (v. 7) Why would the servant be taken away and cut off out of the land of the living? (v. 8) Where would the servant's grave be assigned? (v. 9) Yet, where would he be in death? Why?

9. What would the Lord be pleased to do to his servant? (v. 10) The servant would see his offspring (seed), have prolonged days, and experience the good pleasure of the Lord, if he did what?

10. The Lord would be satisfied as a result of what? (v. 11) What would God's servant, his righteous one, do for the many? (vv. 11–12) What would the Lord then do for his servant? (v. 12)

(For additional study, consider the significance of the Messiah being a guilt offering, especially in its Old Testament context.)

11. Read the following passages: Matthew 8:14–17; John 12:37–41; Luke 22:35–38; 1 Peter 2:19–25; Acts 8:26–35; Romans 10:11–21. In what ways does Jesus fulfill the role of the suffering servant of God?

■ REVIEW

Jesus, unlike physical Israel and even the faithful remnant, is the perfect servant of God. For this reason, he was chosen by God and commissioned to die for the sins of all people. Having modeled what it means to serve the Lord, we (Christians) ought to follow his example. We, however, will do so imperfectly, further necessitating the sacrifice of Jesus. Praise the Lord for his chosen, suffering servant, Jesus Christ!

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

Make a list of ways God has gifted you to serve him and others. Choose one item from your list and schedule a time this week when you will use it to serve.

■ PRIMARY TEXT

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "WHEN I WILL FULFILL THE GOOD WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN CONCERNING THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND THE HOUSE OF JUDAH. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." For thus says the LORD, "DAVID SHALL NEVER LACK A MAN TO SIT ON THE THRONE OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL; and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually." The word of the LORD CAME TO JEREMIAH, SAYING, "Thus says the LORD, 'If YOU CAN BREAK MY COVENANT FOR THE DAY AND MY COVENANT FOR THE NIGHT, SO THAT DAY AND NIGHT WILL NOT BE AT THEIR APPOINTED TIME, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'" (Jeremiah 33:14–22 NASB)

**■ PREVIEW**

Some Bibles supply the headings "Restoration Promised" and "The Davidic Kingdom" to Jeremiah 33. These summarize well the themes of Jeremiah's inspired message. Moreover, they blend together into a comforting, hope-filled promise for the faithful in the midst of wicked, tragic times. It may have even seemed to the Jews that, since Babylon had destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, the Davidic line and the Levitical priesthood had come to an end. Jeremiah assured them that God had not forgotten his previous promises. In this study, we will focus on the phrase "a righteous Branch of David" and its New Testament fulfillment and application.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of word did the Lord affirm he had given concerning Israel and Judah, and what was he going to do concerning that word? (Jeremiah 33:14)

2. What would God cause to spring forth? (v. 15)

Throughout the Old Testament, similar phrases to "a righteous Branch of David" are used. For instance, Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of "a shoot... from the stem of Jesse" and "a righteous Branch for David" (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5).

3. What is the significance of these phrases, and to whom do they ultimately apply? (see 2 Samuel 7:11–13; Zechariah 6:12; Ezekiel 37:24; Romans 15:12; Revelation 5:5; 22:16)

4. According to Jeremiah's prophecy, what would the Branch execute, and what does this mean? (Jeremiah 33:15; see Psalm 89:14; 97:2)

5. What would then happen for Judah and Jerusalem? (Jeremiah 33:16)

Jeremiah indicates that salvation for Judah and Jerusalem would be possible because the kingdom and the priesthood would be established (see Jeremiah 33:17–18).

6. What similarities are there between Jeremiah's prophecies and Psalm 110? (See also Zechariah 6:11–13) In whom do these passages find their fulfillment? (Substantiate your answer with Scripture.)

7. What covenant can mankind not break? (Jeremiah 33:20) Similarly, what other covenant could not be broken? (v. 21) Why? (see vv. 20–26)

8. What assurance(s) can we (Christians) find in these promises?

■ REVIEW

Even though it might have seemed like God had forgotten his promises to David (and Aaron), the Branch prophecies demonstrate that God had not forgotten and that he was secretly and providentially keeping his word. When Jesus came to this world, he united the offices of king and priest and now reigns and mediates for his people. Jesus is the Branch, and he deserves our love, trust, and obedience.

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

Paul applies a Branch prophecy to the universal rule of Jesus over Jews and Gentiles in the Messianic Age (see Romans 15:12; Isaiah 11:10). Since all Christians are under the rule of Jesus, Paul commands us to accept one another (see v. 7). If, then, there is something that another Christian does that bothers you but is not sinful, ask God to help you accept that person and then find a way to promote fellowship between you and that person (e.g., send a card or email, invite him or her to lunch).

■ PRIMARY TEXT

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31–34 NASB)

■ PREVIEW

This study will focus on passages dealing with the covenant made between God and the nation of Israel, examining its participants, contents and conditions, and seal. We will then compare this to the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31 and see how it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Hebrew word “berith,” means “covenant” or “treaty.” The term literally carries the idea of “cutting” an agreement and was often associated with the offering and eating of an animal. This concept was used to describe God’s relationship with his people.

1. With whom did the Lord first make covenants, and what did he promise the recipients? (Genesis 6:17–21; 9:8–17) With whom did God next make a covenant, and what was involved in this covenant? (15:1–21; 17:1–22)

These covenants seem to have been unconditional. In other words, God was going to keep these agreements regardless of the persons involved (see Galatians 3:20).

Similar to the examples above yet differing in its nature, the Lord made a covenant with the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel (see Exodus 24:1–18). This group was part of the unconditional promises made to their forefathers but additional requirements were placed on their continued possession of the land and existence as a nation. These conditions are often referred to as the Law or the Ten Commandments (see Galatians 3:17–18; Exodus 34:10–28).



2. Why and how was the Law added? (Galatians 3:19) What was the Lord trying to accomplish with the Law? (Romans 5:20–21; Galatians 3:19, 24; 1 Timothy 1:8–11)

3. When was Israel made aware of its condition before God, what would they become if they continued in the Law? (Exodus 19:3–6) What did the people say they would do regarding the covenant (Law)? (Exodus 19:8; 24:3, 7; see Joshua 24:22) Did the nation keep their word and follow God faithfully? (see Ezekiel 20:1–31; Acts 7:35–53)

As part of the conditions of the covenant (Law), God confirmed that he would reject the nation and remove it from the land if they people failed to follow him (see Deuteronomy 27–30).

4. In fulfillment of the curses in the Law, what did the Lord do to the nation when it turned away from him? (Ezra 9:5–8) Yet, what did he leave?

As part of the sealing of the covenants made between God and people, there was often the shedding of blood (see Genesis 8:20–9:17; 15:1–21). This was definitely the case in the covenanting of the Lord with Israel (see Exodus 24:3–11).

5. What was first offered as part of Israel's covenant with God? (Exodus 24:5) What did Moses do with the blood? (Exodus 24:6–8) What then did Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel do as part of the inauguration of the covenant? (Exodus 24:9–11)

6. Because Israel failed to abide by the covenant (Law), though they had bound by their word and blood, God promised to create what? (Jeremiah 31:31) Would this covenant be like the previous? (v. 32) How would it be different? (vv. 33–34)

7. To what is the promise of a new covenant referring? (Hebrews 8:6–13; 10:1–10) How was the new covenant sealed? (9:15–28; 13:20–21)

8. What is expected of participants of the new covenant? (Hebrews 2:1–4; 10:19–31)

■ REVIEW

Though the focal point of the Old Testament is the promise made to Abraham, the covenant between God and Israel is highly significant. The Law was the means by which the Lord purified a special, holy people for himself. For the most part, Israel failed to follow the covenant, yet a faithful remnant remained. From this remnant, God sent the Messiah to fulfill the promises made to Abraham. Shedding his own blood, Jesus established a new covenant with (spiritual) Israel—Jews and Gentiles—a covenant that provides forgiveness of sins. As Christians, we are participants in this better covenant that is built on better promises than the first. We must, therefore, be even more diligent than physical Israel to remain in the grace of God.

■ PERSONAL ASSIGNMENT

Even though the nature of the laws in the New Covenant differ from the Old, there is still much we can learn from the Old Testament (see Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1–11). Though reading the Law can be overwhelming, next time you read it, try studying it with a big-picture-perspective. Ask questions like, “What was God trying to get across to the people of Israel with these laws?” and “What is the general moral principle that can be gleaned from this reading?” and “How can I personally apply these Old Testament concepts to my life as a Christian?”