



Candlewood Church

Stepping into God's Story – Episode Four – Land and Kingdom

February 11, 2024

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BIG IDEA – God disciplines those He loves – Hebrews 12:5-8 NLT

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, “My child, don’t make light of the Lord’s discipline, and don’t give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.” As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

Have you ever had a friend or family member who just constantly, consistently let you down? One of the Proverbs (13:12) talks about the effects of hope being deferred, drawn out or delayed – it makes us heartsick! We even tell folks, “don’t get my hopes up!” Compare that to someone who just always seems to come through for you, they can be counted on and have proven themselves dependable. If you think about this, who are we more like when it comes to our walk with God. Are we the friend who lets him down? Or, are we the faithful friend to him?

This week by stepping into the Story of God we find that God is always that faithful, dependable friend and we become the inconsistent one. God even keeps His promises even when we break ours. We also find that **God doesn’t just let us continue on being unfaithful. At some point God loves us enough to correct us, “discipline” us as the Bible says.**

The quick review:

- **God created everything**, including us, in perfection. When Adam & Eve wanted to know evil by eating for the tree God told them not to – they broke stuff. Broke what we had with God, each other and the earth itself.
- **God promised a solution would come through a key family, Abraham** and his kin, eventually leading to Jesus. God even made a contract, a blood pact with Abraham, ensuring He’d keep His Word.
- **Abraham’s family grew into a nation, freaked out their**
- **Egyptian landlords, who forced them into slavery, God rescued them, gave them amazing rules to live by, but they rebelled and broke**

everyone of them. God set up a sacrifice system to remind them of the blood pact he made with Abraham and taught them that it is impossible to **tame our sin** through good works and that sin is deadly, devastating and a too heavy of a debt for us to bear.

- **This week**, we learn about **Land and Kingdom**, and find out that deep in our souls **we ache for our own plot of dirt, want to fit in with people around us, and try our hardest to do life our own way.**

GOD

Episode Four – Land and Kingdom

A clear pattern exists in this story:

1. God delivers on His promises.
2. God disciplines His people.
3. God decrees His purposes.

1. God delivers on His promises.

The long promise made to Abraham becomes a reality. [Over 600 years had passed before Joshua leads the nation into the promised land](#) – beginning with taking the city of Jericho.

God shows them the land, and Joshua will get them there. But there are people already living on it. **It's the massively fortified city of Jericho.**

God only had one requirement – and it was a doosie! God required that every male be circumcised!

Joshua 5:2-5 NLT

At that time the Lord told Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise this second generation of Israelites." **So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the entire male population of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.** Joshua had to circumcise them because all the men who were old enough to fight in battle when they left Egypt had died in the wilderness. Those who left Egypt had all been circumcised, but none of those born after the Exodus, during the years in the wilderness, had been circumcised.

There is a big difference between commitment and consecration! Consecration is a declaration that something is sacred. **Circumcision was a sign of that consecration – but why this act of cutting away a part of our flesh?** It was certainly something physical, but where and how does it play into the male's commitment to God? Remember Abram's blood pact with God?

Genesis 17:24 NLT

Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised...

Genesis 17:9-14 NLT

Then God said to Abraham, "Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.

God then did all the work to vacate the Amorites out of Jericho.

All they had to do is walk around and shout.

Joshua 24:13 "I gave you **land you had not worked on**, and I gave you **towns you did not build**—the towns where you are now living. I gave you **vineyards and olive groves for food**, though you did not plant them.

God often makes it easy by **providing** along with keeping His promises.

God not only gave them the land, but he also gave them a functioning ecosystem as well. "I gave you a land!" It is a gift and I keep my promises. God provided everything for them.

In return, all God asked for was to remember the original agreement, the covenant, the blood pact contract God made with Abraham and told them to not have any other gods in their life. Those fake wooden poles, those creepy carved statues did nothing for Israel – because they were idols, just lies made out of wood and stone.

But Israel just could not keep their promises!

God always keeps His word, but we often BREAK ours!

Joshua 24:14-18 NLT

So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." The people replied, "We would never abandon the Lord and serve other gods. For the Lord our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. **So we, too, will serve the Lord, for he alone is our God.**

In the last sentence of this famous Joshua passage has been quoted often in the Christian community – "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." In context, Joshua was holding the country to their promise to serve God instead of the Amorite gods! Joshua 24:15

Israel just could not keep their promise to God and obey.

2. God disciplines His people.

Judges records one of the saddest truths about our deeply flawed nature.

Judges 2:10

After Joshua dies, another generation rose up and no one remembers the stories of slavery, rescue, or God's promises.

God uses other nations to discipline his own people. **Judges 2:11-15**

They not only did whatever they wanted, they literally followed the cultural ways of the surrounding nations that God had previously judged and removed for the nation of Israel. Now God's people looked like everyone else and did exactly what God had told them NOT to do. **Judges 2:16-17**



A theme starts showing up in this cycle of Israel turning, God handing them over or allowing oppression, suffering then repentance and deliverance.

Although the book of Judges captures the stories of this “sin cycle,” it continues on all the way into the New Testament and absolutely still today.

[God disciplines those He loves!](#)

There are several places that this theme shows up in the Old and New Testament. It’s not a popular theme in Christian Social Media posts, but it is vital for us to understand that although God is faithful in keeping His promises, it does not mean that we can just go off, ignoring Him, and do whatever we want – then, still expect Him to bless us. I love the tongue-in-cheek phrase that Hebrews writes, “**Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?**”

Life Groups get a chance to dig into this discussion this week.

Q: How have you experienced God’s discipline in your life?

As I wrote in my blogpost, I like thinking about discipline themes when it comes to me being a great Dad to my children. However, I DO NO like thinking about being disciplined as an ADULT!

The Bible says, “**But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.**” **Judges 2:19-23 NLT**

Judges (2:19-23), Proverbs (3:11-12), Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:31-32) and Hebrews (12:5-8).

3. God decrees His purposes.

God gives His people what they asked for a King. Yet, even through the highs and lows of good leaders and bad ones, God still accomplished His will – eventually leading to Jesus fulfilling our promise for us – one that we could not keep. Perfect obedience!

It's surprising, but understandable, that as we move out the era of judges and into kings, we find that God gives Israel what they beg him for. They desperately wanted a king! We may ask, "well, what's wrong with that." Great question. It is clear from scripture they wanted a king for all the wrong reasons.

They also wanted a king to lead them rather than God. Remember God lead Israel through a "theocracy," a [Theocracy](#) is a form of government in which one or more deities are recognized as supreme ruling authorities, giving divine guidance to human intermediaries who manage the government's daily affairs. But they wanted a "[Monarchy](#)."

1 Samuel 8:4-9 NLT

Through the Kings of Israel, God continues to work His divine purposes. It will take Israel through another 600 years which is the years of exile and return to their own land.

Through promise, discipline and purpose, God still works in us and through us similar to how He did with Israel.

Except for one major difference – Jesus, the Messiah, and changed everything! Jesus now makes it possible to come to God, not through the curse of our selfishness and sin, but through the work He did on the cross. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus means that we live under the new covenant or contract with God. The old one, the blood pact was paid in full by Jesus and we are living in the era of grace.

The promise to all those before Jesus was fulfilled in Him and to all those after Jesus it is fulfilled by recognizing our sin, believing in Him and committing to follow Jesus the rest of our lives.

NOTES

Scriptures

Exodus 20:2-5

I am the LORD your God, who **brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides me.** Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me.

Exodus 15:13-16 NLT

Then the Lord said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

Joshua 24:12-13 NLT

And **I sent terror ahead of you to drive out the two kings of the Amorites. It was not your swords or bows that brought you victory.** I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns **you did not build**—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though **you did not plant them.**

Joshua 24:14-18 NLT

So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." The people replied, "We would never abandon the Lord and serve other gods. For the Lord our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the Lord, for he alone is our God.

Judges 2:10 NLT

After that generation died, **another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.**

Judges 2:11-15 NLT

The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight and served the images of Baal. They abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of

Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And **they angered the Lord.** They abandoned the Lord to serve Baal and the images of Ashtoreth. **This made the Lord burn with anger against Israel, so he handed them over to raiders who stole their possessions.** He turned them over to their enemies all around, and they were no longer able to resist them. Every time Israel went out to battle, the Lord fought against them, causing them to be defeated, just as he had warned. And the people were in great distress.

Judges 2:19-23 NLT But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways. So the Lord burned with anger against Israel. He said, "Because these people have violated my covenant, which I made with their ancestors, and have ignored my commands, I will no longer drive out the nations that Joshua left unconquered when he died. I did this to test Israel—to see whether or not they would follow the ways of the Lord as their ancestors did." That is why the Lord left those nations in place. He did not quickly drive them out or allow Joshua to conquer them all.

Proverbs 3:11-12 NLT My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 NLT But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. **Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.**

Hebrews 12:5-8 NLT And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

1 Samuel 8:4-9 NLT Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. "Look," they told him, "you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have." Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance. "Do everything they say to you," the Lord replied, "for they are rejecting me, not you. They don't want me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now

they are giving you the same treatment. Do as they ask, but solemnly warn them about the way a king will reign over them.”

Week 4 Teaching Outline

Group Session

In this week’s time together, we’ll see how the covenant family line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

Personal Study

During the first three days of this week’s personal study we will zoom in on the timeline of events we covered in the Session 3 teaching: Moses receiving the law, man’s inability to keep it, and thus man’s need for a priest and sacrifices. Then the last day will take us forward in the storyline to God’s people entering the land God had promised them.

WHERE WE’VE BEEN: RESCUE AND LAW

The family becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. During a tenth plague, God strikes dead the firstborn son of everyone living in Egypt, but “passes over” Israel as they put the blood of lambs on their doorposts. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

WHERE WE’RE HEADED: LAND AND KINGDOM

God brings His people, through their leader Joshua, into the promised land. When God’s people worship the gods of the nations surrounding them, God disciplines them through the attacks of surrounding nations. God raises up judges (or rulers) to rescue His people and call them to repentance. They beg for a king to be like other nations, and God gives them Saul. God raises up a new king, David, and promises that his kingdom will never end. The family that turned into a nation is now a kingdom. David’s son, Solomon, builds a temple to replace the tabernacle.

DAY ONE: The Ten Commandments

When you think of the Ten Commandments, why do you think God gave them? What comes to your mind? Maybe you think of a teacher giving rules at the beginning of a school year. If you break one, you get your name on the board for every person to see. Or maybe you think of new employee orientation where you are given a policy book that is rarely read but somehow still legislates behavior. Because we tend not to like those moments, we can get a distorted view of the Ten Commandments.

God, however, is much better than the best teacher and much greater than the best place to work. He is our perfect and loving Father who gave the Ten Commandments to people He graciously and miraculously delivered from slavery. The commandments were given to God's people in response to who God is and the rescue He provided.

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me. Exodus 20:2-5

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD (WHO HE IS)

He is the One who is above all others, the Creator and Sustainer, the God above all gods and the King above all kings.

WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT (WHAT HE HAS DONE)

He is the One who rescued the people from their slavery, from the shame of being mistreated and abused, from the disgrace of being owned by the Egyptians. The Ten Commandments were given in response to their rescue from slavery, and they simultaneously pointed to the Rescuer (Jesus) who would come to deliver us from our sins. They point us to Jesus because the Commandments show us we need Jesus. We can't keep them! We need Him to keep them for us, to change our hearts, and to forgive us our sins.

The same is true for you. God's commands are given to you because of who God is and because He has rescued you from the slavery of sin.

Bible scholars and students often divide the Ten Commandments into two broad sections: commandments concerning our relationship with God and commandments concerning our relationships with others.

Read Exodus 20:1-17 and place the commandments in those two categories.

LOVE FOR GOD LOVE FOR OTHERS

Let me guess, you want an answer key? Alright. The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God, and the following six commandments deal with our relationships with one another.

The first commandment is clearly about our hearts only bowing to the God who has rescued us. We shall have no other god—no other thing—besides Him in our hearts. He alone should rule and reign in our hearts because He alone rules and reigns over all things, and He alone has rescued us.

Martin Luther taught that if we break any of the commandments it is because we have already broken the first commandment, and if we keep the first commandment, we will keep all the others. For example, if we steal (violating the eighth commandment), it is only because we put the thing we are stealing ahead of God in our hearts. If we commit adultery, it is because we have put pursuit of a woman ahead of God in our hearts. If we don't honor our parents, it is because we have stopped honoring our Father in our hearts.

The way we are motivated to keep the first commandment not to have any other god but Him is to continually be in awe that He is the Lord our God who brought us "out of the place of slavery," (Ex.20:2). As awe of Him and His rescue decreases, burden to obey His commands increases. As awe for His rescue increases, burden to obey Him decreases, and we want to obey Him because we love Him. This is love for God, to obey His commands, and His commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

Is obeying God's commands burdensome to you? If so, why?

Take a few minutes to reflect on the great salvation that Christ has purchased for you. Consider the sacrifice He made and where you would be without Him. Let the awe and wonder of His great love fill your heart today.

DAY TWO: Broken Promises Already

Imagine that you are a young man or woman in the nation of Israel during the time when God's people were rescued from slavery in Egypt.

You grew up hearing your parents pray every night for rescue. You ran errands for Egyptian families with no payment and rarely any gratitude. You barely saw your father because he was always working on the Pharaoh's next building project.

Then one day a guy named Moses was speaking to a crowd outside your house. He said that God told him to tell the leader of Egypt to let Israel leave. You heard about this land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You longed to leave Egypt and slavery, but this seemed so random and utterly unlikely.

But when God started sending plagues as Moses promised, you believed. "Wow, we may actually be free soon!" you thought.

You helped your father put blood on the doors in preparation for the final plague. You struggled to get to sleep that night with anticipation of what was to come. Late in the night you woke up to wailing and crying throughout Egypt. Those without the blood of lambs on their doorposts lost their firstborn sons. It was so surreal, but you didn't have time to process because families were fleeing. There was great urgency and excitement: "We are free. Let's go!" The Egyptians were actually begging you to leave. They were terrified of displeasing your God anymore. You asked them for their possessions, as Moses instructed, and they actually gave them to you. You left Egypt with their gold and their silver. The gift of freedom was greater, but the gifts of gold and silver reminded you that God had orchestrated all of this. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was your God, too, and He liberated you.

After rushing out of Egypt you came to the Red Sea. And as some feared, Pharaoh and the Egyptians were pursuing. You saw Moses lift up his hands and amazingly, the sea actually parted. It was terrifying and loud and awesome, but it was also clear that God was making a way for you to cross to safety. When you crossed and turned around, the waters fell on the Egyptians. Everyone cheered. Rescued again! You were in awe of the God who brought this about.

A few months later, Moses came down from a mountain where He had met with the Lord. You were eager to hear from the One who liberated you, who loved and protected you. Moses gave God's first commandment:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides me.

Exodus 20:2-3

He then gave the second command:

Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. Exodus 20:4-5a

Of course! You nodded as you committed in your heart to give God and only God your worship. Only He deserves it. Only He has rescued me, you said to yourself.

Read Exodus 32:1-8 to see what happened.

After being rescued by God, the people found something other than God to worship. They took the gold the Lord gave them, the gifts from the Egyptians, and made a golden calf to honor, to give credit for their rescue from slavery.

In what ways do we often commit the same sin?

Whenever we look to something else other than God to give us our identity, our worth, or our ultimate satisfaction, we are committing the same sin of idolatry. Idolatry is placing something—anything—other than God on the thrones of our hearts. When we abandon the One who has rescued us and blessed us for something less than Him, we are bowing down to an idol, to something created and not the Creator. Everything that is not Him pales in comparison to the God who can say, “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of slavery. Do not have other gods besides Me.”

What are the idols of our time? Which one do you struggle with the most? Why?

DAY THREE: Priests, Sacrifices, & the Act of Atonement

God gave His people the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, including the commandments to not worship another god or make an idol. But shortly thereafter, the people were already bowing down to a golden calf. So God, in His mercy, set up a sacrificial system that would allow sinful man to approach our holy God.

God instituted an elaborate system where priests daily offered bloody sacrifices to God to serve as a temporary covering of sin. Every day priests were busy offering sacrifices for themselves and for others. In the Book of Leviticus, we find burnt offerings, sin offerings, grain offerings, fellowship offerings, and guilt offerings. The detailed instructions for sacrifices and offerings pointed people to the holiness of God and the reality that we cannot approach Him in our own merit.

All the sacrifices were designed to teach the people to loathe sin. With the constant sacrifices, people were confronted continually with the seriousness of sin. All the bloody sacrifices, all the noisy animals, would cause the people to hate their sin, to think, “My sin causes death. Every time I sin something dies.”

The sacrificial system would help people long for a Savior. The constant sacrifices reminded the people that they could not rescue themselves or cleanse themselves. They needed a Savior whose blood was more sufficient than the blood of an animal.

All the daily sacrifices still were not enough, so God commanded a special Day of Atonement to be remembered annually.

Read Leviticus 16:1-10.

On the Day of Atonement, God instructed that two goats would be set apart. One of the goats would be slaughtered to signify that God's wrath was poured out on the sacrifice instead of on His people. The priest took the blood from the goat, brought it into the Most Holy Place inside the tabernacle, and sprinkled the blood on the lid of the ark of the covenant, also known as the mercy seat or the seat of propitiation. Inside the ark of the covenant, the Ten Commandments were stored. The people, just as we have, sinned against His law. So the blood being sprinkled on the seat of propitiation signified that God's wrath was being turned from His people and placed on the goat instead. Mercy was triumphing over judgment.

The second goat was not killed. Instead of killing this goat, the priest would put his hands on the goat to symbolize that the sins of the people were transferred to the goat. The goat was then led to the wilderness and set free, symbolizing that the sins of the people were cast away from them. They were forgiven! Their sins could be forgiven because God's holy wrath was appeased.

One sacrifice symbolized that the wrath of God was satisfied. The other symbolized the sins of the people being removed from them.

Centuries later Jesus came, and He perfectly fulfilled the function of both sacrifices. When He placed Himself on the cross, willingly laying down His life for us, He placed Himself on the sacrificial altar. His body absorbed the wrath that should be ours, the wrath that we deserve. He also removed our sin from us.

The people could not keep God's commands, so an elaborate sacrificial system allowed them to approach God and enjoy His dwelling among them. We could not keep His commands either, so Jesus came as our sacrifice.

What was the purpose of the Old Testament sacrifices? Why were they not sufficient to forgive sin? How is Jesus the perfect sacrifice?

DAY FOUR: Victory Without a Fight

When God chose Moses to lead God's people to freedom, God not only promised their liberation from slavery, but He also promised He would give them the land He promised their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 6:2-8). After wandering in the desert for 40 years after being rescued from their slavery, God's people were ready to move into the land of Canaan, the promised land. But the land was not vacant. Other people lived there, and those people needed to be conquered. God promised to drive out the other people not only because of His love for Israel, but also because of the wickedness of those living in Canaan (Deut. 9:4-5). The people living there were wicked; and they were not conquered until their sin "reached its full measure" before God (Gen. 15:16).

Moses' successor, Joshua, was the man God used to lead the people to conquer the land and divide it among God's people. But really God was the One who secured the victory. The first battle on the conquest made this absolutely clear. God handed over Jericho, a city in the promised land, to His people—to the nation of Israel.

Read Joshua 6:1-21.

Before the people in Jericho surrendered and without the Israelites raising a fist in fighting, God already called the battle: "I have handed Jericho to ... you" (Josh. 6:2). Priests walked around the city, some carrying the ark of the covenant (where God made His presence known to man in the tabernacle), and seven carrying trumpets in front of the Ark. Troops were in front and behind the Ark, but they did nothing, not even shout. For six days they did this, and on the seventh day they marched, and Joshua told the people to shout when they heard the trumpets blast. They shouted and the walls crumbled. God gave Jericho to His people.

The story reminds us that God is attracted to weakness. In our individualistic culture, we often want to be strong. But in God's kingdom, weakness is strength. When we realize we are weak compared to Him, and that we, in our ability, cannot stand strong, God is attracted to our humility. He knows the proud from a distance, but the humble He knows up close (Ps. 138:6). Though we want to fight battles in our own strength, we must learn to walk quietly and allow the Lord to crumble the walls that He wants to crumble.

God is attracted to weakness. Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

What evidence do you see of this in the Scripture?

God continued to give every city in Canaan to His people. They moved into the land, divided it, and were finally home. Finally to the place the Lord had promised His people, first to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

When they were in the land, the Lord reminded the people that He gave them the land and the victory. As Joshua reminded the people of their history, the Lord declared:

“I gave you a land you did not labor for, and cities you did not build, though you live in them; you are eating from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant. Therefore, fear the LORD and worship him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped ...”

Joshua 24:13-14

Because the Lord has rescued us, defeated sin for us, and fulfilled every single promise He has made, we are to fear Him and worship Him. And we are to get rid of the little gods that clutter our lives.

Do you have little gods cluttering your life? If so, take a moment to confess your sin, dethrone those gods, and let Christ take His rightful place as King of your life.

Scriptures

Group Questions

Discussion Guide

1. Share a quick summary of highlights from Weeks 1–3. Why is this week an important point in redemptive history and the unfolding story of God?

Read Joshua 21:43–45 aloud.

43 So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. 44 The LORD gave them rest on every side according to all he had sworn to their ancestors. None of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over all their enemies to them. 45 None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled.

Joshua 21:43–45

2. What does God delivering on His promises say about His character?

3. How have you seen God deliver on His promises? Explain.

Look up Judges 2:11–12 and 2:16–17. Read it aloud.

4. How do you struggle with the cycle of sin in your life?

5. Why does God hate sin? Why does God discipline His people?

6. How have you experienced the Lord's discipline in your life?

7. If you don't experience God's discipline, what does that indicate? Explain.

For clarity on the previous questions, look up Hebrews 12:6. Read it aloud.

Look up 1 Samuel 16:7. Read it aloud.

8. Are you a man after the people's hearts, like Saul, or a man after God's heart, like David? Explain.

Look back over the personal study.

9. What was especially meaningful or helpful in understanding the story of God and your life with Christ?

- Day 1: The Ten Commandments
- Day 2: Broken Promises Already
- Day 3: Priests, Sacrifices, & the Act of Atonement
- Day 4: Victory Without a Fight
- Day 5: Reflection

10. How does the takeaway affect your view of Scripture? How will you respond to this part of the story?

Internet Links

For more on the [Amorites](#)...

The Amorites were people known to indulge in adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, prostitution, idolatry, and witchcraft. The Lord wanted His people to walk in His ways, not theirs.

[God disciplines those He loves...](#)

Glenn's Blogpost on Father's disciplining their children.

8-week overview

CREATION AND FALL

The self-sufficient and eternal God lovingly creates a perfect creation with humanity as His crowning work. Falling for Satan's temptation, humanity rebels and sin enters the world bringing death, pain, and strife. Instead of giving up on humanity, God promises that from the womb of a woman will come the One who will crush Satan's head.

PROMISE AND A PEOPLE

God pursues Abraham, a man from an idol-worshipping family who has no children with his wife and promises that he will be the father of many nations. God promises land to Abraham and assures him that all nations will be blessed through his offspring. God continues to be faithful to this family. He restates the promise to Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob (who is renamed Israel). A famine strikes the promised land, so Jacob and the family move to Egypt where one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, is already there to provide for the family.

RESCUE AND LAW

The family becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. During a tenth plague, God strikes dead the firstborn son of everyone living in Egypt, but "passes over" Israel as they put the blood of lambs on their doorposts. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

LAND AND KINGDOM

God brings His people, through their leader Joshua, into the promised land. When God's people worship the gods of the nation's surrounding them, God disciplines them through the attacks of surrounding nations. God raises up judges (or rulers) to rescue His people and call them to repentance. They beg for a king to be like other nations, and God gives them Saul. God raises up a new king, David, and promises that his kingdom will never end. The family that turned into a nation is now a kingdom. David's son, Solomon, builds a temple to replace the tabernacle.

EXILE AND RETURN

Solomon takes foreign wives and allows their foreign gods to clutter the land. His son continues the line of rulers, and the kingdom is divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Prophets confront the people, but they persist in their idolatry. The Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria and the Southern Kingdom is carried away into Babylonian captivity. When they

are freed, they return to a nation and kingdom far less glorious than before and are still unable to keep their promises.

JESUS

A descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David, Jesus is the One who crushes the head of Satan, will bless all nations, and reigns forever. Jesus, the God-Man, enters humanity through the womb of a virgin, perfectly obeys the law that we could never obey, dies as the once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sins, and rises from the dead, conquering Satan, sin, and death. He inaugurates His eternal kingdom and secures salvation for His people.

A NEW PEOPLE

After His ascension to heaven, Jesus sends the promised Holy Spirit and His disciples turn the world upside down preaching the good news of Jesus. In the midst of intense persecution, the gospel spreads, and Gentiles and Jews form a new people. Churches are planted in cities, and apostles write letters encouraging and instructing the people in the grace of Christ and their response to His grace.

A BETTER BEGINNING

A time is coming where God's people—people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who have been rescued by Christ—will enjoy Him and His rule forever in perfect harmony. Satan will be crushed, the effects of sin will be reversed, and all things will be made new.

This first week will ease you into the story with just four scriptures setting the stage for our epic journey. Weeks 2–8 will dive deeper into each day's personal study. Ideally, you'll have time to read one passage of Scripture each day for four days leading up to the first group session, plus one day of personal reflection. If you don't have the full week or you didn't receive your book in advance, that's OK—read what you can before your first discussion begins.