



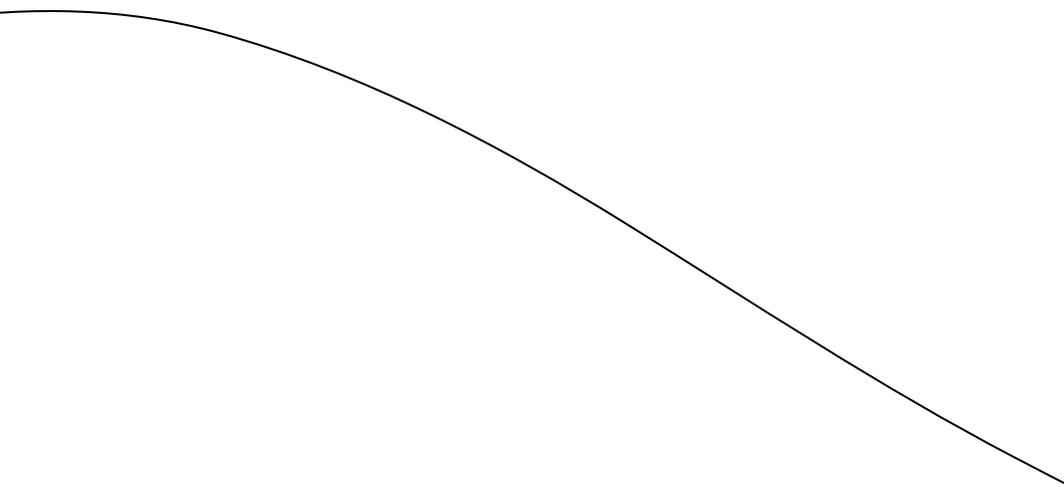
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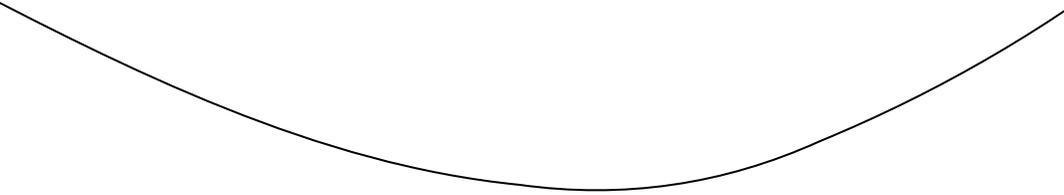
THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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## BIBLE OVERVIEW

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by 40 different authors over the course of about 1400 years. It was written by fishermen, tax collectors, shepherds, kings, doctors, political prisoners and political advisers, farmers, and poets. Genesis through Deuteronomy was probably written in the wilderness; Jeremiah wrote from a dungeon. Paul wrote his letters from prison; Luke wrote Acts while traveling through Asia Minor and Europe; John recorded Revelation while exiled on an island. Different portions were written in Africa, Asia, and Europe. It is not organized in chronological order but by categories or genres of writing, such as law, history, poetry, prophecy, and letters. Amazingly, one seamless story emerges—the story of a passionate God on relentless pursuit of those He loves.

# INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains a Bible reading plan that is designed to help you you engage the story of the Bible in chronological order—to see the overarching story that God is writing through history, to uncover threads of themes that are found throughout, and to discover the inciting incidents that propel His mission on the earth. You will engage with every book of the Bible as we highlight the key people, places, and events. If you have a limited understanding of Scripture, this reading plan is an opportunity to be exposed to the basic story of God. If you have been reading the Bible for a long time, we hope this reading plan will help give you new context and connection points between major episodes in the story of God.

To bridge the daily readings, we have included narration to give context, to establish the cultural and historical setting, and to illuminate the major ideas presented. It also serves to fill in the gaps between the readings.

Finally, the ultimate goal isn't just to get through the Bible but to get the Bible through you. That means that personal reflection and application are critical components of this endeavor. At the end of each reading, we encourage you to consider the following questions:

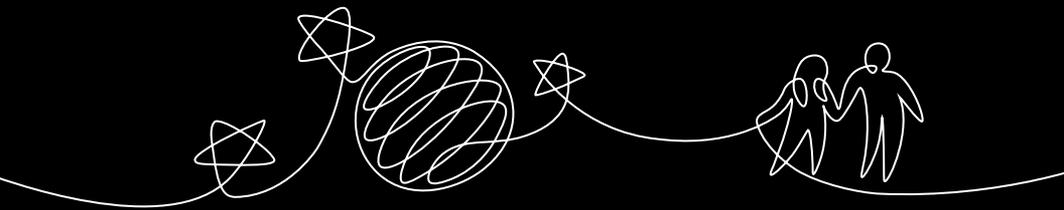
- What did God reveal to you?
- What are you going to do about it?

We believe that engaging the Bible is best done within the context of community. So we would encourage you to gather some friends or join a small group and dig in together.

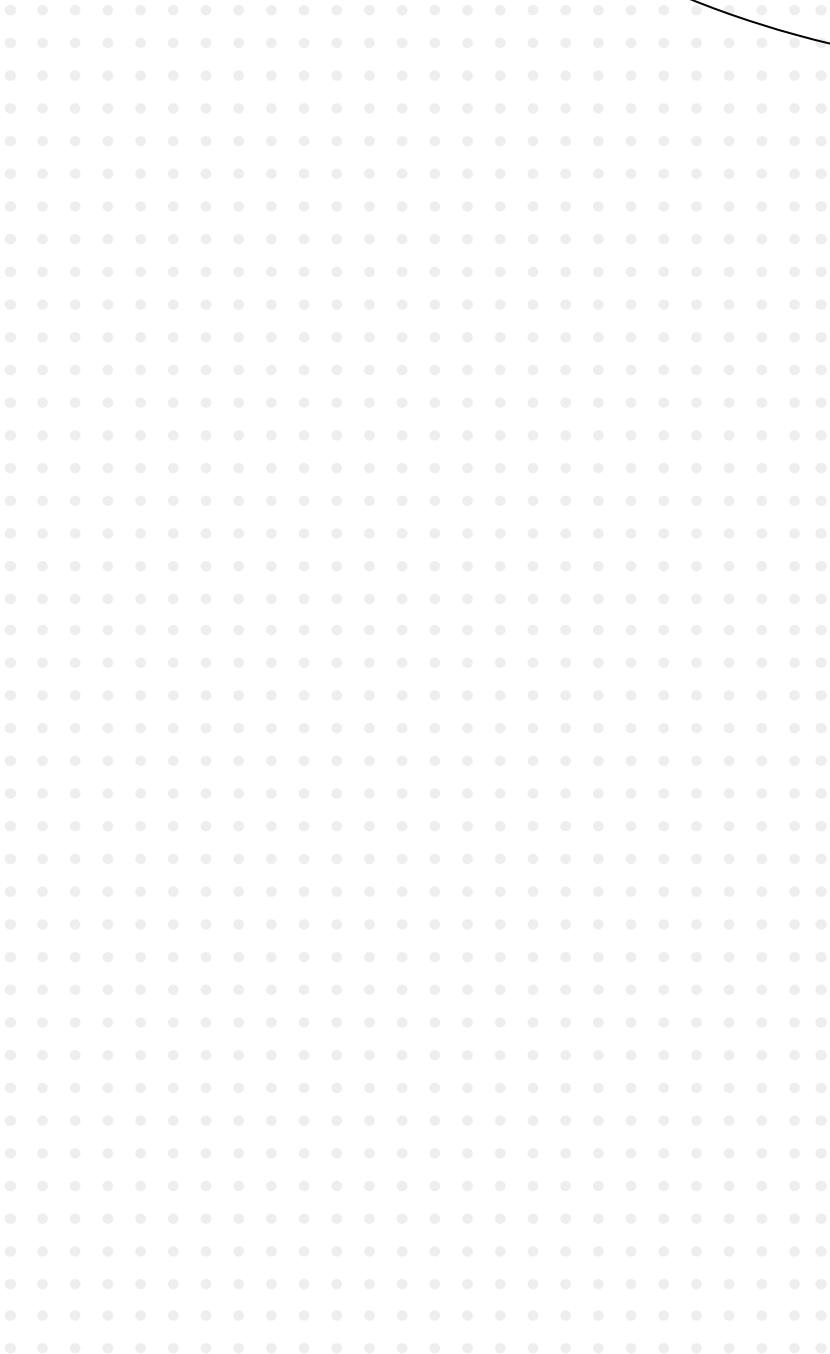
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**WEEK 1**

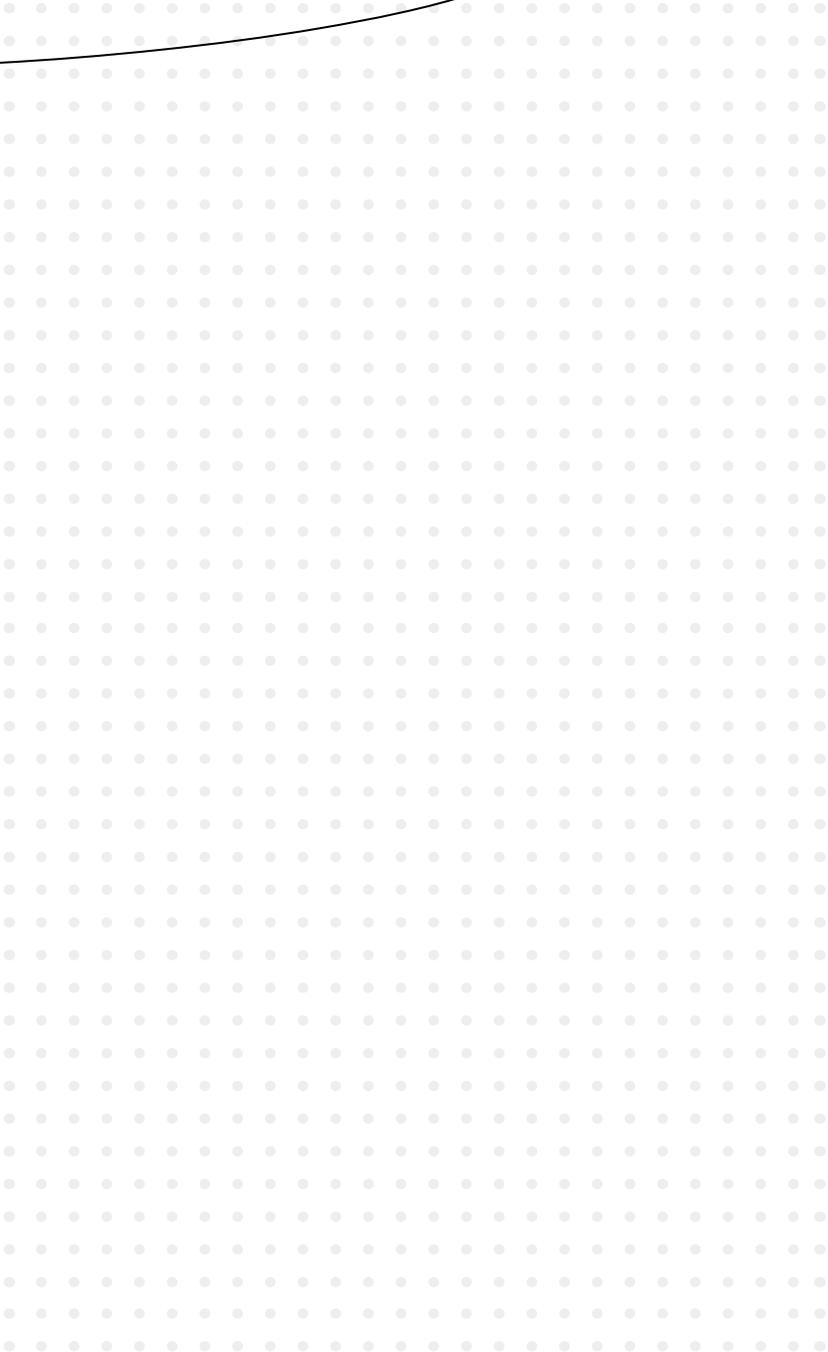
# *The Creation*



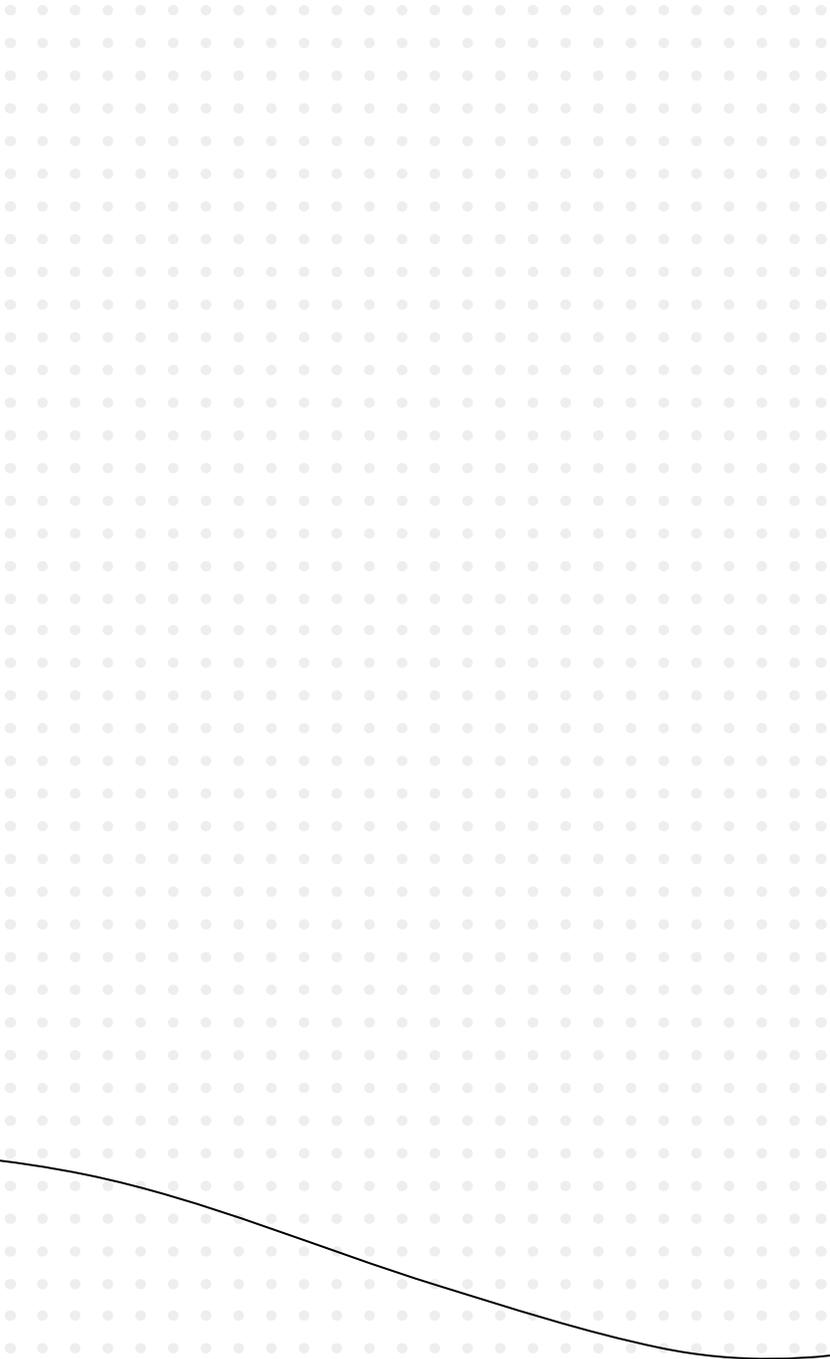
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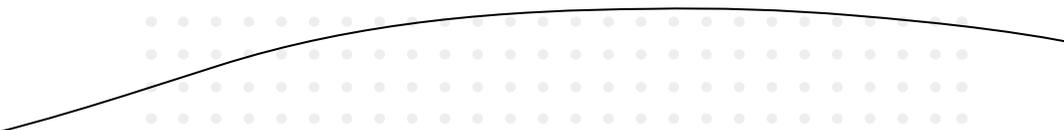
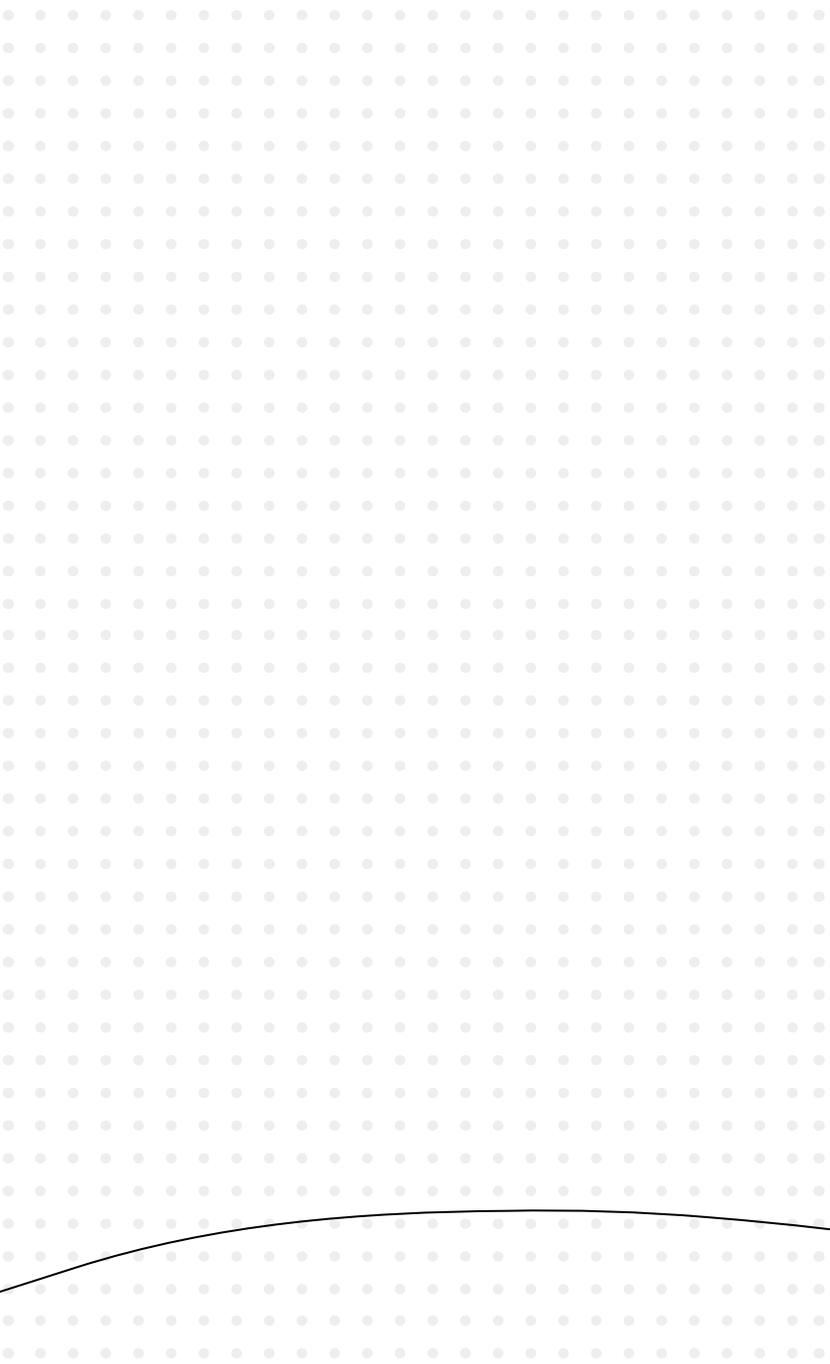
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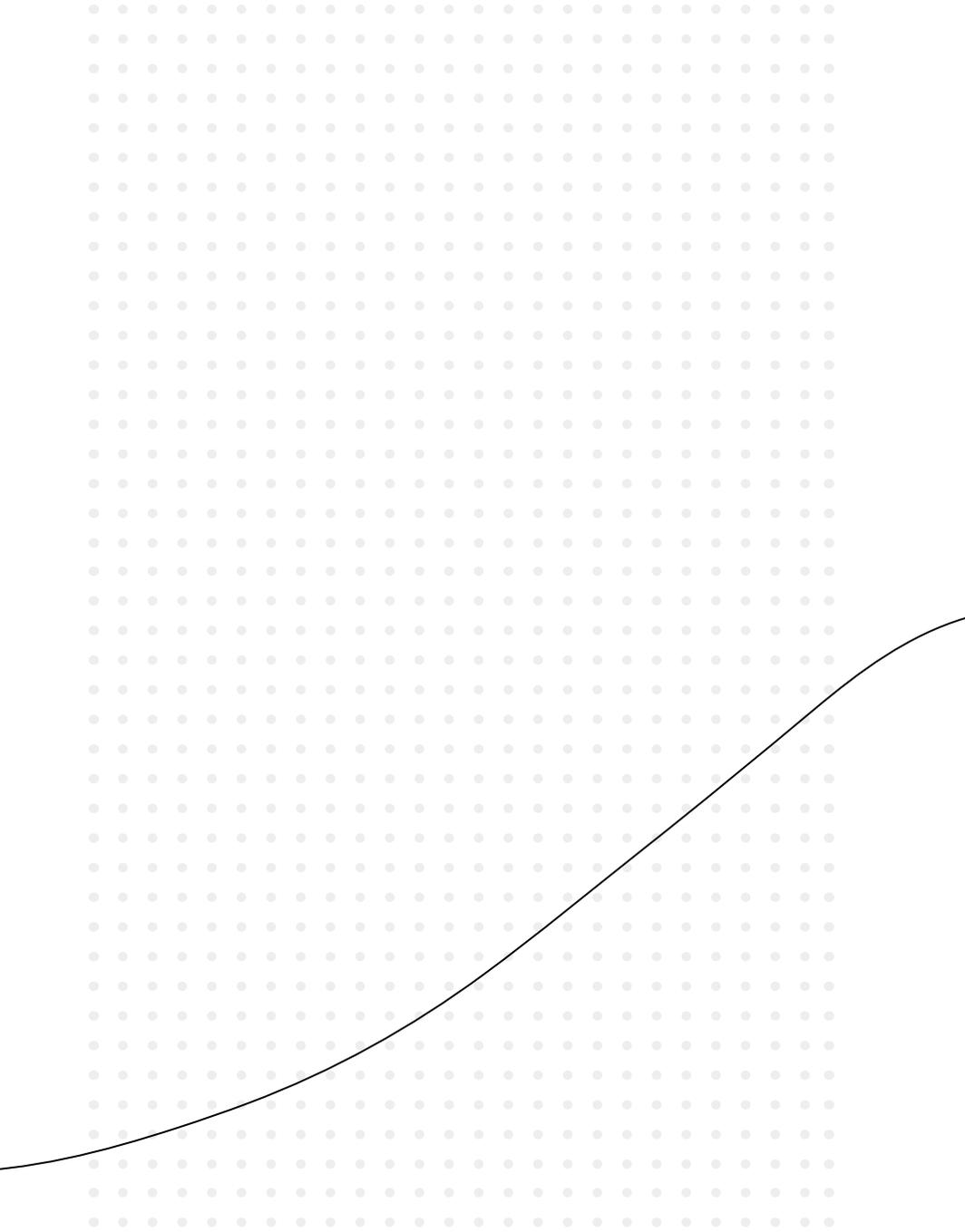
# Sermon Notes: The Creation



# In Your Group

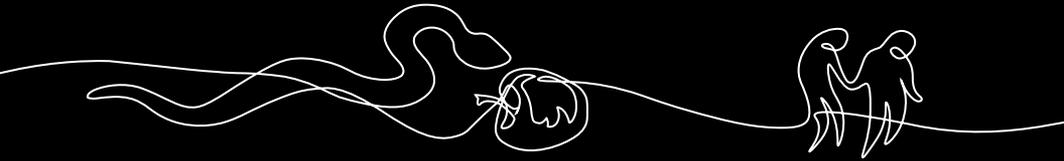


# In Your Group



**WEEK 2**

*The Promise*



## DAY 1

### READING: Genesis 1-4

In the first three chapters of Genesis, God reveals so much about Himself. First, He reveals Himself as Creator. Of all the attributes of God's character He could choose to display, creativity was the first way He introduced Himself to humanity. Because we are made in His image, we reflect God's character when we are creative.

The Enemy tempted Adam and Eve at the point of trust. While God had offered them all the fruit of the garden except one, Satan focused their attention on that one and told them God was withholding something good from them. This is the starting point for every temptation we face—can God be trusted?

Adam and Eve hid in shame; God came to the Garden looking.

In verse 21, God responded by killing an animal to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness. God's heart is always to protect. We also see two seemingly opposing dimensions of His character—wrath and grace. His wrath against sin activated grace on our behalf. It's a foreshadowing of the moment Jesus would be killed for all sin.

Even though a series of consequences are outlined for the man and the woman, God's grace is still present. He promises that one day, the offspring of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. And the woman's name was changed to Eve—the mother of all living. This was a promise of her potential and not a label of her failure.

Cain and Abel revealed the wickedness that had taken root in the hearts of humanity.

## DAY 2

### READING:

**Genesis 6-9, 11:1-9**

Noah's ark is often viewed as a children's story, but it is one of the most severe demonstrations of God's judgment in the entire Bible. But once again, we see God's grace shining through the destruction. A rainbow signifies the promise that God will never destroy the earth in that manner again.

The sons of Noah spread across the earth and multiplied in number. They attempted to reach God-like status through human effort, so God gave them all new languages. The people formed communities around common languages. This was the beginning of cultures and nations.

## DAY 3

The book of Job occurs at some point between Genesis 4 and Genesis 11. Most scholars believe it was the first book of the Bible ever written, probably around 2000 BC. It focuses on the most pressing question of humanity: Why do bad things happen to good people? Surprisingly, the book never gives us an answer; rather, it simply tells the story of how one man continued to trust God in the face of unimaginable circumstances and escalating tragedy. Today, we will read a few highlights from that story.

### **READING:**

**Job 1-3, Job 38-39, Job 42:10-17**

Job's friends oscillate between being faithful friends and frustrating voices in Job's life. They comfort, encourage, accuse, condemn, and question Job and his faith. Why do bad things happen to good people? We are still asking the same question that Job was asking. He gives us a picture of faith. Faith isn't the assurance that everything is going to be okay; faith is the assurance that God is in control.

## DAY 4

### READING:

**Genesis 12, Genesis 15-16, Genesis 18:1-15**

Genesis 12 marks a new chapter in the story of God. He makes a promise to Abraham that is a continuation of the promise He made to Eve. God would bring His blessing through the family of Abraham. The problem, though, was that Abraham and his wife were very old and didn't have any kids.

God didn't answer right away. When He renewed His promise to Abraham in Genesis 15, it's hard to know if Abraham felt frustrated or reassured. At some point, the frustration kicked in, because he had a child through his wife's servant, Hagar. While this seems ludicrous to us today, it was actually a standard practice in ancient times. However, it was an attempt at a short-cut to God's plan and not the way God intended to bring about his promise.

In Genesis 18, three visitors came to Abraham. This story reveals the significant role of hospitality in the Middle East that is still seen today. It is believed that the three visitors were actually the physical manifestation of the three members of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God made a promise. But Abraham had to wait in faith.

## DAY 5

### READING:

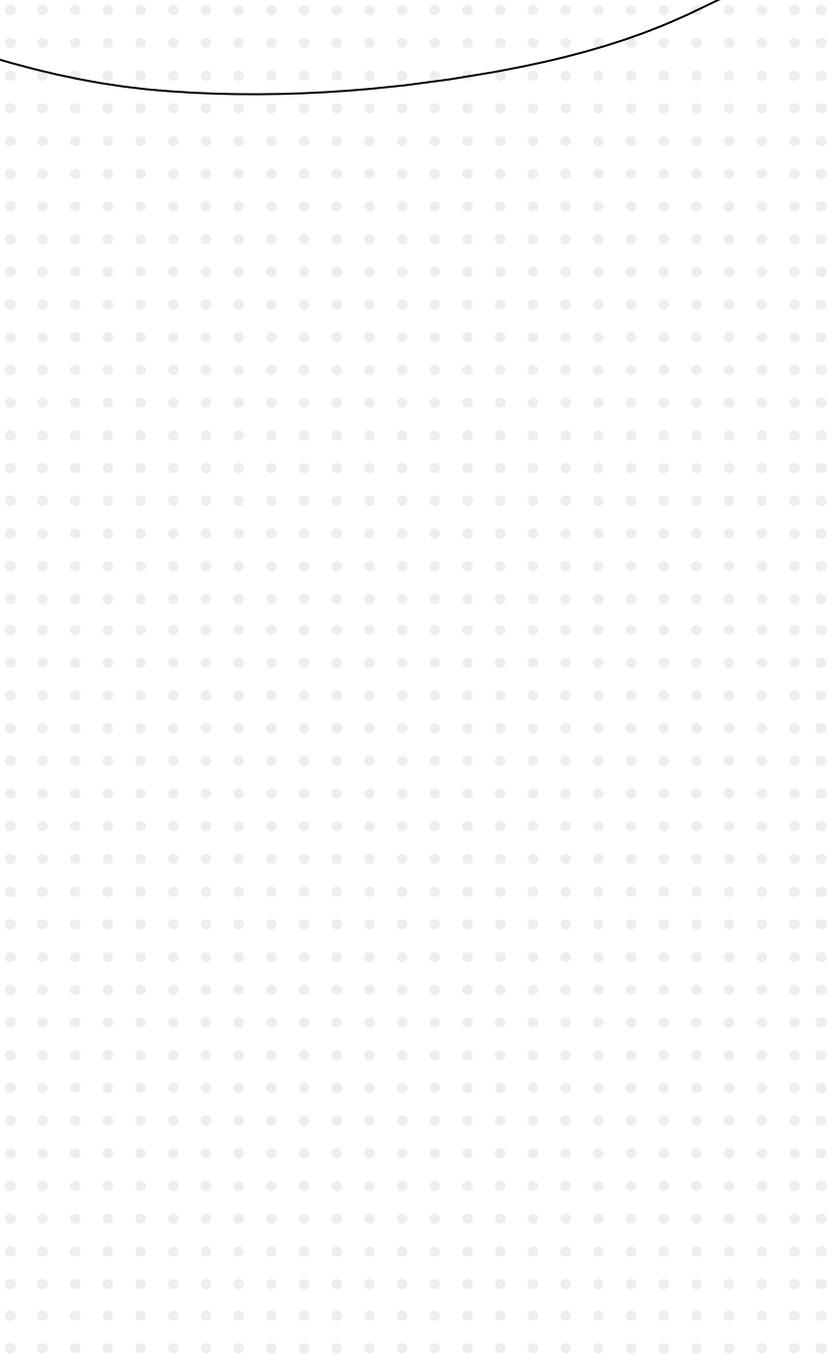
**Genesis 21:1-7, Genesis 22:1-19, Genesis 24**

God's command to sacrifice Isaac is one of the most confusing moments in the Bible. After waiting years for God to fulfill his promise, Abraham was forced to put that promise on the altar. Do we love God's provision more than we love God himself?

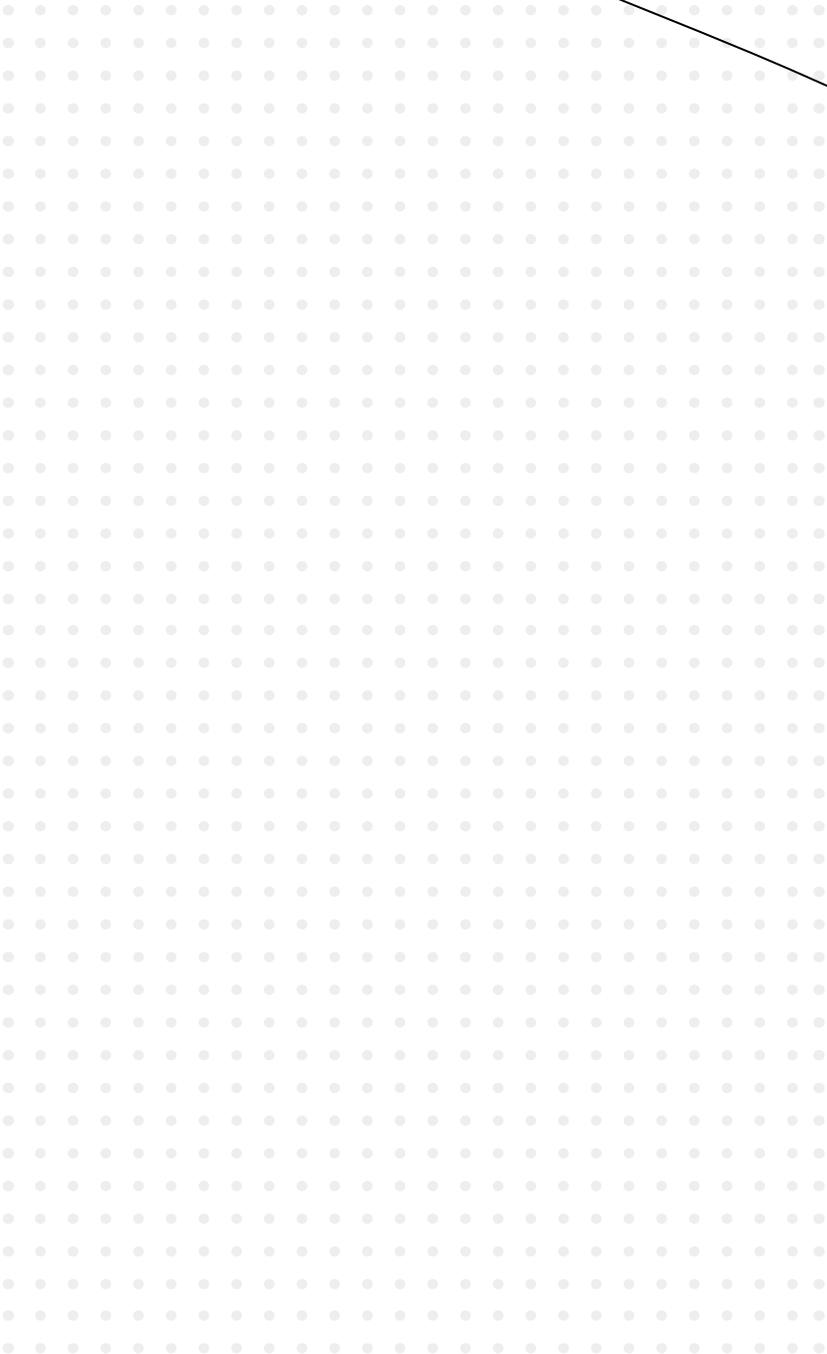
# Sermon Notes: The Promise

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# Sermon Notes: The Promise



# In Your Group



# In Your Group



**WEEK 3**

*The Exodus*



## **DAY 1**

### **READING:**

**Genesis 25:21-34, Genesis 27-28, Genesis 32:22-32**

Isaac's two sons, Jacob and Esau, struggled with one another from birth. Jacob stole the birthright and the blessing from his older brother. A lesson to learn is that we shouldn't trade what we want most for what we want in the moment.

Jacob didn't just wrestle with his brother; he wrestled with every significant relationship in his life. Including God. But God was faithful to fulfill His promises to him and through him.

Jacob had 12 sons.

## DAY 2

### READING:

**Genesis 37, Genesis 39, Genesis 40**

Jacob played favorites with his sons, and Joseph had minimal relational intelligence. His extravagant flaunting of pride prompted his brothers to sell him into slavery, where he experienced privilege in the house of Potiphar and the depths of despair in prison.

## DAY 3

### READING:

**Genesis 41, Genesis 45, Genesis 49:29-50:26**

Over and over in the story of Joseph, we read the phrase, “God was with Joseph.” Joseph’s faith and God’s faithfulness are summed up in Joseph’s response to his brothers in Genesis 50:20: “What you intended for evil, God used for good.” Joseph not only saved his family but an entire nation. And God remained faithful to His promise.

This is how the family of Jacob wound up in Egypt. Four hundred years later, they had multiplied into a large people group. Another Pharaoh came to the throne who didn’t remember Joseph or offer blessing to his offspring.

## DAY 4

### READING:

**Exodus 2:1-4:17, Exodus 6:2-8**

Moses spent 40 years in the palace and another 40 years in the wilderness. He knew how to navigate the diplomacy and the bureaucracy of the Egyptian government and he knew how to navigate the terrain and dangers of the desert. God was uniquely preparing him to be the deliverer of the Israelites.

When Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go, a series of plagues were sent on the Egyptians. At first glance, these appear to be random and unfair. However, each plague played a role in challenging and dismantling the Egyptian religious system, which worshiped the sun and Pharaoh as God, recognized animals to be sacred, and viewed the Nile River as the source of all life.

## **DAY 5**

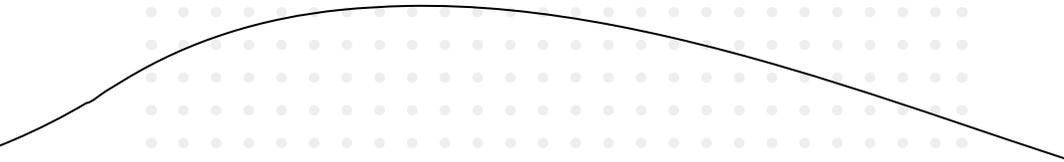
### **READING:**

**Exodus 12:1-42, Exodus 13:17-14:31**

Throughout the Old Testament, God demonstrates His grace and gives pictures of the coming promise of redemption. The Passover is one of the clearest pictures of what Jesus would do on the cross. The blood of the lamb protected the Israelites from judgment and death. Hundreds of years later, the blood of Jesus, who was called the Lamb of God, would cover us from judgment and death.

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and toward the land that God had promised to give to the family of Abraham.

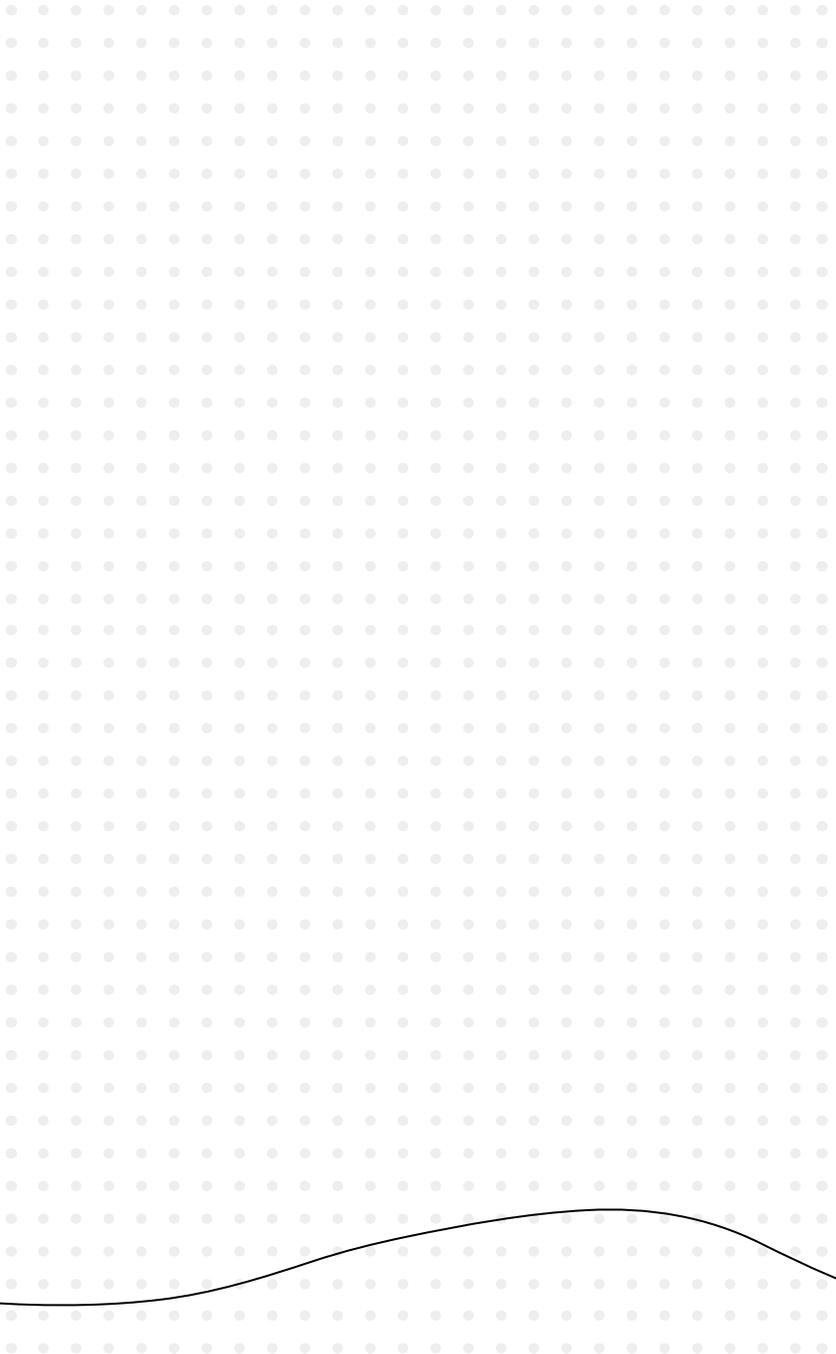
# Sermon Notes: The Exodus



# Sermon Notes: The Exodus

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# In Your Group

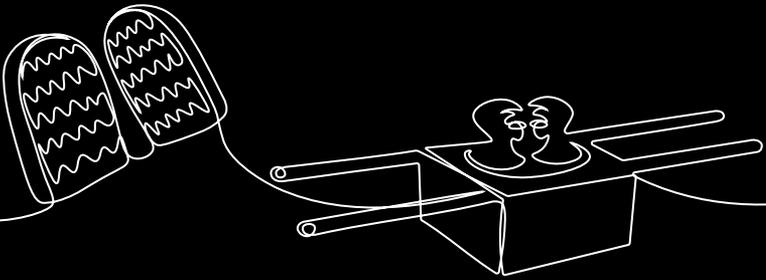


# In Your Group

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WEEK 4

# *The Covenant*



## DAY 1

### READING:

#### Exodus 20, Exodus 24

God miraculously provided food—manna and quail—to the Israelites while they crossed the desert. At Mount Sinai, God met with Moses and gave him the Law, a set of guidelines and guardrails by which the Israelites were to live. The most famous of these are the Ten Commandments. On the surface, they appear to be rules we are supposed to follow. But more important, they are reflections of God’s character.

When He says “no other gods,” He is declaring His **SOVEREIGNTY**.

“Do not make a graven image” reveals His **TRANSCENDENCE** and His **JEALOUSY**.

“Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain” points us to His **HOLINESS**.

“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy” reminds us of God’s **REST** and **CREATIVITY**.

“Honor your father and your mother” reminds us that God is **COMMUNITY** and loves community.

“Do not murder” reveals that God gives and takes away. He is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of **LIFE** and gives it abundantly.

“Do not commit adultery” shows us the **FAITHFULNESS** of God.

“Do not steal” points to His **PROVIDENCE**.

“Do not bear false witness” declares that God is **TRUTH**.

“Do not covet” points us to the **SUFFICIENCY** of God.

In Exodus 24, God confirms His promise to the Israelites.

## DAY 2

### READING:

**Exodus 25:1-22, Exodus 39:32-40:38**

While Moses was on Mt. Sinai, the people created an idol to worship. Even though they had seen God's miracles and provision, they still had a hard time trusting in someone they could not see. While we may not find ourselves worshipping golden calves today, idolatry is not a practice limited to the ancient Israelites. We often find it is easier to place our faith and trust in things we can see and touch instead of relying on God's provision and protection.

The tabernacle and the ark of the covenant provided a way for the people to interact with God's presence in the wilderness.

## DAY 3

The book of Leviticus is one of the most difficult to read because it is a seemingly tedious outline of random rules of the Israelites. While it may be difficult for us to understand through a contemporary lens, The Law established that God was interested in every single detail of the lives of His people and that the Israelites were set apart and called to live differently than every other people group. Now that they were free from the slavery of Egypt, God was giving them a new pathway for relating to Him.

### **READING:**

**Leviticus 9, Leviticus 23, Leviticus 26:1-13**

In the book of Leviticus, God establishes the sacrificial system (the pathway for connecting with God), the role of the High Priest (the mediator between God and his people), and the Day of Atonement (the annual sacrifice for the sins of the people). In the New Testament book of Hebrews, we see that Jesus is the fulfillment of each of these systems. He is the perfect sacrifice, He is the perfect mediator between God and us, and His death on the cross provided the final and eternal Day of Atonement for all humanity.

God commanded that the Israelites observe various holidays throughout the year. These festivals provided opportunities for the people to remember and celebrate who God was and what He had done. They also revealed God's heart that the people experience joy and celebration even in the midst of the wilderness.

## DAY 4

### READING:

**Numbers 9:15-23, Numbers 13:17-14:38**

Twelve spies were sent into the Promised Land. While all brought back a glowing report of the land and its resources, only two (Joshua and Caleb) had the faith to face the giants and follow God's lead.

## DAY 5

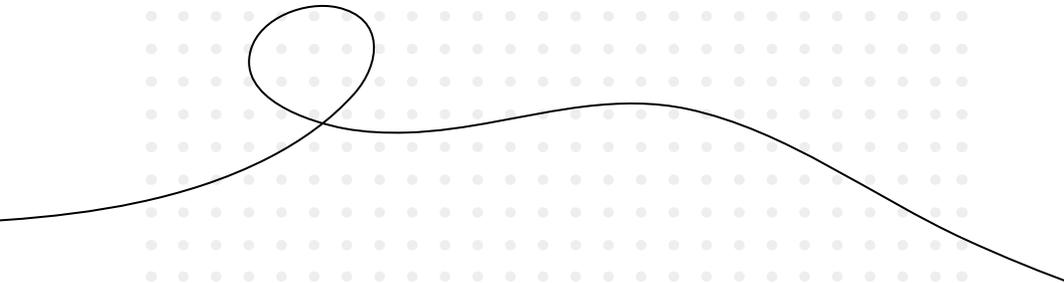
Because the Israelites refused to trust God, they were left to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. At the end of that time, Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy to re-tell the story (it's basically a rewrite of Exodus - Numbers) for a new generation who did not remember slavery in Egypt. He wrote it to remind them of who they were, whose they were, where they were going, why they were going there, and how they were to live once they arrived.

### **READING:**

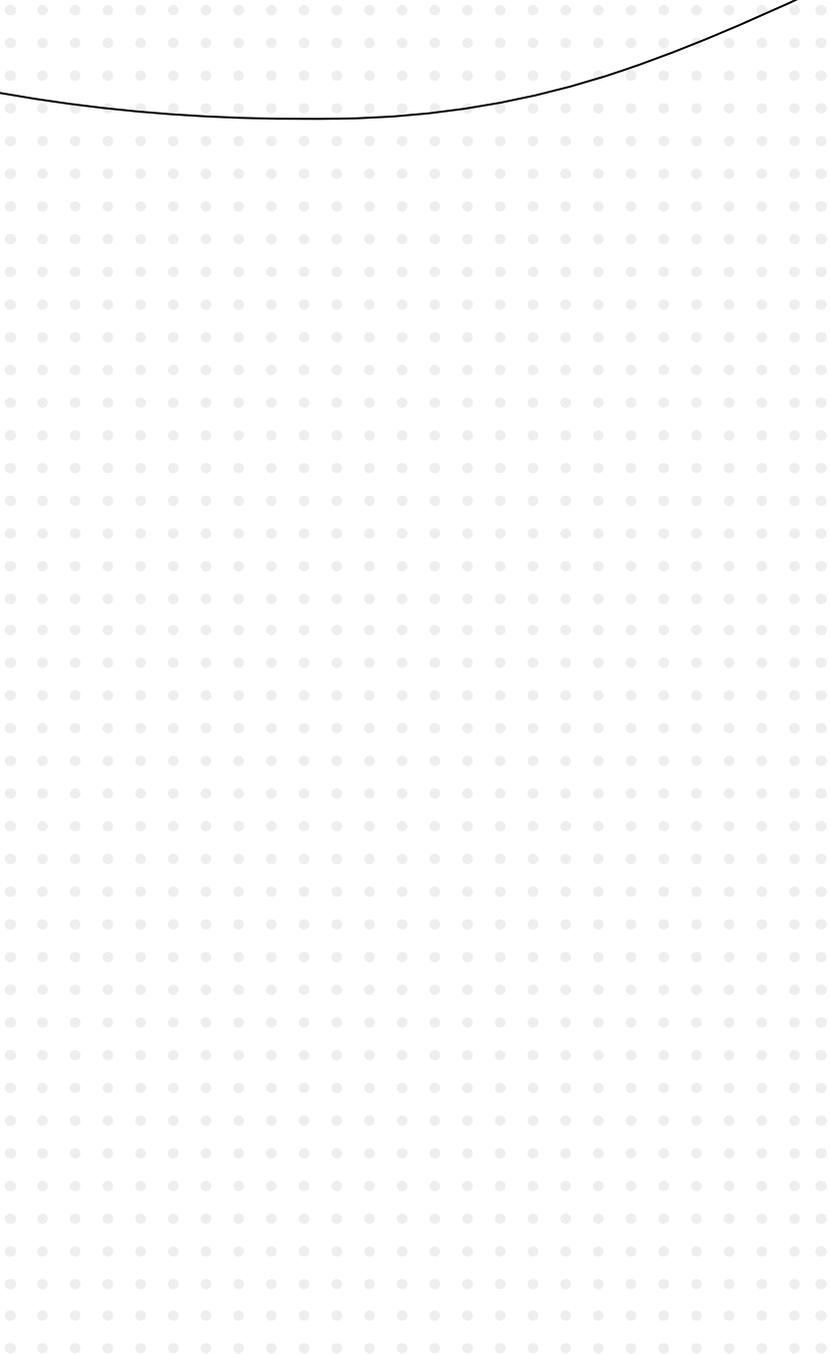
**Deuteronomy 1:6-8, Deuteronomy 4:29-31, Deuteronomy 6, Deuteronomy 11, Deuteronomy 34**

Deuteronomy 11 sets an example for us to remember God's faithfulness in the past so we can trust His direction in the future.

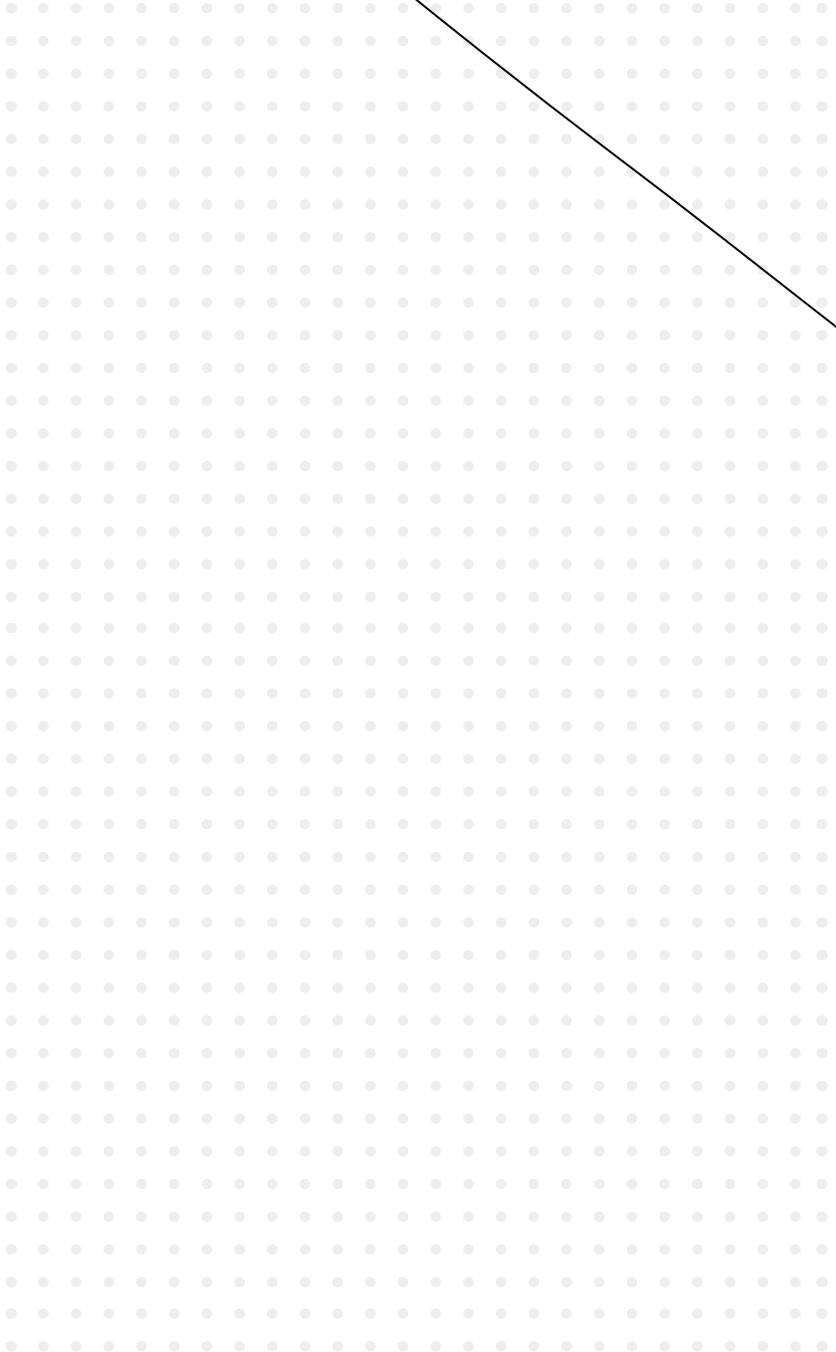
# Sermon Notes: The Covenant



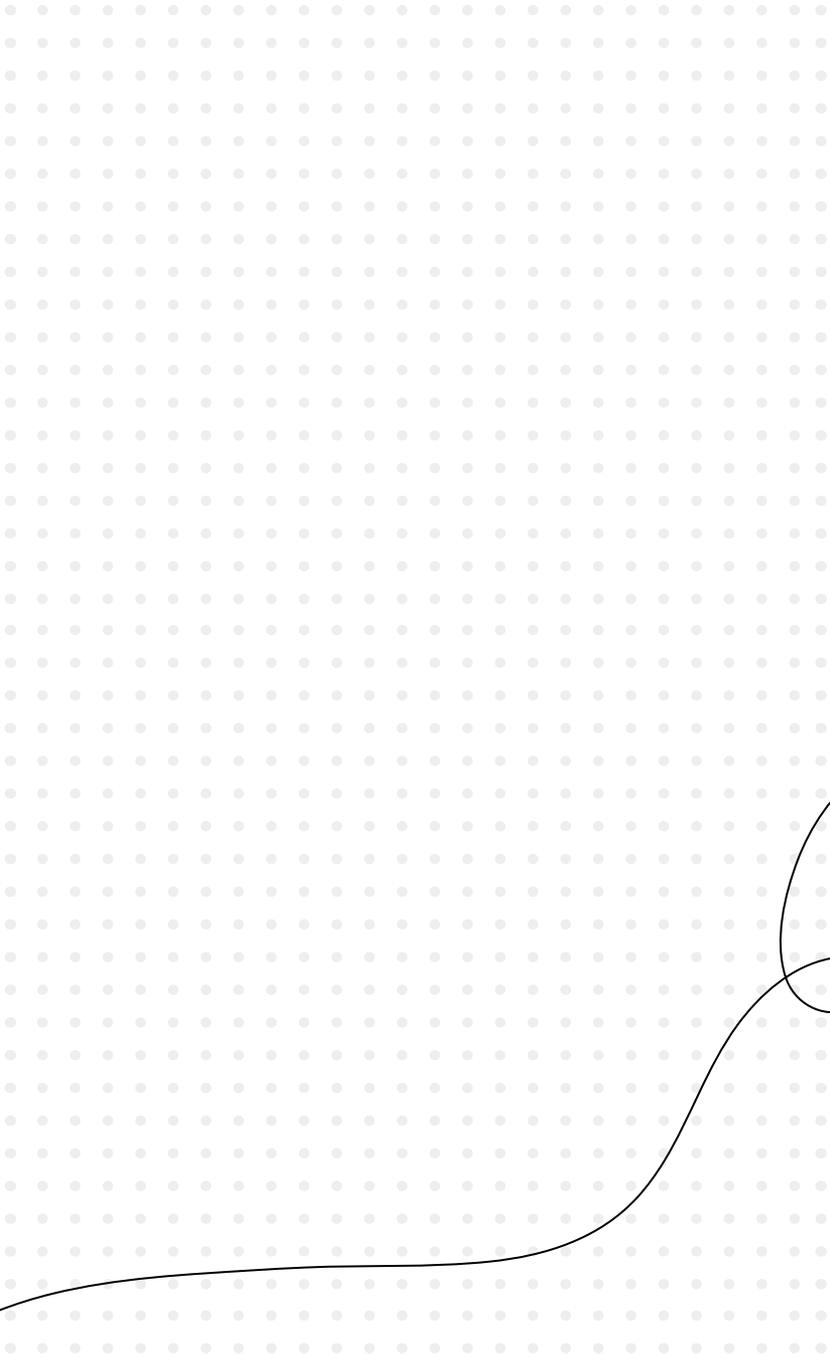
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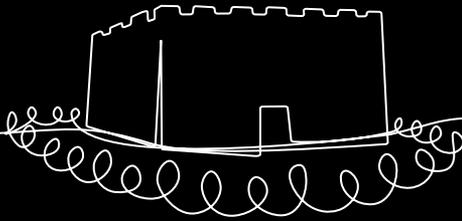


## In Your Group



**WEEK 5**

# *The Conquest*



## DAY 1

After Moses' death, Joshua was appointed to be the next leader of Israel. He had served as Moses' right hand and was one of the two spies who brought back a good report.

### READING:

**Joshua 1:1-9, Joshua 6:1-25, Joshua 23-24**

The first half of the book of Joshua outlines the major battles of the conquest of the Promised Land, including the famous battle of Jericho. The second half of the book details the division of the land among the tribes of Israel. At the end of the book, Joshua re-tells the story for a new generation of Israelites who are possessing and settling the land that God had promised.

The story of Rahab is another interesting display of God's grace and inclusive heart. Even though she was a foreigner and a prostitute, she was embraced as one of the people of God and included in the lineage of Jesus in the Book of Matthew.

## DAY 2

### READING:

#### Judges 2:6-10, Ruth

During the time of the judges, men and women like Deborah, Samson, and Gideon gave direction and leadership to the people of God. They exercised political, judicial, spiritual, and military leadership. The book of Judges contains some weird, graphic, and disturbing stories that are difficult to understand, but it's also a reminder of God's faithfulness to an unfaithful people. In Judges 2, we read that another generation was born that didn't remember God or the mighty acts He had performed for Israel. When we forget our story, we lose our way. But God remains faithful.

The story of Ruth happened during the time of the judges and shows a picture of redemption. Once again, a foreigner (Ruth the Moabite) was embraced by the people of God. She would become the great-grandmother of Israel's most famous king, David, and would be listed in the lineage of Jesus in Matthew.

## **DAY 3**

### **READING:**

**1 Samuel 1:1-2:11, 1 Samuel 3**

Samuel was the last judge and prophet of Israel. His mother, Hannah, gives us a picture of persistent prayer. He learned to hear God's voice at a young age.

## DAY 4

During Samuel's leadership, the Israelites rejected God's judges and asked for a king in order to be like the nations around them. It was ultimately a rejection of God's plan and leadership.

### READING:

**1 Samuel 10, 1 Samuel 13:1-15, 1 Samuel 15**

Samuel selected Saul as the first king of Israel. He had an impressive resume and he looked the part, but he wasn't obedient to God. At Gilgal, he took matters into his own hands instead of following the spiritual leadership of Samuel, and he outright disobeyed God's directions in his dealings with the Amalekites. God rejected him as king and directed Samuel to anoint another.

## DAY 5

### READING:

#### 1 Samuel 16-17, 1 Samuel 24

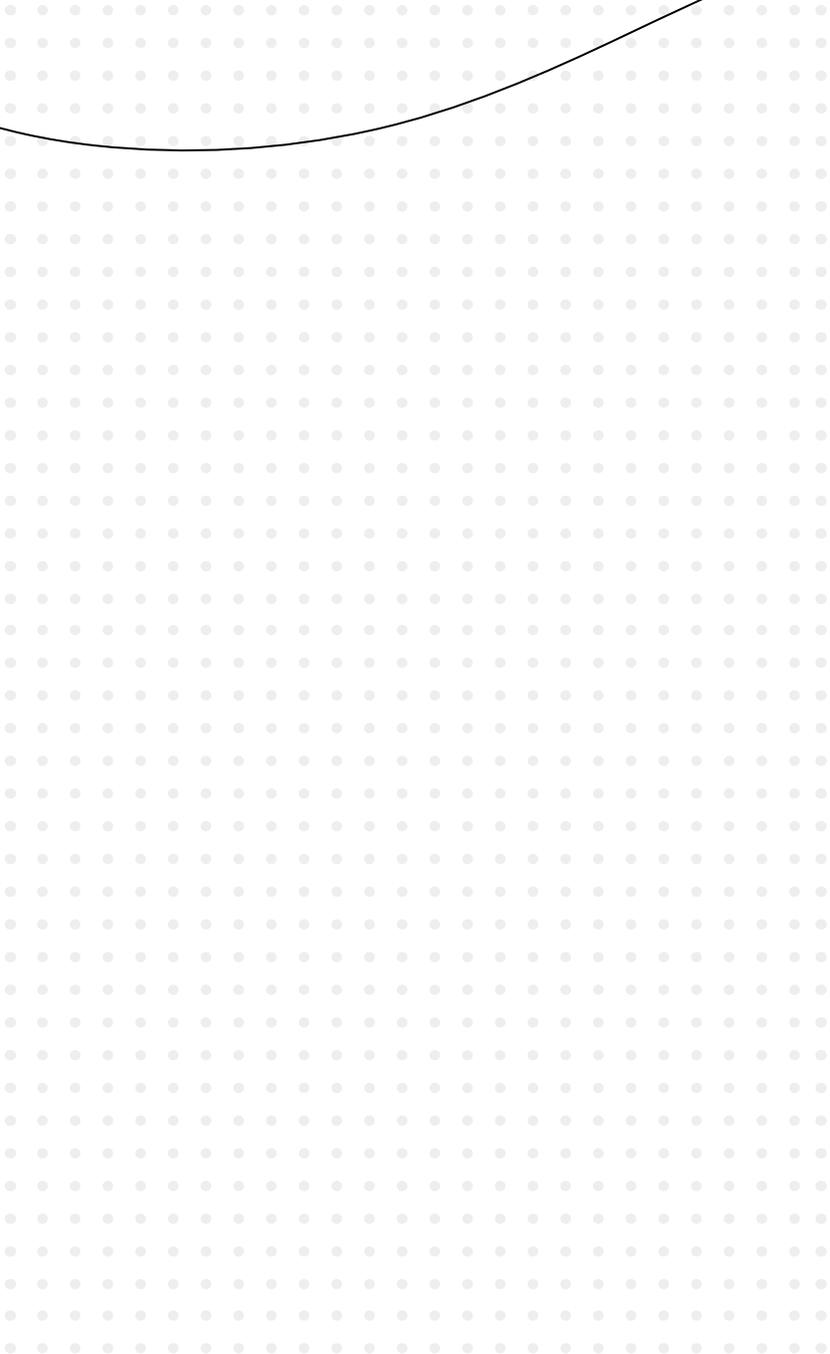
David has been heralded as the greatest king of Israel, and his rise to the throne initiated the Golden Age of Israel. But it didn't happen overnight. His character was refined through years of serving under Saul's leadership. When the prophet Samuel showed up to anoint the next king of Israel, he asked Jesse to bring out all of his sons. One by one, they were each considered for the crown, until Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons. David was the youngest, in the pasture watching the sheep. David's own father didn't even consider him a potential candidate to be king, but Samuel anointed him the next king of Israel.

King Saul was intensely jealous of David and tried repeatedly to kill him. As David and his men continued to hide from Saul, David had two opportunities to kill Saul. However, David repented that he had even cut a corner off the king's robe! He refused to force his way to the throne, even though his actions would have been seen as justified. This is an important lesson we learn from David: Don't try to take short cuts on God's path or you will short-circuit the work He wants to do in you and through you. It's in the waiting that God cultivates our character. God will get you to where God wants you to go.

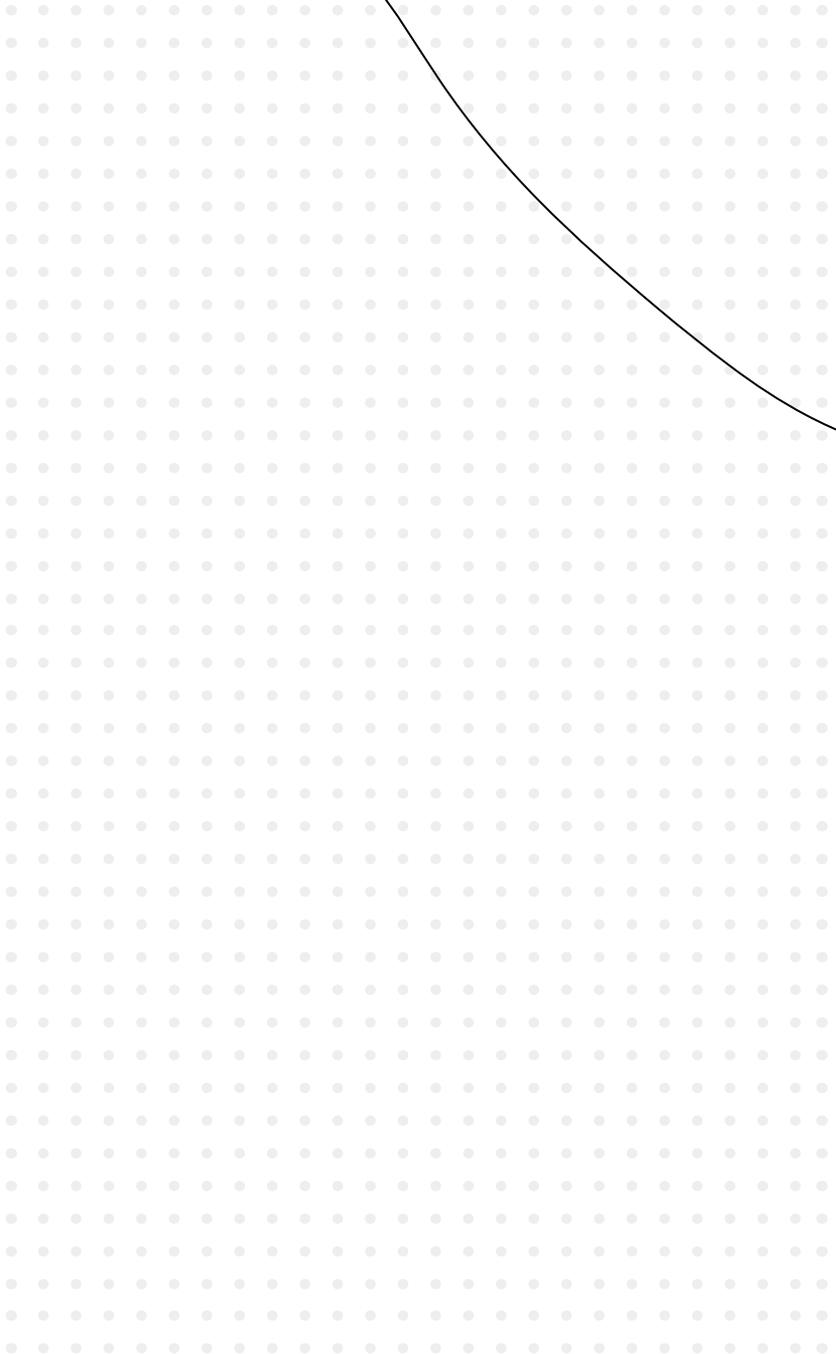
# Sermon Notes: The Conquest

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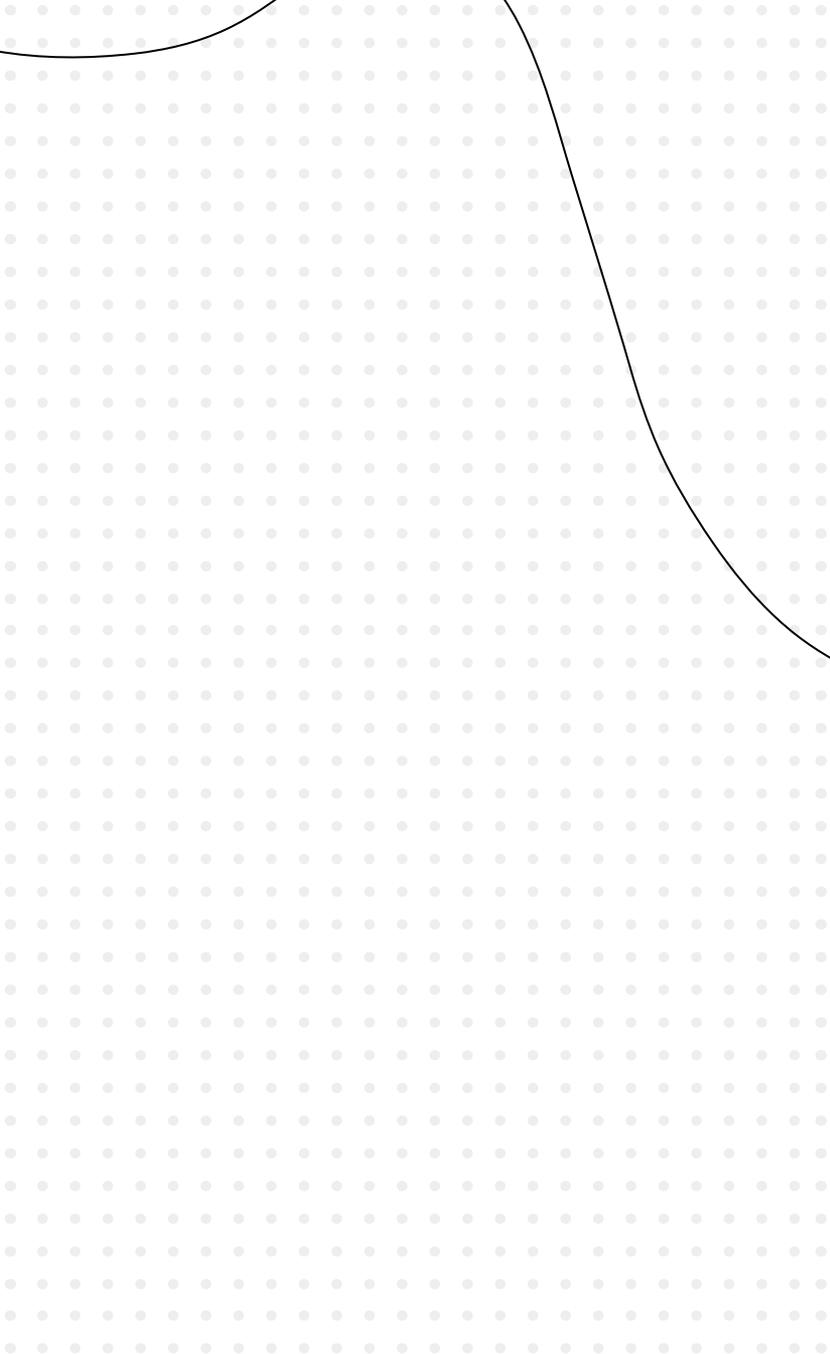
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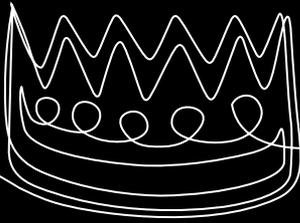


# In Your Group



**WEEK 6**

*The Kingdom*



## DAY 1

### READING:

#### 1 Chronicles 17, 2 Samuel 22

David was certainly a mixed bag. He was deeply flawed but also deeply devoted to God. Murder, adultery, and family breakdown all play a role in his story.

But once again, God demonstrates His faithfulness to unfaithful people. God established a new covenant with David—that the Messiah would come through his family's line. It was a progression of the promise that God had initiated with Adam and Eve and again with Abraham.

During his reign, David expanded Israel's territory by a factor of ten and created a strong and dominant nation from a loose confederation of tribes. He established Jerusalem as a hub for political, religious, and cultural activity; wrote the book of Psalms; defeated several enemy nations; and drew up the plans for the temple and job descriptions for the Levites.

## DAY 2

The Psalms are comprised of five books of collected poetry. David is the primary author, but it also includes songs from others such as Moses and Asaph. Some were written during times of peace and prosperity; others were written during times of trouble and despair. We find the writers questioning God's actions and celebrating His faithfulness—sometimes within the same passage.

If you read five Psalms a day, you can read through the entire book in a month (but carve out some extra time for the day you read Psalm 119!). Today, we will look at five different kinds of Psalms that span the range of emotions and situations represented in the collection.

### **READING:**

**Psalm 23, 27, 100, 139, 146**

## DAY 3

The low point of David's life came when he stayed home instead of going to battle with his army. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrated the murder of her husband to cover up their actions. They had a child named Solomon who would become the next king of Israel.

### READING:

**1 Kings 3:5-15, 2 Chronicles 6:12-7:10**

Solomon's life is marked by four distinct themes: Wisdom (it was the first thing he asked for and God granted): Wealth (his annual income was 25 tons of gold, not including trade): Writings (he is the author of three books in the Old Testament): and Women (his indiscretions ultimately led to his downfall and the breakdown of his Kingdom).

Solomon was responsible for the construction of the Temple, which would establish a permanent place of worship for Israel in the capital city of Jerusalem.

## DAY 4

Solomon was a prolific thinker and writer. Proverbs reflected wisdom for daily living. Song of Solomon (also called Song of Songs) was written early in his life to celebrate marriage. Ecclesiastes was written near the end of his life when he had wandered from God. It's important to remember that context and perspective when reading this book because it chronicles Solomon's attempt to find meaning in life apart from God.

If you read a Proverb a day, you can complete the entire book in one month.

### READING:

**Proverbs 3, Proverbs 22, Ecclesiastes 3:1-15, Ecclesiastes 7:1-14, Song of Solomon 2:8-13**

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam came to the throne. Solomon's former aide Jeroboam launched a rebellion and the kingdom divided into two.

## DAY 5

### READING:

**1 Kings 11:41-12:24, 2 Chronicles 9:29-11:17**

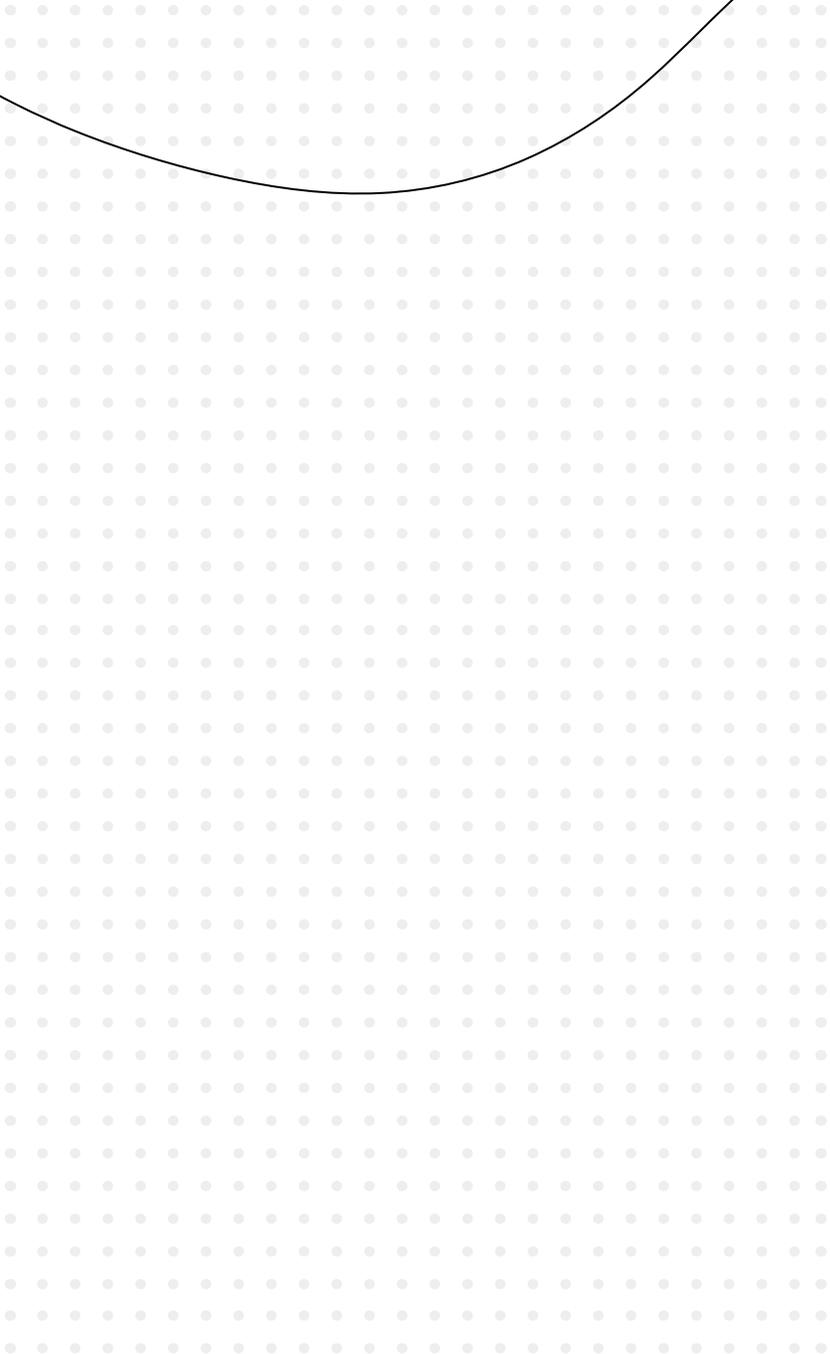
The nation of Israel split into two kingdoms. The Southern Kingdom was called Judah. Consisting of the regions of Judah and Benjamin, they remained faithful to the lineage of David although they didn't always remain faithful to God and they retained their capital city in Jerusalem. Rehoboam was the first king of Judah. He was followed by a mix of good and evil kings. The Temple remained the center of worship. The history of the Southern Kingdom is recorded in 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles. The book of 2 Chronicles focused on the rule of Israel's godly kings. The prophets Obadiah, Joel, Micah, Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel directed their writings to the people in the Southern Kingdom.

The Northern Kingdom, called Israel, departed from David's lineage and established Jeroboam as their king. They made Samaria their capital and constructed golden calves at Dan and Bethel for the people to have places of worship. The Northern Kingdom was ruled by a succession of evil kings and fell further and further away from God's law. God sent them prophets, but they continued on a crash course. In 722 BC, the Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians. The citizens were taken captive and dispersed throughout the Assyrian empire. The history of the Northern Kingdom is recorded in 1 Kings 12-22 and 2 Kings. The prophets Jonah, Amos, and Hosea directed their warnings and writings to the people in the Northern Kingdom.

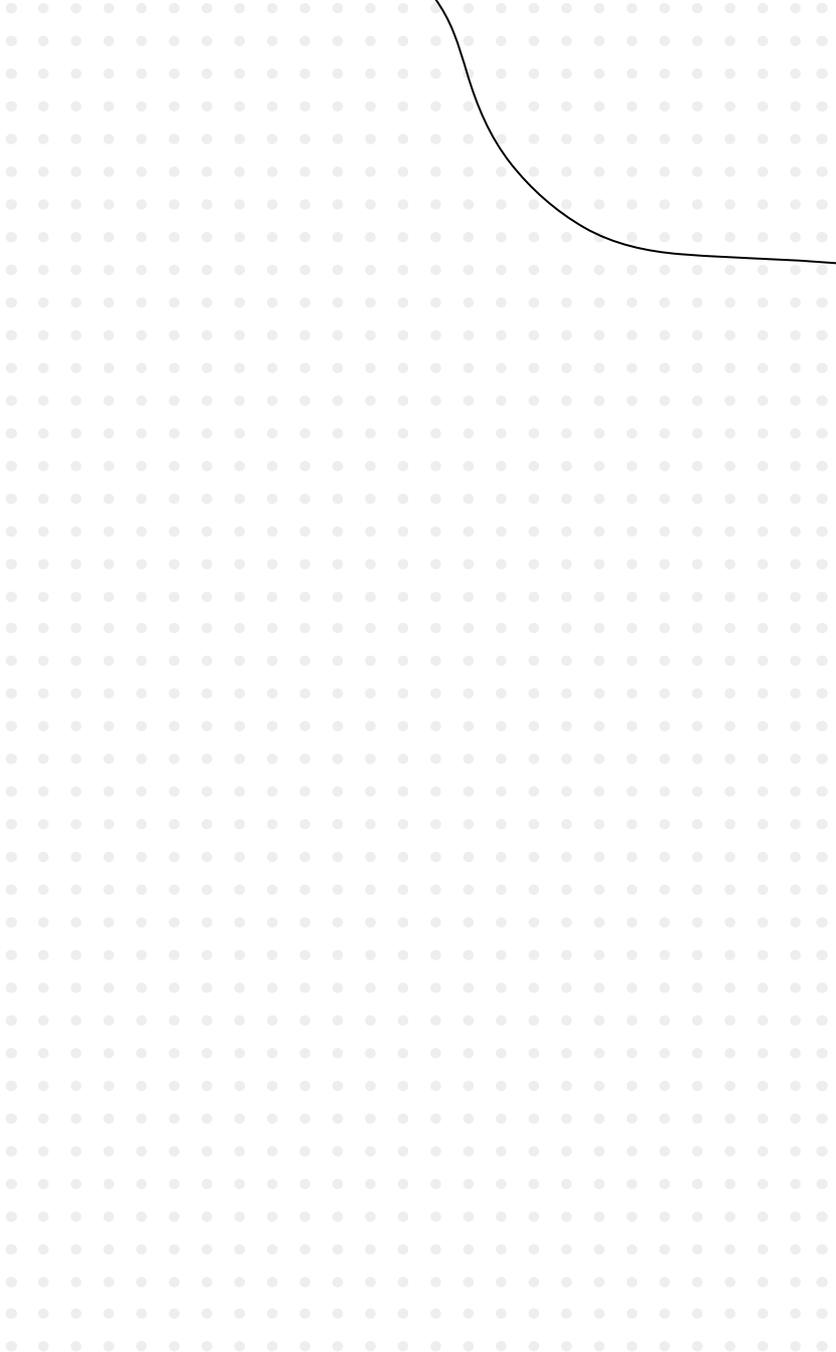
# Sermon Notes: The Kingdom

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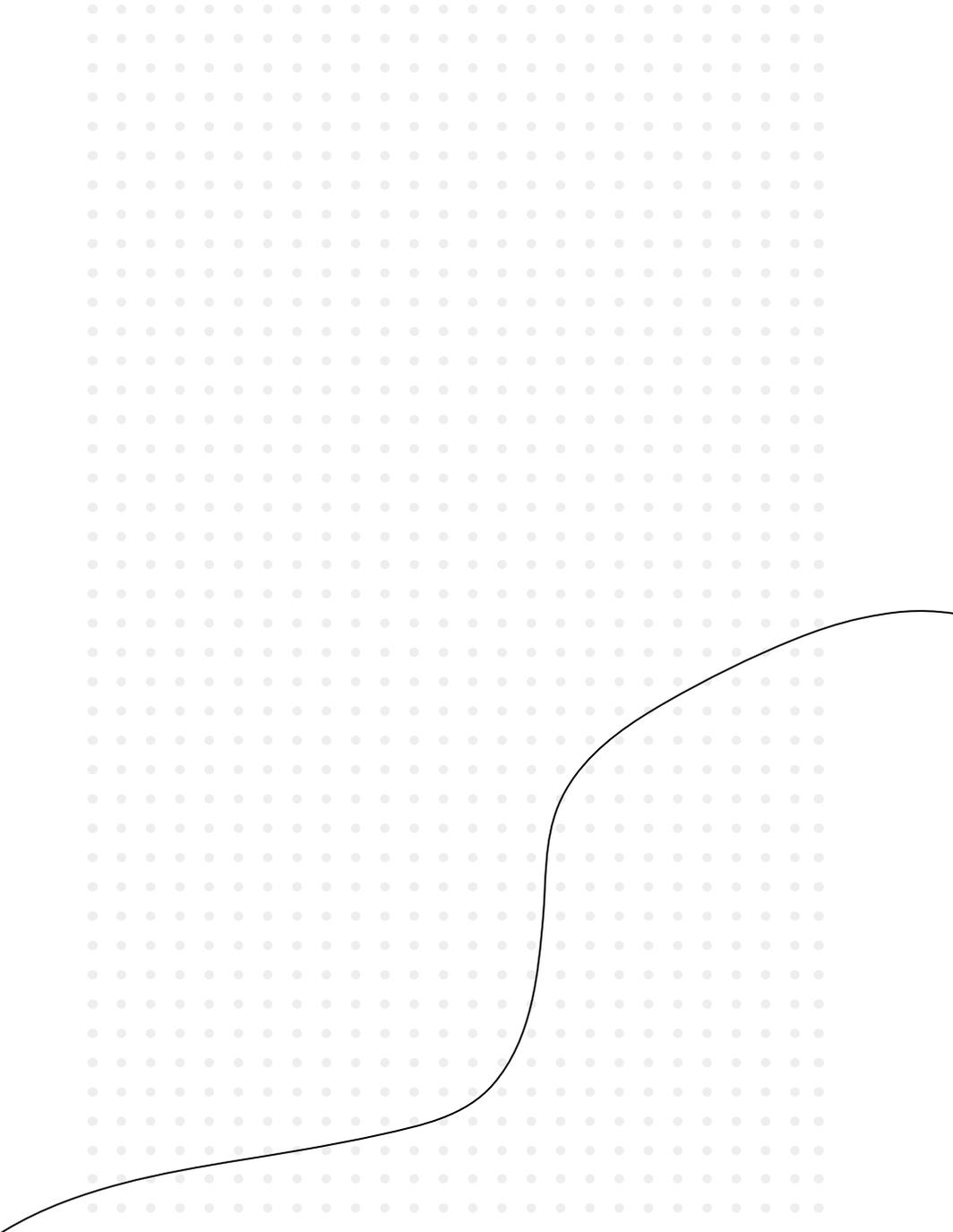
# Sermon Notes: The Kingdom



# In Your Group

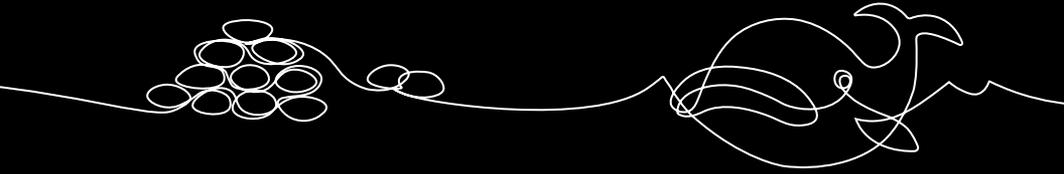


# In Your Group



**WEEK 7**

*The Warning*



## DAY 1

The Kingdom of God has split into two Kingdoms: the Northern Kingdom of Israel (ruled by a succession of evil kings) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (faithful to the line of David but ruled by a mix of both good and evil kings). During the first two days of this week's reading, we will focus on the prophets of the Northern Kingdom. During the final three days of this week's reading, we will focus on the kings and prophets of the Southern Kingdom.

The warnings and writings of the prophets include some interesting paradoxes. Their messages include both judgment and grace, future hope and present warnings, wrath and mercy.

### **READING:**

**1 Kings 17, 1 Kings 18:16-19:21, 2 Kings 5**

Elijah and Elisha were prophets in the Northern Kingdom. At Mt. Carmel, God demonstrated His power over other gods. The story of Namaan reveals God's heart of compassion for those outside the nation of Israel.

## DAY 2

### READING:

**Amos 5, Jonah 1-2, Hosea 1, 3**

The Assyrian empire was rising as a dominant force in world history and was threatening the people of Israel when God asked Jonah to take a warning to its capital city of Nineveh. Jonah tried to run from God's direction (and understandably so: the Assyrians were notorious for flaying their enemies and using their skins as wallpaper), but after an uncomfortable three nights in a fish, Jonah eventually obeyed God. To his surprise and dismay, the people of Nineveh received the warning and repented. God withheld His hand of judgment, leaving Jonah upset and feeling betrayed by God.

Amos encouraged God's people to show mercy.

Hosea is a picture of God's faithfulness. The story of Hosea and his persistent pursuit of his wife, Gomer, is a picture of a God who faithfully pursues unfaithful people.

Despite a momentary season of repentance due to Jonah's warnings, the Assyrian Empire continued to expand and eventually attacked Israel (the Northern Kingdom). Israel fell to the Assyrian army in 722 BC.

The Assyrian army marched into the Southern Kingdom of Judah and towards its capital city of Jerusalem. There Hezekiah was serving as the King of Judah and being advised by the prophet Isaiah.

## DAY 3

During the next three days, we will back up and focus on the kings and prophets of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

### READING:

**2 Kings 18:1-8, Micah 1:1-5, Micah 7:18-20, Isaiah 37:1-20, Isaiah 40, Nahum 1**

King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah sought God in prayer and followed His direction. Because of their obedience, the attacks of the Assyrian Empire were thwarted. The Southern Kingdom of Judah had been spared.

The prophet Micah warned that God would bring judgment on Judah for disobedience. However, he also delivered messages of hope that included the first prophecy about the coming Messiah—that He would be born in Bethlehem.

There are two distinct parts of Isaiah's book. The first half points out Judah's sin and calls them to repentance; the second half points to the coming Messiah and hope for the future.

Nahum pronounced God's coming judgment on Nineveh and Assyria.

## DAY 4

### READING:

**2 Kings 22, Zephaniah 4:14-20, Habakkuk 1:2-4, Habakkuk 3:17-19, Jeremiah 1:4-19, Jeremiah 13:15-17**

King Josiah's discovery of the book of Law brought revival to Judah, but it was too little, too late. During the reign of Josiah, God gave warnings of coming judgment but pointed to a promise of a future for the people of God. Zephaniah reminded the people that God was mighty to save while Habakkuk reminded the people to have faith: knowing God can deliver them, believing God will deliver them, but worshiping Him even when He seems far away.

Judah had been saved from the Assyrians, but the Babylonians presented a new threat, and the prophet Jeremiah encouraged the people to willingly submit to their imminent captors. It was a message he gave in obedience to God's direction, but one that was very unpopular with the people and painted him as a traitor in their eyes.

During the time of the Babylonian conquest, Jeremiah was writing warnings to the people still in Judah while Ezekiel was writing warnings to the people who were already living in captivity in Babylon.

Here is the timeline of the Babylonian invasion of Judah and the exile of its people:

605 BC - First invasion. Daniel was among those taken captive and deported to Babylon.

598 BC - Second invasion. Ezekiel was among those taken captive and deported to Babylon.

586 BC - Third invasion. Jerusalem fell, the Temple was destroyed, and more people were deported and exiled across the Babylonian Empire.

## **DAY 5**

### **READING:**

**Lamentations 3:22-33, Ezekiel 36:22-38, Ezekiel 47:1-12,  
2 Chronicles 36:15-21**

Lamentations was Jeremiah's song of lament over the fall of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Ezekiel wrote to people who were already living in exile to point them to the day when God's people would return to their land and God's presence would return to the Temple.

God allowed the exile to turn the hearts of His people back toward Him.

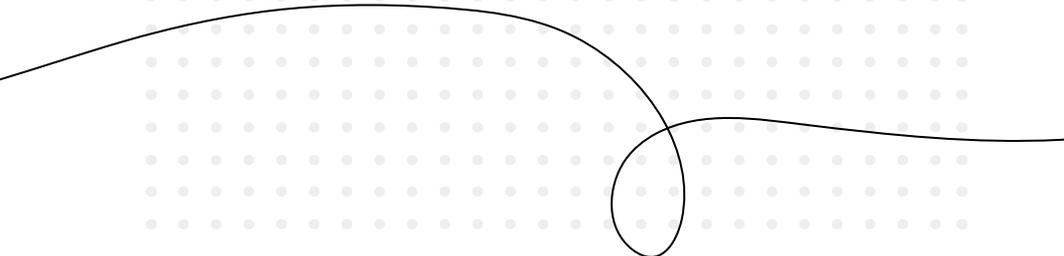
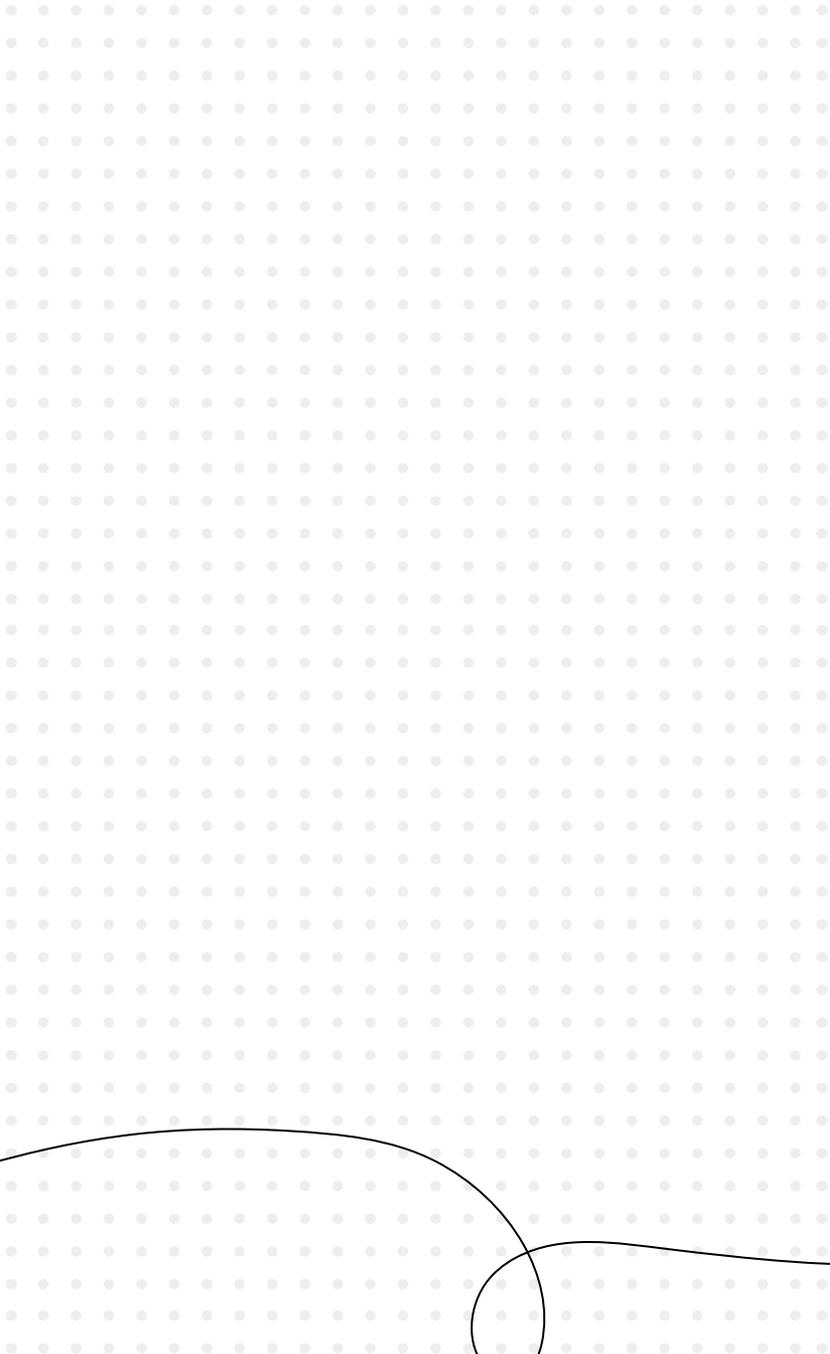
# Sermon Notes: The Warning

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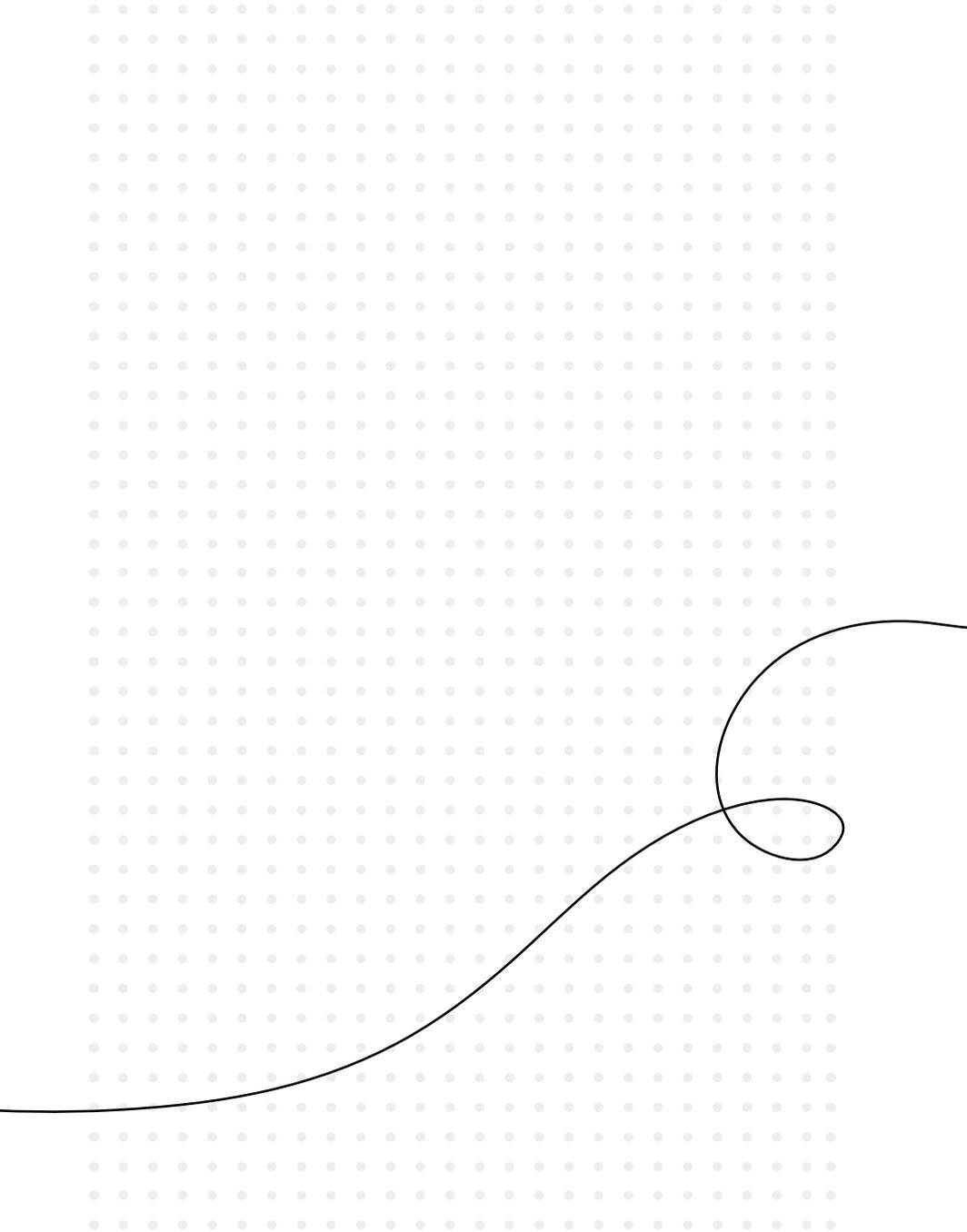
# Sermon Notes: The Warning

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# In Your Group

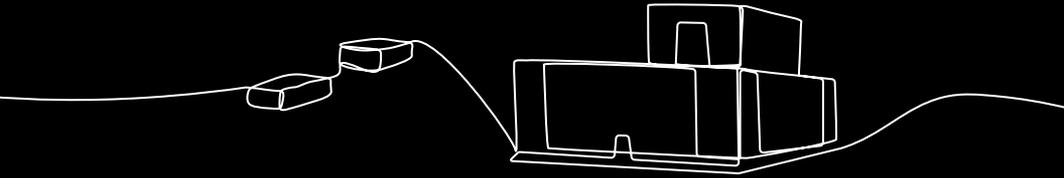


# In Your Group



**WEEK 8**

*The Return*



## **DAY 1**

The people of God lived for 70 years in exile -- first under the rule of the Babylonians, then under the rule of the Persians.

### **READING:**

#### **Daniel 1-3**

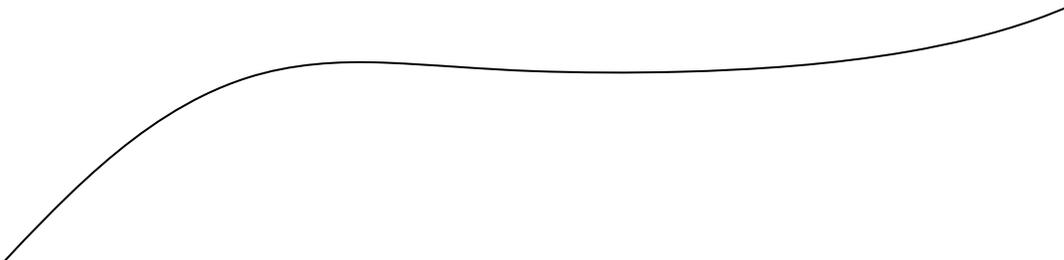
Daniel served in leadership roles in the administrations of three kings, and he gives us a picture of what it looks like to walk in integrity, live in the ways of God, and lead honorably in hostile circumstances. Because of his posture of humble confidence and obedience, God positioned him in many positions of influence.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to believe that God would deliver them but declared they would worship Him even if He did not.

## **DAY 2**

### **READING: Daniel 5-6**

The last half of the book of Daniel contains a vision of four beasts which reinforces the message of the narrative of chapters 1-6. God will be victorious in the end, so wise people will remain faithful to him regardless of the pressure of present circumstances.



## **DAY 3**

When King Cyrus of Persia conquered the Babylonians, he released the Jewish people to return to their land. There were three waves of returning exiles. In 538 BC, Zerubbabel led exiles back to rebuild the Temple. They started but didn't finish. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to finish construction of the Temple. In 458 BC, Ezra led a group back to complete the rebuilding of the Temple. In 444 BC, Nehemiah returned to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem.

### **READING:**

**Ezra 1:1-8, Ezra 6:13-18, Haggai 1, Zechariah 9:9-17,  
Nehemiah 1-2**

When the people of God were released from their captivity, not all of them chose to return to their land. Some, like Esther and Nehemiah, remained in positions of influence in the Persian Empire. Nehemiah traveled between his role in the palace and his leadership with the people in Jerusalem.

## **DAY 4**

Esther was a Jewish woman who became Queen of Persia. Even though the Persian kings had freed the Jewish people to return to their homeland, the Jews still faced persecution in a foreign land. Esther's courage and trust in God brought freedom to her people.

### **READING:**

**Esther 2:1-18, Esther 4, Esther 8**

## DAY 5

Even though the temple had been rebuilt, the wall had been restored, and Jerusalem had been established once again as the hub of political, religious, and cultural activity, the people of God quickly fell back into old patterns and routines. They forgot the God who had delivered them over and over again.

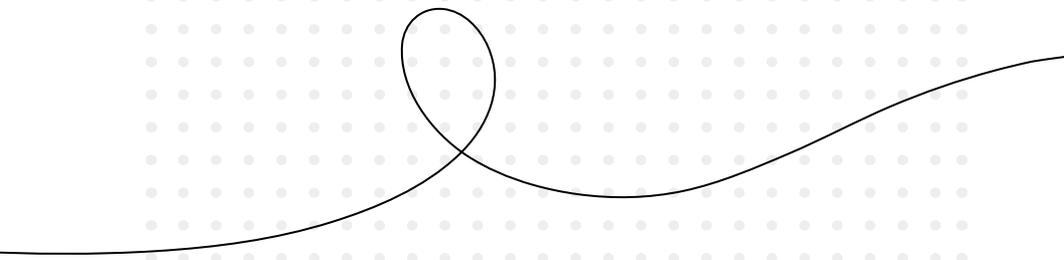
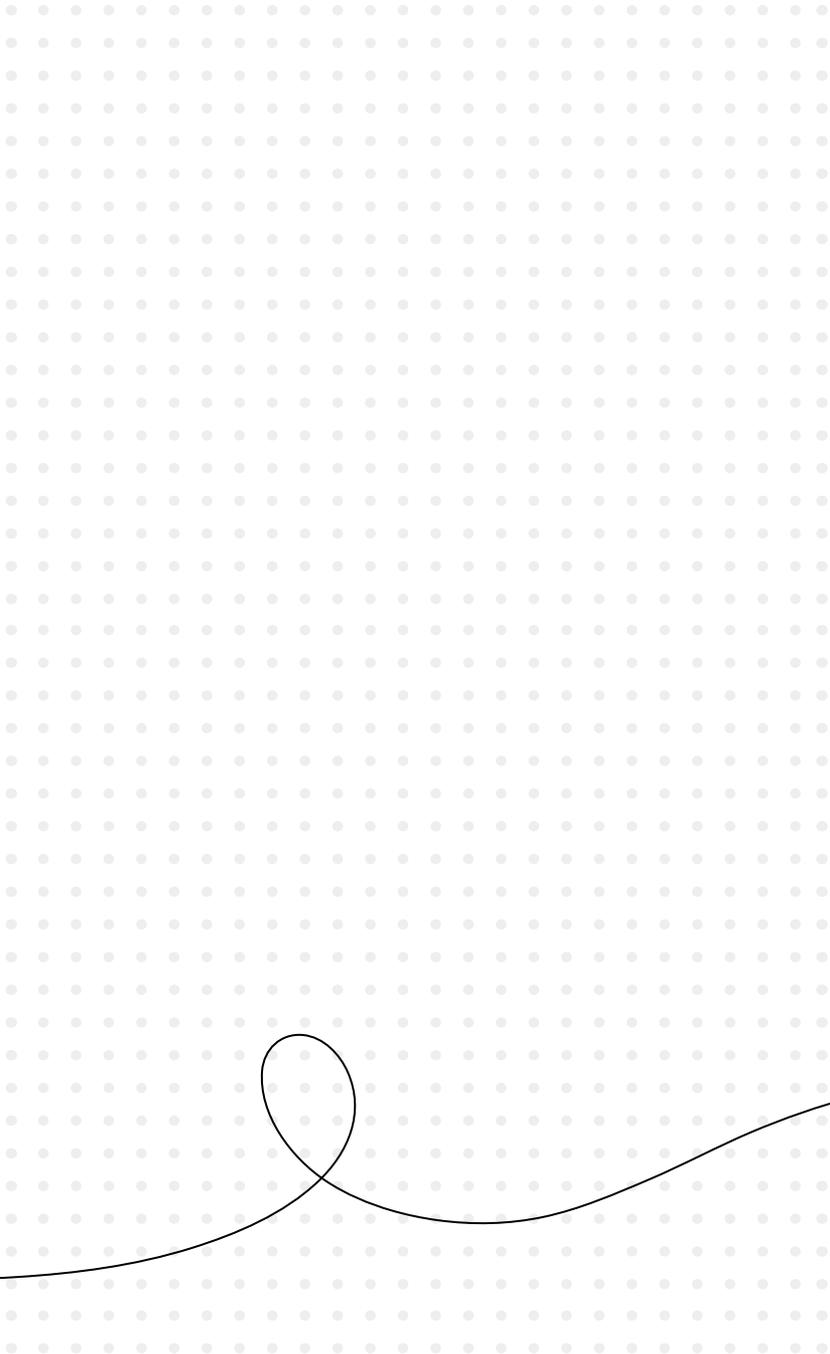
Malachi was the last Old Testament prophet of Israel, and he reminded the people that God would remain faithful if they would return to him.

Obadiah and Joel were prophets in the Northern Kingdom, but it is unclear when their ministries occurred. Obadiah warned Edom (the descendants of Esau) against betraying their brothers, the Israelites. And Joel pointed to a day when the power of the Spirit of God would no longer be limited to specific people at specific times for specific reasons but would be available to all the people of God.

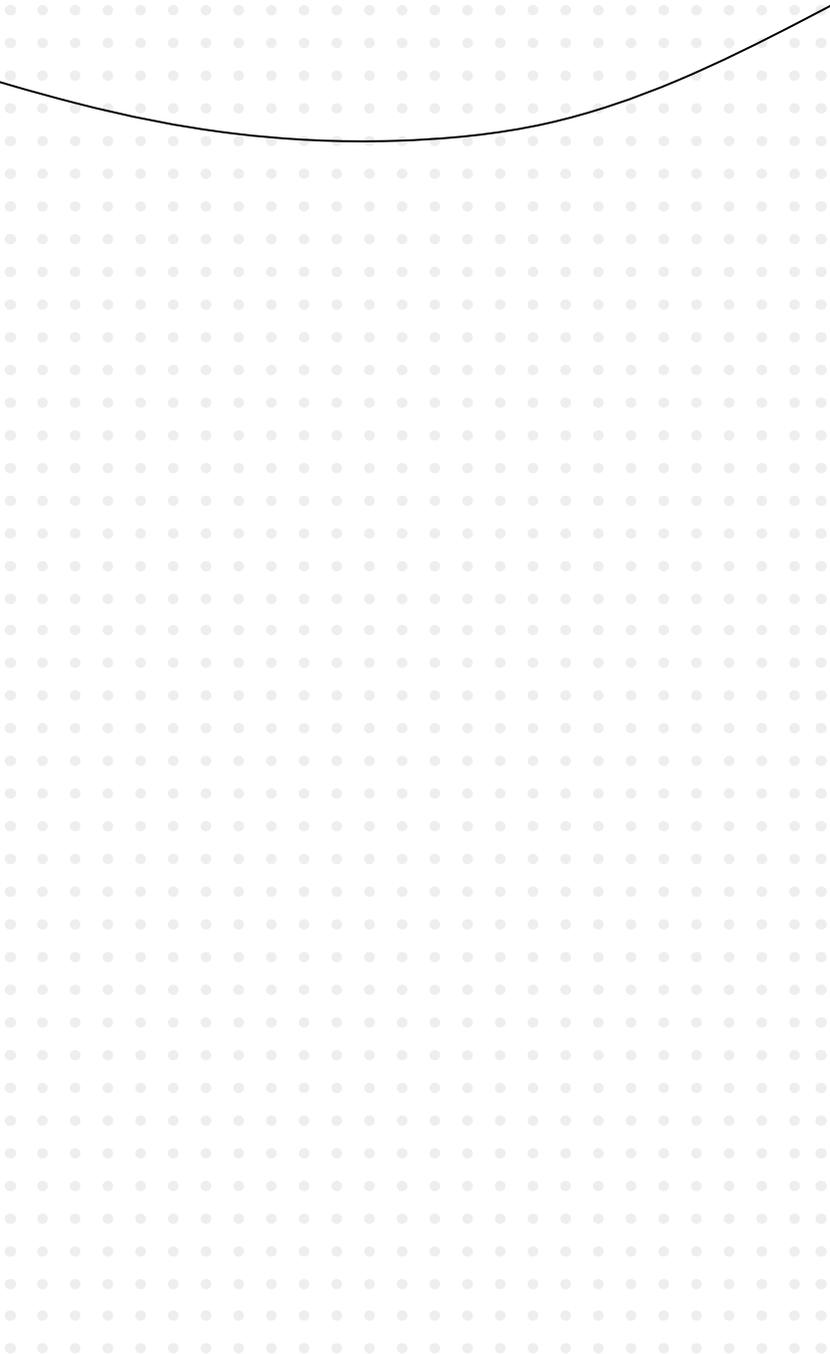
### **READING:**

**Obadiah 1, Joel 2:12-32, Malachi 1**

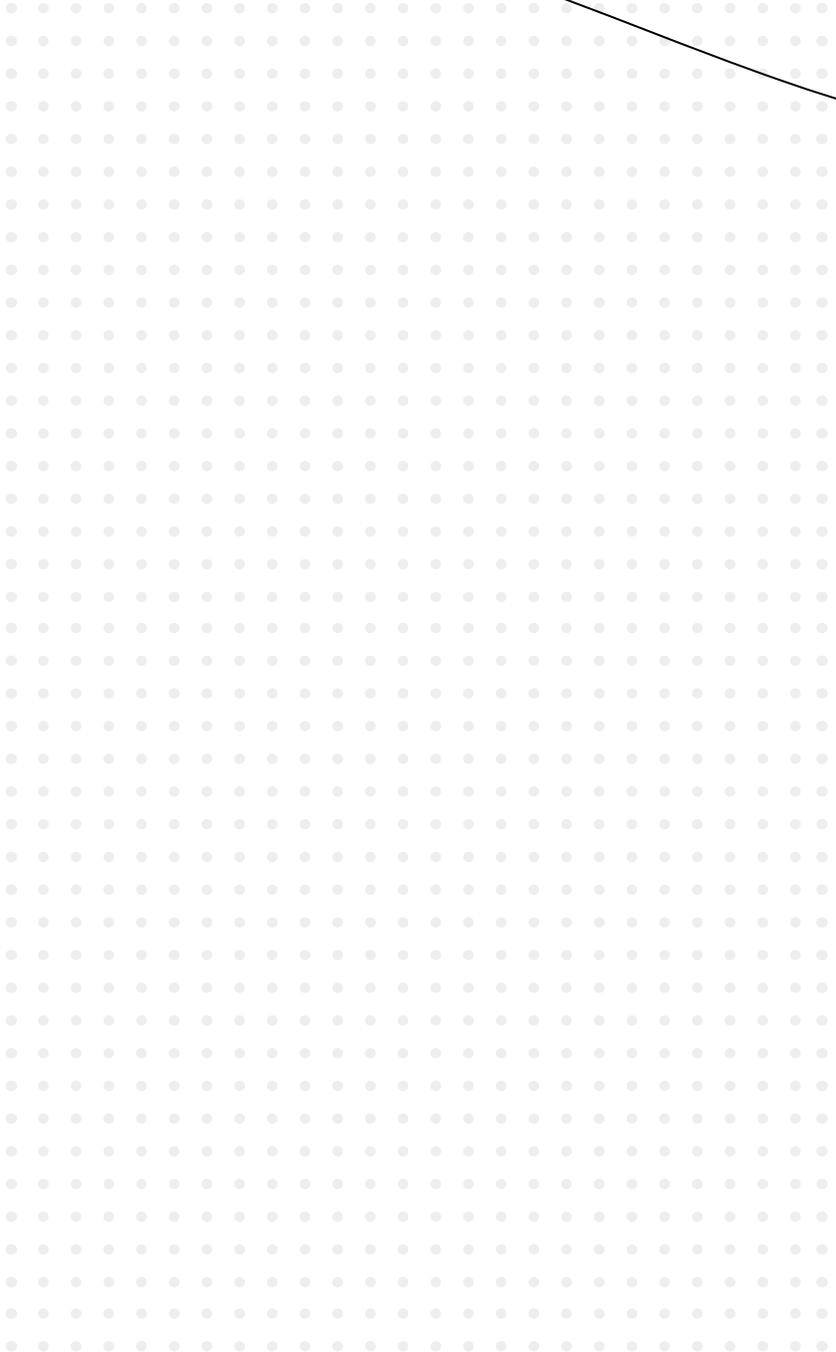
# Sermon Notes: The Return



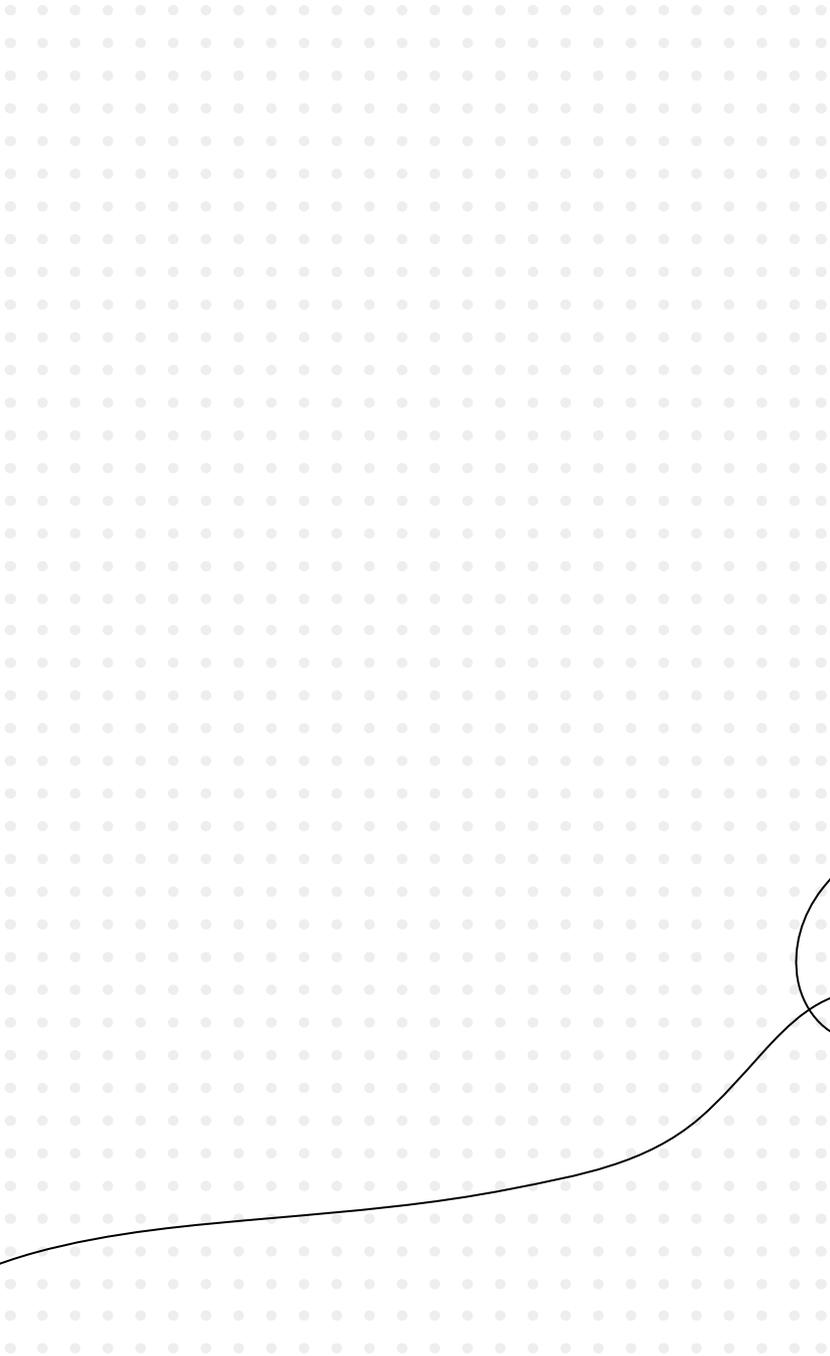
# Sermon Notes: The Return



# In Your Group



## In Your Group



**WEEK 9**

*The Coming*



## DAY 1

For 400 Years, the people of God waited in silence. In 330 BC, Alexander the Great led the Greeks to conquer the Persian Empire. From 164 to 63 BC, the people of God were ruled by a family of Jewish priests called the Hasmoneans. This was called the Maccabean Period. In 63 BC, the city of Jerusalem was captured by the Roman Empire. Roman and Greek influences were felt throughout the New Testament world.

The stories of the birth, life, teaching, and miracles of Jesus are based on eyewitness accounts. Matthew and John were two of Jesus' 12 disciples; Mark learned his account from the disciple Peter; and Luke, a medical doctor, wrote his book after interviewing many people who saw and knew Jesus.

Some Bibles use red text to designate the words of Jesus.

### READING:

**Luke 1:26-56, Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 1:18-2:18, John 1:1-18**

Matthew and Luke give us a window into the character and faithful resolve of Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph. John's book arranges the life of Jesus in a more theological and categorical way than in a chronological timeline, so he begins his book with a declaration of who Jesus is—God in flesh.

## DAY 2

### READING:

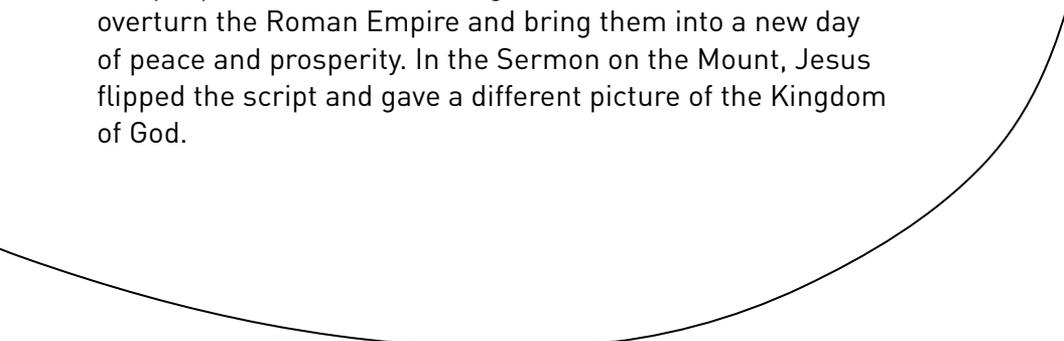
#### Matthew 3:1-4:11

Jesus began His public ministry when He was 30 years old, and He bookended His ministry with baptism. In Matthew 3, He set an example for us to follow, while in Matthew 28, He left His disciples a command to baptize all nations. At His baptism, we see all three members of the Trinity present: the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and God declared that Jesus was His son. After the baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for 40 days. Satan taunted Jesus to prove His identity by presuming on God's power to meet His needs and accomplish God's plans. Jesus responded with Scripture, and He gives us a model for resisting temptation in our own lives.

## DAY 3

### READING: Matthew 5-7

The people of God were looking for a Messiah who would overturn the Roman Empire and bring them into a new day of peace and prosperity. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus flipped the script and gave a different picture of the Kingdom of God.



## **DAY 4**

### **READING:**

**Matthew 9:9-12, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 5:1-11**

Jesus had many followers, but He selected 12 men to be His disciples—people in whom He would invest the greatest portion of His time and influence. They were a mixed bag. Matthew was a tax collector who was despised by the Jewish people for being aligned with the Roman government while Simon was a zealot who was passionate about overthrowing the Roman government. James, John, and Peter were fishermen.

## DAY 5

### READING:

**Mark 2:1-12, Luke 15, John 11:1-44**

The bulk of the gospels focus on Jesus' teaching and miracles. He turned water into wine and healed the sick and commanded dead men to walk out of their graves and showed honor to the scum of society. He told stories to help people understand God's character and to paint a picture of how His kingdom would look.

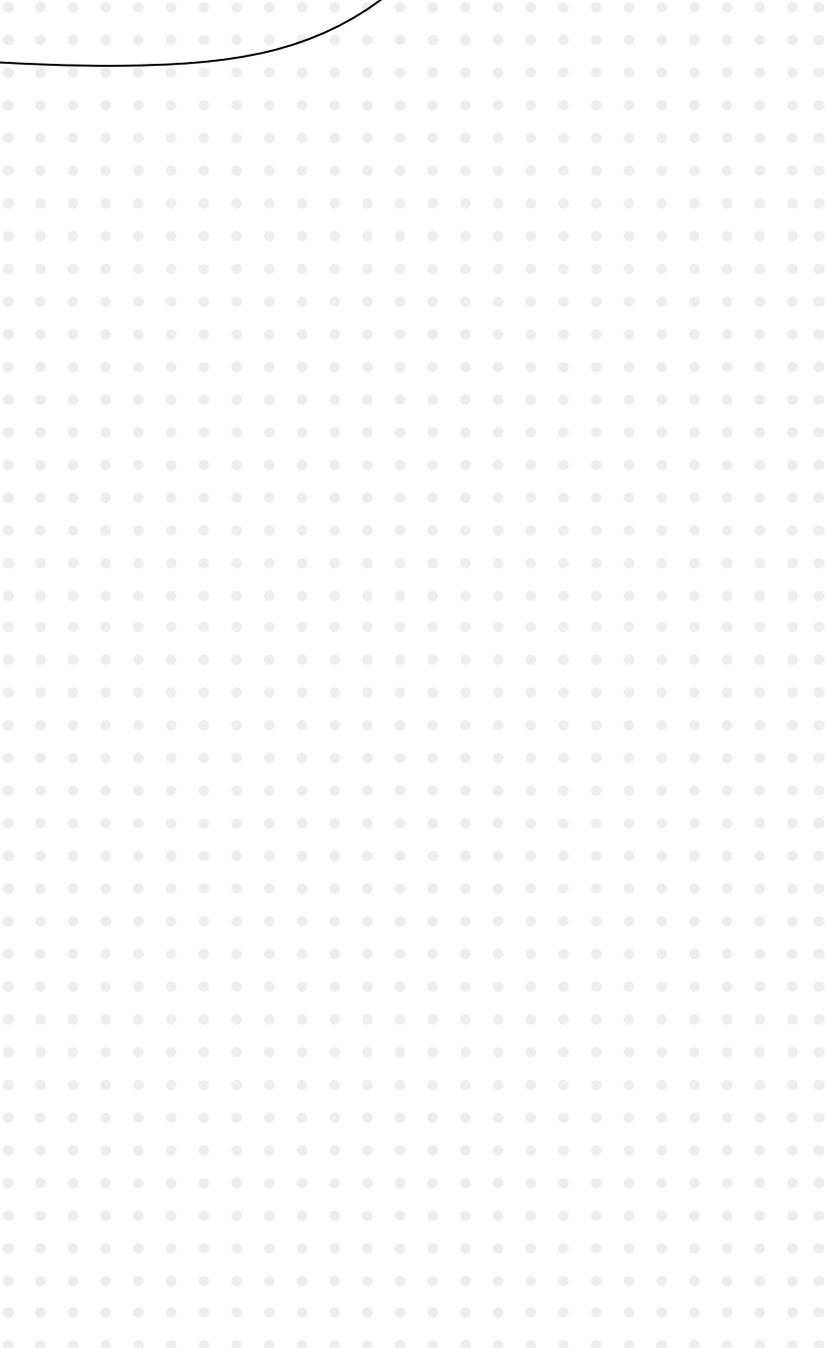
# Sermon Notes: The Coming

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# Sermon Notes: The Coming

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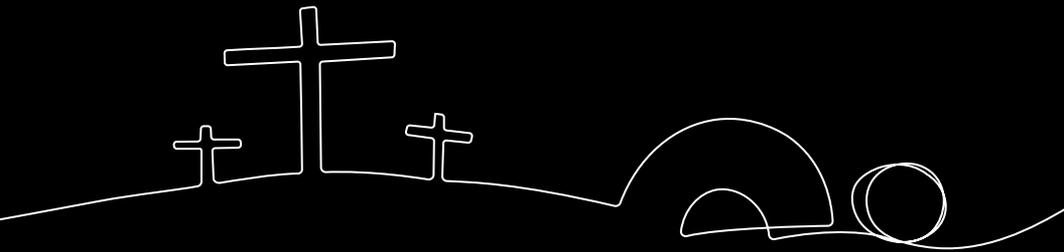


# In Your Group

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**WEEK 10**

*The Rising*



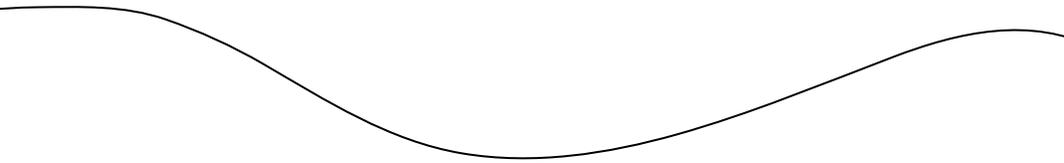
## **DAY 1**

Jesus preached love and offered peace. But the enemy twisted the hearts of people. This week is known as the Passion Week. We move from Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to His betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, and burial on Friday to His resurrection on Easter Sunday. In order to track with the Passion narrative, we will read seven days this week.

### **READING:**

**John 12:1-19**

Take a moment today to worship God in your own way, acknowledging when and how He has been faithful in your life.



## DAY 2

### READING:

**Luke 21:37-22:6**

Ask God to show you any areas in your life where you have traded following Jesus for what was most convenient and profitable for you in the moment.

## **DAY 3**

### **READING:**

**John 13-17, Mark 14:32-41**

Spend time praying that God's will would be done in your life.

## **DAY 4**

### **READING:**

**Luke 22:54-23:25, Mark 14:43-72**

When have you, like Peter, been guilty of following Jesus at a distance? Have you been close enough to see Him but not close enough to be impacted by Him? When have you denied Him?

What do you learn of Jesus' character through His posture in the trial?

## **DAY 5**

### **READING:**

**Matthew 27:27-61, Mark 15:16-47, Luke 23:26-56, John 19:16-42**

Jesus makes seven recorded statements from the cross. Some of them reflect His suffering and humanity. Others point to His grace and divinity. Spend some time reflecting on His words.

## **DAY 6**

### **READING:**

**John 20-21, Mark 16:1-8**

Jesus didn't come to make bad people good, but to bring dead people back to life. Celebrate the life Jesus has given you. What are the dead places He has resurrected?

## **DAY 7**

### **READING:**

**Luke 24:13-35, Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:3-8, Luke 24:36-53**

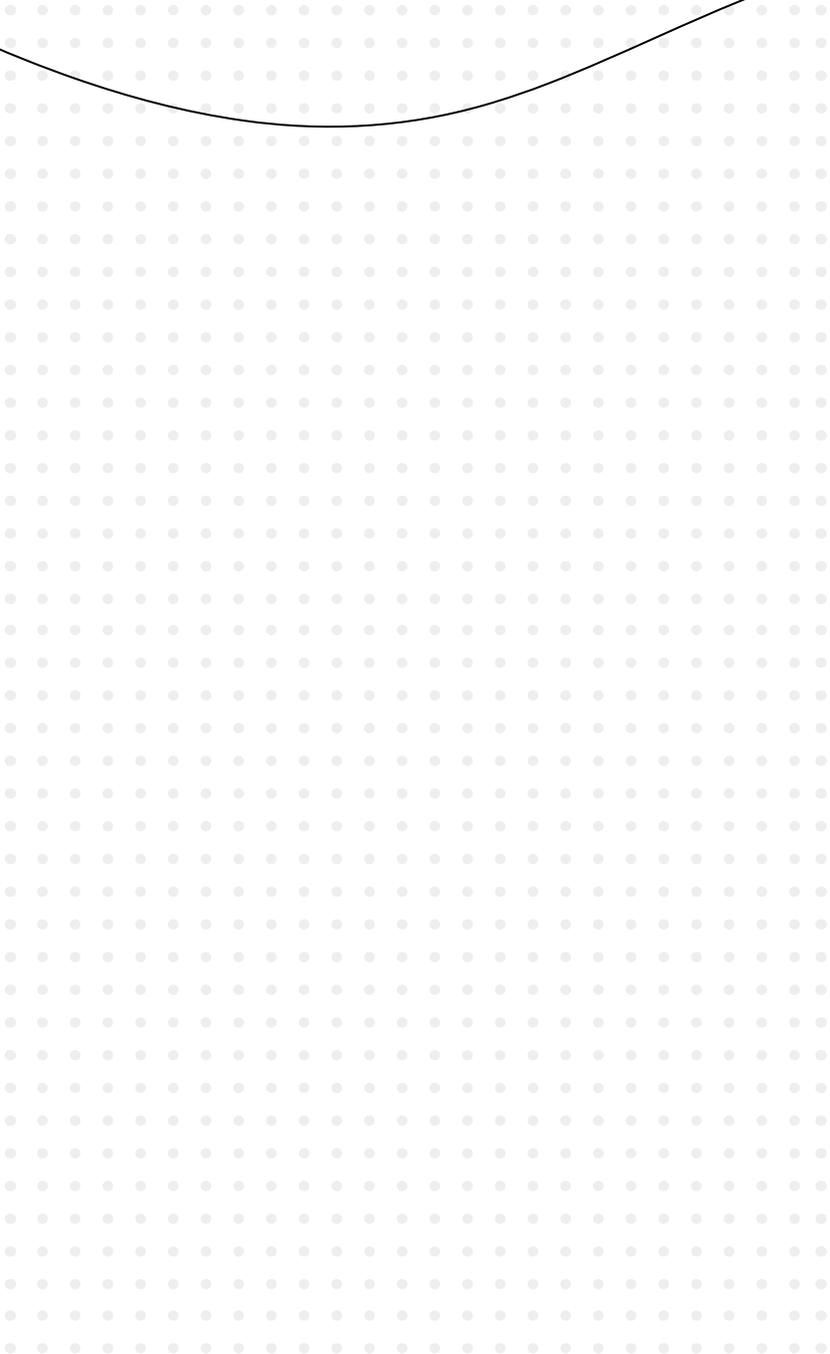
The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus form the turning point of all history. Thousands of Jewish men were crucified, but only one predicted His own death and resurrection and visibly walked out of the grave. He was seen by over 120 witnesses, and He told His followers that the kingdom of God would be established as they took His message of hope, healing, reconciliation, and grace to the rest of the world.



# Sermon Notes: The Rising

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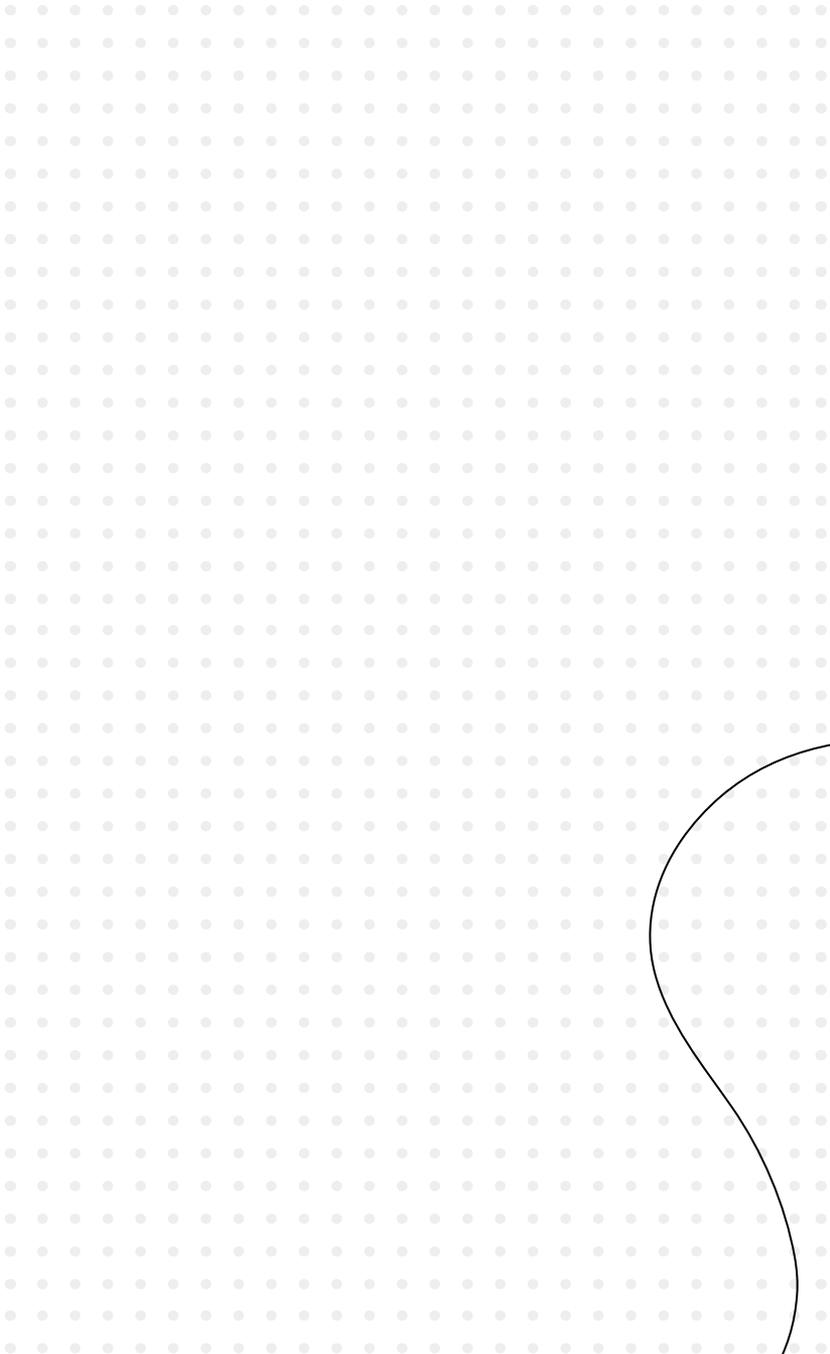
# Sermon Notes: The Rising



# In Your Group

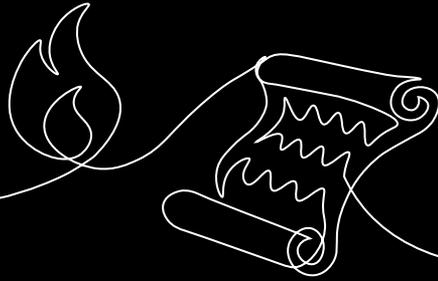
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# In Your Group



**WEEK 11**

*The Mission*



## DAY 1

The book of Acts tells the story of the early church. It is followed by several letters, also called epistles, which provided practical instructions for life and faith for both Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus.

After the resurrection, Jesus instructed His followers to wait in Jerusalem. They spent 10 days in prayer.

### **READING:**

**Acts 2, Acts 4:1-22, Acts 6:8-15, Acts 7:54-8:3**

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on the 120 people who had been waiting in prayer. They were most likely at the Temple when it happened. Because there were Jewish pilgrims from all over the Roman Empire who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Weeks, or Pentecost, they heard the story of Jesus and 3,000 were baptized in one day. The message of Jesus was going from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

The disciples faced new challenges—incorporating the message of Jesus into the construct of their Jewish religion, establishing a structure for meeting the needs of the people around them, and being obedient to take the message of Jesus to the entire world.

Stephen was the first martyr. Saul, a devout Jew who had studied under the some of the most accomplished scholars, witnessed the death of Stephen and persecuted those who were following Jesus.

## DAY 2

### READING:

#### Acts 9, Galatians 1:11-24, Acts 10

Saul's conversion was significant. Later known as Paul, he was a devout Jewish teacher who had studied under one of the most respected rabbis of history. God literally knocked him off his horse to initiate a relationship with him. Because of the threat he had posed to the followers of Jesus, people like Ananias and Barnabas took a risky step in developing a relationship with him and helped him assimilate into the early gathering of the church.

Paul would go on three missionary journeys to take the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.

The vision of Peter and his encounter with Cornelius was a turning point in the early church. Cornelius was a Roman officer who feared and respected the God of the Jews. God honored his devotion. When Peter walked through Cornelius' door, it opened the doors of the gospel to the whole world.

## DAY 3

### READING:

#### Acts 13:1-15:35, Galatians 5

Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church to take the gospel to various cities in Asia Minor. The Council of Jerusalem was a defining moment of the early church as they discussed how to incorporate Gentiles into their community. Because Jesus was the Messiah for the Jewish people, the first followers of Jesus were Jewish. Some believed that Gentiles had to become culturally and religiously Jewish in order to follow Jesus. The testimony of Peter and Paul showed that God was not withholding His grace from the Gentiles. The Council of Jerusalem made a significant decision: Gentiles did not have to become Jewish to follow Jesus. The message of Jesus transcends culture, religion, and ethnicity.

Galatians was a letter that Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (in modern-day Turkey), and it is his first attempt to lay out a systematic expression of what he believes about Jesus. He is adamant that Gentiles should be able to follow Jesus without first converting to Judaism because the message of Jesus transcends culture and ethnicity.

## DAY 4

Paul and Barnabas parted ways, and Paul selected Silas as his new missionary partner. The second journey took them through Achaia and Macedonia, which is modern-day Greece. During that time, Paul wrote two letters to the church in Thessalonica, encouraging them to be faithful in prayer, to stand firm in their convictions, and to be diligent in their work.

### READING:

**Acts 15:36-18:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10,  
2 Thessalonians 2:13-17**

In Acts 16:1, Paul and Silas met Timothy, who would become a traveling companion and eventually the pastor of the church at Ephesus. In Acts 16:6-8, we read a rather quick narrative of all the places Paul and Silas attempted to go but were blocked and redirected by the Spirit. Once they arrived in Troas, they found themselves at the end of the road, facing the sea, without any clear direction for where they were supposed to go. Finally, God gave Paul a vision of a Macedonian man asking that they bring the gospel to them. By the time they had reached Troas, they had already walked 500 miles. Five hundred miles following the direction of the Holy Spirit without any clear destination! We read it in three verses, but it took them months of daily obedience.

With their arrival in Macedonia, the gospel spread to the continent of Europe.

## DAY 5

Paul made Ephesus his home base for his third missionary journey and travels throughout Asia Minor. During that time, he wrote a letter to give instruction and answer questions that had come from the church at Corinth.

### READING:

**Acts 18:23-20:38, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

The Gospel spread throughout the Mediterranean world. Peter, John, and Paul pleaded with the churches to maintain good doctrine, to hold fast to the Word of God, and to plant their lives firmly in the Story God is telling.

Corinth was a Greek city Paul visited during his second missionary journey, and it was home to the Temple of Apollo (the god of wisdom) and the Temple of Aphrodite (the goddess of love). When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he pointed to God as the true source of wisdom and love. He wrote two letters to the Corinthians to address various questions they had asked. They were experiencing quarrels over beliefs, an improper use of spiritual gifts, divorce and separation, lawsuits, and people getting drunk on communion. It was a mess. But it demonstrates that Jesus doesn't expect us to clean up our act before we come to him. We are all in process.

Paul was very strategic in the way he spread the message of Jesus. For instance, in Corinth, your words didn't carry any weight unless you were contributing to society in the marketplace in a practical way. So in Corinth, Paul became a tentmaker. In Athens, the words of philosophers, academics, and teachers were highly respected. So in Athens, Paul stepped into the Areopagus and competed and contended for the gospel in the marketplace of ideas. The message was sacred; the methods were not. He was also careful to ensure that the message he preached was focused on converting people to a person, and not converting them to a culture.

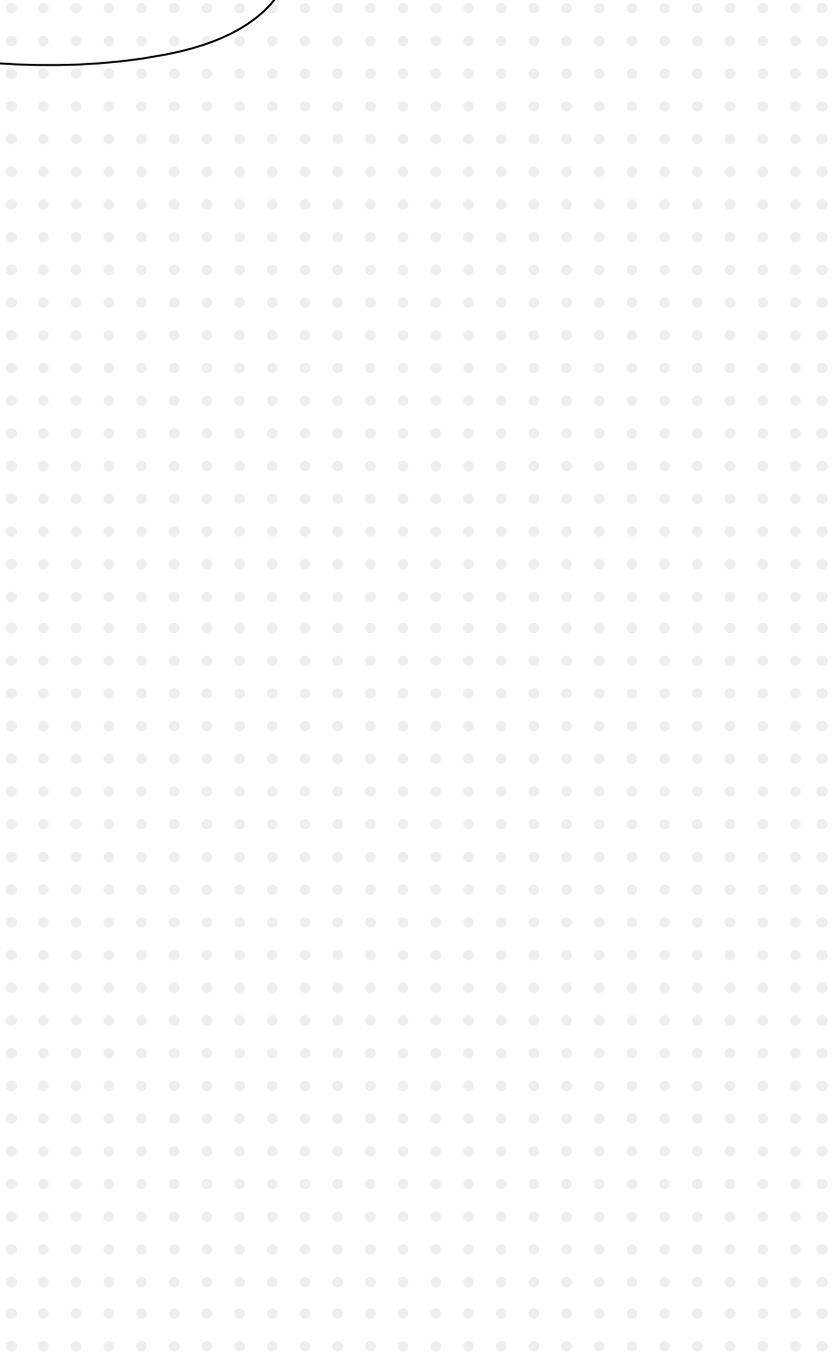
# Sermon Notes: The Mission



# Sermon Notes: The Mission

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# In Your Group

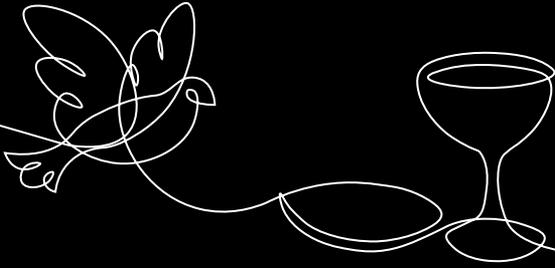


## In Your Group

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**WEEK 12**

*The Church*



## DAY 1

After his third missionary journey, Paul declared his desire to go to Rome. He finally got his wish, but he went to Rome as a prisoner, not a missionary. While in Rome, he wrote letters to churches and pastors. He was also able to share the message of Jesus with high-ranking leaders of the Roman Empire. The book of Acts ends here, so the outcome of the trial is unclear. Early church tradition suggests that Paul was acquitted and went on a final missionary journey to Spain. It is believed he was killed by the Emperor Nero in AD 67.

### READING:

**Romans 3:21-26, Romans 8, Romans 12**

Romans is Paul's most systematic explanation of his theology. Romans 3 unpacks his theology of faith and grace. Romans 8 declares who we are in Christ. And Romans 12 tells us how to serve God and serve one another.

## DAY 2

### READING:

**Ephesians 2:1-10, Philippians 2:1-11, Colossians 1:15-23, Philemon**

While Paul was in prison, he wrote letters to churches he had relationships with. He encouraged the church at Ephesus to root their identity in Christ in order to fulfill the purposes God had ordained for him. Philippians represents one of the most joyful books in the New Testament, and he encourages the church at Philippi to have hope even in the midst of trials. To the Colossians, Paul focused on Jesus' unique display of humanity and deity.

He also wrote a letter to a church member in Colossae called Philemon. At some point, Philemon's slave, Onesimus, had joined Paul's missionary team. Now, Paul was sending Onesimus back to his master, but encouraging Philemon to receive him back as a brother and not a slave. While Paul never directly challenges the notion of slavery in the New Testament world, his opinion is revealed in the letter to Philemon.

## **DAY 3**

### **READING:**

**1 Timothy 1:12-17, 1 Timothy 4:12-16, 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8,  
Titus 2**

Paul also wrote personal letters to two young pastors named Timothy and Titus. Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus, while Titus served as pastor of the church in Crete. Both leaders were met with unique challenges. Paul encouraged them to stand firm in their convictions, gave them guidelines for choosing leaders in the church, and encouraged them to develop their gifts and cultivate their character. The principles embedded in these letters are helpful for young leaders today.

## **DAY 4**

The disciples Peter and John also wrote letters. Peter sought to encourage his readers to live righteously even in the face of opposition, and to hold onto hope for the future. John reminded his readers to be obedient to God and devoted to one another.

### **READING:**

**1 Peter 1:3-21, 2 Peter 1:3-11, 1 John 4, 2 John, 3 John**

## **DAY 5**

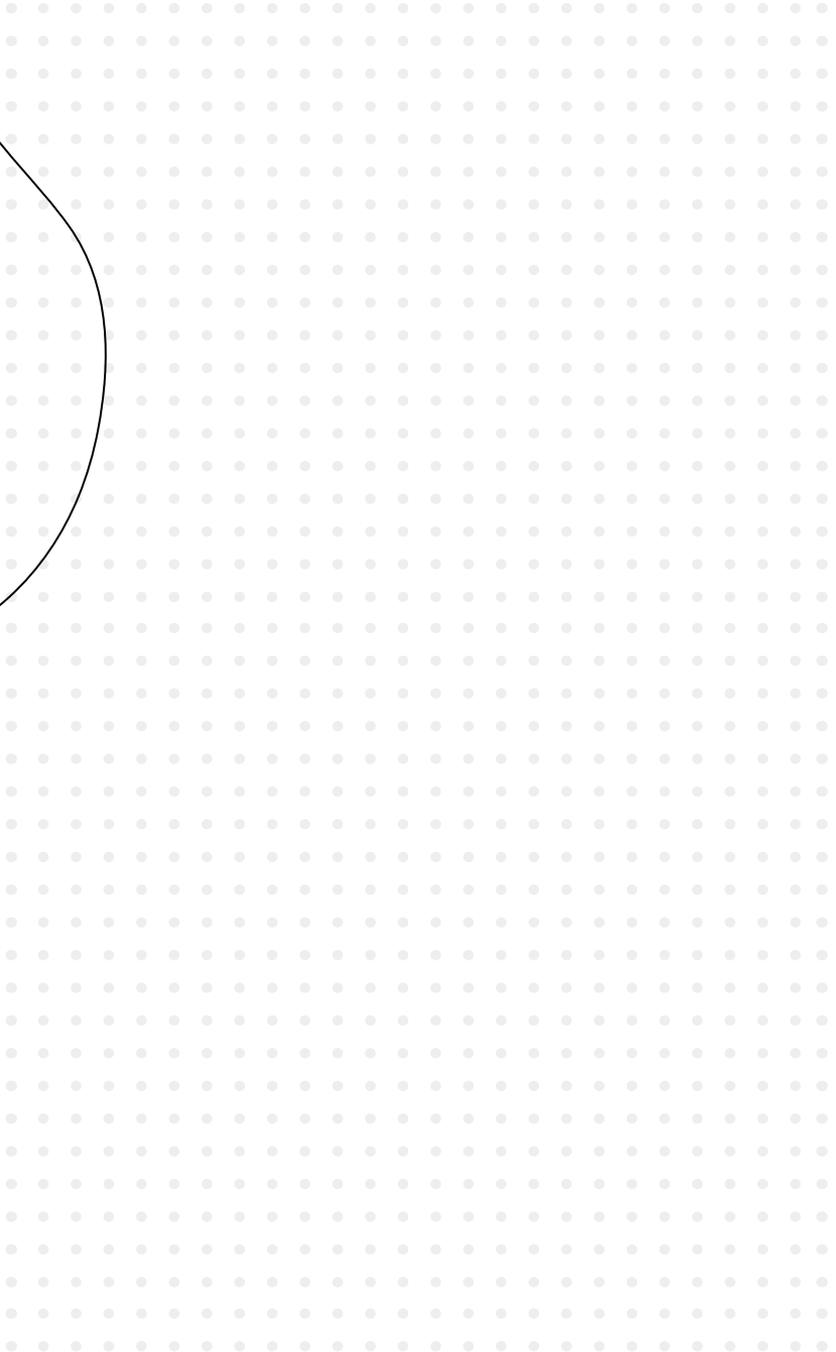
It is unclear who wrote the letter to the Hebrews, but it is obviously someone who understood Jewish Levitical law. It is an interesting parallel to the book of Leviticus because it declares that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, the most perfect High Priest, and the final and eternal Day of Atonement.

Jesus' brothers, James and Jude, also wrote letters. James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem and his book focused on Christian living. Jude encouraged the followers of Jesus to stand strong in their faith even in the midst of persecution.

### **READING:**

**Hebrews 10:1-8, Hebrew 11:1-12:3, James 1, James 2:14-26, James 4:7-10, James 5:13-18, Jude 1:24-25**

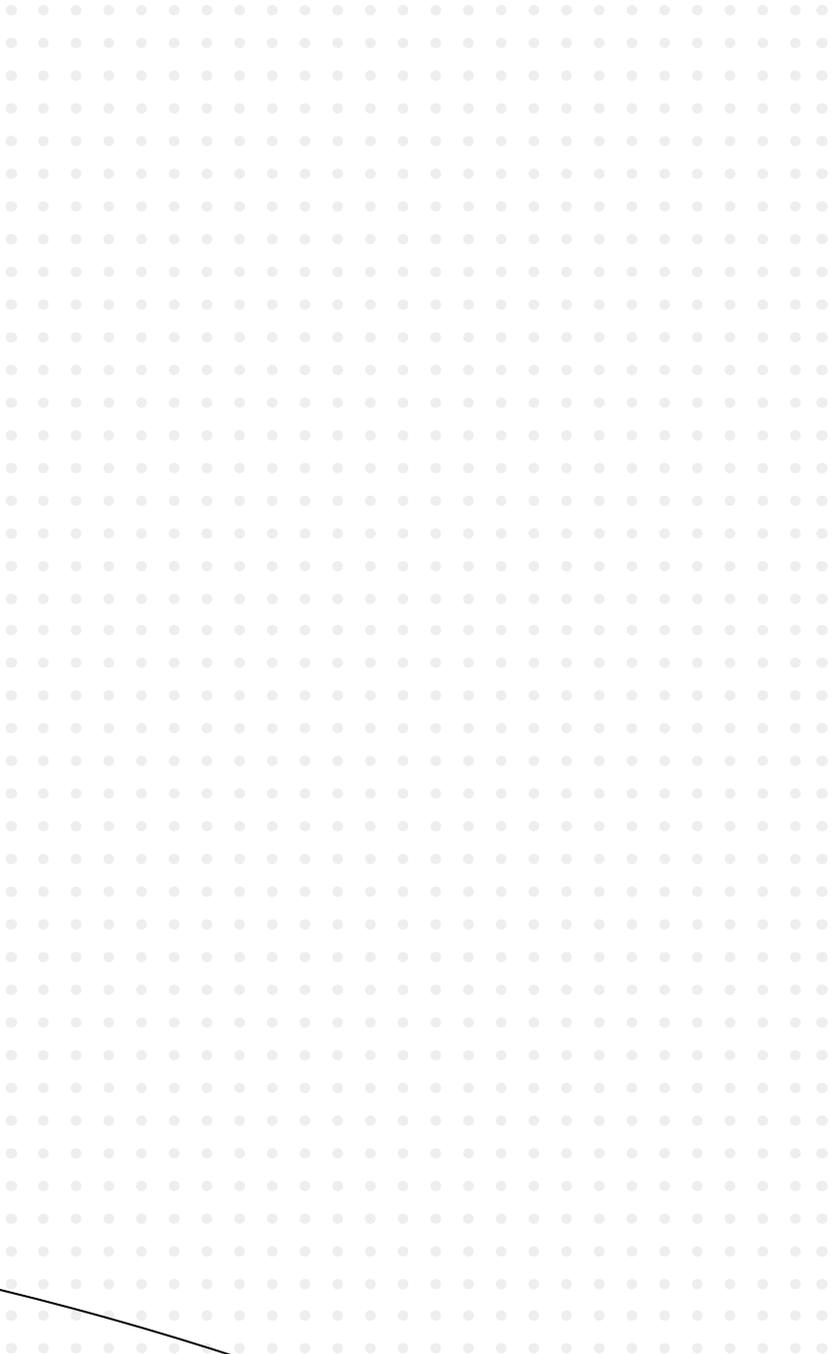
# Sermon Notes: The Church



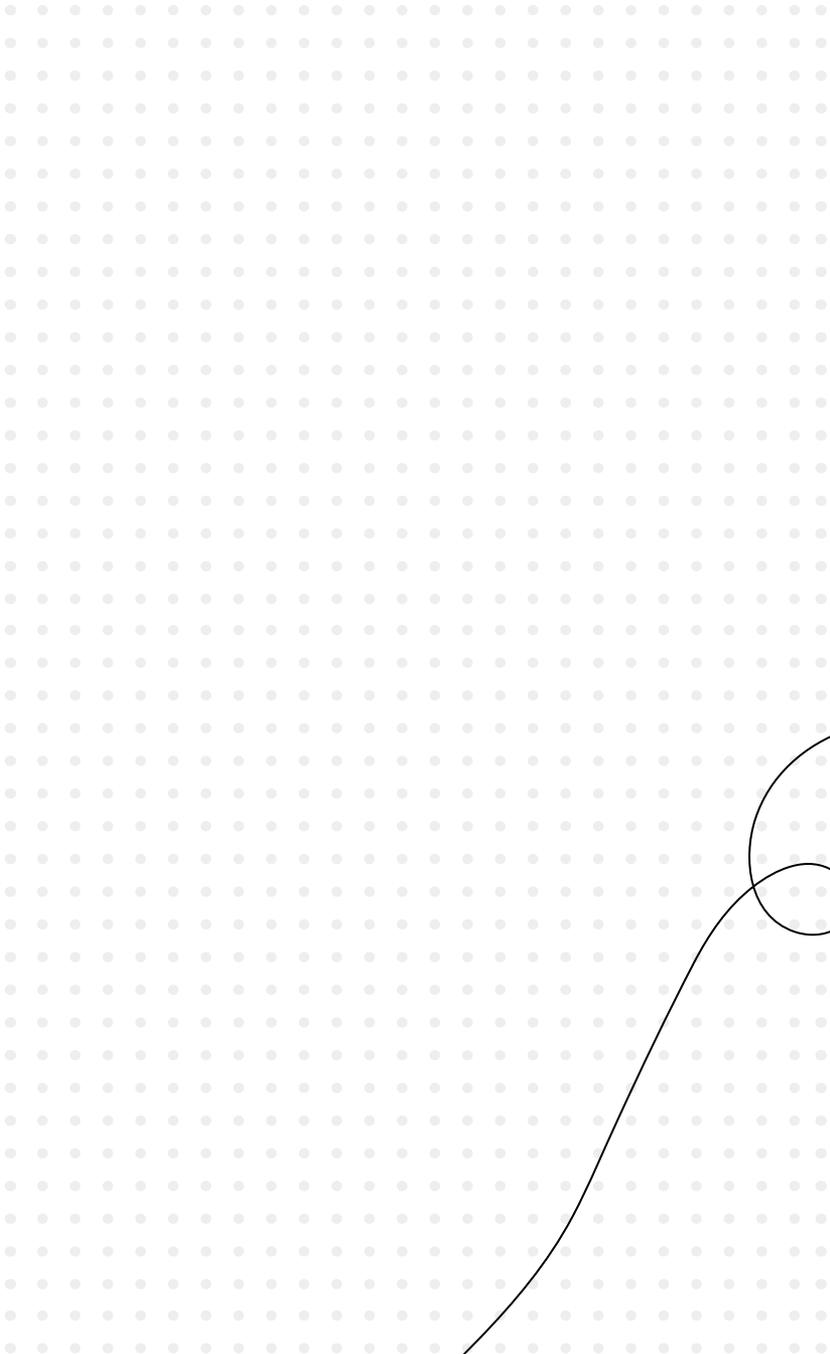
# Sermon Notes: The Church

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# In Your Group



# In Your Group



**WEEK 13**

*The Revelation*



## DAY 1

According to church tradition, John was the only disciple who was not martyred. He was exiled on the island of Patmos. While there, he had a vision of the coming return, judgment, kingdom, and reign of Jesus.

Revelation is difficult for modern readers to understand. It is filled with graphic imagery and symbols. While we may have trouble interpreting it and even debate exactly what it means, it was obviously very meaningful to first-century Christians because they circulated the book widely. Part of the problem is that we read the book of Revelation as though it is a revelation of a timeline of events. Instead, its primary purpose is the revelation of a person—Jesus Christ—victorious and seated on the throne. There are several different interpretations but at the end of the day, Revelation points us to the assurance that Jesus will be victorious and we will spend eternity in His presence.

The first three chapters of Revelation contain messages to seven different churches. Most of the churches receive an encouragement and a warning. The challenges faced by these first-century churches are still felt by the church today.

### **READING:** **Revelation 1-3**

## DAY 2

### READING: Revelation 4-5

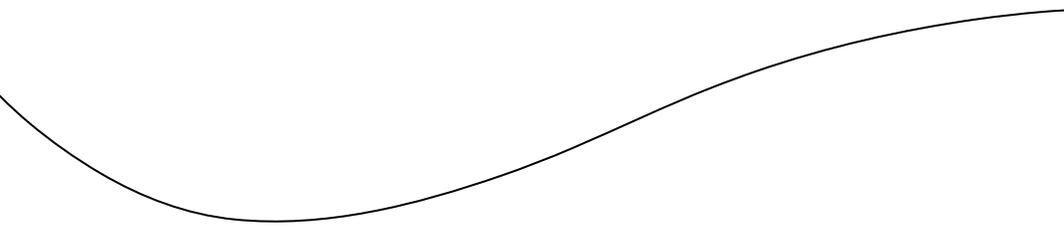
John gives us a glimpse into the presence of God, which is so overwhelming that worship never ends. It gives us a picture of Jesus as both the lion and the lamb—the one who sacrificed and the one who triumphs. His greatest display of power came at the point of His greatest sacrifice.

## **DAY 3**

### **READING:**

#### **Revelation 6-8, Revelation 11:15-19**

We live in an era in which Jesus has triumphed through his death and resurrection, but we have not yet attained the fulfillment of all He has promised. These passages represent the ongoing struggle between good and evil as Satan seeks to advance his own kingdom and Jesus builds His kingdom through the church. The seals and the trumpets represent God's patience and restraint but also the foreshadowing of judgment that is to come.



## **DAY 4**

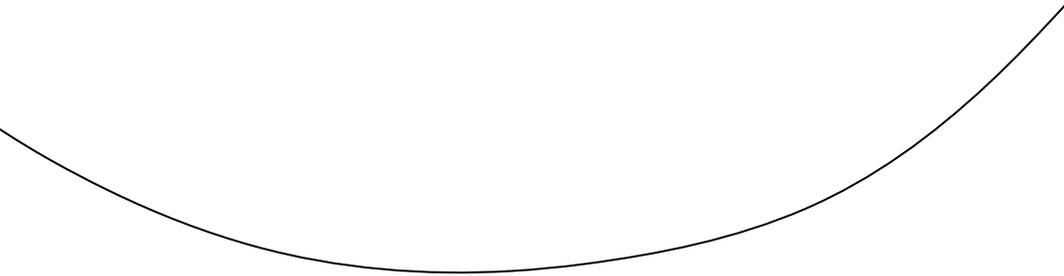
### **READING: Revelation 15-16**

Jesus will ultimately and finally destroy the works of Satan. In the midst of final judgment and the outpouring of His unrestrained wrath, we also read about God's character and blessings towards His followers.

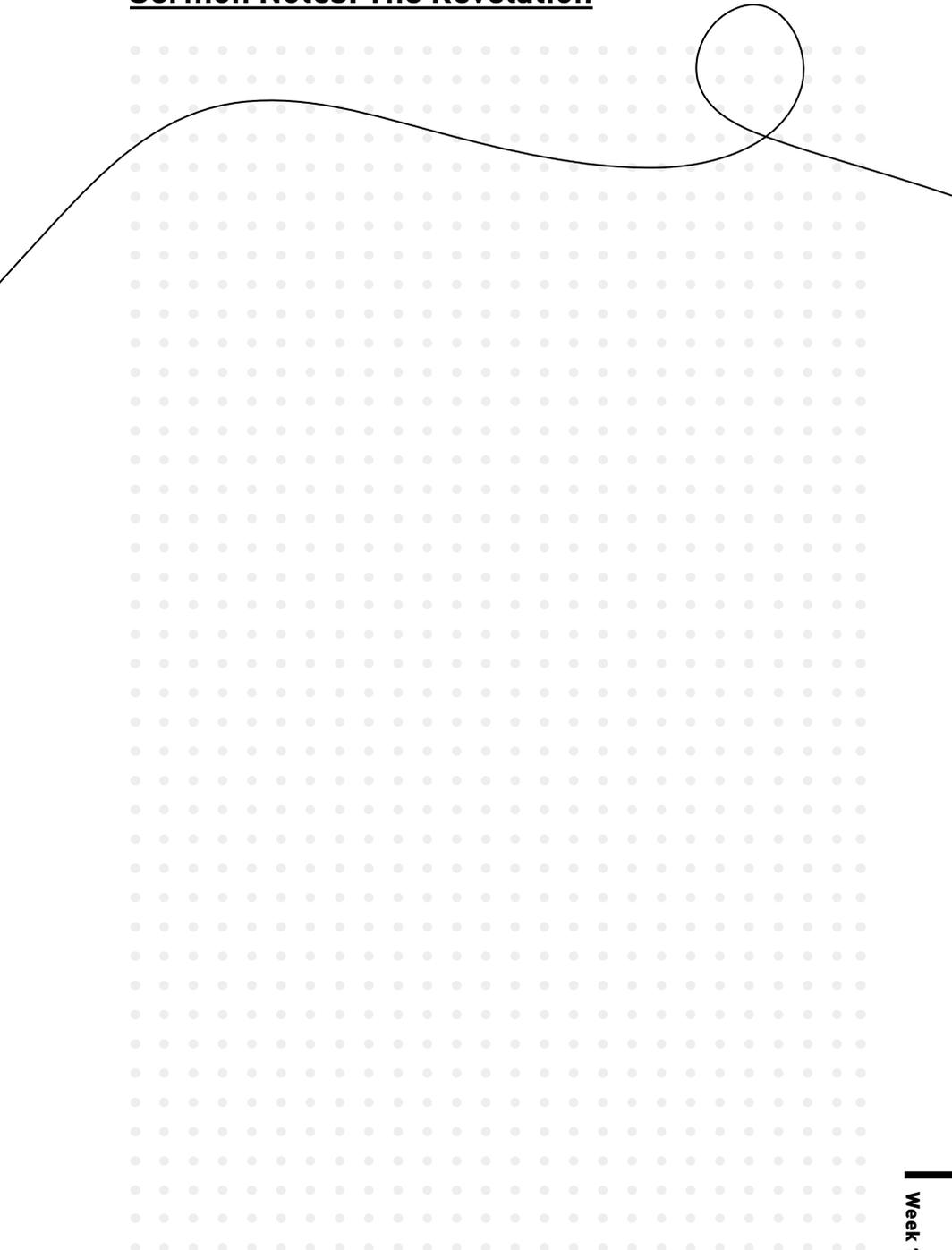
## **DAY 5**

### **READING: Revelation 19-22**

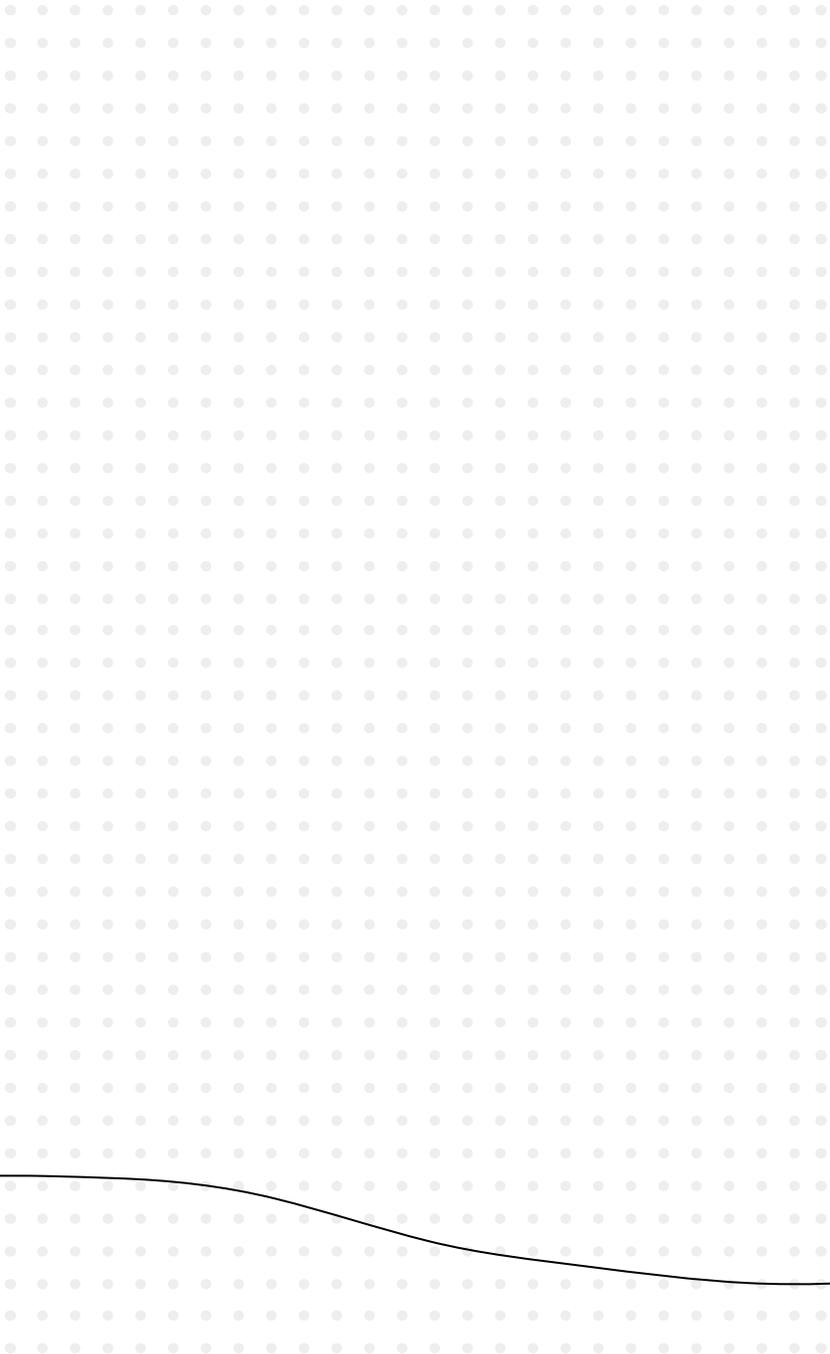
The closing chapter of Revelation shows the unveiling of the new heavens and the new earth and points to an eternity that experiences what God intended for in the Garden at the very beginning—perfect communion between God and people.



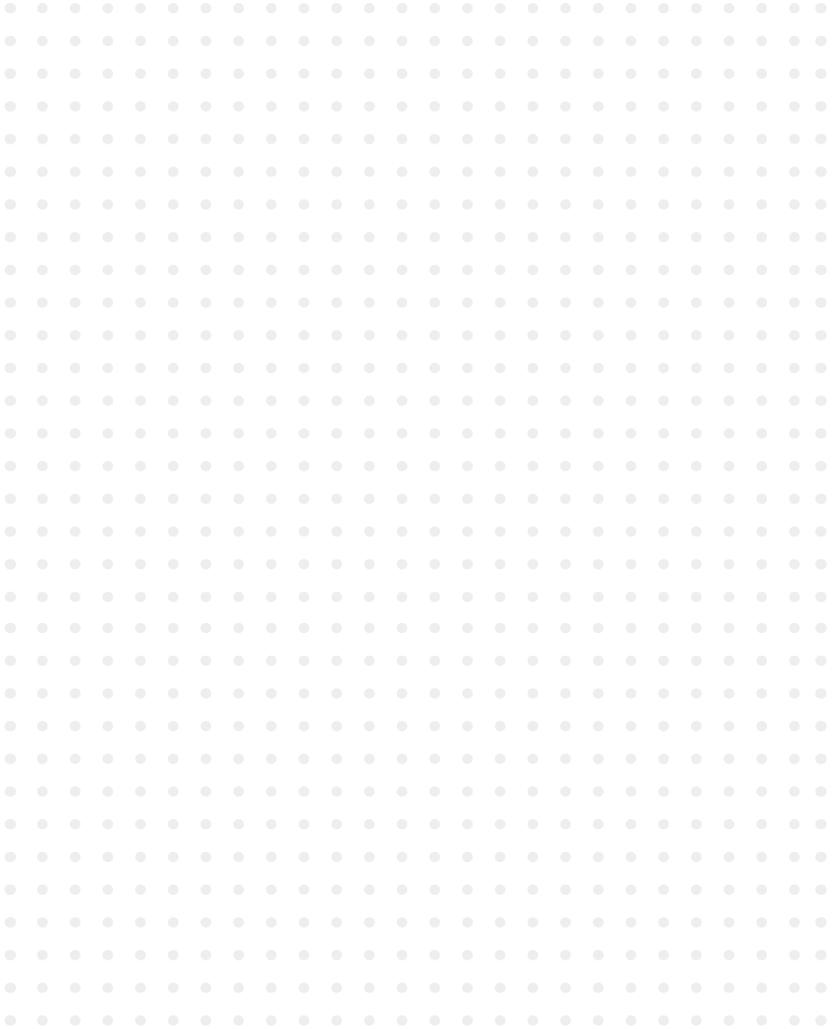
# Sermon Notes: The Revelation



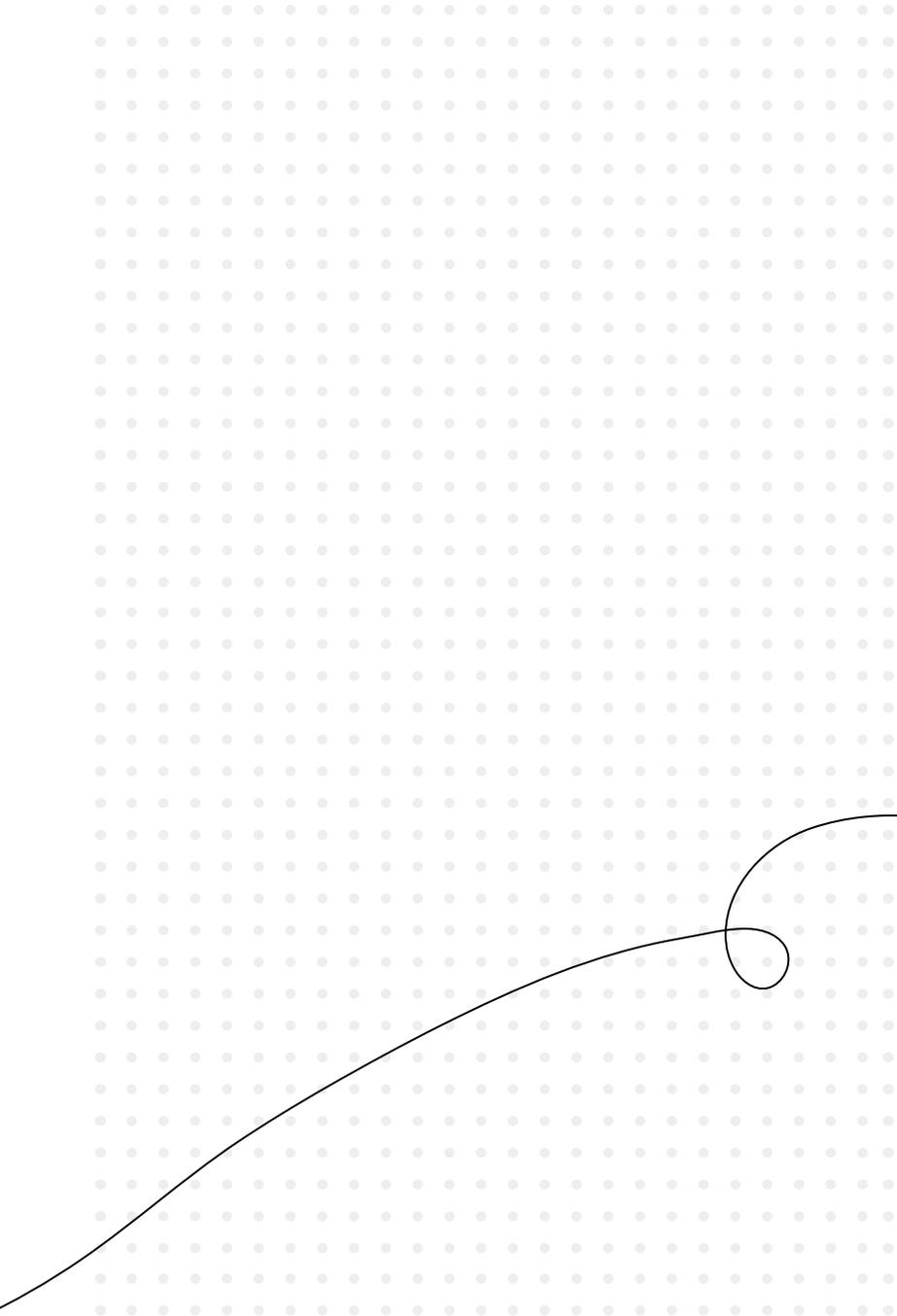
# Sermon Notes: The Revelation



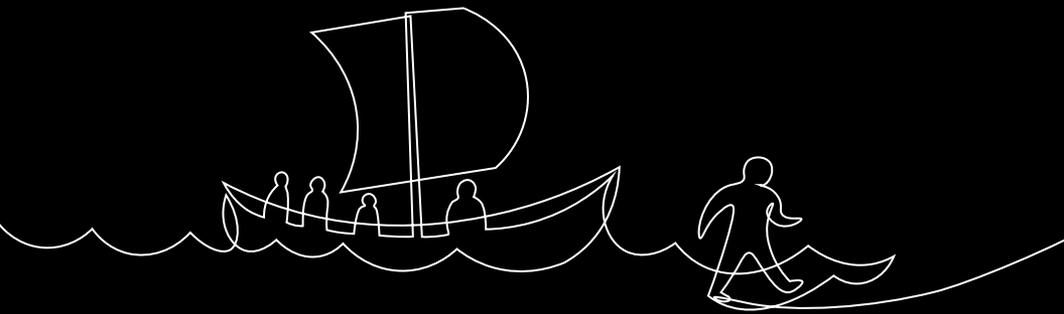
## In Your Group



# In Your Group



*The Books  
of the Bible:  
Summaries*



## **Pentateuch - Books of Law**

### **GENESIS**

**AUTHOR:** Moses

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 1450-1410 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** This book primarily goes through history from the beginning of time. It is the Creation Story and the covenantal plan for God's people.

### **EXODUS**

**AUTHOR:** Moses

**GENRE:** History and Law

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 1450-1410 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** The story of God's sovereignty over the gods of Egypt and His deliverance of the Israelites from slavery.

### **LEVITICUS**

**AUTHOR:** Moses

**GENRE:** Law

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 1445-1444 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** A book of divine encounters with God and the covenantal relationship with the Israelites. It lists ceremonial laws and demonstrates God's holiness.

### **NUMBERS**

**AUTHOR:** Moses

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 1450-1410 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** The Israelites wander in the wilderness and prepare for the Promised Land.

## **DEUTERONOMY**

**AUTHOR:** Moses

**GENRE:** History and Law

**AUDIENCE:** The new generation of Israelites

**DATE:** 1407 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** In Deuteronomy we see the renewed covenant. God reminds His people who He is and what He has done.

## **OT History**

### **JOSHUA**

**AUTHOR:** Joshua (generally accepted)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** The Israelites

**DATE:** Unknown

**PURPOSE:** Describes the fulfillment of the Promised Land and Joshua as the successor of Moses. God provides examples of the obedience of His people and the results of disobedience.

### **JUDGES**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (traditionally ascribed to Samuel)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** Between 1086 and 1004 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** We see God's judgment and forgiveness of sin. Judges become spiritual, political, and military leaders.

## **RUTH**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (traditionally ascribed to Samuel)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 1375-1050 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Displays the faithfulness and redemption of God through the story of Ruth.

## **1 SAMUEL**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (certain parts traditionally ascribed to Samuel)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** Around 930 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** It was originally one book broken into two. It tells the story of Saul's unsuccessful kingship and David's preparations to be the next king.

## **2 SAMUEL**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** Around 930 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Tells the story of King David and his reign, both successes and failures.

## **1 KINGS**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (traditionally ascribed to Jeremiah)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** Between 560 and 538 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** It was originally one book broken into two. The history of the reigns of King David and King Solomon and the division of the nation of Israel into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

## **2 KINGS**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (traditionally ascribed to Jeremiah)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** Between 560 and 538 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** The rise and fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

## **1 CHRONICLES**

**AUTHOR:** Ezra (generally accepted)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites returning from Babylonian exile

**DATE:** 430 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Reminder to returning exiles of God's faithfulness to Israel.

## **2 CHRONICLES**

**AUTHOR:** Ezra (generally accepted)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites returning from Babylonian exile

**DATE:** 430 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Reminder to returning exiles of God's faithfulness to Israel.

## **EZRA**

**AUTHOR:** Ezra (generally accepted)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites returning from Babylonian exile

**DATE:** 450 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To show the faithfulness of God and His heart to restore His people.

## NEHEMIAH

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (includes personal account from Nehemiah)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites returning from Babylonian exile

**DATE:** 445-432 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To show the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the renewed faith of the people.

## ESTHER

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (possibly Mordecai)

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 483-471 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To chronicle God's sovereignty and how Esther becomes queen to save the Jewish people.

### Wisdom Literature

## JOB

**AUTHOR:** Unknown

**GENRE:** Poetry/Wisdom

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** Likely around 2000 BC

**PURPOSE:** To show the sovereignty of God and address the question, "Why do good people suffer?"

## PSALMS

**AUTHOR:** David and various authors

**GENRE:** Poetry/Wisdom

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 1440-586 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Five books compiled into one. Psalms contains real-life situations and emotions in the form of poetry and praise to God.

## PROVERBS

**AUTHOR:** Solomon

**GENRE:** Wisdom

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 970-931 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Wisdom for daily living

## ECCLESIASTES

**AUTHOR:** Solomon

**GENRE:** Wisdom

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 935 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** The meaningless and hopeless nature of life apart from God.

## SONG OF SOLOMON

**AUTHOR:** Solomon

**GENRE:** Poetry

**AUDIENCE:** Israelites

**DATE:** 970-931 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To picture God's love for His people and affirm sanctity of marriage.

### Major Prophets

## ISAIAH

**AUTHOR:** Isaiah

**GENRE:** History/ Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** The people of Jerusalem

**DATE:** 700-681 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To foretell the coming Messiah and bring the people back to God.

## **JEREMIAH**

**AUTHOR:** Jeremiah  
**GENRE:** History/Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** The people of Judah (Southern Kingdom)  
**DATE:** 627-586 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To help people turn away from their sins and back to God; to speak of hope that is coming.

## **LAMENTATIONS**

**AUTHOR:** Jeremiah  
**GENRE:** Poetry  
**AUDIENCE:** The people of Jerusalem  
**DATE:** Around 586 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To show suffering in judgment and that God suffers when we suffer; the destruction of the temple.

## **EZEKIEL**

**AUTHOR:** Ezekiel  
**GENRE:** Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** Exiles in Babylon  
**DATE:** 571 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To show God's judgment on Israel and the hope of God's salvation.

## **DANIEL**

**AUTHOR:** Daniel  
**GENRE:** History/Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** Exiles in Babylon  
**DATE:** 535 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** Portrays the faithful Jews and demonstrates God's sovereignty over nations and individuals.

## **Minor Prophets**

### **HOSEA**

**AUTHOR:** Hosea  
**GENRE:** History/Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** People of Israel (Northern Kingdom)  
**DATE:** 715 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To show God's love even for those who go against Him.

### **JOEL**

**AUTHOR:** Joel  
**GENRE:** Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** People of Judah  
**DATE:** Around 835-796 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To bring the people back to repentance and warn them of the coming judgment.

### **AMOS**

**AUTHOR:** Amos  
**GENRE:** Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** People Israel  
**DATE:** 760-750 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To show God's judgment on Israel and offer hope.

### **OBADIAH**

**AUTHOR:** Obadiah  
**GENRE:** Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** Edomites  
**DATE:** Either mid 800's B.C. or late 600's B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To show judgment on those who go against God's people.

### **JONAH**

**AUTHOR:** Jonah  
**GENRE:** History/Prophecy  
**AUDIENCE:** People of Israel  
**DATE:** 785-760 B.C.  
**PURPOSE:** To show the extent of God's mercy.

## **MICAH**

**AUTHOR:** Micah

**GENRE:** Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People of Israel and Judah

**DATE:** 750-686 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To warn of the coming judgment and remind people to repent.

## **NAHUM**

**AUTHOR:** Nahum

**GENRE:** Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People of Nineveh and Judah

**DATE:** 663-612 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To predict the downfall of Assyria while comforting the nation of Judah.

## **HABAKKUK**

**AUTHOR:** Habakkuk

**GENRE:** Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People of Judah

**DATE:** 612-588 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Shows God's sovereignty over nations.

## **ZEPHANIAH**

**AUTHOR:** Zephaniah

**GENRE:** Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People of Judah

**DATE:** 640-621 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** To tell of God's judgment on Judah and other nations.

## **HAGGAI**

**AUTHOR:** Haggai

**GENRE:** History/Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People in Jerusalem

**DATE:** 520 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Encouragement for rebuilding the Temple.

## **ZECHARIAH**

**AUTHOR:** Zechariah

**GENRE:** History/Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People in Jerusalem

**DATE:** 520-480 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** Spiritual renewal for the people.

## **MALACHI**

**AUTHOR:** Malachi

**GENRE:** Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** People in Jerusalem

**DATE:** 430 B.C.

**PURPOSE:** A call to a return to faithfulness in light of the coming Messiah.

## **NT Narrative**

## **MATTHEW**

**AUTHOR:** Matthew

**GENRE:** Gospel

**AUDIENCE:** Jewish people

**DATE:** 60-65 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** Tells of Jesus' life as the awaited Messiah.

## **MARK**

**AUTHOR:** John Mark

**GENRE:** Gospel/Parables

**AUDIENCE:** Christians in Rome

**DATE:** 55-65 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** Tells of Jesus' life as the awaited Messiah.

## **LUKE**

**AUTHOR:** Luke

**GENRE:** Gospel

**AUDIENCE:** Greeks

**DATE:** 60 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** Tells us of Jesus' life, specifically his Humanity and divinity as Savior.

## **JOHN**

**AUTHOR:** John (the apostle)

**GENRE:** Gospel

**AUDIENCE:** Followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 85-90 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** Demonstrates that Jesus is the Son of God and that everyone can live forever.

## **ACTS**

**AUTHOR:** Luke

**GENRE:** History

**AUDIENCE:** Theophilus and the early church

**DATE:** 63-70 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** A historical account of the birth of the Church.

## **Pauline Epistles**

### **ROMANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Followers of Jesus in Rome

**DATE:** 57 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To guide and teach the Romans what it means to be justified in Christ.

### **1 CORINTHIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Corinth

**DATE:** 55 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To work with and teach the Church of Corinth through the problems they were experiencing in their society.

## **2 CORINTHIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Corinth

**DATE:** 55-57 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To address questions and concerns in the church in Corinth.

## **GALATIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Churches in Southern Galatia (Asia Minor)

**DATE:** 49 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To show the freedom of being justified by faith, not law, and that all are equal in Christ.

## **EPHESIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Ephesus

**DATE:** 60 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To strengthen the faith of the believers in Ephesus and teach unity in Christ.

## **PHILIPPIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Philippi

**DATE:** 61 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To show the joy we can have in Christ; to encourage the Church of Philippi.

## **COLOSSIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Colosse

**DATE:** 60 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To speak against heresy in the Church.

## **1 THESSALONIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Thessalonica

**DATE:** 51 A.D. \*Likely 1st NT book written

**PURPOSE:** To encourage and mature the Church of Thessalonica.

## **2 THESSALONIANS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Church in Thessalonica

**DATE:** 51-52 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To provide clarity about the Second Coming of Christ.

## **1 TIMOTHY**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Timothy

**DATE:** 64 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To empower Timothy as a young leader and mentee.

## **2 TIMOTHY**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Timothy

**DATE:** 66 or 67 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** Instructions to Timothy and church leaders.

## **TITUS**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Titus

**DATE:** 64 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** A letter to advise Titus and church leadership.

## **PHILEMON**

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Philemon

**DATE:** 60 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To encourage forgiveness.

## **General Epistles**

### **HEBREWS**

**AUTHOR:** Unknown (suggestions include Barnabas, Paul, Apollos and others)

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Jewish followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 70 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To show the supremacy of Christ

### **JAMES**

**AUTHOR:** James (Jesus' brother)

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Jewish followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 49 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To teach right living

### **1 PETER**

**AUTHOR:** Peter

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Jewish followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 62-64 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** Encouragement to those suffering and experiencing persecution.

## **2 PETER**

**AUTHOR:** Peter

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 67 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To warn about false teachers.

## **1 JOHN**

**AUTHOR:** John (the apostle)

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 85- 90 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To show the truth and light of God and to expose false teachings.

## **2 JOHN**

**AUTHOR:** John (the apostle)

**GENRE:** Pastoral Letter

**AUDIENCE:** "The chosen lady" and followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 90 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To warn against false teachers and to exhort people to love one another.

## **3 JOHN**

**AUTHOR:** John (the apostle)

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Gaius

**DATE:** 90 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To encourage everyone to live by the standards of the gospel.

## **JUDE**

**AUTHOR:** Jude (brother of Jesus)

**GENRE:** Letter

**AUDIENCE:** Jewish followers of Jesus

**DATE:** 65 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To stay focused and alert.

## **REVELATION**

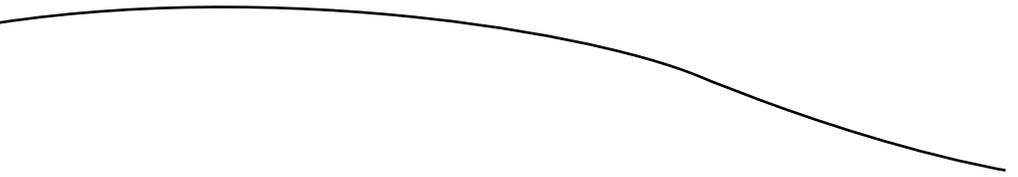
**AUTHOR:** John (the apostle)

**GENRE:** Letter/Prophecy

**AUDIENCE:** 7 Churches in Asia

**DATE:** 95 A.D.

**PURPOSE:** To reveal Christ and give hope for the new Heaven and new Earth.



long story short

