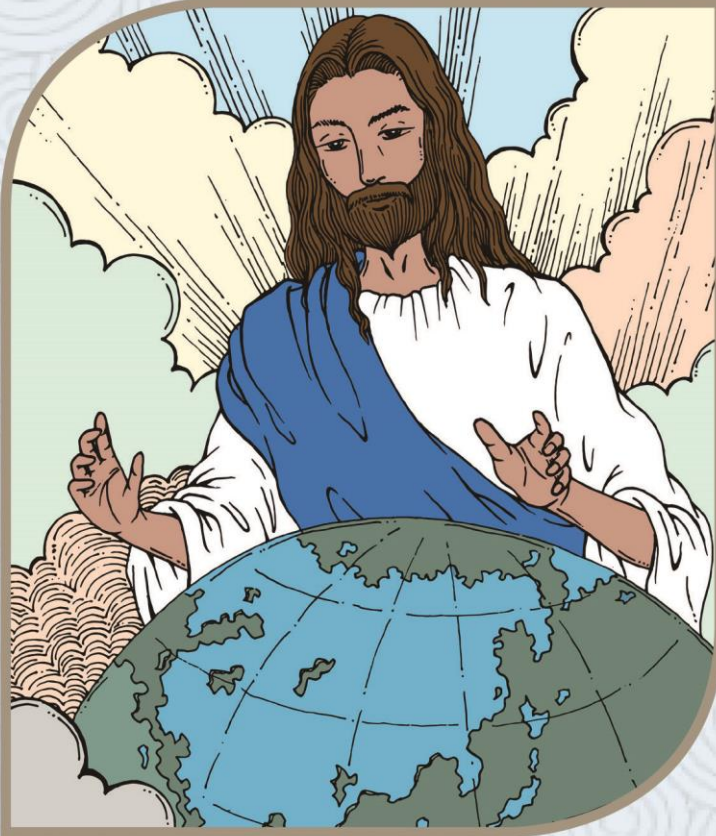




Living in Faith

Discipleship Series



A glimpse
into God's
life-changing
plan

God's Plan for the World

God's Plan for the World

A Glimpse into God's life-changing Plan



Multi-Language Publications
Bringing the Word to the World

God's Plan for the World

Living in Faith Discipleship Series

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Getting Started

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:16-7).

The words above from the apostle John are a pretty powerful message! It is hard to believe in much of anything when everything has been taken away from us – right? Wrong! You can be separated from your home, your family, your job, or your friends. But you can never be separated from Jesus! Jesus opens his heart to his brothers and sisters everywhere!

This book is sort of a study guide and history lesson in one. The history in this book is important. It will help you learn how it happened that every person who has ever lived in the world needed a Savior and why every person who lives in the world today needs a Savior.

Each of the five chapters begins with a list of goals marked with a small star (*). These goals tell you what you will be learning in that chapter.

Connect it to Your Life: After the text, there are questions to help you reflect on the material and make it part of your life. If you are studying this on your own, think through the questions for yourself. If you are studying it in a group, you can use the questions for deeper discussion.

There is a test at the end of each chapter. If you read each section carefully, you should be able to answer the questions correctly and without much trouble. Make sure you understand all the answers before reading any further.

At the end of the book there is a final test. Before you complete the test, go back and review the chapter tests. When you have completed the final test, you can submit it for verification.

Study it Further: After each chapter test there is an additional section you can study. You will need a Bible or a Bible app to read section. You may want to keep a journal of your observations and applications. As you read, realize each portion is just one part of God's big story that continues throughout the Scriptures.

Realize that as you dig deeper into the Bible, God reveals more amazing details into his plan. Although God doesn't answer every one of our questions, I hope you will stand in awe of what you learn about the mystery of God's daily dealings in our life.

Chapter One

IN THE BEGINNING

A lot of life involves planning. Unfortunately, at times things fall short of our expectations, don't they?

Think of moving. As time draws closer to the day you move to a new city, you begin to make plans about what you will be doing when you arrive there.

But no matter how hard you try to plan perfectly, something can easily go wrong. When you travel to the place where you thought you would be working, the employer tells you he has hired someone else. Or maybe the place where you decided to live is not as good as you thought it would be. Or your desire to make some good friends is ruined when your friends turn out to be bad influences. The best-made plans of man do not always work out well.

In your world:

1. Have you ever had an exciting plan that didn't turn out well? Why? Describe your reaction.
2. How has that changed your view of your world?

Several thousand years ago our God had a plan for two people, Adam and Eve. God wanted them to live in happiness forever. But Adam and Eve ruined God's perfect plan. In this chapter, you will discover:

- How the world came into being
- Why it is no longer the perfect world it once was
- God's response to those who ruined his original design for the world

The Amazing Creation

Around the world you will find many stories and theories that attempt to explain how the world began and why it is what you see today. But God didn't leave keep it a mystery. From some of the most ancient writings in the world, the Bible, he revealed to us what only he could know. The very first sentence in the Bible reads, "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). The Bible goes on to explain how God made everything on the earth - the plants, animals, and people.

According to the Bible, the world did not happen by accident. God made the world. Look around you and admire how complex and intricate he made it. He did not make it out of something else, not even out of something scientific-sounding like cosmic dust. He made it out of nothing by using his word. He made everything in the world and on it, except sin, of course. Because of this, each of us owes everything to God.

"Creation" is the word we use for God's making of the world. To create something is to get the idea for something new and to make it. We say that people can create things in a small way, like inventing the light bulb. But they use the brains or minds God gave them and build things with the hands God gave them. They depend on the natural resources God gave them. And they benefit from the knowledge, tools, and technology handed down from previous generations. So, they do not really create something out of nothing. But God did create a whole universe out of nothing by just speaking his word. He said, "*Let there be...*" and it was there, just as he spoke.

"[God] *saw everything that he had made. And it was very good*" (Genesis 1:31). God, who is all good and all-powerful, did not make a bad world. He did not make a world full of sin and sinners.

After he had created everything else, God created people in his own likeness. That does not mean they looked like God or had the powers that only God has. It does mean that God gave them unique creativity, emotion, and reason unlike the rest of creation. It also meant that they were holy, like God, and without sin. They were able to instinctively know and follow God's will and could interact with God perfectly. God intended that Adam, his wife Eve, and all the people who would come after them, would enjoy life and fully experience all its blessings of God. They would live a life in which they loved God and did good to their neighbors. Don't you wish it was still that way today?

The Downfall

But Sin crept into a perfect world. Sin means not doing what God wants us to do. God knew that if sin entered, it would ruin the perfect relationships he had designed into his perfect world.

But God did not make people to be like puppets or robots. He provided the opportunity for them to freely express their love. God gave the first two people the choice to love him and avoid sin. Or they could do the opposite and disobey God if they decided to sin. God tried to protect Adam and Eve from sin. He told them what they should not do. He warned them what would happen if they sinned. God gave Adam and Eve a specific opportunity to obey him and show their trust in him. He planted a special tree and told them never to eat its fruit, or they would surely die. The fruit wasn't poison, but disobedience was.

Unfortunately, evil had soon crept into the spiritual realm. Satan (also known as the devil) rejected God's loving authority over all things. The devil then came and lied to Eve. He tempted her to doubt God's command and good intentions, by saying, "*Did God really say that?*" Then he said to Eve that she would be like God if she ate of the special tree. What an attractive invitation! Eve listened

to the devil instead of trusting and following what God said. She picked fruit from the tree, ate some, and gave it to her husband, who ate some too. Right away they knew they did wrong. Then, because their faith and trust in God had died, fear replaced love, and they tried to hide from God. They also tried to lie to God about it and blame each other. Do you see that pattern today?

Maybe that does not sound so bad. But there are no little sins in God's judgment. God told Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate the fruit of that tree. When they disobeyed, the perfect life with God would end.

Because Adam and Eve were the first people, they set the scene for all people. When they sinned, all people born since then enter life with sin. They are not innocent babies. They are born with Adam and Eve's sinful nature just like the color of hair and eyes and skin is passed down from parents to children. And eventually all die. Adam and Eve's sinful nature is still with us today. *"Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin...death came to all men, because all sinned"* (Romans 5:12).

People cannot sin without paying the consequences, or price, for sinning. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God, what they did affected everyone. From now on, their world would be full of hard times, pain and sweat, sickness and death. All of its people would suffer from these troubles and find themselves under the damaging influence of Satan. Without God's intervention, all mankind would one day face eternal death. IT would be known as hell - a never-ending suffering which included being separated from the eternal blessings God had planned for people.

New Hope

But God loved Adam and Eve. He had made them, and he did not leave them in complete sorrow and despair. Right away he gave

them and all people who would come after them the promise of a Savior from their sins. That Savior would be the descendant (seed) of the woman. He would come one day to crush the power (head) of Satan (Genesis 3:15). That Savior would be our Redeemer, Jesus. To redeem means to “buy back.” Jesus would pay the price that God’s holy judgment demanded. He would die to buy back all people from slavery to Satan and sin. *“Just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.”* (Romans 5:19).

This meant that, although Adam and Eve’s situations were still very miserable, they had comfort and hope from God. They could not do anything to make right what they did wrong. But they knew God would help them. *“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:22). A Savior would come to bring us a new life. That was God’s plan.

Connect It to Your Daily Life:



Reflect on what you learned in this lesson.

1. What was your favorite part of the story? Determine why it stuck out for you.



Explore what God is revealing.

2. What does this lesson reveal about God’s character? What truths did you see?



Apply it to your world today.

3. Where do you observe the greatness and glory of God in the details of the created world?

4. Where do you see the evidences of our sinful nature in your world? ...In your life?
5. How does God's promise give hope to your life? ...to your world?

How will this story help you during your week?



Devote time and energy to put this into practice this week.
Make a Plan. *Write it down!*



Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. Practice retelling it in your own words

Test on Chapter One

Answer the following questions to review or verify your understanding:

1. According to the Bible, the universe ...
 - a) always existed and continues to go through repeating cycles to recreate itself
 - b) was created by the actions of the mighty God who made it out of nothing but speaking his word
 - c) happened by a chance explosion of molecules setting into motion a changing formation of lifeforms over time

2. The first two people created in our world were...
 - a) Vishnu and Brahma
 - b) Moses and Miriam
 - c) Adam and Eve

3. God created people in “in the image of God,” meaning they...
 - a) had the same physical features and looks as God (mirror image)
 - b) were all-powerful and all-knowing and able to do everything God does
 - c) reflected God’s mindset, were holy, and able to relate to God in full knowledge of his will

4. God’s plan for the world was to...
 - a) see people suffer by causing them misery and pain
 - b) enjoy a loving relationship with him and a loving interaction with the world he created
 - c) create caretakers of his gardens, birds, fish and animals so he could rest and enjoy it

5. God gives his commands to people to...
 - a) Instruct them on how to become holy and perfect like God
 - b) keep them down so they won’t rebel against him
 - c) protect and guide loving relationships with him and each other

6. The initial action that ruined the perfect world was
 - a) not taking care of the environment
 - b) the decision to eat the fruit of a tree that God told them would bring death
 - c) the systems of society that created a gap between rich and poor

7. Because of the first sin,
 - a) there is no hope for the world
 - b) everyone now must save themselves and work their way back to God
 - c) everyone is born into this life with a sinful nature passed down from generation to generation

8. The consequences of the fall into sin is
 - a) a more vibrant and exciting life
 - b) hard work, pain and sickness and death
 - c) freedom to enjoy anything we want to without guilt

9. Immediately God revealed that his long range plan for the world would be
 - a) to destroy it all and start all over again
 - b) to let the world exist on its own to solve its own problems without his interference
 - c) to send a Savior to bear the punishment of sin, crush Satan, and restore perfect harmony with God

10. The Savior would be our Redeemer. In this sense the word redeem means to
 - a) pay the price to buy back all people from slavery to Satan and sin
 - b) rescue us from any discomfort and pain in this life
 - c) compensate for our poverty by making us rich and successful

Check your answers.

Study It Further - from the Bible:

Want to know more? *You may want to keep a journal of what you discover. Write down key findings. List questions you may have that need to be answered at a later time.*

- **Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31**
(the beauty of God's creating)
- **Genesis 2:15-18**
(God's simple command of love)
- **Genesis 3:1-13, 16-19**
(Adam and Eve's fatal decision)
- **Genesis 3:14-15**
(God's promise to bring salvation)

Other helpful passages to understand the impact of sin and the power of the promised Messiah:

- *John 1:1-3 (Jesus existed at creation and was creator)*
- *Romans 5:12-21 (contrasting sin and the promised gift)*
- *1 Corinthians 15:20-26 (Adam brought death, Christ brought life)*

Guide for reading:

- What was unique about the way God created the world?
- What does that say about your life?
- God did not force Adam and Eve to love him. How would the command become the opportunity for them to freely show their love?
- Think of parallels today.
- Outline the method Satan used to get Adam and Eve to turn away from God.
- Compare that with specific ways he works today.
- Why was Genesis 3:14-15 good news? For whom?

What additional insights do you gain from these passages?

Conclude your Time in Conversation with God



Pray – talk to God about it.

- **Praise** and thank God for what he is and the amazing things he has done.
- **Repent** in those areas where you are not in tune with God’s will.
- **Ask** for forgiveness, his help, his blessing, and/or his guidance for you and others.
- **Yield** yourself to his way of answering and directing you (“*not my will, but yours be done*”).

Next:

Are you ready to see how sin affected people’s lives and how God continues to be faithful to his plan through it all? Move on to Chapter Two

Chapter Two

HISTORY TEACHES ABOUT GOD AND SINNERS

You and I often like things to happen quickly. We do not like to wait. One area that we wish could be made better quickly is our relationship with other people. By what we may have said or done, we, no doubt, have hurt people besides ourselves. We have told these people we are sorry, but they do not seem to believe us. Or we would like to tell these people we are sorry, but circumstances will not allow it. What does it take for someone to believe we are truly sorry for what we have done wrong? Will it fix things?

In your world:

1. What kind of things hurt relationships with other people?
2. Why is it hard to undo that kind of damage?

Adam and Eve experienced these same kinds of feelings. By their actions they had hurt God, themselves, and the children they would bring into the world. They wanted a quick solution to their problem. But as you will see in this lesson, God was not going to immediately carry out his rescue plan. And while he waited, God found it necessary to use some pretty severe punishment and testing to bring his people back to him.

In this chapter you will discover:

- How even decent people in history showed they needed a Savior
- The two major ways people reacted to God's warnings and calls for repentance
- Several reasons that God sends difficult times

Sorrow that Leads to Repentance

The Savior God promised to Adam and Eve did not come right away. For several thousand years people had only the promise that someday a Savior would come. Meanwhile, they longed for deliverance and lived in hope burdened by the effects of sin.

Adam and Eve felt the pain, shame, and guilt of sin in their own lives. They experienced it not just when they were forced to leave the garden home that God had given them, but when their son Cain murdered his brother Abel. Sin does not just hurt the sinner but others around them too. When Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they did not harm only him; they also made everyday life for his old father Jacob very sad.

But you will see a difference in people and their response to their sin. The most important difference between Cain and the brothers of Joseph was that Cain was not sorry for his sin and did not ask God to forgive him. But Joseph's brothers were sorry later and asked both God and Joseph to forgive them. We could call them repentant sinners. Sincere repentance is a sorrow over our sinfulness and a turning to God for mercy and salvation. Repentance means a change of mind – changing from enjoying sin to seeking God's grace for forgiveness.

Many times the Bible tells us about people who sinned. Not only people like the wicked men of Sodom or the cruel Pharaoh of Egypt, but also those who appear to be good people. Noah, who was called blameless and obediently built the ark God commanded, still fell into

a bout of drunkenness. King David, whom God said was a man after his own heart, fell into sins of adultery and used murder to cover it up. Why does the Bible tell us about their sin? God wants to show us that all people are sinners. All people need to repent. All people need the Savior.

God's Desire that We Come to Know Him

Someone once said that life is mean, nasty, brutish, and short. But God never meant it to be that way. God did not want the people he had made to live as miserable, wretched, hopeless sinners.

Even before the Savior came, God did many things to lead people to repent in order to draw them back to faith in him. Sometimes he used very severe correction when they did wrong. He guided them and taught them what was right through his prophets (God's teachers). God did not want to destroy people. He wanted all of them to come to know him and be saved.

Why does God correct sinners? Because they need to be corrected. Why does he forgive sinners when they repent? Because they need forgiveness, too. God's teaching shows his love and forgiveness. Through his Word he strengthens and keeps his people from being destroyed by sin.

God wants all sinners to be saved. The only way they can be saved is through faith in Christ, whose sufferings, death, and resurrection have earned salvation (deliverance from spiritual dangers) for all sinners. This message of God's love and Jesus' work is called the gospel. Through the gospel, the Holy Spirit creates saving faith in sinners' hearts. When the Holy Spirit leads us to trust the good news of what Jesus has done for us, we become believers in Jesus.

Many sinners hear the gospel, but not all of them become believers in Christ. Some refuse to repent of their sins. They think they do not

need the Savior. Therefore, God may use correction and discipline to lead them to be sorry for their sins and to help them to see they do need a Savior. More important than their physical comfort is inner faith in God. More important than earthly success is gaining eternal joy

The Bible encourages, *“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son”* (Hebrews 12:5,6). Discipline can come in different ways, as the Bible shows us. After King David committed adultery, his baby son died and a pattern of sinful lifestyles plagued his other sons. Sometimes a sickness came on a whole country. Sometimes the country was defeated in war. Sometimes there was no food for the people to eat. When these things were happening as discipline from God, he sent prophets (those who spoke for God) to tell the people why they were experiencing God’s correction. It was meant to turn them back to God. After God’s prophet convicted King David, David asked God to forgive him. God wants to restore us. The prophet assured David that the Lord had taken away his sin and made things right with him again.

Trouble – Opportunities to Show Faith

Not all the bad things that happen to people are correction from God or a result of a person’s actions. Sometimes trouble is part of living in a world plagued by sin. In the Bible you can find plenty of examples of people who remained faithful and believed in the promised Savior even through all kinds of trouble.

What kinds of trouble? Well, Joseph was sold as a slave and then put into prison despite his faithfulness. Daniel was put in a pit to be devoured by lions because he chose between obeying King Darius or the true God. His friends were put into a furnace to burn them up when they refused the King Nebuchadnezzar’s order to bow down

and worship his statue. Both Joseph and Daniel and his friends worked for rulers who did not believe in God. They had people all around them who did not believe in God. Yet God kept them faithful in their troubles and used their times of trouble to reveal the greatness of their God who came to save them.

And there was also Job who was considered blameless and upright. Yet in a short period of time, Job's children were killed. He lost all his money. He came down with boils on his skin. Even worse, he had three friends who kept telling him that God was punishing him and that he deserved it all! Yet even in his pain and frustration, Job remembered the promise of a God and hoped for the time when his Redeemer would come. In the end, he came to a greater respect and awe of the God he depended on and experienced even greater joy and blessings from God.

Because all people belong to one human family, all have inherited sinful natures from Adam and Eve. All people die because of that inherited sin. All people have troubles and hard times. Bad things happen to all people, and all people do bad things.

God is our only help in all these troubles. Adam and Eve received the promise that a Savior would come. Though their descendants sinned over and over again, some of them remembered the promise and hoped for the time when the Savior would come. That was God's plan.

Historic Timeline

☾ Years before Jesus (B.C) ☾ ☽ Years from Jesus on (A.D.)

--- 2000 --- 1500 --- 1000 --- 500 --- 0 --- 1000 --- 2000

- Cain... • Abraham... • David... • Isaiah... • JESUS...
- Noah... • Moses... • Daniel...
- Joseph...

Connect It to Your Daily Life:



Reflect on what you learned in this lesson.

1. What was most important part you learned? Why?



Explore what God is revealing.

2. What do the hatred of Cain and Joseph's brothers reveal about human character?
3. How do the stories of horrible sins by great people like King David affect your mindset about yourself? About your expectations of others?



Apply it to your world today.

4. Discuss whether or not you have to live in a Christian environment to be faithful to God. Why or why not?
5. When have you observed pain, shame, and guilt effectively calling you or others to repentance?
6. How can the stories of Daniel in the lion's den and the three men and the furnace give you strength for your challenges?

How will this story help you during your week?



Devote time and energy to put this into practice this week.

Make a Plan. *Write it down!*



Share it!

Determine how you will share this chapter with others. Who especially needs to hear this? Practice retelling it in your own words

Test on Chapter Two

Answer the following questions to review or verify your understanding:

1. Cain was the son of
 - a) Noah and his wife
 - b) Joseph and Mary
 - c) Adam and Eve

2. Cain's sin was
 - a) He ate the fruit of the tree he was forbidden to eat of
 - b) He killed his brother Abel
 - c) He stole his brother's lamb

3. The man sold into slavery by his brothers was
 - a) Joseph
 - b) Jacob
 - c) Job

4. The sorrow over sin that turns to God for forgiveness is called
 - a) shame
 - b) repentance
 - c) blame

5. The king who committed adultery and murder and then came back to God for forgiveness was
 - a) Leopold
 - b) David
 - c) Solomon

6. God sends times of discipline and correction to his people to
 - a) punish people for being bad and drive them away from him
 - b) bring people to repentance and draw them back to his forgiving love
 - c) remind people he is the supreme one who must be respected or else

7. The one who stood up for his faith and was thrown into the lion's den was
- a) Elijah
 - b) Joseph
 - c) Daniel
8. God's prophets were
- a) Mystical leaders who used rituals and incantations to bring blessings and drive away evil
 - b) Wise businessmen who could predict when it was good time to invest wealth
 - c) Spokesmen for God who revealed God's plans and called people to repentance and faith
9. The gospel message is
- a) be nice to people and make sure we eliminate poverty and sickness from the world
 - b) about God's love that sent Jesus to live, die, and rise from death for our forgiveness
 - c) that God loves and accepts everyone no matter what they believe and overlooks the wrong they do because they can't help it
10. When people hear the gospel
- a) All will automatically turn their lives around and follow God perfectly
 - b) Some will believe and be saved and others will reject and refuse to come to repentance
 - c) They must prove to God that they are good enough to merit his favor

Check your answers.

Study It Further - from the Bible:

Want to know more? *You may want to keep a journal of what you discover. List questions you may have that can be answered at a later time.*

- Cain's jealous heart:
Genesis 4:1-11
- Joseph's brother's hatred:
Genesis 37:16-28; 50:15-21
- King David's failure:
1 Samuel 11:1-5, 12:7-14
- Daniel's faithfulness:
Daniel 6:3-12, 19-23
- Three men and the furnace:
Daniel 3:1-6, 12, 19-28

Guide for reading:

- What went wrong between the brothers in these two stories in Genesis.
- How do you see that same emotion showing itself today?
- What can you learn from King David's failure?
- What can you learn from his repentance?
- What made Daniel and the three men so confident and bold in their faith?
- Where in your life does their story become helpful to you?

Other helpful passages to understand the impact of sin and the need of the promised Messiah:

- Romans 7:14-25 (*Paul inner struggle*)
- Matthew 5:21-30; 7:1-5 (*Even the thoughts to sin...are sin*)
- Psalm 27:7-14; Psalm 51:1-12 (*Prayers for forgiveness*)

What additional insights do you gain from these passages?

Conclude your Time in Conversation with God



Pray – talk to God about it.

- **Praise** and thank God for what he is and the amazing things he has done.
- **Repent** of those things that reveal you are not in tune with God's will.
- **Ask** for forgiveness, his help, his blessing, and/or his guidance for you and others.
- **Yield** yourself to his way of answering and directing you ("*not my will, but yours be done*").

Next:

Move on to Chapter Three to see how God fulfills his great promise that kept Adam, Eve, Noah, Joseph, King David, Daniel and many others looking ahead in hope.

Chapter Three

HISTORY LEADS TO THE SAVIOR

People have made promises to us for many years. They may have told us they would come to visit us, write us letters, give us some money, or contact someone for us. They may have said they would help us when we are in trouble. But we may also have been frustrated again and again by broken promises. People who make promises to us do not always keep those promises. It makes us wonder if we can really trust anyone completely. We quickly lose hope.

In your world:

1. What are some of the broken promises that have frustrated your life?

2. How does that affect how you see yourself or others?

The good news: There is one we can always trust. He keeps every one of the promises he makes to us. He is our God. We read about the promises he makes to us in the Bible. Like Adam and Eve, we have disobeyed God. Maybe we showed rebellious spirit as children when we disobeyed our parents. Or as husbands or wives we may have neglected or harmed one another or our children. Perhaps we stole money from a business or took possessions that belonged to someone else. Maybe we hit and hurt someone. We may have said or thought bad things about our neighbor that damaged their reputation. Whatever we have done, we have not followed God's Commandments as we should. When we start to think about it,

perhaps our evil or bad actions made us feel sad, as if we were not worth very much.

Our God has shown us we are important to him, and he does not want us to be lost. He gave us a promise that a Savior would come one day to rescue us from our sins. He did not give us this promise only one time, but over and over again in the Bible. It certainly is a message that needs to be repeated to us. As we look at the history of our world, we see history leads to the Savior.

In this part of God's story, you will discover:

- The character of God in contrast to that of people
- The way God kept his promises alive through thousands of years
- The reason his prophecies are so important for us

God Entrusted His Promise to People He Chose

The Bible is one of the most informative history books. There is a reason for every single word of history written in the Bible. God himself gave the words and thoughts of the Bible to Moses and the prophets. He had these men write them down for us to study and to learn. These are not simply stories, even though they are very interesting to read. God used the words of the Bible to teach his people then, and he still uses these words to teach people today. As he says, *"Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"* (Romans 15:4).

All through the history of God's people, God kept reminding them he was going to send the Savior. After the great flood, God promised he would never again destroy the earth with a flood, *"even through*

every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood” (Genesis 8:21). And he repeated the promise of the Savior to Noah.

Later, out of all the peoples of the world God chose one group of people to be the special guardian of his promise of a Savior. He paid special attention to this people called the Jews, or the People of Israel. He didn't choose them because they were better than other people, but because of how he would use them to fulfill his plans. God promised the People of Israel that the Savior Jesus would come from them.

The story of the People of Israel started with God calling Abraham to leave his homeland and go to a country to which God would lead him. He told him, *“through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed”* (Genesis 18:18). God promised Abraham that the Savior would come from his family. Abraham was called a patriarch because he would be the ancestor of a great people.

God kept repeating the promise. He repeated it to Isaac, to Jacob, to King David.

However, when the Savior came, he would be for all people not just the People of Israel. Israel had the special task of making sure the promise was not forgotten.

God Clarified his Promise through Prophets He Sent

Moses was the first man in history to be given words from God that were to be put down in a book for people to read and follow. What Moses wrote down was put into a collection of books that we call the Bible. Moses wrote the first five Bible books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Moses and the other men who spoke or wrote God's Word were called prophets. Prophets sometimes told what was going to happen

in the future. Other times they pointed out to the people how God viewed their actions so they could prepare their hearts for him.

Often through the prophets God spoke the law to his people. A well-known summary of that law is the Ten Commandments which he delivered to his people through Moses. He gave his people the law to protect them and to guide them in how they lived their lives. But God gave his law for a reason that is much more important. God gave his law to show people their sin and their need for a Savior.

God also used the prophets to tell his people about his promise to send the Savior. Most of the writing in the Bible was given to teach people what the Savior would be like when he came.

Another name for the promised Savior is the Messiah meaning "anointed one" in Hebrew. The prophecies that Jesus would come to save people from sin were called Messianic prophecies. Both Isaiah and Micah were prophets who wrote famous Messianic prophecies.

In school, we learn that when a newspaper reporter is going to write a story, the story is not good unless it answers the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how. God's prophets answered all these questions about the Messiah. God clearly taught what the Savior would be like and what he would do. The prophets told the people where the Redeemer would be born, what family he would come from, that his mother would be a virgin, how he would act, and many of the things he would do.

When the Savior came, you would think there would be no way they would miss knowing who he was. If they listened to the prophets, you would expect the people would recognize him. But they didn't, just like many today don't recognize who he is.

The Prophecies of a Messiah Kept Hope Alive

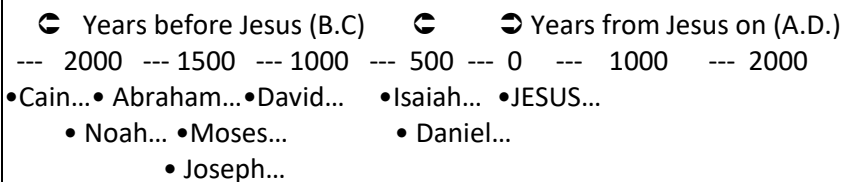
While the believers among God's people were waiting for the Savior to come, they spoke clearly of their faith in God's promises. Even though they still were sinners, they were repentant sinners. They believed God's promises, and they were saved through faith in the promised Messiah who was to come.

This was true not only when life was easy, but also in hard times. Job had many problems, but still he was able to say, *"I know that my Redeemer lives. In the end he will stand on the earth. After my skin has been destroyed, in my body I'll see God. I myself will see him with my own eyes. I'll see him, and he won't be a stranger to me. How my heart longs for that day!"* (Job 19:25-27).

God's promise to sinners that he would provide a Redeemer does not mean God will make life on earth easy for believers. Sometimes God is testing his people. Sometimes he is training them to face even greater difficulties in the future. Sometimes he is revealing their faith or his faithfulness to a world that needs to see it.

Even when times were hard, the believer was still a child of God living in faith and hope that God's good plans will soon be fulfilled. At the center of it was the promised Savior, the Messiah, who would come. That was God's plan.

Historic Timeline



Connect It to Your Daily Life:



Reflect on what you learned in this lesson.

1. What was the most important truth you learned from this part of God's story? Discuss why it stuck out for you.



Explore what God is revealing.

2. Discuss why God chose one group of people to whom he would reveal his promise and from whom the Savior would come.



Apply it to your world today.

3. Identify how God's promise of a Savior makes Christianity different from other religions or spiritual beliefs around you.
4. Determine what aspect of God's promise gives you most encouragement for your daily life.

How will this story help you during your week?



Devote time and energy to put this into practice this week. Make a Plan. *Write it down!*



Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. Practice retelling it in your own words

Test on Chapter Three

Answer the following questions to review or verify your understanding:

1. The one who wrote the first five books of the Bible was
 - a) Buddha
 - b) Moses
 - c) Mohammed

2. All the writings of the Bible have one main purpose
 - a) To show us how to live a good enough life to merit the love of God
 - b) To lead us to faith in the Savior of the world
 - c) To bring us to a higher level of spiritual consciousness

3. Out of all the nations of the world God had chosen one nation from whose descendants that Savior would be born. That nation was
 - a) Israel (Jews)
 - b) Egypt
 - c) Babylon

4. The patriarch whom God called away from his homeland with the promise, “through your offspring all nations will be blessed,” was
 - a) Isaiah
 - b) Abraham
 - c) Moses

5. The leader of the People of Israel through whom God gave the 10 Commandments
 - a) Abraham
 - b) Isaac
 - c) Moses

6. God gave the 10 Commandments to his people not only to guide and protect them but to
 - a) Keep them from feeling free
 - b) Make them more successful than the nations around them
 - c) Show them their sin and their need for the Savior

7. When the Messiah finally would come, he would be the Savior of
 - a) Only the Jews
 - b) Those who proved they were worthy of him by their righteous actions
 - c) All people

8. In his suffering and loss, Job's greatest comfort was
 - a) I didn't deserve any of this since I have lived better than everyone around me
 - b) At least I have my wife
 - c) I know that my Redeemer lives and one day I'll see him with my own eyes

9. The word "Messiah" in Hebrew means
 - a) The anointed one
 - b) The great warrior
 - c) The one who brings the earth into confusion

10. Isaiah and Micah were
 - a) Two enemies of the Israelites who led armies into battle against them
 - b) Two prophets of Israel who wrote down famous prophecies about the coming Messiah
 - c) Two kings of Israel who are known for the large building project they constructed

Check your answers.

Study It Further - from the Bible:

Want to know more? *You may want to keep a journal of what you discover. List questions you may have that can be answered at a later time.*

- **Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 18:17-19**
(The Promise to Abraham)
- **Genesis 28:10-17**
(The Promise repeated to Jacob)
- The Messianic prophesy in Isaiah:
Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 53:1-12
- The Messianic prophesy - other Prophets: **Psalms 22; Micah 5:2-5; 7:7-9; Zechariah 9:9**

Guide for reading:

- List the various details of the Promise to Abraham.
- Put yourself in Abraham's situation. How would you have responded to the promise?
- What comfort and courage did Jacob gain from hearing the promise?
- Describe more details that Isaiah paints of coming Messiah.
- Look at the other Messianic prophesies. What did they help people anticipate about the coming Messiah?

What additional insights do you gain from these passages?

Conclude your Time in Conversation with God



Pray – talk to God about it.

- **Praise** and thank God for what he is and the amazing things he has done.
- **Repent** of those things that reveal you are not in tune with God’s will.
- **Ask** for forgiveness, his help, his blessing, and/or his guidance for you and others.
- **Yield** yourself to his way of answering and directing you (“*not my will, but yours be done*”).

Next:

Move on to Chapter Four to see how God completes his plan

Chapter Four

JESUS COMPLETES GOD'S PLAN

History is built on records of the events and deeds of people and countries. The Bible is full of stories and people in history all woven together. They help us understand the record of Jesus.

His record tells about his birth and life on this earth. His record comes to us from men like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John who wrote the first five books of the New Testament. These men brought out evidence from the past to show the world that Jesus is who he said he was. Jesus is the long-awaited Savior. Jesus is the one who completes God's plan to save the world.

In your world:

1. What historic events are important to your life?
2. What makes a report of history trustworthy?

The Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell about the birth and life of Jesus. They tell what Jesus taught the people. They also tell how Jesus died and rose again from the dead. While the writers of the Gospels tell us about Jesus' life, they often remind us of the promises about the Messiah. The Gospel writers go back to Adam and Eve, to Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob, and to David. They repeat the promises the prophets gave to people long ago.

Why do they do this? The Gospel writers quoted many Messianic prophecies to show that Jesus of Nazareth was the one who had fulfilled all those prophecies. By fulfilling the Old Testament

Messianic prophecies, Jesus proved he truly is the promised Savior, the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Son of God, God himself. God causes the Gospel writers to record this because he wants everyone to believe that Jesus is their only Savior.

In this chapter, you will discover:

- how the birth of Jesus accurately fulfilled the prophecies of the birth of the Savior;
- how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the life and ministry of the Savior;
- how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of what the Savior would teach; and
- how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of how God would save all sinners.

Jesus' Birth – a Fulfillment of Prophecy

As you read the whole Bible, you begin to see the one main story that is being told. The gospel writer Matthew tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He also quotes the prophet Micah who promised that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. The gospel writer Luke tells us that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was still a virgin when he was born. He also reminds us that the prophet Isaiah had said the mother of the Savior would be a virgin. The prophets said the Savior would come from the family of King David. And as Matthew makes clear, both Mary, Jesus' mother, and Joseph, his stepfather, belonged to King David's family.

Even when Jesus was a baby, his life happened exactly the way the prophets had said it would. After he grew up, his life and ministry matched the prophecies of the life and ministry of the promised Messiah. Just as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus healed the brokenhearted and freed those living as captives of sin and Satan. He opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame leap like a deer, and the mute sing for joy. His teachings showed a remarkable understanding of

Scripture and opened up the mysteries that only God could know. There was plenty of evidence that Jesus is the Savior that God promised to send.

Jesus' Life and Death– the Work of the Messiah

It was very important that everything Jesus did was according to God's plan. By fulfilling the prophecies, Jesus was keeping the promise God made long ago to Adam and Eve and repeated so many times throughout history.

Jesus was obeying God by doing exactly as God had promised. He was doing what Adam and Eve failed to do long ago when they failed to love, trust, and obey God above all things. God would accept Jesus' perfect life in place of their imperfect life and the failures of all of us. Jesus became obedient to God's promise by allowing his enemies to falsely accuse and torture him. And just as was prophesied, Jesus was pierced for our wrong-doings, crushed because we had done what is evil. When they nailed him to a cross to die, he became the fulfillment of thousands of years of sacrifices that reminded people that the lifeblood of another would need to be taken in order for God to save ours. So Jesus became the Lamb of God, the sacrifice who takes away the sin of the world. But also as was prophesied, Jesus didn't stay in the grave. He came alive again on the third day. It proved God's promise was true and the work Jesus came to earth to accomplish was complete

So who was this Jesus? The angel Gabriel told Jesus mother that her baby that would be born would be called the Son of the Most High God. The Gospel writer John tells us Jesus was there alongside God at the beginning of the world. In fact, he was God. Jesus was true God who became one with us by being born into this world. If Jesus had not been truly human, he could not have lived and died for us. If Jesus had not been true God, he could not have entered life as a sinless person and he could not have risen from the dead. The only

way Jesus could save people from their sins was by carrying out God's plan of salvation. He did this by giving his sinless life as the payment for all sin. And when he was finished with God's plan for him on this earth, Jesus returned to heaven as both God and man to live in power and glory for us forever. This was God's great plan.

Connect It to Your Daily Life:



Reflect on what you learned in this lesson.

1. What was the most important truth of this story for you?
Discuss why it stuck out for you.



Explore what God is revealing.


2. Write down what was so amazing about Jesus' birth.
3. Explain the picture of a sacrifice and how it applies to the death of Jesus.



Apply it to your world today.

4. What gets in the way of people believing the amazing life, death, and resurrection of Jesus?
5. Compare this with other religions around you. How does this totally change the way of looking at God and this world?

How will this story help you during your week?

-  **Devote** time and energy to put this into practice this week.
Make a Plan. *Write it down!*

Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. Practice retelling it in your own words

Test on Chapter Four

Answer the following questions to review or verify your understanding:

1. Those who studied Scriptures should have realized Jesus was the Messiah because...
 - a) King Herod welcomed him into his palace and declared him part of the royal family
 - b) He could fly in the air and send lightning bolts to earth
 - c) His life, teaching, and actions matched as fulfillments of the prophesies

2. Just as Micah prophesied, the Messiah was born in
 - a) Jerusalem
 - b) Bethlehem
 - c) Nazareth

3. Just as Isaiah prophesied, the Messiah was born to
 - a) A queen
 - b) A sinless person
 - c) A virgin

4. As many other prophesies pointed out, his parents were descendants of the royal line of
 - a) King David
 - b) King Ahab
 - c) King Nebuchadnezzar

5. Because Jesus was the One who fulfilled the prophesies, it was proof that
 - a) We should look for prophesies about our future
 - b) God was keeping the promise made long before to Adam and Eve and many others.
 - c) We can follow the principles of his life to become successful in our life

6. The Biblical records that tell the different details of Jesus life story (called the Gospels) are
 - a) Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers
 - b) Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - c) Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos

7. In the way Jesus lived his life, he
 - a) Showed us how we can be good enough to get to heaven by our actions
 - b) Boasted how great he was in front of the world so they would bow to him
 - c) Did for us what Adam and Eve failed to do in perfectly loving, trusting and obeying God

8. God had to fully become a human like one of us ...
 - a) So he could get close enough to us to finally understand what it is like to be human
 - b) So he could live a sinless life in our place and be the substitute sacrifice for the whole world
 - c) So we could see he really exists and parade his glory in front of the world

9. God's plan to save the world was to
 - a) Send down spirit beings to enter people to make them live the right kind of life
 - b) Have science and governments end war and poverty and create a perfect environment for us to live in filled with peace and love
 - c) Have his Son come to earth so he could fulfill the holy life God expects of us and offer his death to be the complete and final payment for our sin

10. Did Jesus come alive after he died?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) It cannot be proven and makes no difference to my life

Study It Further - from the Bible:

Want to know more? *You may want to keep a journal of what you discover. List questions you may have that can be answered at a later time.*

- His birth:
Luke 1:26-37; 2:1-20
- The Visit by the Wisemen from the east:
Matthew 2:1-11
- His ministry:
Matthew 11:1-6
- His death and resurrection:
Matthew 26:51-56; Luke 24:17-27; 44-48

Other helpful passages to understand the prophesy and fulfillments as they focus on Jesus:

- **Luke 4:14-22, John 5:37-40** (Jesus shows Scriptures point to him as main message)
- **Isaiah 53, Psalm 22** (Prophecies about Jesus' death and resurrection)
- **1 Corinthians 15:1-8** (*the core message of the gospel, the good news*)

What additional insights do you gain from these passages?

Guide for reading:

- Notice some of his titles given even before Jesus was born. What do they tell you?
- Identify some of the details of the birth of Jesus. What makes them unmistakably unique?
- What prophetic evidences does Jesus provide to prove he is the promised Messiah.
- Jesus continued to point out that everything the prophets wrote about him must be fulfilled. His disciples were witnesses of it.
 - How does that impact your view of the Bible?

Conclude your Time in Conversation with God



Pray – talk to God about it.

- **Praise** and thank God for what he is and the amazing things he has done.
- **Repent** of those things that reveal you are not in tune with God's will.
- **Ask** for forgiveness, his help, his blessing, and/or his guidance for you and others.
- **Yield** yourself to his way of answering and directing you (*"not my will, but yours be done"*).

Next:

Ready to find out what happens next? Move on to Chapter Five to see how the message about Jesus spread like wildfire after his resurrection.

Chapter Five

SPREADING JESUS' MESSAGE

There are many stories that spread rapidly from person to person through word of mouth, print, and digital media. Something that might have happened in a quiet corner can soon be news all over the world. It often starts with people who can't wait to tell others exciting or disturbing things they saw or experienced.

In your world:

1. What kinds of stories or news do people around you get excited to share?
2. What are the methods they use to share it?

God's plan for the world did not end with Jesus' death and resurrection. There was another part of the plan – to tell others about what he has done so they could be reunited with God by faith. The message we have about Jesus as our Savior is a message we do not want to keep to ourselves. It is a message that the whole world needs to hear. Without it, people will never really understand the love of God. Without it, people face the punishment of sin. Without it there is no eternal life or hope in death.

In this part of God's plan, you will discover:

- Who Jesus involved to carry out this next part of his mission for the earth
- Where the power comes from that makes it effective

The Great Commission

For thousands of years God used prophets to reveal the great plans he had. When Jesus was born, God used angels to announce the good news to Mary, and Joseph, and shepherds. But after the shepherds saw the baby Jesus, they spread the news of what they had heard and seen. That was just the beginning. There are so many more things that would happen in Jesus' life that people all over the world need to know. However, the land Jesus lived and died in was very small. the time Jesus died, very few people in the world had heard that the Savior had come.

So Jesus told his followers that that they would be his witnesses starting from the city of Jerusalem, to the nation of Judea, then to the neighboring territory of Samaria and finally to the distant parts of the world. Like ripples in the water, the news about Jesus stretched out to continually widening circles. But it wasn't just a special group of people that were telling others. The people who came to believe in Jesus, began spreading it to their families, their neighbors, and their communities. That was God's plan and assignment.

Today, the work of telling others about Jesus is given to all Christians, no matter who they are or where they are. It does not matter if they are rich or poor, young or old. It does not matter what the look like, or the color of their skin, or their status in the community.

The Lord's command to spread the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ is called the Great Commission. The Great Commission says, "*Make disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:18). Jesus sends us out with his message which develops disciples, ones who follow and learn from Jesus as their Savior and Lord. His assignment to us does not mean that each one of us must go to every country as a missionary. It means we are to tell people we meet that Jesus has saved us from our sins, and lives to be with us in life and death...and

forever. If the ones you meet already know Jesus, celebrate who Jesus is and share the joy of what he has done!

But you might say, "Well I am not a pastor!" Or "I'm afraid to talk to others." Or "Look at the bad things I have done in my life! Why would God want to use someone like me?" Why not you? God took a man named Saul who had dragged Christians out of churches and executed them. God made him into Paul, the apostle. He became a powerful Christian missionary who boldly carried the good news of Jesus into new areas of the world. God took Peter, a person who was proud and loud, and made him into a humble and dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ. Soon he was sharing the message about Jesus with people he previously would have avoided or despised. God will also use you in your own way to tell others about his plan for the people in your world.

But what should you share? You could ask people about their story and tell your story, but eventually you want to tell HIS story - the story of Jesus. The basic message is simply this: Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose again for us to save us from eternal punishment and to reunite us to God and his blessings. "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

So now we know that Jesus died to save us from the punishment our sins deserve. We receive the gift of forgiveness by trusting that Jesus is our Savior. Does that mean Christians are not sinners anymore? Does it mean Christians are perfect people? No. Even the followers of Jesus who first heard the Great Commission were still sinful human beings. Jesus' followers still argued. They were still afraid. Life wasn't perfect for them. They still got sick and died.

You can read about Peter who denied knowing Jesus three times when they were dragging Jesus away to condemn him. But later he wept over his sin and repented. Then God used him to heal a

crippled man in Jesus' name. He was also the man who preached in public about Jesus our Savior when persecutors told him not to. He was also a man who died for his faith.

You can read about Paul who at one time in his life persecuted Christians. But God changed his heart and turned him to faith. God then sent him out to tell many others about Jesus and inspired him to write many books of the Bible. He often went to jail because of his preaching about Jesus. He was another man who died for his faith.

Jesus knew that the Christians who went out to spread the gospel would not be perfect people. The message was not about them, but about him – the one they turned to for forgiveness and strength.

The Helper

People who are not perfect can do great things in the name of Jesus. God does not expect us to find the courage to do these things by ourselves. Jesus told his followers that all authority in heaven and earth was now his and that he would be with them always. When Jesus returned to heaven, he sat on the throne to become the eternal King that the prophecies talked about.

And now he sends the Holy Spirit to help believers. The Holy Spirit powerfully came to Christians at Pentecost ten days after Jesus returned to heaven. The Holy Spirit has been guiding Christians ever since. He gives us the gospel message which he uses to change our hearts and the hearts of others.

The Holy Spirit leads people to repent of sin and put their trust in Jesus. He helps them lead better lives. The Holy Spirit guides Christians as they study the Bible so they can understand and apply what it says. The Holy Spirit gives Christians the courage to share their faith and teach others.

The Bible describes this by explaining that the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. What does sanctify mean? It means he daily purifies our hearts to trust in Jesus and become more and more like him. How does he sanctify us? It starts with his Word as we read, hear, and apply it to our lives. This means it is the Holy Spirit who helps us to repent and fight off sin in our daily lives. He helps us obey God's commands and live for God's glory in the days and moments of our lives. The Holy Spirit keeps us in the true faith.

As he sanctifies us, even our lives become witnesses for Jesus. People take notice when they see in us the Holy Spirit developing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in our actions towards others. But ultimately, people learn of God when we share with them his grace and his glory in our lives and then lead them to the story of Jesus birth, life, death and resurrection for us.

What if I don't know a lot? Tell what you do know. At the right time, the Holy Spirit will give the words to say. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can carry out the Great Commission. Jesus tells us that he will always be with us as we carry out that task.

God works through people even though they have weaknesses and sometimes shows his power and glory because of their weaknesses. You may think your witness won't make much of a difference, but remember that this all started with just a small group of followers. The people who claim to follow Jesus have grown to over a billion today. Yet there are even more billions who do not know him. God will use your distinctive personality, your specific relationships, and your unique situations to provide you opportunities to share Jesus in ways others cannot. This is God's plan for the world and you are a part of it.

Connect It to Your Daily Life:



Reflect on what you learned in this lesson.

1. Summarize the role Jesus outlines for his followers in carrying out his plan for the world.



Explore what God is revealing.

2. Was God's mission finished after Jesus death and resurrection? Why or Why not?
3. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the Great Commission given to believers? What assurance does that give you?



Apply it to your world today.

4. Look at your personality, talents, relationships and situation in life. How has God uniquely designed you to be a witness to others of his grace and glory?
5. What could you do this week to better serve God in the details of your daily life and show his love to others?
6. List those in your circle of acquaintances that may not know much or anything about Jesus. Come up with ways you can be a witness to them of what Jesus is for us

How will this story help you during your week?



Devote time and energy to put this into practice this week.

Make a Plan. *Write it down!*

Share it! Determine how you will share this chapter with others. Who especially needs to hear this? Practice retelling it in your own words

Test on Chapter Five

Answer the following questions to review or verify your understanding:

1. The Great Commission from Jesus is to
 - a) Change the world to make it a better place to live
 - b) Condemn the evil of the world and eliminate it
 - c) Make disciples of all nations who trust in Jesus for eternal life

2. The gospel message is...
 - a) Meant only for certain people in the world
 - b) Just another of the many pathways to find spiritual fulfillment
 - c) Necessary for salvation and intended for all people of all nations and languages

3. To which people did Jesus give the task to spread his message to others
 - a) Only the disciples who followed him before he died
 - b) Only the leaders of the church
 - c) Everyone who believes in him

4. Do Christians still sin after coming to faith?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Some do and some don't

5. Sanctification is
 - a) living a perfect life without sinning anymore
 - b) the work of the Holy Spirit to lead us to repentance, faith, and Christ-like living
 - c) determining someone to be a saint because of miraculous things they accomplished

6. Jesus tells his followers they...
 - a) Will no longer have any problems in life but only experience prosperity
 - b) Will still face trouble and challenges but he will be with them
 - c) Will rule over everyone else while they are on earth and gain the respect of all religions.

7. Jesus promised he would make his followers bold and give them the words to say...
 - a) By giving them right rituals and mantras to follow
 - b) By sending them the Holy Spirit to guide them
 - c) By setting up educational institutions in major cities around the world

8. The man once persecuted Christians but God changed to become a great missionary was
 - a) Herod
 - b) Paul
 - c) Peter

9. The disciple who stood up at Pentecost to boldly share the story of Jesus
 - a) David
 - b) Judas
 - c) Peter

10. The power that changes hearts and leads them to believe in Jesus is
 - a) The law
 - b) The gospel
 - c) The forces of nature

Check your answers.

Study It Further - from the Bible:

Want to know more? *You may want to keep a journal of what you discover. List questions you may have that can be answered at a later time.*

- **The Great Commission:**
Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:3-9
- **The Holy Spirit's message and impact:**
John 14:15-17, 25-27; Acts 2:22-24, 32-39
- **Peter's Story:**
Luke 22:52-62; Acts 4:1-13; 10:23-43
- **Paul's Story:**
Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-16; 17:16-31

Other helpful passages to understand the impact of the message of the gospel:

- The message of the gospel – **John 3:16-18, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 5:6-8**
- The power of the gospel – **Romans 1:14-17**
- The need to tell others – **Romans 10:8-17**

What additional insights do you gain from these passages?

Guide for reading:

- Why is it important to know that all authority is given to Jesus when you carry out his commission for you?
- If Jesus were speaking to you about sharing the good news, what geographical locations would he mention?
- Where does the Holy Spirit fit into the picture of you sharing Jesus?
- In his time of weakness Peter once denied he knew Jesus. When might you be tempted to do the same?
- Describe changed Peter to make him so fearless and bold to share the message of Jesus?
- Trace the journey to faith in Paul and its impact on his mission in life.
- Who do you know whose life was totally changed by the gospel? What can you learn from them?

Conclusion

Peter and Paul did not completely finish the work given in the Great Commission. Today, that work is still not completed. The Lord wants us, his followers, to teach his Word in the entire world. That work will be completed only when the last person the Holy Spirit wants to bring to faith in Christ hears the gospel and believes its glorious and amazing truths. Then Judgment Day will come.

Every single Christian alive in the world today has the responsibility to tell other people about Jesus. God's plan about how he was going to save people from sin was finished by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. God's plan about getting the good news to all people to tell them they have been saved is not finished yet.

You do not have to be rich or famous to tell others about Jesus. Many of the early followers of Jesus had simple jobs like fishermen. Some had work that people did not think was good. Matthew had been a tax collector before he followed Jesus. But when he became a Christian, he dedicated his life to telling others about Jesus.

Telling others about Jesus will not make you successful in the eyes of the world. In some places, talking about Jesus can still get you persecuted or thrown out of a country.

Then why do Christians tell others about Jesus? Because it is God's plan. Because the message has given us peace and joy. Because every single person alive in the world today needs God's love and salvation just as much as Adam and Eve did in the beginning.

That is why this history is important.

Conclude your Time in Conversation with God



Pray – talk to God about it.

- **Praise** and thank God for what he is and the amazing things he has done.
- **Repent** of those things that reveal you are not in tune with God's will.
- **Ask** for forgiveness, his help, his blessing, and/or his guidance for you and others.
- **Yield** yourself to his way of answering and directing you (“*not my will, but yours be done*”).

Realize this is one part of God's big story that continues with you today. He has revealed amazing details into his plan, but doesn't answer all of our questions. That is the great mystery.... Content to know He is God, and I'm just his creation...unable to look into all the depth of his daily dealings in my life.

Next:

Move on to the next study in the **LIVING IN FAITH** Discipleship Series

Final Test

Go back through the book and review any mistakes you made in the chapter tests. Also review the goals at the beginning of each lesson. When you are sure you know all the goals, you are ready to take the final test. Send in the test or give to your instructor.

Answer the following questions to review or verify your understanding:

1. According to the Bible, the universe ...
 - Always existed and continues to go through cycles to recreate itself
 - Was created by the actions of the mighty God who made it out of nothing but speaking his word
 - Happened by a chance explosion of molecules setting into motion a changing formation of lifeforms over time

2. The first two people created in our world were...
 - Vishnu and Brahma
 - Moses and Miriam
 - Adam and Eve

3. God's plan for the world was to...
 - see people suffer by causing them misery and pain
 - enjoy a loving relationship with him and a loving interaction with the world he created
 - create slaves to work his garden and be caretakers of all the birds, fish and animals so he could rest

4. The initial action that ruined the perfect world was
 - not taking care of the environment
 - the decision to eat the fruit of a tree God that told them would bring death
 - the systems of society that created a gap between rich and poor

5. Because of the first sin,
 - there is no hope for the world
 - everyone now must save themselves and work their way back to God
 - everyone is born into this life with a sinful nature passed down from generation to generation

6. Immediately God revealed that his long range plan for the world would be
 - to destroy it all and start all over again
 - to let the world exist on its own to solve its own problems without his interference
 - to send a Savior to bear the punishment of sin, crush Satan and restore the perfect relationship with God

7. The Savior would be our Redeemer. In this sense the word redeem means to
 - pay the price to buy back all people from slavery to Satan and sin
 - rescue us from any discomfort and pain in this life
 - compensate for our poverty by making us rich and successful

8. The sorrow over sin that turns to God for forgiveness is called
 - shame
 - repentance
 - blame

9. God's prophets were
 - Mystical leaders who used rituals, incantations, and other divination to call the blessings of the spirits on people and drive away the evil
 - Wise businessmen who could predict when it was good time to invest your wealth
 - Spokesmen for God who revealed the truth of God and called people to repentance and faith

10. The one who wrote the first five books of the Bible was
 - Buddha
 - Moses
 - Mohammed

11. All the writings of the Bible have one main purpose
 - To show us how to live a good enough life to merit the love of God
 - To lead us to faith in the Savior of the world
 - To bring us to a higher level of consciousness

12. God gave the 10 Commandments to his people not only to guide and protect them but to
 - Keep them from feeling free
 - Make them more successful than the nations around them
 - Show them their sin and recognize their need for the Savior

13. The word “Messiah” in Hebrew means
 - The anointed one
 - The great warrior
 - The one who brings the earth into confusion

14. When the Messiah finally would come, he would be the Savior of
 - Only the Jews
 - Those who proved they were worthy of him by their righteous actions
 - All people

15. Those who studied Scriptures should have realized Jesus was the Messiah because...
 - King Herod welcomed him into his palace and declared him part of the royal family
 - He could fly in the air and send lightning bolts to earth
 - His life, teaching, and actions matched as fulfillments of the prophecies

16. As many other prophecies pointed out, his parents were descendants of the royal line of
- King David
 - King Ahab
 - King Nebuchadnezzar
17. The Bible accounts that tell the different details of Jesus life story (called the Gospels) are
- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos
18. God had to fully become a human like one of us in the person of Jesus...
- So he could get close enough to us to finally understand what it is like to be human
 - So he could live a sinless life in our place and be the substitute sacrifice for the whole world
 - So we could see he really exists and parade his glory in front of the world
19. The gospel is
- That we should be nice to people and make sure we eliminate poverty and sickness
 - The message of God's love that send Jesus to live, die, and rise from death for our forgiveness
 - God loves and accepts everyone no matter what they believe and overlooks the wrong they do because they can't help it
20. Sanctification is
- living a perfect life without sinning anymore
 - the work of the Holy Spirit to lead us to repentance, faith, and Christ-like living
 - determining someone to be a saint because of miraculous things they accomplished

21. Jesus promised he would make his followers bold and give them the words to say...
- By giving them rituals and mantras to follow
 - By sending them the Holy Spirit to guide them
 - By setting up educational institutions in major cities around the world
22. The power that changes hearts and leads them to believe in Jesus is
- The law
 - The gospel
 - The forces of nature
23. The gospel message is...
- Meant only for certain people in the world
 - Just another of the many ways to find spiritual fulfillment
 - Necessary for salvation and intended for all people of all nations and languages
24. The Great Commission from Jesus is to
- Change the world to make it a better place to live
 - Condemn the evil of the world and eliminate it
 - Make disciples of all nations who trust in Jesus for life
25. When people hear the gospel
- All will automatically turn their lives around and follow God perfectly
 - Some will believe and be saved and others will reject and refuse to come to repentance
 - They must prove to God that they are good enough to merit his favor

ANSWER KEY FOR CHAPTER TESTS

Answer Key:

Chapter One Test:

1 (b), 2 (c), 3 (c), 4 (b), 5 (c), 6 (b), 7 (c), 8 (b), 9 (c), 10 (a)

Chapter Two Test:

1 (c), 2 (b), 3 (a), 4 (b), 5 (b), 6 (b), 7 (c), 8 (c), 9 (b), 10 (b)

Chapter Three Test:

1 (b), 2 (b), 3 (a), 4 (b), 5 (c), 6 (c), 7 (c), 8 (c), 9 (a), 10 (b)

Chapter Four Test:

1 (c), 2 (b), 3 (c), 4 (a), 5 (b), 6 (b), 7 (c), 8 (b), 9 (c), 10 (a)

Chapter Five Test:

1 (c), 2 (c), 3 (c), 4 (a), 5 (b), 6 (b), 7 (b), 8 (b), 9 (c), 10 (b)

Final Test: Send in or Give to Instructor

God's Plan for the World



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