

STRONG

STUDENTS

HIGH
SCHOOL

TEACHER GUIDE



Kingdom Come

Recovery from Royal Ruin

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Recovery from Royal Ruin



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STRONG

curriculum

A world weak on truth needs a strong, trustworthy message. STRONG Curriculum builds stronger churches by teaching all Scripture to produce spiritually mature believers who measure up to the stature of Christ.

A Plan You Can Trust

We believe the Bible has the answers to what students need most. No other book or philosophy contains God's power to save and transform lives. Because of this, we've made it our unwavering commitment to build Strong Students upon the sure foundation of God's Word. With this curriculum, your church can develop teens who will be strong defenders of the faith.

The Strong Students scope and sequence is designed around the seven teaching aims Jesus modeled in His ministry. Since these are Jesus' aims, teachers can be confident in the aims' effectiveness and purpose. Every lesson in the Strong Students scope and sequence addresses at least one of Jesus' teaching aims.

Every lesson also addresses students' needs. We understand the challenge of teaching the Bible to today's teens because of four barriers culture has pushed on them:

- Struggles with identity
- Subjective view of truth
- Hope in a social utopia
- Belief that a career and wealth guarantee happiness

Strong Students takes care of the tough part for you by striking at the foundation of these barriers and providing a Biblical response to each one. With Strong Students, you can concentrate on communicating to your teens and helping them grow into strong believers in Christ without worrying whether you are effectively addressing the philosophies competing for their minds.

Look for the **BuildUP** icons in the table of contents and on the first page of each lesson.

JESUS' TEACHING AIMS



BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. Jesus taught His students to trust in Him alone for salvation and to share the gospel with others. This aim is obviously fundamental to all the rest.



UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL ETHICS. Jesus instructed His students to live according to moral values. These values provided them with the tools to make wise decisions.



INTERNALIZE GODLINESS. Jesus taught His followers to be godly on the inside. He warned them not to become like the Pharisees, with a mere outward appearance of godliness.



LEARN DOCTRINE. Jesus knew the importance of teaching His students the truth, and He identified doctrine as one of the means for spiritual growth. Wishy-washy doctrine leads to faulty practice.



DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS. Jesus taught His followers to meet life's challenges in a way that honored and glorified God. He gave them the skills to navigate those challenges successfully.



UPLIFT OTHERS. Jesus' life was all about others. Leading by example, He taught His followers to be all about others too.

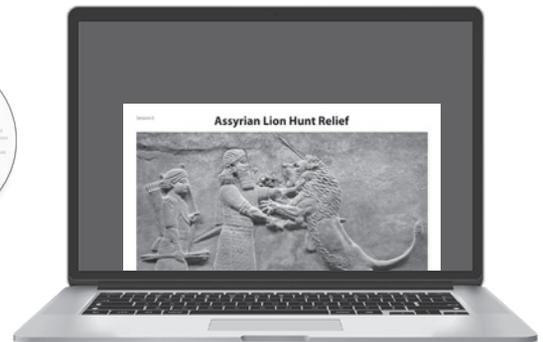
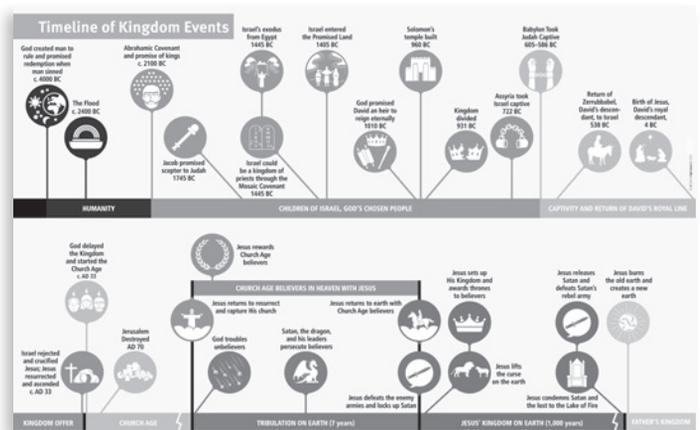
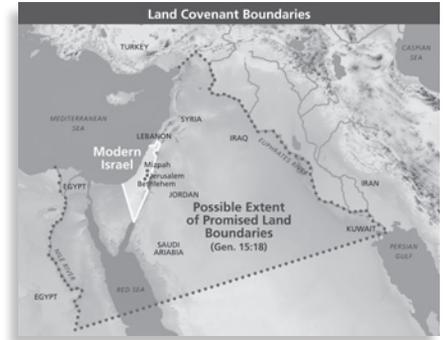


PREPARE TO SERVE. Jesus prepared His followers to serve in the context of local churches that were established soon after His ascension. He emphasized sacrifice and dedication.

STRONG[®] curriculum

High School Kit Contents

- Teacher Guide
- Student Book
Order one book for each student
- Resource CD with
online download code
*Includes PowerPoint,
Home Connection Tool, and
additional teacher resources.*
- Supplemental DVD
- Posters



Ordering Information

All materials are available from
Regular Baptist Press.

- Web: www.StrongCurriculum.com
- Email: orders@rbpstore.org
- Toll-free orders in the United States:
1-800-727-4440
- Fax: 1-847-843-3757
- Canada: Contact your distributor.

The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

How to Teach STRONG STUDENTS Lessons

Leading a Student to Christ

STRONG STUDENTS has been designed to help you clearly present God's Word to your students. Each lesson will guide students through the Bible, encouraging them to interact with the material and apply it to their lives.

Familiarize yourself with the resources included in the kit so that you can maximize your effectiveness in the classroom. The key resources you need are Student Books, the Resource CD, and the Home Connection Tool.

Encourage students to use their Student Books during each lesson so they can follow the PowerPoint presentation by taking notes. The words to fill in the blanks are either part of the outline or highlighted included in orange in the sentences in the PowerPoint.

Some of the PowerPoint presentations contain additional slides that obviously tie into the teacher guide lessons. Make sure you review the PowerPoint presentations before teaching.

The student books include a daily devotional. Encourage your students to complete them either before or after coming to class.

The Home Connection Tool gives the parents of your students an idea of what you are teaching in class. Consider emailing those to each family represented in your class. You can find them on the CD or online using the download code.

Before Each Lesson

- Read the Scripture Focus passage several times.
- Do the Time with God section of the Student Book to know what your students are studying.
- Memorize the key verses.
- Prepare the materials you will need for each activity.
- Work through the Bible Study section and carefully plan the lesson.
- Plan how you will apply the Bible lesson to your students' lives. Make sure what you say is clear and shows students how they can use the lesson.
- Pray for yourself, your students, and your lesson.

AS A TEACHER, your most important concern is the personal salvation of your students. Find out whether your students know Jesus Christ as their Savior in a way that doesn't introduce doubt in their minds. An easy and gentle way to find this out is to give your students several minutes to write out an answer to a question like, How can a person get to Heaven? Collect their answers and read them during the following week. If any of your students seem confused about salvation, you can present the gospel to them and provide the opportunity for them to receive Christ. If possible, deal with students individually.

The Plan of Salvation

- Everyone is a sinner. No one can live up to God's perfect standard (Romans 3:23).
- Sin's penalty is death (Romans 6:23).
- God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sin. Christ died in our place (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- When a person places his trust in Jesus' payment for sins, Christ becomes his Savior. His sins are forgiven, and he receives God's gift of eternal life (John 1:12; 5:24).
- Everlasting life begins the moment we trust in Jesus (John 3:36).
- After that, nothing we ever do will take us out of God's hand; we are secure (John 10:27-29).
- The experience of the new birth (being born into God's family) is not based on a feeling, but on confidence in God's Word (1 John 5:11, 12).

Encourage students to pray, but explain that prayer does not save a person. Prayer is how we communicate our inward thoughts to God. Ask new believers to explain what they have done and what has happened to them.

Discipleship

Encourage new believers to read the Bible, and explain the importance of prayer. Also explain 1 John 1:9 to them so they can deal with sin in their new Christian life. Make it a priority to follow up with new believers.

Knowing Your High School Students

Description of Physical, Social, and Emotional Development

- I MAY feel developmentally out of step with my peers—behind or ahead in physical changes—as I experience puberty.
- I MAY be sensitive about my weight and body shape and worry about whether I am normal.
- I AM developing my own sense of identity.
- I AM more interested in and influenced by my peer group than by the adults in my life.
- I MAY be moody, depressed, or anxious about academic or social issues in my life.
- I AM very focused on myself and may feel both high expectations and lack of confidence.
- I AM better able to express feelings through talking, but I tend to respond dramatically, feeling that no one else has ever experienced the same feelings and emotions.
- I DO NOT always exhibit the emotional maturity that matches my more adult-like appearance. I have trouble thinking before acting; sometimes I seem silly and unfocused on the task at hand.

Effective Responses

- Provide emotional and spiritual support and encourage students to develop a strong sense of self as a valuable person created by God.
- Accept students as they are and avoid comparing them to others. Resist stereotyping. Not every tall boy is a basketball player.
- Generate an atmosphere of acceptance and love for all, demonstrating interest and care for each student.
- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect so youth feel they are part of a community.
- Help build genuine relationships by honestly sharing mistakes and life experiences.
- Help students talk through the ramifications of their choices without asking, How could you? What were you thinking?

- Avoid arguments by remaining calm and not engaging in banter over an issue.
- Be patient with the tendency of some youth toward constant personal grooming.

Cognitive (Learning) Development

- I MAY be hesitant to try new things for fear of embarrassing myself in front of my peer group.
- I AM developing new thinking skills and am able to think about multiple options and possibilities.
- I CAN think more deeply and significantly about abstract ideas such as faith.
- I AM developing a stronger sense of right and wrong.
- I MAY be ready to take significant steps in areas of faith and Christian growth.

Effective Instructional Methods

- Create an open and stress-free environment where youth can learn and share concerns in a confidence-building atmosphere.
- Provide background information, a purpose to the lesson, and understanding of the text.
- Combine love, high energy, enthusiasm, and seriousness with engaging ways to present the lesson.
- Use personal stories that illustrate Biblical principles to keep students engaged in learning.
- Provide honest answers to questions.
- Stimulate thinking in areas of salvation and Christian growth.
- Help Christians work through issues of assurance of salvation and to begin studying the Bible for daily decision making.
- Encourage students to articulate Biblical principles of right and wrong that they are learning from God's Word.
- Invite volunteers to look up and read aloud Bible passages. But don't put students on the spot or ask them to do things that make them feel foolish.

SESSION 1

**GOD'S BACKUP
PLAN**

Scripture Focus

Genesis 1:26–28; 3:15;
Psalm 8:3–8

BuildUP Theme



LEARN DOCTRINE

God is working His plan to restore humanity's rule over creation through Christ.

Measurable Response

Students will trust God's plan to restore rule over the earth through Christ.

Memory Verse

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Ps. 8:4, 6).

Teacher Preparation

- Some people use the word "kingdom" to refer to God's redemptive program. Spreading the gospel, they say, is doing "God's kingdom work." God's redemption work and His kingdom plans, however, are not one in the same. Believers today will indeed be part of an earthly kingdom led by Christ, but that is still a future reality. Christ must return to earth and redeem Israel before establishing His millennial Kingdom. In the meantime, God's redemptive plan includes building the church through evangelistic and discipleship ministries.
- Read Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:28. In his psalm, David acknowledged God's magnificence and declared God's masterful creation provides tangible proof of God's glory. Amazingly, God graciously placed man over His creation to rule it and subdue it. David found that truth profound.
- This lesson presents God's appointment of man to rule over creation on God's behalf and for God's glory. It also presents what went wrong and how God plans to rectify the problem of sin and restore rule over the earth. Your students need to know that though the world might seem chaotic and beyond hope, God's plan has not changed. They can trust God's plan and ability to restore order to the world in His time.

Focus

This course addresses the BuildUP aims called Learn Doctrine and Believe the Gospel. Jesus Christ is at the center of all God's plans. As Israel's promised king, He will fulfill all God's covenants with Israel and establish a literal Kingdom on earth. This course will trace the doctrines of the Kingdom and Christ's Messianic kingship through the Bible and encourage students to live confidently for Christ, knowing God's plan will surely come to pass.

Cultural Barrier

This session addresses the world's promise of a social utopia. Progressive ideology trains students to trust man's ability to perfect the world primarily through governmental control. Sinners, though, will never bring about a utopia. Government intrusion into people's lives will never eliminate the world's problems. Jesus will one day return to earth to set up His Kingdom. Students must look to Him as the only true solution for man's depravity.

Session Starters

Option 1—Disaster Preparedness

Gather

- Resource 13-R1.

Steps

1. Organize the students into two teams. Alternate asking each team questions from resource 13-R1. The questions have to do with knowing how to respond to disasters or dangerous situations. Award teams ten points for getting their answer correct. If a team misses a question, give the opposing team an opportunity to earn five points for getting the answer right.

2. Add up the scores and announce the winning team.

3. Discuss disaster preparedness.

ASK: When have you failed to prepare for failure? What happened? How did you respond?

ASK: When have you had to rely on a backup plan?

ASK: What backup plans do you have in place now?

4. Transition to Bible lesson.

God laid out a grand plan in Genesis 1. He created the universe and then put Adam and Eve in charge of the earth. Before long, His plan went awry in that Adam become unqualified to rule. This course is about God's backup plan to restore order and rule on earth and into eternity. We will learn today that God was not caught unprepared. He didn't have to scramble to go a different route. In fact, we will learn that God's backup plan was His plan all along.

Option 2—Seed Art

Gather

- Variety of seeds, dry beans, and nuts (e.g., popcorn, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, lima beans, walnuts).
- Note cards.
- Construction paper or poster board pieces.

Steps

1. Organize the students into three teams. Consider using more teams



13-R1

Make sure you are aware of your students' food allergies and that you don't have anything in the classroom that would cause any of them to have an allergic reaction.

if you have a large class or have students work in pairs if you have a small class.

2. Give each team access to similar amounts of each of the seeds, beans, or nuts. Each team uses the items to create a picture of something that represents royalty (e.g., crown, scepter, throne, castle). Have them work on a piece of construction paper or poster board. Give them four minutes to work. Students can use the note cards to push groups of the materials into place.
3. Students present their royal creations.

ASK: What do seeds, nuts, and beans all have in common?
They all either have or are seeds that would grow a new plant when planted.

ASK: What might be the relationship between seeds and royalty?

4. Transition to Bible lesson.

We will see the connection between seeds and royalty in today's session and throughout the rest of this course. God planted "seeds" in Genesis that have yet to mature and bear fruit. Those seeds have to do with Adam's failed kingdom and Christ's future Kingdom.

Bible Study

Gather

- Resources 13-R2 through 13-R7.
- Clear cup of water.
- Ping pong ball.

I. God Established Human Rule (Gen. 1:26–28)

READ: Genesis 1:26–28.

On the sixth day of creation, God created Adam and Eve in His image and appointed them to rule over His creation on His behalf and for His glory. God gave them tasks to guide their rule over the earth.

A. Fill the earth

God formed only one man and one woman during the creation week. They could not rule the earth on their own, obviously. They would need lots of help. So God blessed them with the ability to fill the earth with more people by being fruitful and multiplying. God commanded Adam and Eve to start a family so there would be more people to rule over creation and glorify His name. As Adam and Eve carried out God's plan, they would find that a family was a tremendous blessing from God.

ASK: Though we are affected by sin, being part of a family still has blessings. What are some of those blessings? *Care, love, training, discipline, companionship, support, fun.*

A few pop culture icons have pledged to have no children to do their part to “save” the world from over population. They think a world with more people will hasten climate changes that will make the world uninhabitable. God isn’t worried about overpopulation and climate change. Every person born is part of His overall plan (Acts 17:24–26). His plan doesn’t include overpopulating the earth. Furthermore, God sustains the earth along with the rest of the universe. The earth will not become uninhabitable until God is done with it (2 Pet. 3:10). No one should ever feel guilty about getting married and starting a family. Both are still privileges and blessings from God.

God wanted His earth to be full of life, joy, and loving family relationships. A filled earth honors God and shows the goodness of His handiwork everywhere.

B. Subdue the earth

The second task God gave man was to “subdue” the earth (Gen. 1:28). The word “subdue” means pressing upon something with force so that it is brought under control. Man had to take charge of creation.

ACTIVITY: Float a ping-pong ball on the surface of a glass of water. Push the ball to the bottom of the container with your finger. Point out that the force on the ball doesn’t change the ball, it merely places it under your control. Adam and Eve had to be intentional in subduing the earth.

ASK: Why did the earth need subduing? *It doesn’t have a mind of its own. It needs an outside force to arrange and direct it to reach its potential.*

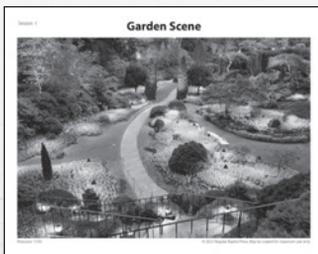
DISPLAY: Resources 13-R2 through 13-R4. **ASK:** How would you describe the work that went into these gardens? *Intentional, consistent, detailed, intelligent.*

God created the earth with lots of potential. He put man in charge of subduing it so it might bring further glory to God for creating something with so much potential.

Science and technology involve learning how God put His creation together and discovering all its possibilities and applications. Both disciplines are part of subduing the earth. Even today we have only scratched the surface of the earth’s potential.

C. Exercise dominion

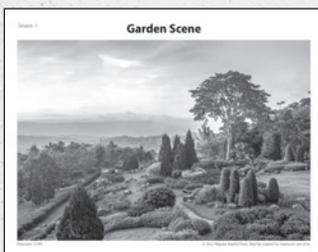
God also intended for man to have “dominion” over living things



13-R2



13-R3



13-R4

(Gen. 1:28). “Dominion” describes man’s established position of rule over creation. The Bible uses the word to speak of masters ruling over servants, kings ruling over subjects, and shepherds’ care and supervision of their sheep.

Man’s dominion spoke to his authority and position. God created man in His image, meaning man had authority over living things. None of the other creatures God fashioned were in God’s image. It’s obvious that none of them are qualified to have authority over the other creatures. Only man can exercise dominion over God’s creatures.

Man’s dominion over creation was not to be harsh or harmful. It was to be authoritative and productive.

ASK: How could Adam have used the animals in the Garden of Eden? *He could have used strong animals to pull loads or horses as transportation.*

While the task of ruling over the creation is not the kingdom of God per se, it is the foundational arrangement upon which God would build His kingdom. God designed His creation to be ruled by Him through His human mediators.

ASK: How do humans struggle to have dominion over the earth today? *We can’t control natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes; our homes are invaded by pests; wild animals terrorize parts of the world.*

Nature has obviously changed since Adam. God cursed the earth and its creatures, meaning the ground has lost productivity and some creatures attack, evade, or annoy humans. We can’t subdue the earth and exercise dominion over it as Adam did before the Fall. God will one day restore human rule over the earth. We will learn about that later in this session.

II. God Honored Humanity (Ps. 8)

David wrote that God honored humanity at the creation of Adam and Eve. His words apply most directly to them in their unfallen state.

A. He crowned them with glory (8:1–4)

READ: Psalm 8:1, 2.

God’s creation, even in its cursed state, reveals God’s glory, including His greatness, wisdom, and character. Young children recognized Jesus’ greatness as the Son of God after He healed the blind and the lame. Jesus applied Psalm 8:2 to Himself when the young children began to praise Him by saying hosanna to the Son of David (Matt. 21:14–16). Remember, Jesus is God’s replacement for Adam. That this

psalm includes Him at this point makes sense. "Hosanna" means "save now." The children realized Jesus was the answer to sin and the key to restoring rule over the earth. As the psalm says, Jesus has the power to crush and silence Satan, His enemy, and to restore rule on earth to humanity.

READ: Psalm 8:3.

David, perhaps while sitting outside on a clear night, considered the work of God's fingers, including the visible stars and the moon. He was impressed with his limited view. We have many more reasons to be impressed. We now know there are somewhere around 200 billion enormous galaxies in the universe. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is approximately 100,000 light years in diameter. A light year is the distance one would travel in a year while going 186,000 miles per second. That's about 5.88 trillion miles per year.

ASK: Resources 13-R5 through 13-R7. **ASK:** What do these pictures reveal about God's greatness, wisdom, or character?

Making up everything in the universe are atoms, the building blocks for all matter. Atoms are so small we have trouble comprehending their size. If we took one atom out of a grapefruit and compared it to the rest of the grapefruit, it would be the same as comparing one blueberry to earth. That's incredibly small! No one has ever directly seen an atom. Scientists have only been able to image an atom using lasers and a special microscope that can capture energy coming from an atom's electrons. Atoms also have protons and neutrons.

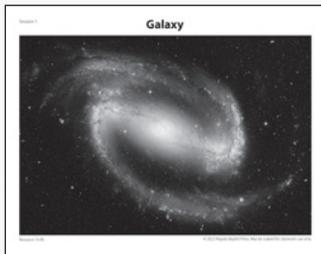
When David considered all of creation, he concluded humans are mathematically insignificant, and he didn't have the benefit of telescopes and microscopes to solidify his case. The universe is unimaginably bigger than one person, and far too detailed to comprehend. Despite those truths, David noted that God showed special attention and care for Adam and Eve by crowning them with glory and honor.

READ: Psalm 8:5.

The word translated "angels" in verse 5 is the word normally translated "God." Most likely David meant "God" rather than "angels." He created Adam and Eve lower than Himself but in His image. God crowned Adam and Eve with glory and honor, meaning dignity, worth, value, and respect.

ASK: How should we treat others knowing that God gives everyone worth, value, and respect? *We should treat them with the same worth, value, and respect God has given them by encouraging them, caring for them, and witnessing to them if they aren't saved.*

B. He gave them privileges (8:5-8)



13-R5



13-R6



13-R7

Hebrews 2:7 quotes Psalm 8:5 and uses the Greek word for "angels." The Hebrew verse refers to men in their fallen state. They would be considered lower than the angels after the Fall because of the presence of a sin nature. Yet God sent Jesus to redeem man, not angels. Man is still crowned with glory and blessed by God.

The glory and honor God gave to Adam and Eve included a privileged position.

READ: Psalm 8:6–8.

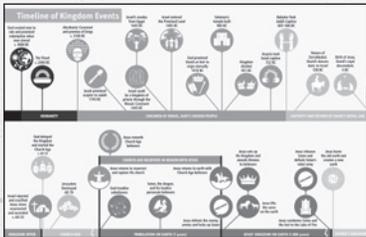
God put the earth, its resources, and its creatures under Adam and Eve’s rule. That was obvious before the Fall. The animals, including the Tyrannosaurus Rex, didn’t attack, chase, or frighten Adam and Eve. The ground grew perfect plants without any threat of destructive diseases, natural disasters, or invasive insects. The earth and its creatures were primed for Adam and Eve to subdue. They exercised dominion over the earth with gladness and energy. They embraced the privilege of being God’s managers of earth.

ASK: If people had accidentally evolved from apes, what would be their relationship to creation? *They would simply be another creature with no responsibility to manage the rest of God’s creation.*

III. God Promised Humanity’s Redemption (Gen. 3:15)

Paradise didn’t last long for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve sinned and ruined themselves and God’s creation. With their failure came severe consequences including death, pain, suffering, and a diminished ability to manage God’s creation. They had to fight against a cursed world, their own physical and spiritual corruption, and Satan and his demons. While this proved an impossible task for them and the rest of humanity, God promised a future where man’s position would be restored. God stepped in with promises of redemption.

DISPLAY: Timeline of Kingdom Events poster. Throughout this course, refer to the timeline poster to track how the major kingdom events in God’s plan relate to one another.



A. He promised a Savior

Genesis 3:15 is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It is often called the “first gospel.” The verse records judgment on Satan, represented by the serpent, in the context of God’s hope for all people.

READ: Genesis 3:15.

God announced there would be an ongoing battle between humanity and Satan. Satan always seeks to destroy humanity. He is not anyone’s friend or helper. He deceives so he might destroy.

Out of humanity, though, will come a promised “Seed,” or baby boy, born of a woman. We now know that baby was Jesus, God’s Son, born of the virgin Mary. Jesus came to earth as a man while maintaining His full deity. He represented humanity and offered to be our redeemer and restore the rightful place of humanity as the rulers on earth.

ASK: How would you characterize today's rulers, presidents, and leaders?

ASK: What hope do you they have of bringing perfect order to creation and humanity? *None. All of them are sinners ruling other sinners in sin-cursed parts of the earth.*

Every politician who promised to end poverty, fix the environment, and rule with honor and justice ultimately failed. Some of them did so miserably. Humans can't solve the problems brought on by sin. We need Jesus to be victorious for us.

B. He promised victory

God explained that the promised Seed would "bruise" the serpent's "head" (Gen. 3:15), meaning Jesus would deliver a final, defeating blow to Satan. The picture is of the Jesus getting bit in the heel as His foot lowers to crush the serpent's head. Jesus' suffering took place as He hung on the cross and bore the sins of the world. Jesus crushed Satan by dying on the cross and then rising again. Satan remains active, but his fate is sealed. He will one day be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

Genesis 3:15 began God's eternal plan to redeem humanity, restore the creation, and reestablish His rule mediated through humanity. This course will trace the unfolding of that plan that will culminate in Christ's Kingdom on earth and God's eternal reign on the new earth.

Memory Builder

Gather

- Whiteboard and markers.

Steps

1. Write the verses out on the board.
2. Review the meaning of Psalm 8:4 and 6.

God placed Adam and Eve over the rest of His creation to have dominion over it. Such an appointment was an act of grace. Because Adam sinned and disqualified himself to rule, God sent Jesus to earth as the Son of Man. The world rejected Him, but one day He will return to earth to set up His Kingdom and restore rule to humanity by ruling Himself.

3. Write "dominion" vertically down each side of the board with the letters stacked. Organize the students into two groups. Each group races to write examples of creatures or aspects of creation over

which humans no longer have rule. The examples must start with or contain one of the letters in “dominion.” The team to finish their list first wins. Note that teams can’t copy from each other.

4. Students work on learning the verses. Alternate between reciting the verse together and erasing some of the words.

Session Application

Steps

1. Review the session.

On the final day of creation, God made man and appointed him as the ruler over the earth. God blessed Adam and Eve, giving them the privilege of filling and subduing the earth. When Adam sinned, God revealed His plan to send Jesus as the Son of Man to restore order. As believers, we will take part in Jesus’ Kingdom. We will rejoice to see Him rule.

2. Discuss man’s place as ruler.

ASK: What does it mean that we are to subdue and have dominion over the earth? *We are to manage it and use it to its fullest.*

ASK: How has our place as rulers been hindered? *Sin makes us unfit to rule. Sin affected all of creation, making it impossible to subdue.*

ASK: What did God do to pave the way to restore rule over the earth? *He sent Jesus to earth as the God-Man to die for our sins and purchase our redemption.*

Session Takeaways

Before dismissing the students, draw their attention to the Time with God page of their student books. Instruct them to complete the activity at home. The activity reviews God’s plan for man to rule the earth under His direction.

SESSION 2

GOD NARROWS HIS PLAN

Scripture Focus

Genesis 12:1–3; 17:6; 49:1–12

BuildUP Theme



LEARN DOCTRINE

God advanced His kingdom plan by narrowing the bloodline through which the King would come.

Measurable Response

Students will see Jacob's prophecy as an integral part of God's Kingdom plan.

Memory Verse

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10).

Teacher Preparation

- God first revealed a formal kingdom when He promised Abraham that kings will come out of him (Gen. 17:6). God passed the promise of kings on to Jacob (35:11). God later narrowed the promise to the tribe of Judah.
- Read Genesis 49:8–12. Israel compared Judah to a lion to illustrate the tribe's dominance over the other tribes. Furthermore, Judah possessed the "scepter," a sign of royal dominion until Shiloh (the Messiah King) came to establish His Kingdom. In the Messiah's Kingdom, prosperity, indicated by the abundance of grape harvests and good health, will be an increasing and lasting condition on the renewed earth.
- Emphasize to your students the detail and care God put into His Kingdom plan, revealing parts of it thousands of years before it began to come to fruition. Your students should desire to understand God's plan and live with anticipation of its culmination at some point in the future.

Cultural Barrier

This session addresses the false hope in a social utopia. Since the Fall, society and creation have both been under an inescapable curse. Man has no power to repair society and nature. God provides the solution through Jesus Christ. He will save those who trust in Him, and one day He will return to lift the curse on the earth and provide a renewed environment for His Kingdom.

Session Starters

Option 1—Royal Scepters

Gather

- Resource 13-R8.
- Paper towel tubes.
- Craft supplies (e.g., construction paper, plastic jewels, wrapping paper, Chenille wire, adhesive foamies).

Steps

1. Show the pictures of the scepters on resource 13-R8.

Japan supposedly has the longest running monarchy. Emperor Jimmu founded it in 660 BC according to legend, making it nearly 2,700 years old. The second continuous monarchy is in Cambodia. It dates from Queen Soma in AD 68. There are 44 monarchies in the world today, but only 29 monarchs because England has power over 15 commonwealth realms. Most monarchs have a scepter to symbolize their power and authority.

2. Students design their own scepters using the paper towel tubes and craft supplies. Display them in the room. Plan to keep them there all quarter. Students can add to them in coming weeks if they like.
3. Transition to Bible lesson.

About 3,700 years ago, God identified a scepter belonging to the greatest monarchy of all time. We will study the passage mentioning the scepter. The passage narrows God's plans to return earth to human rule.

Option 2—Scepter Quiz

Gather

- Whiteboard and markers.
- Paper and pens.

Steps

1. Write the following kingdoms on the board. Number them 1 to 8. In a separate list, write the first monarch for each kingdom. Mix up the order of the monarchs and letter them A to H.
 - (1) Imperial House of Japan. *Emperor Jimmu*.



13-R8

- (2) Kingdom of Cambodia. *Queen Soma*.
 - (3) Sultanate of Oman. *Al-Julanda bin Mas'ood*.
 - (4) Kingdom of Morocco. *Idress I*.
 - (5) British Monarchy. *Alfred the Great* or *William the Conqueror*.
 - (6) Kingdom of Norway. *Harald Fairhair*.
 - (7) Kingdom of Denmark. *Margrethe II*.
 - (8) Kingdom of Sweden. *Eric the Victorious*.
2. Students number their papers 1 to 8, decide which monarch represented which kingdom, and write the letter of each monarch next to the corresponding numbered kingdom.
 3. Give the correct answers. Students share how many they got right.

Japan supposedly has the longest running monarchy. Emperor Jimmu founded it in 660 BC according to legend, making it nearly 2,700 years old. The second continuous monarchy is in Cambodia. It dates from Queen Soma in AD 68. There are 44 monarchies in the world today, but only 29 monarchs because England has power over 15 commonwealth realms. Most monarchs have a scepter to symbolize their power and authority.

4. Transition to Bible lesson.

Scepters are a symbol of royalty and power. The person who wields the scepter has authority over his or her kingdom. In this session, we'll see how God used a prophecy about a scepter to reveal important information about His kingdom plan. That prophecy came about 3,700 years ago, or about 1,000 years before Japan's monarchy supposedly began.

Bible Study

I. Narrowing Promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 17:6)

Adam and Eve's sin both disqualified them from ruling over the earth and made ruling impossible in that God cursed the earth. Adam and Eve could no longer subdue the earth. Weeds, pests, and thorns made growing food difficult. Animals and the weather eventually became violent and unpredictable, making the world a dangerous place to live.

ASK: When have you been scared because of a wild animal or a dangerous weather situation?

ASK: What would you say about people's ability to "subdue" the earth?

God was prepared for Adam's sin. He immediately began implementing His plan to restore human rule over the earth. He promised Adam a "Seed" would defeat Satan (Gen. 3:15). Jesus is the promised "Seed." He defeated Satan by dying on the cross. His death also purchased our redemption and paved the way for His return to earth to restore human rule over the earth.

A. Promise of worldwide blessing (12:1–3)

This session backs up to the time after Adam's sin to see how God worked to bring about His plan for redemption and restoration of human rule. He began by choosing Abraham and making promises to him.

READ: Genesis 12:1–3.

God promised Abraham a land, a nation, a great name, and a blessing that would extend to all nations. His promises formed the basic structure of His kingdom plans and made Abraham the father of the bloodline that produced Jesus. God's promise to make Abraham a blessing to the families of the earth refers to God's offer of salvation to all nations through Christ.

READ: Galatians 3:7–9.

ASK: What is our connection with Abraham? *Through Abraham came Jesus, the Messiah, Who died to redeem us from our sins. We, like Abraham, must put our faith in God for salvation.*

Jesus remains the means through which all the nations of the world can be blessed. He wants us to go to the world to tell them about His offer of salvation.

B. Promise of royal heirs (17:6)

As God continued His relationship with Abraham, He revealed more details about His Kingdom plans.

READ: Genesis 17:6.

God promised Abraham that many kings would descend from him. Some of those kings, including Saul, Israel's first king, and all the kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had nothing to do with God's promises concerning Jesus. King David, Israel's second king, became the first king in the royal line that eventually produced Jesus. Matthew 1:1–16 seems to trace Jesus' legal lineage from Abraham down to David and Joseph. Luke 3:23–38 seems to trace Jesus' biological line, going all the way back to Adam. It's possible Luke traced Jesus' biological lineage through Mary. Either way, both gospels demonstrate Jesus' connection to King David and Abraham.

Believers from the current Church Age will rule and reign with Christ during His earthly Kingdom. What a privilege that will be.

ASK: How should we serve Christ now, knowing we will reign with Him in His Kingdom? *We should make evangelism, the means of filling up His Kingdom, a priority.*

II. Narrowing Prophecies through Jacob (Gen. 49:1–12)

God's promises to Abraham passed on to Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob (Israel). At the end of his days, Jacob gathered his twelve sons and gave prophecies concerning their descendants. Jacob's blessings were no ordinary last will and testament. As he spoke to his sons, he was empowered by God to reveal prophetic truths about each tribe.

A. Dire prophecies for Judah's older brothers (49:1–7)

Not all of Jacob's prophecies concerning his sons were positive. The prophecies for the three oldest were rather dire.

READ: Genesis 49:1–7.

Reuben, Simeon, and Levi all disqualified themselves from receiving the right of succession that normally belonged to the firstborn son. Reuben, once Jacob's pride and joy (49:3), lost his standing and privilege when he had an immoral relationship with one of his father's concubines (35:22). Jacob told him he was as unstable, or uncontrollable, as water. In other words, Reuben did as he pleased. Over time, Reuben's tribe became an insignificant and unstable part of Israel.

Simeon and Levi disqualified themselves when they engaged in brutal violence against Shechem (34:25). Although God provided Simeon's tribe an inheritance within Judah and the Levites were privileged to serve as the priestly tribe, they saw a diminished inheritance compared to the other tribes.

B. Royal prophecies for Judah (49:8–12)

Judah certainly was not blameless in his conduct, but Jacob didn't consider his faults disqualifying. As the next oldest son, Judah received the best blessing. As we will see, God's prophecy to Judah addresses the rest of human history, including days yet to come.

1. Victory (49:8, 9)

READ: Genesis 49:8, 9.

Jacob prophesied that Judah would earn praise from the other tribes for dominating common enemies. Jacob compared Judah's descendants to a lion who has consumed its prey and then laid down to rest without worry of being attacked or disturbed.

The tribe of Judah led Israel in continuing the conquest after Joshua's death (Judg. 1:1–20). Later, King David led Judah and the rest of Israel in defeating Israel's enemies. He rested from his battles and left his son Solomon in a position to begin ruling with relative peace in the land (1 Kings 4:20, 21). Yet, the ultimate fulfillment of Judah's victory won't be until Jesus returns to earth to wipe out His enemies and establish His rule.

2. Rule (49:10)

Jacob pivoted from Judah's victories to his rule.

READ: Genesis 49:10.

A scepter was a long rod covered in ornate jewelry. The person who possessed the scepter displayed his authority to rule as king. The king held the scepter while seated on his throne, letting the scepter rest between his feet. Jacob added that the scepter permanently belonged to Judah, giving the tribe the right to rule the rest of Israel.

Jacob went on to explain that the scepter would remain with Judah until Shiloh came. "Shiloh" is an unusual word that probably means "he to whom it belongs." The word seems to suggest the scepter held by Judah belongs to a future king. Some translations closely associate "shiloh" with the future king by using the word "Shiloh" as the king's name. That is probably a valid translation.

ASK: What valuables do you hope to inherit from your parents?

ASK: What have you done to stake your claim on the valuable?

When Shiloh comes, then the scepter that Judah guarded will be given to her king. Jesus, of course, is Shiloh. He came to earth as a descendant of Judah. The scepter rightfully belongs to Him. When He returns to earth at some point in the future, He will rule the world from Jerusalem, wielding Judah's scepter ("rod") (Rev. 19:11–15). Jesus will initially use His power to wipe out the unbelievers who survived the Tribulation and gathered to fight against Him. He will then turn His attention to the restoration of creation.

3. Restoration (49:11, 12)

As Jacob continued his blessing on Judah, he illustrated the prosperity and health Shiloh (Jesus) will bring to the world through His restoration of creation.

READ: Genesis 49:11.

ASK: What foods do you hate running out of?

ASK: What's your reaction when you go to the fridge or the cupboard to discover the food is gone?

No one will run out of food during Jesus' reign. Jacob illustrated that point with grapes.

Grapes have long been a valuable produce. It takes careful planning and consistent attention to produce a good yield. So vineyard owners protected their crops from donkeys and other animals, who would naturally eat the grapes. When Jesus reigns, people will hitch their donkeys to a grapevine without thinking twice. There will be so much food and such bountiful harvests that whether a donkey eats some of the harvest won't matter.

To further illustrate the abundant harvest, Jacob said people will use the juice from crushed grapes to wash their clothes, rendering the juice worthless in the end. In ancient times people washed their clothes at a river's edge, using rocks to scrub the dirt from their garments. Others used large basins of water to soak and scrub their clothes. In either scenario, there was plenty of water for washing. When Jesus reigns, grape juice will flow like water and could be used for washing clothes without causing a shortage.

Although industrialized nations have experienced great abundance and the average person has more than enough food, there are still many places where food is scarce. No amount of charity or resourcefulness will cure the curse on creation and the hunger it brings. But when Jesus reigns, He will reverse the curse so people won't suffer need.

Lifting of the curse will also affect the health of believers who enter the Kingdom with natural bodies. Such believers will have been saved during the Tribulation and spared until Christ returns to set up His Kingdom.

READ: Genesis 49:12.

While believers who return with Christ to set up His rule will have glorified bodies, those who enter the His Kingdom from the Tribulation will not. Under Jesus' rule, those believers with unglorified bodies will experience excellent health and prolonged life. Jacob noted their excellent health conditions by referring to a person's eyes and teeth. He said people's eyes will be deeper than wine, meaning they will be vibrant indicators of good health. Additionally, people's teeth will be pure white. Some people today spend a great deal of money to achieve a great looking smile. When Jesus reigns, people's health will be so good that their teeth will be straight and bright.

God made narrowing promises to Abraham and to Judah by way of Jacob. His promises gave focus to the Israelites as they grew as a nation. God continued to work His plan, revealing more and more details about the coming Messiah King and the characteristics of His Kingdom.

Memory Builder

Gather

- Whiteboard and markers.

Steps

1. Write out the verse on the board.
2. Review the meaning of Genesis 49:10.

Of the twelve tribes of Israel, God gave the right to rule to the tribe of Judah. The tribe still retains that right to this day. Jesus, the One to Whom the scepter belongs, descended from the tribe of Judah. He will return someday to rule the world. The nations (people) will serve Him during His reign.

3. Students erase key words in the verse and draw pictures or icons in their place.
4. Review the verse and then alternate between erasing some of the words and reviewing the verse. When all the words have been erased, start erasing some of the pictures or icons after each review.

Session Application

Steps

1. Review the session.

After promising the Seed of the woman would come to defeat the serpent, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him the world would be blessed through him. Jesus is that blessing. God also revealed that Abraham would be the father of royalty. God passed His covenant with Abraham to Isaac and Jacob. In his last days, Jacob blessed Judah. The blessing revealed a scepter would not depart from Judah until the One to Whom it belonged arrived. Jesus is the One to Whom it belongs. He will one day return with His scepter to rule the world.

2. Discuss God's narrowing of His plans through Abraham and Jacob.

ASK: What does God's 3,700-year-old prophecy about a scepter reveal about His plans for redemption and restoration through Christ?

ASK: How certain are you that Jesus will return with His scepter to rule the world?

ASK: How should the certainty of Jesus' coming reign affect your life?

Session Takeaways

Before dismissing the students, draw their attention to the Time with God page of their student books. Instruct them to complete the activity at home. The study reviews God's narrowing of His promises through Abraham and Judah.