

Covenant
Leader Guide
(NASB and ESV)

KNOWING
GOD'S COVENANT

Covenant Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)

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USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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COVENANT LEADER GUIDE Lesson 1

Lesson emphasis:

- Overview of covenants in the Bible

To begin this discussion you might ask your group what they learned about the definitions of “covenant” and “made.”

NOTE: The Old Testament was originally written primarily in the Hebrew language and the New Testament in Greek. That is why both words and definitions are given for “covenant.”

“covenant”

Hebrew— *b^erîyth*, meaning “a pledge or an agreement; a compact that is made by passing between pieces of flesh, a confederacy or a league”¹

Greek— *diathēkē*, “a disposition... a contract, a covenant, or a testament”²

“made”

Hebrew— *kârath*, “make an alliance or bargain, originally by cutting flesh and passing between the pieces”³

Ask about the covenants studied in this lesson. Who were the covenants between?

God and man
Men

GOD AND NOAH

Who was involved with the first covenant in Genesis?

It was between God and Noah, his descendants / offspring and all flesh / living creatures.

At this point, you can begin a simple visual aid like the one at the end of this guide. You can add to this visual aid list as the discussion progresses.

¹ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). H1285.

² James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). G1242.

³ James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

Ask your group what they learned about this covenant in Genesis 6 and 9.

God initiated the covenant with Noah and all living creatures.
All life on the earth was corrupt, filled with violence, and man was wicked, with evil thoughts.
God regretted that He had created man and the living things on the earth, animals, and birds.
He decided to destroy them and the earth with a flood.

Noah was a righteous man, and God promised to save him from the flood.
Noah was blameless in his time and walked with God.
He found grace / favor in God's sight.
Because of this, Noah and his family were included in God's covenant.

When the flood came, God remembered His covenant with Noah.
He and his family were spared.

After the flood God established His covenant with Noah, his sons and descendants / offspring and every living creature. His covenant promise was that He would never again bring a flood to destroy the earth.

Genesis 9:12 is the first mention of a sign of the covenant, the bow in the cloud.
The purpose of the bow was a reminder to God of His everlasting covenant.
The rainbow can also be a reminder to Christians of their covenant-keeping God.

God put no conditions on this covenant. Man was not required to do anything.

GOD AND ABRAM

Who was the next covenant between?

God and Abram

Ask what your group learned about this covenant from Genesis 15.

This covenant, also initiated by the Lord, was made with Abram.
Abram, like Noah, believed in the Lord and was a righteous man.

The Lord promised Abram, who was childless at the time, descendants / offspring as numerous as the stars. He also promised they would possess the land.

Abram asked how he would know that they would possess the land, and it seems that the covenant was the Lord's answer to him, verses 8 and 16.

The elements of this covenant are not quite the same as what happened with Noah.

Abram brought a three-year-old heifer, female goat, and ram, and a turtledove and young pigeon. He cut the animals, not the birds, in two and laid each half opposite the other.

When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. The Lord told him his descendants / offspring would be enslaved for four hundred years in a land not theirs. He would judge that nation which oppressed / afflicted them. Then in the fourth generation, the Lord said, they would return to the land.

When the sun had set, a smoking oven / fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces of the animals which Abram had cut. Relate this to the definition of “made.”

How does Genesis 17 relate to this?

Abram was 99 years old when the Lord again appeared to him.

Some of what the Lord promised in Genesis 15 is restated.

The Lord changed Abram’s name to Abraham, because he would be the “father of a multitude of nations.” And He changed Sarai’s name to Sarah because she would be a mother of nations, kings would come from her.

Abraham’s descendants / offspring were heirs of this everlasting covenant, and the land of Canaan is again mentioned as their everlasting possession.

The Lord chose to make a covenant with Abraham and his descendants / offspring; God initiated this covenant. He also made promises connected with this covenant.

The sign of this covenant is circumcision. Every male descendant / offspring and servant either bought or born in Abraham’s house was to be circumcised.

If a man was not circumcised, he had broken the covenant, and the result was that he was cut off from his people. He would not partake of the covenant promises from the Lord.

Abraham and Sarah were promised a son, Isaac, with whom God established the covenant. The covenant promises made by the Lord passed through Isaac’s line, not Ishmael’s.

Abraham obeyed the Lord by circumcising all of the men in his company that very day.

What does Genesis 28:10-22 add to this?

The word “covenant” is not used in this Scripture, but God made the same promises to Jacob, Isaac’s son, as He had made in the covenant with Abraham and Isaac.

He promised that Jacob’s descendants / offspring would be as numerous as the dust, in his descendants all families of the earth would be blessed and that his descendants / offspring would be given the land of promise.

Jacob made a vow, and set up a stone as a pillar, a reminder of his encounter with God.

MEN'S COVENANTS

What other covenants are in Genesis? Discuss the details of them.

Genesis 21:22-34

This covenant was between two men, Abraham and Abimelech.
The basis of the covenant was fear.

Abimelech, a Philistine king of Gerar, recognized that Abraham was blessed by God, and he wanted Abraham on his side. So Abimelech initiated a covenant in which they promised they would not deal falsely with one another, but with kindness.

Abraham gave Abimelech sheep and oxen and seven ewe lambs for a witness or reminder. They exchanged oaths. Their offspring were included in their covenant.

At this point you might review some of the elements of these covenants.

Some are God-initiated.
Signs have been associated with three covenants.
There are promises given in the covenants.
Descendants / offspring are part of the covenants.

How does the covenant in Genesis 26 compare with Genesis 21?

Genesis 26:23-31

The Lord appeared to Isaac, with whom He had continued the covenant begun with Abraham, Isaac's father.

Abimelech initiated a covenant with Isaac for the same reason as the one with Abraham. The basis of this covenant was fear. The purpose of the covenant was to ensure that Isaac did no harm to Abimelech and his people.

They had a feast and exchanged oaths.

What are the details of the covenant in Genesis 31?

Genesis 31:43-55

Laban initiated a covenant with Jacob. As with Abraham and Isaac, the Lord was with Jacob and prospered him. The basis of this covenant also was fear. The covenant promise was not to harm one another.

Jacob set up a stone as a pillar, and his kinsmen made a heap of stones for a witness.

They named it Galeed and Mizpah, which means "the watchtower." It was their reminder of their covenant not to do harm to one another.

They also ate a meal there.

This is the second time a feast or meal is associated with making a covenant.

GOD AND ISRAEL

Who was the covenant in Exodus 24 and 34 between?

God and the nation of Israel

Ask your group what they learned about this covenant.

Exodus 24:1-11

The Lord initiated this covenant with the people of Israel, those whom He had brought out of slavery in Egypt. Compare this with the promise of the covenant in Genesis 15. God told Abram that his descendants / offspring would be enslaved 400 years in a land not theirs, then He would judge that nation and return them to the land of promise.

Moses was the leader of the people of Israel. (God had changed Jacob's name to Israel.) These were the promised descendants / offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were very numerous; some estimate over 2 million came out of Egypt.

When Moses received the word from the Lord, he built an altar with 12 pillars. Burnt offerings and sacrifices were made on the altar to the Lord. Moses took half the blood and sprinkled / threw it on the altar.

He then took the book of the covenant and read it to the people. The people agreed to be obedient to all that the Lord had said. So Moses sprinkled / threw the other half of the blood on the people. He called it the blood of the covenant.

Relate this to the covenant the Lord made with Abram. Animals were cut in two pieces and the smoking oven and flaming torch passed between the pieces.

After the making of the covenant the nobles / elders of Israel went up on the mountain and saw God. He did not kill them, but they ate and drank.

Exodus 34:27-28

The Lord told Moses to write the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. This is another reference to the covenant of the Law or the old covenant.

Review the covenant elements.

Sacrifice, feast or eat and drink, God initiated

This covenant was conditional in that Israel agreed to be obedient to the Lord.

JESUS AND BELIEVERS

Who is the New Testament covenant between?

Jesus and believers

Ask your group what they learned from the New Testament passages.

Matthew 26:20-29

Jesus initiated this covenant with His disciples.

This was at supper on the night He was betrayed and arrested.

Jesus said that the bread was symbolic of His body. They ate it.

He called the cup His blood of the covenant, and they drank it.

His blood of the covenant was poured out for forgiveness of sins.

Luke 22:17-20

Jesus said it was the new covenant in His blood.

You might give time for application discussion. Or ask how this relates to their taking the Lord's Supper or Communion.

How do Isaiah and Malachi add information to this new covenant?

Isaiah 42:5-9

God appointed His servant, Jesus, as a covenant to the people.

Malachi 3:1-2

Jesus is the Messenger of the covenant.

As you bring this discussion to a close, ask your group about the common ingredients of the covenants:

the covenant promises, oaths
signs
conditions
meals
sacrifices
name changes

Encourage your group to continue their study, because the next lesson will examine more closely the customs of covenant and how each might help with a better understanding of the New Covenant.

Covenants

God with Men

Noah and every living thing

Abraham

Isaac

Jacob

Israel

Old Covenant (law)

Jesus with believers

New Covenant

Men with Men

Abimelech and Abraham

Abimelech and Isaac

Laban and Jacob

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis:

- Exchanging robes
- Possible New Covenant symbolism

REVIEW

You can begin this discussion with a review of the definitions for “covenant” and “made.”

“covenant”

Hebrew

“a pledge or an agreement; a compact that’s made by passing between pieces of flesh; a confederacy or a league”¹

Greek

“a disposition, a contract, a testament, a covenant”²

“Made” means to make an alliance, to make a bargain, to make a covenant by cutting flesh and passing between the pieces.³

When the two Hebrew words are used together, it is a Hebrew idiom “to cut covenant.” (*Idiom* is an expression that has a meaning established by usage that is not deducible from the meanings of the individual words.)

You might ask what your group remembers about covenants in the Bible.

God initiated a covenant with Noah and all living creatures after the flood. He promised He would never again destroy the earth with a flood and gave the bow as a sign.

God also initiated a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) to be God to them and their descendants / offspring, give the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession, and bless all families of the earth through them.

¹ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). H1285.

² James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). G1242

³ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). H3772.

God initiated a covenant with Israel who agreed to be obedient to all He said.

Some covenants between men were initiated because of one fearing the other.

Abimelech initiated covenants with Abraham and Isaac because God was with them, and he did not want them for enemies.

Laban initiated a covenant with Jacob so that no harm would come from him.

Jesus said that His body and blood were for the new covenant with His disciples.

What are some of the common elements in covenants?

signs
sacrifices
oaths or promises
meals

JONATHAN AND DAVID'S COVENANT

What is 1 Samuel 18:1-5 about?

Jonathan's soul was knit to David's, and he loved David as much as himself.

Jonathan was the initiator of this covenant with David.
This covenant between two men was based on friendship, not fear.

Jonathan gave David his robe, his armor, sword and bow, and his belt.

At this point, you can begin a visual aid for this discussion. There is a short list at the end of this guide. Or you can draw stick figures. Another visual effect is to have two people in your group exchange robes, coats, sweaters, etc.

What might this picture?

Jonathan gave David his robe.
For Jonathan it might have pictured that he was giving his identity to David.
Jonathan was the son of King Saul.

For David it might have pictured that he was symbolically taking on the identity of his covenant partner.

This act possibly symbolized two becoming one.

POSSIBLE NEW TESTAMENT SYMBOLISM

What in the New Testament relates to exchanging robes or identities?

Believers are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ
Jesus became flesh and blood—a man

How do believers put on the Lord Jesus Christ?

Galatians 3:26-29

This passage states that the sons of God through faith in Christ were baptized into Christ and have clothed themselves with Him (ESV—have put on Christ). The word “clothed” gives the concept of putting on Christ.

This is something which has been done.

Romans 6:1-7

This passage also teaches being baptized into Christ Jesus.

The word “baptize” can mean “to be identified with.”⁴

Believers are united with Christ’s death and resurrection for a reason—to walk in newness of life. There is identification with His life.

Give time to discuss application.

Christians have the very life of Christ dwelling within them. They have the ability and responsibility to live a new life in contrast to the one before salvation.

Believers are dead to the control of sin in their lives, freed from it.

Relate this to Israel being freed from the bondage of Egypt.

The old self was crucified with Him.

The old self is no longer in control, a slave to sin. Sin is now a choice.

A believer’s union, identification now is with Christ.

Therefore, believers should live so that Christ is recognized in them, not themselves.

How do Ephesians 4:17-32 and Colossians 3:1-17 relate to Romans 6?

These three passages all teach about the old self.

⁴ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). G907.

Ephesians 4:17-32

Believers are not to live in sensuality and impurity as they did before salvation.

The old self, the former manner of life, is laid aside.

Believers are called to be renewed in the spirit of their minds.
This is accomplished by studying God's Word.

Put on the new self, that identity of Christ. It is created in righteousness and holiness.
A true Christian has a definite change in lifestyle, from sensuality and impurity to
righteousness and holiness.

Believers should live each day without the sins of the old self controlling them because
these sins grieve the Holy Spirit.

Christians are sealed by Him for the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of
Christ indwelling believers. He is there, the identity of Christ.

Give time for your group to discuss application of the new self.

Believers have an accountability to live as Christ did, by the Holy Spirit and according to
the Word of God.

Ask what they learned from Colossians 3:1-17.

Believers are raised up with Christ in this passage.
Christians have died; their lives are hidden with Christ.
When He is revealed, then believers will be revealed.

Again the contrast of the former life and the Christ-life of believers is presented.
Believers have laid aside the old self and have put on the new, and are still being
renewed.

Almost the same kinds of sins and righteous acts are listed here as in Ephesians.

Paul says to put on love beyond all else because it's the perfect bond of unity.
God's love dwells within believers. Christians are to live according to that love.
Love holds all the other things together.

Three commands are given in verses 15-17:

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.
Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

How is proper behavior described in Romans 13:12-14?

Lay aside / cast off the deeds / works of darkness, and put on the armor of light.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 3 says that believers have clothed themselves with / put on Christ. But here in Romans it says to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. All believers are identified with Him at salvation, but there is also a practical outworking of putting on Christ.

Make no provision for the flesh and its lusts / desires. Believers still live in bodies of flesh, but being united with Christ gives believers the ability to control their flesh.

Give time to discuss personal application.

How does one make no provision for their flesh?

Put on more and more of Christ's behavior.

His Spirit lives within, His Person to direct life in the way He desires.

JESUS BECAME A MAN

Ask what your group learned about Jesus taking on man's identity.

Philippians 2:5-8

Jesus existed in the form of God. He is God.

But He took on the form of a man; He took on the form of a servant.

He, God the Almighty, humbled Himself and became obedient to death.

He took on the identity of man to the degree that He paid the price for man's sin.

Hebrews 2:9, 14-18

For a little while Jesus took on the identity of mankind and suffered at His death.

He tasted death for all men. He paid the price so that believers are united with His death.

Jesus partook of flesh and blood; His body was real flesh like other people.

The devil keeps people in bondage by the fear of death. Jesus sets free.

Jesus took on man's identity to deliver man from the fear of death.

He also took on man's identity that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest.

Because of His identification with men, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. He knows what it's like to be tempted to sin. But because He did not sin, He was able to live the perfect righteous life and pay the price for sin.

To end this discussion, ask your group what they learned about their Lord and themselves that will help them in their daily life.

Identity / united with

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus became a man

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- Weapons and belts
- Possible New Testament symbolism

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about covenant from the previous lessons.

A covenant is a solemn, binding agreement that was made by passing between pieces of flesh. The Hebrew idiom “cut covenant” means “make a covenant.”

In the Bible there are covenants between God and men and covenants between men.

Ask about the covenant in 1 Samuel 18:1-5.

Jonathan made, cut, a covenant with David because he loved David as himself.
He gave his robe to David.
He also gave David his armor including his bow and his sword and his belt.

What is the possible significance of Jonathan giving his robe to David?

It might signify that the covenant partners are taking on each other’s identity and are surrendering their own separate identities.

Believers have put off the old self and put on the new self in the likeness of God.
In other words, they are clothed with / have put on Christ.
Think and act as He would because of His Holy Spirit indwelling.

Christ put on the robe of humanity when He emptied Himself and took the form of a bondservant and was made in the likeness of man. As a man He was tempted, lived the perfect sinless life, and paid the price for the sinful lives of all mankind.

NOTE: Remind your group not to take any of the covenant rituals beyond the clear teaching of Scripture. Don’t be dogmatic on what each symbol means. You might caution your group not to search for a hidden meaning in every passage as that would ultimately result in distortion of truth. Encourage them to let Scripture explain if there is deeper meaning to a passage.

ARMOR/ WEAPONS

Ask your group what they learned about the possible significance of armor and weapons.

Armor and weapons might symbolize protection. In a covenant relationship, each partner has the responsibility to protect and defend the other. Each partner can also extend this protection to his family.

At the end of this leader guide there is a visual aid with two simple lists which might be used to show the main points of this lesson. Or you can draw an exchange of armor and belts. Another visual help is to have a couple of people do an exchange of armor, perhaps their Bibles as representative of the “sword of the Spirit,” and belts.

Relate this to Jonathan and David’s relationship.

1 Samuel 18–20

The covenant relationship between Jonathan and David was even stronger than a family relationship. When Jonathan’s father Saul wanted to kill David, Jonathan put his relationship with David over his relationship with his father. He would have been in line to inherit the throne of Israel from his father, King Saul.

How do the other cross-references add to this information?

Psalm 105:8-15

God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob regarding the land. He reproved kings for their sakes. He cautioned about touching His anointed ones or doing harm to His prophets.

All of the nations who have come against the nation of Israel have been consequently judged by God, sometimes by His using other nations to bring that judgment.

Acts 8 and 9

When Saul was dragging off followers of Jesus Christ, putting them in prison and breathing threats and murder, Jesus said that he was persecuting Him.

Believers’ enemies are His enemies.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10

God will repay with affliction those who afflict believers.

The Thessalonian believers were being persecuted; they were also doing well in enduring that persecution. God said He would give them relief, but not until the coming of the Lord. That is the same time of His repayment to those afflicting them. Christians don’t have to defend themselves for justice to be done.

This passage teaches the eternal perspective of God’s retribution: eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord. He is righteous and just.

Romans 12:14, 17-21 and Matthew 5:43-48

Believers are to bless the ones who persecute them and love their enemies.

Christians should respond in the way that Jesus would respond, in an attitude of love and with another's highest good in mind.

Give time to discuss application.

It is easy to talk about loving our enemies, but it can sometimes be difficult to apply. This is a good time to ask your group for examples of how they have been successful, or how they have failed to love their enemies, and what they have learned from the experience.

What is a Christian's responsibility regarding God's enemies? Who or what are God's enemies?

His enemies are Satan and the world.

John 15:12-25

Jesus defined who His friends are and who His enemies are.

A man lays down his life for his friends.

People are His friends, if they do what He commanded. Believers keep His Word.

The world hates believers because it hates Christ. Christians are not of the world, but chosen out of the world. Understanding covenant gives a better understanding of these verses. If one is united with Christ, then the world who hates Him reacts to His presence. Therefore His enemies become enemies of Christians.

1 John 2:15-17

Since the world is Christ's enemy, then believers should not love the world or the things in the world.

The lust / desires of the flesh

The lust / desires of the eyes

The boastful pride of life

The world is passing away, and also its lusts / desires; but the one who does God's will abides forever.

James 4:1-4

Friendship with the world is hostility toward / enmity with God.

Believers cannot be friends with the world and in covenant with God at the same time.

The world's friends are God's enemies.

Give some time for your group to discuss how this all relates to their lives on a daily basis, the choices they make. How does all of this relate to compromise? What about adopting the world's philosophies, morals, goals, thinking, and looking like the world?

Help them to understand how to practice loving their enemies, but not loving the world.

BELT

Ask what your group learned about the belt.

The belt possibly symbolizes a man's strength.
Therefore, giving one's belt might represent giving the covenant partner his strength.

Christians are bound together with Jesus in a covenant relationship.

Isaiah 40:31

Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength, mount up with wings like eagles, run and not get tired, walk and not become weary.

Those who are bound together with the Lord exchange their strength for His.

Philippians 4:13

Christians can do all things through Christ who strengthens them.

2 Timothy 4:6-18

The Lord strengthened Paul, even when others deserted him.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, physical ailment, so that he would not exalt himself because of being taken to the third heaven. When he asked the Lord to remove it, God's answer taught much.

His grace is sufficient for whatever a believer has to face.
His power is perfected in a Christian's weakness.

Sometimes God allows believers to be weak so that His strength is seen.

Paul could boast in his weaknesses because the power of Christ dwelt in him.
The same is true of all believers.

To end your discussion, ask what your group learned from John 15:7 and 16.

Jesus said to ask the Father in His name for whatever is needed for accomplishing His will, and it will be done.

<p style="text-align: center;">ARMOR</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>protection</i></p> <p>God protects and will repay</p> <p>world – God’s enemy don’t love things of the world</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BELT</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>strength</i></p> <p>do all through His strength</p>
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**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis:

- Covenant, a solemn, binding agreement

REVIEW

Ask your group what they remember from previous discussions about the definition of making a covenant.

“Made” make an alliance or bargain, orig. by cutting flesh and passing between the pieces.¹

“Covenant” means a pledge or agreement,²
“a *compact* (because made by passing between *pieces* of flesh).”³

The Hebrew words translated into English “made a covenant” literally mean “cut covenant.”

What are the possible rituals and symbolism of covenant?

Robes

This might have signified that the covenant partners were taking on each other’s identity and surrendering their own separate identities. The two became one, and every other relationship and ambition was set aside.

Believers have put off the old self and put on the new self—put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ put on the robe of humanity when He took on flesh and blood.

Armor / weapons

This might have symbolized protection for covenant partners. Each partner has the responsibility to protect and defend the other. The relationship can also extend to their families.

Jonathan put his covenant relationship with David above his relationship with his father Saul when he protected David from Saul. He also sacrificed his own right to the throne to protect David.

¹ James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 3772.

² James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

³ James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

God protects and defends those in covenant with Him.

Belts

The belt might be a symbol of a man's strength.

God's strength is available to His covenant partners.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ask your group what they remember from Genesis 15 about this when God made the covenant with Abram. At this point, you might begin listing the main points of this discussion on a simple visual aid. See the last page of this guide for a sample.

The Lord told Abram to cut animals in pieces and lay them opposite each other. Then He went between them in the form of a smoking oven / fire pot and flaming torch.

God Himself walked between the pieces of flesh when He made the covenant with Abram.

What did circumcision have to do with the covenant?

Genesis 17:9-14

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham. It's the outward expression of that covenant.

All of Abraham's male descendants / offspring have to have the sign of circumcision in their flesh. The sign of circumcision is in the outward part of a man's flesh closest to where his descendants / offspring come from.

If one does not have the sign of circumcision, he is cut off from his people because of breaking the covenant with God.

This is an everlasting covenant with Abraham's descendants / offspring.

Why was the Lord going to kill Moses according to Exodus 4:24-26?

Moses had not circumcised his son, kept the covenant, and the Lord was about to kill him until his wife circumcised the son.

God is very serious about His covenants. He means what He says.

1 Samuel 20

When Jonathan spoke of his covenant with David, he said

- “may the Lord do so to Jonathan and more”
- “may the Lord require it at the hands of David’s enemies”
(ESV—May the Lord take vengeance on David’s enemies.)

NOTE: There is a major difference in the translations of verse 16 in the NASB and the ESV.

Jonathan called on the Lord to do him the same harm or greater if he didn’t warn David about Saul’s plans to kill him.

The Lord was between Jonathan and David and their descendants / offspring forever because of their covenant relationship.

Ask your group what they learned about God’s covenant with Israel.

Exodus 24:1-11

Moses received the covenant from the Lord on Mt Sinai.

He made sacrifices and divided the blood. He used half of it to sprinkle / throw on the altar and the other half he put into basins.

He read the covenant to the people.

Hebrews 9:18-20 says he also sprinkled the book of the covenant with some of the blood.

The people said they would obey the covenant.

Moses sprinkled / threw the rest of the blood on them.

This covenant of the Law was a conditional covenant based on Israel’s obedience to God’s commands.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

The first generation of Israel whom the Lord brought out of Egypt broke the covenant, and He killed them in the wilderness.

The second generation was at the edge of the Promised Land when Moses presented them the conditions of the covenant in Deuteronomy. He set before them blessings and life or curses and death.

They, too, entered into the conditional covenant of the Law. God had the right to judge them if they broke it. He had warned them, as their fathers had been warned.

God encouraged them to choose life by loving Him and obeying His voice.

Jeremiah 22:1-9

Many generations later, God still called Israel to keep His covenant of the Law which they had repeatedly broken generation after generation.

If they continued in disobedience, they faced desolation because of forsaking the covenant.

God's promises regarding breaking His covenants are as binding as His promises for keeping covenant.

Jeremiah 34:8-22

Part of the Law, the covenant of Sinai, was for Israel to set free at the end of every seven years any slaves who were brother Israelites.

In the time of King Zedekiah of Judah, the people made a covenant to do this. But those people also broke their covenant.

Verse 18 is very specific as to how the covenant was made. They cut in half a calf and passed between its pieces.

God required obedience.

- They walked between the pieces
- Then they broke, transgressed, the covenant
- He gave them to their enemies

NOTES: Some of your group might be under the misconception that the God of the Old Testament is not the same as the God of the New Testament. Some people teach that God was too severe in the Old Testament, and that the New Testament is only about love.

*God called His people to love Him way back in the Law.
The New Testament contains the same commands—love and obey Him.*

Another word for “covenant” is “testament.”

NEW TESTAMENT

Ask your group what they learned about the seriousness of covenant from the New Testament.

What is the new covenant? When and how did it begin?

Matthew 26:26-28

Jesus' body was the sacrifice, and His was the blood of the new covenant.

There is a parallel between the broken bread representing Christ's body and the animals cut in two when God initiated the covenant with Abram.

1 Corinthians 11:18-34

This passage speaks of “the Lord’s Supper,” and is based on the last supper of Matthew 26.

It’s to remember Him—His death, the new covenant in His blood—and in doing so is to proclaim His death until He returns.

The Corinthian church was not taking this tradition of the Lord’s Supper as seriously as they should have.

Ask your group what they learned about taking the Lord’s Supper which they ought to apply to their own lives.

Let them discuss this for a few minutes. But keep the discussion based in 1 Corinthians 11.

We should examine or judge ourselves before taking the Lord’s Supper. Otherwise we can do it in an unworthy manner, bringing judgment or discipline from God on ourselves.

Weakness, sickness / illness, sleep / death

This judgment of believers is not the same as the condemnation for the world, unbelievers.

What is the relationship between faith and obedience found in the New Testament?

“Belief” and “faith” are the same word in the *koine* Greek—*pistis*, meaning a firm conviction which results in a personal surrender and a conduct inspired by that surrender.⁴

It involves more than what a person thinks; it involves behavior.

“Believe” is *pisteuo*, the verb form of the same word, which has the same basic definition.

Acts 6:7

As the gospel of Jesus Christ spread, people became obedient to the faith—they were saved. Paul wrote about this obedience of faith in Romans. If one has faith, then obedience is a by-product.

Paul also wrote about the opposite in Romans 2:8 and 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

God’s wrath and indignation await those who don’t obey the truth, those who don’t repent. Those who don’t obey the gospel receive retribution / vengeance from Him.

Hebrews 3:18-19

This equates unbelief with disobedience.

⁴ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 222.

Ask your group how this lesson has impacted their lives. Let them share and encourage one another as you end this discussion about covenant being a solemn and binding agreement.

Covenant is solemn and binding

Old Testament

God almost killed Moses

Israel broke the Old Covenant—consequences

New Testament

Jesus' body and blood—New Covenant

Lord's Supper—examine yourselves

Obedience is evidence of faith / belief

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis:

- Walk through the pieces

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember from their previous study of covenant.

One of the definitions of the Hebrew word translated “covenant” is a compact made by walking between pieces of flesh.

The verb “made” means “to covenant...by cutting flesh and passing between the pieces.”¹

Even the definitions described covenant as a walk into death.
Covenant is solemn and binding.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:

Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
Exchanging weapons, taking on one another’s enemies, protection
Exchanging belts or strength

You might give some time for brief sharing at this point, then move into discussion of this lesson.

WALKING THROUGH THE PIECES

Why is Genesis 15 in this lesson? What are the main points of this chapter?

This is the first illustration in Scripture of one actually passing through pieces of flesh when making a covenant.

God had told Abram in Genesis 12 that he would be a great nation, but at the time of Genesis 15 that had not taken place because he was childless.

The conversation between God and Abram in verses 1-8 gives the setting of this covenant.

¹ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). H3772.

In verse 2 Abram asked God what He would give him since he was still childless and his heir was Eliezer. Eliezer was born in Abram's house, but was of Damascus.

NOTE: One of the customs of that time was for a childless couple to adopt a trusted slave to be their heir.

The Lord then promised Abram that it would be one from his own body who would be his heir.

He took Abraham outside and told him to look at the stars. The Lord told him that his descendants / offspring would be as numerous as the stars.

Verse 6 says that from that point on, Abram believed in the Lord.

How do Galatians 3 and Romans 4 relate to this?

Galatians 3

Verse 8 quotes what the Lord told Abram in Genesis 12:3, and said that was God preaching the gospel to him. Then in Genesis 15, Abram believed in the Lord.

Verse 16 says the promises to Abram and his descendants / offspring, literally "seed," are referring to the Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christ was the one who was going to bless all families of the earth because of His life, death, and resurrection. Abraham believed the gospel, the promise of the Christ, and God counted him righteous. Abraham was justified by faith. "Justified" means to be put in right standing with God.

Romans 4

Abraham was justified when he believed God, and it was reckoned / counted to him as righteousness.

Now lead your discussion back to Genesis 15.

God reminded Abraham that He had brought him out of Ur to give the land of Canaan to him, the land he was in at that time, as inheritance for his descendants / offspring. Abram asked the Lord how he would know this, and the Lord made a covenant with him.

Verses 9-21 describe the Lord making the covenant.

You can draw what happened as a visual aid or walk through the middle of your group or some other form of body language.

The Lord told him to bring certain animals to Him.

Abram cut the animals, except the birds, and laid each piece opposite the other. He had to drive away the birds of prey.

When the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. The Lord said to him, “Know for certain . . . ,” answering his question in verse 8 of how he would know that he was going to possess the land.

His descendants / offspring would be enslaved 400 years in another land. Afterward they would come out of that nation with many possessions. God would judge that nation. In the fourth generation Abram’s descendants / offspring would return to Canaan. Abram would live a long life and die in peace.

When it was very dark, a smoking oven / fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces of the animals. That wasn’t Abram passing between the pieces; he was in a deep sleep. It was the Lord Himself according to verse 18 because the Lord made the covenant with Abram.

At the end of this guide, there is a short list which you can use as a visual aid for this discussion.

NOTE: Jeremiah 34:18-19 was also referenced in the lesson as the other place where a walk between pieces of flesh is part of a covenant. Some in your group might have comments about that, too. It’s when King Zedekiah and the leaders of Israel made a covenant, then broke it.

JESUS, THE SACRIFICE FOR SINS

Ask your group what they learned about the new covenant. Is there a walk between pieces of a sacrifice? Who does it?

You can draw the cross with Jesus on it as a visual aid here. Then in some way indicate believers passing through His body to God. Also direct your group to the diagram of the tabernacle.

Malachi 3:1

Jesus is the messenger of the covenant.

John 1:29

John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. He is pictured as a sacrificial animal.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Jesus is our Passover who has been sacrificed. He is labeled a sacrifice.

In relationship to the New Covenant, then, Jesus is the sacrifice of the covenant.

Matthew 26:17-29; Luke 22:7

Jesus began the process of instituting the new covenant in Matthew 26:26-28 on the first day of Unleavened Bread, the day on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

He broke the bread and said that it represented His body.
Then He said that the cup represented His blood of the covenant, which was to be poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. Relate this to the custom of a covenant meal.

The sacrifice of the New Covenant took place at the Passover.

Matthew 27:45-51

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom.
The veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

The veil, the barrier which separated man from God had been broken.
Through Jesus there is now access to God.

John 14:6

Jesus said that He is the way, the truth, and the life; not one comes to the Father but through Him.

Hebrews 10:19-20

These verses give more explanation as to what happened in the temple when Jesus died on the cross. Jesus inaugurated a new and living way for men to enter the holy place, specifically the Holy of Holies here. The veil represented the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Relate this to a walk between the pieces, the pieces of the sacrificed Lamb, a walk into death.

His death made the way for people to walk through to God.

That is the New Covenant, when believers walk through the veil, His flesh.

That walk into death takes place when one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, when one makes that unqualified committal to God, when there is no holding back of anything.

WALK INTO DEATH

How do the other New Testament passages, in Days Four and Five of the lesson, describe this walk into death for Christians? How is that unqualified committal of oneself explained, and how does it relate to their lives?

Matthew 10:34-39

The cross represented death, not a burden to bear for one's lifetime.

In this passage Jesus explained this death as far as relationships are concerned.
Those worthy of Him put the covenant relationship with Him above all others.

Laying down or losing one's life is a death to self and one's own life interests.

This is a completely life-changing situation.

Mark 8:34-38

In this similar passage Jesus said some of the same truths as in Matthew, plus He says that to follow Him one must deny self. Relate this statement to the current teachings and ideas about "self."

Ask your group if they believe what the world teaches about self, or what the Word of God says. Believers are not to hold to the things of the world, the enemy of God. Are they ashamed of what Jesus taught? It has serious consequences.

This death involves self-denial. Losing one's physical life to find eternal life in Jesus is a small price to pay.

Luke 14:25-27

This is a parallel passage of this same requirement for disciples, or believers, stated by Jesus. He uses the word "hate" to show comparison in the priority Jesus is to have.

It's a walk into death, but with that walk into death the believer finds life.

Galatians 2:20

That death with Christ is explained in this verse. In order to come into this new life, death has to take place. The believer is crucified with Christ.

This is salvation through the eyes of covenant.

Encourage your group to evaluate:

Do I really understand what's involved in entering into the new covenant with Jesus Christ?

Have I made that unqualified committal of nothing at all being held back?

Walking through the pieces

God did when He made the covenant with Abram.

Jesus was the veil for believers to walk through.

It's a walk into death to self, to gain eternal life.

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis:

- The oneness of covenant relationship
- Sharing blood, possessions, and names

REVIEW

Ask what your group remembers from previous study in this course.

One of the definitions of the Hebrew word translated “covenant” is a compact made by walking between pieces of flesh.

The verb “made” means to covenant...by cutting flesh and passing between the pieces.¹
Even the definitions described covenant as a walk into death.
Covenant is serious.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:
Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
Exchanging weapons, taking on one another’s enemies, protection
Exchanging belts or strength

SHARING BLOOD

How does commingling blood relate to covenant?

Sometimes commingling blood was to signify that two had become blood brothers.

It showed that two had become one, their lives were then held in common.
Lives were intermingled, symbolic of one soul in two bodies.

How was blood shared?

Those participating made a cut somewhere in their body.
It was usually made in the arm, wrist, or hand.

The blood was commingled in different ways.

¹ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). H3772.

Sometimes it was gathered into a cup, mixed with a liquid, and then drunk by those making the covenant.

Another way was by holding the wrists together at the point where the cut was made. Those making the covenant would simply clasp their hands or arms so the blood would mingle.

Relate this to the Old Testament references to “striking hands.”

In many modern cultures the handshake is a custom.
Demonstrate this by shaking hands with someone in your group.

The phrase “the striking of hands” symbolized that an agreement had been made. The Hebrew word for “strike” is *tâqa'* which literally means, “to slap the hands together.”²

Job 17:3

Job calls on God to lay down a pledge with him to be his guarantor—one who would agree to appear on his behalf, literally, “strike hands with me.”³

Ezra 10:19 and Ezekiel 17:18

The Hebrew words *nathan*, “pledged” and *yad*, “hand,” are used to show giving one’s hand as a commitment. Ezekiel 17:18 speaks of one who had pledged, given his hand, breaking covenant and not escaping.

Isaiah 62:8

This verse was quoted in the lesson. The right hand is symbolic of strength; therefore, for the Lord to say that He swore by His right hand is a very powerful statement. It pictures the vows of covenant being made.

Sometimes when a covenant cut was made, the parties held up their arms.
Sometimes gunpowder or another substance was rubbed into the cut to make a permanent scar, thereby being a reminder of covenant.

Psalm 22:16

This is a prophetic psalm indicating what would happen to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first verse is some of what He said as He was dying on the cross. This speaks of the rejection David, the author of this psalm, felt when alone and forsaken, but also the rejection Jesus suffered on the cross.

Verse 16 predicts that His hands and feet would be pierced.

² James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). H8628.

³ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Job 17:3) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

John 20:24-27 and Isaiah 49:14-16

Jesus had the imprint of His piercing when He was raised from the dead. He called the disciples' attention to it, especially Thomas.

The Lord said that He had inscribed Israel on the palm of His hands. That might also refer to what happened to Jesus.

Zechariah 12:10

This is another prophecy regarding Israel recognizing the Lord Jesus when He returns. His piercing was done by the ones with whom God had made a covenant.

God was pierced in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, a picture of the mingling of blood and clasping of hands in a covenant relationship.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

What might be the marks of covenant on Paul and other believers in the New Testament?

Galatians 6:17

Paul said that he literally bore on his body marks of Jesus. He had been beaten many times for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and for teaching believers the truth of the Word of God.

There are many today who suffer the same way, but that doesn't mean that all believers will have literal marks on their bodies from persecutions.

Other passages speak of servants and soldiers.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Believers are to glorify God in their bodies.

How is a person one with the Lord Jesus Christ?

Jesus was pierced, and His covenant cut made it possible for believers

to become one with Him,
to receive His life,
to become one nature with Him.

John 17:21-23

This was the prayer which Jesus prayed just before His betrayal and arrest. He prayed for Himself, for His disciples, and for those who would hear from them and believe, in other words all Christians for all times, verse 20.

His request was all would be one as He and the Father are One.

The result of that oneness is that the world would know that He was from the Father.

One with Christ, one with each other, perfected in unity is what Jesus prayed.

As your group discusses these passages, allow for application discussion at any point.

Colossians 1:27

This unity is possible only because of Christ indwelling all believers.
Christ in believers is the hope of glory.

Ephesians 5:25-32

Christ gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify her.
He nourishes and cherishes the church, the body of believers.
Not only does the reference of two becoming one relate to a husband and wife, but also to the spiritual relationship of Christ and the church.

Matthew 26:26-28 and John 6:47-58

Jesus said that His blood shed on the cross was the blood of the new covenant. But in John 6 He told His disciples, His followers, that He was the bread of life and that whoever eats that bread would live forever. Eating the bread was figurative language for believing in Him.

He said that the bread He gave for life was His flesh. Bread is a staple food for the life of people in the world. People have to eat to live. The same is true of drinking; people have to drink to live.

Jesus spoke of Himself as the necessity of life. When a person eats or drinks something, it becomes a part of that person. Jesus was telling His followers of the relationship which would happen as a result of His death and resurrection. Relate this to the covenant meal.

SHARING POSSESSIONS AND NAMES

Ask your group what they learned about covenant partners sharing their possessions and how it relates to them.

2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus became a man so that men could receive eternal life with the Father and Him.

That is spiritual riches. This verse is not speaking of material worldly wealth.

Romans 8:15-17

Part of being an heir with Christ is suffering with Him to be glorified with Him.

Philippians 4:19

This is a wonderful promise for believers from the Lord.
There will be no real need which God does not meet.

Ask your group about sharing among believers, Christians.

At the beginning of the church in Acts 2, when the new covenant was really new, the new believers had all things in common. That means that they shared whatever they had with one another. Jesus had just been killed 50 days prior to Pentecost. There were not positive feelings in Jerusalem about His followers either.

2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 13-15

This is the call of the Lord for all Christians to share with one another so that there is no need. Part of the fulfillment of Philippians 4:19 is through believers giving to one another.

The abundance of one Christian can meet the need of another, therefore, equality. Christians are to help meet the needs of covenant partners.

A child of God should not have to go outside the body of Jesus Christ to have needs met. Christians are covenant partners with each other because of the oneness in Christ.

What was the significance of the name change? Is there anything similar in modern societies?

The exchanging of names represents belonging to another. In many societies when a woman gets married, her name changes to that of her husband.

Genesis 17

The Lord changed Abram's name to Abraham, from exalted father to father of a multitude. He also changed Sarai to Sarah, princess, as kings would come from her.

Revelation 2:17

Overcomers / ones who conquer, a synonym for Christians, will receive a new name.

The name that identifies believers in Jesus Christ now is Christian, which means "little Christ."

SHARING FRIENDSHIP

Ask what your group understood from studying the passages about friendship and the statement in the lesson that Abraham was called the friend of God.

Friend is a covenant term. Abraham was God's covenant partner.

2 Chronicles 20:7

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, was crying to the Lord in prayer. The armies of Moab and Ammon had gathered to war against Judah. Jehoshaphat sought the Lord with the whole nation in fasting and prayer. He reminded the Lord of the fact that He was the ruler over all nations, power and might were His, and that He had given that land to the descendants / offspring of Abraham, Judah at that time.

That was the context of Abraham being called the friend of God forever. Jehoshaphat was calling on the Lord to remember His covenant promise to Abraham.

Isaiah 41:8

This statement of Abraham being the friend of God is also related to the covenant He made with him. Israel is the descendant / offspring of Abraham to whom the Lord spoke words of comfort and encouragement; He had not rejected them in the time of trouble because of His covenant with His friend Abraham.

Ask for the contrast of Hebrew words used for Abraham and Moses when referring to them being “friends” of God.

Exodus 33:11

The Lord spoke to Moses face to face as men speak to friends.

It is a statement of comparison, not the same as what was said about Abraham.

Rêa` or rêya` is the Hebrew transliteration for the word friends in Exodus 33, and it does not have the same intimate connotation of *'âhab* used for Abraham as friend in Isaiah 41.

NOTE: This distinction should become clearer to your group when they study the Abrahamic and the Old Covenants in later lessons.

Psalm 25:14 and Genesis 18:17

God makes His secrets known to those with whom He is in covenant.

Therefore, He told Abraham what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah and why He was going to do it.

Relate this to what Jesus said about His friends.

John 15:13-15

He said that love of friends was the laying down of one’s life, which He did.

But He also said that His friends do what He commanded.

Part of being His friend is knowing what the Father told Him.

The Word of God, the Bible, is what the Father had written for those with whom He is in covenant. Jesus said that this Word is to be obeyed by those who are His friends.

There are some who would claim to be a friend of the Lord’s, but are living lives of disobedience to His Word. The terms “friend of the Lord” or “the Lord is my friend” are loosely used by many who have no understanding of them.

For the Lord to call His servants “friends” is an awesome statement, not simply one of familiarity. It is a term which should call His children to worship Him, not bring Him down to the level of man’s understanding.

SHARING A MEMORIAL

Discuss the last ritual or custom of the lesson related to oneness. Also ask for some illustrations of current memorials.

Genesis 21:22-34

When Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant, Abraham gave 7 ewe lambs to Abimelech as a witness.

Genesis 31:43-54

Laban asked Jacob to make a covenant with him, and it would be a witness between the two. Jacob set up a stone as a pillar. They made a heap of stones and made it a witness, a reminder not to pass it to do the other harm.

Exodus 13:11-16

The Lord gave the Law to Moses to give to the people of Israel after He had brought them out of bondage in Egypt. Moses received the Law at Sinai and gave it to the people before they entered the land of promise.

The Lord spared the firstborn of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt; therefore, the firstborn of Israel belonged to Him. A sign of that deliverance from Egypt by the powerful hand of the Lord was to be on the hand and on the forehead. On their hearts and in their thoughts.

From this Jews created phylacteries (Hebrew *tefillin*)

Today phylacteries are still used by Ultra-Orthodox Jews.

They are black leather boxes with four Scripture passages inside: Exodus 13:1-10, Exodus 13:11-16, Deuteronomy 6:4- 9, and Deuteronomy 11:13-21. They're worn on the arm and head at morning prayer.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25

Before the new generation entered the land of promise, the Lord, through Moses, spoke to Israel telling them of the necessity of hearing and keeping His Word. His Words were to be on their hearts so that they could diligently teach them to their children.

Again the hand and forehead are mentioned in connection with His Words.

Another thing which modern Jews do is to have a “mezuzah” at their doors. They are derived from Deuteronomy 6:9 and contain the two Deuteronomy Scriptures that are in the phylacteries also.

You might ask your group if their memorials or signs sometimes become more important than what they are to be representing.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Jesus said to eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Him.
The cup is representative of His blood of the New Covenant.

This remembrance or memorial is many times called “the Lord’s Supper” or
“Communion.”

Christians should take care that the sign is not just a ritual but also a reminder of the new covenant with the Lord and of His death to affect it.

Oneness In Covenant

Sharing blood—

Jesus shed His blood
Christ in you

Sharing possessions and names—

fellow heirs with Christ
“Christians” share possessions

Sharing friendship—

God and Abraham
Christ and believers

Sharing a memorial—

Lord’s Supper

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis:

- Covenant extended to descendants / offspring
- Jonathan's son Mephibosheth

REVIEW

Ask what your group remembers about covenant.

A covenant is a serious agreement.
It speaks of oneness.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:

Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
Exchanging weapons, taking on one another's enemies, protection
Exchanging belts or strength
Sharing names and possessions

ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS / OFFSPRING

Ask what your group learned from Genesis 12 through 22 about the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 12:2

The Lord promised Abram that He would make him a great nation.
At that time he had no children and he was about 75 years old. His wife was barren.

Genesis 15:4

The Lord added to His promise regarding Abram's heir as one who would come from his own body. This was when Abram suggested the servant born in his house as his heir because he still had no children.

This is the time when Abram believed in the Lord and it was counted as righteousness.

Genesis 17

Abram was 99 years old at the time of the events of this chapter.

When he had been 86 years old, Genesis 16, Sarai and he had come up with another plan for an heir. She gave her maid Hagar to Abram to have a son, Ishmael.

The Lord appeared to him at 99, changed his and Sarah's names, and gave him the sign of the covenant, circumcision. It was all related to the promises of the covenant; he would be the father of a multitude of nations, but the promise of the land would go through his descendants / offspring, literally "seed."

The sign of circumcision was for every male when 8 days old.
Those who were not circumcised had broken the covenant and were cut off from their people.

They were no longer heirs of the covenant.

Circumcision is explained in the lesson as being made closest to the source of paternity. It is a sign of the promise of descendants in the line of Abraham.

On the very day that the Lord required this sign of the covenant, Abraham and his son Ishmael and all the men in his house were circumcised.

Genesis 18:10-14

The Lord again appeared to Abraham and told him that Sarah would have a son in a year's time although she was past the age of being able to have children.

Genesis 21:1-5, 12

The promise was fulfilled when Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old. Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was 8 days old.

The Lord told Abraham that it would be through Isaac, not Ishmael, that his descendants / offspring would be named. In other words, Abraham's descendants / offspring were through Isaac's line, not Ishmael's. That meant the covenant promises applied only to Isaac and his descendants / offspring.

Genesis 22:1-19

God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering.
Abraham's response was willingness to obey without hesitation.

This event shows Abraham's relationship to God was supreme, above all others. It shows that he withheld nothing from God. This event had great significance to Abraham in that God's promises all rested on Isaac. If he died, there would be no great nation, no descendants / offspring to inherit the land, no blessing to the nations.

How does Hebrews 11:17-19 relate to the events of Genesis 22? How much had Abraham learned to trust in God?

He knew that God would be able to raise Isaac from the dead because He had promised the seed to go through Isaac. Abraham so believed that God keeps His Word that he was willing to be completely obedient and offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham witnessed life from the dead through Sarah's womb and he was as good as dead, Hebrews 11:11-12.

In this Isaac was an Old Testament type of Christ.

Ask your students how much they trust the Lord in what He requires from them.
When He tests them, do they trust Him completely?

What does Exodus 4:24-26 add about circumcision?

Moses was one of Abraham's descendants / offspring who was required to keep the sign of the covenant and circumcise his sons. The Lord was about to kill him for not doing so when his wife cut off her son's foreskin.

It was at the time when Moses was returning to Egypt to lead Israel out by the hand of the Lord. He was about to put to death the firstborn sons of all Egypt because of the oppression of His people. Moses could spare his son by circumcising him; otherwise, he would be cut off from his people. The Lord requires obedience.

Moses knew the covenant and the consequences if a male among them was not circumcised; yet, he had not circumcised his son. God showed Moses the seriousness of the everlasting covenant.

Give time for your group to summarize what the Abrahamic covenant said about descendants. There is a simple chart at the end of this guide which you might choose to use as a visual aid.

JONATHAN AND DAVID AND THEIR DESCENDANTS / OFFSPRING

What are the main points about covenant and descendants in the 1 Samuel references? At appropriate points, give time for your group to discuss how these truths relate to their lives.

1 Samuel 16

The Lord rejected Saul from being king of Israel because of his repeated disobedience. He told Samuel to anoint David as the next king.

The Lord said man looks at the outward appearance, but He looks at the heart. When Samuel anointed David, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward, and God's Spirit departed from Saul.

An evil / harmful spirit from the Lord terrorized / tormented Saul, but when David played the harp for him, it refreshed Saul. Saul loved David greatly, and David became his armor bearer.

NOTE: Don't let your group get off the main discussion points by discussing the spirit sent by the Lord which tormented Saul. 1 Corinthians 5:1-7 mentions a similar situation.

1 Samuel 18-20

Jonathan and David made the covenant with each other based on love. David had grown into a mighty warrior in Saul's army.

Jealousy raged in Saul toward David, and he tried to have him killed in battle.

David even became Saul's son-in-law, and because his daughter Michal loved David, Saul was even more afraid of him and became his continual enemy.

Jonathan demonstrated his commitment to David when he protected David from his father, Saul.

David's and Jonathan's descendants / offspring were included in the covenant they made with each other, 1 Samuel 20:12-17, 42.

1 Samuel 22, 24, 26, 27:1-4

David was in covenant with God as a descendant / offspring of Abraham and had been anointed by Samuel as the next king of Israel, but he recognized Saul as God's anointed one because he was king at the time.

David was constantly on the run, fearing for his life because Saul tried to kill him. Yet when he had the opportunities to kill Saul, David did not.

David recognized that, though God has promised him the kingdom, Saul was God's anointed one. It was not David's responsibility to remove Saul. It was God's responsibility.

1 Samuel 31

Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle.

2 Samuel 1

An Amalekite, thinking David would be pleased, brought him news of Saul's death. Instead of being pleased, David tore his robe and had the Amalekite killed, again because Saul was the Lord's anointed one.

NOTE: You might need to help your group understand the seeming discrepancy in how Saul died.

1 Samuel 31 gives the accurate details of how Saul died.

In 2 Samuel 1 the man claiming to have killed Saul was obviously lying to David because he thought that it would bring blessing to him from the new king.

2 Samuel 2:1-11

David showed kindness to the men who had buried Saul.

David became king of Judah in Hebron for 7 ½ years, but Saul's son Ish-bosheth was king over Israel for 2 years.

2 Samuel 3:1

There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David with David's house growing steadily stronger.

2 Samuel 4:1, 5-12

Saul's son, King Ish-bosheth, was murdered. When the brothers who had killed him brought his head to David, David had them killed for murdering a righteous man.

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-12

David made a covenant with the elders of Israel and became king. He reigned 33 years in Jerusalem as king over Israel and Judah plus the 7 ½ years he had reigned over Judah in Hebron.

He realized the Lord God of hosts established him as king. He also realized the Lord exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel, with whom He was in covenant.

Was David faithful to the covenant with Jonathan? How did he treat Jonathan's descendants / offspring after his death?

David demonstrated his faithfulness to his covenant between Jonathan and himself.

2 Samuel 9

Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was crippled at the age of five when his nurse fled with him at the news of Jonathan's and Saul's deaths, 2 Samuel 4:4. He was crippled when he fell as they ran away.

Mephibosheth lived in Lo-debar at the time David became king.

Because of his covenant with Jonathan, David sought a descendant / offspring of Jonathan to whom he could show his lovingkindness / steadfast love, and Mephibosheth was found and brought before him.

David restored to Mephibosheth the land and all that belonged to Saul and his house. He also showed Mephibosheth kindness and gave him the right to eat at his table regularly because of his covenant with Jonathan.

To end your discussion, ask your group to share how God has spoken to them so far in this course.

<p>ABRAHAM AND DESCENDANTS / OFFSPRING</p>	<p>JONATHAN AND DAVID</p>
<p>Circumcision—sign of the covenant Seed through Isaac God tested Abraham Moses and his son son circumcised</p>	<p>Covenant based on love included descendants / offspring Jonathan was killed David showed kindness / steadfast love to Mephibosheth</p>

**Covenant
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 8**

Lesson emphasis:

- Abrahamic Covenant
- The Law or the Old Covenant

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about the main points of what they've studied about covenant.

A covenant is a serious agreement.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:

- Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
- Exchanging weapons, taking on one another's enemies, protection
- Exchanging belts or strength
- Sharing names and possessions

Some covenants included descendants / offspring of the ones who made the covenant.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

How are the facts of the Abrahamic Covenant progressively revealed in Scripture?

Genesis 12:1-9

The Lord promised Abram when he was 75 years old that He would make him a great nation, bless him, make Abraham's name great, and in Abraham all of the families of the earth would be blessed.

When Abram got to Shechem in the promised land of Canaan the Lord appeared to him and said He would give the land to Abram's descendants / offspring. Literally the word for "descendants / offspring" is "seed" here and in the other references in Genesis.

Galatians 3:16 says that seed / offspring is Christ.

Genesis 13:14-18

After Lot separated from Abram the Lord told him He would give the land to him and his descendants / offspring forever. He said He would make them as the dust of the earth in number.

Genesis 15:5-21

The Lord said Abram's descendants / offspring would be as the stars in number. Abram believed in the Lord and was counted righteous.

In making a covenant with Abram the Lord told him his descendants / offspring would be strangers in a land where they would be enslaved and oppressed / afflicted 400 years. Then He would judge that nation they served, and afterward they would come out with many possessions.

In the fourth generation, a generation being about 100 years at that time, Abram's descendants / offspring would return to the land.

The Lord passed between the pieces when He made that covenant with Abram.

At the end of this lesson's guide, there is a chart and a time line either or both of which you might use as a visual aid to show the main points of this discussion.

Genesis 17

When Abram was 99 years old the Lord changed his name to Abraham.

The Lord told him that he would be the father of a multitude of nations, and kings would come from him.

It's significant to understand that this was after Ishmael's birth, who was not the father of the descendants / offspring of promise. And it was before Isaac's birth, through whom the descendants / offspring would come, verse 21.

The sign of the covenant, circumcision, was instituted in this chapter.

Genesis 25:23, 33-34

Before Isaac's twin sons Esau and Jacob were born the Lord told Rebekah, Isaac's wife and their mother, that there were two nations in her womb and the older would serve the younger.

Esau, the older, sold his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob.

Genesis 26:1-6, 24-25

The Lord appeared to Isaac and ratified the covenant with him. He made the same covenant promises to Isaac He had to his father Abraham.

Genesis 28:10-22

The Lord spoke to Jacob the same promises as He had said to Abraham and Isaac. The seed would come from him, not his brother Esau.

the land
descendants / offspring as the dust of the earth
through his descendants / offspring all families of the earth would be blessed

Genesis 32:24-30

When Jacob returned to the land of Canaan after being in Paddan-aram for 20 years, the Lord changed his name to Israel. He submitted to the Lord when he wrestled with Him.

Genesis 35:9-15

The Lord appeared to Jacob again and told him that a company of nations would come from him. The land was given to his descendants / offspring. So, the covenant is with the descendants / offspring of Israel, not Esau.

Genesis 49

This chapter lists the twelve sons, who became tribes, of Israel. They are the ones who went to Egypt to escape the famine in the land of Canaan.

Relate this to Genesis 15:13.

What does Exodus say about the Abrahamic covenant?

Exodus 1:8-14

Israel became mighty in Egypt, and the Egyptians were fearful they would become mightier. So, they afflicted the sons of Israel. Again relate this to Genesis 15:13.

Exodus 2:23-25

Israel sighed / groaned and cried out because of their bondage / slavery, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Exodus 6:1-8

The Lord had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, El Shaddai, and established His covenant with them to give them the land. He heard the groaning of their sons and was about to deliver them with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Relate this also to Genesis 15:13-14.

The Lord was about to reveal Himself by His name, LORD. Verses 7 and 8 tell how He would reveal Himself as their LORD.

OLD COVENANT

What are the main points of the Old Covenant, and how does it relate to the Abrahamic Covenant? Give time for application discussion at relevant points.

Exodus 19:1-9

In the third month after the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, they came to the wilderness of Sinai.

NOTE: If you have access to a map of the area, you could show Israel, Egypt, and Sinai.

The LORD said, if they would keep His covenant, they would be His own possession from all the peoples of the earth. He wanted to make of them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The people agreed. Then He told them He would speak to them from a thick cloud.

Exodus 20–23

In Exodus 20 the LORD spoke the Ten Commandments to the people and they requested Moses, not the LORD, to be the one to speak to them further. They trembled when the LORD spoke because of the thunder, lightning flashes, sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking.

In Exodus 21–23 the LORD gave Moses the ordinances / rules to give to the people.

Exodus 24

The LORD called Moses up the mountain again to worship.

Afterward he recounted the LORD’S words to the people, and he also wrote down all His words. The people agreed to do all that the LORD said.

Moses built an altar with 12 pillars which represented the 12 tribes. They offered sacrifice, and the blood was divided and sprinkled / thrown on the altar.

He read the book of the covenant, probably Exodus 21–23 plus the Ten Commandments. The people promised God that they would do all He commanded them. Then Moses sprinkled / threw blood on the people, the blood of the covenant.

The leaders went up the mountain again, saw the LORD, and ate and drank.

Moses was summoned again to receive the stone tablets with the law and commandment which the LORD had written for Israel’s instruction.

When he went up, the cloud covered the mountain for 6 days. On the 7th day His appearance on the top of the mountain was like a consuming fire.

Moses stayed on the mountain 40 days and nights.

Exodus 25:1-9

The LORD gave Moses direction for Israel to take up a contribution and construct a sanctuary for Him that He could dwell among them.

Moses was to construct the tabernacle according to the pattern for it and its furniture.

Direct your group to their diagrams of the tabernacle in the Appendix of the Precept book.

Ask what they learned about the tabernacle and its furniture, and discuss how Exodus 25:10-22 relates to the Old Covenant.

NOTE: This will be studied more in Lesson 10.

Entering through the gateway, from the east to the court of the tabernacle the first thing in the court was the altar for the sacrifices. The people could not come before the LORD without a sacrifice. Jesus is the sacrifice.

Next was the laver for the priests to wash. Believers are cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word.

Then entering the door to the tent or tabernacle the priest would come into the holy place first. Jesus is the door and no one comes to the Father but through Him.

In the holy place was the table of showbread on the north side. Jesus is the bread of life.

The lampstand was on the opposite side of the holy place. Jesus is the light of the world.

The altar of incense is the other piece of furniture in the holy place standing before the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies. Jesus is the intercessor for the saints.

The veil / curtain, torn at His crucifixion, represented His flesh.

Inside the holy of holies / most holy place is the ark of the “covenant” with the mercy seat over it. That was where the LORD met with and dwelt among His people.

Mercy covered the Old Covenant of the law.

What’s the relationship of the Abrahamic Covenant with the Old Covenant of the Law?

The Abrahamic Covenant promised a seed / offspring and the land forever to the descendants / offspring of

Abraham
Isaac
Jacob (Israel)

Part of the promise was that they would be enslaved 400 years; then God would bring them out and they would return to the land of Canaan.

The Old Covenant was made with those descendants / offspring after the 400 years of bondage / slavery in Egypt. They multiplied into a great nation while there. When they came out of Egypt there were over 600,000 men 20 years old and older. Therefore, many have estimated that there were at least two million who came out of Egypt. The Old Covenant was the Law given to them by the LORD so that they would live as a holy nation in the land of promise.

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 9**

Lesson emphasis:

- The New Covenant

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about covenant.

A covenant is a serious agreement.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:

- Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
- Exchanging weapons, taking on one another's enemies, protection
- Exchanging belts or strength
- Sharing names and possessions

Some covenants included descendants / offspring of the ones who made the covenant.

Then ask what they remember as the main points of the Abrahamic Covenant and the Old Covenant or the Law.

Abrahamic Covenant

- God made with Abraham
- Promised a great nation, land, and the seed / offspring—Christ
all families of the earth would be blessed
- Was passed to Isaac and then Jacob, Israel
- Everlasting

Old Covenant or the Law

- God made with nation of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt
- They agreed to obey God's Law

At the end of this lesson's guide there is a time line which you can use as a visual aid to show the chronological order of the Abrahamic and Old Covenants and the promise of the New Covenant.

CURSE FOR BREAKING THE OLD COVENANT

Ask what your group learned from Deuteronomy 28–30, which they studied on the first day of this lesson.

NOTE: These passages were at the end of the 40 years of being in the wilderness. Those whom the Lord brought out of Egypt had repeatedly disobeyed Him, so Israel wandered in the wilderness for 38 years as they died (Deuteronomy 2:14). Deuteronomy was directed to the second generation of Israel after Egypt. The second generation entered into covenant with the Lord as their fathers had done.

Deuteronomy 28:58, 63-66

Just as the Lord promised to give the land to Israel, He also promised to tear them from it if they did not obey the Old Covenant. He said He would scatter them among the other nations where they would find no rest, trembling heart, despair, dread, no assurance of life.

God showed them the seriousness of a covenant relationship with Him, and He demonstrated His holiness.

Deuteronomy 29–30

The Lord reminded Israel of how He provided for them bringing them out of Egypt with His great signs and wonders and how He provided for them in the wilderness for 40 years. Even their clothes and sandals did not wear out.

If they obeyed the Law, the Old Covenant, the Lord would bless them, set them high above all of the nations of the earth, establish them as a holy people to Himself, prosper and multiply them, protect them, and inflict curses on their enemies. He would open His storehouse, the heavens, to give rain on their land in its season, bless all of the works of their hands. Israel would be the lender to many nations.

They had already seen His mighty hand when He delivered them out of Egypt and killed their enemies. All they had to do was obey Him and walk in His ways.

The statement in the Precept book next to the Day Two heading briefly gives the historical setting for the promise of the New Covenant. The Day One introduction told more about it. Help your group understand this because it gives the context of the promises.

The nation of Israel split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom was called Israel and southern was called Judah. They had different kings, and both continually turned away from the Lord to idols.

The Northern Kingdom, Israel, fell to Assyria in 733 and 722 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied to the Southern Kingdom, Judah, immediately before, during, and after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. by Babylon. The curses of breaking God's Law came upon Israel, and were about to come upon Judah as Jeremiah prophesied. In the midst of Jeremiah's prophecies to Judah, God gave His people a promise of a new covenant.

At this point, you can use the list about the New Covenant at the end of this guide as a visual aid for the rest of your discussion.

PROMISE OF THE NEW COVENANT

What do Jeremiah 31 and 32 say about the New Covenant?

Jeremiah 31:31-40

The New Covenant is for the future of Israel and Judah.

It isn't to be like the Old Covenant of the Law which they broke and were suffering the consequences.

In this New Covenant, God promised to put His Law within them, write it on their hearts.

He promised He will be their God, and they will be His people.
They will all know Him; the Lord of Hosts is His name.

The Lord promised He will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

Verses 36-37 are important because of their relationship to the Abrahamic Covenant; the Lord promised again that Israel will never cease from being a nation. The offspring or descendants of Israel will not be cast off from Him. He made an everlasting promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Israel, regarding their descendants / offspring.

Jerusalem would be rebuilt and not overthrown again. It will be holy to the Lord.
The historical setting of these promises—they were suffering the consequences of their sins; Jerusalem was being destroyed.

Jeremiah 32:37-44

The Lord promised to gather Israel from the nations where He scattered them. It happened to the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and was in the process of happening to the Southern Kingdom, Judah, at the time of this promise.

Verse 37 teaches about God's anger, wrath, and indignation against His people because they broke His covenant. But He had also warned them of the curses for breaking the covenant, disobeying His law.

In the future, Israel will be safe dwelling in their land.

Again it is stated that the Lord will be their God and they will be His people.

He will give them one heart and way to fear Him, fear so that they will not again turn away from Him. He will not turn away from them; consider the historical setting—they had turned away from Him, and He was turning away from them.

Verse 40 says that this new covenant will be an everlasting covenant.

The land is also a part of this covenant. It was promised first in the covenant with Abraham; it was where the Law of the Old Covenant was to be practiced and is part of the New Covenant promise. The land and the nation of Israel are connected in the Lord's covenants.

The Lord promised good in the land to restore the fortunes of the land and Israel, even though He was bringing disaster upon them for breaking the Old Covenant.

How does Jeremiah 17:9 relate to the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and 32?

The heart of disobedient Judah and Israel was deceitful and desperately sick. They continually turned away from the Lord.

But later in Jeremiah's prophecy, the Lord promised in the New Covenant to write His law on their hearts and to give them one heart that they would fear Him, to put the fear of Him in their hearts so that they would not turn away from Him.

In the New Covenant there will no longer be the deceitful hearts.

Ask your group what they learned from studying Ezekiel 11:13-21 and 36:24-28 about the promise of the New Covenant.

Ezekiel was a contemporary of Jeremiah. He was taken into Babylonian captivity during the second of three sieges on Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 11:13-21

Ezekiel asked the Lord if He was bringing Israel to a complete end with the Babylonian invasion and captivity.

The Lord stated that even though He scatter Israel, He would gather them from the nations where He scattered them and give them the land of Israel. When that happens, they will remove the abominations and detestable things from it.

He will give them one heart and a new spirit within them. He will replace their heart of stone with a heart of flesh, so that they will walk in His statutes and ordinances / rules.

In the New Covenant there will be obedience to the Lord because of the heart's new condition.

But the Lord also gave a warning through Ezekiel to those whose hearts still go after the detestable and abominations—He will bring their conduct down on their heads.

Ezekiel 36:24-28

When the Lord gathers Israel to their land, then

He will cleanse them from all their filthiness / uncleanness and idols.

He will give them a new heart and spirit.

He will put His Spirit within them and cause them to obey Him.

They will live in the land, be His people and He their God.

During the time when Israel was suffering the curses, or consequences, of breaking the Old Covenant of the Law, the Lord promised through Jeremiah and Ezekiel a new covenant in which they would be returned to their land and dwell in safety, being His obedient people because of a new heart and His Spirit within them.

Now ask what your group learned from the New Testament passages they studied.

Ephesians 2:11-22 mentions the “covenants of promise.”

This is the passage which states that the promises are for Gentiles as well as Jews.

Gentiles were strangers to the covenants in previous times. They were separated from the Messiah, Christ, of Israel. They were without God. But by the blood of Christ Jesus the Gentiles were brought near.

He is the peace between the two groups, Jews and Gentiles. He reconciled both in one body to God—both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Gentile believers are no longer strangers, but fellow citizens with the “saints,” believing Jews, and part of God’s household. They are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

This passage connects the promise of the covenant with the indwelling of the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus Christ brought in the beginning of the New Covenant. The church belongs to the New Covenant, Jews and Gentiles in one body and one Spirit.

But there are still future promises not yet fulfilled for Israel in the new covenant.

Ephesians 3:4-6

This passage also mentions the promise and the Spirit. There was a mystery, not understood until the church began to be made up of Gentiles as well as Jews.

Gentiles are fellow heirs and partakers of the promise through the gospel of Christ Jesus.

Romans 1:16; John 1:11; and Matthew 15:24

The gospel, or good news, first went to the Jews.

They were the original heirs of the promise.

Jesus preached to the Jews first and so did the apostles.

But they also gave the gospel to the Gentiles.

Hebrews 8

The chapter begins by referring to Jesus as the high priest seated to the right of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Jesus is a minister in the true tabernacle / tent.

NOTE: Verse 4 says that He would not be a priest on earth, and that is because He was not of the tribe of Levi but Judah. They were two of the twelve sons of Israel, and the Lord chose the Levites to be the ones from whom the priests would come. Aaron was a descendant of Levi, and he was the first priest and the father of all other legitimate priests. It is sometimes referred to as the “Aaronic priesthood.”

There is a heavenly tabernacle / tent which was the pattern for the earthly tabernacle. Under the Law, the Old Covenant, God’s people could come before Him by bringing offerings and sacrifices to the tabernacle. It was God’s dwelling among His people.

Verse 6 states that Jesus had a more excellent ministry than the earthly priests because He is the mediator of a better covenant, enacted on better promises.

The first covenant of verse 7 is the Old Covenant, and the second is the New Covenant.

Verses 8-12 quote the promise of the New Covenant from Jeremiah 31, making it clear that the New Covenant for Judah and Israel mentioned in Jeremiah is the same New Covenant Jesus inaugurated.

The New Covenant made the first, old, obsolete.

“New,” *kainos*, can mean “freshness,”¹ “of different nature from what is contrasted as old.”²

The New Covenant makes the old obsolete because in the New Covenant there is the law within the heart, forgiveness of sins, the indwelling Spirit to cause one to keep God’s ways.

The New Covenant is salvation.

The blood of Jesus draws Gentiles near as well as Jews.

The Holy Spirit indwells those believing in Him.

There is forgiveness of sins and an ability to obey God.

The fault of the Old Covenant, Hebrews 8:7, was that God’s people continually broke it because it could not make them perfect, complete. But the New Covenant promised a continuing because of the changed heart and indwelling Spirit.

Help your group to evaluate if they have entered into the New Covenant of salvation.

¹ James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G2537.

² W.E. Vine’s, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (electronic edition), published in 1940 and without copyright. G2537.

NEW COVENANT
Israel and Judah <i>everlasting</i> Law written on hearts New heart God's Spirit within cause to walk in His statutes I will be their God; they My people forgiveness, cleanse not turn away mystery—Jew and Gentile in Christ

Abrahamic Covenant
Isaac
Jacob/ Israel
Old Covenant/ Law
Israel Broke Old Covenant
Jeremiah
Babylonian Captivity
Ezekiel

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 10**

Lesson emphasis:

- Hebrews 9 and 10

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about the main points of covenant.

A covenant is a serious agreement.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:

- Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
- Exchanging weapons, taking on one another's enemies, protection
- Exchanging belts or strength
- Sharing names and possessions

Some covenants included descendants of the ones who made the covenant.

Then ask what they remember as the main points of the Abrahamic covenant, the Old Covenant or the Law and the New Covenant.

Abrahamic Covenant

- God made with Abraham
- Promised a great nation, land, and the seed / offspring—Christ
all families of the earth would be blessed
- Was passed to Isaac and then Jacob, Israel
- Everlasting

Old Covenant or the Law

- God made with nation of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt
- They agreed to obey God's Law

New Covenant

- God promised Israel when they suffered for breaking the Old Covenant.
- God's law written on hearts, His Spirit within
- Forgiveness
- God's people and He their God

Hebrews 8 quotes Jeremiah's promise of the New Covenant and said the new made the old obsolete. It also says Jesus is the high priest in heaven, the true tabernacle / tent.

Use the diagram of the tabernacle as a visual aid while discussing this lesson.

HEBREWS 9

What is this chapter about?

The tabernacle, the priests, Jesus the mediator of a better covenant

Verses 1-7

How does this chapter begin?

The first covenant is a reference to the Old Covenant of the law.
It had regulations for worshiping the Lord in the earthly sanctuary / place of holiness.

The earthly sanctuary / tent was a place of worship, where God met with His people.

The outer tabernacle / first section in verse 2 is a reference to the holy place where the lampstand and table of sacred bread were.

Behind the second veil / curtain—the first was the door to the tabernacle entering the holy place—there was the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place in which was the ark of the covenant.

The holy place and the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place were under the tent. There was an outer court of the tabernacle which was also set up according to the pattern, and this was where the sacrifices were killed and the priests cleansed.

NOTE: Verse 4 can give the impression of contradiction about the location of the golden altar of incense. Exodus and Leviticus state that it was in the holy place in front of the veil. Hebrews places it behind the veil in the Holy of Holies. The word in Hebrews, thumiaterion {thoo-mee-a-tay'-ree-on}, can be translated both "altar of incense" and "censer."¹ Hebrews 9 is showing the substance of the Day of Atonement, so the word translated "altar of incense" should perhaps be translated "censer" (as it is in the KJV), the golden censer taken into the Holy of Holies by the priest on the Day of Atonement.

The ark contained the stone tablets on which were written the commands of the Old Covenant. Placed on top of the ark was the "mercy seat," mercy covering the demands of the law.

In the divine worship the priests continually entered the holy place, but only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place once a year. He had to take blood offered for himself first, then also blood of the offering for the people's sins.

¹ R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries*: Updated Edition, G2369 (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981).

There were only offerings and sacrifices for unintentional sins. There was no offering for deliberate sin; those who committed deliberate sin were cut off from the people of God, as the Old Testament says.

No one could go into the Lord's presence in the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place without blood. Only the high priest went into His presence, and only once a year. Relate this to Hebrews 10:19.

Verses 8-10

How do these verses relate to the previous ones?

These verses state the significance of the offerings' symbolism connected with the tabernacle. While the Old Covenant was in effect, the way for all to come into the holy place, God's presence, had not been disclosed. But the offerings for sin pointed to the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gifts and sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not give a clean or perfect conscience to those who worshiped the Lord. Those regulations were only until a time of reformation, which came via the New Covenant.

Verses 11-17

What is the contrast? What are these verses about?

There is a contrast between verse 10 and 11, "until a / the time of reformation" and "but when Christ appeared." It moves from the time of the Old Covenant to the time of the New Covenant. He was a high priest of the good things to come.

As a high priest, He entered the greater and more perfect tabernacle / tent, the heavenly one. He entered the holy place once for all by His own blood. This reference to the holy place / places includes the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place.

Contrast this with verses 6 and 7.

Jesus' blood brought eternal redemption. There was no more for the earthly priests to go into the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place with the blood of goats or calves. He entered once for all.

Verse 13 describes the cleansing / purifying of those who were defiled. In the Old Covenant a blood sacrifice cleansed / purified some forms of defilement and the ashes of the red heifer cleansed / purified of other defilements. But those only cleansed / purified the flesh, not the conscience.

Contrast this with verse 14; the blood of Jesus does cleanse / purify the conscience so one can serve the living God as a priest.

He is the mediator of the New Covenant; His death redeemed for transgressions described in the first covenant. In the New Covenant there is a promise of eternal inheritance. The New Covenant is so much better than the Old Covenant.

In verses 16-17 “covenant” probably has the meaning of a will or testament. A will is not in effect while the one who made it is alive. It is only activated at his death.

Verses 18-22

Which covenant do these verses describe?

There was also blood to inaugurate the first or Old Covenant of the Law.

When Moses gave the commandments to the people, he made sacrifices and sprinkled /both the people and the book of the Law with the blood.

When the tabernacle was completed, it and all of the things in it were also cleansed by the sprinkling of blood.

The end of verse 22 is a good statement to encourage your class to memorize.

Verses 23-28

How do these verses continue the flow of thought?

Since there is no forgiveness without shedding blood, the heavenly things were cleansed with the blood of a better sacrifice, Jesus’ blood.

He entered the true holy place, the very presence of God in heaven.

He appears now in His presence for believers. He is our High Priest who made the way for us to come into God’s presence.

He only had to offer Himself once to bear the sins of all. He put away sin by His sacrifice. Again in these verses there is the contrast with the earthly priests’ offerings.

Jesus will appear a second time for the salvation of those who eagerly await Him, believers, without a reference to sin because He sacrificed His blood once for all.

HEBREWS 10:1-25

What is this chapter about? How does it continue from Hebrews 9?

The subject is still a comparison and contrast of Jesus the High Priest and sacrifice with the priests and sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

Verses 1-4

How does this chapter begin?

Reference is made to the Old Covenant; the Law was a shadow of the good things to come.

The sacrifices of the Law could never make perfect those who draw near. The worshipers under the Old Covenant, under the Law, still had a consciousness of sins. Even the yearly sacrifices were reminders of sins.

Verses 5-10

What are these verses about?

The New Covenant when Jesus came into the world to offer His body as the sacrifice for sins

His body was prepared for the specific purpose of being a sacrifice.
He came into the world for that specific purpose.

He took away the first, Old Covenant of the Law, and established the second, New Covenant of salvation.

“By this / that will,” by God’s will which Jesus came into the world to do, by this will believers in Jesus have been sanctified.

NOTE: Sanctified is from the same Greek root word as “holy” and “saint.”

Verses 11-18

Who is this about? What does it say about Jesus?

After He offered His body as the sacrifice for sins for all time, He sat down at God’s right hand. He sat down in the true heavenly tabernacle. He waits until the time when His enemies will be His footstool. That is the time of His second coming.

He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Then the author of Hebrews quotes again from the Jeremiah 31 reference to the New Covenant. Therefore, it is clear that the New Covenant is salvation.

There is forgiveness for sins and no longer are sacrifices needed to come before the holy God.

The New Covenant is salvation.

Verses 19-25

What are these verses about? Is there a change in the text?

This is stating the results of the New Covenant for believers and instructions to believers, those who are partakers of the New Covenant of salvation.

Believers can have confidence to enter into God's presence because of Jesus' blood.

His blood was the new way to the Lord God as opposed to the earthly tabernacle and sacrifices.

He is the living way to God. The veil / curtain of the tabernacle / tent leading into the Holy of Holies / Most Holy Place symbolized the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ. When He hung on the cross in His flesh, the veil / curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The way to God was made for all who believe in Him.

The instructions are to draw near, hold fast, and consider.

Ask your group to discuss how these instructions relate to their lives.

Believers have clean hearts, and can therefore come before God by faith, fully assured by the sacrifice of His Son.

Hold fast the confession without wavering. The Hebrew believers to whom this was written were going through persecutions for believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is hope only in Him.

God is the faithful one who promised.

Consider how to stimulate brothers and sisters to love and good deeds.

Encouraging one another, assembling together, because the day is drawing near—the time of His return.

**COVENANT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 11**

Lesson emphasis:

- Galatians 3 and 4
- Relationship of the three covenants

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about the main points of what they've studied about covenant.

A covenant is a serious agreement.

Some of the possible symbolic acts of covenant are:

- Exchanging robes or identities, two becoming one, dying to self
- Exchanging weapons, taking on one another's enemies, protection
- Exchanging belts or strength
- Sharing names and possessions

Some covenants included descendants / offspring of the ones who made the covenant.

Then ask what they remember as the main points of the Abrahamic covenant, the Old Covenant or the Law, and the New Covenant.

Abrahamic Covenant

- God made with Abraham
- Promised a great nation, land, and the seed (Christ)
 - all families of the earth would be blessed
- Was passed to Isaac and then Jacob (Israel)
- Everlasting

Old Covenant or the Law

- God made with nation of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt
- They agreed to obey God's Law

New Covenant

- God promised Israel when they suffered for breaking the Old Covenant.
- God's law written on hearts, His Spirit within
- Forgiveness
- God's people and He their God

2 CORINTHIANS 3

You might begin your discussion by asking your group what they learned from looking at 2 Corinthians 3; Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:27; and Exodus 34:29-35.

Ezekiel says the promise of the Spirit is part of the promise of the New Covenant.

The Spirit of the living God is contrasted in 2 Corinthians 3 with the Old Covenant of the Law. Both the “new covenant” and the “old covenant” are used in 2 Corinthians 3. The law is referred to as “the letter” in verses 6 and 7.

What is the contrast between the old covenant and the new?
Direct your group to use the chart in the lesson as a visual aid.

Paul said the Corinthian converts were letters of the living God’s Spirit. The change in them from salvation was a letter written by the Spirit on human hearts for all to read, see.

Believers are servants of a new covenant of the Spirit who gives life, not servants of the letter which kills. The law is a ministry of condemnation and death—the law defined sin, and the wages of sin is death.

The letters engraved on stones came with glory. The illustration is from Exodus 34 in which Moses, who wrote down the law, put a veil over his face after meeting with the Lord. His face shone with the Lord’s glory, and the people were afraid to look at his face.

That glory was fading because the ministry of the Spirit, the new covenant, came with even more glory, abounded in glory. The old faded away / was being brought to an end; verses 7, 11, 13.

Verse 14 says most of Israel have a veil over their hearts; their minds are hardened so as not to believe what even Moses said which would lead them to a belief in the Messiah, the Mediator of their promised new covenant.

But when one does turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Believers are being transformed by the Spirit of the Lord into His image.

The old covenant had glory, but it faded with the coming of the new covenant.

The veil is lifted when one believes; that one comprehends the image or character of the Lord by the Spirit. Believers are transformed into that image from one stage of glory to another.

The new covenant is called the ministry of righteousness, being justified and sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of the living God. He leads believers to fulfill the law.

GALATIANS 3

What is this chapter about? How does it relate to 2 Corinthians 3?

It's about receiving the Spirit by faith.
It also mentions the promises to Abraham and the Law.

As a visual aid for this part of your discussion, direct your group to the chart for Days Two and Three.

Verses 1-5

How does the chapter begin?

The Spirit is received by faith, not by works of the Law.
And one who begins by the Spirit is also perfected by the Spirit.

Verse 5 says the Lord is the one who gives the Spirit by faith.

Give time for application discussion when relevant.

Verses 6-9

Who is presented as an illustration of faith? What do these verses say about him?

Verse 6 gives the illustration of Abraham.
Abraham believed, had faith, and was reckoned / counted righteous. He was perfected by faith, not works—he was righteous before the law was given.

God told Abraham that the Gentiles would come to faith when He that all families of the earth would be blessed through him. Those who have faith, as he did, are God's children.

He didn't keep the law; he didn't have the law. Believing Gentiles at the time of the Galatians didn't need to keep the law either. They could be righteous like Abraham without the law.

Verses 10-18

What do these verses teach about the Law?

The Law brings a curse because one would need to abide by all things in it, and no one can do that perfectly—except Jesus, who died for the sins of others and provided redemption from the curse of the Law because He did not violate the law of God.

No one is justified by the Law. The righteous live by faith.

All of the three major covenants of salvation are mentioned in this chapter:
the Law; the Abrahamic Covenant; and the New Covenant, promise of the Spirit.
The promise of the Spirit is for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Verse 14 relates to verses 8 and 9. The Abrahamic Covenant promised the blessing for the Gentiles, salvation for them through Abraham's Seed, Christ.

Verse 17 says the Law came 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant. That would have been 430 years after the Lord renewed the covenant promises to Jacob, not when He first stated them to Abraham.

Israel was in slavery in Egypt for 400 years. The first 30 years they were in Egypt were not years of slavery. Jacob, Israel, went to Egypt at the beginning of those 30 years, Genesis 46–47, especially 46:3.

The Law did not do away with the Abrahamic Covenant. That was an everlasting covenant. The Law didn't nullify any of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Verses 19-24

What's the Law's purpose? Ask what your group learned from the word studies.

The Law was given to define transgressions, sins, and righteousness.

But the law was never able to impart / give life—the Spirit gives life.

The law was to lead to Christ because it showed mankind his sin and his need to be righteous. It showed man his need to be saved, led to the Savior.

The law "kept" those who would listen to it. God gave it to His people to tell them how to live up to His standard of holiness, righteousness—how to live in their land of promise, to be a light to the nations. God's law is good.

"kept / held captive"—*phroureo*, means to keep with a military guard, blocking up every way of escape as in a siege; providing protection against the enemy, as a garrison¹

The Law was a "tutor / guardian" for those who would listen to it. It was for discipline and training in righteousness. It taught what righteous is and what sin is. It taught man how to come before a holy God—only His way.

"tutor / guardian"—*paidagogos*, means a child-leader, training or discipline²

Verses 25-29

How does this chapter end?

Faith in Christ is the way to God and His righteousness. The law served its purpose by pointing to the Savior. And all who believe are one in Christ; no Jews or Gentiles, no male or female, no slave or free; all are heirs of the promise.

¹ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:284.

² Vine. 2:329.

GALATIANS 4

What is this chapter about? How does it continue the flow of thought from Galatians 3?

This continues the same subject from chapter 3 about the Spirit and the Law.

Verses 1-7

How does this chapter begin?

Paul used the illustration of a slave and a child who is an heir. There is no difference as long as he is a child kept under guardians and managers.

The law kept in bondage. The fullness of time set by the Father was when He sent His Son Jesus to be born.

The Spirit makes believers His children, who can call Him, “Abba, Father.”

Give time for your group to discuss application whenever relevant.

Verses 8-11

What are these verses about?

Some were going back to the legalism of the law. They began to keep the feasts and sabbaths of the law again. If they turned back completely, Paul said that his labor was in vain—they had not truly become part of the New Covenant, they had not received the Spirit, they had not truly been saved.

This is the same thing that Hebrews teaches. If one claiming to be saved goes back under the Law, returns to the Old Covenant, then that one was never part of the New Covenant—he was never really saved. That is why it is such a dangerous thing, and the New Testament repeatedly warns against living under the Law.

Verses 12-20

What do these verses say about Paul and his concern?

Paul pleaded with / entreated the Galatian believers in these verses. He begged them to listen to him who told them the truth instead of those who were lying to them.

Verses 19-20 stress how concerned he is for them, the true status of their salvation. He was perplexed about them and labored until he knew that Christ was formed in them.

Verses 21-31

What is the allegory in these verses? What does it mean?
Use the chart in the lesson as a visual aid.

Paul identified Abraham's two wives and two sons as not only true accounts, but also as an allegory symbolic of God's future plans. The New Testament interprets the Old Testament as the Scripture is a progressive revelation.

The free woman was Sarah, and her son of promise was Isaac.
The bondwoman / slave woman was Hagar, and her son of the flesh was Ishmael.

Hagar represented the law given on Mount Sinai, and her son was a slave.
Paul interpreted this as pertaining to the present Jerusalem of legalism.

Sarah represented the Jerusalem above, and her son was free—as are the children of the New Covenant.

Verse 27 says there are more in bondage than free. That is a sobering statement.

The children of promise are true believers, those of the New Covenant.

Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, the legalists persecute the true believers.
And the same thing is true in this time.

They should cast out the “bondwoman and her son,” legalism.

How do Galatians 5:16-18, 25 and Romans 8:4 relate to Galatians and the covenants?

The requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who live by the Spirit.
Believers are the ones led by the Spirit; they are the ones who fulfill the law.
Christians are not under the law because the Spirit, salvation, sets free.

Those who continually walk or live according to the flesh, are not saved, do not have the Spirit dwelling within, do not fulfill the law of God.

You can end your course by asking your group what part of this study meant the most to them.

Let them share how the Lord spoke to them through His Word. Maybe some were even saved; maybe some were set free from a form of legalism. But all were probably more thankful for the wonder of their salvation than before they began this course.