

WEEK 5

DAY 1: WHY SHOULD WE KNOW GOD?

Today's Reading: Genesis 3:15; Exodus 14:14; Deuteronomy 31:8; Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 37:23-24; 67; Jeremiah 29:11

The Old Testament consists of 39 books written by more than 30 authors, covering about 4,000 years. It has writings in Hebrew and Aramaic, and a wealth of rich, historical information. Beyond what can be learned from the Old Testament is the miraculous hand of God that marks its pages.

Many hesitate to read the Old Testament, reasoning that it's difficult to understand or boring and full of disconnected history. The truth is, though, the Old Testament is filled with beautiful truth and the timeless promises of God. From the beginning, Genesis outlines what God designed for humanity. We can take comfort in knowing that God has always had a plan for our redemption and salvation. The hostility described in Genesis 3:15 between the serpent and the woman foreshadows the Gospel and the victory Jesus will ultimately have over the Enemy.

The promises of God found in the Old Testament are tried and true. Knowing this allows us to find hope in our suffering and peace in chaos. Time and again, Scripture affirms that God will be with us, give us a hope and a future, fight for us, and provide us with strength, which is made perfect in our weakness.

These reassurances serve to guide us through the ups and downs of daily life. God was faithful then, is faithful now, and will be faithful to the point of his Second Coming!

PRAYER:

Lord, allow me to rest in Your promises, and remember that You are the same, big, sovereign God of the Old Testament!

WEEK 5

DAY 2: GOD'S DESIGN IN CREATION

Today's Reading: Genesis 1-2:3; Psalm 139:13-24; Isaiah 42:5-9; Jeremiah 32:17, 26; Psalm 33:6-8

Have you ever had the chance to make a piece of pottery? I once signed up for a pottery class where we were each given a block of clay. Our instruction was to throw it on the pottery wheel and form a bowl with our hands as the wheel spun the clay. I worked and worked the clay, but the bowl never developed as it should have. Several times I destroyed the emerging piece and started over from scratch. Each time I got a little better, and after many tries, my lump of clay began to look like a bowl.

Isaiah 64 describes God as a potter. I'm thankful we worship a perfect God (potter) who created this world with His mighty hands. He didn't need several tries; He could create the heavens, earth, plants, animals and humans in only a few days. We are the benefactors of His wonderful creation. Think for a moment of your favorite landscape – the mountains of Colorado; clear island waters; lush, tropical forest or any place that takes your breath away! Have you ever considered the intricate details in nature that God gave us to enjoy? Creation is amazing.

Imagine an eagle soaring through the sky. Extending its wings, it navigates effortlessly through the air. Have you ever examined the wings of a butterfly? What about the face of a newborn baby, miraculously unique, yet perfectly reflective of the parents. Each one of us has been carefully crafted by God, our Creator.

PRAYER:

Father God, I stand in absolute awe of Your creation. You, oh Lord, are amazing, and I am so thankful and humbled that You created me.

WEEK 5

DAY 3: GOD'S COVENANTS

Today's Reading: Genesis 9:8-17; 12:1-8; 15; Exodus 19; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 31:31-40

Throughout the Old Testament, God makes covenants with His people. A covenant is an agreement or a promise. We can see that God initiated covenants several times with different people to accomplish His purposes in and through them. The first covenant we find in scripture is the Noahic Covenant, between God and Noah after the great flood. God promised Noah that He would never flood the entire earth again, and He sent a rainbow to symbolize His promise.

We later see the Abrahamic Covenant initiated by God. This is a unilateral, progressive covenant in which God told Abram to leave his home and go to the land He promised to give him. He promises to make a great nation through him. Abram left his home, traveled to a new land, received a new name, Abraham, and fathered Isaac at the age of 99.

Next, we see the Mosaic Covenant between God and Moses for the people of Israel. This covenant was also known as the Law, and God promised blessing to the Israelites if they would obey the commandments of the Lord. But, this bi-lateral covenant also carried consequence for disobedience. Scripture revealed that the Israelites could not keep the Law. They could not obtain righteousness on their own. They needed a Savior.

The Davidic Covenant promised that Savior. God established this covenant with David and foretold the Messiah would come through the lineage of David.

The Old Testament concludes with a failed remnant of Israel living in desolate drudgery, unable to keep the Law, and unable to save themselves. But that is not the end of the story! The prophet Jeremiah, alongside Isaiah and others, foretold of the Messiah, who would forge a New Covenant and fulfill the Law! Jesus is that Messiah; God's Son and our Savior.

PRAYER:

Father God, I stand in absolute awe of Your creation. You, oh Lord, are amazing, and I am so thankful and humbled that You created me.

WEEK 5

DAY 4: REDEMPTION

Today's Reading: Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 15:1-5; Psalm 111:9; 130:7; Lamentations 3:57-58

What does it mean to be redeemed? The Oxford Dictionary tells us that to be redeemed is to compensate for the faults or bad aspects of something or to gain possession of something in exchange for payment. When I read that definition I am reminded of the blood of Jesus and the righteousness that has redeemed me.

Throughout the Old Testament, we observe the impossible plight of the Israelites working to keep the Law that God delivered to Moses. They continually worked to fulfill all the laws while offering sacrifices to pay the penalty for their sin. Yet, no matter how hard they worked to satisfy the Law, they always fell short. The Israelites ended up in rebellion against God after failing to uphold their requirements. The harder they worked, the more they could not fulfill what was given.

This feeling of failure was not a mistake or an error in calculations. God foresaw their failure. He knew mankind was incapable of keeping the Law and saving themselves. God, our Father, always planned to send Jesus. Fully God and fully man, Jesus came and fulfilled the Law and then willingly sacrificed Himself as the ultimate satisfaction for our sins. Through Jesus' life, death, burial and Resurrection, we can see He made the final and complete payment for our sin.

PRAYER:

Thank you, Jesus, for Your atoning sacrifice on the
Cross. Thank You for loving me.

WEEK 5

DAY 5: REDEMPTION

Today's Reading: Genesis 18; 16:7-10; 32; Exodus 33; Deuteronomy 31:14-15; Judges 6:11-14; Judges 13, Daniel 3

There are a variety of ways in which God speaks to people. One of the primary ways He speaks is through Scripture, His written word. He also speaks to us in prayer, and through worship moments or devotional material. Often, He uses other people, such as a pastor, friend or even a stranger. As believers, God speaks through the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us. When we feel as though the Lord is speaking to us through others, it's important to verify what we've heard against what Scripture says and the Spirit affirms. God will not contradict Himself.

In Old Testament times, people did not have these same ways to know God. The Scripture had yet to be completely written, and what was written was not available to all people. Also, the Holy Spirit was only sent to certain people for a specific time and task; He was not available to indwell all believers.

Therefore, when we read the Old Testament, we often see people or angels appear with a message from the Lord. These are sometimes examples of theophany or Christophany. A theophany is a visible manifestation of God to man.

. A Christophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. These appearances are chronicled throughout Scripture. For instance, the fourth man in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego was said to be like "a son of the gods." Other examples are described that happened with Moses, Abraham, Jacob and Gideon.

As we study Scripture, we want to be diligent to distinguish between the appearance of angels and theophanies. God uses both to deliver messages, protect, wage war, and serve. One thing we can know with certainty, though – if God has a message to deliver, He is fully capable of deploying natural and supernatural messengers!

PRAYER:

Lord, help me see You on every page of Scripture. Allow me to grow in my awareness and knowledge of You. Amen.