

Learn to Read the Bible Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Session 10



SESSION 10

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Section 1

The place of the Jews in God's plan

When reading the Bible, you cannot help but see that the Bible is not only the plan of God for the human race and this earth, but that it also follows the history of a special people, the Jews. It outlines their birth as a people and nation, and follows their development. It explains the establishment of the nation under David and Solomon. It follows their steady decline and turning away from God, resulting in their removal from the land. It also contains prophecies about their regathering to the land of Israel and their future turning to God at the coming of Christ.

Who are the Jews?

1. The Jews can be considered to be the people, or descendants, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.



Read Genesis 12 v 1

Here you read that Abram (later called Abraham) is called by God.



Read Genesis 12 v 1 to 7;
13 v 14 to 17

He was promised descendants and was told that he would inherit the land.



Read Genesis 15 v 1 to 21

God made a covenant with Abraham.



Read Genesis 26 v 1 to 5;
28 v 13

God repeated the promises to Isaac and Jacob.



Read Genesis 32 v 24 to 32

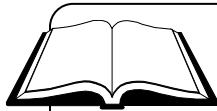
Jacob's name was changed to Israel, which means "Prince with God".

2. The Jews can also be thought of as the nation chosen by God.



Read Exodus 1 v 1 to 14;
3 v 7 to 10

God delivered the people from the land of Egypt under Moses.



Read Deuteronomy 7 v 6 to 8
Exodus 19 v 3 to 6

God chose the nation of Israel to be His special people .

What is the Law of Moses?

The Law of Moses consists of the commandments and laws given by God to the nation of Israel while they were at Mount Sinai. This law was recorded in the second half of Exodus and all of Leviticus. It consists not only of the Ten Commandments, but also of many other instructions for the people, some of which you have looked at already in Session 7, Section 2.

The Law of Moses established:

- An order of worship
The Jews were given guidance on how to worship God acceptably.
- A means of government
The law also contained regulations for controlling the nation.

What happened to the Jewish people?

The Bible records the failings of the nation of Israel. It follows their history through:

- Wilderness wanderings
- Period of the Judges
- Glory and decline during the period of the Kings
- Appearance of Christ, his crucifixion and his resurrection

The Bible also predicted these events:

- Israel's removal from the land (which took place in AD 70)
- Their scattering and persecution (which lasted for 1900 years)
- Their regathering to the land of Israel (which has happened over the last 100 years)

Have the Jews a future?



Read Romans 11 v 1

The apostle Paul clearly tells us that God has not forgotten the Jews.



Read Acts 26 v 6 and 7;
28 v 20

Paul also believed that the promises to Israel are still an important part of God's purpose.

There are many prophecies concerning Israel. Some of these have been fulfilled recently, with the re-establishment of the nation of Israel in the promised land. God's purpose will continue with Israel until they accept Him again.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT 13

Read through Romans 11 and write down the basic argument in the chapter. Then have a look at Jeremiah 31 verses 31 to 40 and write down what that section is telling us. Have a look at the cross-references in both sections, if you have them, and write down what you learn from them.

Section 2

The balance of grace and truth



Read John 1 v 14 to 18

From verse 17 you see that Jesus brought “grace” and “truth”. Why are these two aspects of Jesus mentioned? They are obviously important because they were mentioned in verse 14 as well. Here there is an “echo” from Session 8, Section 1. In that section we discovered that God’s glory is in His characteristics. These characteristics can be summarised as “mercy” and “truth”. This passage in John repeats the same message (assuming “grace” and “mercy” are similar), and adds the information that Jesus came to show the same attributes. We then need to find out what the Bible means by “mercy”, “grace” and “truth”.

If we look in *Strong’s Concordance*, we find the following information:

“Mercy” means: goodness, kindness, faithfulness, joined with a desire to help.

“Grace” indicates: favour, acceptance or good will.

“Truth” means: firmness, faithfulness, sureness, reliability and stability.

Looking at these meanings, God’s character can be summarised as “goodness, kindness and faithfulness joined with a desire to help us to be acceptable to Him, whilst God is being faithful, reliable and stable in His principles”.

If we put that rather complicated definition into simple terms, we could say that God wants to be kind and help people to be acceptable to Him without going against His own principles.

This tells us that there is a balance in God’s kindness and what He expects of people. He cannot just ignore disobedience of His rules. On the other hand, He wants to solve the problem caused by people going against His rules.

God has found a way of solving the problem caused by people going against His rules that does not compromise those same rules. God will show mercy if people acknowledge that He is right regarding His standards and what He expects of them. This is the basis of how God deals with people. Jesus came to show how it was done.

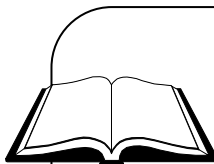
There are “echoes” of this principle all through the Bible. Here are the passages where “mercy and truth” and “grace and truth” are mentioned together. These passages were found quite easily using the computer *Online Bible* that we mentioned earlier.

Mercy and truth

Genesis 24 v 27
 32 v 10
 Exodus 34 v 6
 1 Kings 3 v 6 *
 Psalm 25 v 10
 40 v 11
 57 v 3
 61 v 7
 69 v 13 *
 85 v 10
 89 v 14
 98 v 3
 100 v 5 *
 108 v 4
 Proverbs 3 v 3
 14 v 22
 16 v 6 *
 Isaiah 16 v 5
 Hosea 4 v 1
 Micah 7 v 20

Grace and truth

John 1 v 14 to 18
 Colossians 1 v 6
 2 John v 3



Look up the passages with an asterisk and see if you can find the relationship between God’s mercy and His truth. The 1 Kings 3 reference probably spells out the principle in the simplest terms. If you want to find out for yourself, don’t turn the page!

The relationship can be summed up as, “God will show His love and mercy to people, if they acknowledge that His principles are just and right”. This is how God can do something about the problem that has been caused by the violation of His principles.

You can see the principle in action in the case of king David’s sin.



Read 2 Samuel 11 and 12

2 Samuel 11 tells us how David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David tried to hide the facts, and in desperation had Uriah killed so that he could take Bathsheba as his wife. The end of the chapter says that “the thing that David had done displeased the Lord”. David had now violated God’s principles in two ways – adultery and murder.

2 Samuel 12 tells how God dealt with the problem. Nathan the prophet made David realise that he had violated God’s principles. As soon as David acknowledged that God was right and he (David) was wrong, God forgave him. But notice that David was told he would not escape without suffering consequences to show that what he had done was wrong (v 10 to 12). You will see echoes of this balance of kindness and maintaining principles all through the Bible.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT 14

The balance of grace and truth

If you wish to look at this principle a little more, look up the rest of the references. If you have marginal references, see where they lead you!

As you read through the Psalms, you may notice that wherever “mercy” is mentioned, “truth” or a similar idea will often be mentioned as well. You may like to look at these references:

Psalms 30 v 9 and 10; 31 v 5 to 7; 51 v 1 and 6; 117 v 2; 145 v 9 and 18

Start a list of the times you see this principle in the Bible stories. The “David and Bathsheba” incident can be the first on your list.

Notes

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