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# THE THREAD 201

A PEOPLE RISE AND FALL

Thank you for your partnership in discipleship and patience in the development of our DC curriculum. We are going to continue the next section of ***THE THREAD*** study for our 10th-12th grade students. Our goal is that this study helps our teenagers learn the big picture story of the Bible, and how the Gospel is woven through it.

This leader guide is different due to time in developing our normal leader guides. However, this page will help you understand how to navigate the content and how to lead it.

### ***Looking At Your The Thread 201 Leader Guides***

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Each Leader Guide is broken down into the following sections:

- **Main Content:** These two sections is where you will find your Bible discussion guide. You will find that it is broken down much like The Thread 101 guides with the OT story and the Gospel Thread connection.
- **The Story** — narrative passage designed to teach your students one snapshot of the big picture story of the Bible.
- **The Thread** — A segment where teenagers will see how the message of the Gospel courses through the narrative passage they studied
- **Other Resources**
- **Teacher Prep Videos** — Please ignore this section as we do not have access to these videos.
- **Bible Background** — Consider this a bit of commentary and background information in order to lead the discussion.
- **Getting Started** — Normally this would be something that we would do in the upfront 10 minutes. If you choose to do an activity at your table, please make sure you leave adequate time for the main lesson.
- **The Last Word** — A final activity allowing you to really hone in on the lesson's application

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 14: The Period of the Judges



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Judges 2:6-19

**Gospel Focus:** Romans 10:14-15

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will grasp that even through all of God's faithfulness to the Israelites, they still forgot about Him and turned to other gods.
- Students will understand the importance of spreading the Gospel in words and actions.
- Students will identify specific ways in which they can communicate the Gospel in their specific contexts.



### Overview

The history of God's people is sometimes hard to watch. Over and over again, they blew it. Big time. (Now before we judge them, if we were in their shoes, you can bet we'd have a similar track record.) But in spite of their crummy track record, God managed to work through His people. Why? Because God's plan couldn't be thwarted by the sin of His people. This is the first lesson in Part 2 of The Thread. In Part 2, you'll be learning the story of Israel seeking to establish itself as a nation. In this lesson, you'll be introducing your students to the concept of the judges. You'll be highlighting the cycle the people underwent as they grew as a nation, a cycle that included turning their backs on God. But you'll also see how the Israelites failure only highlighted the need for a Redeemer, and for getting the message of that Redeemer to the world.



### Teacher Prep Video

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To access your *Thread* lesson 14 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 14, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

### Judges

**Author:** Judges is one of several books in the Bible where the author is not definitively known. Church his-

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tory holds Samuel as a potential author. But, most scholars concede that there is no solid textual evidence to strongly support that viewpoint.

**Time frame:** The events of the book of Judges took place over a two to three hundred year time frame between Joshua's death and the rise of Samuel and Saul. The writing of the book is hard to pin down. One school of thought has it being mostly completed by the time David is king, while the second holds that it was completed around the time that Babylon conquered Judah.

**Purpose:** The purpose of Judges was to highlight what un-godly leadership did (and can do) to God's people. And yet, it also served to show that the people would rally to godly leadership. As much as anything, it highlights the fickle nature of Israel and her leaders, and how quickly the people forgot all that God had done for them.

### Romans

**Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.

**Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.

**Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** Students will start thinking about how quickly we forget things that are right in front of our faces.
- **Set-Up:** If you have a projector screen in your room, you can play this game by just using your computer. You'll want to search the Internet for an image of a lot of random objects. (Our searches for "random objects," and "junk drawer" turned up some really good images.) If you don't have a screen, arrange to bring 10-20



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small objects (paper clip, coin, eraser, rock, marble, etc.) along with something to cover them up with (a cloth or towel). You'll want to have the objects covered under the cloth when students arrive. Also, bring enough scrap pieces of paper and pens/pencils for everyone to write down their answers.

**FIRST**, distribute slips of paper and something to write with. Explain that you're going to play a quick game to test their memories. Explain that you're going to show them a collection of objects for a few seconds. Their goal is to see how many they can remember. Then, if you're using the projector screen, display the pre-selected image on the screen. If you've brought objects to display, uncover them. Allow students to look at the objects for 10-15 seconds. Then, cover the objects back up, or, click off the image on your projector. Then, instruct them to quickly take their scrap sheets of paper and write down as many objects as they can remember. This is to be done individually. No teamwork!

Once you've given them a minute or two to write down their answers, see who was able to remember the most items. Did anyone get them all? If not, ask them if they thought they could get a more complete list if they were able to work together. Could the whole class remember all of the items together? When you've finished, ask the following questions:

- **Was the game easier or harder than you thought it would be? Why was it so easy to forget something that was just right there in front of your face?**
- **Why was it easier to get a more complete list when you were able to communicate with each other? How does communicating help our memory?**

**FINALLY**, explain to the students that you're continuing your look at the big-picture story of the Bible. Explain that you're actually starting to look at a new stage in the life of the Israelites. Say something like:

- **We're picking up the story with the Israelites already having settled in the Promised Land. We're going to watch over the next few weeks as they try and build and govern a nation. Today, we're about to see an up-close example of how a lack of communication led to some intense forgetfulness on the part of the Israelites. We're also going to see how crucial it is for us to communicate to the world around us.**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** That students will discover that even through all of God's faithfulness to the Israelites, they still forgot about Him, and turned to other gods.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board to be helpful in jotting down some notes, but it's not essential.

**FIRST**, explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at a sample passage from a period of Israel's history where judges ruled the people. This was before Israel would ask God for a king to rule. Explain that judges were kind of like Presidents, or governors. And like our leaders, some were good and some . . . not so much. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

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### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **The Lord explicitly commanded Israel not to intertwine themselves with the people remaining in the land.**
- **The Lord promised to remain faithful to all of His good promises if the people obeyed Him. He also promised punishment if they chose not to listen to Him.**
- **The people did not obey, and they got caught up in the religious practices of those remaining in the land. They began bowing down to and worshipping their gods.**

Explain to the students that you're going to be looking at a passage that shows just how easily it was for the Israelites to forget all of the amazing things that God did for them. (It's almost crazy to read the words on the page and see how bad their memory actually was!)

**THEN**, read, or have a student read, Judges 2:6-9. When you've finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **What jumped out to you in those verses?**
  - o Of course answers here could vary, but the main things that should jump off the page are in verse 7. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders that outlived him. Those elders had seen all of the great work God had done over the years for Israel. (If you're using a dry erase board, jot these things down on the left half.)
- **What are some of the great things the elders saw God do for Israel?**
  - o Deliverance from Egypt, parting the Red Sea, manna from heaven, water from a rock, etc. (Jot the students' answers down on the left side of the board, as well.)
- **We know that the people of Israel were far from perfect, and struggled to obey quite a bit (like we all do). But what impact do you think it had on their relationship with the Lord that they had seen so many amazing things up close and personal in their lifetime?**
  - o Answer: All that they had seen and been a part of must have served as a good reminder of God's goodness. Even as they struggled to obey and drifted from the Lord, these memories must have been good reminders to turn back to the Lord.

**NEXT**, read or have a student read Judges 2:10. Then, ask:

- **What jumped out at you in that verse?**
  - o Answer: Answers here could vary, but the main (and startling) thing we read in this verse is that there was a whole generation that didn't know the Lord.
- **Wow, that sounds bad. Those first three verses seemed pretty positive, right? And then we get this bleak verse. What can we guess must have happened for this to be true?**
  - o Answer: Not only did the elders pass away, but also their whole generation eventually died. When that happened, a new generation came after them that wasn't around to see all of the amazing works God had done for Israel.
- **So, how do you think things went for them? Do you think not knowing the Lord or what he had done was a big deal? What kind of impact do you think it had on them as a people?**

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o Answers will vary.

Draw a line down the middle of the board (vertically). Explain to the students that we're going to jot down what happens next on the right side of the board, and see if there's a noticeable difference.

**THEN**, read or have a student read Judges 2:11-15. Ask if they feel like things just escalated pretty quickly. Someone could have just shrugged off verse 10 and thought it wasn't going to have much of an impact on the people, but that clearly wasn't the case. Ask:

- **What jumped out to you in these verses?**

- o Put the students' answers down on the right side of the board. Some answers may include: the people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; they abandoned the Lord; they went after other gods; they provoked the Lord to anger; the Lord's anger was kindled against them; He sold them into the hands of enemies, and so on.

**NEXT**, explain to the students that you're going to give them a little context for what's going on here. The Lord had commanded the Israelites to drive out all of the inhabitants of Canaan when they entered the Promised Land. As usual, Israel disobeyed. So, many of the Canaanites remained in the land and were worshipping their gods. Explain that this is what the passage meant when it talked about the Baals and Ashtaroah. Explain that the people had forgotten about the Lord, and all that He had done. However, the influences of the people the Lord had commanded them to drive out of the land remained. The people eventually gave into these influences and began following other gods.

**THEN**, read Judges 2:16. Explain to the students that the "judge's" primary role was to give military and civil leadership over the people. Two of the most famous judges were Gideon and Samson. Ask:

- **How was God's provision of judges to the people of Israel a sign of His love and grace towards them?**

- o Answer: The people were clearly out of control, and were getting hammered by outside forces. They had no real leadership, and couldn't pull things together in the state they were in. God would have been just to leave them alone and watch them get destroyed. The provision of judges, however, was a sign of His grace to the people.

- **How do you think it went? Do you think it got better?**

- o Answers will vary.

Read or have a student read Judges 2:17-19. And then ask:

- **What jumped out to you in these verses?**

- o Answer: Write their answers on the left side of the board. It's OK if it's getting cramped on that side. It will help illustrate the point. Some answers should be: they didn't listen to the judges; they turned from the ways of their fathers; they whored after other gods; they didn't stop their stubborn ways, and so on.

- **Is it hard for you to believe that God was faithful and gracious to Israel even though they turned away from Him? Why or why not?**

- o Answers here will vary. Most of us would have been so fed up with them and their stubbornness that we would have let them go. But God is faithful and gracious over and over again, even in the midst of His people's rebellion.



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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 14: The Period of the Judges

Have the students look at the board. Have them think about the difference between the left half and the right half. Say something like:

- **We drew this dividing line on the board after we read verse 10. That was the point when everything changed and it went from this (point to the left half) to this (point to the right). Does anyone remember what happened in verse 10? Why was that the dividing line?**

o Answer: Have someone read verse 10.

**FINALLY**, wrap up this section by explaining to the students that the reason the two sides of the board are so drastically different is because there was a generation that came up and did not know the Lord. Say something like:

- **What we just read is a sad picture of what happens when people don't know the Lord, and what it means to follow Him. We all know people like that all around us. In the next section we're going to look at our calling as followers of Jesus to those around us that don't know the Lord.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and see seeing where you might find the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

### The Thread

**FIRST**, instruct students to turn to Romans 10. If you choose, while they are finding the book of Romans, provide them with some brief context for book by referencing the Bible Background. Before you get to the passage we're going to discuss, ask:

- **Can anyone give me a nutshell version of the Gospel? What is the "good news" of Jesus Christ?**
  - o Answer: We were born into sin, and have chosen to rebel against God. The wages of that rebellion is death. While God would have been just in letting us suffer that punishment, He was gracious toward us; He sent His son, Jesus, to live the life we were supposed to live, and suffer the death we were supposed to suffer. Jesus was crucified on the cross, but three days later He rose from the dead and conquered death. Because of His life, death, and resurrection, all who trust in Him will be saved, have abundant life here on earth, and enjoy eternal life with God.
- **How do people come to a place where they can learn to believe in and trust Jesus?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**FINALLY**, when you've finished, read or have a student read Romans 10:14-15. Then, ask:

- **What does this passage say about how people learn to believe in Jesus? Is this answer different than what we just said?**
  - o Answers: This passage is clear, people must hear about the good news of Jesus in order to believe in Him and be saved.
- **What calling does this passage put on believers?**
  - o Answers: The passage calls us to preach the good news. It doesn't mean we have to literally give sermons to people, but it's clear that we have to talk to them about the Gospel.

# The Thread

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 14: The Period of the Judges

- **Have you ever heard the quote, “Share the gospel always, if necessary use words.”? According to this passage, what’s the problem with this quote?**
  - o Answer: Romans 10:14 is brutally clear: people need to hear the Gospel. Do we really think that every person who sees our lives will automatically think to become Christians? Sure, our lives need to back up what we say we believe, but we have to use words! We have to talk to people and share how great our God really is!
- **So, think back to the dividing line we drew on the board. What did we say the problem was here?**
  - o Answer: Again, the new generation didn’t know the Lord, and didn’t know about what He had done for Israel.
- **So, thinking about what we say happened here (pointing to the board) and knowing what the Romans passage we just read says, what is our responsibility to the world around us? What are the consequences of us not spreading this message?**
  - o Answer: Our responsibility is the share the good news of the Gospel with the world around us. If we don’t, how will they hear? If they don’t hear, they’ll never know the life that God has for them.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** That students will be able to identify specific ways in which they can communicate the Gospel in their specific contexts.
- **Set-Up:** You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some of your students’ responses.

Lead students in a final discussion. Ask:

- **One of the age-old questions about grace is: If grace is true, does it really matter what I do? In other words, is disobedience a big deal? What do you think? Explain your answer.**
  - o Answers will vary.

**THEN**, have a student reread Titus 2:11-14. Really draw their attention to verse 12. Ask:

- **Why do you think it’s so easy for us to forget the Lord? Could part of the problem be that we don’t talk about the Lord and what he’s done in our lives very much? What keeps us from talking about Jesus to those around us?**
  - o Answers here will vary. Take some time to talk to the students about their answers. More than likely many of the answers will revolve around some sort of fear or embarrassment. Use this as an opportunity to dig into what they are afraid of.
- **If fear is what is keeping you from talking to others about Jesus, what does that say about where you are looking to find your satisfaction/fulfillment/peace/security/etc.?**
  - o It says that we’re looking for all of those things in our status, friends, acceptance, etc.
- **Where should you find those things? Where created to find them?**
  - o All of those things are found in Jesus. We were created for God. But we go looking for them in things that can never provide.
- **When we truly find those things in Jesus, how do you think it will impact us sharing the Gospel with others?**
  - o When we truly come to place where we know that we are accepted and fulfilled in Jesus,

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those fears won't seem like anything. That will free us to talk more and more about Him. In fact, we'll probably want to talk about Him more than ever.

- **So, what are some practical steps we can take to begin to overcome whatever is holding us back from sharing the Gospel?**
  - The first step is coming to a place where we truly find everything in Jesus. This involves us cultivating that relationship on a daily basis. The next step is to identify practical ways we can share the gospel with those around us.
- **What are some areas God has placed you where you could look around and say, "They do not know the Lord?" How do you begin to change that? How can you have "beautiful feet" in that situation this week?**
  - Help them think through their answers and develop some practical ways they can begin to leverage the influence and spaces God has given them for the Gospel.

**WRAP UP** the lesson by reminding students that when they truly find their identity in Jesus, sharing the Gospel will become much more natural. That doesn't mean it will always be easy. Remind them that they still need to look for practical opportunities, and be intentional about sharing (actually using words to talk to people) about Jesus. Ask them if this changes the way they look at the places God has placed them. Once students have had a chance to respond, ask if anyone has any further thoughts or questions. Then, close in prayer.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 14 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

### We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 15: Ruth and Redemption



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Ruth 1:1-18; 2:1-13; 3:1-14; Ruth 4

**Gospel Focus:** Revelation 5:9-10

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will realize that God works to rescue and redeem His children in amazing ways.
- Students will understand that Jesus rescued them from death, ransoming their lives through His death on the cross.
- Students will consider their favorite parts of their lives and express thanks to God for allowing them a life to enjoy.



### Overview

Ruth represents a very interesting story in Scripture. Is it a major story? No. And yes. Ruth isn't a queen. She isn't a noble woman. Her story is so remarkably personal and intimate, and, well . . . normal. Maybe that's one of the major appeals of Ruth's story. That it feels like it could happen to anyone. But while Ruth may not be a queen, she was royal in one way: Simple, devoted, normal, every-day Ruth found herself in the direct lineage of king David and Jesus, Himself. How she happened to find herself there is a beautiful picture of God's grace and redemption.



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### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### Ruth

**Author:** There is no author named in the book of Ruth, and church history has never really put forth any strong candidates.

**Time frame:** The time frame has to be after David has become king, since his genealogy and rise to power are



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mentioned. The book's events are often talked about in past tense, and so, it could have been written anytime after, say, 1010 BC, or so.

**Purpose:** From the ESV Study Bible (Crossway): "Given the book of Ruth's interest in all Israel (4:7, 11), it may have been written in hopes that the 12 tribes, which divided into two nations c. 930 BC (see 1 Kings 12:1–20), would reunite."

### Revelation

**Author:** The writer of Revelation identifies himself as John four times. Scholars agree that it is most likely John the Apostle, son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' most beloved disciples.

**Time frame:** Revelation was written toward the end of John's life somewhere between 90 and 95 AD.

**Purpose:** The purpose of Revelation was to reveal the fullness of Christ's identity and to provide hope for suffering Believers at the time who were encountering grave persecution and suffering. Today it provides us hope of what is to come, as well as a stark warning of the battle that rages until Christ returns.



## Lesson Plan

### The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today?"

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about the idea of what it means to rescue someone and the cost and risk involved to operate a dangerous rescue mission.
- **Setup:** You'll need to be prepared to display the "Rescue" image to your group. We've included it as a PDF and as a JPG. If you're printing the picture, the PDF is probably your best bet. If you're dropping it into presentation software to display to your students, the JPG probably works best.

**FIRST**, explain that you're going to show a photo of some brave people doing something great for someone else. Then, show the group the photo. Ask,

- **Tell me what's going on here, as best you can tell.**
  - o Answers will vary. Just let the group describe what they see.

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 15: Ruth and Redemption

- **What do you think would have happened to the person being rescued if this team of rescuers had not shown up?**
  - They probably would have died.

**THEN**, start a conversation that will get students thinking about the cost of rescuing someone. Ask,

- **While we don't know the entire story behind this image, what may the rescuers have risked by being part of this effort?**
  - Answers will vary, but in general, they could have risking injury or even death.
- **What else are they giving up by being a part of the rescue team?**
  - Possible answers: Time with family, free time, perhaps they could work a less stressful job that pays more money.
- **We've talked about the personal costs of the rescuers in terms of what they are giving up to be a part of the team. Are there any other costs that might have been associated with this rescue?**
  - Lots of things: Potentially helicopters or fire trucks, equipment, and paying the salary of the team members all cost money.

**NEXT**, help your group explore why someone would invest and risk so much to rescue just one person.

- **That's potentially a lot of resources to rescue this one person. Why do you think they do it?**
  - Answers will vary, but try to stress that the team probably thinks the person being rescued is worth it in some way.

**FINALLY**, tell your group that there is a connection between the rescue in the photo and the story they're about to experience. Say something like,

- **Today we're going to be continuing our look at the big-picture story of the Bible. This week we're going to look in the Old Testament at a story of a man who rescued someone, but in a different way than what you might be thinking. Let's take a closer look.**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** For students will realize that God works to rescue and redeem His children in amazing ways.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app, and you'll need a whiteboard, flip chart, or some other way to write some notes down (and maybe draw some pictures, if you're feeling creative) so that everyone in the group can see them.

**FIRST**, let your group know that you will be studying an entire book of the Bible over the next few minutes, reading most of it out loud. Explain that it occurs during the time of the judges. (You may want to remind students that you studied the judges last week.) Tell them that it's an incredible story from start to finish, and that it's difficult to grasp all that God is up to in the story without understanding the whole plot. Tell your group that to help you keep track of the story, you'll be writing (and maybe drawing) some notes on the board as you go along.

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**THEN**, have a student read Ruth 1:1-18. Then, lead students in a brief discussion. (Note: As you work through this story, you (or a student, if you'd like) will write and/or draw details about the story on the white board. You'll need four different areas, one for each chapter in Ruth. Feel free to divide a white board up into four quadrants, or just have enough pieces of flip chart paper.) Ask:

- **Who are the characters in this story so far?**

- o Answer: Naomi and her husband Elimelek; their sons Mahlon and Kilion; Mahlon's wife Ruth (though it's not stated here, we learn in chapter four that Mahlon married Ruth), and Kilion's wife Orpah. Write or draw those characters under the heading "Chapter One."

- **A lot of difficult things happen to Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah in chapter one. What are those things?**

- o Answer: Their husbands all die. (On your board, cross out Elimelek, Mahlon, and Kilion.) If students give other details, write them on the board.

- **One thing you should know about this: in Moab, not having a husband, father, or a grown son was very dangerous for a woman, because they didn't think very highly of women. So Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah might be exploited, or taken advantage of. What is Naomi's solution to that problem?**

- o Answer: Naomi decided to go back to her relatives in Israel, where she knew she would be cared for. She told Ruth and Orpah to find new husbands, since they were still young.

- **And what do Ruth and Orpah decide to do?**

- o Answer: Orpah decides to take Naomi's advice, but Ruth refuses to leave Naomi and accompanies her back to Israel.

**NEXT**, have a student read 2:1-13. Then ask the following:

- **Even though Ruth and Naomi are in a safer place among the Israelites, they still were in a very difficult situation. They needed to figure out how to make ends meet and provide for themselves, and the best they could hope for was a life of poverty, barely having enough to survive. Israelite law provided for people who had very little—like widows such as Ruth and Naomi—by allowing them to pick the leftovers of crops. Whose field does Ruth happen to gather food in?**

- o Answer: Boaz. (Write him on the board under "Chapter Two.")

- **Why does Boaz go out of his way to help Ruth?**

- o Possible answers: Ruth's husband was a relative of Boaz, Ruth had gone out of her way to be kind to Naomi, and perhaps Boaz was attracted to Ruth. (As students answer, write notes on the board.)

**THEN**, have a student read 3:1-14. Ask:

- **In the first paragraph (verses 1-5), what does Naomi tell Ruth to do? And why is Naomi coming up with this plan?**

- o Answer: When Naomi says to Ruth: "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for." Naomi hopes that Ruth will marry Boaz. (Write (or draw) the answers on the board under "Chapter Three.")

- **Do you find this plan odd?**

- o Allow students to feel the strangeness of Naomi's plan and its moral muddiness. Explain that while it's clear what Naomi hopes to accomplish, students of the Bible disagree on how she's going about it. Is she hoping that Boaz will sleep with Ruth while he's drunk and therefore—according to Israelite



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law—be forced to marry Ruth? Or is she so sure of Boaz and Ruth’s integrity that she knew things would happen just as they did? Ask your group to chime in with their opinions.

- **Through this weird exchange, Boaz pledges to marry Ruth. But there’s a catch in 3:12. What’s the catch?**
  - o Answer: There is a closer relative who can be the kinsman-redeemer (some translations say guardian-redeemer or simply redeemer). Make sure you write the details of Boaz’s pledge to marry Ruth on the board.
- **We keep seeing this term “kinsman-redeemer.” Based on the story so far, what do you think it is?**
  - o Let students try to find the answer, but help them land on this definition: if a woman finds herself in a situation like Ruth’s—widowed and without kids—the closest male relative of the late husband was supposed to take the widow as his wife in order to make sure she was cared for. Often, the children from that marriage would inherit the late husband’s estate.

**NEXT**, have a student read chapter 4. Then say:

- **Let’s keep track of how this story wraps up. Tell me what exactly happens between Boaz and the guy who’s the closer relative?**
  - o Answer: The closer relative was happy to acquire the land that had belonged to Elimelek, Naomi’s late husband, until he found out he would need to marry Ruth, which could negatively impact his own children’s inheritance. (Write down that plot point under “Chapter Four” on the board.)
- **So Boaz steps up, and all is well, right? But there’s a significant detail kind of buried at the end of the story in verse 17. What’s that detail?**
  - o Answer: That Boaz and Ruth end up being the great-grandparents of King David.
- **Ruth being an ancestor to King David is really cool, but looking ahead to the New Testament, does anyone know who David is the earthly great-great-great-great- (lots more “greats”) -grandfather to?**
  - o Answer: Jesus! Whether you look at Jesus’ genealogy through Mary, or through his earthly father, Joseph, the line goes through David. In fact, Matthew—who wrote one of Jesus’ biographies in the Bible—goes out of his way to remind people that Ruth is an earthly ancestor of Jesus.

**WRAP UP** your discussion of the book of Ruth by explaining that this is a great love story, but it’s so much more. Say something like:

- **The themes of redemption and faith are powerful elements of the story. Boaz rescued Ruth (and Naomi). And as we look for echoes of the Gospel throughout the Bible, it’s this theme of rescue that should jump off the page at us.**

If students don’t have any questions, transition into The Thread and look to see where we see the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, have your group turn to Revelation 5. While they find it, briefly give your group some background of what they’re about to read. Say:

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John was given a glimpse into heaven and eternity, and he recorded his experience in Revelation. A major theme in Revelation is that Jesus is the rightful King of heaven, and much of Revelation points to the fact that his Kingship was confirmed through His sacrifice for us on the cross.

**THEN**, have a student read Revelation 5:9-10. When he or she has finished, say something like:

- **There's another piece of information that we're missing in this short passage that will help us see how it connects with Ruth. In Ruth's time, when an Israelite fell on hard times, they might mortgage their land for some extra money—something Naomi's husband probably had to do. To get the land back, that person (or a descendent) would need to pay back the loan. Since neither Elimelek nor his sons were around to repay the debt, only a kinsman-redeemer could open the deed once he followed through on his responsibility to marry the owner's widow and purchase the land, repaying the debt. When Boaz did this by marrying Ruth and buying back Elimelek's land, what did he do for Ruth and Naomi?**
  - o Answer: He saved them out of poverty and from a fairly hopeless situation.
- **So what does it mean that Jesus was the only one who was worthy to open the scroll in Revelation 5?**
  - o Allow your group to wrestle through this concept, but make sure they arrive at this point: Jesus was the only one who could redeem us from the bondage and penalty of sin.
- **Boaz had to purchase the land or pay off the debt as part of being the redeemer for Ruth. Looking at Revelation 5:9-10, how did Jesus pay our debt of sin?**
  - o Answer: He was slain and bought our freedom with His own blood.

**FINALLY**, help your students clearly see the connection between Ruth's story and what Jesus did for us.

- **Think about Ruth's life shortly after her husband died and she was left with little hope. How did Boaz change her life by marrying her?**
  - o There are several possible answers; write them under the "Chapter Four" section on the white board. When they are done giving answers, write, "New Life" in the same section and say,
- **In essence, Boaz gave Ruth a new life. In the same way, Jesus gave us new life when He redeemed us by dying on the cross. When we come to faith in Christ, we are saved from the death our sin earns us.**

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** Students will consider their favorite parts of their lives and express thanks to God for allowing them a life to enjoy.
- **Setup:** You'll need the picture you used in Getting Started and the whiteboard with the notes you wrote during the study.

**FIRST**, remind your group of the photo of the rescue from Getting Started by showing it to them again. Say something like:

- **Remember this photo? As we wrap up, let's look at it from the point of view of the person being rescued. What do you suppose this person was feeling before realizing that help had arrived and [he/she] would be okay?**

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- o Possible answers: Scared, sad about possibly not seeing loved ones again, perhaps angry.
- **And once [he/she] was rescued, how do you think those feelings changed?**
  - o Possible answers: Relieved, grateful, happy.

**NEXT**, help students begin to think about how we should respond to God's rescue of us. Ask:

- **Do you think that the experience of being in a life-threatening situation changed how this person lived their life? How so?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **So, if God rescued us from an even bigger danger, why do we not always respond with the same gratefulness we imagine the person in the photo may have?**
  - o Answers will vary, but make sure you allow your group to wrestle through this question.

**THEN**, help your students come up with practical ways to show God we're thankful for his rescue. Say something like:

- **The reality is that it's easy to not really think much about what God did for us, because it's not in front of us every single day. It may be that over time, this person in the photo who was rescued went back to much the same routine as before the rescue. But God did rescue us, and because of that, it changes how we look at and enjoy our lives. So to finish up, we're going to practice being grateful to God for our rescue by answering this question: what are some things in your lives that you really like?**
  - o As students answer, write their responses where there is still space on the white board. Some answers will be surface-level, and some will be more personal. That's OK, just let students answer as they will.

**FINALLY**, challenge students to regularly be grateful for God's rescue by being grateful for the life we get to live. Say something like:

- **Being grateful to God for sending Jesus to rescue us sometimes means simply enjoying the life and the freedom God has given us. This week, every time you get to enjoy one of these things, or time with one of the people we just wrote down, try to say a quick prayer: "Thanks, God!" It may seem silly at first, but by the end of the week, I bet it helps all of us be a little more grateful for God's rescue.**

Close your Bible study in prayer.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 15 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

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### We Want To Hear From You . . .

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- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

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# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 16: Saul and the Need for a King



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** 1 Samuel 8:1-9, 1 Samuel 10:17-24

**Gospel Focus:** Romans 12:1-2

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will see that the Israelites abandoned God's Kingship for a human king.
- Students will see that the source for all of their guidance and wisdom has to be Christ Himself.
- Students will examine areas in their lives where they are conforming too much to the pattern of the world instead of conforming to Christ.



### Overview

In this lesson, we meet up with Samuel at the end of his life. You may remember him as the boy his mother, Hannah, prayed desperately for, and then dedicated to the Lord. He was considered the last judge, and the first major prophet of Israel. In this study, we find Samuel getting on in years. His sons have become judges. And at least two of them have not listened to the Word of God, or their father, and have become corrupt. Their wickedness and greed played a role in Israel's decision to want to be like other nations, and have a king lead them. Basically they were saying, "God's plan to rule us isn't good enough. We want a king like everyone else." And, even though He knew where it led, God gave in to what they wanted. We still have the tendency to do this in our hearts to this day. This lesson will help your students see how well this worked out for Israel. But, furthermore, will see for themselves that the source for all of their guidance and wisdom can't be the world . . . it has to be Christ Himself.



### Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 16 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 16, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

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### 2 Samuel

**Author:** The author of 1-2 Samuel is unknown. While it's certainly possible that Samuel wrote some of what's recorded in these books, the mention of his death in 1 Samuel 25 means that he didn't write all of it. The books are given the title of "Samuel" because of his prominent role in the establishment of the monarchy.

**Time frame:** It's difficult to say for certain when 1-2 Samuel was written. It's very possible that they were written and edited over a period of time. More than likely they were established in their final form around the 10th century BC.

**Purpose:** The main theme of these books is God's choosing to accomplish His purposes through the lineage of David and to set up Jerusalem as the location for the temple. There are many "ups and downs" throughout 1-2 Samuel and David goes through times of obedience and rebellion. He experiences blessings and consequences for sins.

### Romans

**Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.

**Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.

**Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To help students begin to see that what we want may not always be good for us.
- **Setup:** None needed.

**FIRST,** begin by leading students in an opening discussion. Ask:

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- **Can you think of a time when you wanted something really badly that turned out to not be such a good idea?**

Allow students time to think. If they need some encouraging, help remind them that it could be a job they wanted that turned out to be awful; an outfit they loved that turned out to be a dud; a relationship, an experience, a gadget they purchased, and so on. Encourage students to think about little children; they do this type of thing all the time. (What happens when you give a child as much candy as she wants? She eats until she's sick at her stomach.) Be prepared to share your own story with students.

**THEN**, allow students to process this a bit more. Ask something like:

- **Why do we sometimes do this type of thing? How do you explain how we can want something that turns out to be not in our best interests?**
- **Let's take it a step further. How do you explain people who do things they KNOW for sure are not good for them?**

**FINALLY**, begin to transition into your time of Bible study by saying something like:

- **As you may recall, we're continuing our look at the big-picture story of the Bible. Remember, we're talking about the story of Israel's early years as a nation-state. The people have inherited the Promised Land, and they are figuring out exactly how to live as God's people. But in today's lesson, we see them mess up a bit. The Israelites ask God for something that is not in their best interest. God's response is different than you might think. Let's take a closer look.**

Transition to The Story.

## The Story

- **Goal:** For students to see that God was the only one who was ever meant to be the King of Israel, but the people lost sight of this.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

**FIRST**, explain that you will be looking at the story of Israel getting a king in 1 Samuel 8:1-9, and 1 Samuel 10:17-24. Explain that the facts of the story are not as important as the heart of the people. This decision would affect them forever. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Israel had been establishing itself as a nation under leaders called "judges."**
- **Judges were probably more like what we would think of as a president, than a king. There was a rotating cast of leaders, some good, some bad.**

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- The people went through a period of drawing close to God, and then falling away. This led to a lot of instability for Israel.
- Samuel, one of Israel's most influential prophets, was born. Your students may remember the story of Samuel and Eli, where God called to Samuel and Eli encouraged the young boy to listen and follow God.

Inform students that you're going to be reading through a story of how the kings of Israel came to be. Let students know that you'll work together to cover the passage, and as such, will need some volunteers to help you read. Students may know the facts about the story of Saul becoming King, or this could be totally new. Either way, keep pointing them back to the heart of the people.

Start by having students turn to 1 Samuel 8:1-9. While they're finding it, provide some of the basic context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read this passage. Say something like:

- We find Samuel here as an old man, and so he appoints his sons to be judges over Israel. Remember, a judge was not a king. They kept order and helped keep laws, but they didn't have the same power a king had. The people were tired of Samuel's sons taking advantage of them, and decided they wanted a king like other nations have.

**THEN**, ask something like:

- **Why do you think the people may have wanted a king over a Judge?**
  - o Answer: The people may have been looking to their earthly leaders more than they were looking to God. It definitely seems they wanted to be like the surrounding countries, something God had specifically sought to protect against (this was the very reason for the Law, to set apart Israel as a country after God's heart).
- **When Samuel asked God if this was what He wanted, what was His response? Why is His response not surprising?**
  - o Answer: Number one, He knew it was coming. Number two, the people had been turning away from God, off and on, for some time. God keeps reminding them that He is God; He doesn't leave them. But they keep wanting to rely on what they can see.
- **Do you think God allowing a king implies that He gave up on the Israelites?**
  - o Answer: No. God is in control, but we make choices. The people had forgotten that God wouldn't have allowed the judges to rule for long. He would have taken care of them just like He did with Eli and His sons. However, when we as people continue to turn from God, He can't make us love Him or follow Him. God was allowing the people one last chance when He said, "Warn them about having a king." They could have said, "No, we believe you are our King." Yet, He allowed them their choice. They would eventually suffer the consequences. Yet, we see as God used the line of a king, king David, to bring the Messiah into the world, that even in our poor choices we are never "too lost."

**NEXT**, read or have a student read 1 Samuel 10:17-24. Then direct their attention to verses 17-19. Ask something like:

- **What do you hear in God's heart in verses 17-19? What is He trying to say to the people? Do they miss it?**
  - o Answer: Once more, God points out that while the details may not always be the way the people



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would have planned, He is the one who has rescued them again and again from their hurt and pain. He reminds them through Samuel that they are abandoning Him. Yet, the people are still ready to abandon God for an earthly king. He gives them another chance to say, "We changed our mind we want God." Instead, they stand waiting for their new king.

- **Look at verse 20-24. What do you see about the Lord's heart in this passage?**

- o Answer: Even though the people are not choosing God's best way, He doesn't leave them. God is the one who chooses their earthly king. As is true many times of God's plan, it still isn't exactly the way the people would have done it. Saul is afraid and hiding. Yet, God still showed He was in control, and caring for the people.

- **Why do you think the people were OK with a king God chose, but turned from God as King?**

- o Answers will vary. Take some time and unpack the thread you've seen up to this point in the way the people would come toward God, and then turn from Him. God kept trying to show them the ways He was the one who took care of them. They kept missing the point. The people thought they were getting their way, but still God wanted to care for them.

Wrap up your look at the narrative passage by saying something like:

- **The people of Israel should have known better. They should have trusted God to take care of them in ways He did over and over again. Instead, they compared themselves to countries and people who didn't know God. We will talk more about what happened to Saul and Israel as a result of having a king in the next few weeks. However, what we see here is an example that happens to all of us: we want to be more like the world around us than what God wants us to be. It is so easy for our eyes to wander to what others are doing, that we forget God has been taking care of us all along.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and see where you might find an echo of the Gospel in the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, instruct students to turn to Romans 12. If you choose, while they are finding the book of Romans provide them with some brief context by referencing the Bible Background. When you've finished, read or have a student read Romans 12:1-2, then lead students in a discussion. Begin by saying something like:

- **In this passage we see Paul talking again about God being in charge of our lives. Let's look at both verses in this passage separately. When we look at Romans 12:1, what is God asking here of us and why?**

- o Answer: Paul is asking us to put ourselves aside, even our whole bodies to be the Lord's. In other words, God wants all of who we are. He wants us to remember all He has done for us. Christ conquered sin on our behalf, and made the way back to a right relationship with God. Giving Him all of ourselves is all He asks.

- **How is what He asks an act of sacrifice and worship?**

- o Answers will vary. Ask students to give examples from their own life about what they both give up

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to allow God to be in control, and yet at the same time how it is an act of worship. Tell a story from your own life about how you are willing to allow God to be the authority in your life in light of His own sacrifice. Try to move them deeper than just saying, "He died on the cross to take my sins." How does what He has done change who we are? How does this show us how to have hope and know we are loved?

**NEXT**, look at 12:2. Ask:

- **What is Paul saying in this verse? Tell me in your own words.**
  - o Answer: Paul helps us see that God asks us to be different than the world, but He is also the one who helps us be different. If we allow God to change the way we think, then we can know what He is thinking because we are focused on Him.
- **How can we tend to copy the behaviors of this world, like the verse says?**
  - o Answers will vary. Yet, try to get students to be honest about how tempting it is to just fit in with the world because that can seem more fun. You may need to explain the world is anything that is not in a relationship with Christ, and the way this can seep into every area of our lives. It is in the stuff we watch (TV, Movies, Online), the way we talk, the way we dress, and the choices we make. It can make us stand out a little more than we want and that can be hard.
- **What similarities do you see in this verse and in the story of the Israelites getting a King?**
  - o Answer: God reminds both that we should allow Him to be in charge because of all He has done for us. In addition, He provided a way out for both groups: Following Him. The answers may vary here, but take the time to draw similarities in the two.
- **How do we fight against being like the world, according to this verse?**
  - o Answer: The Lord doesn't expect us to figure this out on our own. He knows how easy it is for us to look to the world instead of to Him. That is why it is important (vital even) that we allow Him to change the way we think about things. When we let Him even have the way we think, we can know how to live and the way to know what the Lord is thinking.

**FINALLY**, say something like:

- **When we read verses like these it can seem confusing. We can begin by making a list of "do's and don'ts." That wasn't God's plan ever. He wants our hearts to be drawn into relationship with Him. When He changes the way we think about things, we become more like Samuel than the Israelites. You may have noticed he went to God and asked Him what He wanted and what His thoughts were. The people just looked at others and decided they wanted to do things their own way. The point we have to dig into is where is our heart? Do we want to know God's will or would we rather do things our own way?**

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the Wrapping Up section.

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### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To take time to be honest and reflect on how to not be distracted by the world but instead to give ourselves totally to the Lord and let Him be in charge.
- **Setup:** Provide something to write with and on for each student.

**FIRST**, remind students that you've spent a lot of time today looking at God being your King. You looked at how the Israelites chose Saul over God, and you've realized that we can do the same thing. Sometimes we can easily make excuses for following the world. Explain that we say things like, "Everyone does this or does that." And just like the Israelites, we compare ourselves to people who don't have Christ in charge of their lives. Say something like:

- **We often make excuses because we just want to do things our way and not God's. Today as we wrap up I am going to ask you to be honest with yourselves, and allow the Lord to speak to your heart.**

**THEN**, distribute pen and paper. Explain that this will just be for students to look at. Explain that you're going to sit in silence for a moment. Challenge students to be honest with all of the ways that they want to do what the world wants more than what God wants. Give students a few moments to do this

Ask students to look at their list and write down WHY they don't give God all of their lives. Challenge them to identify what it is that draws their attention to the world and away from God. Again ask them to be honest.

**NEXT**, tell students that while they don't need to share what is on their paper, you would like to have a discussion with them. Take some time and brainstorm ways that students can give their entire selves to the Lord. It starts with the ability to trust that He does indeed want to take care of us, and has our best interest in mind all the time. We can get to know Him better and understand His character through continuing to regularly meet Him in His Word. We can also talk to Him when we are struggling, and in every other thing as well. We can allow other people who have a deep relationship with Christ to help us learn how to better hear His voice. You may want to take a few moments and really discuss accountability, and how this will help them stay on track.

**FINALLY**, finish with something like the following:

- **My challenge to you this week is to continue to be honest with God about those ways you are drawn to be like the world. Ask Him to continue to be in charge of your life, and be honest with ways you struggle. Look into your heart and find out what it would take for God to have total control.**

Close in prayer.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 16 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**



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- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 17: Samuel Anointing David



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 5:1-5

**Gospel Focus:** Philippians 2:5-11

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will learn the story of how David was an unlikely choice to be King of Israel.
- Student will see how Jesus breaks expectations in redeeming us from our sins.
- Students will define what humility looks like in their context, and will brainstorm ways they can embrace humility in their daily lives.



### Overview

We all have expectations about the way life works. In this lesson we're going to explore the lives of David and Jesus, might be seen by outsiders as unexpected choices by God. David was an unlikely choice for King, yet God chose him and used him to lead well. Likewise, Jesus was not the Messiah that people were expecting, and He was able to accomplish a completely unexpected victory, one much larger than the people of His day believed possible. God doesn't always work in the ways that we expect He should. In fact, often He uses the least likely candidate to accomplish a completely unexpected end.



### Teacher Prep Video

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### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### 1 & 2 Samuel

**Author:** The author of 1-2 Samuel is unknown. While it's certainly possible that Samuel wrote some of what's recorded in these books, the mention of his death in 1 Samuel 25 means that he didn't write all of it. The books are given the title of "Samuel" because of his prominent role in the establishment of the monarchy.

**Time frame:** It's difficult to say for certain when 1-2 Samuel was written. It's very possible that they were writ-

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ten and edited over a period of time. More than likely they were established in their final form around the 10th century BC.

**Purpose:** The main theme of these books is God's choosing to accomplish His purposes through the lineage of David and to set up Jerusalem as the location for the temple. There are many "ups and downs" throughout 1-2 Samuel and David goes through times of obedience and rebellion. He experiences blessings and consequences for sins.

### Philippians

**Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

**Time frame:** Philippians was one of the last letters Paul wrote before he was martyred, sometime around A.D. 62.

**Purpose:** Philippians was written to Paul's close friends at the Philippian church, thanking them for their kindness and prayers while he was in prison. And he was encouraging them not to lose their faith because of his persecution.



### Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today?"

### Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students thinking and talking about unexpected events.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a way to show the 3 GIFs linked below.

**FIRST**, ask your students, "Have you ever said, 'I didn't see that coming?'" Explain that the "I didn't see that coming" moment is when you are surprised or blindsided by something completely unexpected. Say something like:

- **Maybe you never thought he would ask her to prom, maybe it was the plot twist in a movie, or maybe it was an unexpected hero that saved the day. Here are a few a good GIFs showing some different "I didn't see that coming" moments:**

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- <http://i.imgur.com/sTUyl.gif>
- <http://www.theandrewblog.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Lee2.gif>
- [http://img.izismile.com/img/img6/20131109/1000/kids\\_even\\_find\\_nonscary\\_things\\_frightening\\_20.gif](http://img.izismile.com/img/img6/20131109/1000/kids_even_find_nonscary_things_frightening_20.gif)

**NEXT**, ask a few questions like:

- **Have you ever had a “didn’t see that coming” moment? What made it so unexpected? What was your reaction?**
- **What’s the key to a great “didn’t see that coming” moment?**
- **How would you define the word “unexpected?”**
- **How do unexpected moments affect our lives? What would life be like if everything happened as we expected?**

**FINALLY**, begin to wrap up the discussion by explaining that your lesson today is about an unexpected choice that no one saw coming. Say something like:

- **As we continue to look at the big-picture story of the Bible, we’re going to look at the story of Samuel choosing David to be the next king of Israel. You’ll learn that David was a rather unexpected choice. But like many things in God’s way of seeing things, the unexpected choices are the best. Let’s open our Bibles and see what we find.**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** For students to learn the story of how David was an unlikely choice to be king of Israel.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app.

**FIRST**, explain that in this lesson you’ll be looking at 1 and 2 Samuel. If you’d like, use the “Connecting The Dots” section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

#### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Since our last lesson, God has rejected Saul as king because Saul rejected God’s word. Check out 1 Samuel 13:14; 15:23,26 if you want more context.**
- **Saul was Israel’s first king. Today we’re going to look at how God chose the next king.**
- **The purpose of a king was so that God’s people who have a clear picture of a benevolent, humble, and yet powerful leader.**

**NEXT**, review last week’s lesson with your students. Remind them that Saul was chosen as the first king of Israel because the people of Israel demanded a king. They longed to be like the nations that surrounded them and, therefore, requested God to give them a king. Explain that during Saul’s reign, God rejected him as king because Saul repeatedly refused to heed God’s direction and His Word. (If you’d like to review God rejecting Saul as king, you can read 1 Samuel 13:14 and 1 Samuel 15:1-29.)



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**THEN**, explain to your students that today your lesson is going to explore how God chose the next king of Israel. Ask them to turn to 1 Samuel 16. Read or have a student to read 1 Samuel 16:1-5. Ask something like:

- **According to this passage, who has chosen the next king of Israel?**
  - o Answer: God. He tells Samuel that He has already provided a new king.
- **Why is Samuel initially afraid to follow God's instructions? Who is he afraid of?**
  - o Answer: He is afraid that Saul will find out about the plan and kill him. Even though Saul had been rejected by God as king, he was still the current ruling king and therefore very powerful.
- **When Samuel shows up in Bethlehem the elders meet him and seem to be scared. Why?**
  - o Answer: Samuel is a prophet, which means he speaks to God's people on behalf of God. The messages he was told to deliver were not always good news. Here the leaders, or elders, of Bethlehem are afraid Samuel has come to deliver bad news.

**NEXT**, explain to your students it is important to remember that Samuel is going to anoint the person that God has chosen as king. This person is going to display the characteristics that God deems vital to being a great leader, which may be different from our expectations. Read or have a student to read 1 Samuel 16:6-7. Ask something like:

- **How did Samuel assess Eliab's qualifications to be king? How does God respond to Samuel's assessment of Eliab?**
  - o Answer: Samuel "looked on" him and concluded that he looked like a king. In other words, Samuel judged him based on his outward appearance. God says that He has not chosen Eliab. God instructs Samuel to not look at his outward appearance.
- **Is outward appearance the best indicator of how qualified someone is to lead? Why or why not?**
  - o Answer: No. Looking like a king and acting like a king are different. Inward character, not outward appearance, is what determines our actions.
- **God says that He "looks on the heart." What does He mean by "heart?"**
  - o Answer: Your students may stumble around this answer. They will intuitively understand what it means, but might not be able to explain the concept. Explain to them the Bible uses the word "heart" to describe the center of your emotions, intellect, and will. So it is where your feelings, thoughts, and decisions combine to drive your actions and your attitude.
- **How did God challenge Samuel's expectations in these verses?**
  - o Answer: Samuel expects the future king of Israel to look a certain way, but God explains that He expects something different. God is looking for a heart that is qualified to be king.
- **How do these verses challenge our expectations of great leaders?**
  - o Answer: We, like Samuel, often judge people based on their outward appearance. We should remember that God judges the heart. It is someone's heart, or his or her character, that makes him or her a great leader in God's Kingdom.

**THEN**, read or have a student to read 1 Samuel 16:10-13. Ask something like:

- **David's own family didn't make sure he was there to meet Samuel. What does that tell us about what his family's expectations of him?**
  - o Answer: Even David's family didn't consider him either old enough or important enough to deserve an invitation to meet Samuel.

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- **How did Samuel know David was the one he was suppose to anoint?**

- o Answer: God told him. When Samuel saw Eliab he looked at his outward appearance, but when he saw David, Samuel listened to God.

- **Why is it important for us to listen to God instead of judging people by their outward appearance?**

- o Answer: Your students' answers may vary. The idea is that God can see people's hearts, so He is a much better judge than we are.

**NEXT**, instruct your students to go to 2 Samuel 5:1-5. Say something like:

- **David was an unlikely choice for king. In fact, his own family didn't expect him to be a candidate. He didn't come from the palace; he came from a field. He had never led an army; he was busy tending sheep. He didn't look the part, but he was exactly who God chose. David was the "didn't see that coming" choice for Israel's next king. For years David served under Saul as a musician, counselor, and warrior. Additionally, David's best friend was Saul's son, Jonathan, and David was married to Saul's daughter, Michal. Years later Saul was finally removed as king, and David was crowned as king.**

**NEXT**, read or ask a student to read 2 Samuel 5:1-5. Ask something like:

- **Who came to David to anoint him as king?**

- Answer: The people, all the tribes of Israel.

- **Why did the people want to anoint David as king?**

- Answer: They saw what God had seen. When he was given opportunities he led them well.

- **Do you think it is important for a king to have the support of his people? Why?**

- Answer: It is much easier to lead people who trust you and support you.

**THEN**, say something like:

- **God used the time between Samuel anointing David and the people anointing David to prepare David to be a great king, and to prepare the people for his leadership. Remember, he was an unexpected candidate, so God used the time in between the initial anointing and this anointing to display David's kingly heart in front of the people, so they would see in him what God saw.**

**FINALLY**, tell your students that there is another King in the Bible who seemed like an unlikely leader. He was not who people expected him to be, but He was set apart to accomplish a mighty task.

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and see where you can find the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, ask your students to go to Philippians 2:5-11. As they find the passage, explain during the first century the Jewish people were being ruled by the Romans. They were waiting and hoping for a Messiah, a man sent from God who would rescue them from Roman rule. The people were expecting a great warrior who would kick out the Romans, and

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then lead them as their new king.

**THEN**, tell them Philippians 2 describes the Messiah who came from God and, like David, He was extremely different from what the people expected. He was not the Messiah they saw coming. Read or ask a student to read Philippians 2:5-7. Ask something like:

- **The Jewish people expected a military or political leader. How was Jesus different from their expectations?**
  - o Answer: Jesus humbled Himself and came as a servant instead of a political or military leader.
- **Look back at verse 5, which instructs us to have the same attitude as Jesus. What would it look like in your life to have the same attitude as Jesus?**
  - o Answer: Humility, servanthood, sacrifice.
- **What does it mean that Jesus was “in the form of God?”**
  - o Answer: This phrase may be confusing for your students. Another way to understand it would be that Jesus was of the exact nature as God. He was (and is) equal to God.
- **How did Jesus view His status as God?**
  - o Answer: He did not count it “to be grasped” or to be held onto. In other words, He was willing to give up His rights in order to serve us. This does not mean that Jesus ceased to be God when He came to earth as a man. This is the Prince taking on the rags of a pauper in order to best serve His Kingdom.

Say something like:

- **The big idea here is that Jesus stepped down from his position as ruler in order to come as a servant. This was an unexpected plot twist. When God wanted to show His people exactly who He was, He came as a servant. Didn’t see that coming.**

**THEN**, read or have a student read Philippians 2:8. Ask

- **We learned in the previous verses that Jesus unexpectedly came as a servant. In verse 8, what else did Jesus do that was unexpected?**
  - o Answer: He laid down his life. Instead of kicking the Romans out, He allowed the Romans to crucify him on a cross.
- **Why did Jesus lay down his life instead of beating the Romans up and kicking them out of Israel?**
  - o Answer: Jesus came to defeat a different and more important enemy. He did not come to rescue us from our circumstances, but from sin and death. Through the cross Jesus was able to rescue a much larger group of people, than just the Jews.

Explain that just like Jesus was an unexpected Messiah, He, also rescued us in an unexpected way. He gave His life on the cross so that He could take the punishment we deserved for our sins. Read or have a student read Philippians 2:9-11. Ask something like:

- **How does God respond to Jesus’ attitude of humility and His act of sacrifice on the cross?**
  - o Answer: God exalts him. He gives Jesus the name above every name.
- **At the end of time, what position will Jesus hold?**
  - o Answer: He will be King of all. Like David, He will have received His Kingdom because of his inward



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character, not his outward characteristics. He will be a King, not through war, but because He was a servant.

**FINALLY**, conclude The Thread by reminding your students that God often uses the unexpected to accomplish His purposes. He called David, an unexpected King. He sent Jesus, an unexpected Messiah and King. If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the Wrapping Up section by inviting your students to examine their own lives in light of today's lesson.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to define what humility looks like in their context, and to brainstorm ways they can embrace humility in their daily lives.
- **Set-Up:** A whiteboard, chalkboard, or other writing space.

**FIRST**, go to the whiteboard, chalkboard, or some other form of large writing space (or recruit a student to do it). Ask your students to help you make a list of all the things that students their age believe they deserve. The list might include a car when they turn 16, nice clothes, an education, food on the table, good parents, happiness, or dozens of other things. Try not to make it personal at this point so you can get a wide variety of answers. As your students answer, write down the answers on one side of the board.

**THEN**, draw a line down the middle of the board. Tell your students your students that this side of the board will be reserved for what they actually deserve. Give them a few minutes to think about what should belong in that column. Now ask:

- **In light of how Jesus laid down what He deserved as king of all, what would you like to move from column 1 to column 2?**
  - o Answer: If your class is pretty quick, they will realize that there is not a single thing that should be moved into column 2. If they are still want to move things you might want to review who Jesus is and what He sacrificed once more.
- **After we understand Jesus' humility express toward us, is there really any right or privilege that we can claim we deserve? Or that we're entitled to? How does this change the way we view our every day lives?**
  - o Answer: The key to humility for us is realizing that we are not entitled to anything. Moreover, if we are truly following Jesus, the One who set aside all His rights and privileges, we should be able to do the same through the power of the Spirit.

**NEXT**, have a discussion surrounding the following questions about how living a life with this type of humility would have an impact on those around us:

- **If you viewed your life this way, how would it change the way you live daily? Would embracing this type of humility be the expected at your school? Among your friends? Why or not? What difference could this unexpected humility make in the lives of the people around you?**

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**FINALLY**, as you conclude remind your students that God uses unlikely people. Challenge them that it is likely that they are the unlikely person that God wants to use. Remind them that God chooses people based on their inward character, not outward characteristics. Encourage them to embrace the humility of Jesus, to lead by serving because, as we've seen in the stories of David and Jesus, that is the attitude that God honors and uses. Pray together as a class for humility.

- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 17 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

### We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 18: David, Bathsheba, and Nathan



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** 2 Samuel 11-12:14

**Gospel Focus:** Romans 3:23-24

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will see that even David, a godly ruler, is capable of really messing things up when left to act out of his sinful nature.
- Students will grasp that sin affects all humans, but Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only means by which the devastating impact of our sin is removed.
- Students will evaluate their relationship with sin in light of their relationship with Christ.



### Overview

David is one of the most well-known characters in the Bible. Almost everyone has heard the story of David and Goliath and knows a little bit about who David was. Early in David's life it was obvious that God had a plan for him. Although God's hand was clearly on David, it didn't mean that David was beyond making some huge mistakes. The lesson of David and Bathsheba shows us just how easy it is for people of great faith to get tangled up in sin, and suffer serious consequences. But the good news of the Gospel is that Jesus has not left us to suffer the greatest consequence of our sin: eternity separated from Him.



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### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

### 2 Samuel

**Author:** The author of 1-2 Samuel is unknown. While it's certainly possible that Samuel wrote some of what's recorded in these books, the mention of his death in 1 Samuel 25 means that he didn't write all of it. The books are given the title of "Samuel" because of his prominent role in the establishment of the monarchy.

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**Time frame:** It's difficult to say for certain when 1-2 Samuel was written. It's very possible that they were written and edited over a period of time. More than likely they were established in their final form around the 10th century BC.

**Purpose:** The main theme of these books is God's choosing to accomplish His purposes through the lineage of David and to set up Jerusalem as the location for the temple. There are many "ups and downs" throughout 1-2 Samuel and David goes through times of obedience and rebellion. He experiences blessings and consequences for sins.

### Romans

**Author:** Paul is the author of Romans

**Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.

**Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students to see that even a person strong in his or her faith can make sinful choices, which carry major consequences that affect not only the sinner, but also those around him or her.
- **Set-Up:** Be prepared to show this YouTube video called "AFV Treadmill Fails." Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/StejfrgnV48>. (If the link is not active at the time you're preparing for this lesson, searching for "treadmill fail" on YouTube will always provide plenty of worthy videos.)

**FIRST**, tell the students about a time where you looked like a total klutz in front of people. It could be a time where you tripped, fell, dropped a plate of food, etc. As embarrassing as those things can be when they happen to you, they're usually



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pretty funny to witness. Let the students know that you didn't want to let them down by not showing a great fail video to get things started.

**THEN**, show the AFV Treadmill Fails video. When the video ends, ask for students' reactions. Here are some questions to get them talking:

- **Have you ever had a treadmill accident or witnessed one up close and personal? If so, explain.**
- **Would you send a video of your treadmill fail to AFV? Why or why not?**
- **What is the worst fail you have ever seen on video?**

**NEXT**, lead students in a brief discussion about a deeper kind of failure—sins that are moral failures. Be prepared to share a story of a real-life moral failure that went very public for someone famous. Sadly, these are not hard to find. Use one that you think will be familiar to your group. Then, dig deep with these questions:

- **What are some of the main causes people have for moral failures?**
- **Do you think certain types of moral failure sins are easier to fall into than others? Explain.**
- **Do you believe that a person with strong faith in Christ is less or more likely to fail morally? Explain.**

**FINALLY**, explain to the students that even some of the most famous and respected characters in the Bible experienced failures—big and embarrassing failures that hurt those around them. Transition to The Story by saying something like:

- **In this lesson we'll take a look at a true story about someone referred to as "a man after God's own heart." We'll see how even people with deep faith in God can give in to temptation and fail miserably, hurting themselves and those around them. Rest assured there is good news in the end, which is always the case for anyone who accepts the free gift of God's grace.**

Transition to The Story.

## The Story

- **Goal:** For students to grasp that sin affects all humans, but Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only means by which the devastating impact of our sin is removed.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

**FIRST**, explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at the story of David and Bathsheba from 2 Samuel. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **David was an unassuming younger son who was anointed king by Samuel.**
- **David's bravery began with protecting sheep, and grew into protecting a nation as a mighty warrior king!**
- **David's deep love for God brought him great responsibilities. In this lesson you will see how even the great ones fail, and need to be reminded of God's greatest gift: grace.**

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**NOW**, ask students to find 2 Samuel 11–12:14 in their Bibles. While students are looking for this passage, use the Bible Background to go into greater detail about how David's journey of faith brought him to this point in his life.

**NEXT**, ask for volunteers to help read this lengthy passage aloud. Encourage all of the students to make a mental note of the key details of the events that unfold. When you've finished, have a student read 2 Samuel 11:1-3. Ask something like:

- **What tips you off to the fact that something is wrong right of the gate?**
  - o Answer: Verse 1 tells us that David stayed home at the time when kings "go off to war." The tone and wording of the verse lets us know this is going to be a part of what goes wrong.
- **Does free time usually help or hurt one's ability to dodge temptation? Explain.**
  - o Answers will vary.

**NEXT**, let the students know that it's not going to take long for us to learn exactly what went wrong. Have a student read 2 Samuel 11:4-5. Ask something like:

- **What's the first thing David does wrong?**
  - o Answer: He let lust hang around in his heart and mind. He gave sin an opportunity to take a stronghold.
- **What could he have done differently?**
  - o Answer: He could have seen Bathsheba and moved on with his day. He could have engaged in something to take his mind another direction, but he dwelt on his lust and it led him down a dangerous road.
- **Typically, when we really mess up, we have two choices. We can put an end to the bad decisions and deal with the consequences at hand, or we can try and cover things up and get ourselves into a bigger mess. What do you think David did?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**THEN**, explain to the students that you're going to read a lengthy chunk of verses that are going to show how quickly things spiraled out of control. Tell them to make a mental note of all the bad decisions David made in these verses. Read or have a student read 2 Samuel 11:6-27. Ask something like:

- **Off the top of your head, list the bad decisions David made that caused the situation to get even worse.**
  - o Answer: He tried to manipulate Uriah into coming home from battle so he would sleep with Bathsheba, and they could act like the child was actually Uriah's. When Uriah didn't go home, he tried to get him drunk and do the same thing. Then he had Uriah moved to the front of the battle, and instructed the other soldiers to let him get killed.
- **What is your reaction to David, the one who killed Goliath, committing these sins?**
  - o Answers will vary. The shock of such a bold warrior for God making such bad decisions should permeate the discussion.
- **What does this show us about the power of sin in our lives?**
  - o Answer: It shows us that sin can quickly run rampant in our lives if we don't seek the Lord, and draw on His strength to follow Him.

**NEXT**, tell the students that most of us would assume that David is going to get away with what he's done since he's the king. However, Nathan had a different plan. Read or have a student read 2 Samuel 12:1-14. Ask something like:

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- **Have you ever been called out about something you did wrong? How did it make you feel? Explain.**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **Have you ever really experienced the power of forgiveness for something you know you did wrong? What is one word or phrase that describes how you feel the moment after you have been forgiven for something?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **What was the consequence for David's sins?**
  - o Answers might vary. David and Bathsheba's child will get sick and die.
- **What is your initial reaction to the punishment for David's sins? Explain.**
  - o Answers will vary. Perhaps some will be shocked. Others might feel it is too lenient. An essential realization about God's justice comes when one respects God's decision and authority regardless of the cost.

**FINALLY**, as you transition from The Story to The Thread, ask the students to think about how God's grace was on display at the end of David's trail of sin. Before moving on to The Thread, make sure that students understand that even the strongest people of faith fail, and that our sin carries consequences that affect more than just us.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, have students look up Romans 3:23-24. If you choose, reference the Bible Background to give students a simple overview of the book of Romans. Then have a student read and then reread these two verses. After the student reads the verses twice, ask something like:

- **So, according to this passage, what do the worst of sinners and those that seem like they have it all together have in common?**
  - o Answer: They're both sinners and have fallen short of God's standard.
- **What should this truth do to our spiritual pride?**
  - o Answer: It should stop it dead in its tracks. There's no room for spiritual pride because the "worst" and the "best" person are in the same boat, separated from God.
- **That sounds pretty bleak. What is the good news that's offered to both?**
  - o Answer: Everyone, the worst of sinners and the most moral person on earth, are both equally as sinful, but redemption is offered to both through the grace of Jesus.
- **What does grace do to our pride?**
  - o Answer: Grace also stops our pride because it means we didn't do anything to earn God's love and redemption.

Ask students if they have any questions about The Story or The Thread. If there are no more questions then move on to the Wrapping Up section.

# The Thread

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 18: David, Bathsheba, and Nathan

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To get students to evaluate their relationship with sin in the light of their relationship with Christ
- **Set-Up:** None.

**FIRST**, remind the students that if David, a man after God's own heart, can have such colossal sin failures, then surely every person in the room has sin failures. Again, call their attention to the fact that this is the very reason Jesus went to the cross.

**NOW**, say something like:

- **I want to help you think about where you are in your relationship with the Lord and the sin you wrestle with. You may fall into one of the following categories:**

**1) You are fully devoted to Jesus. This means you believe Jesus has saved you from your sins and you try to live for Him every day, but you still experience a battle between the flesh and spirit.**

**2) You don't know Jesus. Perhaps you have heard of Jesus, but you don't know Him personally. You might not really know whether or not certain sin is a big deal or not.**

**3) You are stuck in the middle of the first two. You aren't fully devoted to Jesus, but you do believe He gave His life for you. So, you may waffle between really trying to battle the sin you struggle with and wondering if it even matters.**

**THEN**, have the students spend some time in prayer. Instruct them to pray about where they see themselves in terms of their relationship with sin and their relationship with Christ. Have them think about how they lean on the grace of God to battle the sin in their lives. Say something like:

- **Whichever category you feel like you're in, the truth is that we all struggle with sin. We all mess up and, on our own, our hearts are inclined to seek anything and everything besides God. That's really what sin is. The reason sin is a big deal is because it separates us from the Lord. But none of our sin is so big that it's too much for His grace.**

Ask:

- **As Christians, how do we take sin seriously and fight against it, but not let it overwhelm us and make us feel unworthy of God's love?**
  - o Answers will vary. The truth is, battling sin is hard. It's a daily process. We can't be passive in it, but we also can't fall into the trap of believing we can overcome it on our own strength. The grace of Jesus is what has defeated sin and allows us to battle it in our lives. Each day we must lean into following Jesus, trusting His promises over the lure of sin, and praying for wisdom in the decisions we make. When we do fail, we confess it, seek forgiveness, and trust that our failures don't separate us from God's love.

**FINALLY**, remind students once more that you are available for further questions and discussion about personal faith in Jesus before closing in prayer, especially if they found themselves in one of the categories where



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they were wrestling with some questions about Jesus and sin.

- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 18 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

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- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
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Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Psalm 23

**Gospel Focus:** John 10:11-15

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that the psalms are creative expressions of a multitude of emotions written by God's people.
- Students will understand that Jesus is the perfect shepherd who, out of His great love for His children, rescued us once-and-for-all.
- Students will be reminded of the many ways God provides for them and will commit to being more mindful of God's provision in their lives.



### Overview

God cares for us. Reread that sentence understanding "cares" to be an active verb and not just a gushy, emotional idea. God cares for us. He feeds us, clothes us, gives us shelter, and provides training and discipline. He is our caregiver actively providing, leading, and protecting. As your students read one of the most well-known Bible passages, try to help them consider the ways God's provision, leadership, and protection have impacted their lives.



### Teacher Prep Video

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### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

### Psalms

**Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remain unknown.

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

**Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e. Psalm 119).

**Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e. Psalm 51).

### John

**Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

**Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

**Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get student thinking about what it may be like to take care of animals, specifically sheep.
- **Set-Up:** You're going to need a way to display the following YouTube video:
  - <https://youtu.be/D2FX9rviEhw>
  - If you can't show the video, be prepared to summarize it for your students.

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

**FIRST**, ask students if they have any pets that they have to take care of. Ask them a little bit about their pets. You can use some questions similar to the following:

- **Is your pet intelligent or dumb? Can you give some examples of why you think so?**
- **Can your pet do any good tricks? What's its best trick?**
- **Do you like taking care of your pet or do you get tired of it? Why?**

**THEN**, ask if any of them have ever spent any time around sheep. What do they know about sheep? Show students the amazingly weird, sort of awesome, YouTube video, "Extreme Sheep LED Art." When you've finished, explain to students that in this lesson, you're going to be looking at a Biblical poem where God is described as our shepherd. We are the animals, and He's the one taking care of us. Ask:

- **Do you think God makes funny videos with His angels herding us into shapes you can only see from space?**
- **Do you think of yourself more as a shepherd, sheep, or sheep dog? Why?**
- **What do you think God thinks of us if He thinks of Himself as a shepherd?**

Leave these questions unanswered. The idea is to have a little fun and to set up the imagery of sheep and shepherd.

**FINALLY**, if no one has any more input, transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** Students will understand that the psalms are creative expressions of a multitude of emotions written by God's people.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

**FIRST**, explain that in this lesson you'll be glancing briefly at the book of Psalms; "briefly," because it's the largest book in the Bible, and you're only going to look at one little chapter. Provide some of the basic background for the book using the Bible Background. Explain that the book is basically a book of worship songs for God's people, the Israelites. Although many people think of David when they think of the psalms, there were at least eight authors of the Psalms. The 150 Psalms were written over a period of nearly 700 years.

**NEXT**, explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at Psalm 23. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

#### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **David was a shepherd whom God hand selected to be king of His people.**
- **Saul, the first King of Israel was angry that David would replace him as King. Saul pursued and tried to kill David for years. This meant that David was on the run and hiding out**

**THEN**, have students turn to Psalm 23. While they're finding it, inform students that you're going to be reading Psalm 23



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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

more than once. Explain that this portion of the Bible is short, but full of meaning and insights. Let students know that you'll want some volunteers to help you read.

Read or have a student read the entire passage. Say something like:

- **If you haven't grown up in the church and you hear Psalm 23 for the first time, perhaps you wonder if you've fallen asleep and woken up at someone's funeral. If you're more familiar with this psalm, maybe you envision mountain vistas, spectacular sunsets, and lazy meadows beside a babbling brook. Gentle music might play in the background of your imagination. By the end of our lesson, I hope you see a lot more.**

**NEXT**, ask students to turn and share with a friend what they think of this psalm, just the first things that come to mind.

**THEN**, have students to open their Bible to 1 Samuel 16. While they are finding it, explain that Samuel was a prophet of God. He was told by God to select a new king for Israel. He was told to go to a man named Jesse and God would show Samuel the new king from among Jesse's eight sons. Have a student read 1 Samuel 16:6-13. Ask something like:

- **What was David doing when God's prophet came to select the new King of Israel?**
  - o Answer: Watching sheep.
- **Put yourselves in David's shoes. He's about 13-15 years old. Let your imagination run with it. What was he thinking when THE prophet of God anointed his head with oil to signify that he would be king?**
  - o Answers will vary. Some possible answers include fear, excitement, and disbelief. He may wonder, "Who's watching my sheep?"
- **What was going through his brothers' minds?**
  - o Answers will vary. Some possible answers are: "WHAT ...!? Why not me?" They may have felt jealousy, but they also may have felt admiration and joy for their brother.

**THEN**, lead students to and understanding of what it is to be a shepherd. Ask something like:

- **Ok, so David the young boy gets sent out to the meadows to watch sheep. That's his job for the family. What do you think it's like to be a shepherd? What do they do, see, and experience?**
  - o Answers will vary. Some possible thoughts are: Shepherds are totally responsible for something fragile and valuable because they're dealing with animals that are helpless, defenseless, aimless, and fairly stupid. Shepherding is probably lonely. Shepherds are constantly on the lookout for danger.

**NEXT**, re-read or have a student read Psalms 23:1-4 with the mind of a shepherd. Say something like:

- **While we read Psalm 23 again, try to imagine that you are a shepherd. Really focus on the imagery that David uses and what the scenarios he describes makes you think about.**

After you've re-read the Psalm, draw the students' attention to some of the phrases David used. If you have a dry erase board, write some phrases from the passage down and ask the students to describe the emotions the phrases evoke when they hear them. Some phrases to point out and potential answers include:

- **"fields of green grass" = peace, rest, food**
- **"quiet waters" = rejuvenation, water**
- **"right paths" = guidance in uncertainty, leadership**
- **"rod" = a club to beat off predators, protection**
- **"staff" = a walking stick used to gently guide/discipline sheep**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

**THEN**, ask students to think about times God has been their “Shepherd.” Have students turn and share with someone sitting next to them about God’s provision of some of the things on your list (e.g. peace, protection, discipline, etc).

Remind the students that sometime after Samuel anointed David, King Saul took David to live as a servant in his palace. Say something like:

- **David was so successful at everything Saul asked him to do that Saul put David in charge of the army. Unfortunately, David was so successful in battle and well liked by the people, that Saul became angry and jealous. So much so that Saul tried to kill David and David had to escape and live like a fugitive on the run with Saul and his men looking to kill him.**

Ask:

- **What do you think it would be like having to live “on the run?”**
  - o Answers will vary. Some possible answers include. He would have felt paranoia and fear and would have had little food, shelter, and clean water.

**THEN**, re-read or have a student read Psalms 23 with the mind of a fugitive. Say something like:

- **While we read Psalm 23 this time, try to imagine that you are on the run from someone trying to get you. What parts of the psalm stand out for you this time? What emotions do you feel when you hear the passage this time?**
  - o Answers may include: “everything I need” = Actively setting your mind not to want. Consider the stark difference between David’s life in the palace (he had everything he could possibly want), and his life in caves (God provided all that David needed). The difference is how David perceived his situation and God’s provision.
  - o “lie down in fields of green grass” = God giving peace and rest from the chase.
  - o “the darkest valley” = Wondering who is hiding in the shadows and around the corners.
  - o In the original language, “will follow me all the days of my life” has a sense of paranoia. In other words, if I start to fear that something is hunting me, I choose to know that it is God’s “goodness and love.”

**NEXT**, ask students to think about times God has been with them through a “dark valley.” Turn and share with a friend what it meant to have His presence during those times.

**REMIND** the students that eventually, King Saul died in battle. Say something like:

- **After King Saul died, David became the king in Judah, one of the twelve parts of the country. The other eleven parts were united against David with one of Saul’s sons as their king. There was a violent civil war. It was fierce and angry; people would be battling their relatives and neighbors. After about 7 years, Saul’s son was killed and the whole country was united with David as their king.**

Ask something like:

- **What do you think it would be like for David to finally become the king after so many struggles?**
  - o Answers will vary. A possible answer is that he probably felt a sense of relief. It would take a lot of faith to believe that what God promised 15 years ago, when you were just a boy, was actually true.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

Say something like:

- **While we read Psalm 23 one last time, try to imagine that you are finally being made king. After everything that happened, you are now sitting on the throne, surrounded by your allies and your enemies. They are all finally acknowledging that you were chosen by God to be the rightful king. How is Psalm 23 different this time? What emotions would you be feeling?**

Ask students to think about times God has granted them a moment in the spotlight. Have students turn and share with someone sitting next to them about that time. In that moment, did they remember that it was God who brought them there for His glory?

**FINISH** this section by talking to the students briefly about the book of Psalms. Say something like:

- **As you can see, this one psalm can bring a number of things to our minds and hearts depending on what's going on in our lives. That's the beauty of the psalms. They're expressions of human emotions as real life is going on around us. Sometimes they're full of thankfulness and praise. Other times we see frustration, worry, and even anger. But they always point us back to the Lord, and His rule over our lives and love for us. In the midst of the chaos of life, they anchor us to the Lord as our true foundation. As we dive into the next section, we're going to see how Jesus fits into this role of being our shepherd. As you read the psalms, always be on the lookout for how Jesus is the true fulfillment of what's being talked about.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread to see where we see the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, Instruct students to turn to John 10. If you choose, while they are turning pages, provide them with some brief context for book by referencing the Bible Background. Also give them some immediate contextual background.

Say something like:

- **The crowd Jesus was talking to would have been familiar with shepherds and sheep. They would know what makes a good shepherd versus a bad one. They would have also been familiar with Psalm 23 and the concept of thinking of the Lord as our shepherd. Now, Jesus is going to make some bold claims here in this passage that will really rile them up.**

**NEXT**, have one student read Jeremiah 23:1-4 and immediately after he or she is done, have another student read John 10:11-15. Then lead students in a discussion. Ask something like:

- **What are the glaring differences between the two passages?**
  - o Answer: Jeremiah describes leaders that lead their people astray and don't care about them. In John, Jesus says He's a good shepherd that truly cares for His people and even lays down His life for them.



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

- **Jesus starts John 10:11 with “I am.” What is significant about that?**
  - o Answer: Jesus has several “I am” statements throughout the Gospels. He’s making a connection to the Lord saying His name is “I am” in the Old Testament. Jesus is drawing attention to the fact that He is God. Using “I am” is a claim to His divinity.
- **So, if Jesus begins this passage with a claim to divinity and goes on to say that He’s the good shepherd, what connection is He making to Psalm 23?**
  - o Answer: He’s letting us know that He is the shepherd David described in Psalm 23. He’s the good shepherd that leads His people in all the ways we’ve discussed, but He adds in there that He’s willing to die for His people.

If your students don’t have any questions, bring it all together for your students and transition into the Wrapping Up section by saying something like:

- **We’ve looked at two important sections of the Bible. In Psalm 23 we read about the Lord’s character and how He cares for His people. In John 10 we read about Jesus making the claim that He is God and that He is the true shepherd that’s even willing to die for His people. Now we’re going to think about our response to that promise of care and provision.**

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** Students will be reminded of the many ways God provides for them, and will commit to being more mindful of God’s provision in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need lined paper and a pen/pencil to write with. You may also use a dry-erase board for this section.

**FIRST**, review the character of the shepherd described in Psalm 23. Say something like:

- **We’ve learned from Psalm 23 what a shepherd is like to his sheep. Can you list some one-word descriptions of what the shepherd is and does for his sheep?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**THEN**, instruct students that they are going to write their own paraphrased version of Psalm 23. The main ingredient is that their Psalm 23 has to describe how God’s presence in their own lives has provided all the things a shepherd provides. Say something like:

- **To wrap things up, we are each going to write our own paraphrase version of Psalm 23. A paraphrase is more than just re-wording. Try to grab a whole concept and write the concept in a way that is meaningful to you. For this task, you’ll want to focus on the ways that God’s presence has been all those things that a shepherd was for David. You might say, “God is my coach. He wants me to be strong even if it sometimes hurts. He makes sure I get a water break, but also pushes me beyond what I think are my limits,” and so on.**

Give students enough time to paraphrase their own Psalm 23. Then, ask students who are willing to share their Psalm 23 with the group.



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 19: David and the Psalms

**FINALLY**, ask students to describe how this lesson helped them better understand God's character and His intentions for us. Once students have had a chance to respond, ask if anyone has any further thoughts or questions. Then, close your Bible study in prayer.

- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 19 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
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# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 20: The Rise and Fall of Solomon



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** 1 Kings 1:28-30; 3:4-15; 9:1-9; 11:1-13

**Gospel Focus:** John 14:23-24

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will see how Solomon's rise was tied to God's blessing, and how his fall was tied to his own sinfulness.
- Students will understand that our motivation for obeying God should be born out of our love for Him.
- Students will examine their own attitudes toward obedience and what their motivations are.



### Overview

In today's lesson, the legacy of David continues as his son, Solomon, is crowned king. But we will find that things don't go so well for David's son. David led the people to follow God. And Solomon kept this same thread for many years. But Solomon strayed from God in a very significant way. And because he was king, his wandering led the people away from God as well. And it set in motion a turn of events that would cripple Israel for generations. It's a powerful reminder of what happens when we fail to obey God's guidance.



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- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### 1 Kings

**Author:** Ancient Jewish history has Jeremiah as the author of 1 Kings and 2 Kings. However, this view has never been widely supported by scholars. It's best to view the books as a collection of writings with no known author.

**Time frame:** 1 Kings and 2 Kings are extremely difficult to date because it's a collection of writings that could have been written and edited in stages.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 20: The Rise and Fall of Solomon

**Purpose:** 1 Kings and 2 Kings tell the stories of the kings of Israel. These books speak of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of kings and the impact that a godly leader can have on God's people.

### John

**Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

**Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

**Purpose:** John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** For students to experiment with the concept of if/then clauses in order to better understand the conditions of God's covenant with Solomon.
- **Set-Up:** Two notecards or pieces of scrap paper for each student, pens, and two paper bags or bowls.

**FIRST**, give each student two notecards or scrap pieces of paper, and a pen or pencil. Tell students that you are going to have a little fun with language before you dive into the lesson today.

Say something like:

- **Each of you has two cards that together will make up one statement. You are going to think of one conditional if/then statement and write it as two parts on the cards. For example, "IF I lay down right now (card 1), THEN I will fall asleep (card 2). Do not let anyone else see your statement.**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 20: The Rise and Fall of Solomon

**THEN**, when everyone has written both parts of their statement, collect all the cards, making sure that all of the 'IF' cards go in one bag, and all of the 'THEN' card go in the other. Shake up the bags so the cards are mixed, then have each student randomly draw out one card from each bag. Go around the group and have the students read their mixed up clauses aloud.

**NEXT**, say something like:

- **While all of these statements may be grammatically correct, some of them make no sense and sound pretty silly. But, the truth is, for each of these 'IF' statements, there is one correct result. Take a minute and see if you can find the correct matches.**

**THEN**, after the students have taken a few minutes to try and match the cards, say something like:

- **Remember that we're looking at the big-picture story of Scripture. We're coming to some pretty major parts of the story. In today's lesson we are going to see God give some very clear conditions that have a definite result. He does not leave any room for confusion when He enters into a covenant with His people!**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** For students to see how Solomon's rise was tied to God's blessing, and how his fall was tied to his own sinfulness.
- **Setup:** Dry erase board and Bibles or Bible apps.

**BEGIN** by giving your students a quick recap of the saga between David and Bathsheba. (Look at 2 Sam. 11-12 if needed.) Remind them that although David's early actions regarding this woman did not honor God, his heart of repentance surely did! Although David and Bathsheba suffered consequences, including the loss of their first child, God set David back on a path of obedience.

Use the information below in the 'Connecting the Dots' section to help set the scene for today's lesson.

#### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **King David is now very old and his health is starting to fail. It is no secret to anyone that it is time to anoint his successor.**
- **While one of David's sons, Adonijah pursues the throne, Nathan the prophet prompts Bathsheba to request that David appoint her son, Solomon, as the next king. (Scripture hints that perhaps David had once promised this to Bathsheba in private.)**
- **David anoints Solomon as king, but clearly warns him to uphold their family's covenant with God. He instructs his son to 'show himself a man' by remaining obedient to God and thereby preserving their blessed line of kings. (1 Kings 2)**



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**THEN**, read or have a student read 1 Kings 1:28-30. Ask something like:

- **Looking closely at David's words here, what do you see about his attitude toward making Solomon king?**
  - o Answer: He reveals this as a promise he made to Bathsheba beforehand, and says he will do this "As the Lord lives." The fact that he swore this by the God of Israel seems to indicate that he thinks this decision is God ordained.

**NEXT**, have students turn to chapter 3 and read or have a student read 1 Kings 3:4-5. Ask something like:

- **If you were Solomon and had just become king and could have any request granted, what would you ask for?**
  - o Answers will vary. Share with them your answer and try and get them talking about what they think would be the most important request.

**THEN**, finish this passage by reading or having a student read 1 Kings 3:6-15. Ask something like:

- **What does Solomon's request reveal about his relationship with God at this point in his life?**
  - o Answer: Solomon acknowledges in verse 7 that he is on the throne because God put him there. He understands that he is king of God's people, and that he will have to depend solely upon God rather than his own skill.
- **Where did Solomon's wisdom come from?**
  - o Answer: It came from the Lord. Solomon wasn't born that wise. He became incredibly wise because the Lord chose to bestow it on him.
- **Where did his great riches come from?**
  - o Answer: They also came from the Lord. The Lord willingly chose to bless Solomon with these things.

**THEN**, explain to your students that you're going to skip ahead to chapter 9. While they're turning there, give them a quick summary of what takes place leading up to chapter 9 by saying something like:

- **In the next couple of chapters, we learn that David had never been able to build a proper temple for the Lord during his reign due to all the wars that occupied his resources. Now Solomon, basking in the riches and years of peace that God has given him, declares that he will build a temple fit for the Lord God. He even recalls the prophesy spoken by Nathan to David in 2 Samuel 7:13, that David's son would build this temple. All of this begins to take shape some 480 years after the Israelites are freed from slavery in Egypt. In 1 Kings 6-8 we see extravagant detail of the design and construction of the temple, as well as Solomon's palace. The description of the materials and elaborate furnishing help us to imagine the significance of this building. Upon its completion, we see in 1 Kings 6:11-13 that the word of the Lord comes to Solomon and reiterates the promise that He will dwell with the Israelite nation so long as they remain faithfully obedient to Him. After this, the inner sanctuary, or "Holy of Holies," is prepared to receive The Ark of the Covenant.**

**THEN**, read or have a student read 1 Kings 9:1-9. Ask something like:

- **What two tiny words did you notice in this passage?**
  - o Answer: "If" and "then" were both used in two if/then statements.

**NEXT**, make two columns on a dry erase board. At the top of the first column, write "If" and at the top of the second column, write "Then." Explain to your students that you're going to read verses 1-5 again and fill in these columns. Read 1 Kings 9:1-5 and when you're done, ask the students to list what goes in each column. After they're done, ask something like:

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- **What do you think about this if/then statement? How does it sound to you? Does it seem fair?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**THEN**, do the same thing with verses 6-9. Read 1 Kings 9:6-9 and when you're done, ask the student to list what goes in each column. Ask the same question:

- **What do you think about this if/then statement? How does it sound to you? Does it seem fair?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**NEXT**, say something like:

- **Looking at these charts, you can see that God was very clear in what He expected. The importance of obedience to God is seen in the potential for either elaborate blessings or devastating destruction. For most of his life, Solomon kept the commands of the Lord and his kingdom prospered like no other. His wisdom, wealth and success became so renowned that he even received a visit from the infamous Queen of Sheba. Despite great wealth of her own, the sight of Solomon's wealth actually took her breath away.**

Ask something like:

- **So, where do you think things went from there? Which one of this if/then statements do you think eventually came to fruition?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**THEN**, read or have a student read 1 Kings 11:1. Ask something like:

- **What 'red flag' do you see here in verse one?**
  - o Answer: We see a new object of Solomon's love. He is no longer solely clinging to God and His commands, but his heart has turned toward women of pagan beliefs.

**NEXT**, read or have a student read 1 Kings 11:2-13. Ask something like:

- **Think about those 10 commandments that the Israelites carried around for over 400 years and placed in the center of their temple. Does anyone know the first commandment? How would following this one rule have impacted Solomon's choices?**
  - o Answer: The first commandment is "You shall have no other gods before me." This is why God told them not to marry those who worshipped pagan gods. If Solomon had still loved God with all his heart, he would have seen for himself the problem with loving these women who did not love God.

**THEN**, have students look back at the if/then columns. Ask something like:

- **Can you point out what you see on the chart that resurfaced in this passage?**
  - o Answer: Solomon chose to turn aside from following God and served other gods and worshipped them. Therefore, God declared that He will destroy Solomon's kingdom.
- **Who was to blame for the ensuing destruction?**
  - o Answer: Solomon.
- **Would the destruction had come if Solomon had kept the first set of "ifs" we read about in chapter 9? Why or why not?**

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- o Answer: No, destruction would not have come because it would have gone against the Lord's promise, and the Lord can't and won't go against a promise He made.

Transition to The Thread by saying something like:

- **Even after being blessed beyond his wildest imagination, Solomon let his guard down and turned away from God. God's requirement of absolute obedience is rooted in His desire for our hearts to be wholly His. By following His commands, we show that we place His desires above all others, even our own!**

### The Thread

**FIRST**, Begin The Thread by having students turn to John 14. Read or have a student read John 14:23-24. Ask something like:

- **What does Jesus say the motivation for true obedience is?**
  - o Answer: Love.
- **What's the problem with trying to obey with a motivation other than love?**
  - o Answer: The motivation eventually fades away. We can only obey to try and earn God's love or to keep our parents happy or some other reason for so long. We'll eventually get tired of it and burn out.
- **Why is love different from other motivations?**
  - o Answer: A love for God comes from a heart that's been changed. It doesn't mean we don't make mistakes or disobey, but if our heart is bent towards loving God, we'll want to obey Him and that won't become a never-ending drudgery.

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to examine their own attitudes toward obedience and what their motivations are.
- **Set-Up:** A dry erase board.

**FIRST**, tell your students that we are going to make a chart similar to those we made for God's covenant with Solomon, only this time it will be more personal. Erase everything on the board except the "If" and "Then" at the top.

**THEN**, have the students look back to John 14. Read or have a student read verse 23. Ask something like:

- **Let's fill in our chart again. What goes in the "If" column? What goes in the "Then" column? Put the answers in the first person.**
  - o Answer: In the "If" column write "I love God" and in the "Then" column write "I will keep his word," "the Father will love me," and "God will make His home with me."

**NEXT**, read or have a student read John 14:24. Ask something like:

- **What goes in the "If" column? What goes in the "Then" column? Put the answers in the first person.**



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- o Answer: In the "If" column write "I don't love God" and in the "Then" column write "I won't obey God."

**THEN**, when you're done writing on the board, ask something like:

- **What are your initial thoughts when you look at it like this?**
  - o Answers will vary. Make sure students understand that this isn't a salvation issue. The Bible makes it clear that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Christ. We're saved by Christ's work on the cross, not by our godly actions. But we can't dismiss the fact that God WANTS us to obey Him.
- **What is your motivation for obeying God? Don't give the answer you think you should give. Give the one that's the real motivation for you.**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **Depending on your motivation for obedience, your attitude towards it will vary a bit. When you think about obeying God, what's your attitude toward it? Is it something you want to do? Or does it sound miserable, boring, hopeless, pointless, etc?**
  - o Answers will vary. Try and keep the conversation going a little bit.
- **So, if you're struggling to obey God or it seems miserable or hopeless to you, what's the solution?**
  - o Answer: The answer is to come to a place where you truly love God.
- **How can we learn to love God more?**
  - o Answer: The best way we can learn to love God more is to spend more time thinking and reflecting on the truth of who He is, and how much He loves us. When we let those truths sink in and wash over us, it moves us to place of loving Him more and more.

**WRAP UP** by saying something like:

- **The passages we've looked at today show us that God wants our hearts. He wants us to follow and obey Him out of our love for Him. We can try and obey Him for a number of other reasons, but it won't be pleasing to Him and it won't last. We'll burn out eventually. The only answer to this issue is to regularly remind ourselves how glorious God is and how deeply He loves us. Let those truths move in your heart each and every day and if you do that, then you'll come to a place where obeying Him won't be miserable, it will be your heart's desire.**

Close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps including thanksgiving for what God has promised followers of Jesus about eternity.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 20 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memo-rizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**



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### We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at **[feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com)**.

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 21: The Divided Kingdom



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** 2 Chronicles 9:29-10:19

**Gospel Focus:** Matthew 11:28-30

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will see that because of sin and pride, God's chosen people created a devastating rift among themselves.
- Students will learn that submitting to Jesus brings freedom not oppression.
- Students will define what it practically looks like to bring their burdens to Jesus, and to live under his "yoke."



### Overview

We're continuing the big-picture story of the Bible this week with another look at the prophets. The prophets were sent by God to warn Israel of what would happen if they continued to turn from Him. See, after Solomon died, Israel was split in two, resulting in a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom, each with their own king. This was not God's vision of how His people would live. And so He sent the prophets to convict them to turn from their rebellious ways. If you could go back to the moment the Israelites entered the Promised Land and could tell them how the future would wind up, there's no way they would feel OK about that. Sin wrecks our lives. The Israelites' sin drove them away from God. That's the beauty of Jesus' offer in Matthew 11. Jesus says that when we are dragged down by sin, and worn out from running from God, we can turn to Him for rest. He promises to take our burdens and lead us toward spiritual freedom.



### Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 21 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 21, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

### 2 Chronicles

**Author:** We don't know for sure who the writer of 1 and 2 Chronicles is. Scholars point toward Ezra who lived in the latter half of fifth century BC. However, some assert that Nehemiah was an author.

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**Time frame:** 1 and 2 Chronicles have traditionally been hard to date. We know they were written after the exile from the Babylonians, around 1000 BC. They were likely written in mid 400 BC.

**Purpose:** In some sense, 1 and 2 Chronicles is a worship manual for the people of Israel returning after the exile. Specifically, they focus on the Southern Kingdom, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. They helped the exiles understand what real worship looked like, while also bringing unity and direction to the people.

### Matthew

**Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.

**Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

**Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about divisions, and the devastating effect that they have on a group of people.
- **Set-Up:** You're going to divide your students into two teams. Your students will have a debate about a pointless issue (see examples below). You will then ask your students questions regarding division.

**FIRST**, explain to your students that you are going to show them the harmful power of division in a group. Begin by dividing your students into two groups. (You may want students to number off 1, 2, 1, 2, etc.) Once students are in groups, explain that today you will be having a debate (but don't tell them that it is a pointless topic). Some possible examples might include:

- **The best color is "red" vs. the best color is "green."**
- **Cats are better than dogs vs. dogs are better than cats.**

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- **Sports team A is better than sports team B vs. sports team B is better than sports team A.**
- **Or create your own vs. scenario.**

(Note: Pick a topic that students will have fun with and that feelings will not be hurt in the discussion. Avoid a controversial news, local, or political issue.) Explain to students that regardless of their actual opinion, they must argue their side as if they 100% believed in it.

**THEN**, let one side share their point of view, and then allow the other side to respond to the first viewpoint. If you'd like, allow a round of counter arguments.

**NEXT**, lead students a brief discussion about the difficulties of division within a group. Ask something like:

- **What did you do to make your position sound better?**
  - o Possible Answer: We tried to make the other team look bad so that their position would look wrong, and they would look dumb.
- **What does a division in a group do for relationships in that group?**
  - o Possible Answers: It hurts the group. It causes the group to come up with reasons in their mind that the other group is bad or wrong.
- **What are some dumb things (like we discussed in our debate) that people are divided over?**
  - o Possible Answers: Sports teams, schools, music, peer groups, etc.

**FINALLY**, explain to students that in this lesson, they are going to see a story of how the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms, and how one ruler's bad decision led to that division. Through this lesson, students will see that because of sin and pride, God's chosen people created a devastating rift among themselves.

Transition to The Story.

## The Story

- **Goal:** To see that because of sin and pride, God's chosen people created a rift among themselves.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app.

**FIRST** explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at the beginnings of the divided kingdom of Israel. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **This is a time in the history of the people of God that comes at the end of Solomon's reign.**
- **Solomon was the son of King David, who followed the Lord and though David sinned, he continually sought God.**
- **King Solomon had been a good king who followed the Lord, and God's people had lived at a time of peace, prosperity, and growth under his reign.**



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- **Near the end of his kingship, Solomon turned from God. Israel fell away from God as a result, preparing the way for the division to come.**

**NEXT**, have your students turn in their Bibles to 2 Chronicles, and ask a student to read 2 Chronicles 9:29-31. Explain that when leadership changes, people can go into a time of unrest. Many questions can run through people's minds regarding the new leadership, and how the new leadership's decisions are going to effect their own lives. Explain that this was the mindset of the people of Israel. Ask the students the following questions:

- **Have you been in a situation when the leadership over you was changing? What was that situation?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **What were some concerns and/or fears that you had when the new leader was coming in?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **How would you feel if the new leader was a bad leader and your fears became a reality?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**THEN**, explain that Rehoboam, Solomon's son, became the new king. As soon as Rehoboam became king, the people began to ask questions about his approach to leadership and its effect on their lives.

Have a student read 2 Chronicles 10:1-5. Explain that Jeroboam was a leader during King Solomon's reign who had obviously had problems with Solomon and his leadership style. These leadership issues had caused Jeroboam to flee to Egypt. As he heard that Solomon had died, and that there was a new king in town, he came back to Israel. Say something like:

- **In the passage, it is clear that Jeroboam has influence among the people of God, and served as their spokesman to the new king. The request of the people, from the mouth of Jeroboam, is that Rehoboam will lighten the workload, i.e. the "yoke," from that of his father. Explain that the word "yoke" is one that we normally don't use. It comes from the word that describes the device that was used to connect two cows or oxen side by side together at the shoulder. The people felt oppressed, overworked, and underappreciated under Solomon's rule. Now, Rehoboam had an opportunity to determine what he was going to do and how he was going to lead. If you were Rehoboam, how would you respond?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**NEXT**, explain to your students that you will now explore the advice that Rehoboam gathered regarding his approach to leadership. Ask a student to read 2 Chronicles 10:6-11. Have someone summarize what you just read. Then, explain that Rehoboam did a wise thing in asking for wisdom from others. He sought older people and friends for advice. Ask your students the following questions about seeking wisdom from others:

- **What are some situations that you will face, or are facing, where you could use the wisdom of others?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **What are the types of people that you will go to for this advice?**
  - o Possible Answers: Parents, teachers, coaches, friends, youth pastors, small group leaders, etc.
- **If you were Rehoboam, which group (older people or friends) would you have listened to? Why?**
  - o Answers will vary.

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**THEN**, have a student read the verdict of Rehoboam's decision in 2 Chronicles 10:12-14. Ask:

- **What would you say about how Rehoboam views the power he's been given?**
  - o Answer: Rehoboam allows his sin and pride to cause him to choose to be hard on the people, and to use his power for his own good and not the good of God's people.
- **Describe the "yoke" that Rehoboam presents to the people. Good? Bad? Hard? Easy?**
  - o Answers will vary. This question will come back up in a moment.
- **What was the impact of Rehoboam's decision?**
  - o Answer: Like many decisions, Rehoboam's decision did not just affect him. His decision to choose pride and sin over the well-being of those who God had appointed him to lead and rule was the final straw leading to the division in the kingdom of Israel.

**NEXT**, have a student continue the story by reading 2 Chronicles 10:12-19. Ask:

- **What was the ultimate result of Rehoboam's decision?**
  - o Answer: The people revolted. Rehoboam tried to enforce his yoke of oppression, yet his taskmaster was killed, and he was forced to flee to Jerusalem.

Explain to students that Rehoboam's decision to oppress the people was the catalyst event to God's people dividing into two kingdoms. Rehoboam would go on to lead the southern kingdom, Judah, which consisted of two of the tribes of Israel. Jeroboam would lead Israel, the northern kingdom, which was the other 10 tribes. Say something like:

- **The continuing story of the divided kingdom is one filled with many negatives. Throughout the next several hundred years, a few of the kings of Israel and Judah chose to be faithful to follow God, but most of the kings did not follow God. The bad kings would lead the people of God away from Him, causing God to send prophets to warn them of God's coming judgment. This cycle repeated itself over and over, until finally God sent pagan nations to judge His people. Israel was ultimately taken into captivity by the Assyrians, and Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Rehoboam's bad decision led to division, which put God's people into a cycle of unfaithfulness ultimately leading to their destruction as a nation. The story of a divided kingdom is not a pretty one, yet it leaves God's people in a place needing a Redeemer to come and rescue them from oppression and restore them to a right relationship with God.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and discover where you see an echo of the Gospel running through the story of Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, instruct students to turn to Matthew 11. Explain that in today's lesson, you've seen how Rehoboam's heavy yoke led God's people to reject his rule, and a division to happen between Israel and Judah. Say something like:

- **A heavy yoke is something that no person wants to bear. Many times people put yokes and burdens on each other to make their lives more difficult. We as humans can be harsh, mean, and sinful. So often people who have power and authority use that authority to hurt other people. What are some examples of modern day yokes that people could experience?**

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- o Answers will vary.
- **What are some examples of people abusing their authority?**
  - o Answers will vary.

Explain that when it comes to Jesus, He offers us a yoke, but it is very different than the yoke of Rehoboam, or the yokes of leaders who choose to abuse their authority and hurt people in the process.

**THEN**, have a student read what Jesus says about His yoke in Matthew 11:28-30. Ask your students the following questions:

- **How is Jesus' yoke different from Rehoboam's yoke?**
  - o Possible Answers: Jesus' yoke is easy, while Rehoboam's was hard. Jesus' yoke is light, while Rehoboam's yoke was heavy.
- **What does Jesus' yoke promise us that Rehoboam's yoke would never promise?**
  - o Answer: Rest. Peace and rest.

**FINALLY**, explain that Jesus offers rest. Say:

- **Jesus' yoke is one of grace and love, rather than hardness and oppression. Jesus has come to set people free. As we follow Jesus, He leads us to rest and true life. Jesus is the ultimate leader, yet unlike Rehoboam, He leads His children to rest. He leads His children to peace. He leads His children to experience their greatest good in His great plan for them.**

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the Wrapping Up section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To define what it practically looks like to bring their burdens to Jesus, and to live under his "yoke."
- **Set-Up:** None

**FIRST**, explain to students that we have yokes in our day too. Our yokes are probably not slavery, or physical oppression, but if we are honest, we all have things that weigh heavy on our hearts and in our minds.

**NEXT**, ask your students to close their eyes and to imagine the things in their lives that could be considered a yoke. Say something like:

- **Imagine these things as weights on your back. Now, imagine Jesus coming to them. Jesus looks each of us in the eyes and says "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Can you imagine Jesus taking the weights off of your shoulders? Can you imagine the peace and rest that happens when Jesus takes the burden of your sin and worries from you?**

**THEN**, explain that this image that the students imagined is what happened for us at the cross. Jesus took our sins, burdens, and struggles from us. He put them on His own shoulders and died for the cost of them on the cross. Say:

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- **We can now live lives of freedom. The chains have been broken. The burdens have been lifted. And the same Jesus who lifted our burdens is the one who walks with us as our guide and friend. The Christian life is simply walking in Jesus' yoke until He leads us home to heaven with Him.**

**FINALLY**, close the Bible study in a time of prayer that God would give each of your students the faith to give their burdens to Jesus and to live under His yoke, walking faithfully with Him.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 21 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memo-rizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

### We Want To Hear From You . . .

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# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Jeremiah 2:1-13; 16:10-13; 31:31-34

**Gospel Focus:** 2 Peter 3:8-10

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand the role the prophets played in the history of God's people.
- Students will see how God demonstrates His great love in His patience with humankind.
- Students will embrace their role in sharing the news of the Gospel with those who most need it.



### Overview

As you attempt to tell the big-picture story of Scripture in a year, you'll inevitably have to leave out some details and condense others. This is one of those moments where we're going to fast-forward over an important aspect of Israel's history: namely, the role of the prophets. There's simply no way to cover the entire amazing ministry the prophets undertook. But you're going to get the chance to teach your students all about Jeremiah, and how his message to the Israelites was representative of the ministry of the prophets in general. Your students will also understand how they are called to be kind of like the prophets in their own way, telling the world about the good news of the Gospel.



### Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 22 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 22, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### Jeremiah

**Author:** Though there has been some disagreement over the years, there is no compelling reason to doubt that the Prophet Jeremiah is the author is indeed the author of the book that shares his name. He was accompanied by his scribe, Baruch.

**Time frame:** Best estimates have the book completed sometime around 550 BC.

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

**Purpose:** Jeremiah and Baruch wrote the book to capture the turmoil that faced them and to cast a vision for the hopeful future God had in store for Israel.

### 2 Peter

**Author:** 2 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.

**Time frame:** 2 Peter was likely written between 64-67 AD, shortly before Peter was martyred.

**Purpose:** 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero, similar to 1 Peter. 2 Peter deals with some of the same themes, though focuses a great deal on grace in the face of persecution.



## Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** Students will be introduced to the role the prophets played in the history of God's people.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need something for students to write on and with. You'll need to be prepared to divide students up into small groups. And you may want to bring a prize of some sort for the team that wins.

**FIRST**, distribute to your group whatever you have provided for students to write with. Then, split your group into smaller groups, into pairs, or into individuals--whichever works best! Explain that you are about to play a little Bible trivia game. If you have a prize, like candy or a Starbucks card, show it to your group.

**THEN**, say something like:

- **Who has ever heard of the prophets in the Bible? This week, as we continue our big-picture look at the story of the Bible, we're going to talk about the prophets of Israel. However, there are a ton of prophets ministering in the Bible, way too many to discuss in this lesson. (Scholars point out that there were over 50 different prophets mentioned in the Old Testament. ) In fact, there are 17 Old Testament books in the Bible that are considered "prophetic" books. Without looking at your Bible or your Bible apps, work together to identify all 17 books. The first one to all 17 wins!**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

If your students are having difficulties remembering, after a few moments, allow them to open their Bibles. The interaction is the most important part, so don't worry if they don't know them all from memory.

**NEXT**, award the winning team with their prize, and affirm all of the students for working together to accomplish the task. Then, talk a little bit about what a prophet is. Ask:

- **What do you remember about the Old Testament prophets? What was their purpose?**
  - o Answer: They were God's chosen messengers, sharing God's words with the people.
- **Can you remember any specific stories involving prophets?**
  - o Don't worry if students can't, though you may want to mention a few yourself.
- **Just off the top of your head, if someone said they were speaking a message from God, how would you respond, and why would you respond that way?**
  - o Again, you're not really looking for specific answers here. Just wanting to get students thinking about prophets and their message.

**FINALLY**, transition to the Bible study portion of the lesson by saying something similar to the following:

- **Today, we're going to look at the words God spoke through Jeremiah as a sort of representative example of the ministry of prophets in general. What we're going to see is a pattern in how God spoke through His prophets. We'll see how God spoke a message of hope through His prophets, and how that hope was fully realized in Jesus.**

Transition to The Story.

## The Story

- **Goal:** To understand the role the prophets played in the history of God's people.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

**FIRST** if you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Remind students where they are in the story of the Bible. David had come and gone as King of Israel.**
- **Solomon, David's son, was a good king for most of his rule. But he turned away from God, leading Israel to do the same.**
- **God's people experienced a major division once Solomon died. Israel split in two, with a northern kingdom called Israel, and a southern kingdom called Judah.**
- **The prophets were sent by God to warn the people to stop their divisive ways and to turn back to God.**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

**THEN**, explain to your students that you are going to look at three different parts of Jeremiah's message. Have students turn to Jeremiah 2. While they are finding it in their Bibles or Bible apps, provide some of the context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read Jeremiah 2:1-13. When he or she has finished, lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **Look at verses 1-3. Describe what's happening here. What is the tone of these verses?**
  - o Answer: God is remembering the time when Israel was faithful. He was recalling how His hand was on them because they were faithful. It is a peaceful, loving, reminiscent tone.
- **Verse 4 provides a sort of break. Describe what happens in verses 5-8. How is the tone different?**
  - o Answer: God wants to know why the people turned away. In a sense, He's accusing them of worshipping other gods and forgetting His faithfulness to them. The tone is maybe anger, or frustration, even a little hurt or disappointment.
- **Focus on verses 9-13. Yikes! What does this sound like to you? In other words, if you were the Israelites, what would you consider this message?**
  - o Answer: It is a warning! When God says that He will "contend" with Israel, it means that His judgment is coming.

Explain to students that verse 5 kind of sums up the Lord's issue with Israel. Israel had turned their back on God. And God sent the prophets to warn the Israelites. Say something like:

- **For hundreds of years, yes hundreds, the prophets gave this kind of message to the Israelites. They operated in both the northern and southern kingdoms sharing God's message of disappointment and frustration. God made it clear that He saw Israel's betrayal and was angered and hurt by it. This kind of message repeated itself over and over again, but it wasn't the only message.**

**NEXT**, have students turn to Jeremiah 16:10-13. Explain that this is the second type of message the prophets would give. Read or have a student read, and then engage in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Describe what's happening in verse 10? What are the people saying?**
  - o Answer: This is a picture of the people protesting when God does indeed allow His judgment to come upon them. They are basically going, "What did we do to deserve this?"
- **Considering what we just discussed, why is this kind of funny that the people would respond this way?**
  - o Answer: They knew they had turned from God. The prophets spent hundreds of years telling the people this type of warning. And yet they didn't listen.
- **In verses 11-12, God gives the reason why His judgment is finally coming. What is the ultimate prediction that occurs in verse 13?**
  - o Answer: God would eventually allow Israel and Judah to be overrun by other countries. In fact, you'll read about this in your next lesson.

Again, explain that numerous prophets, in both the northern and southern kingdoms, gave this kind of message for hundreds of years. God was extremely CLEAR and extremely PATIENT with His people. Say:

- **He told them what was coming, and then God gave them hundreds of years to change their ways. They didn't. And they experienced the judgment God told them would come. But God being God, He couldn't leave it at that. Let's look at one last kind of message the prophets gave the people.**

**THEN**, read or have a student read Jeremiah 31:31-34. Ask:



# The Thread

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

- **Whoah! What is happening here? Someone summarize what kind of message this is?**
  - o Answer: It's a message of hope! It's a promise that God would continue to love and care for His people.
- **What makes this message so unique?**
  - o Answer: It came in the midst of God's warning and pronouncement of judgment.
- **When most people give you a warning, and then punish you, do they take the time to promise you all the good things they will continue to do for you?**
  - o Answer: Um, no.
- **What does this say about God and His character?**
  - o Answer: God is eternally, perfectly faithful. God was showing that He would keep the covenant He made with His people that started with Abraham. He would remain faithful and loving even though His people had not.

Say something like:

- **Over and over again, God warned His people of coming judgment for their unfaithfulness. And God kept His word. He did allow His people to be judged in the form of invading armies. But over and over again, God spoke through His prophets to predict the hope that was coming. He promised to be faithful to His own nature: evil must be punished, but God will always work for restoration and redemption. Let's take a quick look at how we see this message playing out in the form of the Gospel.**

### The Thread

**FIRST**, read or have a student read 2 Peter 3:8-10. When you've finished, ask students if they can point out the parallel between the patience God showed Israel/Judah and the patience He shows the world today. Ask:

- **What is the parallel? How do you see God working with us today in a similar way in which He worked with Israel?**
  - o Answer: The key is, of course, understanding God's patience. God spent hundreds of years giving His people warnings through the prophets. He wanted them to turn back to Him! God is doing the same thing today. He is patiently awaiting returning so that more people can come to saving faith in Him.
- **Today we see the world falling apart around us. We may ask, Where is God? Why is He waiting? Why hasn't He returned? Peter gives the reason here. What it is?**
  - o Answer: Because He is patient! He is loving. He wants as many as will come to Him to come.
- **We saw both judgment and hope in Jeremiah's words. Where do you see both judgment and hope in Peter's words?**
  - o Answer: There will be redemption and salvation. God is waiting so more people have the chance to come to saving faith in Him. There is hope in this, and love, and grace. But there is also a judgment coming, a final one. And like the Israelites, God will allow those who turned from Him to be judged. And this time it will be final.

**FINALLY**, explain that we should be motivated by God's great love and patience. We should be compelled to go out

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

and share the Gospel with others in hopes that they come to faith in Him.

If there are no questions or comments, transition into the Wrapping Up section to talk about how your students apply these truths in their lives.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To challenge students to embrace their role in sharing the news of the Gospel with those who most need it.
- **Set-Up:** You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some of your students' responses.

**FIRST**, remind students that God has an enormous heart for the world and wants all people, everywhere to be invited into His family. Explain that part of God being patient and waiting on people to come to faith in Him is so that we can have the opportunity to tell the world about Him. Say something like:

- **All of us are called to share the Gospel with the world. You are called to make an immediate impact in your schools and communities. So let's take seriously this invitation to partner with God to bring the love and grace of Jesus to your specific context.**

**NEXT**, ask your students to picture the people they interact with on a daily basis. Some of these are good friends. Some are acquaintances. But all of them are impacted by your students' day-to-day interactions with them. These are the people that they have the most influence on, and might actually be the very people who need to be invited into God's family.

Ask, as they picture these people, if any of them don't yet know Jesus. Explain that these people might not be in their circle of friends, but God has given them a heart for them, and an opportunity to reach them for Christ.

**THEN**, tell them that the task of sharing the Gospel is something that they do not do alone. It is something that they partner with the Holy Spirit in. Explain that part of how we connect to that power, wisdom, and discernment is through prayer.

Tell students that the way you are going to conclude your time together is in praying to God. Say something like:

- **Sharing the Gospel in our words in our actions isn't always easy. And so, I want to pray for us very specifically here. I want to ask God for wisdom and discernment in how to go about sharing the Gospel with your friends; for opportunities to have spiritual conversations with them; and for your own walks with Jesus, that you would continue to become more and more like Jesus, more and more like disciples, so that you too would be able to make disciples of others.**

Depending on your group and group dynamics, students should spend the remainder of their time in prayer for their friends and for the things on this list. This can be one alone, in pairs, in small groups. You know your group and you know the best way to proceed.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 22: The Prophets

**FINALLY**, after everyone is done with prayer, close your time by challenging them to be bold in sharing their faith. God is coming back one day. And there are people who will be separated from Him unless they come to faith in Him. Challenge them to play their part in leading people to Christ.

- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 22 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
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# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 23: The Destruction of Israel and Judah



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** 2 Kings 17:1-6; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21

**Gospel Focus:** Romans 5:6-11

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that Israel and Judah were finally punished for their rebellion.
- Students will grasp the fact that, through Jesus' death on the cross, we escape the punishment we rightfully deserve for our sins.
- Students will articulate what the right response is when faced with the truth that Jesus has saved them from God's righteous wrath.



### Overview

This week marks a major event in your weekly look at the big-picture story of the Bible. Israel prospered under the leadership of kings Saul, David, and Solomon. For over 100 years the people were united. But then after the death of Solomon, things started falling apart. A divided kingdom, evil kings, and people disobedient to God all led to destruction for both kingdoms. God's wrath was slow to come, but the sin of His people could no longer be ignored. His punishment would continue to be poured out all the way to the Jews being ruled by the Romans. But a long-promised Savior would bring salvation from God's wrath forever.



### Teacher Prep Video

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### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### 1 & 2 Kings

**Author:** Ancient Jewish history has Jeremiah as the author of 1 Kings and 2 Kings. However, this view has never been widely supported by scholars. It's best to view the books as a collection of writings with no known author.



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 23: The Destruction of Israel and Judah

**Time frame:** 1 Kings and 2 Kings are extremely difficult to date because it's a collection of writings that could have been written and edited in stages.

**Purpose:** 1 Kings and 2 Kings tell the stories of the kings of Israel. These books speak of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of kings and the impact that a godly leader can have on God's people.

### 1 & 2 Chronicles

**Author:** We don't know for sure who the writer of 1 and 2 Chronicles is. Scholars point toward Ezra who lived in the latter half of fifth century BC. However, some assert that Nehemiah was an author.

**Time frame:** 1 and 2 Chronicles has traditionally been hard to date. We know it was written after the exile from the Babylonians, around 1000 BC. It's likely written in mid 400 BC.

**Purpose:** In some sense 1 and 2 Chronicles is a worship manual for the people of Israel returning after the exile. Specifically it focuses on the Southern Kingdom, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. It helped the exiles understand what real worship looked like, while also bringing unity and direction to the people.

### Romans

**Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.

**Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.

**Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.



## Lesson Plan

### The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today?"

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 23: The Destruction of Israel and Judah

### Getting Started

- **Goal:** To help your students start thinking about the concept of punishment for wrong doings.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

**FIRST**, begin by explaining to your students that we all know there are laws we are expected to follow. In the United States, different cities and states have different laws from other ones. Also, different countries all over the world have different laws from each other. Some laws make total sense. And then there are some head-scratchers. Read the following list of laws and ask the students to think about which ones make sense, and which ones seem a little out there.

- **Feeding birds in Trafalgar Square in London can result in a \$1,000 fine.**
- **In Indiana you can face 6 months to three years in jail for stealing something as inexpensive as a hot dog.**
- **You can be sentenced to life in prison in America for attempting to cause an explosion, endangering the safety of airline or train passengers, and hijacking a ship, as well as murder, armed robbery, and kidnapping.**
- **In Singapore vandalism can cost you 8 strokes with a cane, which often leaves permanent scars.**
- **A woman can be arrested in Saudi Arabia for driving a car without her husband's permission. A man caught stealing can have his hand cut off.**
- **In Cuba a farmer that slaughters his cattle without government permission can spend 4-10 years in jail.**

**THEN**, ask something like:

- **Did any of those seem a little weird to you? Which ones?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **Did some of them make sense? Which ones?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**FINALLY**, explain to your students that we're going to be talking a lot about punishment in this this lesson. Say something like:

- **We live in a world of laws. While some of those laws may seem ridiculous, breaking them will result in some type of punishment. In today's lesson we will see the ultimate punishment unleashed: the wrath of God. We'll also learn about what's been done on our behalf so we don't have to experience that ultimate punishment.**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** For students to understand that Israel and Judah were finally punished for their rebellion..
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

**FIRST** explain today's lesson is a continuation of what they learned last couple of weeks about the Prophets and the divided kingdoms of Israel. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below for review and/or to fill in the gaps between the last lesson and this one.

#### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 23: The Destruction of Israel and Judah

surrounding the passage.

- **Even before Solomon died there were jealousies and issues between the twelve tribes of Israel. Some of the issues were because of the forced labor imposed by Solomon.**
- **After the death of Solomon it took approximately 209 years for Israel to fall, and then 136 years later Judah was captured.**
- **Both kingdoms were ruled by a succession of kings who mostly did evil in the sight of the Lord. The evil usually took the form of worshipping false gods, and not leading the people to acknowledge the true God.**

**THEN**, ask the students to find 2 Kings Chapter 17 in their Bibles or devices. You can use the Bible Background to give your students a better understanding of the book. Take a few moments to help the students get a picture in their minds about what was happening historically during the times of today's lesson. Remind them that after Solomon died, the country split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Tell them this first passage deals with what was going on in the northern kingdom of Israel.

Read or have a student read 2 Kings 17:1-6. Ask the students something like:

- **Why was King Hoshea put in prison?**
  - o Answer: Assyria had already defeated Israel, and Hoshea had to pay an annual tribute or tax to them. To get free from this, Hoshea conspired with the king of Egypt. The Assyrian king found out and put King Hoshea in prison.
- **What happened to the northern Kingdom of Israel?**
  - o Answer: After three years of Assyrian attack, the country fell and the people were exiled to Assyria. Some of the people were allowed to stay in Israel for political reasons and some fled to Judah.

Explain that it took almost 200 years after the death of Solomon for the kingdom of Israel to fall. Let them know that of the 19 kings that followed Solomon, none of them did what was good in the sight of the Lord. Also, explain that later in 2 Kings 17, God poured out His wrath on Israel by allowing Assyria to capture them because they worshipped other gods, built shrines for themselves, took on the practices of the pagans, didn't listen to prophets sent by God, and rejecting God's laws and commands.

**THEN**, ask the students to turn to 2 Chronicles 36. While they're turning there, explain to them that you're going to see if the story was any different in the southern kingdom of Judah. Tell them that this took place around 135 years after the fall of Israel. Read or have a student read verses 2 Chronicles 36:11-13. Ask something like:

- **How was King Zedekiah described?**
  - o Answer: He did evil in the sight of God, would not listen to prophets God sent, and refused to turn to God.
- **Do these things sound familiar? What do they remind you of?**
  - o Answer: They remind us of what happened to Israel. Help the students grasp the fact that the people of Judah learned nothing from the fall of Israel because the pattern of disobeying God continued.

**NEXT**, explain to the students that the southern kingdom of Judah had 20 kings after Solomon, and only eight of them actually did what was good in the sight of the Lord. Read or have a student read 2 Chronicles 36:14-16. Ask something like:

- **What do you think when you hear this passage read? What goes through your mind?**
  - o Answers will vary. Most of probably cringe a little bit when we hear passages like this, and wonder how

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 23: The Destruction of Israel and Judah

the people could have been so hardened.

- **What was said about the Lord and His response that jumped out to you?**

- o Answers will vary. It distinctly said that in the midst of all of this, the Lord still had compassion on them.

- **What pushed the Lord to the point of punishing them?**

- o Answer: He had compassion on them and repeatedly tried to get them to turn back to Him. Their continued refusal to turn to the Lord pushed Him to exercise His wrath.

**THEN**, read or have a student read 2 Chronicles 36:17-21. Ask something like:

- **So, what did Judah's punishment look like? Was it just a small slap on the wrist?**

- o Answer: No, it wasn't a minor punishment at all. It was severe. Many people were killed, the city and temple were ransacked, and survivors were taken into exile to Babylon.

- **What did both kingdoms, Israel and Judah, have in common?**

- o Answer: They both had kings that did evil in the sight of the Lord and led them astray. They both openly turned away from the Lord and followed after other gods.

- **Just so we're clear, what did the rebellion of both kingdoms lead to?**

- o Answer: In both cases it led to severe punishment from the Lord.

**FINALLY**, draw this part of the Bible study to a close by helping the students see that the old saying "history repeats itself" certainly applies here. In both the northern and southern kingdoms, the patterns of behavior were identical. The people, the priests, and the kings disobeyed God's laws and commands, worshipped false idols, and refused to listen to the warnings sent by God through prophets. The end result was also the same for both Israel and Judah: Israel was taken captive by Assyria around 740 BC, and Judah was captured by Babylon around 586 BC. Close by saying something like this:

- **God patiently waited for the children of Israel to change their evil ways. God kept His part of His covenant with Abraham. But hundreds of years later, the sin of the people eventually invoked God's wrath, which resulted in destruction, and the removal of the people from their ancestral home. How could this happen? God had been so faithful to deliver them from captivity, and to lead them to the Promised Land. Yet they turned their back on Him. The good news, however, is that God didn't leave His people to suffer the ultimate punishment they truly deserved.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread to see where we notice the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

## The Thread

**FIRST**, ask the students to turn to the book of Romans. While they are turning to the book remind them that Paul wrote Romans from Corinth around 56-57 AD. You can use the Bible Background section at the beginning of the lesson for more information on the book.



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 23: The Destruction of Israel and Judah

**NEXT**, read or have a student read Romans 5:6-11. Ask something like:

- **How is our situation today different from what the people of Israel and Judah faced?**
  - o Answer: There was no escape for the Hebrew people from God's wrath. They were guilty before God, and had to pay the price for their wickedness. Paul says that we have been saved from God's wrath and judgment permanently because of Jesus' death on the cross.
- **This passage says we were God's enemies. Do you think that sounds a little overboard? Why or why not?**
  - o Answers will vary. Be sure to let the students know that it's not overboard. Even if we never thought of ourselves as God's enemy, the truth is we were in direct opposition to Him, thus we were His enemy.
- **So, what punishment do we deserve apart from Christ?**
  - o Answer: Apart from Christ, we deserve death and eternal separation from God.
- **What do you think the word justified mean is verse 9?**
  - o Answer: It means that, in Christ, we are declared right before God. Because of Christ's death on our behalf, He looks at us as if we never sinned.
- **What does it mean that we're reconciled to God?**
  - o Answers: We've already talked about the fact that we were once enemies of God. That means that there was hostility and division. Now, through Jesus, reconciliation and peace have come to the relationship.
- **So, through Christ, what do we get instead of the punishment we deserve?**
  - o Answer: We experience salvation!

**FINALLY**, if your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to be able to articulate what the right response is when faced with the truth that Jesus has saved them from God's righteous wrath.
- **Set-Up:** A scrap piece of paper and pen for every student.

**BEGIN** by asking something like:

- **At the beginning of the lesson we looked at some different laws from around the world. If you got caught trying to rob someone and got in trouble for it, what would your response be? Now, what if you were fined for feeding birds? What would your response be? Would your responses be similar in both cases?**
  - o Answer: No, our responses probably wouldn't be the same. If we got in trouble for robbing someone, we'd probably know that we were getting a just punishment. If we got in trouble for feeding birds, we would probably think it's a little overboard and ridiculous.
- **What's your response when faced with the truth that we all deserve death and eternal separation from God because of our rebellion from Him? Do you think that's overboard?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **Now, what's your response to the truth that Jesus offers salvation from that punishment? Don't just give the right "church answer." How do you respond to that truth? What's your reaction?**
  - o Answers will vary. Try and get the students to have an honest discussion about this subject. Most of us take this truth for granted. Talk a little bit about why that's the case.

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- **Let's look beyond what our response normally is. How should we respond to it?**

- o Answer: The proper response is one of gratitude, love, adoration, and a desire to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

**THEN**, ask the students to take their piece of paper and write down what they feel like is the right response to the truth that Jesus has saved them from God's wrath. Let them know that they can write it in a sentence or two, or they can make a bullet list of a few words that come to mind. Give them time to write their responses down and say something like:

- **We've all been offered the most gracious gift of all time, the offer of salvation from God's wrath and the promise of eternal life with God. The thing is, most of us get bogged down in all the junk we deal with on a daily basis and we lose sight of this amazing gift. Take this piece of paper and put it in your Bibles or in your wallet or take it home and tape it to a mirror in your room. Just put it somewhere that you'll see it on a regular basis and remind yourself of the right response to God's gracious gift of salvation.**

Close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps including thanksgiving for what God has promised followers of Jesus about eternity.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 23 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memo-rizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

### We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

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# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Daniel 1; Daniel 6

**Gospel Focus:** Colossians 1:11-14

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand what the Exile was, and how God provided for Daniel even in the midst of it.
- Students will understand how perfect, lasting deliverance comes through Christ's death on the cross.
- Students will consider what it means to live in the "Kingdom of the Son" as those who been brought from dark to light.



### Overview

You've more than likely heard the story of Daniel and the lion's den a number of times. It's an amazing story of God miraculously saving Daniel from the mouths of some pretty scary lions. While it's pretty awesome that God chose to save Daniel from the lions, the truth is that He doesn't choose to save everyone from all the scary situations that are out there. So, we have to consider what this story is pointing us toward. As we dig into the truths of this story and look forward to the New Testament, our lesson is going to go beyond God's incredible ability to do things like shut the mouths of lions, and look to His ability to save us from the most important enemy we'll face.



### Teacher Prep Video

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To access your *Thread* lesson 24 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 24, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### Daniel

**Author:** Daniel, a young man that was a part of a noble or royal family, who was exiled from Judah to Babylon.

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Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile

**Time frame:** Scholars who believe Daniel wrote the book date it's writing during the events that occur between the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus (605 BC – 536 BC). However, there are some who believe it must have been written later than that because of its prophecies of events that happened in the second century BC. They believe it was written after the events in the second century actually took place.

**Purpose:** The book of Daniel serves two primary purposes. Chapters 1-6 show us how God's people are to live in the midst of a world that is not concerned with the Lord and His ways. The remainder of the book is full of visions about the end-times. It reassures us that no matter what goes on here on earth, God will prevail and His people will be redeemed.

### Colossians

**Author:** The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.

**Time frame:** Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).

**Purpose:** Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.



## Lesson Plan

### The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today?"

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** For students to begin thinking about the concept of deliverance and what it means to be truly rescued once and for all.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a way to show the following YouTube clip:
  - o <https://youtu.be/3rsvgkyJv5w>
- **You may also want a dry erase board to jot down some answers if possible.**



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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile

**FIRST**, begin by telling students that today you're going to talk a lot about finding yourself in a really rough set of circumstances, and what it means to be truly rescued and delivered from what's surrounding you.

**THEN**, ask students if they've ever found themselves in a dangerous situation where they had to rely on someone else to help get them out. If anyone says they have been in a situation like this, ask them to share what happened.

**NEXT**, once students have had a chance to share, tell them that you're going to watch a short YouTube clip about some people that were rescued at sea. Play the video clip. Then, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **This was a dad and his son (and their friends) whose boat had capsized 12 miles off the coast of one of the Hawaiian islands. What are some of the words you would use to describe the video clip?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **The group was stranded for several hours. What emotions do you think must have been going through the young teens' minds as they were waiting to be rescued?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **When the Coast Guard finally arrived, what do you think the group must have felt like?**
  - o Answers will vary.

**FINALLY**, as you make the transition to The Story, say something like:

- **As we continue our yearlong look at the big-picture story of the Bible, today we're going to read the story of someone who finds himself in a tough set of circumstances that only get scarier. It's the story of Daniel, and he finds himself in a situation where he's in desperate need of rescue. But this story will help point us forward to what we all ultimately need: an eternal rescue.**

Transition to The Story.

## The Story

- **Goal:** That students will understand what the Exile was, and how God provided for Daniel even in the midst of it.
- **Set-Up:** None.

**FIRST** explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at Daniel. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **The prophets had been passionately telling the people that judgment was immanent if they didn't turn back and obey the Lord.**
- **The people persisted in their disobedience, and the judgment the Lord promised came. First, the northern kingdom of Israel was captured by Assyria in the mid 700s BC. The southern kingdom of Judah was captured less than 200 years later, culminating in the burning of the temple in 586 BC.**
- **A significant portion of the Jewish population found themselves exiled to Babylon.**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile

**THEN**, inform the students that you're going to a few verses from Leviticus to provide some more context for the passage and lesson. While they're finding Leviticus, explain to them that these verses from Leviticus tell us that the Lord had made it very plain to Israel that if they disobeyed Him, and did not uphold their end of the covenant, that He would scatter them to other nations.

Read or have a student read Leviticus 26:27-33 and 26:39. Ask something like:

- **What do we know about Israel after they made it to the Promised Land? Did they uphold what the Lord called them to do? Explain your answer and give some examples you remember from some of our previous lessons.**
  - o Answer: No, they didn't obey the Lord. Think back to our lesson from Judges. It was repeatedly said that the people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They gave in to the culture around them, and repeatedly bowed down to other gods. They trusted their own skill and military might rather than trusting the Lord. The kingdom was eventually divided because of pride and selfishness, and more and more idolatry ensued.

**NEXT**, read or have a student read Daniel 1:1-7. Ask something like:

- **So, what do you think is happening in verses 1-2?**
  - o Answer: What is happening in Daniel 1:1-2 is part of the fulfillment of the promise the Lord made to Israel in the Leviticus passage we just read. This is the beginning of the Babylonian exile.
- **After listening to that passage, what was the king up to? What was his goal here?**
  - o Answer: He had them taught a new culture, he changed their diet, and he changed their names. He was stripping them of their identity as God's people, and assimilating them into a pagan culture.
- **What do you think was significant about the name changes?**
  - o Answer: This is another instance of the king assimilating them into pagan culture; he gave them names that identified with pagan gods. What we don't know from a surface reading is that all the new names had meanings associated with pagan gods.

**THEN**, read or have a student read Daniel 1:8-21. Ask:

- **So, what were Daniel and the other three up to? Did they just want to get some good abs for the summer? Or was there a bigger picture they were looking at when it came to what they were going to eat? Explain.**
  - o Answer: Daniel and his friends were looking at the bigger picture of not being completely assimilated into Babylonian culture. Part of the Babylonians' diet included pork, which was prohibited for Israelites to eat. They were attempting to keep themselves distinct and set apart from the Babylonians while they were in exile. They wanted to be identified as people that trusted and followed the Lord.

Explain to the students that you're going to fast-forward a little bit to chapter 6, a very well known story in the book of Daniel. Our look into chapter 1 helped give us some much needed background and context to what happens in this chapter. Read or have a student read Daniel 6:1-9. Ask:

- **At this point Daniel has served the empire for over 50 years. Does it seem like much has changed with Daniel's character? Does it seem like he's given in to the culture around him? Explain.**
  - o Answer: No, it looks like Daniel has remained steady. He's upstanding and wise and has found favor in the eyes of those in charge. No one could find fault with him. He hasn't given into the culture and lives and upright life.

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- **Why do you think some high officials and satraps wanted to find something wrong with Daniel?**

- o Answer: They were jealous of his position.

- **Why did they come up with this plan in verses 6-9? What was their goal?**

- o Answer: They wanted to put Daniel in a miserable situation. They knew he wasn't going to want to pray to King Darius. But they also knew that getting thrown in a lion's den wasn't exactly minor punishment. They wanted Daniel to make a choice. If he bowed down, they could criticize him for not staying true to his beliefs. If he didn't, they could have him killed.

**NEXT**, read or have student read Daniel 6:10-23. Ask:

- **So, did the new law faze Daniel? What happened next?**

- o Answer: Nope, he heard about it and still went to his house and prayed to the Lord in the same way he always had. The authorities that got the king to make the law gathered evidence against Daniel and took it to the king. They informed him that Daniel had been praying to the Lord as usual. The king wasn't happy about this. Not because he was mad at Daniel, but he realized their true motives. He didn't want to punish Daniel, but he couldn't look weak and go back on the law. So he had Daniel thrown in the lion's den.

- **Let's talk about Daniel for a second. What are some key components of his character? What stands out to you about him?**

- o Answer: Answers here will vary, but some noticeable things about Daniel are that he's faithful in the midst of adversity and he's consistent regardless of the circumstances.

- **Consider everything we've studied about Daniel today. Do you think he's more concerned with the eternal or the temporal? Explain?**

- o Answer: He's more concerned with the eternal. Most people look at what's right in front of them and make decisions based on that. In chapters 1 and 6, Daniel was more concerned with faithfulness and obedience to the Lord than he was with what happened to his life.

**THEN**, read or have a student read Daniel 6:25-28. Say something like:

- **King Darius obviously had respect for Daniel before the whole lion's den thing went down. But as he witnessed what happened to Daniel when he was thrown in with the lions, he was given a different perspective. This went beyond Daniel being a good guy and strong leader; he now started to see the power of Daniel's God. He recognized that Daniel's God was the true, living God.**

**THEN**, ask something like:

- **Is this story more about Daniel or about God?**

- o Answer: The story is more about God. There are definitely great human examples all throughout the Bible. But the stories of their faith aren't intended for us to just be impressed with them. They're intended to point us toward their amazing God, the one who delivers and rescues.

- **What if the lions had eaten Daniel? Would that change anything about God? Would it still have been right for Darius to say that God delivers and rescues?**

- o Answer: God would still be the same God if He had allowed Daniel to be eaten by the lions. The reason we can say that is because, while sometimes He does deliver and rescue people from physical harm on earth, His ultimate delivery and rescue is a spiritual one.



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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile

Once you wrap up that discussion point, have the students to turn to Colossians 1:11-14 and let them know that you're going to dig into this idea of ultimate, lasting deliverance a little more.

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and take a look at seeing where we discover the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

### The Thread

**FIRST**, Read or have someone read Colossians 1:11-14. Ask something like:

- **So, what does this passage say that the Father has delivered us from? What did He deliver us to? What does that mean?**

- o Answer: This passage tells us that the Father has delivered us from "the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." This means that He has taken us from our former life of enslavement to sin and death, and moved us into real and eternal life through Jesus.

- **How is this different from the deliverance Daniel experienced in the lion's den?**

- o Answer: No doubt, God rescuing Daniel from the lion's was an amazing miracle. But it only spared Daniel's life here on earth for a period of time. Eventually, he, like everyone else, died. So, while the experience in the lion's den was awesome, it was small potatoes compared with the eternal deliverance that is being talked about in this passage. One was temporary; one is completely perfect and eternal.

- **Do you tend to value temporal deliverance more than eternal deliverance?**

- o Answers here will vary. It's so easy for us to value what is right in front of us, and lose sight of what is really going to last. We can tend to value deliverance from tough situations much more than we value what Christ has done for us. Probe into why the students responses of why they tend to do that.

Once that discussion ends, transition to the Wrapping Up section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to consider what it means to live in the "Kingdom of the Son" as those who been brought from dark to light.
- **Set-Up:** None.

**FIRST** ask the students to think back to the video clip you watched at the beginning of the lesson. Tell them to think about the way they answered what the people probably felt like as they were wondering if they'd be rescued. Say something like:

- **So, think about this for a minute. Let's say one of them got home that day, hugged his wife and kids, got cleaned up, had a great meal, and kicked back in his recliner all safe and cozy in his**



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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile

**house. And then he thought, “You know what, this isn’t that great. I’d rather be lost at sea.” And he got up and made his way back to the middle of the ocean alone with a life jacket and an inflatable raft. What would you think about that?**

o Answer: Well, obviously, we would all think the guy was an idiot. I mean, who would do something so dumb? Who would value sitting in the middle of the ocean ready to drown alone, over being safe and sound in your own house with your family?! That’s just nuts.

- **Isn’t that the same as us being transferred from darkness and into the kingdom of Jesus, but still living like we were never rescued and delivered from death? What’s the difference?**

o Answer: Yes, it is the same. They’re both crazy when you step back and think about it. We’ve been given the greatest gift in the world, yet we take it for granted all the time and run back to things that are awful for us.

- **So, why is deliverance through Jesus greater than rescue from a certain situation?**

o Answer: The deliverance and rescue we experience through trusting Jesus is eternal. We might get saved from a scary, dangerous, or stressful situation. But we’ll experience them again. When we’re delivered from sin through Jesus, it’s done once and for all and seals our eternity with the Lord.

- **What do you think it truly looks like to live as a member of “the Kingdom of the Son” that has been delivered from darkness to life once and for all?**

o Answers here will vary, but there are some things that should be brought up and discussed. Living as a member of the Kingdom means that we have an eternal perspective. This doesn’t mean we don’t care about what God has put in front of us, it just means our perspective is different. We value love, hope, mercy, compassion, and treasuring Jesus more than we value stuff and reputation and status.

- **Spiritual growth is a process. We aren’t going to all be super-mature Christians overnight. But how do we continue to grow in this area and value the things of the Kingdom more and more?**

o Answer: We continue to seek God, follow Him, and learn to treasure Jesus above all else.

**WRAP-UP** by saying something like:

- **We’re using words like Kingdom, treasure, darkness, light, and value. It would be a lot easier to just get a checklist of things to do or not to do. That’s easier than working on our heart’s desires. But there are practical steps to take. We know that God’s Word is living and active. Spending time in it stirs our heart’s love and affection for Him. We know we can communicate with Him through prayer. This helps tune our hearts to His. And we know that the things of this world continually let us down. Remembering what Jesus has done for us, being grateful for that, and reminding ourselves that He is the only thing that can satisfy our souls, helps turn us toward Him and away from darkness.**

Unless the students have any more comments or questions, close your Bible study with a time of prayer.

- **If you’ve purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they’ll be working through Week 24 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memo-**

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Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 24: Daniel In Exile

rizing this week's verse their best shot.

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# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Nehemiah 1; 2:1-10; 2:11-18; 12:27-43

**Gospel Focus:** Revelation 21:1-8

#### Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand why the narrative of Nehemiah repairing the wall is such an important end to the Old Testament's look at the Israelite's story.
- Students will understand that God is moving toward a future where all who have believed in Him will live together, with God, in a new Jerusalem.
- Students will express their thoughts on what they think is the most significant detail of the new creation John refers to in Revelation 21.



### Overview

This week is a turning point in your journey through the big-picture story of the Bible. You'll be close to finishing up the Old Testament part of the story. The Old Testament holds its challenges for modern readers. But when you know the backstory, it makes Jesus' life, death, and resurrection even more awesome. This week you'll look at the story of Nehemiah, and through this story, you'll get a glimpse at what it was like to try and rebuild Jerusalem. Nehemiah and the remnant of God's people were facing a major uphill battle, one with a ton of emotional implications. But, they recognized that this was the Lord's will. And they persevered and finally succeeded. You'll also learn about the New Jerusalem God plans to usher in at the end of all things. It's a very cool connection to make with one of the last chronological stories of the Old Testament.



### Teacher Prep Video

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### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

### Nehemiah

**Author:** Nehemiah is the main character of the Book that shares his name. But he is not the only author. In

# The Thread

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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

fact, Nehemiah was more than likely written by (at least) Nehemiah, Ezra, and the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles.

**Time frame:** Nehemiah, a Jewish exile serving in the courts of the Babylonians, initially arrived in Jerusalem in 445 BC, and came back again sometime between 433 and 423 BC. The Book would have been written during and sometime after these events.

**Purpose:** The Jews were at a historic low-point. They had been conquered and dispersed. The Temple and the city walls had been destroyed. Nehemiah is part of the narrative of the rebuilding of the Temple and the city. It was written as a historic narrative to record the events, but also to encourage the Jews as they struggled to re-discover their national identity at great cost.

### Revelation

**Author:** The writer of Revelation identifies himself as John four times. Scholars agree that it is most likely John the Apostle, son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' most beloved disciples.

**Time frame:** Revelation was written toward the end of John's life somewhere between 90 and 95 AD.

**Purpose:** The purpose of Revelation was to reveal the fullness of Christ's identity and to provide hope for suffering Believers at the time who were encountering grave persecution and suffering. Today it provides us hope of what is to come, as well as a stark warning of the battle that rages until Christ returns.



## Lesson Plan

### The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about how there are problems in our life that don't seem to have solutions, but we really wish we could fix.
- **Set-Up:** Paper and pens for each student.

**FIRST**, start the conversation on a light note by getting students thinking about things they would change. Ask something like:



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## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

- **Think about your room in your house. If you could change one thing about your room, what would it be, and why?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **What about your whole house? If you could change one thing about your house, what would it be and why?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **What about school? What's something you'd change about school?**
  - o Answers will vary.

THEN, guide the conversation to a more serious discussion. Ask something like:

- **What about your life? What's one thing you'd change about your life?**
  - o Answers will vary. Encourage students to be serious with their answer and to write it down on their piece of paper. Try and get them to think about a thing or situation they really struggle with. Getting better at a video game or winning the lottery aren't the type answers we're going for. Let them know that they won't have to show it to anyone. If anyone is willing to share their answer, give him or her time to do so.

**FINALLY**, let your students know that you'll be talking a bit about a time and place in history when a whole city wished one thing was different. Say something like:

- **Today, we're going to hear a story about some people who were pretty desperate for something to be different in their lives, and one man who asked God for help in changing that thing.**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** For students to understand why the narrative of Nehemiah repairing the wall is such an important end to the Old Testament's look at the Israelite's story.
- **Setup:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app.

**FIRST** explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at Nehemiah, a story that happens during a time in history when Israel was no longer an independent nation, let alone a powerful one. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Israel became a divided nation, resulting in two kingdoms, Israel and Judah.**
- **Israel was eventually defeated by Assyria and the Babylonians defeated Judah. Most of the wealthy and influential people were captured and taken into exile.**
- **Several decades later, after the Persians defeated the Babylonian Empire, the exiles from Judah were allowed to return to Jerusalem. Some decided to stay.**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

**BEGIN** by asking the students to think all the way back to Genesis and the promises God made to Abraham. Ask something like:

- **Can anyone remember any of the promises God made to Abraham?**
  - o Answers may vary. There are a few correct answers they can give. See if they remember God's promise to give Abraham's offspring a land to possess (Genesis 15:7). Remind them that this is the Lord's promise of the Promised Land.
- **So, how do you think that promise looked after Israel and Judah were both defeated and left in shambles all while a lot of the people were living in exile? What do you think most people thought about the Lord's promise of His people having a land to possess?**
  - o Answer: Things probably didn't look good on the surface. The people were probably struggling with a lot of doubt. They were scattered all over the place. That didn't look like a land to possess.

**THEN**, explain to the students that this wasn't a minor issue in Nehemiah's opinion. He remembered God's promises and trusted them, but knew he wasn't called to sit back and wait for something to happen. Let the students know that you're going to quickly look at a few passages from Nehemiah to get an overview of the whole book.

Read or have a student read Nehemiah 1. Ask something like:

- **Nehemiah is pretty upset in this chapter. What news does he get that makes him so upset?**
  - o Answer: He finds out that Jerusalem has been destroyed and that the wall around the city has been broken down.
- **Why do you think this is such a big deal to Nehemiah?**
  - o Answer: First, he recognizes that it was the Jews' sin that had brought destruction to Jerusalem. He mourned the fact they had turned their back on God. He also knew that a strong wall was a city's first defense against enemies. With the wall broken down, the people inside were not safe.
- **Nehemiah pleads with God once he hears the bad news. Take a look at verses 8-9. What is Nehemiah asking God to do?**
  - o Answer: Specifically in these two verses, Nehemiah is asking God to remember one of His promises, that even if the people rebelled against God and were exiled, He would restore them if they repented and returned to Him.

**NEXT**, read or have a student read Nehemiah 2:1-10. Ask something like:

- **We know from the last chapter that Nehemiah was hopeful God would use him in some way to help Jerusalem. Do you think Nehemiah had a plan?**
  - o Whether this was part of Nehemiah's plan or not, things worked out pretty well for him. Even though he was very close to the king as the cupbearer, he wasn't generally allowed to freely talk about his own desires or wishes. So, the fact that Artaxerxes starts the conversation to allow Nehemiah to talk about what was going on in Jerusalem is a small miracle in itself.
- **Look back at verse 8. What is Nehemiah's attitude toward the fact that the king was allowing him to rebuild Jerusalem's walls?**
  - o Answer: He was grateful to God and gave him credit.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

- **In verse 10 Nehemiah foreshadows some opposition that he eventually encounters in building the wall. Why do you think Sanballat and Tobiah weren't happy that someone had come to repair the walls of Jerusalem?**

- o Answers will vary, but these men had used the weakness of Jerusalem for their own political and financial advantage.

**THEN**, read or have a student read 2:11-18. Ask something like:

- **Nehemiah doesn't tell the people in Jerusalem at first why he's there. Why do you think he waited?**

- o Answers will vary; likely he knew he would have some opposition to his plan. He also probably wanted to see how much work would be needed before he presented his plan to the city leaders.

- **The people had probably wanted to rebuild the wall before Nehemiah arrived. After all, they were far less safe without a secure wall. Why had they not rebuilt it already?**

- o Answer: The biggest reason would have been a lack of resources, but there also could have been a lack of confidence that they would be able to even pull it off.

- **How do you think they felt when Nehemiah shared his plan and the fact that he had the resources and political power to make it happen?**

- o Answers will vary; they likely felt hopeful for the first time in a long time.

**NEXT**, explain that through some difficulties and opposition from enemies, Nehemiah leads the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. Read or have a student read Nehemiah 12:27-43. Say something like:

- **What is the main theme that you notice in this celebration?**

- o Answer: Thankfulness and joy. Have students think about all that the people in Jerusalem had been through. None of them were alive when Israel was still an independent nation, but their parents and grandparents had passed down stories to them about God's promises to give His people a land and uphold David's kingdom, which was in Jerusalem.

- **What do you think it was like to hear stories but live in a time when Israel was no longer its own nation, and Jerusalem was anything but a royal city?**

- o Answer: They may have lost hope, and they probably wondered whether God had forgotten His promises and His people.

- **With that in mind, what do you think this rebuilt wall meant to the people of Jerusalem?**

- o Answer: From their celebration, we can tell the people had a renewed hope in God and the covenant He made with Israel. They had a renewed understanding of God's promises and what He had called them to do.

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and take a crack at seeing where we see the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

### The Thread

**FIRST**, have your group turn to Revelation 21. While they find it, briefly give your group some background of what they're about to read. Say something like:

- **John, the author of Revelation, was given a glimpse into heaven and eternity, and he recorded his experience in Revelation. A major theme in Revelation is that Jesus is the rightful King of heaven, and much of Revelation points to the fact that His kingship was confirmed through His sacrifice for us on the cross.**

**THEN**, read or have a student read Revelation 21:1-8.

- **So, what did John see in these verses? What is he describing?**
  - o Answer: He's describing heaven. But heaven isn't going to be just floating around on clouds like some people think. What John is describing here is a very real, physical reality. He's talking about what it's going to be like when we dwell with God forever. This is a land promise!
- **What are some characteristics of heaven that John mentions?**
  - o Answer: There will be no death, no tears, no mourning, and no pain. All things will be made new and God will dwell among His people. If you're able, take time to write down the students' answers on a dry erase board.
- **What is the connection between this passage and God's promises to Abraham?**
  - o Answer: God promised His people that they would dwell in a land where He was their God and they were His people. While there were immediate fulfillments of that along the way, this is the ultimate fulfillment of that promise.

Ask:

- **This is going to sound like a totally random question. No, I haven't lost my mind. Hang with me. What is the point of an appetizer at a restaurant? If you're really hungry, is the appetizer usually going to fill you up?**
  - o Answer: The point is to get you ready for the real meal. The appetizer whets the appetite. If it were all you ate, you wouldn't be fulfilled.
- **How did the story of Nehemiah help point forward to the reality of Revelation? How was it a bit of an appetizer for what we read in Revelation 21:1-8?**
  - o Answer: The experience of brokenness and the consequences of sin make us long for something more. The reality that things aren't ok makes us long for the One who can make them ok. The rebuilding of the wall demonstrated God's faithfulness to His people and His promises. It gave a taste of what the ultimate fulfillment of His promises would be like. It didn't totally fulfill God's promises and it didn't totally satisfy His people, but it gave them a taste of what that complete fulfillment would be like.



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to be able to express their thoughts on what they think is the most significant detail of the new creation John refers to in Revelation 21.
- **Set-Up:** None.

**FIRST** lead a discussion about the hope that Revelation 21 talks about. Ask something like:

- **What jumped out to you the most about the Revelation 21 passage we read? Why is that significant to you?**
  - o Answers will vary.

Have them look at the answer they wrote down at the beginning of the lesson and then look at the descriptions of heaven you wrote on the board. Ask something like:

- **Will the answer you wrote down be made right in heaven? If you're willing to share your answer, explain.**
  - o Answers will vary. Help your group connect what they have shared so far about difficulties in life with some of the promises in 21:1-8. Explain to them that all of our brokenness, insecurities, struggles, and sin will be no more. Our pain and suffering will be no more. Our security will be in God. Everything we struggle and suffer with will be made right and we'll be perfectly satisfied in God's presence.
- **What do you long for most, having a problem fixed or being in God's presence? Why is the difference between the two significant?**
  - o Answer: We all have problems we want fixed. There's nothing wrong with that. But if we want them fixed more than we want God, then we have an issue. The problem, or the solution to the problem, has become an idol. The most amazing part of Revelation 21 should be that we are going to dwell with God forever in the land He has ultimately promised us. He's the one that's going to satisfy every longing we've ever had. He's more precious than the earthly solution to any problem we have.

If your students don't have any questions, close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps including thanksgiving for what God has promised followers of Jesus about eternity.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 25 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 25: Nehemiah and Rebuilding

### We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at **[feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com)**.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah



### Session Snapshot

**Narrative Passage:** Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 53:1-6

**Gospel Focus:** 1 Peter 2:21-25

### Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that the Messiah, God's perfect rescue plan for His people, was predicted centuries before Jesus came to earth.
- Students will understand that Jesus was the Messiah, the predicted, once-and-for-all redeemer of all who will believe in Him.
- Students will be challenged by the fact that Jesus paid the price so that they could "live to righteousness," and what this looks like in their lives.



### Overview

As you progress through the big-picture story of the Bible, this is your last lesson in the Old Testament. And it serves as a bridge, of sorts, from the story of the Old Testament to the story of the New Testament. As you've learned this year, all of Scripture points toward Christ and His coming. But the Old Testament prophecies were so much more direct in doing this. There are hundreds and hundreds of prophecies that predicted Jesus' coming. You'll use this lesson in Isaiah as a representative example of the way God predicted the coming of the Messiah. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God spoke through Isaiah to give God's people hope. The same message gives us hope today, as well.



### Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 26 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 26, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

### Isaiah

**Author:** Isaiah, son of Amoz wrote the book of Isaiah.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah

**Time frame:** The events of Isaiah occurred between 740 and 681 B.C., though some parts of the book would have been constructed at a later date.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this book was to call the nation of Judah back to God, to warn of coming judgment, and to tell of God's ultimate salvation through the Messiah.

### 1 Peter

**Author:** 1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.

**Time frame:** 1 Peter was likely written between 54-68 AD.

**Purpose:** 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero. Peter calls the Church to persevere under trials because eternal life awaits them. He encourages them that God's promises to His people will endure and should be the basis of their hope.



## Lesson Plan

**The Lesson Plan contains four elements:**

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

## Getting Started

- **Goal:** To help students understand that Jesus coming as Messiah was not just a "whim" from God, but planned for centuries.
- **Set-Up:** You are going to need to make copies of the lyrics to the Christmas Carol, "Oh Holy Night." Make sure you find a copy with all of the verses, as not every rendition has those. You may decide in addition to find your favorite version and play it for students, but this is not necessary.

**FIRST**, ask something like:

- **It might not be Christmas right now, but we are going to take a few moments and talk about the songs we sing at Christmas time. It might take a moment because we typically only think about these songs once a year, but I would love to know what is your favorite Christmas carol that is about Jesus? (So we aren't looking for Rudolph or Jingle Bells.)**
- **Why is it your favorite?**



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah

**THEN**, ask students if they can imagine how those songs would be different if we were still waiting for the Messiah to arrive. Explain that the birth of Jesus was talked about hundreds of years before He ever came to earth. People were hoping that He would come. And then He did! And it was awesome. Explain that this sentiment was captured in the Christmas song, "Oh Holy Night." Distribute the lyrics and take a few minutes to look at the words. Ask students what stands out from the lyrics of this song.

**NEXT**, explain that you're going to look at these lyrics through a different set of eyes. Say something like:

- **We've all had someone make us a promise. Some promises take longer to keep than others. It's one thing if a parent promises to take you for fast food for dinner, and entirely another if they want to take you on an expensive vacation. The people of Israel had people who were born and died waiting for the Messiah to come. Put yourself in the shoes of one of the people of Israel who had been told a Messiah was coming. Maybe they had heard it from their parents, and their grandparents, and now were telling their children that He is coming . . . Just wait! What would it be like if He never came?**

**THEN**, work together to look at the lyrics of "Oh Holy Night" as if Jesus hadn't come yet, but you were waiting for Him. How would the song be sung if you were still waiting for Jesus? What would be different if He still had not been born? Have fun with this and let it go as long as it's productive.

**FINALLY**, say something like:

- **As we continue our look at the big-picture story of the Bible, this is our last week to study the Old Testament. As I mentioned, prophecies and predictions had been made for literally hundreds of years waiting for a Messiah to arrive. God did a very cool thing and gave His people messages about what this Messiah would look like. You remember we talked about the prophets a few weeks ago. Isaiah was one of those, and his words about the coming Messiah are among the most well known. Now that we have looked at what it might have felt like to be waiting for Christ to come, let's look at some of the predictions that were made.**

Transition to The Story.

### The Story

- **Goal:** Students will understand that the Messiah, God's perfect rescue plan for His people, was predicted centuries before Jesus came to earth.
- **Setup:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

**FIRST** remind students of who the prophets were and why they were special. While there were a lot of prophecies about the Messiah, we will be focusing on one this week. In these two passages we will look at both the hope of who was to come, and also the reality of what it would take to atone for our sin and redeem our relationship with God.

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah

### Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Last week you looked at Nehemiah and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Isaiah was prophesying well before the events of Nehemiah. Remind students that this lesson serves as a bridge between how you will study the Old Testament and the New Testament.**
- **You may want to give a refresher to students about who the prophets were and why they were special. Isaiah was not the last prophet, but was perhaps Israel's most significant one.**
- **There were hundreds of predictions about the coming Messiah. Some of them were more than 700 years before Jesus ever came to earth.**

**THEN**, start by having students turn to Isaiah 9:6-7. While they're finding it, provide some of the basic background for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read this passage. Say something like:

- **What are your first thoughts in reading these two verses?**
  - o Answers will vary. Help students see that Isaiah was a prophet who had many things to say about who the Savior would be, and how to find Him when He would arrive here on earth. This is a passage of hope. Again, let's remember we are reading this looking backward. We know who Jesus was, how He came, and what He did. We have the completed action to rely on. When Isaiah said these words, the people were looking forward to what would come.
- **If you were hearing for the first time that a baby was coming, and the "government would rest on His shoulders," what would you think?**
  - o Answers will vary. This is a hard passage to understand and often why the Israelites misunderstood what Christ's purpose was in coming. This was a passage of hope meant for us to see that the Messiah would carry the world on His shoulders. Yet, many interpreted this that the Israelites would no longer have to endure rule from an outside nation.
- **Take a look at all of the words used to describe the coming Messiah. What do they make you think?**
  - o Answers will vary. You may want to make a list of all the descriptions used. They are in both verses, not just the obvious list in verse 6. Have students take a few moments and discuss how all of these words still describe Jesus today.

**NEXT**, read or have a student read Isaiah 53:1-6. Then, ask something like:

- **Looking at verse 2, what does it say Jesus will "look like?"**
  - o Answer: We know that He will always belong to the Lord, and that actually nothing out of the ordinary in His looks will draw us to Him. This is opposite of often how Jesus is portrayed in movies with blown dried hair and chiseled features. Help students understand that Jesus was fully God, but fully human. In His appearance, he really was just one of us. It was WHO He was that would draw people to Him, not His appearance.
- **Focus on verses 3-6. What are these verses describing?**
  - o Answer: This well known passage is describing the crucifixion that Jesus would take on for our sin. Focus on words like "crushed" and "pierced."
- **Why does it say God would do this?**

# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah

- o Answer: This passage discusses our weakness, rebellion, and ultimately sin. The people would think it is His own fault this is happening, but instead it would be because of us and our sin.
- **Again remember this passage was written for people who were hearing it for the first time. How would you feel if you heard this?**
  - o Answers will vary. People might be confused. It felt like a huge contrast to the passage in Isaiah 9. Why would someone whom people despise choose to carry all of our sin and be beaten for our sake? What could this really mean?
- **Think about both of the passages you just read. How are these both a picture of hope?**
  - o Answers will vary. Point out both show us the character of a loving God. Jesus would leave His home at the right hand of God for our sake. His greatest desire was to return people back into right relationship with Himself. These passages show a wonderful King who would do anything, even becoming an atoning sacrifice, to draw us back to Him.

Transition to the Thread by saying something like:

- **Can you imagine hearing about this coming Messiah? It all sounds so overwhelming. These passages show the depth that God cares for us. He planned to send His son and told us what He was coming to do.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread and see where you can trace the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

### The Thread

**FIRST**, instruct students to turn to 1 Peter 2. If you choose, while they are finding the book, provide them with some brief context for book by referencing the Bible Background. When you've finished, read or have a student read 1 Peter 2:21-25, then lead students in a discussion.

Begin by saying something like:

- **In this passage, we see Peter discussing the way the Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled. You may remember that Peter was one of the 12 core disciples who walked and talked with Jesus in His time on earth. At this point of Peter writing this, he had not only heard the words, and known Jesus personally, but he had witnessed Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Peter is calling people to come into a relationship with Jesus. This is no longer a call for people to be on watch for the Messiah. This is a call for people to understand He has come! In this passage Peter is telling us to be like Christ.**

**THEN**, ask:

- **We just finished discussing Isaiah 53. This passage in Peter sounds very similar how?**
  - o Answer: Peter is talking about what HAS happened not about what WILL happen. Isaiah says the Messiah won't retaliate when insulted. Peter is saying he DIDN'T.
- **Look at verse 24. Tell me what it is saying to you about who Jesus is, what He did, and what happened as a result of His death and resurrection?**



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah

o Answers will vary. We often talk about how our sin was carried on the cross. We talk about what happened and how we were saved FROM sin. However, it isn't just that we were saved FROM, it's what we were saved TO. Jesus saved us to a life free from sin so we could be close to Him, and know how to live with Him once again.

- **Isaiah said that we are like sheep that have strayed. What does Peter say we are?**

o Answer: Peter said we were once sheep who wondered. But now we've returned to our shepherd.

**FINALLY**, say something like:

- **When we look at the hope in this passage from Peter, we can see just exactly what God had promised us in the coming of Christ. Notice this passage calls us to live like Christ did. It is asking us to embrace who He is, and all that means in our lives. We no longer have to walk around lost and wondering if we can be enough. Now we know that Christ came to not merely save us away from all the bad we do, but to be loved by a Savior that would do anything for us.**

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the Wrapping Up section.

### Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** To take time to reflect on who we are saved to, not just what we are saved from.
- **Set-Up:** Pen and paper for each student.

**FIRST** say something like:

- **You've probably had someone tell you that Christ saves you from your sin. You may have heard that there is nothing you could do that would make Jesus not love you. This is a true and important statement. Yet it's not the whole story. Sometimes we think that most of our sin isn't awful, so we can just make up for it in being a better person. Instead, we need to focus in on what we are saved TO, and what that means in everything we do and every way we live. Let's take a few moments and think about this.**

**THEN**, instruct them to take a sheet of paper and, if they are in a saving relationship with Jesus, write some of the things they have been saved from. Encourage them to think about those last passages they just focused on, especially being like unfaithful sheep wandering on our own. Give students a few moments to do this.

**NEXT**, ask students to look at their list. Brainstorm together some things they know they are saved TO Christ and what that means. You may want to focus on the characteristics of Jesus, what freedom in Christ truly is, and how it's not about stopping at our "sin" being taken away.

**THEN**, tell students to take a few minutes and be introspective. You have spent time talking in general about what we are saved to. Now have them reflect on what their relationship with Christ is like because of His follow through on His promise. Ask students something like:

- **How does knowing God kept a promise that he made for over 700 years change the way we look at our relationship with Jesus?**



# The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

## Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 26: Messianic Prophecy From Isaiah

**FINALLY**, finish with something like:

- **The whole plan for a Messiah and salvation was so we could be rid of our sin in order to be close to Him once again. Yet, even to this day we get distracted and wander off away from Him. Sometimes we focus so much on the fact that our “sin has been taken care of,” that we can forget that it’s so we can be free and at peace at the Lord’s side. My challenge to you this week is to continue to seek God and ponder who He is. Move your focus from what you have been saved from and focus instead on what you have been saved TO.**
- **If you’ve purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they’ll be working through Week 26 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week’s verse their best shot.**
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