

Presenting the Study Sheet:

“What Is God’s Plan?”

The sheet “What Is God’s Plan?” can be used as a beginning study sheet, or it can logically follow the study sheet, “What Is the Source of Sin and Death?”

Purpose

The purpose of the “God’s Plan” sheet is to show that from the beginning God had a plan. In this lesson the teacher can show that the Old Testament provided guidance and laws for a nation of people, the nation of Israel, and that the New Testament is the guide for Christians.

Lesson in Brief

God revealed to Abraham His plan to make of him a great nation and to bless all nations through his descendant, Christ. This nation developed in Egypt. God gave them a law through Moses at Mt. Sinai. This law did not bring the *blessing*, but instead brought them under a *curse*. The blessing came through Jesus as God had promised.

Introduction

[If the teacher has used the study sheet “What Is the Source of Sin and Death?” as the first one, he should briefly review that study sheet.] Through Adam and Eve sin came into the world. God foreknew that this would happen, so He had already worked out a plan that could bring about the forgiveness of sin. This lesson will present God’s plan.

I. The Plan Revealed

1. In considering the plan of God, we must begin very early in the Bible, very close to the beginning of the Bible. God revealed His plan to Abram whose name was later changed to Abraham (Gen. 17:5; “Abram” means “exalted father,” and “Abraham” means “father of a multitude.”)

God’s promise included *two* major aspects. What did God promise Abram if he would leave his homeland? [Read Gen. 12:1, 2.] God promised He would make of Abram a great *what*? [Fill in the blank with “nation.”]

2. God also included another great promise. What is it? [Read Gen. 12:3.] Through Abram all nations of the earth would be *what*? [Fill in the blank with “blessed.”]

[*On the back* of the study sheet write “Abraham” then write, 1. “nation” and 2. “bless.” See page 7.]

3. The blessing would *not* be provided *by* Abraham, even though it would come through him. How would this be accomplished? [Read Gen. 22:18 and Gal. 3:16.] The blessing was to be provided by the one seed (descendant) of Abraham. *Who* is that seed, descendant? [Fill in the blank with “Christ.”] The blessing Christ was to bring was not only for the nation of Israel but was also for *all* the nations of the earth. [*On the back* of the study sheet draw a line from “bless” to the center of the paper, and write the word “seed” or “descendant.” Then draw a line toward the right side of the paper, and draw a cross. See page 7.]

The Bible is divided into *two* parts based on these two promises to Abraham. The Old Testament’s main concern is the *nation* that developed from Abraham, and the New Testament’s concern is the *blessing* which was made possible through Jesus Christ. If one wants to read about the *nation*, he will read the Old Testament. If one wants to read about the *blessing*, he will read the New Testament.

II. The Development of the Nation

1. The rest of the book of Genesis is concerned with the events leading up to the development of the great nation. Because Jacob would become prominent in the development of the great nation, God changed his name. [Read Gen. 32:28.] To *what* did

God change Jacob's name? [Fill in the blank with "Israel," which means "he who strives with God."] The *children of Israel* are the descendants of Jacob. Keep this in mind as you read the Bible. The nation and children of Israel are the descendants of Jacob. [On the back write beneath "Abraham" the word "Isaac," and explain that this was Abraham's son. Below that write "Jacob (Israel)" and explain that this was Isaac's son. Write "12" below Jacob's name and explain that Jacob had twelve sons from whom the twelve tribes of Israel came. See page 7.]

[At this time the teacher should explain how Jacob's sons sold their brother Joseph to traders who took him to Egypt. After he had served Potiphar and was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, Joseph was thrown into prison where he interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker. Later the butler told Pharaoh, who was troubled over a dream he had dreamed, that Joseph could interpret his dream. Because Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream, he was given the responsibility of collecting food seven years in preparation for the coming seven years of famine.

When the famine came, Jacob sent Joseph's brothers for grain in Egypt. After the second time his brothers came to Egypt for grain, Joseph revealed to them that he was their brother. He told them to bring their father to Egypt. When they told Jacob to come to Egypt, Jacob had to make a decision whether or not to go to Egypt. While he was considering this, God appeared to him.]

What did God say to Jacob? [Read Gen. 46:2, 3.] In *what* country would Jacob's descendants develop into a great nation? [Fill in the blank with "Egypt." On the back draw a square, and write in it "Egypt." See page 7.]

2. Jacob took all his sons and their children with him into Egypt. How many went with him? [Read Ex. 1:5.] *How many* came to Egypt with Jacob? [Fill in the blank with "70."]

These rapidly multiplied. [Read Ex. 1:7-9.] After Moses led them out of Egypt, Moses and Aaron were commanded to take a census. Who were to be included in the census? [Read Num. 1:1-3.] How many men were in their army? [Read Num. 1:45, 46.] *How many* were there in the army? [Fill in the blank with "603,550."] Who was not included in this number and why? [Read Num. 1:47-50.] The Levites were not numbered with the army because they were to take care of the religious matters of the nation of Israel.

Who of the Levites and *how many* of them were

numbered? [Read Num. 3:39.] [Fill in the blank with "22,000." On the back write "603,550" and "22,000" as going out of Egypt. See page 7.] Israel had an army of 603,550 and had 22,000 males in the tribe of Levi. Various estimates state that to have an army of that size and that many priests the nation would have had between three and five million people.

From a very small beginning in the land of Canaan, Israel had grown into a multitude of people as God had promised. [If you have a map, trace the travel of Abraham to Palestine and the movement of his descendants into Egypt and then to Mt. Sinai.]

III. Law for the Nation

1. Before the descendants of Israel (Jacob) came to Egypt, they were but a small family of people and did not need a law as a nation. While they were in Egypt, they were compelled to live by the laws of the Egyptians. But now that they had grown into an independent nation of people, they would need a national law.

Who gave them their law? [Read Deut. 4:2, 5.] *Whose* law did Moses give them? [Fill in the blank with "Lord."] This was not a law for the whole world, but for them. [Read Deut. 4:7, 8; also Ps. 147:19, 20.] It was a law for them as a *what*? [Fill in the blank with "nation."] This national law that God gave them was also a religious and moral law.

2. Where was this law to be observed? [Read Deut. 4:5.] *Where* were they to observe it? [Fill in the blank with "land."] The nature of the law indicates that it was not a law for the inhabitants of the earth but was rather a law for people living in the land of Israel.

Notice the problems the law would create for those who lived thousands of miles away from the land of Israel. All males were to appear three times a year in Jerusalem, the place God chose (Deut. 16:16). This was the place where God was to be sought and where they were to bring their tithes and offerings (Deut. 12:5-11; 14:22-25). Judicial matters were to be decided in that place (Deut. 17:8, 9). The manslayer was to flee to one of six cities in Israel (Num. 35:6). This was a law for Israel to obey in their land.

3. Besides their statutes and judgments, there was another aspect of their law. What did this include? [Read Deut. 4:13, 14.] *What* did God make with them? [Fill in the blank with "covenant." On the back draw a mountain, label it "Mt. Sinai," and write "covenant" beneath it and then "Ten Commandments." See page 7.]

What is a covenant? A covenant is a formal agreement, a pact, a contract. God drew up an agreement, a contract with Israel. Keeping the Ten Commandments was Israel's responsibility in the contract.

4. What did God agree to do if Israel kept their part of the covenant, the Ten Commandments? [Read Deut. 5:33.] This is what He promised after giving the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5:1-21). If they kept it, what did He agree to do for them? They would *what*? [Fill in the blanks with "live," "well," and "land."] Notice what God bound Himself to do for Israel. He promised He would give them *physical blessings*.

5. If they broke the covenant, what would God do to them? [Read Lev. 26:14, 15, 33.] Their land would be taken away from them, and *what* would happen? [Fill in the blank with "scatter."] Why are the Jewish people scattered today? They are scattered because they broke the agreement God made with them. As a part of this, they are also a "proverb" among those where they have been scattered (Deut. 28:37).

IV. The Problem

1. The law God gave to Israel was a good standard, but there was a problem that God purposefully built into it (Heb. 8:6, 7). A fault was built into it.

What was the fault with the law? What had it done to those to whom it had been given? [Read Gal. 3:10.] Those under it were under a *what*? [Fill in the blank with "curse."] Why were they under a curse? They were under a curse based on the fact that they had to keep every aspect of it without making a mistake (Gal. 3:10). No one did this.

2. For this reason, what kind of a system could it be considered? [Read 2 Cor. 3:6, 7, 9.] *What* kind of a ministry was it? [Fill in the blanks with "death" and "condemnation."] It was a ministry of death because those who violated it were usually punished with death. No provision of forgiveness was made for anyone who defiantly broke the law (Num. 15:27-31).

3. What happened to the person who defiantly violated the law? [Read Heb. 10:28.] He was put to death without *what*? [Fill in the blank with "mercy."] [On the back of the study sheet write (see page 7): "1. Curse"; "2. Death"; "3. Condemnation"; "4. No mercy"; and "5. No grace (Gal. 5:4)."] God had promised to *bless* all nations through the *descendant* of

Abraham, but the law had rather brought a *curse*, so it is evident that God had not planned to *bless* all nations through the law.

What about the purpose of the law, if those who lived under it were cursed instead of blessed? The law was added, because of transgression, as a custodian to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:19, 24).

Some of us as human beings think we are good enough to be acceptable to God because of who we are. In a sense the law was an experiment for man's benefit to show man he is not able to save himself, but needs help.

One could compare this to a man seeking to convince a Florida farmer that he cannot grow oranges in Canada. To do this he would choose the most southern slope in the warmest section of Canada for the orange grove. After a reasonable number of years of early frosts, snows, and failure, the farmer would be convinced that oranges cannot be grown in Canada.

In the same way God chose Abraham, the faithful, and separated his descendants from the wicked nations, then gave them a perfect standard to keep (Rom. 7:12). If any people could have become righteous on their own, the nation of Israel had the best possible opportunity to do so, but they all sinned (Rom. 3:9, 10). God, for all times, proved that man will not make it on his own, but rather needs the death of His Son to forgive their sins. The purpose of the law was to show us conclusively that we need a Savior who can provide mercy to cover our transgressions.

V. God's Plan

1. God had planned to bless the world through a descendant of Abraham. The law could not void God's plan (Gal. 3:17). If the law could provide the blessing, Jesus' death was unnecessary (Gal. 2:21). God did not plan for the law and the covenant to provide this blessing.

What did God plan to do? [Read Jer. 31:31, 32.] *What* did God promise He would make? *Would* it be like the covenant God made with Israel? [Fill in the blanks with "new" and "not."]

2. What would the new covenant provide? [Read Heb. 8:12.] *What* did God say He would be under the new covenant? [Fill in the blank with "merciful."]

3. Inasmuch as mercy was not built into the first covenant, does this mean that they could not obtain mercy? The blessing promised through Abraham

could bless them also, *not* based on the law, but rather based on what? [Read Heb. 9:15.] Jesus also died for the transgressions that were under *what* covenant? [Fill in the blank with “first.”] If anyone comes to God it can only be done through Jesus (John 14:6). This has always been God’s plan. The sins of the world can be forgiven *only* through the blood of Jesus. The law did not provide mercy and forgiveness. It only cursed those who were under it.

4. When did the *new* come into force? [Read Heb. 9:16, 17.] *When* did it become effective? [Fill in the blank with “death.”] A will is a dead document until the one who made it dies. The same was true with the new testament of Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus made it effective.

5. Has the new covenant replaced the old covenant? [Read Heb. 10:9.] He did *what* with the first so he could do *what* with the second? [Fill in the blanks with “takes” and “establish.”] When Jesus brought into force the second covenant at His death, He also took away the first one. [On the back write “First (Old) Covenant” and “Second (New) Covenant.” See page 7.]

6. Which of these is better and why? [Read Heb. 8:6.] How do the promises of the second compare with the promises of the first? These promises are *what*? [Fill in the blank with “better.”] What were they promised if they kept the first covenant? Weren’t they promised the land with prosperity (Deut. 5:33)? What are we promised that is better? [Read 1 Pet. 1:3, 4.] Isn’t “heaven” much better as a blessing than long life with prosperity in the land of Israel?

What benefits does the new covenant provide that are better than the old? [On the back across from what the old covenant provided write: “1. Bless (Gal. 3:14);” “2. Life (Gal. 3:21);” “3. Righteousness (Gal. 2:21);” “4. Mercy (Heb. 8:12);” and “5. Grace (John 1:17).” See page 7.]

Which of these two covenants would you rather live under? Why? Under the new covenant we have better benefits and better promises. Surely we do not want to go back under the first covenant.

[At this point the teacher might want to explain that moral principles are eternal, and that the new covenant does *not* do away with eternal moral principles such as, we are not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to lie, etc. The new covenant *includes* these principles, but does *not*, however, include the Sabbath. The Sabbath was given Israel as their special day of rest, a memorial day for them, in which they were to do no work but were to rest and re-

member that they had been slaves in the land of Egypt (Deut. 5:15). It was *not* a day dedicated as a memorial of the Creation. God chose to give the seventh day as a rest day for Israel to remember their deliverance from slavery without rest in Egypt because He had rested on the seventh day (Ex. 20:11). The first day of the week, the day after the Sabbath (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1), is the day Christians met (Acts 20:7) and still meet. The first day of the week is a memorial day for Christians as a day to remember their deliverance from sin and death, based on the resurrection of Jesus on that day. To them it is a day of *spiritual* rest and not of *physical* rest like the Sabbath, the rest day for Israel.]

In this lesson we noticed God’s plan to show through a nation of people that mankind needs a Savior to save them, not a law to save them, and that His plan to save mankind had always been through the death of Jesus on the cross.

Summary

In this study sheet we have examined the revelation of God’s plan to save us from our sins. This is the theme of the Bible.

A good way for us to summarize this lesson is for us to answer the major questions in the lesson.

I. *What plan did God reveal to Abraham?* God made known to Abraham that He would make of him a great nation (the theme of the Old Testament) and that He would bless all nations through one of his seed, i.e., Jesus (the theme of the New Testament).

II. *How did the great nation develop?* The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob grew from 70 in all who entered Egypt to a great nation of people, when they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, of between three and five million people with 603,550 in their army and with 22,000 males in the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe.

III. *What was the law of the nation of Israel?* God gave them a law at Mt. Sinai that was to be observed by them as a nation in the land of Israel. The covenant (God’s agreement with them) was also a part of their law (Rom. 13:8-10). If they kept this contract with God, they would live a long life with prosperity in the land, but if they broke the covenant, they would be taken out of the land and be scattered among the nations.

IV. *What was the problem with the first covenant?* Because those under the law did not keep it, the law brought them under a curse, condemnation, and the penalty of death. The reason this was true was that

it provided no mercy.

V. *What would God do to provide mercy?* God brought in a new covenant, a new agreement, that provided mercy. Through the death of Jesus, the curse of the first covenant was lifted, a new covenant was ratified, and the first covenant was set aside. The *first* was replaced by a *second*, a new and better covenant, built on better promises (eternal life in heaven instead of long life with prosperity in the land).

Today we are to live by the terms of the new covenant. We do not want to go back under the *first*, for those who tried to live under it were condemned and under the curse of the law. We rather are to live by the *second* because through it we receive grace, mercy, and the hope of eternal life in heaven.

This lesson helps us understand many things:

(1) the reason Christians do not keep the laws of the Old Testament; (2) the reason Christians do not rest on Saturday, i.e., the Sabbath; (3) the reason the conversions after the death of Jesus are to be considered examples of how people become Christians; and (4) the reason Christians study the New Testament so they can learn how to live the Christian life.

[After summarizing the lesson, the teacher might ask the student concerning his attitude toward the law, if he has read the law and considered obeying all that is taught in it, and if he has studied what was required for forgiveness of sins in the law and what is required in the new covenant.

The teacher should then arrange another study, stating that the next study will consider forgiveness in the Old and New Testaments.]

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WHAT IS GOD'S PLAN?

I. What plan did God reveal to Abraham?

1. God promised He would make of Abraham a great _____. Gen. 12:1, 2
2. All families of the earth would be _____ through him. Gen. 12:3
3. The blessing came through the seed, _____. Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16

II. How did the great nation develop?

1. God promised to make of Jacob, whose name was changed to _____ (Gen. 32:28), a great nation in the land of _____. Gen. 46:2, 3
2. From a number of _____ (Exo. 1:5) who went into Egypt came _____ men of war (Num. 1:45, 46), besides _____ men of Levi when Israel left. Num. 3:39

III. What was the law of the nation of Israel?

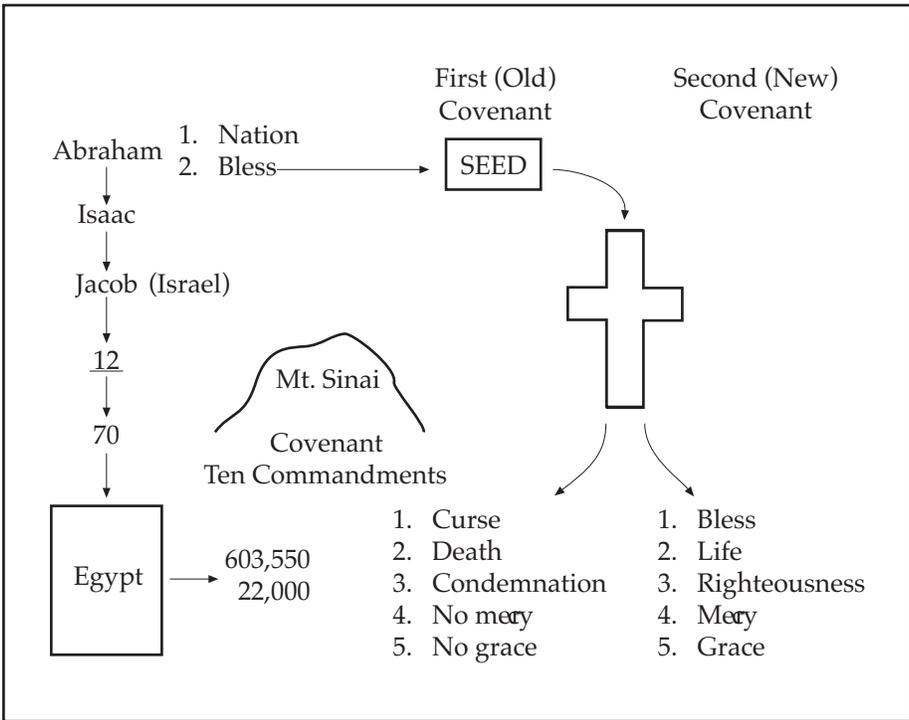
1. Their law was commanded by the _____ (Deut. 4:2, 5) for them as a _____ of people. Deut. 4:7, 8
2. This law was to be observed in the _____ they were to possess. Deut. 4:5
3. God also made with them a _____, the ten commandments. Deut. 4:13
4. If they kept the covenant, they would _____, all would go _____ with them, and God would prolong their days in the _____. Deut. 5:33
5. If they broke the covenant (Lev. 26:14, 15), God would _____ them among the nations and their land would become desolate. Lev. 26:33

IV. What was the problem with the first covenant? Heb. 8:6, 7

1. Those under the law were under a _____. Gal. 3:10
2. It was a ministry of _____ and _____. 2 Cor. 3:6, 7, 9
3. Those who violated it died without _____. Heb. 10:28

V. What would God do to provide mercy?

1. God promised a _____ covenant, _____ like the first. Jer. 31:31, 32
2. Under the second covenant God said He would be _____. Heb. 8:12
3. Jesus died for the transgressions under the _____ covenant. Heb. 9:15
4. The _____ of Jesus made the new covenant effective. Heb. 9:16, 17
5. He _____ away the first to _____ the second. Heb. 10:9
6. The second is better and has _____ promises. Heb. 8:6; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4



The Drawing for the Back of the "God's Plan" Sheet.
(See page 6.)