

# **TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY**

## **Extending God's Ways to the World**

### Main Lessons

1. Discipling a Nation
2. The First Fathers: Genesis Foundations
3. Egypt & The Wilderness: God Establishes a Righteous Nation (Pharaoh vs. Moses)
4. Deuteronomy Study: God's Purpose for Each Area of a Righteous Society
5. The Promised Land: Declining Character in Israel (Anarchy)
6. The Kingdom of Israel: The Fall of the Nation of Israel (Tyranny)
7. Judah's Exile and Return: Rebuilding a Broken Nation (Ezra & Nehemiah)
8. Jesus the Messiah: The Kingdom of God Begins
9. The Early Church: The Apostles Extend God's Ways in the World
10. Missions: Exploring Ways to Transform Your Community

### OUTREACH

- Practical Project on Transforming the Community
- Focus skill: Topical Messages

### SAMPLE WORKSHOPS (Customized Electives)

- How we got the Bible
- Overview of Cults
- Biblical Stewardship & Community Development
- Ideas for Micro-Business
- Foundations of Christian Education
- Redeeming Cultural Music and Art
- Types of Biblical Prophecy
- Foundations for a Strong Marriage
- Successful Parenting

# ***DISCIPLING A NATION***

## ***Building the House of Society***

### **Lesson Summary**

Introduce the BELT seminar and the participants. Include a brief inspirational message on God's desire for all communities and nations to be transformed and functioning according to His ways. Reference the "House of Society" poster. It may be helpful to review the Bible Road Overview poster.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. Jesus commissions us to disciple all the nations (Matt. 28:18-20)
2. God warns and blesses Solomon and Israel (1 Kings 9:1-9; 10:1-29)
3. Jeremiah goes to the potter's house (Jeremiah 18:1-11)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. God desires all nations to be transformed and functioning according to His ways.**

1. God want us to disciple, not just evangelize, nations. (Matt 28:18-20)
2. The Bible is the record of God's ways and must be the foundation of society in order for there to be a free and prosperous community or nation. (Josh 1:6-9; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
3. A disciplined nation is one built on biblical principles. (Deut 30:11-20; Rom 14:17; Eph 6:13-17)

#### **B. To disciple a nation, we must first disciple the people in a nation.**

1. Change begins with the heart. (2 Chr 7:14; Ezekiel 18:31-32; Matt 15:18-19)
2. Change continues as people reason from the Bible and apply it to all of life. (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:5; Philippians 4:4-9)
3. God justly directs the destiny of a nation depending on how the nation obeys His will. (Jer. 18:7-10; 1 Kings 9:1-9)

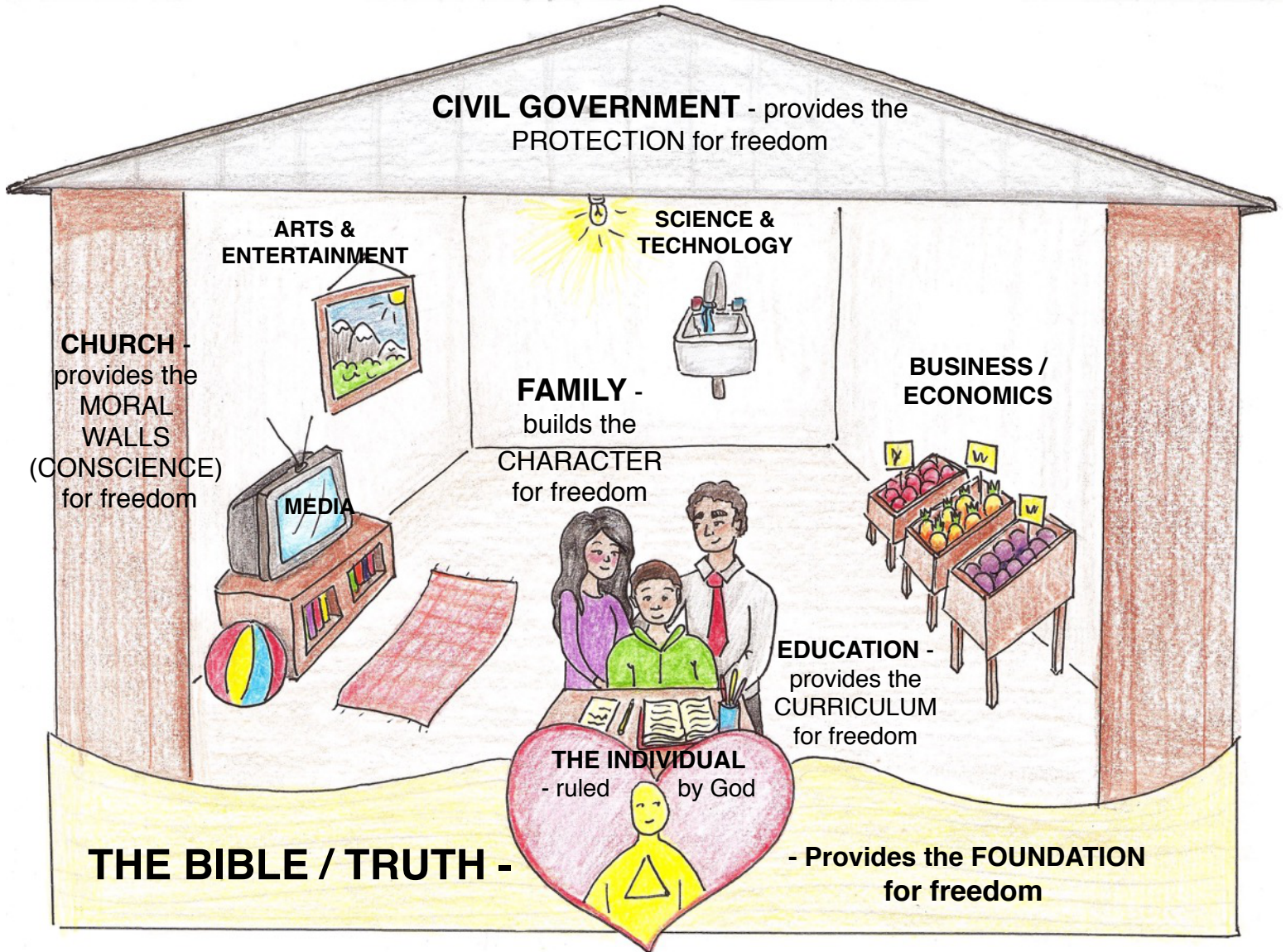
#### **C. The "House of Society" gives us a picture of how each area of society relates to each other, especially emphasizing the family, church, and government.**

1. The FAMILY is the most important building block of society, where children are educated and learn character and discipline from their parents. (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4)
2. The CHURCH is the pillar of truth in society, which is supposed to strengthen the nation and help keep it from collapsing. The church provides the light (models the truth) to the conscience of the people, so that they see the benefits of righteous living and glorify God. (1 Tim 1:14-15; Eph 3:9-10; Matt 5:13-16)
3. The CIVIL GOVERNMENT exists to provide the protection for freedom by punishing wrongdoers and protecting the innocent (Rom 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14).
4. The FAMILY, CHURCH, and GOVERNMENT are interconnected, and each must stay within its God-given boundaries in order for the people to be free and to prosper.

### **Sample Discussion Questions**

1. What are your expectations for this seminar?
2. Are you willing to do your part with what you learn to see your own community and nation changed?

# The House of Society



# **GENESIS**

## **Foundations for Freedom**

### **Lesson Summary**

From the beginning God delegated authority to people desiring them to partner with Him to see His purposes come about in the earth. In order to have a strong society, God desired people to govern themselves according to His ways. God established the family and civil government to promote and protect freedom. God chose Abraham and his descendants and made a covenant with them that He would be their God and they would be His People.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. God creates the first man and woman (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:5-25)
2. God floods the earth and starts over with Noah's family (Genesis 6:1-22; 7:17-24; 9:1-13)
3. Abraham intercedes about Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-33)
4. Joseph saves his family (Genesis 42:1-25; 45:1-15; 46:1-7,26-34; 50:15-26)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. God is the Creator and the highest authority over all. God expected Adam and Eve to love Him first by respecting His authority and loving rulership in the garden.**

1. God is a loving and good Creator. He created all people in His own image as highly valuable, designing them with the abilities of mind, will and emotions. God also *gave authority* to people to rule over and care for all the earth. However this authority was *delegated authority* – they were responsible to God for how they carried out His wishes (God is highest authority over earth). (Gen 1:26-28; 2:7)
2. God made the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to teach Adam and Eve to love God first and obey Him. His hope was that they would have biblical self-government, using their choice as individuals to submit themselves to His loving and wise rulership in their lives. (Gen 2:8-9, 15-17)
3. God establishes marriage between a husband and wife as a life-long commitment with unity and intimacy between equal companions. Marriage is the first human relationship introduced in the Bible, for the family is the basic building block of society. (Gen 2:18-25)

#### **B. God established civil government after the flood to protect the value of people.**

1. Adam and Eve selfishly chose to do what was wrong, rebelling against God and his loving rulership. Their sin destroyed their relationship with God and each other. (Gen 3)
2. People became increasingly selfish as their *sin led to more sin*. At the time of the flood all people (except Noah) were totally wicked and there was no biblical self-government (complete anarchy and chaos). As a last resort, God brought judgment by flooding the earth in order to limit sin. (Genesis 6:1-22; 7:17-24; 8:1, 18-22)
3. After the flood, God established civil government by delegating authority to mankind to take the life of any one who murders an innocent person. (This severe punishment protects the value of people's lives.) The purpose of civil government is to serve God's will by protecting the innocent, punishing the wicked, and promoting good in a society. This is affirmed in the New Testament. (Gen 9:5-6; Romans 13:1-4; 1 Pet 2:13-14)

**C. God prepares a people to be a testimony to the truth by being biblically self-governed and free because of Him ruling in their hearts through faith.**

1. God reveals his character and ways to Abraham so he would know and trust God. God wanted Abraham to teach his descendants to live righteously through biblical self-government and to carry out justice in all areas of their society. (Gen 18:16-33)
2. God established a covenant with Abraham because of his supreme faith in God's character and ways. Abraham set the necessary precedent of faith in God for all of his descendants. God was preparing a people to be a testimony to the truth and to bring God's freedom to the world by Him ruling in our hearts through faith. (Gen 22:1-18; Gal 3:8)
3. Abraham's descendent Joseph governed himself and the nation of Egypt by faith and fear of the Lord. Because he submitted to God's loving rulership, Joseph was able to bring healing and freedom to his family and the nations. (Gen 42:1-25; 45:1-15; 46:1-7,26-34; 50:15-26)

**Application Questions**

1. Biblical self-government is choosing to do what is right, even when no one else is looking, because of loving submission to God. Are there any specific areas that you need to grow in biblical self-government?
2. Is your nation's civil government functioning according to God's purpose for civil government? Why is this important?
3. What does the story of Abraham interceding with God (Gen 18) teach you about God's ways in justice and righteousness?

# **EGYPT AND THE WILDERNESS**

## ***Pagan vs. Biblical Government***

### **Lesson Summary**

God revealed Himself and His ways to Israel so that they would be a model to all other nations and through them the Messiah would come to redeem mankind from sin. At Mt. Sinai in the wilderness, God revealed Himself and affirmed His covenant with the nation of Israel. He gave them the Ten Commandments, which was to be the foundation of their nation's laws.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. The Hebrew midwives fear God rather than Pharaoh (Exodus 1:8-22)
2. The God delivers Israel from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 6:1-9; 11:1-6; 12:3-42)
3. God gives the Law as the basis for a just and free society (Exodus 19:1-12,16-19; 20:1-20)
4. God establishes the Tabernacle and sacrificial system (Exodus 25:1-22; 29:43-46)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. Egypt was a typical nation having a pagan understanding of God, people and government.**

1. The Hebrew midwives believed God was their highest authority and therefore feared God more than Pharaoh. They acted according to their biblical self-government and were blessed by God. (Exo 1:7-22)
2. Pharaoh, who was considered a son of the gods, was proud and refused to submit to God or obey his voice. He had absolute power – his word was the law of the land. He treated the Israelite slaves cruelly and forced them to work hard to build cities for himself. This was a tyrannical form of government (see diagram). (Exo 5:1-23)
3. God had not forgotten Israel. He saw their suffering and called Moses to fulfill His promises and deliver them from Pharaoh's pagan rulership. (Exo 6:1-9; 11:1-6; 12:3-42)

#### **B. God brought Israel out of slavery and into the wilderness to teach them what He was like and what a godly nation should be like with righteous and just leaders and laws.**

1. God called Israel to be His "own possession" and a "kingdom of priests and holy nation" – a nation under the rule of God, following His righteous ways and a model for the pagan nations around them. (Exo 19:1-6)
2. With great emphasis God comes down on Mt. Sinai and speaks the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel so they would always love God first ("fear God") and obey His righteous commandments ("not sin"). The Ten Commandments were laws based on love given to protect the purpose, value and freedom of the nation. *[Review TS1 God's Laws of Love]* (Exo 19:16 – 20:20)
3. Moses is called to be the transitional leader of the people. His job is to serve the nation by deciding difficult disputes and to teach the nation God's ways until they can govern themselves (see diagram). (Exo 18:8-26)

**C. God establishes the sacrificial and priestly system as the religious or “church” domain to show the people how they should approach their holy God in purity and holiness themselves.**

1. God gives instructions to build the Tabernacle where God dwelled among His own people. (Exo 25:1-9; 29:43-46)
2. All the elements of the Tabernacle and sacrificial system (the Ark of the Covenant, the altar, the table of incense, etc) had a part to play in showing Israel how to approach their holy God. (Ex 25:10-22)
3. The priests and Levites were to teach the people to be holy and righteous, knowing and obeying the laws of God. (Exo 28:1-3, 30; Lev 10:10-11)

**Application Questions**

1. Discuss the difference between Pharaoh’s and Moses’ leadership. As leaders in different areas of influence, are you leading more like Pharaoh or Moses? What are practical changes that you can make to be a more godly Leader?
2. Consider your nation’s civil government. Which form of government prevails, pagan or biblical? Is there anything the church can do in your nation to influence the civil government, or does the church need to change its own style of leadership?
3. Is the church in your nation representing God as holy? Are the church leaders knowing and obeying the laws of God?

## **DEUTERONOMY STUDY**

### **God's Purpose for Each Area of a Righteous and Free Society**

#### **Lesson Summary:**

Moses repeated all of God's laws to a new generation of Israel for how they were to operate as a nation when they were living in the Promised Land. The essence of the covenant was to love God first, and obey His commandments (biblical self-government). This formed the basis for all the laws of Israel in every area of society which are described in the book of Deuteronomy.

#### **Lesson Outline**

- A. **Moses repeated the covenant of God's laws to a new generation, so that they could enter the Promised Land and live in freedom and prosperity. The essence of the covenant was to love God first and obey His commandments (BSG).** (Deut 5:6-21; 6:1-6)
- B. **Deuteronomy Study:** *Break into groups according to the different areas of society. Each group must read the passages out loud for their area of society and discuss the questions below. After this activity each group will present back to whole class.*

#### *Questions for Group Study:*

- *What is God saying about this area of society?*
- *How does it compare with how your culture practices this area of society?*
- *Is there a strategy to develop for changing this area of society to align with God's purpose for each of area of a righteous and free society?*

#### **1. Civil Government**

- a. Deut. 1:8-18 - Godly, honest and just leaders are chosen (elected) to serve the people.
- b. Deut. 17:4-20 - God limits the powers of executive government for the protection...  
Good government serves the people-not the people serving the government.
- c. Deut. 16:18-20 and 24:16-17 and 25:1-3 - Justice is the goal. No corruption.

#### **2. Economics**

- a. Deut. 5:7-15 and 23:19-29 - Protecting the land
- b. Deut. 8:6-17 - God gives us the power to make wealth (creativity is part of that.)
- c. Deut. 15:1-28 - Caring for the land and the poor.

#### **3. Family**

- a. Deut. 5:16-21 and 10:18-22 - The value of marriage and family.
- b. Deut. 6:1-25 and 11:19-21 - Building Godly character each generation. i.e Biblical Self Government.
- c. Deut. 22:13-30 and 24:1-5 - Marriage and divorce.

#### **4. Education**

- a. Deut. 6:1-9 and 20:25 - Godly character is essential to education.
- b. Deut. 11:18-21 and 26:3-10 - Learn history in all areas from a providential view. Idea that every area or subject we learn about needs to begin with God.
- c. Deut. 31:30 and 32:45-47 - Moses taught them.



5. **Church**

- a. Deut. 10:8,9 and 12:21 - The role of church, teaching and modeling God's way.
- b. Deut. 12:2-32 - Idolatry, tithing, teaching biblical self government, and not forgetting about the Levite.
- c. Deut. 13:1-5 and 18:1-5, 9-14, 20-22 - Warnings against those who don't speak truth.

6. **Science and Health**

- a. Deut. 7:12-22 - Blessings and creation stewardship including animals.
- b. Deut. 22:6-7 and 23:9-14 - Biology and Cleanliness
- c. Deut. 28:21-29, 34-35, 59-62 - Curses because of the disobedience of a whole nation.

7. **Media/Communication**

- a. Deut. 5:1-5, 22-20 - The importance of truthful communication
- b. Deut. 13:12-14 and 23:21-23 - Diligent inquiry and vows.
- c. Deut. 31:9-19 and 32:44-47 - Moses accurately recorded and communicated truth, and he placed it in a location where everyone had access to it.

8. **Arts and Celebration**

- a. Deut. 16:9-17 - Celebrating the Lord God (community celebration)
- b. Deut. 12:3-18 - How not to celebrate
- c. Deut. 31:19-22, 30 and 32:1-4 - Music is a powerful tool for teaching and remembering

**C. God told Israel that His law is good, and it is not too difficult to obey.**

- 1. Obedience to the law would bring safety, prosperity and freedom resulting in life. (Deut 6:1-3; 30:11-16)
- 2. However disobedience to the principles of the law would bring the nation to destruction and death. (Deuteronomy 28:15-45; 30:17-20)

**Application Questions**

- 1. What would it look like if each area of society would function in the way that God intended in your nation?
- 2. Understanding the different spheres gives us strategic ways to pray for our nation. Gather together in groups and pray for specific spheres and how they can be disciplined to operate along God's ways.

# **SETTLING THE PROMISED LAND**

## ***The Decline into Anarchy***

### **Lesson Summary:**

God established Israel to be a nation that was biblically self-governed (godly character) with God as their king, leading to safety, prosperity and freedom. However, after Joshua's death the people of Israel abandoned God as king and worshipped idols. During that time "everyone did what was right in their own eyes", leading to anarchy, lawlessness, distress and oppression.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. The Israelite's renew their covenant at Joshua's death (Josh 24:1-31)
2. Israel begins their cycles of disobedience and deliverance (Judges 2:6-22; 3:5-11)
3. Micah the Ephraimite hires a corrupt Levite priest (Judges 17:1-13; 18:1-2,15-31)
4. Ruth and Boaz live righteously in an unrighteous society (Ruth 1:1-5, 2:1-20; 4:9-17)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. God's desire for the nation of Israel was that individuals would be self-governed according to His law and that He would be their king. This is called Liberty with Law.**

1. God raised up Joshua to lead the Israelites to conquer the land of Canaan (the Promised Land). God judged (destroyed) the Canaanites because they had defiled the land with their great immorality and wickedness. (Lev 18:3, 20-30; Deut 18:9-14; Josh 1:1-9)
2. During the lifetime of Joshua, Israel had decentralized tribal states with no central government. God was Israel's king, and He gave them prosperity and freedom as they continued to obey His law (ex: Joshua 5:1-12; 14:1-5).
3. During Joshua's last days, the Israelites renewed their covenant with God and promised to obey His law (Joshua 24:1-31).

#### **B. After Joshua's death, a new generation of Israelites grew up who abandoned God and His law and "everyone did what was right in their own eyes". This is called Liberty without Law, or Anarchy.**

1. Israel forgot God and His law and began several cycles of sin, which consisted of: rebellion, oppression by foreigners, repentance, deliverance by God through judges/deliverers, and peace for a period of years. (Judges 2:6-22; 3:5-11)
2. **Families** in Israel neglected to **educate** younger generations about God's law and the history of what He had done for them. (Deut 6:4-9; Judges 2:10; Psalm 78:1-11).
3. The **church** domain in Israel (the Levites) failed to inform the moral conscience of the nation. The priests did not uphold the law; they committed idolatry instead of leading the nation in obedience to God. (Judges 17:1-13; 18:1-2,15-31).
4. When every **individual** in Israel did what was right in their own eyes (practice anarchy or Liberty without Law), the House of Society began to collapse. The entire nation increased in corruption, violence, and anarchy (Judges 21:25; Proverbs 12:15).

**C. Even in the midst of corruption and idolatry in Israel, Boaz and Ruth continued to obey to God's law, practicing biblical self-government. (Ruth 1:1-5, 2:1-20; 4:9-10, 13-17)**

1. Ruth, a foreigner, shows kindness to her widowed mother-in-law by caring for her after the deaths of their husbands (Ruth 2:2, 8-12).
2. Boaz upholds the law of God by allowing Ruth to glean in his fields and offering her protection (Deuteronomy 24:19; Ruth 2:8-9).
3. Boaz fulfills his biblical responsibility by marrying the widowed Ruth and redeeming Naomi's family line and inheritance. (Lev 25:25; Deut 25:5; Ruth 4:9-10)
4. God blessed the entire nation of Israel because of the faithfulness of Boaz and Ruth. Their descendants included King David (the most righteous king of Israel, with whom God made a covenant) and Jesus, the Messiah. (Ruth 4:17; Matt 1:5)

**Application Questions**

1. Has there been a time in your nation where everyone did what was right in their own eyes? What was the result? Give specific examples.
2. Is the church fulfilling its purpose of being the light for the nation? Why or why not? Are the priests and pastors serving for God's purposes or their own?
3. Are the families of the nation, including your own family, raising up a next generation with integrity and biblical self-government? Is your family like the families of Judges 2 or like Ruth and Boaz? How can we change our families, despite the character of society around us?

# **THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL**

## ***The Rise of Tyranny***

### **Lesson Summary**

Even though God warns Israel about the consequences of having a king they still choose to have a king like all the other nations. The size of the civil government under the kings increased and during the reign of Solomon became a great burden for the people to carry. Eventually the failure of the civil government and church domains in Israel resulted in God judging the nation and sending it into exile

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. Israel Demands a Human King (1 Samuel 8:1-22; *cf.* 12:12-17)
2. Solomon Turns from the Lord (1 Kings 11:1-14, 23, 26)
3. Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21; *cf.* 22:34-38)
4. Josiah reforms the nation and saves it for another thirty years (2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. The lack of biblical self-government and anarchy during the period of the judges leads to Israel rejecting God's decentralized form of government for a centralized earthly kingship.**

1. Israel rejected God as their King. The moral decline of the people came as a result of the failure of the family and priests to train people in righteousness. They demand a human king to be like all the other nations around them. (1 Sam 8:1-9)
2. God warns that a human king and centralized government will lead to tyranny and slavery but the people refuse to listen. In the end God gives the people their request. (1 Sam 8:10-18)
3. God chose and anointed the civil rulers but all the people of Israel gathered together to confirm or make the person their king (1 Samuel 10:1, 17-25). God set limitations on the kings and required the people and kings of Israel to live under biblical self-government. (Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Sam 12:12-17).

#### **B. As Israel exchanged the internal rule of God for the external rule of man, the character of the people continued to decline. The increasingly centralized government of Solomon led to tyranny (Law without Liberty) and became a heavy burden on the people.**

1. Solomon asked for wisdom and God granted his request by making him the wisest man in the world. Solomon had an opportunity to greatly influence the world with the Biblical worldview because "all the kings of the world" were coming to him. (1 Kings 3:1-15; 1 Kings 4:29-34)
2. The massive centralized government of Solomon – the huge number of his household and servants and a large army – were provided for by the people (heavy taxes) and it became an unbearable burden for the people to carry. (1 Kings 10:1-29; 12:4)
3. Solomon accumulated excessive power and wealth including silver, gold, horses, and even wives. Ultimately Solomon rejected God's loving rulership and pursued false gods and as a result, God divided the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms. (1 Kings 10:26-11:13)

**C. As the kings of Israel continuously rejected the influence of the prophets, they became increasingly wicked so that each king was worse than the king before him. These kings thought they were above the Law and abused their power to oppress the people.**

1. The civil leaders despised God, were morally corrupt, oppressed the poor and vulnerable, took bribes, and murdered the innocent (Micah 3:9-11; Amos 5:10-12).
2. The kings abandoned God's original intent for civil government: protection of the rights of the individual. God sent prophets to rebuke the sins of these wicked leaders and people. They warned that there would be consequences and judgment if there was no repentance. (2 Kings 17:13)
3. In Ahab's tyrannical form of Government, he made himself above the Law and the highest authority. Ahab abused his power and unlawfully killed Naboth to steal his vineyard. God used the prophet Elijah to condemn Ahab's sin and pronounce judgment on Ahab and Jezebel. (1 Kings 21)

**D. God finally gives the nation the external government they require: captivity into Babylon. He does this because of the character of the people, not just because of the kings.**

1. Josiah was a good king who tried to externally cleanse the nation of Israel by destroying anything to do with false gods and reinstating the proper forms of worshipping God, but the hearts of the people were not in it. For a nation to truly change the path it is on, it requires first that the individual people biblically self-govern *themselves*. (2 Kings 22:1-23:30; Isaiah 29:13).
2. The people of Israel had forgotten God and pursued after the idolatry of the surrounding nations having increasingly wicked character. The priests weren't teaching God's law or morality to the people. There was no justice or liberty, and the land had become defiled. God sent his people Israel into exile to cleanse them from their sin and bring rest to their land. (2 Chron.36:14-21)

**Application Questions**

1. Why didn't God want a human king for the nation of Israel? What is your own nation like? Do they have the kind of government that the people want?
2. Looking at the kingdom of Israel's story, what are the consequences of people who refuse to govern themselves according to God's rule?
3. What does the story of Josiah reveal to us about how a nation can be truly transformed? How could we as church and community leaders influence our nation so that its people truly change?

# **THE EXILE AND RETURN**

## ***Rebuilding a Broken Nation***

### **Lesson Summary**

God used the exile to internally cleanse his people by preserving a remnant who would live with him ruling in their hearts. After about seventy years the people were allowed to return home, which they did in three groups, re-establishing the temple, the covenant laws, and the walls of the city. They were essentially rebuilding the House of Society, with the family, church and government working together and all functioning according to their separate God-given roles.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. Jeremiah writes a letter to the exiles (Jeremiah 29:1-14)
2. Zerubbabel returns to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:1-5; 3:8-13; 6:13-22)
3. Ezra returns to teach the people (Ezra 7:1-10; 10:1; Nehemiah 8:1-8; 9:1-3; 10:28-29)
4. Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls (Nehemiah 1:1-4; 2:11-20; 4:6-9; 6:15-16; 12:26-30)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. God used the exile to internally cleanse his people by preserving a remnant who would live with him ruling in their hearts.**

1. While in exile God sent them a message of hope and encouraged them to be fruitful members of society. He promised to rebuild and restore them to their land if they would seek him with their whole hearts. (Jeremiah 29:1-14)
2. God promised to use the exile to cleanse his people Israel and preserve a remnant who would have a new heart and walk in His ways. (Ezekiel 36:25-29)

#### **B. After about seventy years the people were allowed to return home. Zerubbabel led the first group to return and oversaw the rebuilding of the Temple, establishing the love and worship of God as the most important foundation for their society.**

1. The Spirit of God stirred the hearts of specific people who would return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Love of God and worship as the foundation of their nation would keep their focus on God. (Ezra 1:1-5, 3:8-13)
2. Even though the new temple was not as impressive as the old temple, the exile had brought about a shift from false, external worship to genuine, internal worship. God was pleased. (Ezra 6:13-22; Haggai 2:2-5)

#### **C. Ezra the priest led the second group to return and facilitated the process of teaching the Law of God and bringing revival to the hearts of the people.**

1. Ezra was very skilled in the Law of God and he had set his heart to “*Know* the Law of God, and to *do it*, and to *teach* it. Before teaching God’s ways to others, the Levites had to first know and apply the word of God to their own lives. (Ezra 7:1-10)
2. As Ezra and the priests taught the Law, the people recognized their sin and their hearts were revived towards God. The Levites were fulfilling their God-given purpose: to teach the people the Law of God and urge them to live righteously. The people recommitted to follow the Law and live righteously. (Ezra 10:1; Neh 8:1-18; 9:38)

**D. Nehemiah led the third group to return and oversaw the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah models how the government can serve and protect the people, while lovingly upholding the righteous laws of God.**

1. Nehemiah united the people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, providing safety and protection so the nation could rebuild to a flourishing society. At the dedication of the wall, Nehemiah invited the church and government to work together and function according to their separate God-given roles. (Neh 1:1-4; 2:11-20; 4:6-9; 6:15-16; 12:26-30)
2. Nehemiah served the people and refused to take any special allowances for governors. He stopped the other Jewish leaders from oppressing the poor, modeling that the government exists to serve the people, not the people to serve the government. (Neh 5:1-19)
3. Nehemiah ensured that the law be followed by all people, including the priests. Nehemiah did not do the work of the priests, but confronted them to fulfill their own roles. When the priests failed to do their job by abandoning the temple due to a lack of provision, he ensures that the priests are provided for and that they are doing their duties according to the Law of Moses. (Nehemiah 13:1-30)

**Discussion Questions**

1. Israel was exiled to a pagan nation, yet in Jeremiah 29:7, God told them to seek the welfare of the city they were in. How can I seek the welfare of my city and nation regardless of the wickedness that may be in it?
2. Looking at the story of Ezra, what is my role as a church leader? Am I fulfilling that role?
3. As a church leader, how can I partner with the local government to see God's purpose established in my village or city?

# **JESUS THE MESSIAH**

## ***The Kingdom of God in Transforming Society***

### **Lesson Summary**

Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God (the saving rulership of God) on earth as it is in heaven. As His kingdom comes, His loving lordship increases on earth as it is in heaven. His kingdom reign begins internally in the hearts of individuals (BSG), and grows to influence every area of society.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. The Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13)
2. Jesus tells the Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven (Luke 13:18-21)
3. Jesus tells the Parable of Money Usage (Luke 19:12-27)
4. Jesus establishes his church upon the rock of Peter's confession (Matthew 16:13-20)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. The main message of Jesus was the kingdom of God, which is *the saving rulership of God manifested in all things.***

1. The kingdom of God is characterized by repentance and faith, leading to righteous living (biblical self-government). In other words, it starts when people change their supreme purpose for life away from selfishness to obeying God as King. Jesus came to establish biblical self-government for all people! (Mark 1:14-15; Matt 5:20)
2. The kingdom of God is a reality that encompasses both the spiritual and physical realms. God's will can be done on earth as it is in heaven. We partner with God in bringing His kingdom through our *prayers* and the way we *give our lives* to Him. (Matt 6:9-13; Matt 12:28; Matt 16:24-28)
3. The kingdom of God began with Jesus, is growing, and will last eternally. As God's influence increases in individual's hearts and in societies, the kingdom grows like a mustard seed that becomes a huge tree. (Luke 13:18-21; Isaiah 9:6-7)

#### **B. The teaching in the Gospels on the kingdom of God is very practical and touches on all areas of society here and now (Matt 6:10). This makes sense because Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill (complete) it. (Matt 5:17-19)**

- *How did Jesus bring about transformation in the following passages? Think practically on both a personal level and sphere of society level.*
- *What do we learn that would transform your community today if applied?*

1. **Church:** Matthew 16:13-20; Matthew 18:12-22; John 17:20-23
2. **Family:** Matthew 5:27-32; Matthew 19:3-9; Matthew 19:13-15;
3. **Government:** Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 10:42-45; John 19:8-12
4. **Economics:** Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 12:13-21; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 19:12-27;



5. **Education:** Matthew 7:24-29; Matthew 11:1-19; Mark 4:1-9 (also Matthew 23:1-3)
6. **Science/Health:** Luke 7:1-22; Luke 8:22-25; Luke 17:11-19
7. **Media/Communication:** Matthew 5:33-37; Matthew 12:33-37; Matthew 10:16-20
8. **Arts/Entertainment:** Luke 1:46-55; John 12:1-8; Matthew 7:13-20

**C. The church is the primary place where God models what the kingdom of God is supposed to look like on this earth.**

1. The church was founded on the confession of Christ as Supreme Ruler. Its people are to live with Jesus as their King, not just in confession but in the hearts and deeds. (Matt 16:13-20; Matt 7:21-23)
2. Jesus tells His followers to be the salt and light of the world by modeling and teaching the truth. We are to be the example of good relationships and godly choices in the world, modeling unity despite differences. (Matt 5:13-19; Matt 18:15-20)
3. When the religious leaders (church domain) did not perform their God-given purpose, Jesus rebuked them. His main rebukes were that they failed to live out what they taught (hypocrisy), abused their power, were corrupt and loved money, did not know the Scriptures or the power of God, and most of all, they missed the whole point of the law: justice, mercy, faithfulness, LOVE. (Matthew 23:23-28; Matthew 21:12-13; Matthew 22:29, 34-40)

**Application Questions**

1. What is the area of Jesus' teaching that challenged you the most today? Why did this challenge you? How can you apply what you have learned starting this week?
2. Read the parable of the money usage again (Luke 19:12-27). What resources has God given you to steward and multiply? Are you using these things in a way that advances God's kingdom? How can you make changes to be more fruitful?
3. Are you and your local church functioning according to God's purpose to be salt and light for the nation around you? How can you and your church be more involved in participating in the kingdom of God into this community?

# **THE EARLY CHURCH**

## ***The Apostles Extend God's Ways to the World***

### **Lesson Summary**

The Holy Spirit empowers and guides His church in all areas of life. The church is to teach and model God's ways in all aspects of society, setting an example for all to follow. This includes the civil government, which looks like respecting and supporting its role in society, praying for its leaders, and modeling biblical leadership.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. The Holy Spirit is given at Pentecost (Acts 1:3-9; 2:1-41)
2. Peter and John are brought before the council (4:1-21)
3. The early church prays for boldness (Acts 4:23-31)
4. The believers become a joyful community of unity and generosity (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35)

### **Lesson Outline**

#### **A. God graciously gives His Holy Spirit to guide and empower the Church for life, ministry, and spreading the gospel of the kingdom.**

1. After the resurrection, Jesus promises that the power of the Holy Spirit will be given to His followers for the purpose that the message of the kingdom would spread throughout all the earth. This happens in an exciting and powerful way at Pentecost. This gift is equally for all members of God's people: men and women, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile. (Acts 1:3-9; 2:1-18, 38-41; Acts 10:44-47; Acts 15:8-9; Titus 3:5-7)
2. In the early church, the Holy Spirit was the new marker of God's people (Christians), instead of circumcision or diet or special clothing or any other external signs. Having the *Holy Spirit* in our lives changes us and helps us to not fulfill the desires of the flesh. (Acts 19:1-6; 1 John 3:24; Romans 8:5-17; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 5:16-25)
3. The Holy Spirit actively guides and empowers the church for life and ministry. (Acts 4:23-31; Acts 8:29; 9:31; 13:1-4; 16:5-10; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 3:17-18; Eph 3:14-19)

#### **B. The Spirit-filled church points the nation towards a godly way of living by modeling and teaching the truth in all areas of life, which is supposed to strengthen the nation and lead others to glorify God.**

1. The new church gathered in the temple, synagogues, or homes, and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, common life, breaking bread together, and prayers. The Church is not a building but a group of believers gathered together and living out the kingdom of God in all areas of life. (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35)
2. Unity in the Church involves functioning like one body, where all parts are needed and valued. Even though the parts are different, they are meant to work together toward the same purpose: the whole world knowing Jesus and coming under His rulership. We must put aside things that cause disunity and division. (1 Cor 12:12-27; Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:1-16)
3. The church's leadership and governance is to set an example for society, especially in regards to having godly character. (Acts 6:1-10; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-8; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

4. Everyone in the church is to model and hold high standards for living in purity, love and respect within the family, work ethic, and wisdom in personal finances. (1 Cor 5:9-13, 6:9-20; Eph 5:15 - 6:9; 2 Thes 3:6-15; 1 John 3:16-18; 1 Peter 2:9)

**C. The Church is to respect and support the civil government's role in society and pray for its leaders. However sometimes the Church must challenge government policies if they violate God's ways, no matter what the consequences are.**

1. God defines the purpose and limits of civil government as a servant of God to punish the evildoer and promote good through protection of life, liberty, and property. God requires that His people submit to this authority of civil government. (Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-15)
2. The church is called to pray for civil leaders. God asks His people to pray for kings and those in authority to fulfill their divine calling so that mankind can live in peace. When the civil rulers are doing their job, the defining marks of the nation are peace and freedom to obey God. (1 Timothy 2:1-4; Acts 8:26-39)
3. When a man-made law goes against the commands of God, we are under obligation to obey God rather than man, even if it means suffering as a consequence. God's law and authority remains supreme. (Acts 4:13-21; Acts 5:17-33)

**Application Questions**

1. What is your experience and relationship with the Holy Spirit's guidance and empowering of your personal life and public ministry? Do we each recognize our deep need for God's Holy Spirit to make our lives new and lead us forward? Have we focused too much on outward forms of Christianity rather than a transformed inner life with God?
2. Does the church in your community look anything like the early church of believers, who gathered together in purity, love, and a common purpose? Are there any things that are causing disunity among the churches/congregations in your city? Pray and seek God for strategy in creating and maintaining Christian unity.
3. What is your church's relationship with your civil government? Do you pray for your government and its leaders? How can your congregation better support and serve your civil leaders and thus influence them? Are there any areas where the church needs to boldly speak up for justice?

# **THE SPREAD OF LIBERTY**

## ***Exploring Ways to Transform Your Community***

### **Lesson Summary**

God's purpose in history is to spread biblical liberty for individuals and peoples. God establishes liberty by using ordinary people who seek to apply His Word to all areas of life. We can learn from the record of history about how God has brought about transformation in the nations.

### **Key Bible Stories**

1. The Kingdom of God fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:24-45)
2. The Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:28-34)
3. Tell the Coming Generation of the Glorious Deeds of the Lord (Psalm 78)

### **Lesson Points**

#### **A. God's care and oversight in the affairs of history is for the purpose of spreading liberty for individuals and nations.**

1. Biblical liberty means being free of oppressive domination from either external forces or internal sinful bondage. It is the freedom to do what is right. (Galatians 5:1,13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 1:25)
2. God plans to bring his kingdom of liberty to all peoples and nations on earth. (Daniel 2:24-45; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 6:10; Philippians 2:5-11)

#### **B. The Bible in the head/heart/hands of the people is the seed of liberty. Every believer needs to own, read, understand, and apply the word of God to see biblical liberty established.**

1. The way God spreads biblical liberty on earth is through people groups knowing His Word and obeying it in all spheres of society. (John 8:31-36; Matthew 28:18-20; Deut. 12:28; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
2. Biblical liberty is not established through top-down control of people's behavior. Instead it begins on the inside (in the heart) as people lovingly make Christ the ruler of their lives. (Mark 12:28-34; 2 Tim 2:21-22; Romans 6:15-18)

#### **C. The purpose of studying history is to learn from the record of the past how God has brought about transformation in the nations.**

1. We learn from the record of the past about God and what He has done, as well as how people have responded to His kindness (Psalm 78:4-8; Psalm 102:18-22).
2. *The Timeline of Liberty*: When we study the past 2,000 years since the end of the New Testament, we see that what brought liberty was always the people having direct access to God and His Word. This led to desire for church and civil reforms based on the Bible. Whenever the Bible was removed from the common people, there was little advancement in civil liberty, education, or science / technology.

**3. *Historical Examples of Transforming Communities:***

- What were the conditions in society like before the gospel/word came?
- What did the people do with God's word, and how did that change the nation?

a. **Norway** (Hans Nielsen Hauge)

b. **Geneva** (John Calvin)

c. **India** (William Carey)

d. **Korea**

**Application Questions**

1. How can we work together to see biblical liberty strongly established in our nation within the next seventy years? Take time to pray about this in groups.
2. What is keeping the people in our community from owning, reading, understanding, and applying the word of God? How can we overcome these obstacles?