

Small Group Study Guide



The Old Testament

Nov 17, 2019

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for preserving this epic story of the Hebrew people. We thank you for using the nation of Israel as a means to your divine end. And we thank you that when the time was just right, you sent your Son into this world so that we could be forgiven and be adopted as your Son and daughters. May we never take this story for granted and may we instead drop to our knees in gratitude. We pray this in the matchless and powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 53:5-11

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes[c] his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. 11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life[d] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Galatians 4:4-5

4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.



INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament chronicles God's redemptive, sequential activity in history. It's a fabulous gritty, epic history of the Hebrew people in which over and over, Israel is reminded that they are a divine means to an end. So instead of seeing the Old Testament as a spiritual guide book or a storyline that needs to be tidied up, maybe we should see it as something even better – the history of God preparing the world for a savior.

The storyline of the Old Testament should cause us to drop to our knees in gratitude. There is no need to tidy it up or sand off the rough edges. It's not a spiritual guidebook. It's a story of our God who waded into the mess in order to write a story of redemption.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss a story or an idea from the Old Testament that someone tried to tidy up and soften the edges to serve their practical purpose for teaching you. What's the difference in seeing the Old Testament as a spiritual guide book versus a history of the Hebrew nation?
- 2) As a group, discuss a few words or phrases that you associate with the following Old Testament words: Abraham, Moses, Sinai Covenant, Kings, Temple, Prophets?
- 3) Which of the following ideas is the most surprising or meaningful to you with regard to the Sinai Covenant? What do these ideas change about the way you see God? What do they change about your view of the purpose of the Old Testament?
 - The covenant represented a moral and civil code that ascribed inherent dignity in every person.
 - The covenant included a sexual ethic that protected the weak and the vulnerable.
 - The covenant viewed humanity as the pinnacle of creation because every person is made in God's image.
 - Women, servants, foreigners, and children all fared better under the Hebrew law than did their counterparts in the surrounding nations.
- 4) Read Isaiah 53:5-11 on page 1. Occasionally, a prophet would speak their historical context to a future day when God would do something through a nation for all the nations. What is the most meaningful image to you in this passage?
- 5) Read Galatians 4:4-5 on page 1. What does it mean that Jesus would redeem those under the law? What is different about the relationship we can have with God versus the relationship an ancient Jew could have with him?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, write Galatians 4:4-5 on a notecard and think about what these verses mean for you.