

Lesson 53: Faith in Action IV – Evaluating “Biblical” Statements

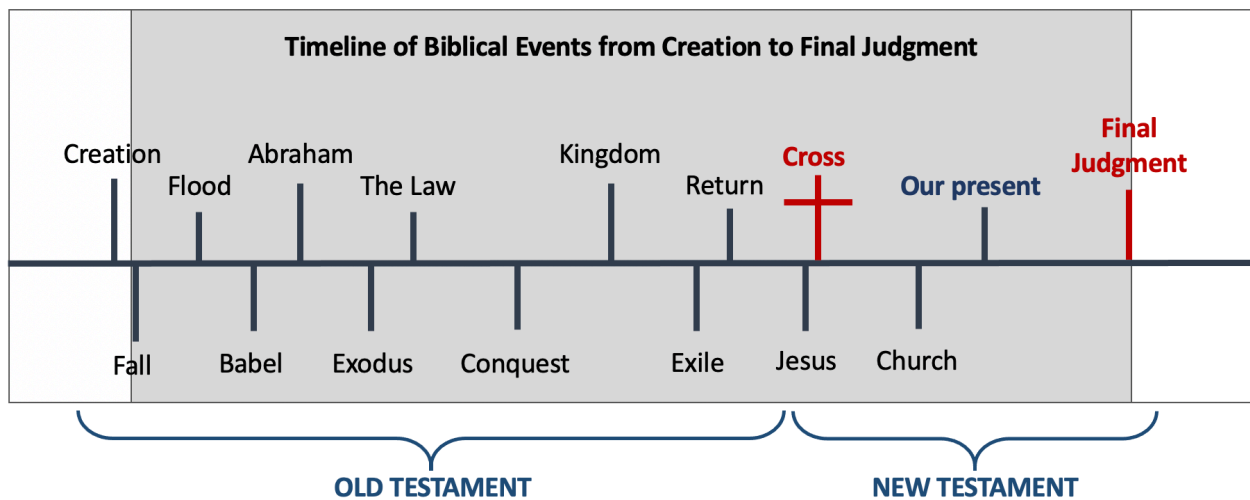
(**Note:** This Faith in Action exercise works best as a workshop. Please allow more time for meaningful discussion. Recommended time: three hours.)

The Bible is a record of Yahweh’s history and truth. And it also contains information about the future that the Creator-God of the universe wants us to know.

Even though the Bible’s narrative spans all of history, from before creation till the far future of eternity, God did not record every event down but only chose to include the very events we have in the Bible. He did this for specific reasons.

None of the events in the Bible are random. Each and every event God included helps us build our understanding of Him, mankind, ourselves and helps us interpret the world.

In this series, we’ve covered key events from Genesis to Revelation.



However, what we’ve learnt is not just supposed to be head knowledge. It is really meant to help us live an effective Christian life every day.

In these final three lessons of the Interlocked series, we will pull together everything that we have learnt and practise how we can apply our knowledge of Scripture.

This is the focus of each of the remaining lessons.

Faith in Action IV: Evaluating “biblical” statements

How do we use an interlocked network of biblical truth to help us evaluate what other Christians are saying or teaching about God?

Faith in Action V: Evaluating the pagan worldview

How do we use the biblical framework to evaluate questions, ideas and criticisms that come from the pagan worldview?

Faith in Action VI: Standing strong in our faith

How do we use the biblical framework to assure ourselves so we can continue to stand firm in God and not get shaken?

For this Faith in Action IV, we will be evaluating “biblical” statements. But before we do that, we want to review what we have learnt in the New Testament. There are three parts to this lesson.

Part 1: Review the Truths We Have Learnt

Instructions

- On page 4, there is a table of New Testament events that we have studied.
 - The left column is the name of the event.
 - The middle column (which is blank) are the truths (doctrines) that we have learnt.
 - The right column contains the descriptions of the truths we have learnt from these events. For example:

Event	What did God teach man?	Notes
Messiah		Christ Jesus

- On page 5 are the truths written as questions that go into the middle column. They are the doctrines we have learnt in the series. For example:

10
Who is the
God-man?

11
What is the
baptism of fire?




12
What is the
Tribulation?

- Each event teaches us Bible truths. For example, when we learnt about the Messiah, **Christ Jesus**, one of the truths we learnt is that He is the God-man. So “**Who is the God-man?**” is the truth that we learnt.

Event	What did God teach man?	Notes
Messiah	(10) Who is the God-man?	Christ Jesus

- Fill in the middle column on page 4 with the list of truths found on page 5.
- The completed table will give you a summary of the key lessons we have learnt from the New Testament.
- In this review, each option on page 5 fits into only one event on page 4.

Lessons from the New Testament

Event	What did God teach man?	Notes
	(10) Who is the God-man?	Christ Jesus.
		Jesus put aside the right to use His divine powers.
		Jesus has two natures in one body at the same time, without mixing.
		Jesus was born without imputed sin nor a sin nature and He committed no personal sin.
		Restitution: whatever has been destroyed or damaged must be restored.
		Having a brand new, everlasting, perfect body.
		God's programme for Israel is on pause until the full number of Gentiles come to faith.
		The body of believers united to Jesus.
		The Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
		The third Person of the Trinity.
		Gives new life, indwells, baptises, seals, intercedes for believers and gives spiritual gifts.
		Joining believers to Jesus and to other believers.
		Jesus removes all unbelievers from the earth.
		Jesus, from heaven.
		The Holy Spirit works with the Father and the Son through believers.
		Jesus will remove it at the rapture.
	The End	This is a time of severe discipline for Israel.
		The physical, 1000-year reign of Jesus on earth.
		The completely new and perfect heaven and earth.
		The final and never-ending destiny of all rebellious mankind and spirit beings in the lake of fire.

Use these options to fill in the blanks on Page 4.

1
What does it mean
that Jesus is perfect?

2
What is the
Kingdom of God?

3
What is the work
of the Holy Spirit?

4
What is
the church?

5
How does the
church grow?

6
What does "Jesus
emptied Himself" mean?

7
Who is the
Holy Spirit?

8
What does justice
mean to God?

9
Who directs
the church?

10
Who is the
God-man?

11
What is the
baptism of fire?

12
What is the
Tribulation?

13
What is the
Eternal State?

14
How does
the church end?

15
Who started
the church?

16
What is the baptism
of the Holy Spirit?

17
What does it mean
that Jesus is both
God and man?

18
What is eternal
punishment?

19
What is the delay
of the Kingdom?

20
What is
glorification?

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Instructions

For Part 1, staple pages 1–4 together and hand them out. Also hand out page 5 as a loose sheet.

The answer key on page 33 can be handed out loose after Part 1 is completed so the class can review the answers.

For Part 2, staple pages 7–20 together and hand them out. Go through the worked example as a class.

For Part 3, staple pages 21–28 together and hand them out. Also hand out as loose sheets the reference pages 29 and 31. These will aid the class in the exercise. Break up the class into smaller groups to do Part 3.

Staple pages 35–42 together and hand them out after the small breakout groups have finished their discussions and the class regathers to share their thoughts.

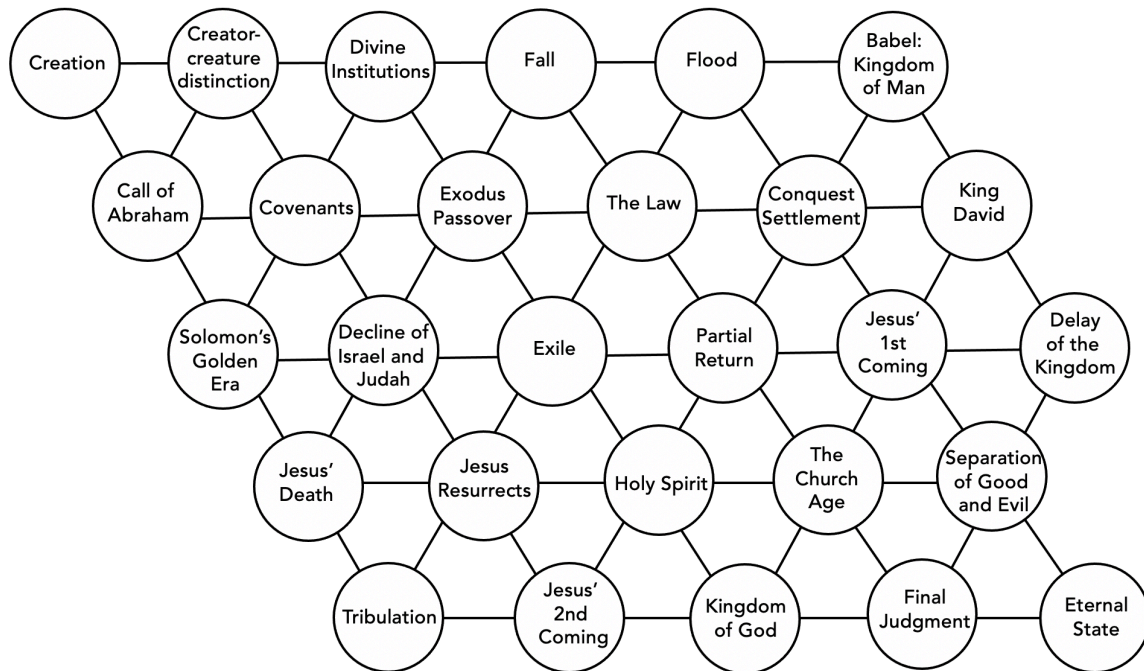
Part 2: An Interlocked Network of Biblical Truth

The Bible is not a collection of standalone events. Rather, God has very carefully curated the historical events He wants to record in the Bible.

All the truths in the Bible work together.

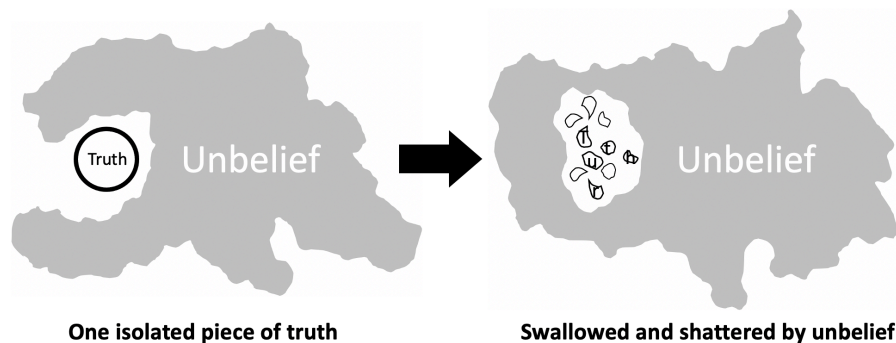
And this is how God did it: each event teaches us one or more biblical truths that build on the foundation of truths revealed earlier. And these new truths are then the foundation of more truths He revealed in later events.

In this way, over time, God gave us a network of interlocking truth.



What's so important about interlocking truth?

A. Interlocking truth helps us avoid having our one piece of truth shattered by unbelief.



- B. Importantly, interlocking truth also helps us better evaluate statements and ideas to see if they fit with God’s revealed truth in the rest of the Bible.

The Bible consistently warns us to guard against false teaching and false teachers. This means we must not simply believe everything we hear, read or watch. Otherwise we’ll unknowingly accept ideas that contradict the Bible or even contradict each other. But how do we do this?

How do we evaluate ideas? A worked example.




Imagine you are reading an article and you came across the following section:

In the Old Testament, we see Yahweh enforce His righteous standards by repeatedly judging Israel and the nations.

However, in the New Testament, we see Jesus come in love to save the world. Jesus’ message is one of peace and love and not about judgment. John 3:17 says, “God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”

Therefore, as Christians, we should focus on sharing the love of Christ. Jesus loves the whole world and if Jesus Himself doesn’t judge, then we Christians should not judge others as well. As Matthew 7:1 says, “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.”

Christians have several responses. They could say:

- **It’s right:** Some Christians will read this and believe it because it quotes the Bible and it was taught by a prominent or trusted Bible teacher. 
- **It’s wrong:** Other Christians instinctively feel there is something wrong with the statements, but they don’t know the reasons why and are unable to explain it to themselves or others. 
- **Don’t know:** Still others have trouble knowing what to do with a commentary like that. They are unsure whether to believe it or not. So, oftentimes, this thought is left hanging unresolved in their minds. 

The Bible tells us that even when Paul, God’s chosen apostle, was teaching the Word of God, the Bereans did not simply accept his word just because he was an apostle or because he was quoting Scripture.

Instead, using Scripture as their ultimate authority, they diligently checked Paul's teaching against the Bible.

Acts 17:11

And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.

God wants all Christians to be discerning when it comes to His Word. This is especially important as the Bible warns that there are many false teachers and false teachings specially designed to trick Christians into believing lies and clever half-truths. This is what Peter warned.

2 Peter 2:1a

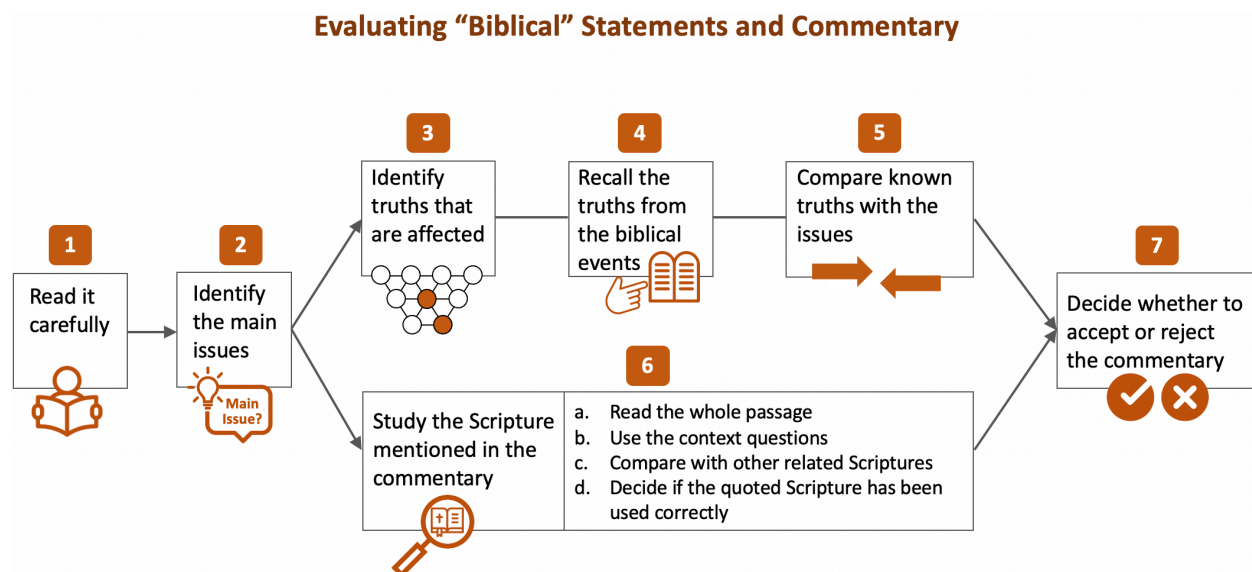
But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies...

Therefore, as Christians, instead of simply choosing from the above three possible responses, perhaps this would be better:

- **Let's evaluate:** Do as the Bereans did in searching the Scriptures to see if this commentary is true.

But how do we evaluate? One important tool is to use the whole interlocking framework of Scripture.

Faith In Action Drill





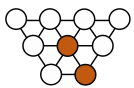
1. Read the commentary carefully.

Read the text in the box on page 8 once more.



2. Ask ourselves, “What is the main issue?”

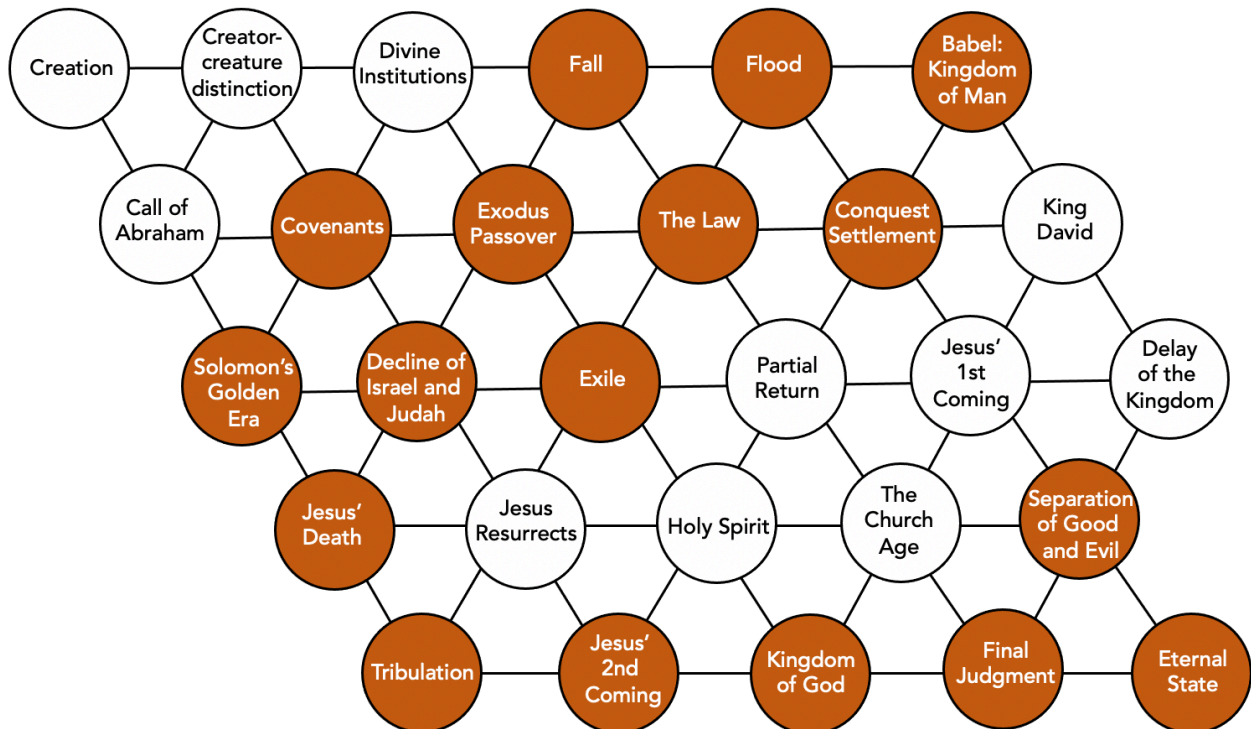
- Does Yahweh focus on judgment while Jesus focuses on love and acceptance?
- Does Jesus judge?
- Should Christians judge?



3. With the main issues in mind, which events or truths in the Bible are directly affected, contradicted or toppled?

We have seen that every truth in the Bible is interconnected to others.

Using the interlocking framework diagram as a simple guide, we have coloured in the truths that the main issues most affect (that is, judgment, love and acceptance).





4. Recall the truths from these events that would be relevant in helping us evaluate the commentary.

Here, it will also be helpful to look at the summary of the lessons learnt in both the Old and New Testaments found on pages 29, 31 and 33.

- **Fall:**

Yahweh judged but showed mercy to Adam and Eve by preserving their lives.



- **Babel:**

Yahweh judged but showed mercy to rebellious mankind by not destroying them; instead, He scattered them using language so they would stop plotting evil.



- **Flood, Exodus, Conquest and Settlement, Separation of Good and Evil:**

Yahweh saved those who believed in Him and judged the rebellious after a period of grace.



- **The Law, Solomon's Golden Era, Decline of Israel and Judah, Exile, Covenants:**

Yahweh gave His standard of righteousness and promised blessings for obedience and cursings for disobedience. Yahweh did indeed bless His people when they obeyed, but He also punished them through the decline and exile of the Kingdom when they rebelled. Yet, God never forgot His unconditional covenants to them, so He preserved them and kept reminding them of His steadfast love towards them.



- **Jesus' Death:**

Yahweh's judgment fell on Jesus because Jesus was man's substitute.



- **Tribulation, Jesus' Second Coming, Kingdom of God, Final Judgment, Eternal State:**

Jesus comes to judge the world and separate believers and unbelievers. Believers will enter into His Kingdom and finally the Eternal State. Unbelievers will be punished for eternity in the lake of fire.



Review the relevant Scripture as needed to ensure we are clear on what the Bible teaches.

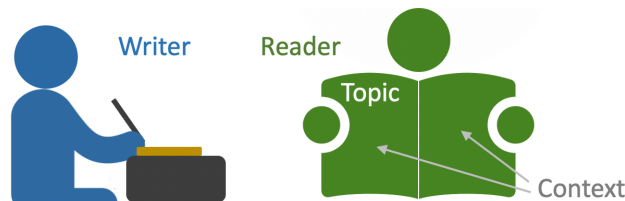
5. Compare known truths we have recalled in relation to the main issues of the commentary.

Main Issues from Commentary	Truths We Have Previously Learnt
Does Yahweh focus on judgment while Jesus focuses on love and acceptance?	Yahweh is full of mercy even when He judges.
Does Jesus judge?	Jesus came to offer salvation at His first coming, but Jesus will return to judge at His second coming. Judgment and salvation are linked but can be separated by time.
Should Christians judge?	God's people need to make judgments every day. Every decision needs to be judged—there is a right choice and a poor choice. Also, God's people are encouraged to help each other live well by God's standards. This involves judgment, or discernment. Every choice is wise or foolish. God's people need to help each other decide (judge) good and bad choices.



6. Study the Scripture brought up by the commentary.

The passage used two verses. Use the context questions to understand these verses.



- Who is the writer? (What is his cultural background?)
- Who is the audience? (Who was the original reader?)
- What is the topic of discussion? (Salvation? Discipline? Something else?)
- What is the context of the passage, chapter and book? (What is the surrounding text talking about?)

Examining Bible Verse #1

John 3:17

God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

- a. **Read the whole passage where the verse comes from (the verse itself is in bold).**

John 3:1–21

¹ There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.

² After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

³ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

⁴ “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

⁵ Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

⁹ “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.





¹⁰ Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? ¹¹ I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. ¹² But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ **God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.**

¹⁸ “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

b. Use the context questions

Context Questions	Answers
1. Who is the writer? 	The apostle John. He's relating a conversation that Jesus had.
2. Who is the audience? 	Nicodemus who is a Jew and a Pharisee (verse 1).
3. What is the topic of discussion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to enter the Kingdom of God (verse 3). • Jesus says the Holy Spirit must give spiritual life before someone can enter the Kingdom (verse 6). • People must believe in Jesus to get eternal life (and enter the Kingdom of God) (verse 15). • Jesus came to save the world (verse 17). • There is no judgment for those who believe in Jesus, but there's judgment for those who reject Him (verse 18).
4. What is the context of the passage, chapter and book? 	<p>The context of the passage highlights an issue that the Jews had. They knew that in order to be righteous and enter the Kingdom of God, they would need the promised Messiah to make them righteous. But they didn't know how God would actually do it. So Nicodemus, believing that Jesus is the Messiah, came to ask Him for the details on how one enters the Kingdom.</p> <p>Jesus answered by drawing from Old Testament Scripture talking about spiritual birth. To the one who believes in God's Messiah, God will grant spiritual life. For the one who rejects God's Messiah, they will be judged for their rejection.</p>

c. Decide if we need to look for more Scripture on this topic

Sometimes, the passage itself may not be enough to give a clear understanding. If so, look through a Bible concordance (or use the search feature in your digital Bible) to study other passages on the topic of judgment and love.

d. Ask ourselves if the writer of the commentary has used the verses correctly.

The writer used John 3:17 to say that Jesus' message is about peace and love and not judgment. However, verse 18 says there is judgment for those who do not believe in Him.

The writer has therefore not used the quoted verse in its proper context. We have learnt that God saves through judgment. Salvation and judgment go together. We also learn that Jesus' work of salvation and judgment is split into His two comings. At His first coming, He came to save. At His second coming, He will come to judge. That is why during His first coming, He focused on talking about saving and said He wasn't going to judge... at that time. But He will return to judge!

Examining Bible verse #2

Matthew 7:1

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.

a. Read the whole passage where the verse comes from (the verse itself is in bold).


Matthew 7:1–5




¹ **“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.** ² For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

³ “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own?

⁴ How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

b. Use the context questions

Context Questions	Answers
1. Who is the writer? 	The apostle Matthew. He’s recording Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5:1).

Context Questions	Answers
2. Who is the audience? 	Jews from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan River, including scribes and Pharisees. (Matthew 4:25).
3. What is the topic of discussion? 	Jesus is scolding the Jews for being hypocrites and wanting to judge others without first examining their own hearts.
4. What is the context of the passage, chapter and book? 	<p>This discussion was the last part of the “Sermon on the Mount” where Jesus was explaining Mosaic Law to the Jews. They, especially the Pharisees, had misunderstood the Law and made it legalistic and about outward actions and not about the heart or spirit of the Law.</p> <p>Jesus corrected their wrong understanding. He said if they judged others harshly with their own made-up, external, unrealistic standards, then they themselves will be judged in the same way.</p>

c. Decide if we need to look for more Scripture on this topic

In this case, looking at more Scripture would be helpful. Looking at what the Bible says about judging others, we see that the basic meaning of judgment is to discern good from evil, and right from wrong.

Here are other teachings about judgment:

- When there is a dispute among believers, the matter should be brought to the church’s attention so that other believers can make a judgment on the issue (1 Corinthians 6:1–8).
- The church is instructed to judge the serious sins of its members and take appropriate action (Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5:9–13).
- Believers are to judge whether a teacher’s teaching is true or has errors (Matthew 7:15–20; 1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 John 4:1).
- Believers are told to use judgment and discernment to identify those who are lazy, unruly, weak, fainthearted, etc. (1 Thessalonians 5:14).
- Those in church must judge who has the qualifications to be leaders (1 Timothy 3:1–13).

Scripture has much more to say about having good judgment. But from these examples, it is clear that part of the journey of a believer is learning God’s Word to build wisdom and wisdom is used to judge. Each believer has to judge their own actions and they are also called upon to judge fellow believers, to help them stay on the right path!

d. Ask ourselves if the writer of the commentary has used the passage correctly.

Jesus is saying in Matthew 7 that the first principle of judgment is that we begin with ourselves. He said, “First get rid of the log in your own eye.” He warned that if we failed to judge ourselves correctly, but then go to judge others unrighteously, we will be judged by the same unrighteous standards (“The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.”).

Jesus didn’t say believers could not judge others. Rather, having wisdom in judgment or discernment is part of being a mature Christian. All throughout Scripture, believers are told not to be blind but to make wise decisions (Philippians 1:9–10).

The believer who hears and accepts all kinds of teaching will end up being thoroughly confused.

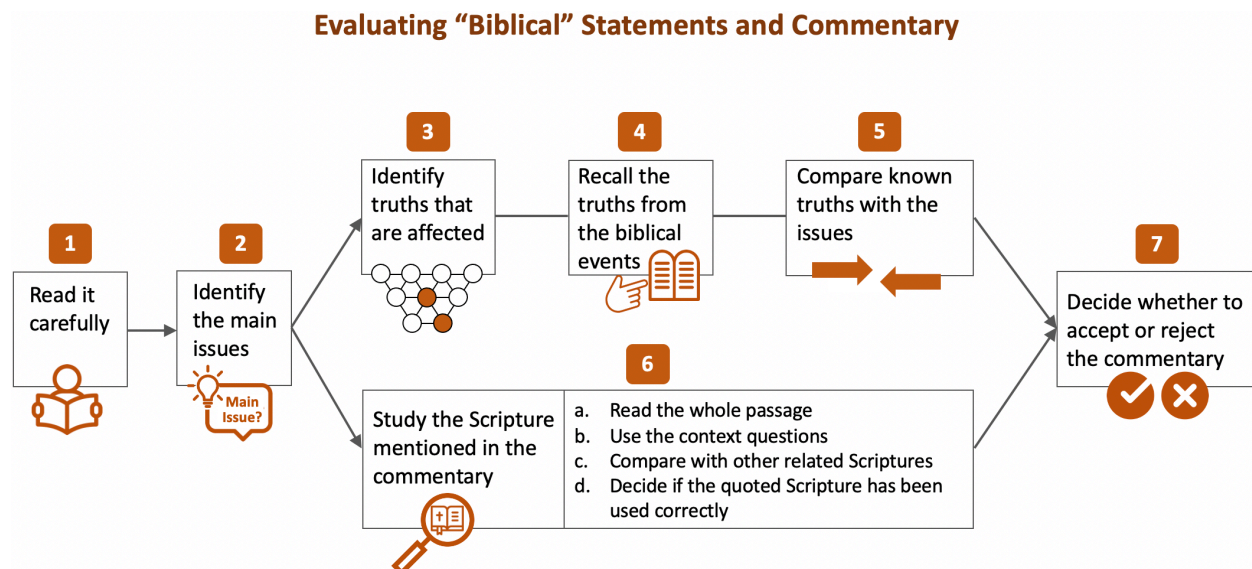
So, firstly, the writer of the commentary is wrong to say that Jesus doesn’t judge. What the writer has done is to pick out a fragment of Jesus’ overall teaching about judgment. That is dangerous. It is like quoting someone halfway and that results in a totally new thought that the speaker never intended.

Secondly, we see that Christians are told to know right from wrong. This means Christians must judge. Christians are also told to learn God’s standard of right and wrong well and to judge ourselves first before we are able to judge others.

The writer is therefore wrong to suggest that Christians can’t tell others what is right or wrong.

7. Finally, evaluating the statement in the light of the rest of Scripture, what conclusion should we arrive at when deciding whether or not to accept the commentary as true?

Having done the first six steps, we now do step 7.

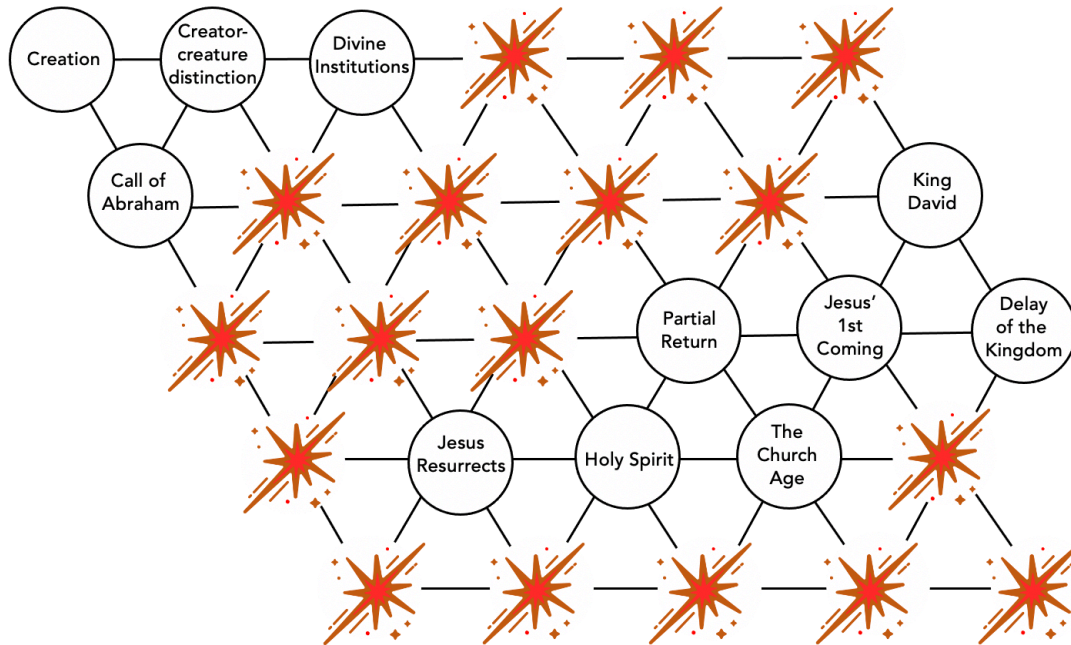


These are the choices we have about the commentary.

Choice #1:

Accept the statements of the commentary and reject the rest of the biblical truths that are impacted by it.

If we accept the commentary, then look at the truths in the interlocked framework that are impacted. Can our faith still stand?



Choice #2:

Reject the commentary, understanding the reasons why we have chosen to reject it. Our whole-view framework has guided us to analyse the commentary and it is clear the writer has made errors about the topic of judgment. We therefore have to reject it.

This is one example of how we use our interlocking network of biblical truth to evaluate statements and ideas that are related to the Bible.

Our worked example was a “negative” one where the commentary did not fit with what we understand about the Bible as a whole.

However, learning to use the interlocking framework of biblical truth is not just about being able to identify incorrect teaching.

It is also about being able to support and explain accurate statements made about the Bible. Here is an example. Read the below commentary.

In Philippians 3, Paul tells us about the righteousness we have by faith in Jesus Christ. It no longer matters who we once were. All that matters now is who we are today in Christ. We gladly give up what we once treasured and throw away everything in our lives that led us away from God. “I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ” (Philippians 3:9).

The things we did to try and look righteous, we can rest from that now. Instead, we can lean heavily on Christ because in Christ, we have something that we could not achieve on our own. All of us desire that the things we have done wrong in life will not be counted against us. We wish that every evil thought, word or deed that we have committed could vanish. All of us desire to be able to stand in front of God with a clean record. When we trust in Christ, that becomes not just a possibility, but a reality!

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul explains how Jesus took every evil thought, word or deed we committed (and will commit) and placed it on Himself. And at the same moment, He placed His righteousness into our “account”. God promises that He would never hold our sins against us any longer for Christ has taken care of them all!

Do you understand what that means? Do you understand the freedom that brings? Do you understand that when God looks at our “account”, there is nothing but Christ’s righteousness. It’s like an overflowing bank account. Sure, we can try to add in our own pennies of good work, but do those pennies make our account more full? No, they do not. Jesus has filled our account with His righteousness and it already overflows.

While we will not be doing this exercise as a worked example, we encourage you to try this yourself.

Go through the seven steps. You should find that:

- In Step 5, the commentary fits the truths presented in the Bible.
- In Step 6, the writer of the commentary has indeed used the quoted Scripture correctly. Also, there are other supporting Scriptures in the Bible that teach the same thing. (Try looking for the other supporting Scriptures.)
- In Step 7, you should find that because the writer's conclusions match with the truths in the Bible, we can trust this commentary.

Ultimately, what we are attempting to do is live our lives using God's Word as our ultimate authority.

This means that the first place we go to should always be the Bible. But we must not use just bits and pieces of God's truth. We need to use the entire Bible framework with its interlocking network of truths to evaluate and analyse so-called biblical ideas and concepts to see if they really match up to God's Word. And we must also use the Bible framework to evaluate the worldviews that we encounter. Never the other way around!



Part 3: Practise Evaluating Statements and Ideas Using Scripture

Instructions



1. Read this article snippet.

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus in a visible and dramatic way. He began the church that day. Since then, God has been bringing believing Jews and Gentiles into one body. The church caused a huge upset in the Jewish worldview. God was doing something different, something new!

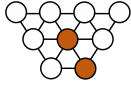
God is now relating to the world through the church instead of through the nation of Israel. In fact, the nation of Israel is no more. Since AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed, God has focused on the church and not on Israel. Also, God has called the church the “true Israel”. God calls church-age believers the true children of Abraham (Galatians 3:7).

Though the New Covenant was made with Israel, because of their continued disobedience, God has now transferred that to the church. That’s what Jesus did when He initiated the New Covenant at the last supper (Luke 22:20). Since then, it is mostly Gentiles who are coming into the covenant. Israel is no longer a party to it.

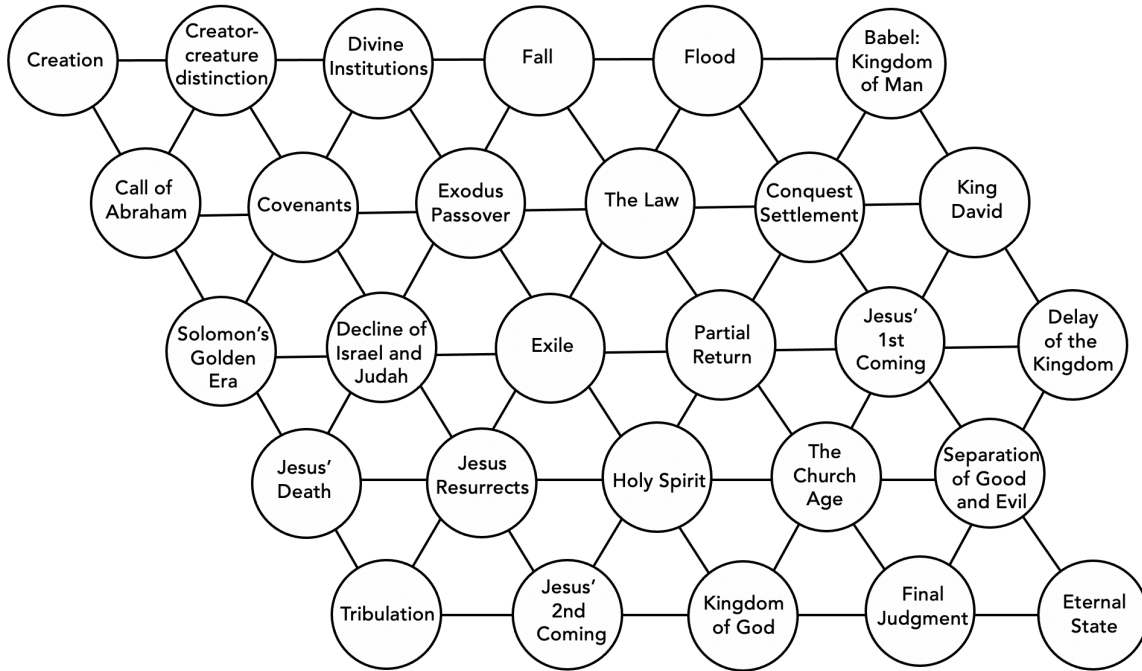
All the descriptions of spiritual blessings that God spoke of in the Old Testament, He has now transferred to the church. And the passages speaking about the physical land and kingdom, God has now transformed into spiritual blessings for the church.



2. Identify the main issue(s).

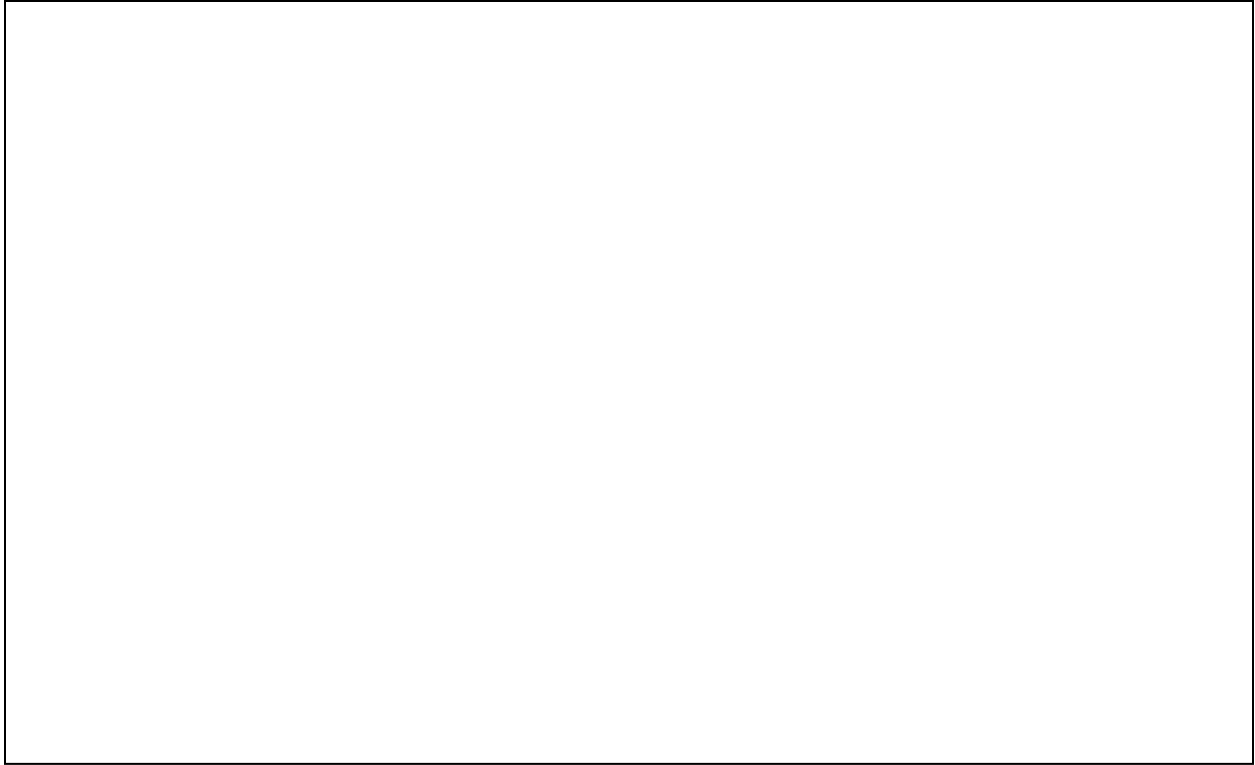


3. Identify truths that are affected by marking against the relevant circles.

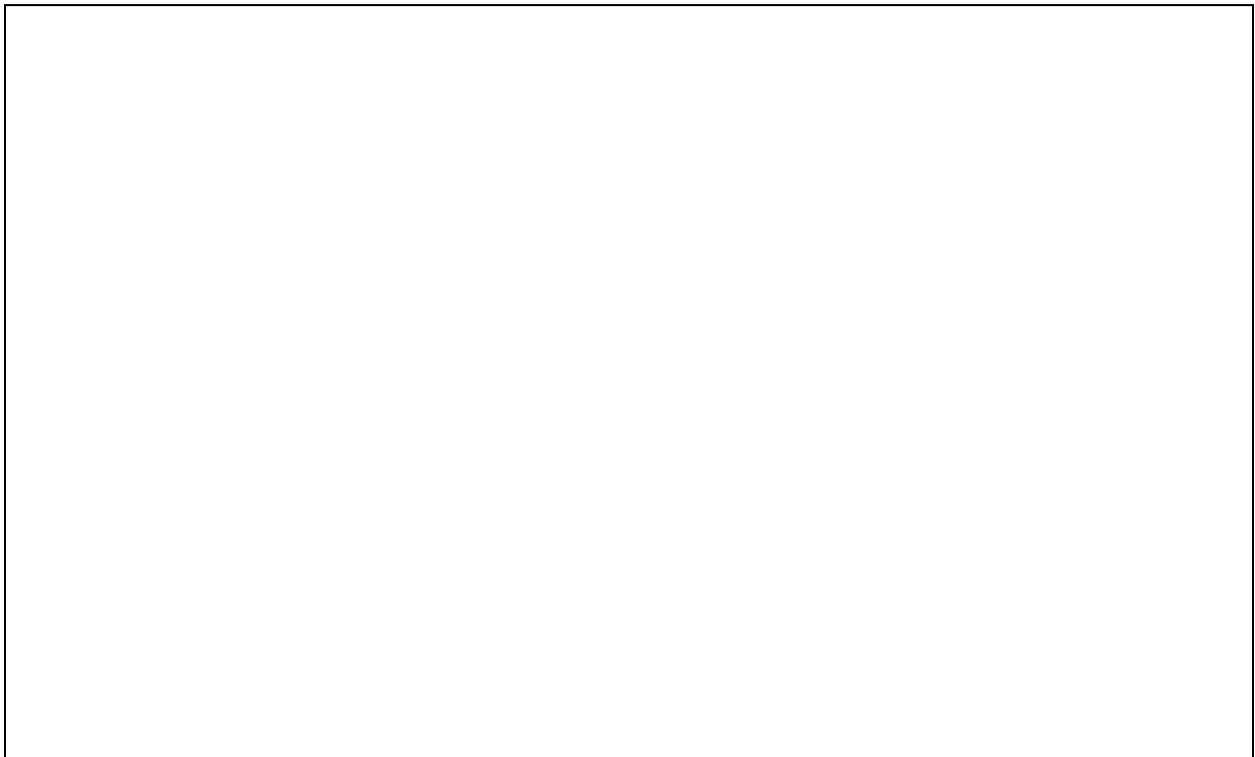


4. Recall the truths from the affected biblical events.

Use pages 29, 31 and 33 to help you recall the truths.



-  **5. Compare known truths we have recalled in relation to the main issues of the commentary.**









6. Study the first Scripture verse mentioned in the commentary.

Galatians 3:7

The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

a. Read the whole passage where the verse comes from.

b. Fill in the context questions.

Context Questions	Answers
1. Who is the writer? 	
2. Who is the audience? 	
3. What is the topic of discussion? 	
4. What is the context of the passage, chapter and book? 	

c. Decide if we need to look for more Scripture on this topic.

(You can use your digital Bible's search function, concordance, Bible commentary or study Bible to help. You can write your notes here. Also, you can refer to the lesson notes.)

d. Ask ourselves if the writer of the commentary has used the passage correctly.





Study the second Scripture mentioned in the commentary.

Luke 22:20

After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

a. Read the whole passage where the verse comes from.

b. Fill in the context questions.

Context Questions	Answers
1. Who is the writer? 	
2. Who is the audience? 	
3. What is the topic of discussion? 	
4. What is the context of the passage, chapter and book? 	

c. Decide if we need to look for more Scripture on this topic.

(You can use your digital Bible's search function, concordance, Bible commentary or study Bible to help. You can write your notes here. Also, you can refer to the lesson notes.)








d. Ask ourselves if the writer of the commentary has used the passage correctly.

  **7. Decide whether or not to accept the commentary as true.**

HINT: The following lessons address this topic.

- Lesson 28: Partial Return of Judah (pages 15–17)
- Lesson 29: The Jewish Expectation (Part 1) (pages 1–21, 27–34)
- Lesson 30: The Jewish Expectation (Part 2) (entire lesson)
- Lesson 40: The Delay of the Kingdom (pages 1–9)
- Lesson 45: God’s Plan for Israel and the Church (Part 1) (entire lesson)
- Lesson 46: God’s Plan for Israel and the Church (Part 2) (pages 1–15)
- Lesson 52: The Kingdom of God (pages 1–20)

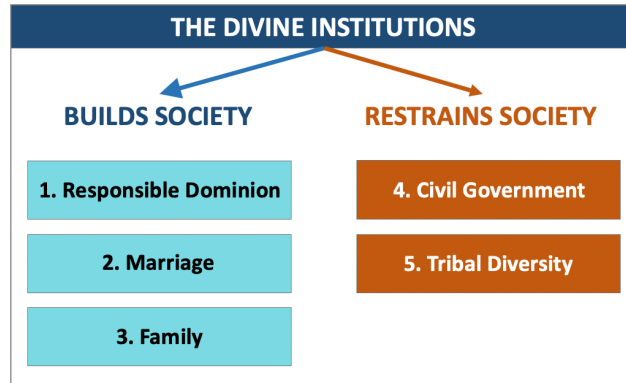
Reference Sheet: Lessons from the Old Testament

Event	What did God teach man?	Notes	
	Creation	Who is God?	Yahweh, the Creator God of the universe. There is a Creator-creature distinction.
		Who is man?	Under-lords representing Yahweh.
		What is nature?	This is under the authority of man.
	Fall	What is sin?	Rebellion against God.
		What is suffering?	Living with evil.
	Flood	What is judgment and salvation?	Separation of evil and good.
		What is grace?	God extending kindness to undeserving people.
	Call of Abraham	What is election?	God chooses to work through certain people.
		What is justification?	God declares people right in His eyes through their faith in Him.
		What is faith?	Believing Yahweh's words.
	Exodus	What is substitutionary atonement?	The innocent shedding blood and dying in place of the guilty.
	Mount Sinai	What is revelation?	God revealing Himself to man using language.
		What is inspiration?	What God chooses to record as Scripture.
		What is canonicity?	What passes the standard to become Scripture.
	Conquest	What is sanctification?	Learning obedience to God and pushing out sin.
	David	What is repentance?	A believer in God being convinced of sin, then confessing and trusting God for forgiveness and restoration.
	Solomon	What is biblical wisdom?	God's idea of what is truly right and wrong.
		What is godly culture?	Word of God and biblical wisdom as the foundation of culture.
	Decline of the Kingdom	What is divine discipline?	God uses punishment to encourage repentance.
	Exile	What is endurance?	How to live by faith while in the pagan world.
		What is prayer?	Relating to God while focusing on His faithfulness, glory and grace.
	Partial Return	What is hope?	Trusting in the apocalyptic literature about God's final restoration.

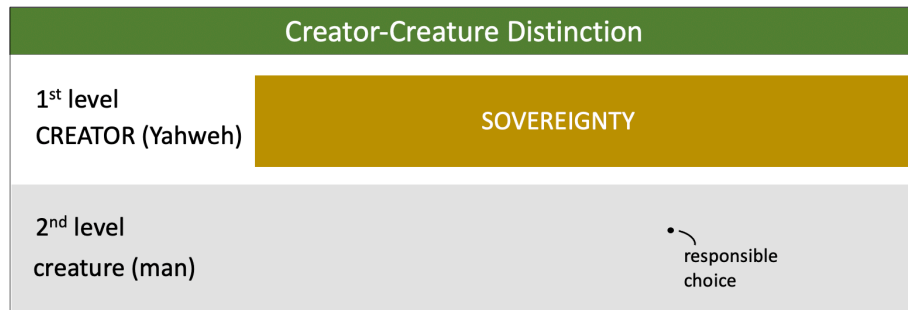
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Reference Sheet

Review of the Divine Institutions



Review of the Creator-Creature Distinction






Review of the Unconditional Covenants

Abrahamic	Land	Davidic	New
Unconditional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land • Descendants • Worldwide blessing Genesis 12:1-3	Unconditional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God will regather Israel to possess their Promised land forever Deuteronomy 29:1-30:10	Unconditional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David's dynasty will be eternal • David's dynasty will be in Jerusalem 2 Samuel 7:11-17	Unconditional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God will forgive sins • God will change hearts • God will regather Israel to their land Jeremiah 31:31-34

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Lessons from the New Testament (Answers)

Event	What did God teach man?	Notes
	(10) Who is the God-man?	Christ Jesus.
	(6) What does “Jesus emptied Himself” mean?	Jesus put aside the right to use His divine powers.
	(17) What does it mean that Jesus is both God and man?	Jesus has two natures in one body at the same time, without mixing.
	(1) What does it mean that Jesus is perfect?	Jesus was born without imputed sin nor a sin nature and He committed no personal sin.
	(8) What does justice mean to God?	Restitution: whatever has been destroyed or damaged must be restored.
	(20) What is glorification?	Having a brand new, everlasting, perfect body.
	(19) What is the delay of the Kingdom?	God’s programme for Israel is on pause until the full number of Gentiles come to faith.
	(4) What is the church?	The body of believers united to Jesus.
	(15) Who started the church?	The Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
	(7) Who is the Holy Spirit?	The third Person of the Trinity.
	(3) What is the work of the Holy Spirit?	Gives new life, indwells, baptises, seals, intercedes for believers and gives spiritual gifts.
	(16) What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?	Joining believers to Jesus and to other believers.
	(11) What is the baptism of fire?	Jesus removes all unbelievers from the earth.
	(9) Who directs the church?	Jesus, from heaven.
	(5) How does the church grow?	The Holy Spirit works with the Father and the Son through believers.
(14) How does the church end?	Jesus will remove it at the rapture.	
	(12) What is the Tribulation?	This is a time of severe discipline for Israel.
	(2) What is the Kingdom of God?	The physical, 1000-year reign of Jesus on earth.
	(13) What is the Eternal State?	The completely new and perfect heaven and earth.
	(18) What is eternal punishment?	The final and never-ending destiny of all rebellious mankind and spirit beings in the lake of fire.

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Suggested Response for Part 3



2. Identify the main issue(s).

I. Issues regarding Israel

- What is God’s plan for Israel?
- Is God done with rebellious Israel?
- Has God replaced Israel with the church?
- What does Scripture say about Israel’s future?

II. Issues regarding the Church

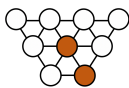
- How is the church related to Israel?
- What is God’s plan for the church?

III. Issues regarding God’s covenants

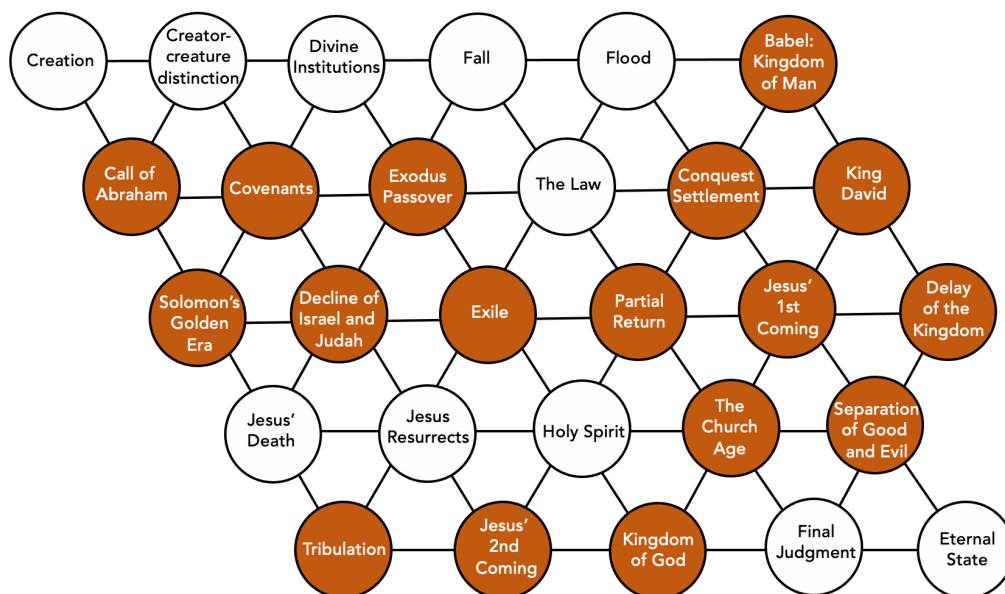
- Why does God make covenants?
- Does God show integrity in the way He handles His covenants with Israel?

IV. Interpreting Scripture

- How do we interpret Scripture?



3. Identify truths that are affected by marking against the relevant circles.





4. Recall the truths from the affected biblical events.

(Note: The comments include how aspects of the truths are impacted by the article snippet.)

Separation of Good and Evil. God intends to separate good and evil permanently. His plan involves Israel.



Babel: Kingdom of Man. Rebellious mankind has set up their own kingdom to defy God's authority. But God will get rid of the Kingdom of Man. It's a battle between Babylon (the evil Kingdom of Man) vs Jerusalem (the righteous Kingdom of God). Israel is at the centre of God's plan to separate good from evil.



Call of Abraham. God elected Abraham and his descendants to (i) record His history and truth as Scripture, (ii) to take Scripture back to the world and (iii) to be the source of worldwide blessing. Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant are the beginning of Israel.



Exodus/Passover. God supernaturally created the nation of Israel to carry on the mission He gave to Abraham. It was the next step in using Israel to be the worldwide blessing.



Conquest and Settlement. God guided Israel into the Promised Land and ordered them to clear out evil. This was a picture of God clearing out evil and setting up His Kingdom of God. God already demonstrated in history how He will use Israel to clear out evil.



Covenants. God made three more covenants to confirm and expand the Abrahamic Covenant. God gives more details of how He will bring in the Kingdom of God through Israel. God tied His character to His fulfilment of the covenants. If God fails, then He is not a God who is sovereign and also not a God to be trusted! One of the covenants, the New Covenant, is about God forgiving Israel's sins, God putting in them a new heart that will love and obey Him, and God returning them to the Promised Land permanently. Jesus initiates the New Covenant with His death on the cross.



King David. He is a picture of Jesus, the future, perfect, human and Jewish King of the Kingdom of God. The details of how David became king picture or foreshadow how Jesus becomes King of the Kingdom of God.



Solomon's Golden Era. Solomon's reign is a picture of God's Kingdom in operation. Israel's golden era shows us what God's Kingdom looks like when people live by His standards and under His protection. The influence of God's Kingdom goes out everywhere. God intends to make the returning Kingdom of God be like Solomon's era, but on a global scale.



Decline of Israel and Judah; Exile; Partial Return. Israel's failure to be obedient to the conditional Mosaic Covenant resulted in severe discipline. But God has not forgotten His masterplan to make Israel be the worldview blessing. He caused a partial return of Jews to the Promised Land. This was the next phase of His plan for Israel.



Jesus' First Coming; Delay of the Kingdom; the Church Age. God's plan for Israel was put on "pause" due to their continued unbelief and rebellion. So He delayed the return of the Kingdom and introduced the church age. But the church age will end and God will once again turn His attention back to Israel and His plan for them.



Tribulation and Jesus' Second Coming. Though the Jews have persistently been rebellious, God will bring them to faith through severe discipline. This is the Tribulation. At the end of the Tribulation, all remaining Jews will come to faith in their Messiah. Jesus personally and physically returns to earth to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.



Kingdom of God. Revelation tell us the Kingdom will last one thousand years and will be based in Jerusalem. King Jesus will physically reign over the earth with resurrected David as the prince. Israel will be the superpower of the world and the source of world peace. This is God's plan for Israel. This is how God fulfils all His covenants with Israel.



➔ ➔ **5. Compare the truths we understand from the Bible with the issues.**

Main Issues from Commentary	Truths We Have Previously Learnt
<p>I. Issues regarding Israel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is God's plan for Israel? • Is God done with rebellious Israel? • Has God replaced Israel with the church? • What does Scripture say about Israel's future? 	<p>In recalling the truths from the biblical events, we see that God very intentionally created and guided Israel for the purpose of separating good and evil permanently.</p> <p>The Kingdom of God is the result of God separating good and evil. His Kingdom is a physical, actual, political kingdom on earth that is centred in Jerusalem. And the Jews are part of God's plan to bring in the Kingdom.</p> <p>God intends to complete His Kingdom plans using Israel. What He plans, He will not abandon. Though Israel has been rebellious throughout much of its history, God's plan for the nation of Jews has not been thwarted.</p> <p>It is true that God's plan for Israel is on hold and God is currently focusing on the church. But God has not replaced Israel with the church. At some point in the future, when God's plan for the church is complete, He will turn His attention back to finishing His plan for Israel. We see this most clearly in the apocalyptic writings.</p>

Main Issues from Commentary	Truths We Have Previously Learnt
<p>II. Issues regarding the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the church related to Israel? • What is God's plan for the church? 	<p>Because of Israel's rebellion, God started the previously unannounced programme with Gentiles through the church. But the church is a different people of God whom God is using to make Israel jealous. God told the church to make disciples. In this way, while Israel remains in rebellion, the church brings the gospel to the world.</p> <p>But when the full number of the church has come in, God will remove the church from the earth at the rapture. Then he will turn His attention back to Israel.</p>
<p>III. Issues regarding God's covenants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does God make covenants? • Does God show integrity in the way He handles His covenants with Israel? 	<p>God only started making covenants with mankind when their relationship with Him was broken. God made covenants to show how serious He was about the plans He had for Israel and the world. He wanted Israel to be able to trust and rely on Him.</p> <p>Because of His trustworthy character, He intends to fulfil every covenant promise He has made. And He recorded His actions in Scripture to show that He is trustworthy. He has staked His reputation on fulfilling Israel's covenants. If He fails to keep His word, He is not the true God! So to show He is, God will keep and fulfil all His covenants with Israel.</p>
<p>IV. Interpreting Scripture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we interpret Scripture? 	<p>When reading about God's and Israel's history, what He recorded were actual events. His record of history in the Old Testament is to be read in a plain, ordinary way, like how we would read a newspaper or a history report. In fact, with regards to the covenants that He made, it is like any contract: the only way to understand and interpret contracts are in a plain, literal way. Contracts cannot work if there are multiple metaphorical interpretations to each of the terms.</p> <p>And we should read the New Testament in the same way too. After all, it's the same God and He continues to record His Word in the same way.</p> <p>God defines words through biblical events. The New Testament is loaded with words that come from the Old Testament. We are not free to make up new meanings for the Bible's vocabulary. Instead, we need to go back to the Old Testament to learn what the words mean. This will help us interpret the New Testament and to read it in its proper context.</p>






6. Study the Scripture verses mentioned in the commentary.


a. Read the whole passage where the verse comes from.

Read Galatians 3. (You can also read more of the surrounding chapters.)

b. Fill in the context questions.

Galatians 3:7

Context Questions	Answers
<p>1. Who is the writer?</p> 	<p>The apostle Paul, who is Jewish and previously a Pharisee. God appointed him to be the apostle to the Gentiles to share with them the gospel and teach God’s Word to them.</p>
<p>2. Who is the audience?</p> 	<p>The churches in Galatia. They were mainly Gentile believers.</p>
<p>3. What is the topic of discussion?</p> 	<p>Some false teachers who still held strongly to the Mosaic Law had come to tell the believers in Galatia that it was still necessary to follow the law. This created confusion among the Galatian churches.</p> <p>Paul writes to remind them that salvation is by faith alone, trusting in God’s grace, and not by any works of the law.</p> <p>In Galatians 3, Paul reminded his readers that they received the Holy Spirit because of faith in Christ, not through obedience to the law. He reached back into history and pointed out that the event of Abraham coming to faith and being declared righteous by God happened before God gave Moses the law. Justification happened without the need of the law!</p> <p>In other words, the Abrahamic Covenant, an unconditional covenant, was given first. And 430 years later, God gave the Mosaic Covenant. Abraham did not need the law to save him or keep him justified! God did that.</p> <p>Abraham is the model for all believers on how to be justified. And therefore, anyone who comes to faith like Abraham, is spiritually counted as his child: “The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God” (Galatians 3:7).</p>





Context Questions	Answers
<p>4. What is the context of the passage, chapter and book?</p> 	<p>Galatians 3 and 4 are some of Paul's strongest words about how salvation is by God's grace alone. He uses six arguments to prove that God saves sinners through faith alone, and not by any works of the law.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal argument (Galatians 3:1–5). Paul asked the Galatians to recall their personal experience with Christ when they were justified. 2. Scriptural argument (Galatians 3:6–14). He used Scripture to prove his point. 3. Logical argument (Galatians 3:15–29). Paul explained how contracts worked and he compared the Abrahamic Covenant with the Mosaic Covenant. 4. Historical argument (Galatians 4:1–11). He explained how the law guided Israel until Christ came to take over and after that, there was no longer the need for the law. 5. Emotional argument (Galatians 4:12–18). Paul reminded them of his love for them and their happy relationship in the past. 6. Allegorical or symbolic argument (Galatians 4:19–31). He used the life of Abraham and his relationships with Sarah and Hagar to show how Hagar represented working to gain justification through the law (it doesn't work!) versus how Sarah represented believing in God's promises (it works!). <p>So the wider context of his letter is Paul battling false teaching that has crept into the churches in Galatia.</p> <p>These false teachers had come to say that believing in Christ alone was not enough. They needed to obey Mosaic Law. (You can well imagine how fed up Paul must have been. He fought this in Acts 15 and Acts 21 and reading his many letters, he continued to argue against not tampering with the gospel of Jesus Christ by adding the law to it. Here again in Galatians he is arguing between salvation by grace alone versus salvation by grace plus works!)</p>

a. Read the whole passage where the verse comes from.

Read Luke 22.

b. Fill in the context questions.

Luke 22:20

Context Questions	Answers
<p>1. Who is the writer?</p> 	<p>The apostle Luke, who did extensive research and interviews to compile the evidence of Jesus' life.</p>
<p>2. Who is the audience?</p> 	<p>Luke addressed his work to Theophilus, who is a believer with a Greek name. It seems the books of Luke-Acts were first written for him to have an accurate and comprehensive record of the things he had been taught about Jesus.</p>
<p>3. What is the topic of discussion?</p> 	<p>In Luke 22, the focus is on Jesus initiating the New Covenant that the prophet Jeremiah had written about (Jeremiah 31:31–40). The Jews had long wondered when God would initiate and fulfil the promises of this covenant.</p> <p>It turned out that Jesus was the One to start the covenant and He was the founding sacrifice of the covenant. It would be by His shed blood that people entered the covenant.</p>
<p>4. What is the context of the passage, chapter and book?</p> 	<p>In this section of Luke's Gospel, the focus was on Jesus' upcoming work on the cross. It turns out that what Jesus would do was exactly pictured by the Passover feast that the Jews had been celebrating every year since the actual event in Egypt.</p> <p>Now Jesus, at the Passover meal, was giving the feast its greater meaning when He explained that He was the true Passover Lamb who was going to be the substitute sacrifice for mankind.</p> <p>Later, in Luke 24, the risen Christ explained to two of His disciples that the promises and prophecies that Yahweh made long ago to the Jews would be fulfilled by Him. God had not forgotten His covenant promises.</p> <p>In fact, at the Last Supper, all the men around the table were Jewish. The church was not in view because the church did not exist at that point! Jesus was among a group of Jews, initiating a Jewish covenant that God had promised to fulfil for Israel since Old Testament times.</p>

c. Decide if we need to look for more Scripture on this topic.

As we had studied in Lessons 40–44, Jesus announced that because of the rebellious and unbelieving hearts of the Jewish people, Yahweh was putting Israel on “hold” and He began a new programme—the church. The church was an unrevealed programme (a “mystery”) that God had not told Israel’s prophets about.

But Jesus’ death on the cross also offered salvation for Gentiles. It is through His death on the cross that the way was opened for Gentiles to come to faith in Him and be saved.

The church and Israel are not the same group. Both are God’s people but God had different plans for each.

d. Ask ourselves if the writer of the commentary has used the passage correctly.

Galatians 3:7. The writer has taken the quote from Galatians 3 out of context. When we read the flow of the argument that Paul is presenting, the apostle is actually explaining how what Christ did was superior to the law. Christ justifies people through faith and nothing else is needed. Works of the law do not contribute to one’s justification. Galatians 3 is not a discussion about the church replacing Israel.

Luke 22:20. In the same way, the writer has ignored the larger context of the New Covenant. That covenant was first mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah. The covenant was for Israel and Judah. Besides the forgiveness of sin and a new heart, God had promised to restore Israel and Judah to the Promised Land. We are told how God will fulfil the New Covenant for the Jews in Revelation. So simply reading about the Last Supper in Luke 22 without knowing the larger context of God’s plan caused the writer to misunderstand what Jesus was saying at the Last Supper.

  **7. Decide whether or not to accept the commentary as true.**

Having reviewed all that we’ve learnt about God’s covenants, His plan for Israel and the church, and also apocalyptic writings about what will happen to Israel and the church, we have to reject the commentary because the writer has taken two passages of Scripture out of context to create something that is simply not true.

God has not abandoned Israel and the church has not taken over Israel’s covenants. A God who would violate His own contracts is a God who cannot be trusted!