

# L LORD

## OF HEAVEN & EARTH:

*LESSONS ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER  
OF THE GOD OF SCRIPTURE*

Grant Pickup  
Embry Hills COC  
Segment 4, 2020

## LORD OF HEAVEN & EARTH: Lesson Notes

**\*\*Class participants can prepare for each session by reading through the lesson notes and being prepared to discuss the Thought Questions in class\*\***

# LESSONS

## 1. TOTHEPRAISEOFHISGLORY

A lesson on Christian theology as a basis for praise to God

## 2. ETERNAL POWER & DIVINE NATURE

A lesson on the results and limitations of recognizing God in nature

## 3. MAKER OF HEAVEN & EARTH

A lesson on the identity of God revealed in the act of creation

## 4. HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

A lesson on the transcendent nature of God

## 5. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A lesson on the immanent character of God

## 6. HOW LONG, O LORD?

A lesson on God and the problem of evil

## 7. THE GOD OF ISRAEL

A lesson on the story of Yahweh, Israel, and the blessing of the world

## 8. GOD WITH US

A lesson on the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth

## 9. FATHER, SON & SPIRIT

A lesson on the Trinity revealed in salvation

## 10. ALPHA & OMEGA

A lesson on the God who makes all things new

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## LESSON 7: THE GOD OF ISRAEL – The Story of Yahweh, Israel, and the Blessing of the World

- ❖ Moving beyond the attributes of God, we now have God revealed through his actions within the history of his creation.
- ❖ The Fall
  - Humanity is created to fill the earth as the bearers of God's image in the world.
  - The fellowship between God and humanity is broken by sin in the Garden, resulting in a curse upon humanity and the Earth.
  - The world is corrupted in the generation of Noah.
  - The pride of humanity endures at the Tower of Babel.
- ❖ The Call of Abraham
  - God calls a single person Abraham out of the land of his forefathers to go to a new country and form a new people.
  - God promises Abraham a new land and a nation of descendants through whom all nations of the world would be blessed.
- ❖ The Exodus
  - Abraham's descendants become enslaved to a foreign ruler and his gods in Egypt.
  - God raises up Moses, through whom Egypt is stricken and the people are released.
  - The new nation of Israel is covenanted to Yahweh at Sinai.
- ❖ The Monarchy
  - Despite God leading Israel back into their promised land, Israel is often to their covenant with Yahweh, and becomes like other nations around them, demanding a human king.
  - God's kingdom within Israel is best embodied by the Shepherd King David, by whom the nation expands, including the establishment of Jerusalem, and the building of the Temple (constructed by his son Solomon).
- ❖ The Exile
  - After David, the monarchy continues to devolve. The nation of Israel is split along tribal lines. The northern tribes fall into idolatry, are exiled, and phased out of history. The southern tribes are somewhat more faithful, but eventually fall under similar exile by foreign captors.
  - Despite a 'remnant' of Jews being allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem, Israel remained under the power of foreign rulers for centuries.
- ❖ Symbols of God's Election of Israel
  - The 'Scandal of Particularity' – the idea that salvation is not general, direct and universal, but that God chooses specific agents of his favor by which redemption is enacted. This principle is embodied by God's election of Israel.
  - COVENANT/TORAH – otherwise known as the 'Law of Moses,' the commands of Yahweh became the basis for Israel as a religious-political entity, and lasting cultural force in the world.
  - TEMPLE – the ritual place of God's dwelling among his people, and thus the place for mercy and forgiveness. As the primary symbol of God's fellowship with Israel,

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it was to be the place from which God's glory would be made known to the rest of the world.

- SABBATH – the counterpart in time what the Temple was for space. The Sabbath set the regular rhythm for Jewish life and calendar, and was a reminder that God seeks final rest with his people.
- LAND – the land promised to the forefathers of Israel was a telling marker for their faithfulness to God. Israel's fellowship with God was often determinable by the condition of the land (whether it yielded resources for living) and its possession by Israel.
- WORD/PROPHETS – especially in the days when Israel was failing the covenant, certain men were directly called by God to proclaim the 'word of God.' These 'prophets' could predict future events related to Israel, and often used vivid imagery, poetry, and symbolic action to warn the nation to remain faithful to Yahweh.

### ❖ The Living God

- God's purpose to redeem the world is a function of his role as creator.
- He doesn't save people out of the world, but he wants to save people for the sake of the world, and his glorification in it.
- Yahweh is not just another tribal deity, he is the Living God who rules over all time and space, but does so through particular actions in history which reveal his aims and purposes.

### ❖ In Praise of God

- Isaiah 49: 1-7 / Romans 9:3-5

### ❖ Thought Questions

- What do we learn about God from telling the story of Israel that we don't learn from studying God's attributes?
- How is God's call of Abraham a turning point in God's plan to redeem the world?
- Why is the notion of an 'electing God' potentially offensive? How can we maintain that God still desires fellowship with all people if we also believe that God acts in particular ways which favor some people over others?