

Introduction

Genesis 33:18, 20 reads: “Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. . . Then he erected an altar there and called it El-Elohe-Israel.”

Translated, the name of Jacob’s altar is “God, the God of Israel.” When Jacob chooses this name for his new altar, he probably doesn’t intend to make a statement of huge Scriptural significance. His new name is Israel, God is his God, and he’s quite happy about that. However, the name that Jacob applies to his altar can be applied equally well to the entire Old Testament. Those thirty-nine books of the Bible are about God and how He is defined by His relationship with His chosen people. God is the hero of the story.

Often, when we study the Old Law, we do so on a small scale as we become entranced by the stories of godly men ranging from Abraham to Nehemiah. Although these stories are instructive and important, sometimes they distract us from understanding God. This textbook aims to correct that mistaken focus. It divides the history of God’s ancient dealings with mankind into twelve segments and describes each segment in terms of the aspect of God’s character that predominates during that time. Because God does not change, an understanding of those traits is still critical to us today. By better understanding our Father, we can all learn how to better walk with Him as well.

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Chapter One:

Creator

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Genesis 1-2

More Scriptures

Job 38-39; Psalm 104

For thousands of years, scientists, philosophers, and mystics have been asking, “Where did we come from?” The Bible gives us the definitive answer to that question. The universe is the handiwork of God. In this lesson, you’re going to use Genesis 1-2 and other Old Testament Scriptures to answer the questions below. Then, in class, we’re going to use everyone’s answers to build a portrait of the God who can create something from nothing.

Questions: Genesis 1-2

This story is familiar to almost all of us. However, let’s try to read it with fresh eyes to see what it tells us about God. For each of the five Scriptures below, write down what you learn about God from that passage, and then explain why that knowledge is important in our spiritual lives. Feel free to cite other Scripture to establish your point.

1. Genesis 1:1
2. Genesis 1:4
3. Genesis 1:7, 9, 14

The Big Question

When we read what the Bible has to say about God as the Creator, what do we learn about Him?

4. Genesis 1:26-27

5. Genesis 2:20-21

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. What's the overall point of God's argument in Job 38-39? Why is this something that we need to recognize?
2. Is God's description of creation in Job 38-39 scientific or unscientific? Why would God have chosen to reveal Himself in such a way?
3. The philosophy of deism describes God as a "watchmaker" who created the world but permits it to operate without His intervention. What does Job 38-39 say about this philosophy? Why is it important for us to understand that?
4. According to Psalm 104, how intimately is God involved in His works? Why is this relevant to us?
5. What impression do we get from Psalm 104 about the goodness of God and His creation? What false doctrine might this impression contradict?

Questions: Application

1. What happens to man when he fails to recognize God as Creator? Romans 1:18-32 might help. Do we see evidence of this around us today? Where?
2. How should our understanding of God as Creator affect our walk with Him? Be specific.



Chapter Two:

Covenant-Maker

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Genesis 17:1-22

More Scriptures

Genesis 9:8-17; Genesis 15; Genesis 26:1-5, 12; Genesis 28:10-17

Perhaps the hardest thing for us to understand about God is not His existence—whenever we look up at the stars at night, we see that proclaimed—but the fact that God is interested in mankind. Why would a being of such power and magnificence bother interacting with puny mortals like us? Nonetheless, Scripture is quite plain: God DOES care what we do. These passages tell the story of the first agreements ever made between the human and the divine.

Questions: Genesis 17:1-22

1. In Genesis 17:1, God sets out the basic form of covenants between God and man. What is this form? What does God's use of this form tell us about Him?
2. How broad are the terms of this covenant? Why is this significant? Genesis 17:4-5 might shed some light on the subject.
3. What is the ultimate promise of this covenant as described in Genesis 17:7-8? What makes this important?
4. According to Genesis 17:10-11, what is the sign of this covenant? Does God's choice of this sign make sense to our human understanding? What does this say about God?

The Big Question

What does God's behavior in making covenants with man tell us about Him?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Two

5. In Genesis 17:14, God describes something that Abraham's descendants might choose to do. What does God think of this decision? Why is this important?
6. How much were the terms of this covenant governed by the laws of nature? Consider Genesis 17:17, 19 before answering. Why is this something we need to understand?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. Describe the main point of Genesis 9:8-17. Explain why this is important.
2. What impression do the events of Genesis 15 leave on your mind? Why do you think that God set the covenant ceremony up in such an odd fashion?
3. How concerned is God with man's reaction to His promises? Look at Genesis 15:5-6. What does this tell us about God?
4. Even in these early covenants, how does God respond to those who serve Him? Look at Genesis 26:1-5, 12. Does this service necessarily follow the course of human wisdom? What should we learn from that?
5. What is Jacob's situation in Genesis 28:11? In Genesis 28:13-15, what does God promise? What attribute(s) of God does this highlight?

Questions: Application

1. Why is it important to understand God's nature as Covenant-Maker?
2. What happens when we forget it? Consider Psalm 78 in your answer.



Chapter Three:

Provider

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Genesis 45:1-15

More Scriptures

Genesis 30:25-43; Genesis 32:1-12;
Genesis 33:1-19; Genesis 50:22-26

In Genesis 22:14, God has just saved Isaac the son of Abraham from being sacrificed by his father. He has commanded Abraham to stop and has provided a ram in Isaac's place. In gratitude, Abraham names the place of sacrifice "The Lord will provide." Abraham's descendants could easily have taken that statement for their motto for the next 150 years, as God continually provides for them. Let's study what God does so that we can better understand Him as Provider.

Questions: Genesis 45:1-15

1. Drawing on what you know of the story of Joseph, how many things happened to Joseph that we would consider Really Really Bad if they happened to us?
2. Did God know about the Bad Things that were going to happen? Could He have prevented them? Why didn't He?
3. What did God know that Joseph didn't know?
4. Why did God set up such a complicated series of events?

The Big Question

What does God's constant provision for His people tell us about Him?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Three

5. Does the fact that God used the evil done by Joseph's brothers and Potiphar's wife to accomplish His purpose mean that God *wanted* the evil to take place? What's the difference?
6. How was Joseph's attitude important to the success of God's plan?
7. Do you think that Joseph was pleased with the result of God's plan? Why or why not?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. What happened in Genesis 30:25-43? What did God have to do with it?
2. Why did God do such a thing? What does this tell us about God?
3. What was Jacob's concern in Genesis 32:1-12? Why was Jacob's concern valid?
4. In Genesis 33:1-19, what happened despite Jacob's concern? Do you think God was responsible? Why or why not?
5. Why is Joseph's request in Genesis 50:22-26 significant? Hebrews 11:22 may help. What does this request tell us about Joseph's perspective on God?

Questions: Application

1. What relevance does God's nature as Provider have for us?
2. How should an understanding of this change the way we behave?



Chapter Four:

Redeemer

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Exodus 14

More Scriptures

Exodus 3; Exodus 7:1-5; Exodus 15;
Psalm 107; Psalm 124

Throughout the book of Genesis, God deals largely with righteous men and their families. In Exodus, though, God turns His attentions to an entire nation, the nation of Israel. In Exodus 1, the situation looks bleak—the Israelites are the slaves of the Egyptians, the most powerful nation on earth. However, God, through a spectacular display of power, frees the Israelites and proves to the arrogant Egyptians that He is God. Let's look at this story to see what it means that God is a Redeemer.

Questions: Exodus 14

1. Explain the problem that the Israelites are facing in Exodus 14:5-9.
2. According to Exodus 14:1-4, why did this problem come up in the first place? What does this tell us about God?
3. In what way is the Israelites' complaint in Exodus 14:10-12 reasonable? In what way is it unreasonable? What can we learn from this?
4. What does God tell Moses in Exodus 14:15-18? Does this seem like a spur-of-the-moment improvisation by God? Why is this significant?

The Big Question

What does it mean to us that God is a Redeemer?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Four

5. List the things that God does to accomplish the salvation of Israel in Exodus 14:21-29. On a scale of 1-10, how spectacular are these things? What does this tell us about God?
6. How much credit could the people of Israel claim for their victory over the Egyptians? Is this significant? Why?
7. Based on Exodus 14, what does it mean for God to be a Redeemer?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. Throughout Exodus 3 (and indeed through Exodus 4), Moses repeatedly expresses reluctance to help God lead the Israelites to Canaan. However, God persists until Moses agrees to participate. What can we learn about God from this story?
2. Explain what Exodus 7:1-5 tells us about the way that God uses people to accomplish His will. Why is this important?
3. Exodus 15 is the oldest recorded song of praise to God. In what ways does it differ from what we would say to praise Him today? In what ways is it the same?
4. Psalm 107 describes God's redemption in a number of different settings. List three important truths that this Psalm reveals to us about God.
5. What basic claim does Psalm 124 make about the importance of God to the success of His people? How often is this true?

Questions: Application

1. Why do we care that God is a Redeemer?
2. If we truly understand and believe in His redeeming power, how will we live our lives differently?



Chapter Five:

Lawgiver

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Deuteronomy 5-6

More Scriptures

Exodus 19; Leviticus 19:1-4;
Numbers 15:32-36; Psalm 19:7-14

Once God rescues the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, His interest in them does not diminish. Instead, He elicits an agreement from them that they will be a people for His own possession. He then spends the next forty years revealing a system of law to them that will be their moral polestar for the next 1500 years. This giving of an ethical code is something that no god from any of Earth's mythologies ever bothered doing. Why is it significant, then, that the REAL God is a Lawgiver?

Questions: Deuteronomy 5-6

1. What do we learn about God from Deuteronomy 5:6-10? Why is this important?
2. Do the commandments described in Deuteronomy 5:11-21 appear to have any purpose in mind? What is it? Why would God be interested in that purpose?
3. What appears to motivate the Israelite elders in Deuteronomy 5:22-29? Does God desire to create this motivation in them? Why?
4. In Deuteronomy 6:3, God tells the Israelites that it will be well with them if they obey Him. In what senses is this true?

The Big Question

What does God's interest in giving laws to His people tell us about Him?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Five

5. It's commonly said that the Old Law was designed to exact robot-like obedience from God's people. What does Deuteronomy 6:4-6 tell us about this belief? What, in turn, does that tell us about God?
6. Consider Deuteronomy 6:7-9, 20-25. What do these Scriptures tell us about God's interest in seeing children taught the Law? Why would God have this interest?
7. What does Deuteronomy 6:17-19 say about God's motivation in giving law to the children of Israel in the first place?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. Describe the argument that God makes in Exodus 19:3-6. What connection does God see between redemption and possession?
2. What point does God want to impress on Israel in Exodus 19:21-23? Why is this significant?
3. What is God's message in Leviticus 19:1-4? What does this tell us about God's purpose in giving the Law?
4. Tell the story of Numbers 15:32-36. What do we learn about God from this Scripture?
5. Describe David's attitude toward the Law as he presents it in Psalm 19:7-14. What causes this attitude? What are the results of this attitude? Why would God want to create this attitude?

Questions: Application

1. Why is it important today to understand God as a Lawgiver?
2. How should our insight into this aspect of God's nature change our way of life?



Chapter Six:

Conqueror

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Joshua 6:1-8:22

More Scriptures

Joshua 1:1-9; Joshua 4:19-24; Psalm
144

After 40 years of wandering, the children of Israel finally get their act together and arrive on the east bank of the flooded Jordan. Across the river waits the promised land of Canaan. However, the land's already occupied by a numerous and warlike people that can rely on the protection of strongly fortified cities—a tall order for the descendants of ex-slaves. However, the Israelites have one big advantage—God. Let's see what it means that the God of Israel is also a Conqueror.

Questions: Joshua 6:1-8:22

1. If you were the commanding general of an ancient army and had to take a walled city, how would you go about doing it? List at least three different possible approaches. Feel free to steal ideas from *The Lord of the Rings*.
2. Does God's plan as described in Joshua 6:1-5 appear on your list of ideas? To our human logic, does it even seem like a GOOD plan? What does this tell us about God?
3. Why does God's plan work?
4. How well do things work for the Israelites WITHOUT God's help? Consider Joshua 7:2-5. What does this tell us?

The Big Question

Why is God's nature as Conqueror important to us?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Six

5. According to Joshua 7:1, who sinned? In Joshua 7:11, to whom does God attribute this sin? Why does God do this? What can we learn from God's reaction?
6. Why does God prescribe such a harsh punishment for Achan in Joshua 7:15? What should we take from God's judgment?
7. In Joshua 8:1, have the people actually taken Ai yet? Then why does God tell Joshua that He HAS given Ai into Joshua's hand? What does this tell us about what God's people must do to achieve victory?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. Put yourself in Joshua's shoes in Joshua 1:5. Why is God's promise in that verse significant?
2. Why is the statement of Joshua 1:6 important to our understanding of God?
3. In the middle of the warlike exhortation of Joshua 1:1-9, why does God bring up obedience to the law? What does this tell us about the nature of God's conquests?
4. What's the purpose of God's instructions in Joshua 4:19-24? What does this tell us about God?
5. In light of the rest of the Psalm, answer David's question in Psalm 144:3.

Questions: Application

1. Do we still need God as Conqueror in our lives today? Where?
2. How will we live differently if we understand this aspect of God's nature?



Chapter Seven:

Protector

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Judges 6-7

More Scriptures

Judges 4; 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25; 1 Samuel 4:1-11; 1 Samuel 8

After God basically gave Canaan to the children of Israel on a silver platter, one would think that the Israelites would stay faithful to Him forever. Instead, they plunge into a cycle of faithlessness and despair. They turn to other gods, become enslaved by other nations, cry out to God in their misery, and await His rescue. Amazingly, each time they seek His help, He listens. Let's consider these times and learn how God protects Israel—from their enemies and from themselves.

Questions: Judges 6-7

1. In Judges 6:1-5, how well are God's people doing? Why is this? What does this tell us about God?
2. Consider Judges 6:6-10, especially in light of the entire book. If you were God, how interested would you be in helping your people out? Why? What does this say to us about God?
3. In Judges 6:13, does Gideon seem to understand why God has deserted Israel? In light of Judges 6:28-30, does Gideon's confusion make sense? What does this say to us about our view of ourselves, as opposed to God's view?
4. How heroic does Gideon seem through Judges 6? Why? What does this tell us about the kind of people God needs to do His work?

The Big Question

Why is it useful for us to understand how and why God is our Protector?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Seven

5. How many times in Judges 6-7 does Gideon seek reassurance? How many times does God give it to him? What aspects of God's character does this highlight?
6. Why does God dismiss 99 percent of Gideon's army in Judges 7:1-8? How does this help us understand God better?
7. Time to put on your general's hat again. Using your own reasoning skills, what do you think of God's plan as described in Judges 7:15-18? Why is this important?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. Why does God's choice for Israel's leader in Judges 4:4 seem unusual? What does His choice tell us about Him?
2. Look at 1 Samuel 2:12-17. Does being someone who claims to be a servant of God entitle one to God's protection? 1 Samuel 2:22-25 explains. Why is this significant?
3. In 1 Samuel 4:1-11, are the people trying to get God's power on their side? Do they succeed? Why or why not? What does this say to us about God?
4. According to 1 Samuel 8:4-7, whose wisdom are the people relying on? How does God take this? What does God reveal about Himself in this encounter?
5. According to 1 Samuel 8:19-21, do the people listen to God? How does God react?

Questions: Application

1. How important is God's protection to us today? Why?
2. Based on today's lesson, how should our lives reflect our desire for God's protection?



Chapter Eight:

Shepherd

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

2 Samuel 22:1-23:5

More Scriptures

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Psalm 51;
Psalm 139

After following the general course of the nation of Israel for hundreds of years, the Bible's lens zooms in on one remarkable figure: David. As the Scriptural record reveals him, David is many things that seem opposed to us: poet and bloody-handed hero, philosopher and conqueror. However, David is most defined by his relationship with God, for it is God who raises Him from obscurity to immortal fame. Let's see what it meant for David that God was his Shepherd.

Questions: 2 Samuel 22:1-23:5

The song of David as recorded in 2 Samuel 22 is perhaps David's fullest explanation of what God is to him. Summarize each context below, and then explain what the passage in parentheses next to it has to do with it.

1. 2 Samuel 22:2-3 (1 Samuel 19:18-24).
2. 2 Samuel 22:4-20 (2 Samuel 15:30-31; 2 Samuel 17:1-14).
3. 2 Samuel 22:21-28 (1 Chronicles 15:11-15).
4. 2 Samuel 22:29-37 (1 Samuel 17:41-47).

The Big Question

What can we learn from the way that God acts as a Shepherd for David?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Eight

5. 2 Samuel 22:38-43 (2 Samuel 5:17-25).
6. 2 Samuel 22:44-46 (2 Samuel 8).
7. What does David's life summary in 2 Samuel 23:1-5 say both about him and about God?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. In 1 Samuel 16:7, what does God say that gives insight into why He chooses David as king? What does this tell us about God?
2. According to Psalm 23, how does David perceive God? How does he perceive himself? How does this help us understand God better?
3. In Psalm 51, why would David's sin cause him to be so heartbroken?
4. Also in Psalm 51, upon what aspect of God's character does David rely? Why is this important?
5. What picture of God does David paint in Psalm 139? What does David's understanding prompt him to do? What does this say to us about God's nature?

Questions: Application

1. What are the differences between understanding God as a Protector and understanding Him as a Shepherd?
2. How should our understanding of God as a Shepherd cause us to live differently?



Chapter Nine:

Pardoner

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

1 Kings 18

More Scriptures

1 Kings 11:1-13; 2 Chronicles 24; Joel 2:1-27; Jonah 3

Sadly, after David's passing, his nation does not follow the example of his righteousness. Israel fractures into two kingdoms, and both pursue a course that leads away from God. Although God's people have never been constantly faithful to Him, their new faithlessness appears to be a trend, not a cycle. Nonetheless, God continues to bear with His people, giving them both repeated warnings and second chances to come back to Him. Let's study this time to learn about God as Pardoner.

Questions: 1 Kings 18

1. Why is Israel suffering from a famine in 1 Kings 18:1-2? Why a famine and not something spectacular and final like happened to Sodom and Gomorrah? What does this say about God?
2. How godly are Ahab and Jezebel? Does God seem to have given up on even them?
3. Of what does Elijah accuse the people in 1 Kings 18:21? Why is this significant?

The Big Question

What can we learn from God's patience with His people that will tell us about Him as Pardoner?

4. What does God through Elijah propose to the people in 1 Kings 18:22-24? Why do you think God follows this plan?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Nine

5. Considering the physical resources that each side can muster in the contest of 1 Kings 18, who looks like the likely winner? Who wins? What does this tell us about God?
6. Just as soon as the people acknowledge God in 1 Kings 18:39, what happens to the drought? Why is this significant?
7. List all of the things in the story of 1 Kings 18 that should have convinced the people to follow God. What should we learn from this?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. What are the things that Solomon does in 1 Kings 11:1-8? What could God have justly done to Solomon, his people, and his descendants in return? What does God actually do? What does this tell us about Him?
2. According to 2 Chronicles 24, what were Joash's religious leanings when he was influenced by a priest of God? What were they when he was influenced by the leaders of the people? What does this tell us about God's people at this time?
3. What does God do in response to Joash's apostasy in 2 Chronicles 24? How far does Joash have to push God before God forsakes him?
4. What action does God urge upon His people in Joel 2:12-17? According to Joel 2:18-20, what will God do in response? Why is this important?
5. When the non-Israelite people of Nineveh actually DO repent in Jonah 3, how does God respond? What would God have done for those who WERE His people if they had repented?

Questions: Application

1. How do the Scriptures in this lesson make you feel? Why?
2. When we consider God as a God who forgives, how should that change our lives?



Chapter Ten:

Avenger

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Jeremiah 7

More Scriptures

2 Kings 17:1-23; 2 Kings 21:1-15;
Jeremiah 44; Lamentations 2

Despite hundreds of years of second, third, and fourth chances, despite God doing everything imaginable to win them back, both Israel and Judah ultimately reject God. Although God still holds the door of His mercy open, He knows that His people will refuse to take advantage of it. In wrath, He mobilizes the nations around Israel and Judah against them, so that ultimately His people are carried away captive. Let's examine this sad time to see what it reveals about God as an Avenger.

Questions: Jeremiah 7

1. According to Jeremiah 7:1-7, what bothers God about the actions of His so-called worshippers? What does this tell us about Him?
2. In Jeremiah 7:7, what does God tell the people of Judah that they can STILL have if they start obeying?
3. In God's eyes, who is really injured by the disobedience of the people recorded in Jeremiah 7:16-20? What does this tell us about God's interest in the matter?
4. According to Jeremiah 7:21-31, what have the people of Israel done to God? How does His offense at these things tell us more about Him?

The Big Question

What important aspects of God's nature are revealed by His role as Avenger?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Ten

5. As described in Jeremiah 7:23-28, how much effort has God invested in instructing His people? Why is this important?
6. As a result of Judah's final refusal to hear Him, what does Jeremiah 7:32-34 say will happen? How does this tell us more about God?
7. Many portray the "Old Testament God" as a mean guy who likes to toss around lightning bolts and roast cities. Does Jeremiah 7 support this image or cast doubt on it? Why?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. What about the behavior of Israel as described in 2 Kings 17:1-23 does God seem to find intolerable? How does this illuminate His character?
2. What makes the bad behavior of Manasseh as set forth in 2 Kings 21:1-9 so bad that it moves God to the response described in 2 Kings 21:10-15? Does God's response seem extreme?
3. As recorded in Jeremiah 44:1-19, how fair is God's accusation of the remnant of Judah (which has now fled to Egypt)? Do the people listen? Is there ANYTHING that God possibly could have said or done that would have convinced them?
4. In Jeremiah 44:24-30, what does God say He will do to these people? How would you describe His judgment?
5. According to Lamentations 2, how severe is God's judgment against Judah? What can we take from this?

Questions: Application

1. Why is an understanding of God's avenging nature important to us today?
2. How will we change our thinking and behavior if we understand God as an Avenger?



Chapter Eleven:

Restorer

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Zephaniah 3

More Scriptures

Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Nehemiah 1;
Isaiah 44:21-45:7

Even after they force Him to destroy their nation, God doesn't give up on His people. Their story doesn't end with apostasy and exile. Despite all the evil that they have done, God still wants them to be His. Just as He once planned their overthrow, He has also planned their return. A remnant of the people—those who truly love God—will be permitted to come back to the land of their fathers. Let's examine this story and see what it will tell us about God's handiwork as a Restorer.

Questions: Zephaniah 3

1. What contrast is drawn between God and His people in Zephaniah 3:1-7? How does this explain God's previous actions?
2. What action is described in Zephaniah 3:8? What action is described in Zephaniah 3:9? Are these the same action? If so, what does that tell us about God?
3. What event is prophesied in Zephaniah 3:10-11? How does this passage help us to understand God's purpose in the exile and return? What does that purpose say about God?
4. How does God describe the returned exiles in Zephaniah 3:12-13? How does that help us understand God better?

The Big Question

What does the return of the exiles to Judah tell us about God as a Restorer?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Eleven

5. What does Zephaniah 3:15 tell us about God's present/future actions? How does this give us insight into the nature of God?
6. What aspect of God's character does He express in Zephaniah 3:17?
7. According to Zephaniah 3:18, what sort of people will God gather? What does this say about God?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. Judging from Deuteronomy 30:1-10, how long had God been planning Israel's return from exile? How does Moses describe the change that this will create in the people of Israel? How does this help us understand the way that God works?
2. According to Deuteronomy 30:9-10, was God's promise of blessing after the return absolute or conditional? Why is this significant?
3. What does Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1 tell us about the kind of heart that God permits to return to Him?
4. Despite the evil that the Israelites have done, how does God describe them in Isaiah 44:21? Why is this important to our understanding of God?
5. According to Isaiah 44:28-45:7, who is God's chosen instrument of restoration? Does this instrument even know he's working for God? What insight into God does this give us?

Questions: Application

1. Why do we need to understand God's nature as a Restorer?
2. How should this understanding change the way that we live our lives?



Chapter Twelve:

Purifier

Meeting God in the Old Testament

Main Scripture

Malachi 2-3

More Scriptures

Nehemiah 13; Haggai 1-2

After their exile and return, God's people finally learn their lesson. Never again will they forsake the Lord of heaven to go after false gods. However, this doesn't mean that God's work with Judah is finished. As the curtain closes on the Old Testament, God calls His people to a higher standard of godly conduct and promises that One will come who will refine them into what God wants them to be. Let's study God's relationship with His people in this time to learn about Him as Purifier.

Questions: Malachi 2-3

In Malachi 2-3, God describes five conversations with His people. What are the topics of these conversations? What do they tell us about God?

1. Malachi 2:13-16.
2. Malachi 2:17-3:4.
3. Malachi 3:5-7.
4. Malachi 3:8-12
5. Malachi 3:13-15.

The Big Question

What do God's last words to His people in the Old Testament reveal about Him as a Purifier?

Meeting God in the Old Testament: Chapter Twelve

6. What does God's requirement for the priesthood in Malachi 2:4-7 tell us about Him?
7. How does God's objective as described in Malachi 3:18 illuminate His character?
8. Forget everything you know about the New Testament (not permanently; just for now). Describe God's plan in Malachi 3:1-4 and the means God hopes to use to carry out that plan. What does this say to us about God?

Questions: Other Scriptures

1. What are the problems that Nehemiah encounters in Nehemiah 13?
2. How does Nehemiah address these problems? Why? What does Nehemiah's understanding of what God expects tell us about Him?
3. According to Haggai 1:6-11, what is happening to the returned exiles? Why? What does this episode reveal to us about God?
4. How well off do the rulers of Judah think they are in Haggai 2:2-8? What does God promise them? Why is this significant?
5. What does Haggai 2:10-14 tell us about God's attitude toward those who try to mingle the holy with the unholy in their lives? Why is this important?

Questions: Application

1. What does God's purifying work have to do with us today?
2. Where does our understanding of this side of God's character need to show up in our lives?



Chapter Thirteen: *Review*

So . . . What's the Point?

This quarter, we've looked at God's character as it is revealed through His interactions with humanity in general and the children of Israel in particular. Each lesson has highlighted a particular aspect of God's divine personality. For each aspect listed below, explain what it means and its relevance to us.

1. Creator:
2. Covenant-Maker:
3. Provider:
4. Redeemer:
5. Lawgiver:
6. Conqueror:
7. Protector:
8. Shepherd:
9. Pardoner:
10. Avenger:
11. Restorer:
12. Purifier: