

Leaders, Nations, and God

marta e greenman



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*Scholars vary in dating systems they use. This Bible study follows John Whitcomb's system throughout for the sake of consistency.
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Table of Contents

Week 1 In the Beginning

Day 1	Who Is a Leader? Adam and Eve	1
Day 2	Abraham and Jacob	8
Day 3	David, A King to Rule over Us	14
Day 4	God's Sovereignty in Leaders and Nations	20
Day 5	George Washington.....	25

Week 2 The Consequences of Compromise

Day 1	Solomon	32
Day 2	Solomon and Jeroboam	37
Day 3	King Uzziah.....	45
Day 4	Manasseh and King Nebuchadnezzar.....	52
Day 5	Founding Fathers and Life	59

Week 3 My People Perish for Lack of Knowledge

Day 1	Deuteronomy	68
Day 2	Deuteronomy, the Blessings and Curses	74
Day 3	Numbers 13, Spying Out the Promised Land.....	81
Day 4	Numbers 14, Spies' Report on Promised Land	90
Day 5	Declaration of Independence, Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Locke	98

Week 4 United We Stand, Divided We Fall

Day 1	Joshua Entering the Promised Land	108
Day 2	Time of the Judges	115
Day 3	Jeremiah and Disobedient Judah	120
Day 4	Ezekiel, Judah, and King Nebuchadnezzar	129
Day 5	Thomas Jefferson, the Danbury Baptist Association, and Separation of Church and State	137

Week 5 Formulating a Plan

Day 1	Prayer of Jabez	147
Day 2	Prayer	153
Day 3	Prayer	155
Day 4	Prayer	157
Day 5	Prayer	159

Week 6 Taking Action

Day 1	Men Who Understood the Times	163
Day 2	Prayer and Research.....	169
Day 3	Prayer and Research.....	177
Day 4	Prayer and Research.....	178
Day 5	Prayer and Research.....	179

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Karen, Maureen, Mary, Gayle, Debbie, Joy, Colleen, Cheryl, and Kathy
Not pictured: Becky, Dianne, Nancy, and Velma

Heart-felt thanks to my husband, Marshall, for seeing God's call upon my life and supporting me unconditionally.

To my Lord and Master, help me always to be obedient to You.

"Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free."

Ephesians 6:5-8

My Friend,

I am thankful for your faithfulness in seeking truth in God's Word. I pray that God will use *Leaders, Nations, and God* to transform your view of yourself as a leader and to challenge you to seek HIS will concerning the role He would have you play in this age.

Leaders, Nations, and God is a Bible study for today. We will travel back about 3,400 years to study the history of the beginning and take a speed-of-light journey forward—traveling 2,000 years in one day—to get the highlights. We will spend most of our time with God's chosen people, the children of Israel, beginning with the father of the Israeli people, Abraham. We will conclude our journey with them in 586 B.C. when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Judah (the Southern Kingdom of Israel) for the third and final time.

Today one can drive the entire country of Israel in just a few hours. From the southern tip of Israel to the northern tip is only 263 miles; east to west distances vary from nine miles to as wide as seventy-one miles. It is a small country, but there is not a day in which Israel is not in the news. Why is this minute country so important to God? Why should Israel be important to us? Why is it important that we study their history? And how does all this relate to us today?

These are important questions which deserve thorough answers. As you work through *Leaders, Nations, and God*, you will find the answers to these questions. My prayer is that after this study you will never look at the Bible in the same way. I pray you will long to spend time in God's Word because you discover for yourself the wisdom it imparts, the grace it gives, and the power it holds.

Please contact us at info@wogt.org, call, or write and share how the Lord uses *Leaders, Nations, and God* in your life. I can't wait to hear from you!

Consumed by His Call,
Marta E. Greenman
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Introduction

Don't believe for a moment that you are reading this by mere coincidence. God has handpicked you for this journey. He is entrusting His Word to you with the intention of transforming your life.

Every word written in *Leaders, Nations, and God* has been prayed over, and you have been prayed for also. There is no greater joy than discovering God's Word with God's people to discern God's message for today.

Get ready for God to open your eyes to His truth. The Bible might be an ancient book, but Jesus is the Word (**John 1:1**) and He is the same yesterday and today and forever (**Hebrews 13:8**). Therefore, every word found in the Bible is for today and for your life. Are you ready? The journey is well worth your time and effort.

About Marta Greenman and *Words of Grace & Truth* (WOGT) – why we do what we do:

Many years ago, Marta read a book by Howard Hendricks, a professor from Dallas Theological Seminary. The book, *Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive*, gives an illustration that describes the passion behind the ministry of *Words of Grace & Truth*. Hendricks poses the question, "Why are we told not to feed the bears when we travel to a national park?" The reasoning is that over time the bears will become dependent upon man to feed them and will not be able to find food on their own. When the weather becomes cold and humans stop coming to the parks for the winter season, the bears will starve and die.¹

This illustration applies to Christians. Today, too many are dependent on others (pastors, teachers, evangelists) to feed them spiritual truth, never learning how to feed themselves. Unfortunately, just like the bears, when we come to the winter of our lives we are starved, clueless as to how to dig deep into God's Word and receive life-sustaining spiritual food.

As one begins to study God's Word on a regular basis, God begins to transform one's heart and mind to meet His priorities, not man's. This gives a person God's

worldview, a biblical worldview—not that of the god of this world, Satan. As Marta likes to say, “Bible study is **not** about **information**, Bible study **is** about **transformation**.” We, as Christians, need to be transformed to become salt and light to those who need to know HIM.

Words of Grace & Truth is committed to using proven methods in their biblical material to teach believers how to study God’s Word for themselves. Marta’s heart beats like the heart of Paul when he commanded Timothy, “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (**2 Timothy 2:2**). Not only does Marta teach these methods in the written biblical material, she travels the world teaching others how to teach God’s Word through *WOGT* material, equipping others to teach also.

About *Leaders, Nations, and God*:

Leaders, Nations, and God (LNG) was birthed out of a heart concerned for the United States and the direction our country is headed. Most people consider America to be the greatest nation in the world, and yet we are headed in a downward spiral that seems to have no end. Few agree on how to solve our problems. LNG looks at the history of God’s people, Israel, and provides parallels to the state of our nation throughout the study.


You may think Israel’s history has nothing to do with our nation, but God’s Word teaches, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). Every time we read Scripture, it applies to one of these four areas of our lives — teaching, reproof, correction, or training in righteousness. We need to keep this fact at the forefront of our minds as we approach any study. God has something to teach us for our lives today through the history lessons on Israel in *Leaders, Nations, and God*, or He wouldn’t have written their story in the pages of *His-story* to you.

Each week

- ❖ You will find five lessons for each week of this study. Each lesson will take you approximately forty-five minutes.

Note: If you are new to studying God’s Word, don’t let that intimidate you! Just do your best. Even if you are only able to complete one day of study, you will gain great wisdom from the Lord.

- ❖ Days 1-4 are considered a traditional Bible study method.
- ❖ Day 5 of each week will diverge from traditional Bible study and inject American history. We will specifically look at the question, “Was America founded on Christian principles?”
- ❖ Since Bible study is NOT about information but IS about transformation, you will be asked to apply every lesson to your life, your church, and your nation.
- ❖ You will be asked probing questions to trigger your mind to consider what is happening in our country today.
- ❖ You may watch 3-5 minute teaching videos by accessing the QR codes at the end of each lesson. There is a small, one-time fee to watch the videos.

Note: These codes will look like . If you have a smart phone, you may be familiar with these codes. To access the codes on your phone you need to have a QR reader. Free readers can be obtained from the App store.

- ❖ If you prefer to watch the videos on your computer, simply go to www.wogt.org. You will find the *media* section under STORE. Click on the *Leaders, Nations, and God* title and follow the directions given.

What you will need and need to know:

- ❖ Bible - All biblical material referenced is from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise noted. Therefore, we like for students to use this particular version of the Bible. The English Standard Version (ESV) is also compatible.
- ❖ Bible on Internet - If you don’t have an NASB or ESV version of the Bible, there are many internet websites where you can find the verses. Spend a week trying out both versions to decide which one best fits your needs, and then you can make an intelligent purchase before you invest in one.
- ❖ Protection – One principle which holds true is that when people get serious about God’s Word, the enemy of the world, Satan, gets serious about distracting them. You will be amazed at how many distractions will crop up when you sit down to study God’s Word. Protect your time with the

Lord. Almost everything can be put on hold until you finish your time with the Lord.

- ❖ Perseverance – Make up your mind that you **will** finish this study, no matter what! If you want your life to change, you have to allow God to change your life. This can only be done through His Word and with a willing heart.
- ❖ It's too hard! – Don't let anyone speak these words to you ... even yourself. God brought you here for a reason. Don't focus on what you don't know or what someone else is taking away from the study. Focus on what God shows you. We are all at different places spiritually. You wouldn't expect someone in kindergarten to be able to accomplish calculus; neither should one expect a new Bible study student to understand the *calculus* of God's Word as well as someone who has studied His Word daily for twenty years. God speaks to us individually. He brings young and old believers together so we can learn from one another.

Week 1 In the Beginning

Day 1 Who Is a Leader? Adam and Eve

Why is history so important? What does it teach us? Moreover, why should we study it? Merriam-Webster defines history as “a chronological record of significant events (as affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes.”²

This definition gives us reason to deliberate. How does history affect our personal lives? Nations, just like people, have pivotal points that alter the course of their histories. For example, some pivotal markers in American history include:

- ❖ 1754-1783: The Revolutionary War
- ❖ July 4, 1776: The Declaration of Independence
- ❖ June 21, 1788: The adoption of the US Constitution
- ❖ January 31, 1865: The passing of the Thirteenth Amendment that abolished slavery
- ❖ July 9, 1868: The passing of the Fourteenth Amendment that provided citizenship and equal protection to minorities
- ❖ August 26, 1920: The passing of the Nineteenth Amendment that gave women the right to vote
- ❖ December 7, 1941: The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the United States into World War II
- ❖ 1955-1968: The Civil Rights Movement
- ❖ 1955-1975: The Vietnam War
- ❖ 1963: The *Murray v. Curlett* decision that ended school prayer and labeled it “unconstitutional”
- ❖ January 22, 1973: The *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion in the United States
- ❖ September 11, 2001: The killing of 3,212 people by Muslim terrorists on US soil

We were not alive when many of these events marked America's history, but these and more shaped the United States of America.

Question to Ponder

Do you believe biblical history relates in any way to America? Give your reasoning.

Continue to think about this question over the next four weeks; you will be asked to answer it again in week 4 of our study.

1. Think about at least three pivotal moments in your personal history with a positive influence on the course of your life. List them on the following timeline. Include the year if you know it.

History happens daily. This is a certainty. What we choose to think about and act upon will ultimately drive our futures. We must learn from the past in order to understand how to live in the future. Alphonse de Lamartine, a French writer and politician, said, "History teaches everything including the future."³ To have a clear picture of US history, you must start at the beginning. This is also true for the history of humanity, beginning with Adam and Eve. Just as America's Founding Fathers shaped our lives, the lineage of Adam and Eve shapes our existences.

This Bible study examines the history of humanity and then the United States to learn from them. Then we will consider practical steps to shape our thinking. Let me encourage you to be patient. We must look back to move forward. We will study patterns seen throughout humanity's history through biblical leaders and patterns in the lives of pivotal world and US leaders. Author George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."⁴ Let

Leaders, Nations, and God

us commit not only to remember the past but also to be determined through the Lord's help not to repeat it. Write your prayer here to the Lord. Ask for His help to learn the lessons necessary to make positive changes toward becoming the leader He is calling you to be.

You may be thinking that you aren't a leader. Are you a mother, husband, or single and living alone? Everyone is a leader in some capacity, even if the only person you lead is yourself. Some embrace leadership, while others want to run and resist it with every fiber of their being. Regardless of the category in which you find yourself, this Bible study will give you greater insight into what a leader should be. You will learn practical steps to embrace your God-given role.

So let's get started "in the beginning." Genesis, the first book of the Bible, gives the account or genealogy of God's creation. The word *genesis* comes from the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament and means "beginning."⁵ This Genesis takes us to the beginning of God's creation of all things. On the sixth day, He created humanity. Let's take a quick look at God's plan for all He created.

2. Read **Genesis 1:26-27**.

a. What did God say in **Genesis 1:26**?

"Let Us make _____ in Our image, according to Our likeness...."

b. What were they to rule over in **Genesis 1:26**?

c. Who was created in God's own image according to **Genesis 1:27**?

God's original design was for male and female to rule over the earth. This sounds like leadership. Much has happened since God looked at all He made in the six days of creation and said it was very good (**Genesis. 1:31**). But the heart of God was for humanity to have dominion over all He gave them. We don't have to read very far to discover that humanity made a royal mess out of what God

created for them. God freely handed them everything they needed and had only one edict, “But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat from it you will surely die” (**Genesis 2:17**). Well, as you might have guessed, humanity did the one thing they were commanded not to do. They ate of the forbidden tree.

The result of not listening to God had devastating effects that are still with us today. “Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (**Romans 5:12**).

3. Answer the following questions from **Romans 5:12**.

- a. What came through Adam?
- b. What was the result of sin?
- c. Why will all people die?

Our first leaders brought us sin and death, which still affect us today.

- d. What do these few verses teach you about leadership?

In our lifetime we have seen moral failures by religious leaders, political leaders, business leaders, and people we have known personally. Moral failures *lead* younger generations to copy deteriorating behavior. Thus, one generation fails to lead the next generation in a godly manner. This was the failure of Adam and Eve. And their choice set the course of human events for generations to come.

In **Genesis 4:1-11:32**, we see how the pattern of dismal leadership led to drastic consequences. “The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart” (**Genesis 6:6**). The Lord used the great flood

Leaders, Nations, and God

to blot out all the people on the earth except for Noah and his family. Biblical historians place the flood about 1,650 years after the creation.

Just short of three hundred years after the flood, Abraham was born. God, in His infinite wisdom, chose Abraham to father a nation. This nation, Israel, is still influencing the world today. It is not a coincidence that a country about the size of New Jersey is constantly in the news. God is still looking after His land and His people, and Satan still wants to destroy what God designed.

4. Read what the Lord said to Abram in **Genesis 12:1-3**:

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’”

In the columns below, list what the Lord told Abram to do and what the Lord would then do.

The Lord told Abram	The Lord would
_____ <i>forth</i>	
From:	❖
From:	❖
From:	❖
To where?	❖
	❖
What would be the result of Abram accepting the Lord’s call for him to go forth (v. 3)?	

If Abram obeyed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Now that is motivation to say yes. From **Genesis 12:4**, we learn that Abram did what the Lord asked of him. At the age of ninety-nine, God changed Abram's name ("exalted father") to Abraham ("father of a multitude") (**Genesis 17:5**). At this same time, God established the covenant (promise) He had made twenty-four years earlier in **Genesis 12**. So, when Abraham was ninety-nine and his barren wife, Sarah, was ninety, they conceived a child. The Lord told Sarah she would name him Isaac ("laughter") because the child would make her laugh (**Genesis 17:19, 21:6**). This child was the one through whom the nation of Israel would come. From Isaac's genealogy, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born. Christ fulfilled the promise to Abraham that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (**Galatians 3:16**).

The rest of the history of the generations of Abraham is found in the Old Testament. This is where we will spend the next two weeks of our study to discover both positive and negative leadership lessons from God's people. Many people think the Old Testament is archaic and not relevant today. Prayerfully, you have discovered in this short time together just how relevant it is.

Every day we will ask ourselves, "How does this apply to my life, my church, and my nation?" Some days you may not have an answer. These questions are designed to be prompts, encouraging you to contemplate the subject and to provide you with a more meaningful experience during this study. You may want to use a simple system of L, C, and N in front of your answer(s) to help you remember, L standing for life, C for church, and N for nation.

Let's close by answering today's application questions. Then we will pray.

5. What has God begun to show you about leadership in your own life? In your church? In your nation?

Leaders, Nations, and God

Write a closing prayer to the Lord. Ask Him for eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to obey what you learn in this study.



Today's Leadership Lesson (20/1)
wogl.org/media

*“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that
He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”*

2 Chronicles 16:9a

Day 2 Abraham and Jacob

Today, we will continue our whirlwind tour of the history of Israel. **Remember:** We are looking at what leadership lessons we can learn and how we can apply them to our churches, our nations, and ourselves. Write your prayer below and ask the Lord to show us what we need to learn about leadership through His Word and this study.

Yesterday, we began with God's original intent for humanity. We saw that God created humanity to rule over the earth. We learned that God established godly leadership, but humanity sinned, and we continue to suffer the consequences today. Adam and Eve's failed leadership affected humanity for all eternity. Thankfully, from the moment of the first failed leadership attempt, God promised redemption through Eve's seed (offspring). The Lord told Eve that the seed of the serpent would bruise the heel of Eve's seed and her seed would crush the head of the serpent (**Genesis 3:15**). This was God's promise to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to the cross (bruising the heel of Christ) not only for the sins of Adam but also for all of humanity; thus, redemption occurred. In this one act of selfless love, Christ overcame Satan and death for all time (crushing the head of the serpent).

As we moved from the genealogy of humanity to the establishment of a nation, we began to study Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel. The Lord foretold this when Abraham was seventy-five and childless and his sixty-five-year-old wife was barren. Yet Scripture tells us, "Then he [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and He [the Lord] reckoned it to him [Abraham] as righteousness" (**Genesis 15:6**). Although Abraham's leadership was far from perfect, he believed the Lord and trusted in this promise from the Lord. Abraham knew the Lord would fulfill His promise of this great nation. The Lord told Abraham to look to the heavens and count the stars. If Abraham could count the stars, then he would know how vast his descendants would be (**Genesis 15:5**).

For the next twenty-five years, Abraham and his wife Sarah believed faithfully in God's promise. Finally, at age ninety, Sarah bore a son, and they named him Isaac. Abraham raised his son to know and understand this promise of the Lord,

for it was through Isaac that the nation of Israel would emerge. Abraham could not take this leadership assignment lightly.

Question to Ponder

What might have happened if Abraham had not passed along to Isaac his belief in the Lord's promise?

Abraham did get to see the emergence of this great nation. Before Abraham died, Isaac had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Just as the Lord had spoken to Abraham and Sarah, He spoke to Isaac and his wife Rebecca. The younger son, Jacob, was the child through whom the nation of Israel would emerge (**Genesis 25:23**). As with Abraham and Isaac before him, Jacob had a divine encounter with the Lord.

1. Read **Genesis 28:10-22**.

- a. Listed on the chart are the promises the Lord gave to Abraham. In the column on the right, record what the Lord told Jacob in **Genesis 28:13-15**.

Abraham	Jacob
<p>❖ “Go forth from your father’s house and I will make you a great nation” (Genesis 12:1-2).</p> <p>❖ “I have brought you out of Ur to give you this land to possess it” (Genesis 15:7).</p>	<p>❖ God spoke to Jacob/Israel, “the land on which you lie I will give it to you and your descendants” (Genesis 28:13).</p>

❖ “Descendants shall be like the stars of the heavens” (Genesis 15:5).	❖ Genesis 28:14a
❖ “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth” (Genesis 13:16).	
❖ “Now lift up your eyes and look north, south, east and west, for all the land you see I will give it to you and your descendants forever” (Genesis 13:14-15).	❖ Genesis 28:14b
❖ “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3b).	❖ “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 28:14c).
❖ “I [Lord] will bless you, and the Lord will make your name great” (Genesis 12:2).	
❖ “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you” (Genesis 15:1).	❖ Genesis 28:15a
❖ “Know for certain your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs then in the fourth generation they shall return” (Genesis 15:13-16).	❖ Genesis 28:15b
❖ “For the Lord chose Abraham in order that he may command his children to keep the way of the Lord in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what the Lord has spoken about him” (Genesis 18:19).	❖ “I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Genesis 28:15c).

Leaders, Nations, and God

- b. Compare what the Lord told Abraham and Jacob. What does this comparison teach you about the Lord?
- c. What was Jacob's response to the Lord (vv. 16-17)?
- d. What did Jacob call the place where he met with the Lord (v. 19)?

The name "Bethel" means "the house of God." Jacob had an encounter with the Lord just as his grandfather Abraham had. Jacob knew the Lord had spoken to him. Like Abraham, Jacob said, "the Lord will be my God." This was not to be Jacob's last encounter with the Lord. Jacob married, and he was fruitful and multiplied and multiplied and multiplied. By the time of Jacob's next encounter with the Lord, he had eleven of his twelve sons.

2. Read about Jacob's encounter with the Lord from **Genesis 32:24-31**:

Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he [Man] saw that he had not prevailed against him [Jacob], he touched the socket of his [Jacob's] thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him [Jacob]. Then he [Man] said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he [Jacob] said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me [Jacob]." So he said to him [Jacob], "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." He [Man] said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked Him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you [Jacob] ask my name?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.

- a. With whom did Jacob say he had wrestled?
- b. To what did God change Jacob's name? Why?

The Hebrew word for striven or struggle is *sārāh*, meaning “to struggle, contend; to wage war; or to have power as a prince.” This word is only used twice in the Old Testament, and both are used in reference to Jacob's struggle with God and men in **Genesis 32**.⁶

- c. When it is said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven [*sārāh*] with God and with men and have prevailed” (**Genesis 32:28**), what does this tell you about Jacob's relationship with God and others?

Jacob did not want to submit to the Lord's leadership. He wanted the Lord to submit to his direction. Because of this wrestling encounter with God, the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means “prince of God.”⁷

- d. What do you believe the Lord was trying to teach Jacob about leadership?

God birthed a nation when He changed Jacob's name to Israel. Jacob was God's chosen leader, the head of a family and a nation. He was a man at war with both man and God. Yet God loved Jacob enough to wrestle him into becoming a leader worthy of the calling God had destined for him. God didn't choose Jacob because he was equipped to be a leader. God equipped Jacob for leadership. If He could do this for Jacob, He can do this for you.

Do you struggle with the Lord? Do you want the Lord to bless your agenda? Are you like Jacob, wanting the Lord's blessing on your plans? Have you been trying to wrestle with God and man? What a lesson on leadership today through our Old Testament leader, Jacob/Israel.

Let's close today by answering the application questions, then we will pray.

Leaders, Nations, and God

3. What is God showing you about leadership in your life? Your church? Your nation?

Write a closing prayer to the Lord. Ask Him for eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to obey what you learn in this study.



Today's Leadership Lesson (20/2)
wogl.org/media

*“For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees
all his steps. There is no darkness or deep shadow where
the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.”*

Job 34:21-22

Day 3 David, A King to Rule over Us

So far this week, we have looked at our first leaders, Adam and Eve; Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel; and Abraham's grandson, Jacob, whom the Lord renamed Israel. As we begin with prayer, ask the Lord to reveal what lessons He wants you to learn from today's leader in the Old Testament. The first two weeks are fundamental lessons in forming a biblical perspective on leadership. This will help you understand what the Lord is calling you to do. Write your prayer below.

Thus far, we have covered about the first 2,100 years of history. Today, we will move forward about a thousand years and learn about the first kings of Israel. What you need to know about this span of time is that Jacob's ten sons sold the favorite son, Joseph, into slavery in Egypt (**Genesis 37**). After many years, the Lord exalted Joseph to be the second-in-command over all of Egypt. Then the Lord used him to save his brothers and their families from a famine. All seventy family members, including Jacob the patriarch, moved to Egypt.

Four hundred and twenty years passed. The new pharaoh forgot what Joseph had done for Egypt and enslaved the Israelites. God raised up Moses to deliver his people from the hard taskmasters of the pharaoh. Moses brought the people to the border of Canaan, the land the Lord promised to Abraham and his descendants. Joshua, Moses' servant, was appointed to deliver Israel into the land of Canaan. After Joshua died, the Lord raised up various judges to govern the land and its people. We find the history of these judges in the Old Testament book appropriately entitled Judges.

We will look at both Moses and the book of Judges in our lessons on nations and fill in some details of this thousand-year span of history. We are saving these illustrations for later as they align more with our study of nations rather than individual leaders. After the time of the judges, the kings began to reign. This is where we will enter our study of Israel today.

Let's look at why kings began to reign in place of the judges. Then we will examine the leadership style of the first kings and see what we can learn about leadership.

1. Read **1 Samuel 8:1-8**.

- a. Why did the people want a king (v. 5)?
- b. The Lord told Samuel to listen to the people. What did He say about Israel?
Make your list from **1 Samuel 8:7-8**.

A king was not in the Lord's plan for Israel; however, the people were persistent in their petitions, so the Lord gave His permission. The Lord continued to warn Israel of their future, and He began to explain what would happen if they stayed on a path that the Lord never intended them to pursue. In **1 Samuel 8:9-17** the Lord gave Samuel the facts regarding things that would happen to Israel if they continued their pursuit to acquire a king.

A king will:

- ❖ Reign over you.
- ❖ Take your sons for himself for protection.
- ❖ Appoint commanders to plow and reap his harvest.
- ❖ Appoint commanders to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.
- ❖ Take your daughters for perfumers, cooks, and bakers.
- ❖ Take the best of your fields and vineyards and give them to his servants.
- ❖ Take your best servants and animals and use them for his work.
- ❖ Take a tenth of your flocks and make you become his servants.

2. Write **1 Samuel 8:18**, the Lord's final warning to Israel in their pursuit of a king.

The Lord certainly gave Israel a clear picture of what their future would look like. There would come a day when they would cry for the Lord and He would not listen because they had chosen their own path.

3. Read **1 Samuel 8:19-22** to see how Israel responded.

Wow! How heartbreaking. Not only did the people refuse to listen to Samuel, they would not listen to the Lord. Why did they persist in wanting a king?

Fill in the blanks below from verses 19-20.

“There shall be a king over us, that we also may be _____
_____, that our king may judge us and go out
before us and _____.”

Questions to Ponder

Can you think of an instance when Americans have looked to a human leader for salvation from the country's problems? What was the result?

Has there been a time in your life when you looked to someone other than God to fulfill your needs? What was the result?

Israel wanted to be like everyone else *and* have a king to fight their battles. Wouldn't it be nice to have someone to fight your battles for you? God told them that their sons would be protecting the king instead of the king protecting them (v. 11). Israel clearly had not listened to what the Lord told them. Israel already had the best king possible, the Lord God Himself. Israel had forgotten who had already fought many battles for them. The God who delivered them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and fed them manna in the wilderness was the One who

wanted to fight for them again. Instead, they cried out for an inferior king, one of flesh, when the supernatural King of Creation was at their disposal.

Before you cast stones at Israel, think about yourself. How many times have you wanted another person to fight your battle for you when the Lord was willing? How many times have you wanted to fit in with everyone else when the Lord wants you to stand out instead? This was Israel. They were trying to fit in with the other nations when the Lord had set them apart for Himself. He wanted to be their king, but they rejected Him. So God gave them what they wanted, a human king.

Israel's first king was Saul. Although his story is fascinating, we will not dwell there for Saul did not listen to the Lord. Consequently, the Lord gave Saul's kingdom to another (**1 Samuel 15:11, 28**).

Most of us have heard the great stories of David, both his successes and failures. Let's look at this man and discover why the Lord chose him to be the king of Israel. We will focus on why God chose David instead of focusing on his failures. By now, you should realize that God chooses imperfect people to do His perfect work. This is how God can display His glory. When imperfect people are involved, there can be no doubt that God is manifesting His glory.

The Lord sent His priest Samuel to anoint the king who would succeed Saul. What were His instructions?

4. Read **1 Samuel 16:7**. List the instructions:

Do not look at:

Why?

Man looks:

God looks:

God is concerned about our relationship with Him, not our appearance. When choosing a king to replace Saul, God looked at the heart, rather than the outward appearance as the world does. From the very beginning, David's ascendance to being king was quite a story.

5. Read **1 Samuel 16:8-13**. What did David's father, Jesse, assume about who would be the next king?

Even when Jesse had sent seven of his sons to pass before Samuel, the thought never occurred to him that God would anoint his youngest son, David, as king. Has anyone ever told you—or have you thought—that you're too young or too old, too fat or thin, the wrong gender, the wrong ethnic group, or not affluent enough to do something?

6. Contrast leadership in God's view and what it is in today's society.

It was many years before David actually became king. He had to learn to trust in the Lord and let God fight his battles for him. The Lord taught David to slay giants, to be gracious, to serve King Saul (who was trying to kill him), and to survive in caves with the Lord providing for his every need. The Lord was raising up David to be a mighty warrior. David became king after he had learned many lessons.

We've covered a lot of history today. Is God showing you your role as a leader? Let's close with our application questions and prayer.

7. What has God shown you today about leadership in your life? Your church? Your nation?

Leaders, Nations, and God

Write a closing prayer to the Lord. Ask Him for eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to obey what you learn in this study.



Today's Leadership Lesson (20/3)
wagt.org/media

“[T]hat all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and He will give you into our hands.”

1 Samuel 17:47