

GENESIS			
1	Introducing...God Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 1 & 2	God has many names and relates to creation in different "personalities." We gather the first of many important tools we'll need to delve into Scripture.
2	A Tough Question And A Way To Approach It Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 3 thru 11	God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve...right? We use this question as a test case to demonstrate how to approach tough passages in a methodical, sound manner. Then we move on to Genesis 3 thru 11 and examine the etiologies (stories of how things came to be) that we find there.
3	A Saga Of Epic Proportions Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 12 thru 14	Visions, Harems, War and Kidnapping...and that's just this week! The Hebrew Bible is not for sissies. This week starts a grand story, and Pastor Gayle will probably tell it in a way you've never heard it before. Then you'll get a chance to dig into the story yourself.
4	A Promise, A Slave, And A Wedding Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 15 thru 17	God shows up again (twice) and Abram and Sarai get into another big mess. But God takes their shenanigans in stride, and it all comes right in the end. We see God as King but also as a loving bridegroom, with a very surprising twist at the end of the ceremony.
5	Sodom And Gomorrah Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 18 thru 19	Christianity has long associated Sodom and Gomorrah with homosexuality. This is even where our word "sodomy" comes from. It's a tough and controversial subject, but it's in the Bible for a reason. We are going to face it honestly and with careful scholarship. Do not be afraid. God is with us. God is still compassionate. God is still holy.
6	Chiasms And Child Sacrifice	Genesis 20 thru 22	Genesis just doesn't quit with the tough topics. In this class we'll add to your tools for dealing with perplexing passages.

	Video or Podcast Study Guide		We run into another wife-sister story, almost identical to the first one. Say, what? Sarah is, like, 90 years old at this point! Never fear, I'll show you how understanding the ancient literary device of chiasms reveals that this weird story makes perfect sense. Once we've got this chiasm under our belt we'll move on to where God tells Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. Another totally perplexing passage, but you've got this! We'll use tools we already have in our backpack to figure this one out.
7	Miracles, Backstabbing, And Love At First Sight Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 23 thru 28	We get introduced to a whole new set of characters this week. Genesis starts to read like a novel at this point. No more stacks of etiologies or crazy chiasms. And the story speeds up considerably. These new characters are something else!
8	Between A Rock And A Hard Place Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 29 thru 31	Jacob makes it to Haran where he falls head over heels in love. But he's nearly pulled to pieces--caught in a struggle between the woman he loves and the woman he's forced to marry, cheated by his father-in-law, and running for his life. We'll see how God shows up.
9	The Place Of Choosing Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 32 thru 36	Circumstances force Jacob to make some tough choices. If Jacob has really changed, now is the time to show it. He's got to face Esau, and it's a pretty sure bet Esau is going to be gunning for him. Jacob's sons endanger the entire family just when Rachel finally gets pregnant again. The story gets darker and darker. Jacob will show his true colors. Want to bet what they are?
10	Joseph Just Can't Catch A Break!	Genesis 37 thru 39	Joseph's big mouth lands him in hot water. His brothers plot murder, but at the last minute decide to spare his life. Joseph is sold into slavery and hauled off to Egypt where he builds a

	Video or Podcast Study Guide		new life--only to be falsely accused of attempted rape and thrown into prison. Why do bad things happen to good people?
11	The End Of Genesis Video or Podcast Study Guide	Genesis 40 thru 50	Genesis ends with a bang! Joseph is elevated from the dungeon to the height of power in Egypt. But leading a country through a famine is nothing compared to facing the brothers who tried to murder you. This is a man wrestling with forgiveness and reconciliation.
EXODUS THROUGH DEUTERONOMY			
12	This Is Not Going To End Well Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 1 thru 4	God calls Moses to return to Egypt to rescue the Israelites, but Moses really, really, doesn't want to go. God insists. God's already warned him that he will harden Pharaoh's heart. And once Moses sets out for Egypt, God shows up to kill "him" -- him who? What in the world is going on? What kind of God is this?
13	Here Come The Plagues Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 5 thru 11	Pharaoh thinks he's a god. And he'll worship anything that moves--except God. The Hebrews are shrieking in pain and crying out in their suffering. And God shows up! In this class, God does battle with Pharaoh and the entire pantheon of Egyptian gods. We get two new tools for our backpack. And we do a deep dive into "I am YHWH" to see what God has to say about himself and his relationship with us. This gives us the backbone--the spine--the rest of the Bible will be built around. It's an eye-opening view of God.
14	The Exodus Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 12 thru 16	All its mysteries. All its violence. All its wonders. The Israelites are like an abused spouse. They want to be rescued, but they are terrified when their abuser gives chase.

			God is mighty to save--and tender as a mother with them. Even when they falter and want to return to their abuser, God gently coaxes them onward to freedom. We take a closer look at the power dynamics that lurk beneath the surface, especially in the struggle between God and the gods of Egypt, including Pharaoh. Why did the firstborn have to die?
15	Be Careful What You Wish For Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 17 thru 19	The Israelites finally get to Mt Sinai. It wasn't easy. Got attacked on the way. Ran out of water--twice. Ran out of food. And God showed up every single time. Now the Israelites have a chance to hear God for themselves. I think they get more than they bargained for!
16	The Ten Commandments Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 20 Deuteronomy 5	The First Day of God School What points are on God's Top Ten list? We explore the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5 and Exodus 20. And we find some surprises when we look at some of the questionable passages--like the one about grandchildren being punished for the sins of their grandparents.
17	Tabernacle, Sacrifices & Priests Video or Podcast Study Guide	Tabernacle: Exodus 25 thru 27; 30; 31:1-11 Leviticus 24:2-9 Numbers 7; 8:2-4 Sacrifices: Exodus 23:18; 29:38-46; 30:11-16 Leviticus 1 thru 5; 7; 17:2-9; 19:5-8; 22:17-30	We knock down lots of myths this week. And the biggest one is that the God of the Hebrew Bible is different than the God we know as Christians. But--yikes! Does that mean God is vengeful and angry and needs to be appeased? Nope. Isn't now, and never was that way. God is the same now and forever--loving and welcoming and wholly merciful.

		Numbers 15, 28 Priests & Levites: Exodus 28 thru 29 Leviticus 6:9-30; 21; 22 Numbers 3; 4; 6:23-27; 8; 18 Deuteronomy 14:27-29; 18:1-8	
18	God Talks About Sex Video or Podcast Study Guide	Leviticus 18	It's not what you think! If you are gay or have an LGBTQ child or loved one, do not fear. There's no bashing going on in this lesson. In fact, as in previous lessons, we find out that God's been completely misrepresented as harsh and condemning. Can someone be gay and still be Christian? What does Jesus have to say about all this?
19	Clean vs Unclean Video or Podcast Study Guide	Leviticus 11 thru 15	The concept of clean vs unclean things is pervasive in the Hebrew Bible. The idea that some things or even people (!) are unclean and should quote "be dealt with" has led to abuse of power within the church. And it is wrong. Jesus himself fought against it, actively resisted it, and preached against this abuse of power. The people he declared clean were the poor and marginalized and outcast, and the people he called unclean--literally "whitewashed tombs full of filth"--were the religious hierarchy. In this video we explore the concept of Clean vs Unclean.
20	Festivals And Sabbath Years Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 23:10-19; 31:12-18 Leviticus 16; 19:30; 23; 25; 26:2 Numbers 9:1-14; 15:32-36; 28:9-10,16-31; 29	Don't Worry, Be Happy That's more than a pop song--it's God's call to his beloved people. This week we look at all the special celebrations God sets up to remind the Israelites of his constant concern and provision--reminding them to REST ALREADY! And making

		Deuteronomy 16:1-17	sure they are 100% certain of his love and forgiveness and complete acceptance of them. None of it required guilt or backlashing. None of it required shame or difficult tasks. It isn't soul-searching God wants from the Israelites...it's rejoicing. He wants more than anything to see them running full tilt into his outstretched arms. And the gifts he's got for them! Wait until you hear how God would set up the economy.
21	The Golden Calf, Nadab, And Abihu Video or Podcast Study Guide	Exodus 32 Leviticus 10	When Moses finally gets down off that mountain he's greeted with the Israelites running amok. Fireworks ensue. Moses pleads with God to spare the people...and God does! Aaron doesn't even lose his job as High Priest. Amazing. In this lesson we see God's holiness in its stark power, and it raises a lot of questions. Join us for the discussion as we try to understand the "Both/And" God.
22	Chickening Out And Grumbling Video or Podcast Study Guide	Numbers 13-21	The Israelites make it to the border of the Promised Land. Moses tells them to go for it! Take the land! And they chicken out. Then, to make matters worse, a big group of the Levites stage a coup, accusing Moses and Aaron of being power hungry. The result of the coup is not pretty. But even that fiasco isn't enough to stop the Israelites from grumbling and rebelling. God does some incredible, amazing things--so much so that Jesus even talks about it in a secret meeting with a powerful leader. And we make some surprising connections between the seraphim of the Hebrew Bible and a story about a snake on a pole. Who knew all this was in the Bible???
23	Balaam And The Ass	Numbers 21:10-27:11	Balaam is a prophet for sale. Israel's enemies hire him to

	Video or Podcast Study Guide		curse the Israelites and the results are hilarious. From a talking donkey to "You're fired!" this is a complete fiasco for Balaam. You can almost hear God say, "Who's your Daddy?" Are sorcery and divination fake or real? What was Balaam's most grievous sin in this whole sorry saga? (It'll probably surprise you.) We give some thought to discernment, gifts and calling in the discussion afterwards.
24	Moses' Parting Shot Video or Podcast Study Guide	Deuteronomy	If you were leading these stiff-necked, stubborn folks, what last words would you say to them? How would you persuade them to choose good things over bad things? How would you convince them that God loves them and will care for their every possible need, if they haven't understood that already? Moses tries everything--telling them, giving them object lessons, writing it all down, telling them to write the important stuff on their hands and their foreheads, appointing (and praying for) a new leader, and even teaching them a song! We finish the Torah, the first five books of the Bible today. What would you write on your forehead? What have you discovered about God?
JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH			
25	Entering The Promised Land Video or Podcast Study Guide	Joshua 1-5	World powers at war. Migrations of displaced peoples. And the Promised Land is caught in the crossfire. Israel readies itself to enter the Promised Land and God shows up in a big way. In fact, the Commander of the Lord's Army shows up. I wonder who that is? Lots of things happen in this liminal space as Israel crosses over from slavery into the land of promise. Cutting off, heaping up, spies and sex workers--it all comes together in a dramatic way as we follow the Israelites across the Jordan

			River.
26	Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho Video or Podcast Study Guide	Joshua 6 thru Judges 2:9	This class is for the skeptics in the bunch. Walls falling down when you shout at them? The sun standing still for 24 hours? Must we suspend all laws of physics? What about Biblical Inerrancy? What do we do with all this stuff? We tackle these tough questions. There is room for everyone at the table--the skeptics and the literalists. We finish up Joshua today and get the Israelites settled in the Promised Land.
27	Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, And Deborah Video or Podcast Study Guide	Judges 2 thru 5	This book is the cesspool of the Bible. And we often mistake that cesspool for being a reflection of God when it is actually a reflection of the people he was trying to communicate with. These stories are violent, earthy, and often overtly sexual--and they are in the Bible for a reason. Join us as we explore "campfire theatre" at its best.
28	Gideon The Timid And The 300 Not-So-Great Warriors Video or Podcast Study Guide	Judges 6 thru 9	It's a good thing God shows up for Israel. I'd hate to have to rely on Gideon. And, really, that's the point God is making. God often picks the weakest to be the "hero" so there is no question at all as to who is doing the saving. Gideon is a sort of Clark Kent/Superman hero. Half the time he's timid and cautious and half the time he's a brilliant, courageous hero. His son, on the other hand, is ambitious, arrogant, and a serial killer. As usual, the Bible takes some crazy twists and turns. This time, the question is how to know God's will for us. Gideon's answer was to "fleece" God. What do you do?
29	Jephthah's Daughter Video or Podcast	Judges 10 thru 11	Wait...child sacrifice is in the Bible? This is one of the most difficult stories in Scripture. So it is rarely taught and most people don't even know it's in there. What do you do with

	Study Guide		child sacrifice--especially when it is done as an act of devotion to YHWH? We don't just use one backpack tool on this tough story--we use two! And the results are both startling and reassuring. If you have time, stick around for the after-class discussion at the end of the video. There's some good stuff in there.
30	Samson Video or Podcast Study Guide	Judges 12 thru 16	What happens when God's call goes off the rails? We all know about Samson's long hair and Delilah's treachery, but there's a lot more to the story. The enemies du jour are the Philistines. They've been a thorn in the side of the tribe of Dan from the git-go and now the Lord's going to do something about it. The problem is, God picks Samson as the hero this time. Why is that a problem? Because Samson is all about Samson. This week we'll see what happens when the hero is an immature hothead who thinks he's God's gift to women.
31	Micah And The Levite The Levite's Concubine Video or Podcast Study Guide	Judges 17 thru 21	This one is even worse than Jephthah's daughter, but don't chicken out! Put on your HazMat suit and wade in with us. We're going to add an important tool to the backpack that will help us figure this out. There's not even a judge involved this time, so why are Chapters 17-21 in here at all? How are these stories even related? Believe it or not, we'll make sense of all of it.
32	Ruth - Giver And Receiver Of Love Video or Podcast Study Guide	Ruth	A love story. A story of courage. A new tool for our backpack. And some cool info on the origins of the Old Testament we hold in our hands today.
SAMUEL THROUGH SOLOMON			

33	Samuel's Birth The Ark Is Taken Captive Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Samuel 1-7	This week we meet Samuel, the last judge and the greatest prophet in Israel since Moses. This man is a king-maker and the mouthpiece of God, and he gets more terrifying as he ages (kinda like some of the rest of us). We'll cover 1 Samuel 1-7 this week. There's a chiasm in this section but we won't be covering it in class. I've put it in the Study Guide as Bonus Material in case you'd like to check it out.
34	Saul, The first King of Israel, Suffers From Imposter Syndrome Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Samuel 8-11	The Israelites insist on a king like everyone else has. Samuel is horrified, but they insist. So the Lord himself picks out their first king, a man named Saul. You'd think it would be happily ever after...but no. This is the Bible, after all. Saul cannot get past himself, and the wheels start to fall off the wagon pretty much right away.
35	Saul Succeeds In War But Fails As King Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Samuel 12-15	Saul's finally acting like a King, but he's screwing up royally! It's like every time he does something, he messes up. And every single time it has to do with disobeying a specific instruction from God. Why does Saul make this so much harder than it needs to be? Samuel pulls no punches. He rakes Saul over the coals no matter who's watching and listening. Saul tries to save face and gets caught in his lies by Samuel. Embarrassment after public embarrassment can't be helping with Saul's Imposter Syndrome.
36	David Fights Goliath, But Saul Fights A Giant Too Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Samuel 16-19	David fights Goliath, but Saul fights mental illness. Poor Saul. At first it seems like simple arrogance combined with a serious case of Imposter Syndrome, but this week King Saul develops a full-fledged case of paranoia. David arrives on the scene and quickly becomes a national hero. Saul does not react well at all, as you can imagine.

37	What Happens When Enemies Fall Into Our Grasp? Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Samuel 20-25	The answer might surprise you. The power struggle between King Saul and David is life or death. David flees Saul's court and is betrayed. Pressed to breaking point, David faces a tough choice when he catches Saul unawares. Would it be self-defense to kill Saul while he can? Mental illness plays a surprising role this week--leading to David's escape from a Philistine ruler. The ending is not so happy for Nabal, a man whose name literally means "fool." In the discussion we wrestle with the whole concept of revenge and what that looks like for God's people.
38	David Spares Saul, But Saul Takes His Own Life Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Sam 26 - 2 Sam 2 1 Chr 10	The Philistines are Israel's arch-enemies. But sure enough, David joins forces with them and even marches to battle with them against Israel. We've got a crazy story this week with another tragic ending. This time we say goodbye to Saul, and we'll take some time in our breakout groups to think about how different the two leaders have been.
39	Two Kings And Two Commanders - Something's Gotta Give Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Sam 3 - 9 1 Chr 11 - 17, 21	King David and King Ish-Bosheth. Commander Joab and Commander Abner. The struggle that began between Saul and David is about to bear fruit. David continues to have a heart for the Lord, but cracks are beginning to show. He makes some big mistakes this week. In our breakout sessions we encounter the concept of hesed--an attribute of God that is so broad and deep that it defies description. We reflect on how that impacts our relationship with God in very practical ways.
40	David Fails Utterly As King And As Father	2 Sam 10 - 13 1 Chr 18 - 20	And his people and his family pay a terrible price. This class comes with some serious trigger warnings: adultery, rape,

	Video or Podcast Study Guide		murder, and infant death. How will God respond? What happens when we fail at everything?
41	The Treachery Of Absalom Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Sam 14 - 19	After Absalom kills his brother Amnon in revenge for the rape of his sister Tamar, Absalom flees across the Jordan. There he bides his time...convinced he is King David's rightful heir. Through a little subterfuge, Absalom is given another chance and returns to King David's court, only to betray him by sparking a palace coup! The tables are turned and now David is exiled across the Jordan! Will David prevail or will Absalom retain his grip on the throne?
42	David Dies, Long Live Solomon! Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Sam 19-23 1 Kings 1-2	David fights back against Absalom and wins, but his kingdom comes at the cost of his son's life. David is heartbroken. There's a strange sequence of events as David returns to Jerusalem. He meets the same cast of obscure characters he met on the way out...wait a second...could this be a chiasm? We pull out our backpack tools to see what hidden secrets we can discover.
43	Solomon's Temple Discussion of Sheol, Hell, and Wisdom Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Kings 3-10 1 Chron 22-29 2 Chron 1-9	After a rocky start, Solomon builds a grand and peaceful kingdom with a brand new Temple as its centerpiece. The Lord grants his wish for wisdom to rule the people and throws in massive riches and honor for good measure. Solomon is so famous that eventually the Queen of Sheba decides she's gotta see this for herself. Spoiler alert: She's not disappointed. We find out what the Israelites thought about hell and life after death (you might be shocked). And we had a very deep

			discussion about Wisdom -- Is Wisdom a person? Why isn't Wisdom talked about in church?
44	Solomon Fails, And Jeroboam Is Given The Kingdom Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Kings 11 The Song of Songs Ecclesiastes	Solomon has absolutely everything going for him--good looks, wealth, wisdom, everyone admires him, and the Lord picked him to be king. But he throws it all away. No kidding. The smartest, wisest man in the world fails completely. How can this be? We hear from Solomon in his own words this week as he looks back on what went wrong.
ELIJAH AND ELISHA			
45	The Divided Kingdom Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Kings 12-15 2 Chronicles 10-16	Solomon was the last great king of Israel. After his death, his son Rehoboam's arrogance causes the kingdom to split into civil war. The ten northern tribes make Jeroboam king, while Rehoboam is left only with Judah and Simeon, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah. The border between Judah in the south and Israel in the north remains fluid, moving and blending as battles rage. The battles are not just military ones, but are also fought over the people's gods. Will the people choose YHWH or will they worship the golden calves their kings set up for them? When is God going to lose his patience with these people?
46	The Prophet Elijah -- Fearless Fireworks And Deep Depression Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Kings 16-19	The northern kingdom is in a state of turmoil. We've got a civil war within a civil war. Total chaos. Finally, Omri seizes the throne and when he dies his son Ahab becomes king. Ahab is the worst king yet. Case in point? His wife is none other than the infamous Jezebel who starts a program of extermination of God's prophets.

			Elijah proves to be elusive. He's a survivor. On the outside he's fearless, but behind the scenes we see his anguish and fear and discouragement. In this class we follow Elijah through an incredible mountaintop showdown against Jezebel's prophets of Baal. Then Elijah faces torrential rain, wind, earthquake and fire. Which terrifying event do you think God was in? (It's a trick question)
47	Elijah Finds A Successor Israel And Aram Go To War Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Kings 19-22 2 Chron 17-18	Ben-Hadad of Aram picks a fight with King Ahab of Israel. Ahab has virtually no military resources to respond. With his back to the wall, who does he turn to? His idols? Nope. YHWH. But of course, Ahab is only in this for Ahab. He doesn't do what God tells him to do. When God calls him on it, what does Ahab do? He pouts! Jezebel has to step in and prop him up.
48	God Brings Out The Big Guns Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 1, 3-5 2 Chron 19-20	Not only are dates getting more solid, but we're beginning to run into historical records that corroborate biblical accounts. This commemorative monument ("stele") was set up by one of Israel's enemies--a king of Moab that we run across in this week's lesson. The northern kingdom of Israel is slipping deeper and deeper into idol worship, and they are enticing Judah to forsake dependence on YHWH. Desperate times call for desperate measures. God shows up in miraculous ways for even the wickedest of kings--all to try to woo his people back. And Elisha is right in the thick of it: calling down fire, purifying poisoned waters, rescuing widows, healing generals. We've got some crazy powerful stuff going on here. I wonder if the people will pay attention?

49	The Chariot Of Israel, Elisha Gets A Double Portion Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 2, 6-7 2 Chron 21	Elijah goes out with a quite literal bang, and Elisha gets a double portion of his spirit (Elijah told him to be careful what he wished for!). Elisha gives the King of Aram fits in a hilarious story that results in the Arameans slinking away with their tails between their legs. Meanwhile in Judah, sixty years of being governed by relatively good kings comes to an abrupt end. The bloodlines of the royal families of Israel and Judah are joined, and we witness the beginning of the end of the nations. We don't do separate breakout groups this time. Instead we stay together and use our backpack tools to figure out why a crazy story about bald heads and bears is in the Bible.
50	Jezebel Gets What's Coming To Her Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 8-10 2 Chron 22	As do her son, the King of Judah, and her grandson, the King of Israel. It's a complete rout and lots of old prophecies get fulfilled--as the story says, "Not a word the Lord speaks falls to the ground." The thing is, though, those prophecies were like 12-14 years old. God told Elijah to do them, but he dies and apparently passes the work to Elisha, who then dawdles around before suddenly doing it all. Why is that? What does that say to us about how WE are to understand when and how to do what the Lord tells us to do? Here's the link to the TED talk about Liquid Lead that I reference during class: https://youtu.be/OH0dK208MNk
THE FALL OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH			
51	Here Comes The Prophets--But No One Listens	2 Kings 11-13 2 Chron 23-24 Joel	Athaliah seizes power in Judah and kills all her own grandchildren. True story. She misses one though, due to some heroics by a gal named Jehosheba. The boy, Joash, eventually becomes king. He starts well but ends very poorly.

	Video or Podcast Study Guide		Even Jesus calls him out 800 years later! We say goodbye to Elisha and hello to the books of the prophets. This takes us to a whole new level of understanding Scripture. You don't want to miss this. We start with the book of Joel. He introduces the concept of "The Day of the Lord" and provides a thumbnail sketch we can use as a template to understand all the rest of the prophets.
52	Israel's On The Brink So God Sends Jonah Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 14 2 Chron 25 Jonah	Israel gets Jeroboam version 2, and he's as bad as his namesake. You'd think the Lord would come down hard, right? The problem is--Israel's borders have shrunk so much it's in danger of disappearing altogether. So either the Lord will let Israel be wiped out or he'll have to let this wicked king be a victor in battle. What will the Lord choose? We know one thing for sure--the Lord's gonna send a prophet. And guess who it is this week? Jonah! Yay! This is one of my favorite stories in the Bible. Jonah is sent to both Jeroboam and to Assyria. Crazy! This week is a ton of fun.
53	Amos: The Not-A-Prophet Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 15 2 Chron 26 Amos	Amos isn't a prophet--nobody in his family is a prophet--but the Lord takes him from Judah and sends him to Israel to proclaim the coming disasters about to overtake Israel, Judah, and all the surrounding nations. As long as he speaks against Israel's enemies he is welcome company, but as soon as he starts calling Israel out, he is quickly given the boot. In this revealing class, we look at the difference between the Lord's grievances against the foreign nations and his grievances against Israel and Judah. We'll think about what the Lord says he wants instead of sacrifices and praise songs. And we'll consider the "plumb line" Amos saw. What might that be, and does it have significance for us today?

54	Isaiah And A Peek At The End Times Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 15 (still) 2 Chron 26 (still) Isaiah Ch 1 thru 4	King Uzziah of Judah is pretty proud of himself. Judah is thriving under his economic leadership. So he figures he should be more important than anyone, including the priests. He shows up with incense and crashes the Holy Place in the Temple. Hmmm...I wonder what could go wrong here? Israel is in complete turmoil as the kingdom changes hands three times in seven months. Into all this chaos, the Lord sends Isaiah. We take a peek at future events so we have a good frame of reference for understanding Isaiah's messages.
55	War On All Sides--So What Does That Have To Do With Baby Jesus? Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 15-16 2 Chron 27-28 Isaiah Ch 6-8, 17, 57	What if you were attacked on all sides simultaneously? And what if the Lord showed up and said, "Don't worry. I will protect you. Let me prove it to you." That's an offer you jump at, right? But the King of Judah turns to the King of Assyria for help instead. Say, what? You think Assyria is going to protect you when they are already poised to crush you? It's like asking the fox to protect the hen house. The results are disastrous for both Israel and Judah. Thousands of Israelites are deported to far-flung places across the Assyrian Empire. Don't miss the discussion and additional whiteboard session in the second half where we dive into Isaiah's "A virgin shall conceive" and find out it doesn't mean what we thought it did!
56	The Last King of Israel Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 17 2 Chron 28 (still) Isaiah 9, 50 Hosea Micah	The Lord's going to take one more shot at saving Israel, and it's going to be a dramatic one. This time, he doesn't just have the prophet speak the words...the Lord has him act them out. Israel, the Lord's chosen wife whom the Lord has wooed and protected and fed and cherished, has been hopelessly

			unfaithful for their entire marriage. She's run away with idols every chance she's gotten. So as shocking as it is, it should be no surprise that the Lord wants Hosea to act out the "state of the marriage." The Lord tells Hosea to find a prostitute to marry--specifically one Hosea is 100% sure will be unfaithful to him. Meanwhile, in Judah, the prophet Micah adds another prophetic voice, calling both kingdoms to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
57	Hezekiah Becomes King - The First Passover, Again Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 18:1-12 2 Chron 29-31 Isaiah 14 (v24-end), 18-20	When Ahaz dies, his son Hezekiah becomes king and immediately tosses all the idols out of the Temple. He calls for a renewed devotion to YHWH. Frankly, he's looking for all the help he can get to avoid being conquered by the Assyrians. But this first effort is a comedy of errors. Will Hezekiah decide to hedge his bets by forming an alliance with Egypt? Things get pretty dicey, and the Lord calls on Isaiah to step up in a graphic way. This lesson needs to come with a warning label.
58	The King Of Assyria Defies God Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 18-21 2 Chron 32-33 Isaiah 36-39, 49-53	Despite Isaiah going naked in warning, Hezekiah still turns to Egypt for help. Assyria pounces and Hezekiah quickly realizes his mistake. But then the King of Assyria dares to disparage YHWH, the God of Israel. He dares to say YHWH cannot be trusted. And so, YHWH shows up in person and forces the King of Assyria to turn tail and run, without landing so much as an arrow in Jerusalem. After a miraculous 15-yr life extension, Hezekiah dies and his 12 year old son Manasseh becomes king. Manasseh is a disaster. He does it all--worshipping idols, bringing them into

			the Temple, and sacrificing his own son. He ends up a captive in Babylon where he finds...YHWH! He really does. And YHWH hears his repentance and restores him to his throne where he worships YHWH only ever after. We finish up with a look at the four “Servant Songs” in Isaiah, especially Ch 49 which is typically taken out of context.
59	A Cauldron From The North Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 22:1-2 2 Chron 34:1-3 Zephaniah Jeremiah 1-6	After Manasseh’s death and the assassination of the next guy in line, 8 yo Josiah comes to the throne. He follows the Lord wholeheartedly his whole life. He destroys all the idols in Judah and even whatever he can find in what used to be Israel. He destroys high places, desecrates idol altars--the whole nine yards. But it’s pretty much only Josiah. The people show up and say the words, but their hearts are not in it. They want their idols back. And so, the Lord sends the next great prophet--Jeremiah--who will stick with the kings of Judah until the bitter end. He sees a cauldron from the north ready to flood Judah with disaster. Jeremiah is a young, introverted man and his “call story” is one of the most dramatic in the Bible.
60	Gung-ho For God Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 22-23 2 Chron 34-35 Jeremiah 7-12, 14-17	When the Book of the Law is found in the Temple and is read to King Josiah, he knows the nation is in deep trouble. He goes on a rampage cleansing all of Judah, Jerusalem, the Temple and even what used to be Israel of all the idols and high places and shrines. Then he orders a grand Passover celebration. The problem is that it’s a top-down reform. It definitely does not reach the hearts of the people. The Lord has Jeremiah stand at the gates of the Temple and then at every gate into Jerusalem

			and urge the people to repent and turn to the Lord. The Lord tells Jeremiah to stop bothering to intercede for the people. The Lord will relent only if the people themselves turn to him with their whole hearts.
61	Jeremiah Is Accused Of Treason Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Kings 24 2 Chron 36 Jeremiah 18-20, 25-26, 36, 45, 35, 13 Lamentations Nahum Habakkuk Daniel 1	After King Josiah dies, Judah never has another good king. Jeremiah writes laments over King Josiah. The book of Lamentations, which may not be Jeremiah's, is a poignant lament over the fall of Jerusalem which is fast approaching. Jeremiah is a persistent, annoying thorn in the side of the new king, Jehoiakim, and his officials. And since Jeremiah sets up his soap box in the Temple precincts, it's not long before the priests and false prophets are out to get him. Things get dicey when they accuse Jeremiah of treason. The Lord saves Jeremiah and his faithful scribe, Baruch, but he has no mercy on wicked King Jehoiakim. After Jehoiakim's death, his son Jehoiachin reigns only 3 months before being taken captive to Babylon along with all the ruling and upper classes. We close with the famous story of Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as they learn to navigate Babylonian language and culture. We cover a lot of ground in this class. But don't worry--the class is still only 30 minutes long. If you stay for the discussion afterwards, we talk about a very helpful way to know whether (and how) to respond to evil in the world.
62	King Nebuchadnezzar Has A Dream Video or Podcast	Jeremiah 30-31, 24, 47-51, 27-29 Daniel 2	The sages and mages of Babylon cannot tell the king his dream nor can they interpret it, so the enraged king orders them all killed as frauds. And that includes any wise-men-in-training like Daniel and his friends.

	Study Guide		Daniel and his friends beseech the Lord God for mercy, and God gives Daniel both the dream and its meaning. This means all lives are saved and Daniel gets a big promotion. Meanwhile in Judah, Jeremiah is still trying to make an impression on the hard-hearted, stubborn leaders. He wears a wooden yoke and gets into a confrontation with a more politically correct prophet. Letters and envoys are swapped between Judah and Babylon, with Jeremiah right in the middle of it all.
63	Ezekiel Sees Visions Video or Podcast Study Guide	Ezekiel 1-9	One of the young priests in exile in Babylon is called by God to warn the people of Jerusalem of impending disaster. Which is kind of weird--Ezekiel does all sorts of object lessons there in Babylon, and his antics all have to be transmitted back to Jerusalem by mail and messenger. Isaiah had to go naked for 3 years and Hosea had to marry a woman he knew would be unfaithful, so you know Ezekiel is in for a rough ride. This week we hear his “call story” and follow along as he acts out the events bearing down on Jerusalem.
64	The Glory Of The Lord Leaves The Temple Video or Podcast Study Guide	Ezekiel 10-23, 25-36, Jeremiah 21-23, 32-34, 37-38	The end is near. All who grieve Jerusalem’s evil have been marked with God’s mark on their foreheads. The rest, the Lord says, will be pursued by plague, famine, and sword. In Eze 23 we meet Oholah and Oholibah and see how God views Israel and Judah in this moment in history. And now, Ezekiel sees the Glory of the Lord depart from the Temple. It is a view of what is happening spiritually. The physical events are yet to come. Zedekiah rebels against Babylon and allies with Egypt. Big mistake. Nebuchadnezzar sets out with his armies and then

			comes to a fork in the road--and finds a sign that Ezekiel put there. In the midst of all this turmoil, Jeremiah is arrested and thrown in prison.
65	The Fall Of Jerusalem Video or Podcast Study Guide	Jeremiah 32-33, 39-44, 52 2 Kings 25 2 Chronicles 36 Ezekiel 24 Also the chapters of woes: Jeremiah 46-49 Ezekiel 25-32, 35 Isaiah 47	The Babylonian siege lasts about 2 ½ years. The food supply in Jerusalem completely runs out. When the attention of the Babylonians is momentarily distracted, the Lord has Jeremiah buy a field as a sign of hope and promise that the Lord's people will one day be gathered back home. When all hope is lost, King Zedekiah and his soldiers sneak out through a hole in the wall but are caught by the Babylonians. Things do not end well for Zedekiah. Most of the people are taken into captivity to Babylon, leaving only a tiny staff supporting Gedeliah, the governor set up by the Babylonians. Gedeliah is quickly assassinated, and in fear for their lives, the few remaining Jews flee to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them.
THE EXILE AND THE RETURN			
66	God's Prophets Speak Comfort Video or Podcast Study Guide	Isaiah 40-66 Ezekiel 34, 36-48	Isaiah 40-66 is often called the "Book of Comfort." It contains some of the most well-known and memorable passages in all of Scripture. Big chunks of Handel's Messiah come from this part of Isaiah. And big chunks of our understanding of who the Messiah is comes from this section as well. Ezekiel also has chapters of comfort. He gives a great deal of information on a Davidic king who will shepherd the people. And in this war-torn land he sees a battlefield where the dry bones of slain soldiers rise up, become enfolded, and live again. Ezekiel 38-39 are more End Time prophecies about the Lord showing up to defend Israel from attack. And the book ends

			with a very detailed vision of a brand new Temple and a redivision of the tribal lands.
67	How Could God Do This? Video or Podcast Study Guide	Job	The book of Job raises the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" From the bizarre opening scene through the various answers given rather emphatically by Job's friends and then finally to God's voice in the whirlwind, people have combed through this book to find the answer. And I have to be honest, most of their responses would not comfort me at all if I were in Job's situation. As you might expect, we'll take a different tack in this class. We'll apply our backpack tools to see if we can make sense of this story.
68	The Fiery Furnace And The Mentally Ill King Video or Podcast Study Guide	Daniel 3 & 4	The book of Daniel is full of striking, extravagant stories, and we look at two of them this week. The first is the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace and the second is King Nebuchadnezzar's rather bizarre mental illness. We see world power begin to shift as Babylon shrinks and the Medes and Persians gain strength. In our breakout session we pause to reflect on the bizarre details in these stories, on the various parts left out or added by Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. And we'll wonder--where do you draw the line?
69	The Clash Of Empires Video or Podcast Study Guide	Daniel 7-8	Daniel has some pretty intense dreams and visions: a winged lion, a bear with ribs in its teeth, a leopard with four heads, and a great crushing, trampling beast with ten horns. He sees a similar vision a couple of years later, but this time it

			is a ram with two horns who conquers the world. It in turn is overcome by a goat with a large single horn that is broken off and replaced by four horns. In both sets of visions, a final boastful and cruel horn arises--one that persecutes the holy people. And yet, it is not all death and destruction, for Daniel also sees the Ancient of Days and is present when the holy one enters and is given kingship over all nations and peoples and languages. Justice is meted out and time arrives for the kingdom to belong to God's people forever.
70	The Writing On The Wall Video or Podcast Study Guide	Daniel 5-6	So-called King Belshazzar is full of himself. He has no respect whatsoever for God. But when he dares to drink from the vessels stolen from the Temple, a disembodied hand inscribes mysterious words on the wall. He does not know it yet, but these words spell the end of his kingdom. Daniel survives the change of regime. He's elderly now, but he quickly becomes an invaluable advisor to the new Median/Persian government. This, of course, makes him some bitter enemies who cause Daniel to be sentenced to immediate execution. We get our first glimpse of the Apocrypha as we compare the Sunday School standard version of Daniel in the Lions' Den with the Apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon.
71	The 70 Sevens Video or Podcast Study Guide	Daniel 9	Jeremiah prophesied that the exile would last 70 years, and in the first year of King Cyrus of Persia Daniel realizes the 70 years is up. He prays for God to remember his promise, and immediately God sends the angel Gabriel with news of great blessings that will occur during a set of "70 Sevens." The news isn't exactly what Daniel is expecting, but it is great

			news nevertheless. Gabriel ends his news with some rather alarming predictions about the Messiah and the end times. We'll take a look at the "70 Sevens" and see how we might make sense of them.
72	Prophecy Or History? Video or Podcast Study Guide	Ezra 1 Nehemiah 7 Daniel 10-11a	In a surprise move, Cyrus the Great decrees that any exiles who wish to may return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. He orders exiles staying behind to contribute gifts towards the effort, and Cyrus himself sends gold and silver from the treasury. Meanwhile, in Babylon, Daniel is visited by an angel who gives him a detailed account of the future. The prophecy is so detailed that we can match it up exactly to historical events until about 165 BCE, then the wheels fall off the wagon. Did Daniel's prophecy morph to the more distant future at that point? Was his original prophecy overwritten with historical detail and recorded around 165 BCE, leaving the rest of the prophecy untouched?
73	Daniel's Grand Finale Video or Podcast Study Guide	Daniel 11b-12	After the set-up of the timeline in the "70 Sevens," the angel goes on to explain to Daniel a series of wars and intrigue between a King of the North and a King of the South. All of the details fit perfectly with what happens historically between Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Egypt--until the time Antiochus dies. Then the events no longer match up to history. Even before that, the wording in Daniel begins to wobble between the time of these kings and the End Times. There are several clear End Time markers in the text, including prophecy about resurrection and judgment and the afterlife.

			In our breakout groups, we take a look at how beliefs regarding the afterlife morphed over the biblical period and we think about these influences on God's people.
74	Laying The Foundation Of The New Temple Video or Podcast Study Guide	Ezra 2 thru 4:5 Haggai Zechariah 1-4	The newly returned exiles start off by building an altar for their future Temple and beginning sacrifices and feast days. But they and their leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel, run into stiff resistance laying the foundation of the new Temple in Jerusalem. The opposition delays them for years. When they do lay the foundation, they have a huge celebration, but the size of the new Temple's footprint is so small and pathetic the elders actually weep in sorrow. Joshua and Zerubbabel are clearly discouraged. But the Lord sends the prophet Zechariah with magnificent words of encouragement that have reverberated through the ages.
75	Zerubbabel's Temple Is Finished Video or Podcast Study Guide	Zech 5-14 Ezra 5-6	Zechariah has three more visions (including one of a huge flying scroll) and then the Lord tells him to make some crowns. He's to put one of them on the High Priest Joshua. Zechariah's encouragement helps Zerubbabel and Joshua press on. The last bastion of resistance falls, and the Temple is finally completed. What a celebration they have! We finish Zechariah--diving into his important End Time prophecies, looking for themes and searching out the heart of the Lord.
76	Heroes, Sheroes, And Villains Video or Podcast Study Guide	Esther	The story of Esther has been a smash hit for millennia. And for good reason--what's not to love about an orphan girl raised to be queen who is hiding a deadly secret and when threatened by the most dastardly villain is able to vanquish him with her cunning and shrewdness? There's more to the story than this, of course. There are

			reasons this story is in the Bible. There are reasons it has stood the test of time. We uncover hidden meanings and use our backpack tools to break open the overarching chiasm that reveals the central message of the book.
77	Rebuilding The Walls Of Jerusalem Video or Podcast Study Guide	Ezra 7-10, 4:7ff Nehemiah 1-12	The Israelites have run amok in the 60 years since the Temple was rebuilt. King Artaxerxes sends Ezra, a renowned scholar, a priest, and a gifted teacher to Judah and Jerusalem to teach all the people the Law of Moses. Ezra is horrified when he finds the Israelites have intermarried with the local people and have fallen back into idolatry. His teaching and prayers ignite a revival among the Israelites, and the foreign wives are sent away. It only takes another 10 years or so, however, for the Israelites to fall away again. And in all this time they've not even started rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah, the king's wine taster, begs King Artaxerxes to send him back with the financial support and authority he needs to rebuild the walls. And the king agrees! Despite intense local opposition, the walls are rebuilt and Ezra again inspires the people to renew their vows to the Lord. Sacrifices, feasts, and tithes are all renewed, and we leave the story as Nehemiah is recalled by King Artaxerxes.
78	The End Of The Hebrew Bible Video or Podcast Study Guide	Malachi Nehemiah 13	While Nehemiah is away at the court of King Artaxerxes, things fall apart. Levites and other temple workers don't get paid, the people work on the Sabbath, and they marry foreign wives--again. The prophet Malachi calls them all to task, reminding them that their actions matter and that YHWH is very, very real.

			The Lord speaks words of warning but also of tenderness: “Test me in this. Bring me your firstfruits and see if I do not open the storehouses of heaven to you!” Nehemiah returns to find everything in shambles. He sets everything right and does it all, not with an eye to the approval of Israel, but with an eye to finding favor with God.
THE APOCRYPHA			
79	A Fishy Tale Video or Podcast Study Guide	Tobit	Tobit is a righteous man living in Galilee until he is exiled by the Assyrians to their capital city of Nineveh. He rises to an important position in Assyria, only to lose everything when he is caught burying the bodies of fellow exiles who have been thrown outside the city walls. There follows an incredible tale involving an angel in disguise, hidden wealth, inexplicable blindness, death wishes (two of them), a demon king (!!), a sudden marriage, and a happy ending. Hang on for a wild ride!
80	Truth And Lies Video or Podcast Study Guide	Judith	The story of Judith is set at the time of the fall of Israel and Judah (both--it's a mashup). General Holofernes threatens to overwhelm the forces of Israel. The tiny town of Bethulia guards the mountain pass. Judith, a righteous and beautiful widow living in Bethulia, devises a plan to deceive General Holofernes. Asking God to bless her in her deceit, she enters the enemy camp with nothing but her handmaid and a bag of food. Is her deceit blessed by God? Good question. She does, in fact, deliver Israel from the hands of General Holofernes. We'll give some thought as to what parts to take away and

			what parts we should perhaps leave behind.
81	Who Is Wisdom? Video or Podcast Study Guide	Baruch, Wisdom, Sirach	The Apocryphal books of Baruch, the Book of Wisdom, and the Wisdom of Ben Sirach all emphasize the importance of Wisdom. Her value is far beyond that of riches or any power. In all three books she is emphatically female. And yet, we get conflicting views of her. In some passages, she is omniscient and all-powerful, the very image and breath of God, while in other passages she is quite clearly a created being (albeit the very first created being). In this class we explore these passages and compare them to similar passages in the Proverbs of the Hebrew Bible as well as passages in the New Testament.
82	Beginning Maccabees Video or Podcast Study Guide	1Ma 1:1-28; 2Ma 1:1-4:38 1&2 Maccabees overlap, so refer to the Maccabees Chronology to guide your reading.	The Hebrew Bible ends around 400 BCE. There are no more tribes of Israel--only scattered families which are gradually coalescing into geographic communities. Around 330 BCE, Alexander the Great conquers the world but dies suddenly, leaving the world in chaos. After 40 years of infighting, the world settles (more or less) into four major kingdoms: Macedonia, Thrace, Egypt, and the Seleucid Empire. Judea (named Palestine by the Romans who were themselves a rising world power) is fought over by Egypt and the Seleucids. The Seleucids eventually win. As the story of the Maccabees opens, the high priest has become a political appointee of the Seleucid king. It is a position of power that goes to the highest bidder. Prepare yourself for a whirlwind of politics and intrigue.
83	The Persecution Begins	1Ma 1:29-2:48;	Things are about to get bad. The High Priest Menelaus goes

	Video or Podcast Study Guide	2Ma 4:39-8:7 1&2 Maccabees overlap, so refer to the Maccabees Chronology to guide your reading.	to Antioch and instigates murder and bribery. He gets caught, but he uses his ill-gotten riches to make the charges roll off his back. Antiochus IV Epiphanes attacks Egypt and is humiliated by the Romans. Enraged, he vents his anger on Jerusalem. After ransacking the Temple (with the help of the high priest!) and setting up “the abomination that causes desolation,” he returns to Antioch where he begins an aggressive campaign to Hellenize his empire. And that spells disaster for the Jews. Forced to worship the Greek pantheon and desecrate all that is holy to Israel, many Jews forsake their faith rather than face torture and death. But many others would rather be martyred than renounce YHWH. One family in particular, the Hasmoneans, fight back hard. The father, Mattathias, is a local priest. He has five sons, one of whom is Judas Maccabeus. Judas the Hammer. Here come the Maccabees!
84	Overwhelming Odds And A Miracle Video or Podcast Study Guide	1Ma 2:49-6:63; 2Ma 8:8-12:1 1&2 Maccabees overlap, so refer to the Maccabees Chronology to guide your reading.	Mattathias dies, leaving his son Simon as head of the Hasmonean family and his son Judas Maccabeus as leader of the army--a euphemism for a force of about 6K. Judas and his men rely on God and shrewd tactics. They fight a classic guerrilla war, consistently outflanking, outmaneuvering, and outsmarting Seleucid forces ten times larger. More fighters join the resistance. Finally, after three years of fighting, they are able to beat back the Seleucids, leaving only a garrison ensconced in the heavily fortified citadel near the Temple. Judas and his men find the Temple in shambles and set about to repair it. Finding only one day's worth of untainted oil, they begin an

			eight-day celebration, and the oil burns without ceasing. It's a miracle, the very first Hanukkah!
85	The End Of The Maccabees Video or Podcast Study Guide	1Ma 7-End 2Ma 12-End	After the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Lysias gains control of the Seleucid Empire, at least while Antiochus V is a boy. But Lysias is an interloper with no real claim to the throne. He is challenged by both Demetrius I Soter of the Seleucid line and another pretender to the throne, Alexander Epiphanes (Balas). One thing leads to another, and even the reigning Egyptian Ptolemy gets in on the power struggle. And who's caught in the middle? The Maccabees, of course. This class has plenty of intrigue and plot twists, but what it does not have is any theology, so we don't have any questions in the Study Guide. We'll spend the entire class time getting from where we are in 163 BCE to Herod the Great and the time of Christ. It's quite a ride.
THE LIFE OF JESUS: THE EARLY YEARS			
86	Herod's Rise to Power Video or Podcast Study Guide	<i>No readings</i>	Ever since the Maccabees established the Hasmonean Dynasty, a Hasmonean has ruled Judea as High Priest and eventually King. The Pharisees and the Sadducees arise as significant political groups within Judaism. The Edomites, now called Idumeans, are forced to convert to Judaism. Palestine slides into civil war as various Hasmonean factions fight for power. Finally, both sides appeal to Rome. Big mistake. General Pompey marches on Jerusalem and in 63 BCE, Judea falls to Rome. Pompey allows a Hasmonean to remain as High Priest, but no longer are they kings. Palestine loses its independence, and Herod (the Great) is made king by the Romans.

87	In The Beginning Was The Word Video or Podcast Study Guide	John 1 Luke 1:1-25	Herod has grandiose ideas about how to welcome God. And honestly, those ideas seem to revolve around his own ego. He takes pitiful little Zerubbabel's Temple and transforms it into a massive Temple complex, then promptly desecrates it. God has far more humble plans. God sends the Angel Gabriel with a surprise announcement for an elderly couple. God's idea of preparing the way of the Lord looks nothing like what Herod might imagine. Our discussion focuses on John 1 and the idea of Jesus as the Word ("Logos"-- a word heavily associated with reason in the Hellenistic culture). What is this saying about reason and faith and Jesus?
88	Prepare The Way Of The Lord Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 1 Luke 1:26-79	The angel Gabriel appears to Mary to tell her she will bear God's son. Mary immediately travels to see her relative Elizabeth who is also miraculously with child. Mary stays until Elizabeth's baby, John (the Baptist), is born. Joseph, Mary's betrothed, is told in a dream that Mary's pregnancy is indeed an act of the Holy Spirit so despite his misgivings, he goes ahead and marries her. Both Matthew and Luke see these events as fulfilling ancient prophecies. We take a look at those prophecies and discover that things are not always as they seem!
89	Good News For All People Video or Podcast Study Guide	Luke 2:1-40	Jesus is born during the reign of Caesar Augustus. His birth is announced by an angel to a group of startled shepherds. The angel tells them the baby is the long-anticipated Messiah. The shepherds will know the angel is telling the truth if they find a baby in a manger. When the time comes for Jesus, the firstborn, to be devoted to God and for Mary to be "purified" after childbirth, the little

			family troops into the Temple carrying the required birds for sacrifice. There they are met by a dying man with some astounding words of prophecy.
90	The Rest Of The Christmas Story Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 2 Luke 2:41-52	The Christmas stories of Matthew and Luke are completely different. Both place Jesus in Bethlehem for his birth and both place Jesus in Nazareth growing up, but how and when and why Jesus is in either town is very different. Matthew gives us the story of the Magi and of the resulting Slaughter of the Innocents by Herod. He tells us how Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt to escape the killing frenzy. They only return when Herod dies. Luke gives us the tiniest glimpse into Jesus as a preteen--sassing his mom. And throughout it all Matthew roots the story firmly in subversive messianic prophecies.
91	John The Baptist Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 3 Mark 1:1-9 Luke 1:14-17, 67-80 John 1:15-32 Isaiah 40	John the Baptist: Elijah. The voice in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord. The one preparing the people for the Lord's coming. There's all sorts of political turnover, in both the local Roman government and in the office of the high priest. It is a time of unrest. And John the Baptist is definitely a loose cannon. He's wild and untamed and he shouts at the religious leaders. But his message for the people is one of tenderness and care, and crowds make daily treks out to the desert of Judea to hear him and be baptized. And soon, Jesus himself comes to be baptized. Why?
92	The Temptation Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 4:1-11 Mark 1:12-13 Luke 4:1-13	After his baptism Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where he fasts for 40 days and is tempted by Satan. That leads into all sorts of interesting topics like why did he have to be tempted? Why was he fasting? Is there

			really a Satan personified or is evil just something that people do? We pull out our backpack tools to answer these questions. Opinions aren't what we're after; we want something more objective. Our investigation yields fascinating insights into the purpose of miracles, the tests we set up for God, and the lure of power.
JESUS BEGINS MINISTRY			
93	Jesus Is Called To Action Video or Podcast Study Guide	John 3:22-36; 4:1-42 Matthew 4:12-17 Mark 1:14-15 Luke 3:19; 4:14-15	After his wilderness experience, Jesus begins traveling around Galilee teaching and baptizing, and the disciples of John the Baptist move swiftly to cut off the competition. Jesus' message is radical and his approach is shocking. The first person he explicitly tells that he is the Messiah is a woman--and she's not even a Jew! Things are moving quickly--perhaps more quickly than Jesus is prepared for. Then disaster strikes. His cousin, John the Baptist, is arrested. Will Jesus be next? How will Jesus respond?
94	Jesus Calls Disciples Video or Podcast Study Guide	John 2:1-12; 1:37-51 Luke 4:16-30; 5:1-11 Matthew 4:18-22 Mark 1:16-20	Jesus has pupils but it isn't until after John the Baptist's arrest and a rather spectacular miracle at the wedding of a friend that Jesus begins his ministry in earnest. His miracles make him famous quickly. He begins to call disciples to help him. When Jesus goes back to his hometown and teaches in the synagogue, he makes it clear that he's the Messiah and that God intends to bless everyone, not just the Jews. That just about gets him killed, and he's hardly gotten started yet!
95	Billboards From God	Matthew 4:23-25; 8:1-4,14-17; 9:1-17	Jesus, as the Messiah, brings the good news of God's incredible, expansive, urgent love. And God provides

	Video or Podcast Study Guide	Mark 1:21-45; 2:1-22 Luke 4:31-44; 5:12-39	miracles of healing to prove that Jesus is telling the truth. Miracles are billboards from God saying, "Believe what Jesus is telling you!" The people may not all believe, but the demons and unclean spirits certainly do. We talk about this difficult terminology.
96	The Tender Messiah Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 12:1-21 Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-12 Luke 6:1-11, 17-19 John 4:43-54; 5:16-47	Jesus turns everything upside-down. All those religious rules? Out the window. Burdens are left behind and blessings take their place. With one hand he heals and encourages the people until he's dropping from exhaustion, and with the other hand he absolutely skewers the religious leaders. You don't want to argue Scripture with Jesus! He runs circles around those know-it-alls. He embarrasses them so badly they begin plotting to kill him. And it's all to bring us the good news that God will not judge us. Jesus refuses to accuse us. We are already living eternal life in the pleasure of God. Already. Even back then, before Jesus was crucified.
SERMON ON THE MOUNT			
97	Bird's Eye View Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 5:1-7:29; 19:4 Mark 3:13-19; 10:1-12 Luke 6:12-16, 20-49; 11:1-4, 9-13; 12:57-59	Jesus needs help. He chooses a leadership team of twelve disciples from among the many following him. Together they travel throughout Galilee, Samaria and Judea teaching and healing. But these bumbling, eager, and confused disciples need training! The Sermon on the Mount and Luke's similar collection called the Sermon on the Plain are Discipleship 101 as taught by Jesus. We'll spend four weeks digging into this gold mine. But first, we'll do a bird's-eye view of the material to see if we

			can identify major themes. (We can!)
98	Light, Salt, Anger & Lust Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 5:13-32; 19:1-12 Mark 10:1-12 Luke 12:57-59	Jesus' premise in the Sermon on the Mount is that he is the light of the world sent to bring Good News to all the people--and we are too. This is what all the Law and the Prophets point towards, and we are to help him fulfill every last one of God's wonderful promises. But we can't fake it. We have to start by dealing with our junk, specifically our anger and our lust. We also hear Jesus' teachings on adultery and divorce in this class.
99	God, Power & Money Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 5:38-48; 6:1-8,16-21,24; 7:13-23 Luke 6:27-36	What does Jesus mean we should be perfect? That's impossible, right? Nope. If Jesus says something that seems impossible, we are misunderstanding somehow. Jesus continues to teach his disciples how to be disciples. He gives lots of examples and they seem to center around learning to be humble, laying down our pride, and holding our possessions with an open hand. He says we cannot trust both God and money. And Jesus extends that humility into our relationships with others. We talk about what it means to "turn the other cheek."
100	Forgiveness & Beatitudes Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 5:3-12,33-37; 6:9-15,25-34; 7:1-12 Luke 6:20-26,37-49; 11:1-13	We finish the Sermon on the Mount today. Jesus talks about forgiving others for their slip-ups and not judging them. He talks about the importance of setting healthy boundaries. He also talks about the importance of staying in our own lane and not trying to fix everyone else. And he reminds us that we actually cannot control much at all, so it's better to take things one step at a time and trust God with the outcome. At the end we circle back to the beginning and look more closely at the Beatitudes.

TEACHINGS & PARABLES OF JESUS			
101	Healing, Chosen Family, & New Life Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 8:5-13; 9:32-34; 12:22-37, 46-50 Mark 3:20-35 Luke 7:1-17; 8:19-21; 11:14-23 John 5:1-15	Jesus' teachings and parables are tightly interwoven with healing after healing. We begin at the Pool of Bethesda with the healing of a man who's been ill for 38 years. Then we notice a special literary device called an "intercalation" where one story is inserted in the middle of another one. We set the two stories in conversation with each other and together we are able to make sense of Jesus' seeming rejection of his own family and the scribes' accusation that Jesus is acting through the power of Satan. There's another healing after that and then, for the first time, Jesus raises someone from the dead.
102	Parables & Women Disciples Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 11:1-18, 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 7:18-50; 8:1-15	After declaring unequivocally to John the Baptist's disciples that he is the Messiah, Jesus is pressed hard by the crowds. But he somehow manages to really see each person--to heal them in the ways they need healing, and to speak truth to the religious leaders who still cast aspersions on "sinners." Jesus teaches the people using parables. His disciples aren't sure this is the most effective way to teach and they challenge him on it. Jesus has a very interesting answer. Then we meet the women. Not just any women, but disciples, part of Jesus' inner circle. Who knew?
103	Good & Evil Mixed Together Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 8:23-27, 10:26, 13:24-52; Mark 4:21-41; Luke 8:16-18, 22-25, 13:18-21	Jesus tells a whole string of parables to try to get folks to understand that the Kingdom of Heaven is a tiny bit of precious goodness in the middle of a sea of evil. But even though it seems hopelessly tiny, it is more than enough to spread throughout the whole world. Jesus says not to worry about separating the evil from the

			good. That gets you dangerously close to being judgmental. He says God will take care of evil when the time comes. And in the meantime, we should pay close attention to the weights and measures we use. How we weigh things out for others is exactly how it will be weighed out to us.
104	Healing & Wholeness Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 8:28-34, 9:18-26 Mark 5:1-43 Luke 8:26-56	In this class, we find Jesus healing a man (or two?) of a legion of demons, raising a little girl from the dead, and acknowledging to a woman that it is her faith that has healed her--not something Jesus did to her. That's been a theme with Jesus--asking folks if they want to be healed, giving them agency in their own healing, and always pointing them to God. We also talk about eternal torment in this class. Yikes! We look at all the places in the New Testament where this term is used, and we discover some surprising things.
105	Judgment & Jesus Video or Podcast Study Guide	John 9:1-41, 10:1-21	We switch from the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) to the Gospel of John. John has a completely different viewpoint on Jesus. He is not as concerned with a more-or-less historical account like the others, but is more concerned with presenting Jesus as divine. So it makes sense that he skips a lot of Jesus' more mundane daily teachings and healings and he adds in several stories that simply aren't found in the other gospels. We make sure to stay aware of John's particular lens as we read his account. John's story of the man born blind leads us to a deep dive into the concept of judgment--what it means in Jesus' world and what it seems to mean to Jesus.
106	Sending The Twelve	Matthew 10:1-36, 40-42;	Jesus' ministry shifts into a new and more dangerous phase.

	Video or Podcast Study Guide	13:53-58; 14:1-12 Mark 6:1-29 Luke 9:1-9	John the Baptist is beheaded by Herod, and Jesus sends his disciples away for a bit. But he's not sending them for a well-earned rest. No, he's sending them to spread the Good News, and he gives them the jurisdiction to heal all sorts of inner and outer illness, including raising folks from the dead! His instructions are more than a little scary and have implications for us as Jesus-followers.
WHO IS JESUS REALLY?			
107	Flesh and Blood Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 14:13-36 Mark 6:30-56 Luke 9:10-17 John 6: 1-59	Jesus' ministry shifts into a different gear. He continues to heal anyone who asks him, but the miracles he does begin to expand in scope and purpose. Jesus begins coming out as the Messiah. He feeds more than 5000 people from a little kid's lunch bag. Then he walks on water, scaring his disciples half to death. But even scarier than that, he starts talking about how anyone who follows him must eat his flesh and drink his blood. What do we do with that?
108	Woe to the Hypocrites! Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 15:1-28, 23:13-39 Mark 7:1-30 Luke 11:37-54 John 6:60-71	After that eating flesh and drinking blood stuff, Jesus loses a bunch of disciples. Perhaps sensing that his following is shaky, scribes (religious lawyers) and Pharisees from Jerusalem travel to confront Jesus. They criticize him for allowing his disciples to eat without making sure their hands are ceremonially clean. Hah! They get a lot more than they bargained for when Jesus answers. In fact, after excoriating them and calling them a brood of vipers, Jesus and his remaining disciples need to lay low in Gentile country. But his reputation precedes him, and Jesus

			has a fascinating exchange with a Gentile woman who refuses to be cowed by this Jewish prophet.
109	More Chiasms Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 12:38-45; 15:29-39; 16:1-20 Mark 7:31-37; 8:1-30 Luke 9:18-21; 11:29-32; 12:1-3	Jesus heals a deaf-mute by spitting. We remember we heard this weird technique just a few verses ago. Then he feeds 4000 people with a few loaves. Wait a minute. Are we having deja vu? Could this be a chiasm? We follow Jesus and the disciples to Caesarea Philippi and knock down a popular but faulty myth. We also examine the “sign of Jonah” from a little different angle. It is in this passage that Jesus first uses the word “ekklesia”--later translated as “church.”
110	Transfiguration Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 10:32,37; 16:21-28; 17:1-23 Mark 8:31-38; 9:1-32 Luke 9:22-45	Things start to get real. Jesus gets explicit with the disciples. Who do you think that I am? Really? What if I tell you I am going to be arrested, tried, tortured, killed, and then after three days, rise again? If you want to follow me, you’ll have to take up your cross and give up your life. Uh, nope. The disciples aren’t ready to hear that. Jesus is the Messiah king who’s going to crush Israel’s enemies, right? Is that what “rise again” means? Jesus tries twice to convince the disciples he’s about to die. Doesn’t work. Peter, James, and John see Jesus start to glow. They see Elijah and Moses talk to him. They hear God say, “This is my beloved Son, listen to him!” Still, they do not understand.
DISCIPLESHIP 102			
111	The Greatest Commandment Video or Podcast	Matthew 8:18-22; 11:20-30; 18:1-5; 22:34-40 Mark 9:33-41; 12:28-34 Luke 9:46-62; 10:1-28	Jesus and his disciples travel from Galilee through Samaria and on to Jerusalem, so it makes sense that Samaritans figure prominently in today’s stories. They were religious, political and social enemies of the Jews. Lots of bad blood

	Study Guide		between them. The disciples are proud of their accomplishments after they do some serious flexing in the neighboring villages. Jesus warns them to be sure they're proud they are known by God rather than proud of the things God does thru them. I don't think the disciples quite get that memo. A big-shot lawyer asks Jesus a trick question about what it takes to get eternal life. The answer is what we call "the Greatest Commandment," and Jesus illustrates it with a story about a Samaritan--a Samaritan who has compassion on a Jew.
112	God So Loved The World Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew (6:22, 25-34 reprise); 10:29; 12:43 Luke 10:29-42; (11:1-13 reprise); 11:24-28, 33-36; 12:22-34 John 3:1-21	Discipleship 102 looks a lot like Discipleship 101. Shocking. Jesus clearly teaches the same thing over and over to the disciples. We focus especially on the new material Luke adds here. The sisters Mary and Martha make their first appearance, but the shocker is when Nicodemus, one of the most highly placed Pharisees in Jerusalem, sneaks out to find Jesus at night. He's worried that the religious leaders are getting it wrong. He thinks there's a good chance Jesus is exactly who he says he is. Jesus talks to him of being born a second time, wind that cannot be seen, the judgment and verdict of God, and...snakes?
113	Take Courage and Help Each Other Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew (5:21-26 reprise); 10:19-21,26-34; 18:15-20 Luke 12:1-59; 13:1-9	Discipleship 102 gets very explicit and more than a little scary at this point. Some of the disciples may be rethinking their positions. Do they really want to sell all their possessions, be given the responsibility of sharing God's love to the people, get arrested, get tried, and probably get beaten or killed? Do they really want to be the ones from whom more is expected?

			Jesus teaches them what to do when they hurt each other. And he tells a parable to help them remember that when bad things happen to someone it's not because the people involved are worse than anyone else. Good to know.
114	Show Yourself To The World Video or Podcast Study Guide	Luke 13:10-30 John 7	Jesus reaches back into the Sermon on the Mount to talk about going in through the narrow door--but is he really talking about the same thing this time? Once again there are people who miss the path. Jesus says some interesting things about what will happen to them. Jesus' life is in serious danger. He's got to go to Jerusalem for Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, but he must play it smart. He needs to stick to the big crowds, but his brothers (mocking him) urge him to show himself to the world! We catch up with him when he finally does surface in Jerusalem. He's causing all sorts of confusion. Is this the Messiah? It can't be--he's just an uneducated country bumpkin from Galilee.
115	Before Abraham, I AM Video or Podcast Study Guide	John 8	The religious leaders are pulling out all the stops to trap Jesus, bring him up on charges (probably heresy or inciting violence or both), and then sentence him to death. First they try to get him to choose between compassion or the very clear Law requiring death for adulterers. They catch a woman in the act of adultery, drag her to Jesus and force him to choose. What do you think he chooses? Jesus completely loses patience with them. The whole rest of the chapter is an "in your face" argument in which Jesus tells the religious leaders that they do not even know God! He winds up telling them, "Before Abraham was born, I AM!" Those are definitely fighting words. They pick up stones to kill

			him immediately.
THE FINAL PARABLES			
116	Tell Us Plainly Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 22:1-14 Luke 14 John 1:9-18; 10:22-42	Jesus is very careful never to call himself <i>Christos</i>, the Messiah. In public, he always refers to himself as the “Son of Man.” The Jews understand this is a Messianic title, but the Romans do not, so the religious leaders keep pressing Jesus to be plain--to call himself “Messiah.” What he says in reply nearly gets him stoned. Again. Jesus is the guest of honor at a hoity-toity Sabbath meal with high-ranking lawyers and Pharisees. I bet you can guess that Jesus says some pretty uncomfortable things to them, and he does it with parables. Jesus is down to his last few months. He’s got to get his points across in a way these folks will remember.
117	A Prodigal Son & A Dishonest Manager Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 18:10-14; (6:19-24 reprise) Luke 15; 16:1-15	Each and every one of us is known by God. We are seen and we are cherished. When the scribes and Pharisees deride Jesus for hanging out with unworthy people, Jesus tells them three parables demonstrating the prodigal love of God (“prodigal” means wasteful, reckless extravagance)! The most famous of these is the story of the prodigal son. As with most parables, there’s more to it than you might remember from childhood stories. Jesus follows this with a really crazy parable directed at the disciples, where he tells them to be more like a dishonest manager. Say, what?!?
118	The Rich And The Poor, The Harsh And The Forgiving	Matthew (5:17-20 reprise); 18:6-9, 21-35 Mark 9:42-50	Jesus tells the story of a rich man and a poor man and what happens to them after death. It’s an old familiar story drawn from the culture of the Ancient Near East, but Jesus gives it a

	Video or Podcast Study Guide	Luke 16:16-31, 17:1-4	new punchline. Then he talks about how serious it is when we lay traps for other people <i>and for ourselves</i>. This is apparently a VERY big deal to God, with roots all the way back in the Hebrew Bible. Jesus ties it all to the importance of forgiving each other. We talk some more about life after death vs. life now. There's a lot of meat in here.
119	Justified & Elect Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 19:13-30 Mark 10:13-31 Luke 17:5-37; 18:1-30	Jesus teaches a lot about the difference between being self-righteous and actually doing righteousness. "Righteous" in Greek is synonymous with "justice," so it makes sense that Jesus uses a parable about a poor widow in court. He warns the disciples not to be proud. He reminds them they are just doing their job. They must not be like the self-righteous Pharisee who prays out loud that he is so thankful he's not like the sinners in the room! In fact, Jesus says it is people like the widow who are "elect" and people like tax-collectors who humble themselves to pray for God's mercy who are "justified." This is the first time we encounter these terms, so we begin to unpack some of the baggage many Christians carry over this.
120	Lazarus Is Raised From The Dead Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 20:17-28 Mark 10:32-45 Luke 18:31-34 John 11:1-54	Jesus raises one of his best friends from the dead and thoroughly awes the crowds, which in turn sets off alarm bells for all the powers that be. Fearing that Rome is about to step in and crush the Jewish nation, the religious leaders call an emergency meeting. Caiaphas, the High Priest, declares that Jesus must die so the entire nation does not perish. There's just one problem--they have to catch him alone, away from the crowds who increasingly believe he is the Messiah.

			Jesus calls his disciples aside to give them the bad news (again) that he will die soon. They, like the people, still have trouble believing it. The mother of two of the disciples even asks Jesus to be sure to give her sons places of honor as soon as he gets to be King.
121	There's Enough Mercy For Everyone Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 20:1-16, 9:27-31; 20:29-34 Mark 10:46-52 Luke 18:35-43; 19:1-10	Jesus is trying so hard to teach his disciples to be as humble as servants. He tells a parable about a landowner who hires day laborers throughout the day and gives a full day's wage to everyone. The ones who worked only one hour get the same as the ones who worked all day! He tells his disciples, "Don't resent the blessings of others. Just do your job." Then he heals a blind man or two--or rather, their own faith heals them. And we wind up this class series with the story of Zaccheus--one of the most amusing stories in the New Testament.
MY TIME HAS COME			
122	Separating The Sheep From The Goats Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 25:14-46 Luke 19:11-27 Plus lots of prophecies from the Hebrew Bible: Isaiah 2:3-4; 4:2-4; 11 (excerpts); 24:21-22; 65:17-25; 66:15-20 Jeremiah 30:7-8 Joel 2:23ff; 3:12-14 Micah 4:6-7 Zechariah 12:10; 14 (excerpts) Zephaniah 1 (excerpts); 3:8-20	The people think Jesus' time has come. They are trailing along after Jesus, waiting breathlessly for the Day of the Lord--the great and terrible day when God comes to avenge Israel and deliver her from her enemies. We hear the story of this Day of the Lord as told through the voices of the Hebrew prophets. Jesus knows the time has not yet come for these things to happen. He tries to prepare the people (and his disciples) to be faithful servants and workers even if the time grows long. To illustrate he tells what happens when the Day finally comes and the just are rewarded and the unjust are condemned to eternal, fiery torment with the devil and his angels. What do we do with that? How does that fit with Jesus' other

			teachings?
123	Hosanna! Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 21:1-22; 23:37-39 Mark 11:1-25 Luke 13:31-35; 19:28-48 John 2:13-17; 12:12-19	The pressure is mounting. The people are insisting that Jesus become the Messiah King they expect. Jesus does everything he can to dissuade them from this disastrous course of action. He sets up an almost ridiculous way of riding into Jerusalem to try to make his point. Jesus is, of course, the Messiah--even the stones under his feet know that. But Jesus knows the people have misunderstood and he weeps over their missed opportunity for peace. We've got another intercalation today! Our backpack tools yield surprising fruit once again.
124	The Time Has Come Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 17:24-27; 21:23-46; 22:15-22 Mark 11:27-33; 12:1-17 Luke 20:1-26 John 2:18-25; 12:20-50	When Passover pilgrims from as far away as Greece ask to meet Jesus, Jesus suddenly realizes his hour has come, and he experiences trepidation. It is a shock that the time has finally arrived. He talks about being a grain of wheat, dying so that it might bear fruit. He talks about two sons, noting that doing what the Father asks is more important than just saying you'll do it. He talks about holding your life and your money loosely--giving what belongs to God to God. And he talks about wicked, greedy vinedressers who rent a property and then kill the owner's son when he comes to collect the fruit. Jesus knows what is about to happen to him. And this week we get a glimpse into how he is facing it.
125	Prepare & Keep Your Eyes Peeled Video or Podcast	Matthew 22:23-46; 23:1-12; 24:1-35; 25:1-13 Mark 12:18-44; 13:1-37 Luke 20:27-47; 21:1-38	Jesus has been crossing verbal swords with Pharisees, Herodians, and legal experts. Now the Sadducees pile on with a trick question about the resurrection. Jesus sends them packing with their tail between their legs.

	Study Guide		Jesus says, “Don’t be like those guys. Look at that widow who put in the last two coins she had to live on. Her gift is worth more than all the gifts of the rich men.” Then Jesus sits his disciples down and tells them straight up how bad the situation is. They can expect to be beaten and killed. Jerusalem will be destroyed. Then the Day will come when the “Son of Man” comes in power. It’s a lot to take in. Jesus tells them he doesn’t know when it will happen--they simply need to be prepared and keep their eyes peeled.
126	The Last Supper (Part 1) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 26:1-29 Mark 14:1-25 Luke 22:1-23 John 11:55-57; 12:1-11; 13:1-30	On the day the Passover lambs are slaughtered, Jesus and the disciples gather in an upper room where they can share the Passover meal. The disciples are still arguing over who’s the greatest so Jesus takes on the role of the humble foot-washing servant to show them how they must be from now on. He gives them a new commandment: Love one another like this! It is while they are eating this meal that Jesus passes around some unleavened bread and calls it his body, broken for them. And he has them all drink from a cup of wine calling it his blood, being poured out for many. Judas is unable to bear it any longer. He leaves to betray Jesus.
127	The Last Supper (Part 2) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 26:33-35 Mark 14:29-31 Luke 22:31-34 John 13:31-38; 14:1-31	We are in the middle of the Last Supper. Jesus talks about leaving the disciples, and he says they cannot come where he is going. Peter wants to know why he can’t go too! After all, he’d die for Jesus. But Jesus tells him, “You’ll disown me three times this very night.” Even though they cannot come with him, Jesus tells the

			disciples they know the path. The words Jesus uses to explain all this are based on the "patronage model" of relationship that was prevalent throughout the Roman Empire. We use this lens to unpack some of Jesus' words. Then he says, "Don't worry. I will come back, and in the meantime, my Father will send another <i>Paracleton</i> to you--the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit--to be with you forever. This <i>Paracleton</i> will teach you all things, and will remind you of all I have said."
128	The Last Supper (Part 3) Video or Podcast Study Guide	John 15, 16, 17	At the conclusion of the Last Supper, Jesus explains that the disciples can't do this by themselves. They are like branches on a vine. They have to stay connected to the vine in order to bear fruit. Jesus reviews the really important stuff: • I am in the Father. You are in me. We have to all stay together. • You can do this even though I am about to go where you cannot see me anymore. • Love each other just like I have loved you. • If you do this, the world will hate you and persecute you. • But don't worry, I'm sending you a helper, an advocate--the Spirit of Truth (the Holy Spirit) to guide and teach you. • And always, always, know you can ask me for anything you need as you go along and I will give it to you, for the Father has given me everything and I freely give it to you. • Be at peace in this. And then he prays a blessing over his beloved friends.
129	On Trial Before The	Matthew 26:30-32; 36-75	After they finish the Passover meal, Jesus and the disciples

	Religious Leaders Video or Podcast Study Guide	Mark 14:26-28; 32-72 Luke 22:24-30; 35-71 John 18:1-27	make their way to the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives, just across from the Temple gates. There, Jesus tells the disciples to be alert for trouble is coming, but they cannot keep their eyes open. Jesus prays in agony, wrestling with his feelings about his torture and crucifixion. This is not where he wants to go. Meanwhile, Judas Iscariot has alerted the religious leaders where Jesus can be found, and they send a contingent of soldiers to arrest him. Jesus stops the ensuing violence and is taken to his trial at the hands of the religious elite. It is here, finally, that he tells them openly that he is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. Peter, in fear for his own life, denies ever even knowing Jesus. When the rooster crows he is overcome with remorse, remembering that Jesus had told him he would fail in this exact way this very night.
130	On Trial Before Herod And Pilate Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 27:1-31 Mark 15:1-20 Luke 23:1-25 John 18:28-40; 19:1-15	It is the early hours just after dawn. The religious leaders have condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy, but for a public crucifixion they need Roman authority. They bind Jesus and take him to Pilate, the governor of Judea. Pilate can't find any reason to crucify Jesus, but upon discovering he's from Galilee Pilate sends him to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, who is in Jerusalem for the Passover. Herod can't get a thing out of Jesus either. Meanwhile the religious leaders are whipping the crowd into a frenzied, bloodthirsty mob. When the religious leaders tell Pilate, "He has declared himself King, and if you do not sentence him you are no friend of Caesar's!" Pilate is backed into a corner. He must quell this riot. He must be seen to support Caesar. So he acquiesces and condemns Jesus to death by crucifixion.

131	The Crucifixion Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 27:32-56 Mark 15:21-41 Luke 23:26-49 John 19:16-30 Psalm 22	Jesus is too weak to drag the crossbar of his cross to the hill of execution so a passing traveler is dragooned into carrying it for him. He is stripped naked, and his wrists and feet are nailed to the cross. As the soldiers argue about who gets which bit of his clothing, other people jeer and mock Jesus. “If you are the Messiah, save yourself!” As Jesus dies, he mumbles the first line of Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” It sounds like God has withdrawn himself from Jesus in his hour of greatest need, but using our backpack tools we discover this is not the case at all!
132	In the Tomb Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 27:56-66; 28:1 Mark 15:42-47; 16:1-4 Luke 23:50-56; 24:1-3 John 19:31-42; 20:1, 11-17	Jesus is crucified the day after Passover. It’s a Friday, and since the Passover Festival lasts a whole week, the next day is a High Sabbath. It is imperative to the religious leaders that the bodies of the men crucified not be left over the Sabbath. They ask and receive special permission to have their legs broken to hasten their death so the bodies can be removed before sundown. But when the soldiers get to Jesus they don’t break his legs because he’s already dead. This makes a lightning connection in John’s mind with the Passover lamb whose bones must not be broken. Jesus is quickly entombed and as far as we know, nothing else happens until he is resurrected on Sunday morning. So why do people think Jesus went to Hell in the meantime?
133	The Resurrection Video or Podcast Study Guide	Matthew 28:2-20 Mark 16:5-8 Luke 24:4-53 John 20:2-10, 18-31; 21	This final class in the “My Time Has Come” series is all about differences. The four gospels writers tell four different stories of the resurrection each including different characters and events. We look at each one in turn, noticing Mark’s abrupt ending, Matthew’s guards, Luke’s walk to Emmaus, and

			Peter's raw responses. We look at "The Great Commission" in Matthew, the "Ascension" in Luke, and read two different versions of how the disciples receive the Holy Spirit in power. And these aren't the only differences--Jesus' resurrected body is definitely different.
PENTECOST & PERSECUTION			
134	Choosing Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 1	In "Pentecost & Persecution" we'll hang onto our hats as the disciples face a whirlwind of blessing and tragedy. The story is told in "Acts of the Apostles" which is Luke's sequel to his gospel. But do we really know who Luke was? For that matter, do we know who wrote any of the gospels? The short answer is no. We take a moment in this first class to look at how the books of the New Testament were chosen--who chose them and why they chose the ones they did. Then, as we begin the story, we catch up with the disciples. Peter is emerging as a leader. They are a person short, so we listen in as they choose a replacement for Judas.
135	Pentecost Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 2-3	The Jerusalem community of 120 believers is filled with joy in the weeks following Jesus' resurrection. For nearly six weeks, Jesus has walked and talked and eaten with them. Then, suddenly, just a week ago he left! He ascended into heaven, and angels had told them he'd come again the same way he left. It's been a crazy week, and now the big festival of Pentecost is here. The believers are gathered in a house when suddenly they hear a mighty wind and what seems like

			flames of fire descend on their heads. They are filled with words they do not know but cannot keep inside. As they spill out into the streets, praising God in foreign languages, people from all over the Roman Empire understand them! And this is just the beginning.
136	Ananias & Sapphira Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 4:1-5:11	The religious leaders are very upset when Peter and John heal a lame man in the Temple and tell the people that Jesus is the Messiah and that he's risen from the dead. They arrest Peter and John, but they can't really do much more than that because everyone saw the healing with their own eyes. Meanwhile, the believers, who have gone from a small group of 120 to more than 5000, are pooling their resources. The rich give enough that everyone has all they need. But then, one married couple decides to keep a little extra for themselves. It does not go well.
137	The Story of Stephen Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 5:12-7:60	The apostles and other leaders such as Stephen continue to be harrassed by the religious leaders in Jerusalem. But things turn ugly now. Apostles are flogged, and Stephen becomes the first believer to be martyred. Stephen's words at his trial take us on a flyover of the story of Israel. His words are worth hearing--both for their content and to honor his courage.
138	The Ethiopian Eunuch Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 8	We run into the "Angel of the Lord" this week. The angel of the Lord is not just a regular messenger-type angel. This phrase is used in the Bible to identify the Lord showing up in human form at some particularly important juncture in the history of Israel. Often the angel of the Lord appears as an important man, but sometimes it is just an audible voice. Either way, it is always a significant event.

			So why did the angel of the Lord orchestrate a meeting between the disciple Philip and the treasurer of Ethiopia who had traveled 2300+ miles to Jerusalem?
139	Saul Sees The Light Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 9	Saul is a young, zealous Pharisee, passionate about the Law of Moses and the authoritative oral traditions that now surround it. He sees the folks proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah as a direct threat to everything Judaism stands for. He is passionate about stamping this threat out, and we find him on the road to Damascus with orders in his pocket giving him the authority to capture both men and women and bring them to trial. Saul's plans go awry when Jesus shows up in a blinding light. The world, and Christianity itself, will never be the same.
140	Peter and Cornelius Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 10-12	Peter, along with James the brother of Jesus, is the clear leader of the new church. In this story he has an epiphany that leads him to the household of a Roman centurion named Cornelius. Jews aren't supposed to associate with, go in the houses of, or eat with Gentiles such as Cornelius. But the Lord tells Peter to do all these things. Peter's choice shifts Christianity for all time.
The 1st Missionary Journey: The Galatians			
141	Journey Thru Galatia Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 13-14 2 Corinthians 12:2-10	Barnabas and Saul are sent by the church in Syrian Antioch to preach the Good News far and wide. They, along with Barnabas' young relative John Mark, head out for Galatia. Along the way they meet with great success and with great hardship. John Mark throws in the towel, but Barnabas and Saul persist. Gradually, Saul begins to take the leadership role and from this point on is called by his Roman name: Paul.

			A near-death experience leaves its mark on Paul for the rest of his life, including what he later calls his “thorn in the flesh.”
142	Trouble in Antioch Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 15:1-35 Galatians 2:1 thru 3:22	Paul and Barnabas are back in Antioch after their missionary journey to Galatia. Peter comes for a visit and mingles with all the new believers--Jews and Gentiles alike. All is well until some Jewish believers show up from Judea and insist that all Gentile believers must be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. Even Peter and Barnabas are swayed, but Paul is horrified. He calls Peter out, and Peter returns to Jerusalem. The believers in Antioch cannot decide what to do, so they send Paul and Barnabas and others to Jerusalem to consult the leaders there. Meanwhile, Jewish believers are making the same case for circumcision to the new believers in Galatia. Paul writes the Galatians a letter, warning them not to fall for this.
143	Wrapping Up Galatians Video or Podcast Study Guide	Galatians 3:23-6:18	Paul tries everything he can think of to convince the Galatians not to fall back into the Law. He tries a pretty unique argument, making the distinction between “seed” singular and “seed” plural, saying the singular version in the Abrahamic Covenant refers to Jesus. Interesting idea and we look to see if his argument holds water linguistically. His point is that God’s covenant of blessing and grace preceded the Law! He tells them the Law was simply put in place to act as a guardian until the coming of Jesus. And he doubles down by saying those under the Law are slaves like Hagar’s child, Ishmael, while those under grace are free like Sarah’s child, Isaac. These are strong words, worth looking at a little closer.

The 2nd Missionary Journey			
144	The Church at Philippi Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 15:36-16:40	Barnabas wants to take his nephew John Mark along on their second missionary journey, but Paul absolutely refuses, saying J-M “deserted” them last time. They disagree so vehemently they end up splitting up. Barnabas takes J-M and sets sail to Cyprus, while Paul teams up with Silas and heads towards Galatia by land where they check up on the new churches there. On their travels, Paul has a vision of a man begging them to come to Macedonia, so they head there straightaway. They find open hearts in Philippi, especially in Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman, and they stay there until Paul loses his temper and gets them in trouble with the authorities.
145	Thessalonica, Athens & Corinth Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 17; 18:1-18 (and Psalm 91 in the discussion)	Paul, Silas and Timothy continue down the Via Egnatia to Thessalonica where Paul’s preaching lands him in hot water again. They are smuggled out by night to Berea where Paul still cannot seem to keep his mouth shut. He preaches everywhere, no matter the danger. This time when trouble hits, they have to split up. Silas and Timothy remain in Berea while Paul is taken to Athens. He has a crazy encounter with the famous Areopagus and then heads to Corinth where he gets a job while he waits for Silas and Timothy to join him. Together they establish a new church of believers in Corinth. But Paul is worried. Frightened even.
146	1 Thessalonians (Part 1) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1Thess 1; 2:17-3:13	Paul, Silas and Timothy spend a year and a half in Corinth. And while they are there, Paul becomes desperate for news from the new church he left back in Thessalonica. He tries several times to go visit them but is prevented “by

			Satan” so he finally sends Timothy instead. When Timothy returns with news that the Thessalonians are thriving, Paul bursts with relief. He sits down and immediately pens a letter to them. And in this letter some of Paul’s theological petticoats begin to show. In this class we focus on his assertions that Jesus will come “with the holy ones” and that Jesus will “rescue us from the coming wrath.”
147	1 Thessalonians (Part 2) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1Thess 2:1-16, 4:1-5:27 Acts 18:18-22	The Thessalonians have lots of questions. They’re not feeling particularly sure-footed in their faith. Paul writes to tell them that God wants them to be holy. That’s a tall order! But he goes on to give a list of what that entails, and the list makes a lot of sense. Then Paul addresses the elephant in the room--the fact that believers, including some of the Twelve, are dying! Where is Jesus? Why hasn’t he come back? Paul’s answer is, “He is! Any minute now. And the dead will rise to be with us to meet him. But things are not going to go well for unbelievers. Their ruin will fall on them unexpectedly.” In our breakout groups we wrestle with what happens to unbelievers and where it is that we should stand in all this.
The 3rd Missionary Journey - 1 Corinthians			
148	1 Corinthians (Part 1) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 18:24-19:10 1 Corinthians 1-2; 5:9; 16:12	Paul is ready for another missionary trip, this third one being more ambitious than either of the other two. He leaves from Antioch in Syria and heads overland through Galatia where he picks up his trusted porter and messenger, Timothy. They wander through Asia Minor until they reach the huge metropolis of Ephesus on the coast of the Aegean Sea. On

			the way they either establish or visit many churches, including the seven listed in Revelation. Paul will end up staying in Ephesus for three years. His ministry is powerful there, but as news comes to him about his other churches he dashes off letters--sometimes letters of praise, but mostly letters of correction. We hit the first set of letters today.
149	1 Corinthians (Part 2) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Corinthians 3-5	Paul is writing a scathing letter to the Corinthians. They are in serious danger of losing their way entirely. At this point there is not much to distinguish them from the unbelievers and idol worshippers they live among. There is an overlay of puffed-up, prideful self-importance that is endangering the church. Everyone is all about themselves--and the more extreme they can be, the better. Paul isn't having any of it! He absolutely sticks a skewer into their pride over someone who is sleeping with his father's wife. Paul says, "Not even the unbelievers think that's a good idea!" We spend our breakout time talking about Paul's recommendation that they immediately expel this person from their midst.
150	1 Corinthians (Part 3) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Corinthians 6:1-11 With reference to: Galatians 5:19-26 Matthew 7:1-2; 12:41-42 Luke 22:28-30 John 5:22-24; 28-29 Isaiah 33:10-24	We hit 1 Corinthians 6:9 this week--one of the most famous "clobber" verses in the Bible. It's one of those verses often used to bludgeon each other and to exclude each other from fellowship with other believers. We use our backpack tools to determine whether this is Paul's intent and to see how his words might have landed on Roman ears.

		Zechariah 14:1-5	There is a strong divide within Christianity over how to interpret this passage. We try to do it carefully and respectfully, using historical context and linguistic context as well as taking a look at the witness of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible. Above all, we consider the words of Jesus and his advice to “look at the fruit.”
151	1 Corinthians (Part 4) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Corinthians 6:12-8:13 Matthew 19:3-12	Paul has a lot more to say to the Corinthians--some of it in response to a message they send to him with a bunch of their questions. Paul focuses on the physical body in this part of his letter. He talks about sexual immorality, about marriage, and about treating your body as a holy temple. But some of the most interesting and fruitful bits spring from his admonition that “You are not your own. You were bought with a price.” We use our backpack tools on that one--with very surprising results.
152	1 Corinthians (Part 5) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Corinthians 8:1-11:16	Paul addresses two huge issues the Corinthians are having. It was a thing back then to be invited by your patron to dine at the local god or goddess’s temple. Can Christians eat in a pagan temple? And leftover meat sacrificed to these gods and goddesses was sold at a discount in the market. Can Christians buy food sacrificed to idols? And what about women praying or prophesying in church? Should they have their heads covered or not? We carefully walk through Paul’s logic and arrive at surprising results.
153	1 Corinthians (Part 6) Video or Podcast	1 Corinthians 11:17-13:13	The Corinthians are a clique-ish group. Some are rich and some are poor, and they obviously don’t mix.

	Study Guide		The “Lord’s Supper” is a literal meal but everybody brings their own food and they don’t share! It’s not even a potluck. Paul is horrified. He says they are sinning when they do this and, as far as he’s concerned, that’s why some of them have fallen ill or died before Jesus comes back. (We, of course, have a different perspective on this after 2000 years.) The Corinthians also have questions about the gifts of the Spirit. Don’t we all? Paul gives them a terrific answer. It’s one of the most famous passages in all of Scripture.
154	1 Corinthians (Part 7) Video or Podcast Study Guide	1 Corinthians 14-16	We wrap up 1 Corinthians today. Paul continues with his strong words about the chaos in the worship gatherings the Corinthians have. They’ve been blessed with an abundance of spiritual gifts of the Spirit, but they’re trying to shout over each other. Are you getting the sense that the Corinthians have a problem with self-importance? It is in this context that Paul addresses women who are utterly derailing the worship service with their questions. He talks about how the law says women should be silent in the churches. The problem is, the Mosaic Law doesn’t say that. So what is Paul talking about? On top of that, some of the Corinthians apparently don’t believe in resurrection. The Corinthian church is confused, and Paul is horrified. It boggles his mind that they would worship a risen Messiah and at the same time say they don’t believe in resurrection. You can bet he’s got some strong words about that. And in the process, we get another glimpse into his developing theology.
The 3rd Missionary Journey - 2 Corinthians			
155	2 Corinthians (Part 1)	2 Corinthians 1-3	Paul is ready to leave Ephesus, and that’s good because they are ready to kick him out. There’s a huge riot because

	Video or Podcast Study Guide		Paul is converting so many idol-worshippers that it's impacting the sales of paraphernalia and trinkets feeding off the worship at the temple of Artemis. Paul heads out towards Macedonia and on the way meets back up with Titus, who is carrying news from the Corinth. You can imagine Paul's immense relief when he hears the Corinthians have finally repented and are back on track. Paul immediately sits down to write a joyful letter to them. In the part we read today he tells them the veil has dropped from their faces and they are gazing at the Lord. The view is still not perfectly clear--it's more like a reflection in a mirror--but it's enough to transform them. We talk about that in our breakout groups.
156	2 Corinthians (Part 2) Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Corinthians 4:1-7:4	Paul is in the middle of his letter to the Corinthians. He wants to make sure they understand that he and the other apostles are just men--jars of clay--and subject to all the hardships that go with that. And yet, Paul regards these hardships as nothing. He sees his body as nothing more than a tent. Transient. Impermanent. He wants the Corinthians to see themselves as being "in" Christ's death, and as ambassadors of the Good News that God is not holding anyone's sins against them. We take a look at what this means and at what might shift if we take Paul's advice.
157	2 Corinthians (Part 3) Video or Podcast Study Guide	2 Corinthians 7:5-13:14	We finish our series on 2 Corinthians today. Paul spends some time talking to the Corinthians about what it means to be a cheerful giver. The idea that he might get to Corinth and they won't have gathered a collection for the poor in Jerusalem, or even worse, that he'll find some of them unchanged and unrepentant gives him pause.

			There's a sort of break in thought after Chapter 9. Perhaps he was interrupted and wasn't able to get back to the letter for a bit. In the meantime, it's pretty clear that someone has brought news of so-called "super apostles" showing up in Corinth and bad-mouthing Paul. You can imagine Paul's reaction! It's here that he talks about his "thorn in the flesh."
The 3rd Missionary Journey: Romans			
158	Romans (Part 1) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 1	Paul is nearing the end of his 3rd Missionary Journey. As he turns south towards Corinth, his heart yearns to continue westward to Rome to meet the church of believers that has formed there in the heart of the Empire. He can't go to see them quite yet, so he writes a letter that is widely regarded as his <i>Magnum Opus</i>--a sweeping statement of his theology. We discover that, as usual, Paul's words are controversial. Four hundred years later, the Early Church Fathers quite literally spill blood as they fight over what it means for Jesus to be both divine and human and whether the Holy Spirit is part of God and Jesus or not. And, of course, there's the big clobber passage in Romans 1 that has been used to bash the LGBTQ community. We discover this passage actually applies to us all equally.
159	Romans (Part 2) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 2:1-3:26	Paul throws us in the deep end here. Romans is densely packed with theology. Don't worry. We take it in bite-sized chunks. He talks about the value (or not) of being a Jew as opposed to being a Gentile. Paul has deep roots in the Law but he sees it now as something that pointed to Christ--something

			fulfilled in Christ. We join Paul as he reflects on how the sin offerings under the Law showed God's justice and righteousness in the same way Christ did, but with Christ, God's righteousness and justice are revealed even more brilliantly.
160	Romans (Part 3) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 3:27-6:23	Paul has something of a reputation for anti-Semitism. We hit a few of those passages today. We look at them through the lens of Paul's deeply held Jewish roots and his understanding of the role of the Law. We also talk about works vs grace. And we discover that the Greek word for grace is <i>charis</i>, literally the charisma of God. That opens up a whole new vista of what "grace" might mean for us. Lastly we examine what Paul might mean when he talks about Jesus dying for the benefit of the wicked and reconciling us to God. There's a lot to unpack here.
161	Romans (Part 4) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 7-8	We're hitting the "steep" part of Romans now. Paul's theology is beginning to get uncomfortable. (Yeah, I know, it's already been steep. I told you that Romans is the Mount Everest of the New Testament.) He smack-talks the Law and the flesh. He keeps saying the Law is good, but what he says about it sure doesn't sound good. And what he says about the flesh sounds just as bad. This is one of those passages we will need to wrestle with in our breakout groups and on our own. Then, for the first time, Paul begins to talk about predestination and election. There's more about that next week, but we do some interesting excavation in Greek that sheds new light on these words.

162	Romans (Part 5) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 7-11 Overview	Paul devotes this central part of his letter to his grief over the Jews of Israel who do not believe in Jesus Christ and to his joy over those who do. It's easy to get lost in the weeds when he uses words like "predestination" and "election," but if we put them in context then those seemingly random words start to make a lot more sense. And it helps to make sense of how Paul uses Jacob and Esau as examples. This part of the letter spans chapters 7-11, so today we take a peek at the ending of the section so we know where we're heading--kind of like looking at a map before setting out on a trip.
163	Romans (Part 6) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 9-11	Keeping Paul's overall context in mind, we dive into passages where Paul explains how, in his opinion, God's chosen (elect) people (the Jews) ended up opposing Jesus Christ. And how God worked that to the blessing of the Gentiles. But lest we Gentiles become arrogant, Paul makes it quite clear that in the end all of Israel will be saved, regardless. He says God lumps us all together in our disobedience and uses it to show his great mercy on us all.
164	Romans (Part 7) Video or Podcast Study Guide	Romans 12-16	Paul is very clear about what it looks like to live as a true Christian. We need to paste his list on our mirror! He's never been to the church in Rome and is making plans to come see them as soon as he takes the contributions he's gathered back to the suffering church in Jerusalem. In the meantime, he sends personal greetings to a ton of folks in Rome, including a female deacon and a female apostle.

Paul: The Prison Years			
165	The Riot in Jerusalem Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 22:1-24:23	Over the strenuous objections of all those who love him, Paul persists in returning to Jerusalem in spite of the danger. He delivers the contributions he's collected for the church, and they advise him to make a public display in the Temple of how devout and law-abiding he is. The plan backfires spectacularly. Instead of appeasing the Jewish faction, Paul's appearance in the Temple causes a riot. He is arrested and sent north to Governor Felix in Caesarea for trial.
166	Paul's Trial, Philippians 3&4, Philemon Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 24:24-28:9 Philippians 3-4 Philemon	Governor Felix never gives Paul a full trial. He lets him sit in jail for two years. Paul takes the opportunity to write several letters. Paul is still there when Governor Festus arrives to relieve Governor Felix of duty. Festus can't figure out what to do with Paul. He has a trial that goes sideways in a hurry and Paul appeals to bring his case before the Emperor, as is his right as a Roman citizen. Festus knows he needs to appease the Jewish High Priests and religious leaders, but he can't figure out what charges to bring against Paul but he's got to send him to Rome anyway now that Paul has appealed to Caesar.
167	Philippians 1&2, End of Acts Video or Podcast Study Guide	Acts 28:10-31 Philippians 1-2	Paul is shipwrecked while being transported to Rome for trial. Because of him the entire crew, the soldiers and all the other prisoners survive the shipwreck. When Paul arrives in Rome he is kept under guard but continues to be well-respected and is allowed to preach and teach to visitors. It is during this imprisonment in Rome that he writes another letter to the Philippians (what we know as

			the first 2 chapters of the book). After this, we don't really know what happens to Paul. The Book of Acts ends. Some sources trace him to Spain but others say he is beheaded in Rome.
Paul's Theology Handout: Summary of Paul's Theology Handout: Expanded Summary of Paul's Theology			
168	Paul's Theology (Part 1) Video or Podcast Study Guide		Paul makes seven main theological points in his writings. We cover the first three today: 1. God's overarching intent for humanity--the essence of the Good News 2. The purpose of the Law 3. The significance of Jesus--his life, death, and resurrection
169	Paul's Theology (Part 2) Video or Podcast Study Guide		In this class we cover the next three main points in Paul's theology: 1. How Israel and Gentiles share in Christ (and therefore how to adhere to the Law) 2. The work of the Holy Spirit 3. The function of faith and how the faithful live
170	Paul's Theology (Part 3) Video or Podcast Study Guide		We cover the very last point in Paul's theology: 1. Salvation, the Second Coming, and the Day of the Lord There may be a surprise or two in here.
Paul-Maybe-Not-Paul			
171	Colossians Video or Podcast	Colossians	The author of Colossians purports to be Paul, but scholars are divided (roughly 50/50) as to whether this is the case or not. In this class we take a look at the material in question

	Colossians Scorecard Study Guide		and compare it to Paul's other letters. We track everything on a Colossians Scorecard and then talk about what we think and how, therefore, we should approach Colossians.
172	Ephesians (1) Video or Podcast Ephesians Scorecard Study Guide	Ephesians 1:1-4:13	Ephesians is a lot like Colossians, but more extreme. Even fewer scholars think Ephesians was written by Paul. You'll see why. The author tends to start from something Paul might have said but then blasts it upwards into a great, big, cosmic vision of kingship and domination. This, perhaps more than any other book, may have planted the seeds of Imperialism in Christianity.
173	Ephesians (2) & 2 Thessalonians Video or Podcast 2 Thessalonians Scorecard Study Guide	Ephesians 4:14-6:24 2 Thessalonians	We finish up Ephesians and move on to 2 Thessalonians. We're spiraling downward in terms of Pauline authenticity. 2 Thessalonians takes a very different view of the End Times than that taught by Paul. Paul saw the coming of Christ as imminent--any minute now, don't make plans, don't get married, etc. But the writer of 2 Thessalonians says a "man of lawlessness" will be unleashed upon the earth and will set himself up as "God" before Jesus even shows up. Yikes!
174	The Pastoral Epistles (1) Video or Podcast Pastoral Epistles Scorecard Study Guide	1&2 Timothy Titus We also cover the clobber verse in 1Tim 1:9-11.	1&2 Timothy and Titus are called "The Pastoral Epistles," and it's easy to see from the writing style that they are all written by the same person. We'll look at how the content of the epistles dovetail (or don't) with Paul's travels as related in his authentic letters and in Acts. We examine some of the things the author says about himself and ask ourselves if this is something Paul would say about himself. Then we take a birds-eye view of the author's diatribes against false teachers. The author paints an alarming picture of their effect on the Christian communities.

			If the author wasn't Paul, was he himself a "false teacher"?
175	The Pastoral Epistles (2) Video or Podcast Pastoral Epistles Scorecard Study Guide	1&2 Timothy Titus We cover the passages about women.	We wrap up the series by looking at what the author of the Pastoral Epistles has to say about Church governance and household governance. We give some thought to both the roots and the fruits of these teachings.
Hebrews			
176	Who is Jesus? Video or Podcast Study Guide	Hebrews 1-2	Written by a devout Jew to Jewish believers, the unknown author of this book dives into the burning questions of the day: Who is Jesus in relation to God, to the angels, to us, and to Judaism itself? Remember that it will be several hundred more years before the early Christian church settles the question as to whether Jesus was divine, human, a mixture of the two, or something else entirely. We've had the official answer for thousands of years now, but it is fascinating to follow this author as he wrestles with this dilemma in real time.
177	Jesus as High Priest Video or Podcast Study Guide	Hebrews 5:1-6; 7:1-9:15	The author of Hebrews sees Jesus as the ideal High Priest. He is first and foremost wholly human so he can understand our trials. But he is not just any old high priest, he is the mediator of the new covenant, the one foretold in the Hebrew Bible where God promises that we will all know him because he will write his law in our hearts and our minds. No more need for books or teachers! It's important to recognize the switch in metaphors from that

			of the Paschal (Passover) Lamb used by Jesus and John to that of the Lamb of Atonement used by the writer of Hebrews. They are two completely different metaphors and yield completely different results.
--	--	--	---