

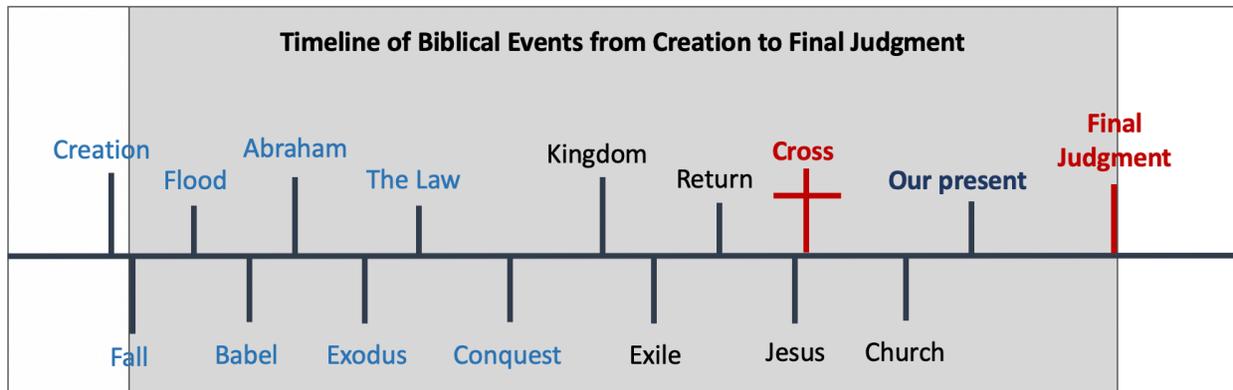
# Lesson 20: Faith in Action II – Using Scripture to get Perspective on My Questions

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

## Part 1: Truths We Have Learnt from the Early Bible Accounts

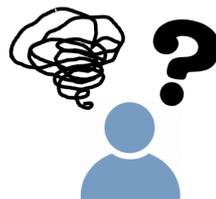
The Bible is a record of history and revelation of the future as told to us by Yahweh, the Creator-God of the universe. The accounts in the Bible are not random. God very specifically chose to put into Scripture events that help us build a framework to understand Him, mankind and interpret the world.

In the lessons so far, we’ve completed a quick study of the key historical events from Creation to the Conquest.



Before we proceed further, we will do a review of the truths using the “Faith in Action” drill. Here is a recap of the drill. When the troubles of life overwhelm us, or when a complex issue confuses us, our first response should be to ask: “Where in God’s Word can I look to for the biblical perspective on this question?”

### FAITH IN ACTION EXERCISE



**1** “Which events in God’s Word helps me with the question that I have?”



Creation



Fall



Flood



Noahic Covenant

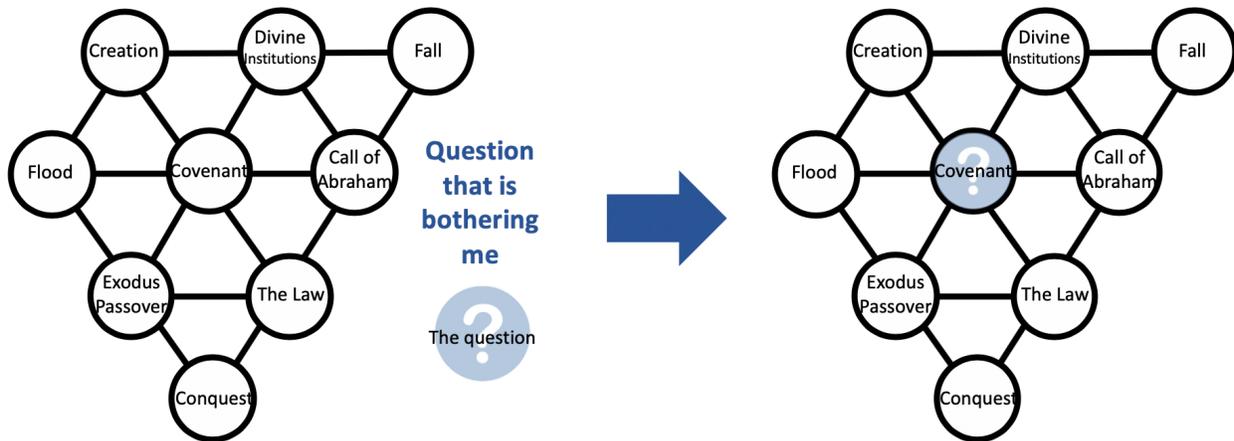


Babel

Mentally, we scroll through the events in the Bible, quickly reviewing the truths that each event teaches us to see which is relevant to the question that is bothering us. Then we use that event's truths to give us perspective on the problem. That is the first step.

Then comes the second step. We need to check if the way we have applied those truths to our problem is consistent with what the rest of the Bible teaches.

- 2** “Does this fit into everything else I know about God and is consistent with the rest of the Bible?”



## “Faith in Action” Drill

We will attempt this exercise in two parts.

### Instructions for Part 1:

1. On the next page are eight historical events. Look through each event and recall in your minds what we have learnt from each one.
2. Read the truths labelled A–N.
3. Fit each of them (A through N) into the historical event that taught us that particular truth. For purposes of the review, each letter fits into one event only.

**Key Events in History Covered from Creation to the Conquest**

							
<b>Creation</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Flood</b>	<b>Noahic Covenant</b>	<b>Call of Abraham</b>	<b>Passover/ Exodus</b>	<b>The Law</b>	<b>Conquest/ Settlement</b>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____				_____	_____	_____	_____
						_____	

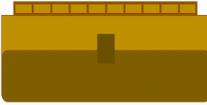
**What Truths Did God Teach Us Through These Events?**

<b>A</b> Evil, death and suffering are abnormal.	<b>B</b> A picture of how Jesus will be man's substitute and die in man's place, taking man's sin penalty.	<b>C</b> Biblical faith is simply trusting God and His promises as one would trust a friend.
<b>D</b> God makes and keeps promises with mankind. He is the only God who makes contracts with people.	<b>E</b> A picture of sanctification: how God intends to get rid of evil in us and build our loyalty to Him.	<b>F</b> The Bible records God's and man's actions accurately to show whether both parties have kept or broken the covenants.
<b>G</b> God is totally separate from man and nature. Man is under-lord of nature.	<b>H</b> God personally reveals information and history about Himself that man would never know if He didn't reveal it.	<b>I</b> A picture of the final judgment and how God will get rid of evil forever.
<b>J</b> The Creator-God is sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving.	<b>K</b> A picture of how Jesus' blood will pay for man's sin so God will see man as righteous.	<b>L</b> The Bible is accurate because it contains the words of God that were recorded by human writers.
<b>M</b> A picture of how God will judge and save (judgment and salvation).	<b>N</b> God declares man righteous when we have faith or trust in Him.	

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First hand out pages 1–4 to the group so they can do Part 1 of the review.

## Answers

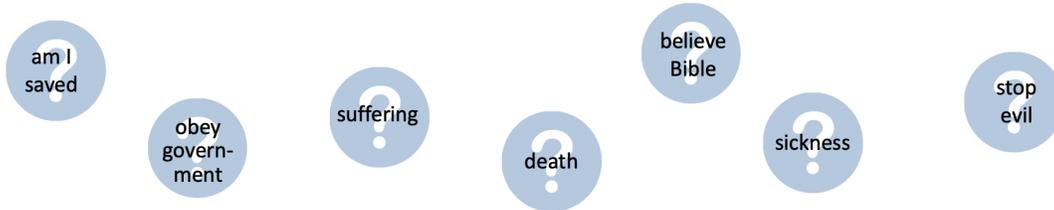
<p><b>Creation</b></p> 	<p><b>J.</b> The Creator-God is sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving.</p> <p><b>Attributes of God</b></p>	<p><b>G.</b> God is totally separate from man and nature. Man is under-lord of nature.</p> <p><b>Creator-Creature Distinction</b></p>	
<p><b>Fall</b></p> 	<p><b>A.</b> Evil, death and suffering are abnormal.</p> <p><b>Doctrine of Sin</b></p>		
<p><b>Flood</b></p> 	<p><b>M.</b> A picture of how God will judge and save.</p> <p><b>Judgment and Salvation</b></p>		
<p><b>Noahic Covenant</b></p> 	<p><b>D.</b> God makes and keeps promises with mankind. He is the only God who makes contracts with people.</p> <p><b>Promise-Keeping God</b></p>		
<p><b>Call of Abraham</b></p> 	<p><b>C.</b> Biblical faith is simply trusting God and His promises as one would trust a friend.</p> <p><b>Biblical Faith</b></p>	<p><b>N.</b> God declares man righteous when we have faith or trust in Him.</p> <p><b>Justification</b></p>	
<p><b>Passover/Exodus</b></p> 	<p><b>B.</b> A picture of how Jesus will be man's substitute and die in man's place, taking man's sin penalty.</p> <p><b>Substitutionary Sacrifice</b></p>	<p><b>K.</b> A picture of how Jesus' blood will pay for man's sin so God will see man as righteous.</p> <p><b>Atonement</b></p>	
<p><b>The Law</b></p> 	<p><b>F.</b> The Bible records God's and man's actions accurately to show whether both parties have kept or broken the covenants.</p> <p><b>Inerrancy</b></p>	<p><b>H.</b> God personally reveals information and history about Himself that man would never know if He didn't reveal it.</p> <p><b>Revelation</b></p>	<p><b>L.</b> The Bible is accurate because it contains the words of God that were recorded by human writers.</p> <p><b>Inspiration</b></p>
<p><b>Conquest/Settlement</b></p> 	<p><b>E.</b> A picture of sanctification: how God intends to get rid of evil in us and build our loyalty to Him.</p> <p><b>Sanctification</b></p>	<p><b>I.</b> A picture of the final judgment and how God will get rid of evil forever.</p> <p><b>Final Judgment</b></p>	

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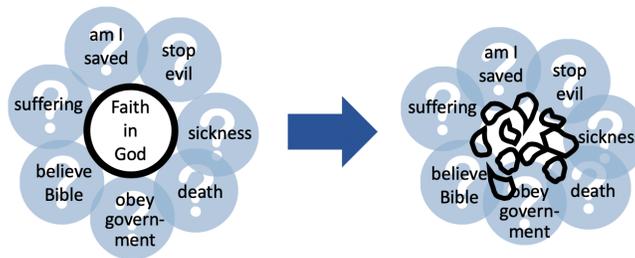
The answer key can be handed out loose so the class can place the key beside their question sheet.

## Part 2: Making Sense of the Problems in Our Lives

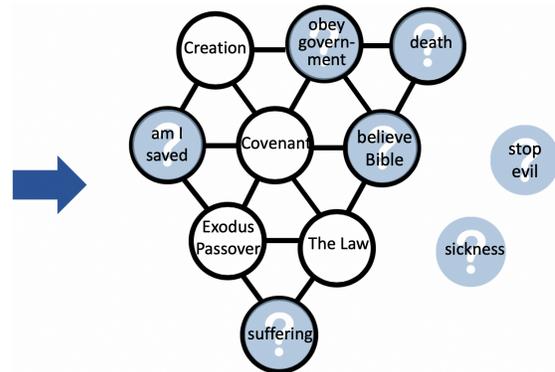
One of the main reasons why we want to study the Bible by matching God’s truths to the biblical historical events is so we can correctly answer the big questions in life. All of us have these big questions. For many of us, these questions float around in our heads and hearts for a long time.



If they are never answered, very soon, they become a problem and they weaken or destroy our trust in God and the Bible.



However, if we build up a biblical framework of truth, we’ll be able to understand and answer these big questions in life from the Bible’s perspective. These questions will not keep floating loose in our brains and hearts and make a mess of our faith.



With that objective in mind, we will attempt Part 2 of the “Faith in Action” drill.

### Instructions for Part 2:

1. The following pages contain five common questions. Just based on the truths we reviewed in Part 1, which truths do you think help give perspective on each problem? Write down the truth(s), bearing in mind that there can be more than one. For example:

**Question:** Why do people get sick and die?

**Truths:** *The Fall (evil, death, sin and suffering are abnormal)*

2. Then fill in the comments part on your own before you discuss as a group how the truths help you specifically answer the question.

**Comments:**

**1. I'm a believer but why does God keep making me suffer one problem after another?**

**Truths:**

**Comments:**

**2. Is the Bible completely accurate? Isn't it a human document?**

**Truths:**

**Comments:**

**3. How can I be sure that my justification is secure?**

**Truths:**

**Comments:**

**4. Why doesn't God get rid of all the evil in the world?**

**Truths:**

**Comments:**

**5. Governments are man-made institutions that Christians should rebel against.**

**Truths:**

**Comments:**

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## Commentary

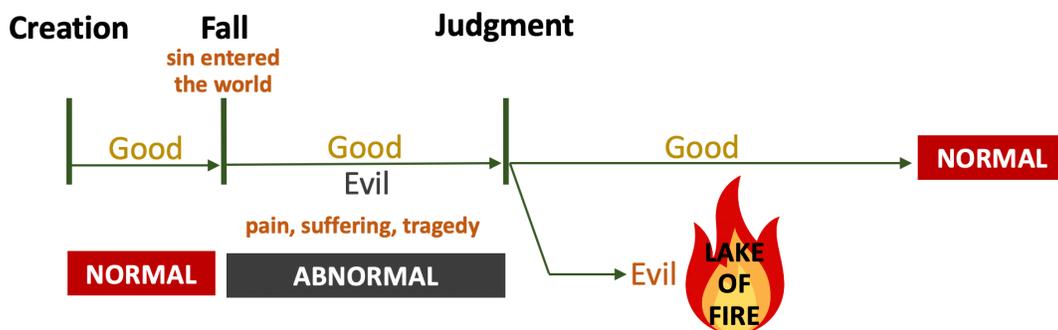
The intent of this section is to see if we can begin to answer important life questions from the biblical worldview just based on what we have already learnt in this series. Please note the answers below are samples and are not exhaustive (entire books have been written over the ages to deal with the different questions posed in Part 2 of this review!)

### 1. I'm a believer but why does God keep making me suffer one problem after another?

<p><b>Truths:</b></p>  <p><b>The Fall:</b> Evil, death and suffering are abnormal</p>	 <p><b>Conquest and Settlement:</b> Holy War to get rid of evil</p>
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We remember that because of the **Fall**, all people experience the consequences of sin and evil. We currently live in a broken, abnormal world where pain, suffering, sorrow and tragedy affect all mankind, not just unbelievers.

But God will get rid of this mix of good and evil permanently at the final judgment. All this suffering is temporary. It will end.



Believers have a wonderful hope of a happy ending, free from pain and suffering forever. This is because as believers, God has already declared us righteous through our faith.

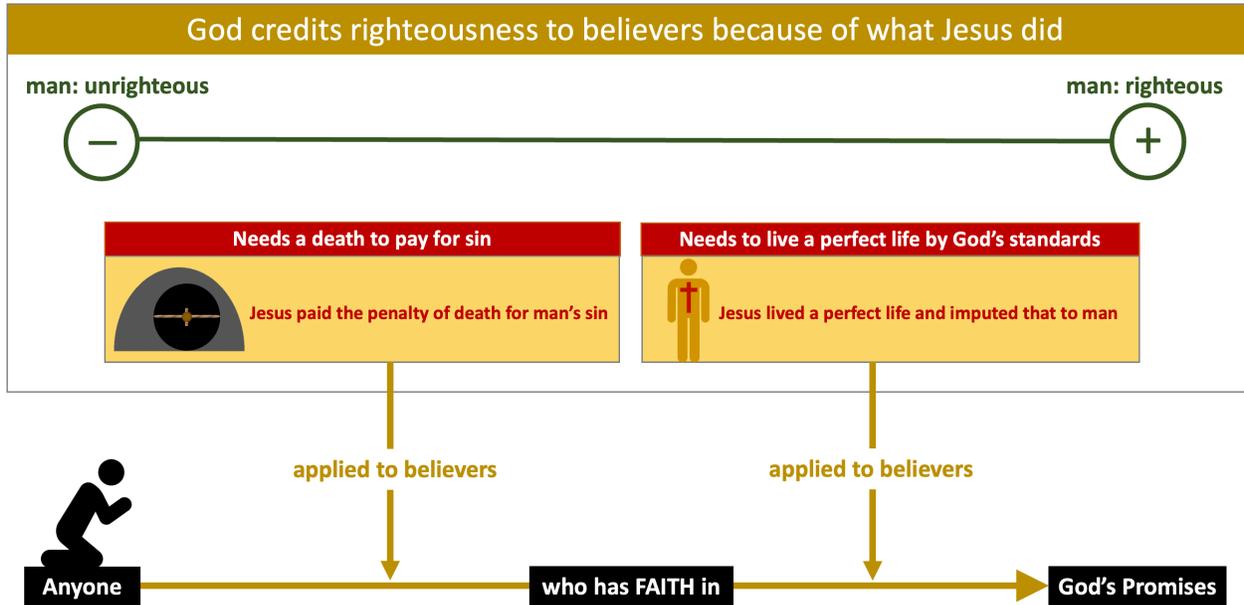
Specifically, God applied to our lives what Jesus did for us:

- (i) Jesus' substitutionary death in our place, paying off our penalty of death and
- (ii) Jesus' righteous life on earth, giving us the righteousness that we need to be reconciled to Yahweh.

#### Romans 4:22–25

<sup>22</sup> And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. <sup>23</sup> And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded <sup>24</sup> for our

benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. <sup>25</sup> He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.



The Bible also says we are adopted into God’s family as His children.

**Romans 8:15**

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”

These truths mean that after the final judgment, we will live with God forever in resurrection bodies, free from suffering. That will be the final state of believers. Therefore, suffering for the believer is temporary. There is a definite end to our suffering.

Some people think that the good news of the Bible is like medicine. They think that once they take this special medicine called “Believe in God”, their life will get better and they will no longer experience pain and suffering.

We should not think this way because this is not what the Bible teaches. God is not a magic pill or medicine we “take”. Instead, the Bible says all believers will continue to suffer while alive.



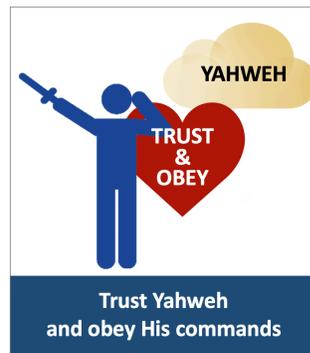
However, suffering for believers is not about God being angry with us and wanting to punish us further for the sins that Jesus had already died for. Some suffering has to do with the consequences of the Fall that God is allowing to persist.

But mainly, suffering for believers is about sanctification.



We can see from the example of the **Conquest and Settlement** period how the Promised Land belonged to the Israelites but they still had to work hard to drive out the evil Canaanites in the land. God was teaching them how to:

- get rid of evil, but also to
- trust and obey Him.



In the same way, God uses our suffering to:

- get rid of evil in us and
- train us to trust and obey Him.



Suffering helps us turn to God.

So as believers, we should not be surprised when suffering comes our way. It is God’s way of shaping us and making us more like Christ.

**Revelation 3:19–20**

<sup>19</sup> I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

<sup>20</sup> “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.”

However, we need to ask God if our suffering is caused by our own sin. If it is, we need to confess, repent and ask for God’s help to change us.

SUFFERING CAUSED BY SIN		
BELIEVERS		
①  Sickness and death	②  Self-induced misery	③  Suffering within families and nations
	④  Discipline of the Father	⑤  Denial of rewards

If God gives us peace that our suffering is not caused by our own sin, then we need to ask God for help.

SUFFERING BECAUSE OF GOD’S INTERVENTION			
BELIEVERS			
⑧ Push our spiritual growth 	⑨ Help unbelievers believe 	⑩ Encourage spiritual growth in other believers 	⑪ Consequence of spiritual world 

- We should ask God for help to have faith and trust in His sovereignty even if we can’t understand what is happening or what He is doing.
- And we need to ask for strength and courage to endure.
- We should also continue to worship Him with thanksgiving through the difficult season, knowing even this is temporary.

## 2. Is the Bible completely accurate? Isn't it a human document?

**Truths:**



**The Law at Mount Sinai:**  
Revelation / Inspiration / Inerrancy

**Revelation.** There are many truths about God and the world He created that we would never know unless He revealed them to us.

Creator-Creature Distinction				
1 <sup>st</sup> level CREATOR (Yahweh)	Infinite	All-knowing	All-wise	All-powerful
2 <sup>nd</sup> level creature (man)	 finite: limited knowledge, understanding and wisdom			

God in His grace told us how He created the world and man. He told us about His interactions with man and how He continues to interrupt and work in history to guide it to the perfect, happy end that He has planned for it.

The Creator-God is a communicative and revealing God. At Mount Sinai, He spoke audibly to over two million Israelites who were rescued by Him and were now gathered to hear Him. This is what Moses said:

**Deuteronomy 5:22**

“The LORD spoke these words to all of you assembled there at the foot of the mountain. He spoke with a loud voice from the heart of the fire, surrounded by clouds and deep darkness. This was all he said at that time, and he wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

After Moses, God continued speaking to man through the prophets.

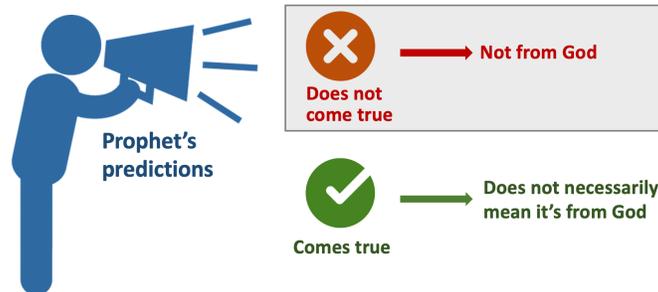
**Hebrews 1:1**

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.

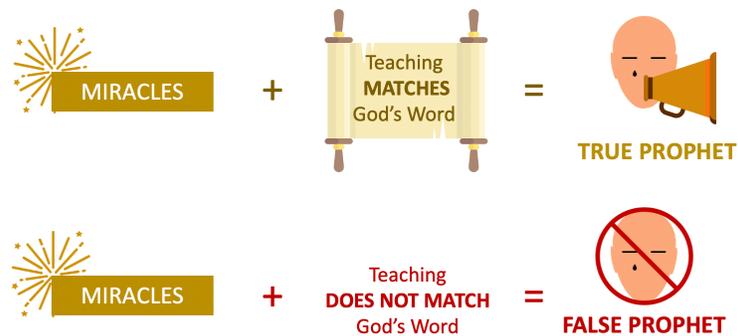


The role of the prophets was very important because they were communicating the very words of God. So God gave two tests to validate the prophets' words.

1. What a prophet predicts must come true (Deuteronomy 18:19–22) and ...

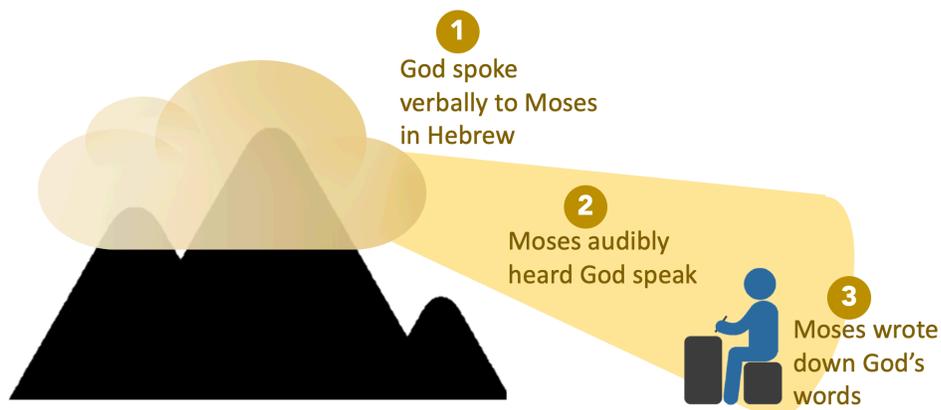


2. ... their teachings must be consistent with what God had previously revealed (Deuteronomy 13:1–5).

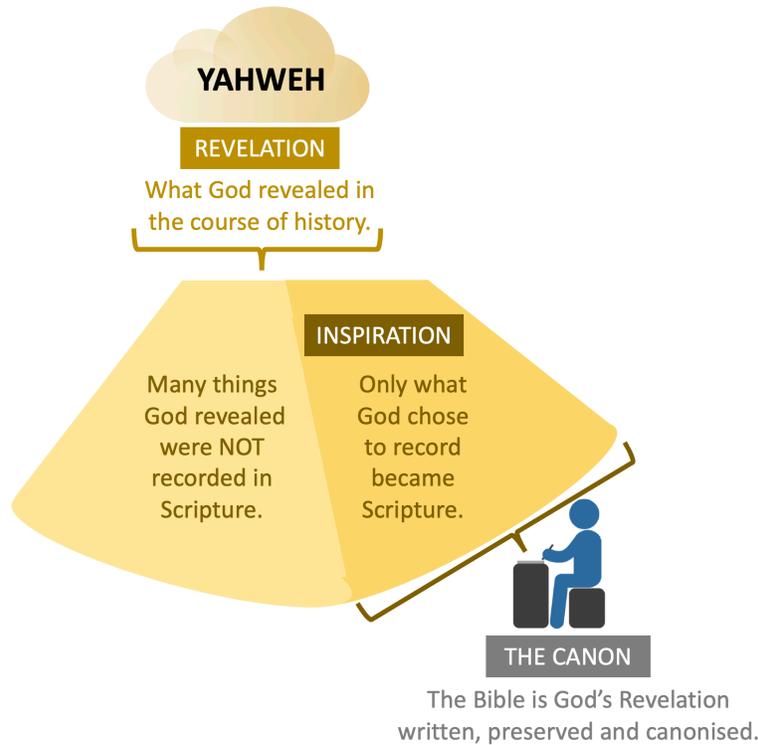


The Bible is God's own revelation. God was eyewitness to the creation of the world and everything that has happened on earth since creation. We can trust that He knows what He is talking about.

**Inspiration.** The Bible is history preserved by human writers whom God spoke to. At Mount Sinai, Moses wrote down everything that God told him. This included the law.



Later, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God would direct men to record His words in written form so that it could be read and passed along so more people would come to know about Him. These men wrote the words of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.



The entire Bible is what God Himself revealed to man. None of the human writers made things up. So, we know that the Bible is accurate because human writers recorded in written form what God revealed.

**2 Peter 1:20–21**

<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, <sup>21</sup> or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.



**NOT IN the Canon of Scripture**  
 NOT Inspired Word of God  
 NOT Inspired Word of God  
 NOT Inspired Word of God

**Inerrancy.** We also learn that Scripture is a testimony, recording the actions of both God and man. This is especially important as God made covenants with man. And the covenants have promises that can be tracked. The parties to the covenant and the witnesses can see if all parties have kept their promises as recorded in the contracts. Their actions are recorded as a testimony, a legal document proving their faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

To give an example, God made a contract with man, animals and nature after the Flood. He promised not to send another flood to destroy the earth. Even though it was mankind who had previously broken their relationship with Yahweh at the Fall,



God graciously extended His invitation for them to trust Him again. So God made a very serious promise, a contract. He would keep this promise. Based on this contract, man could check on God's behaviour at any time to see if He has indeed kept His word.

Because of this need for a legal document, Scripture must record historical accounts truthfully and accurately. God's Word has to be 100% accurate and free of error if these contracts are to be tracked.

**Psalm 105:7–8**

<sup>7</sup> He is the LORD our God.

His justice is seen throughout the land.

<sup>8</sup> He always stands by his covenant—

the commitment he made to a thousand generations.



Testimony showing  
the faithfulness or unfaithfulness  
of the parties in the contracts

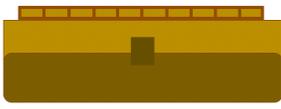
It is only in the Bible that we see a God who makes contracts with man. No other religion has a god like that. This tells us that Yahweh is serious about promises and intends to keep all His promises. And because God wants man to know that He can be trusted, we know the Bible must be a trustworthy document.

These three aspects of Scripture (Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy) help us see that though the Bible was written by man, God is the ultimate author. He is responsible for what is written and all His words are accurate and true.

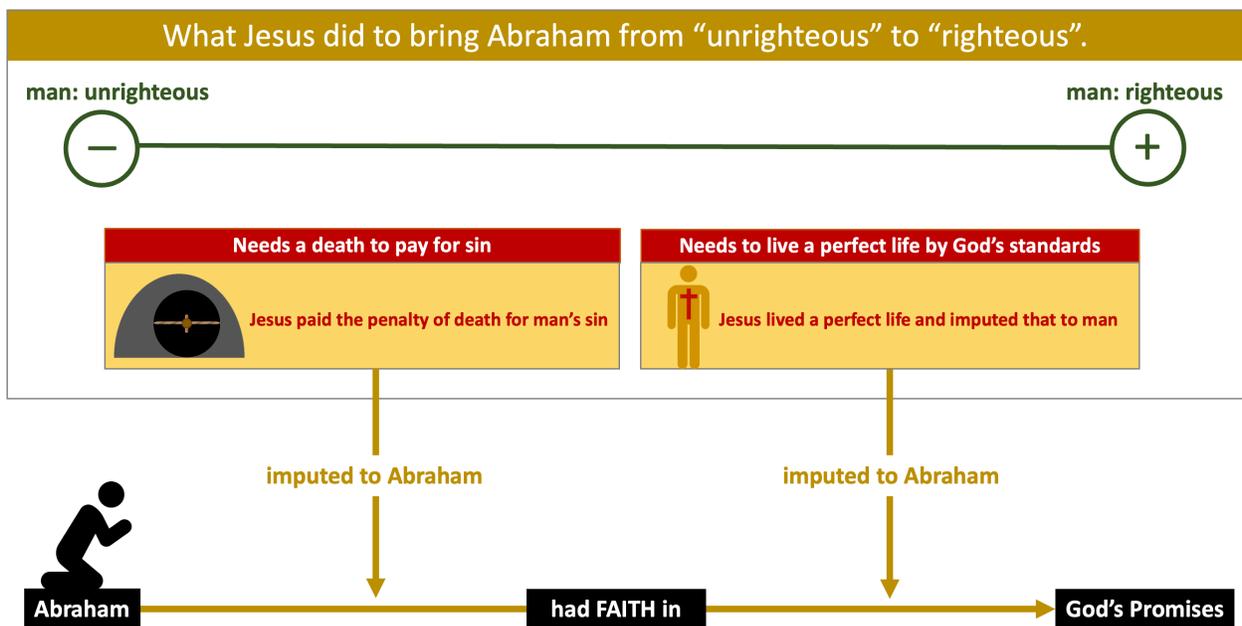
**2 Timothy 3:16**

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

### 3. How can I be sure that my justification is secure?

<p><b>Truths:</b></p>  <p><b>Call of Abraham:</b> Abraham trusted God</p>	 <p><b>The Global Flood:</b> A picture of judgment and salvation</p>	 <p><b>The Passover:</b> A picture of substitutionary sacrifice and atonement</p>	 <p><b>The Conquest:</b> A picture of sanctification</p>
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Biblical faith is trusting God. **Abraham** had information about Yahweh and His promises. And he trusted God. Based on Abraham’s faith, God imputed, or credited righteousness to him because of what Jesus did in (i) taking Abraham’s penalty for sin and (ii) imputing His righteous life to Abraham. There is nothing mystical or mysterious about biblical faith. It is believing the promises of the One who made them.



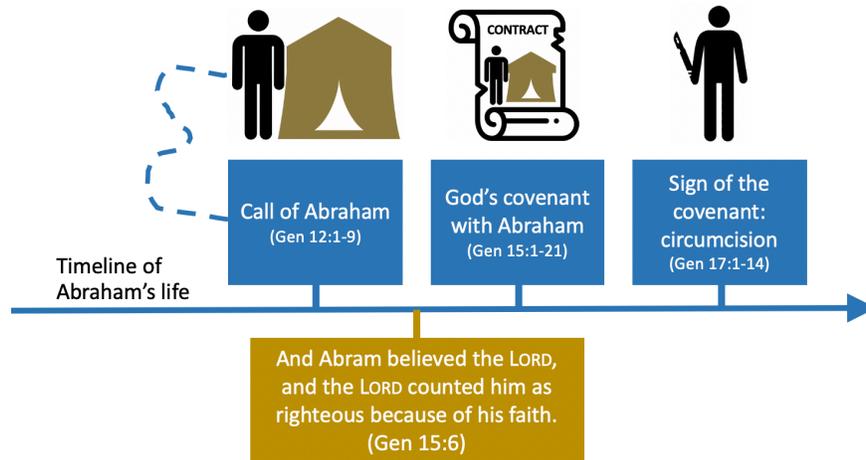
Abraham did no work to save himself, earn his salvation or deserve being saved. He simply believed God’s promises and the Bible says that through his faith, God declared Abraham righteous. In other words, He justified Abraham.

This was God’s one-time work in Abraham’s life. He didn’t have to do it repeatedly.

This act carries a legal sense, like a verdict passed in God’s heavenly court.

**Romans 4:20–22**

<sup>20</sup> Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. <sup>21</sup> He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. <sup>22</sup> And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous.



It is the same with us. Every human being is unrighteous and sinful in front of the holy Creator-God, Yahweh. The call of Abraham shows us that God declared Abraham righteous in His sight when Abraham trusted Him. Likewise, those who believe what God says will also be declared righteous by God.

**Galatians 3:6–9**

<sup>6</sup> In the same way, “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” <sup>7</sup> The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

<sup>8</sup> What’s more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, “All nations will be blessed through you.” <sup>9</sup> So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

**The global Flood** shows how God provides salvation. It is His plan and He does the saving. We only have to trust Him.

The picture of Noah and his family sealed into the ark by Yahweh and then kept safe by God reminds us that our salvation is managed and kept secure by God, not us. It is a physical act of God, and not based on our feelings at all.

In the same way, **the Passover** shows us that it is God doing the saving.

Once God saw the blood of the lamb smeared onto the doorframe, He spared the firstborn of that household from death because a substitutionary death had already occurred.

Again, God was physically sparing the family when they trusted Him.



In the Passover, the lamb was a picture of Jesus, the real substitutionary sacrifice for man.



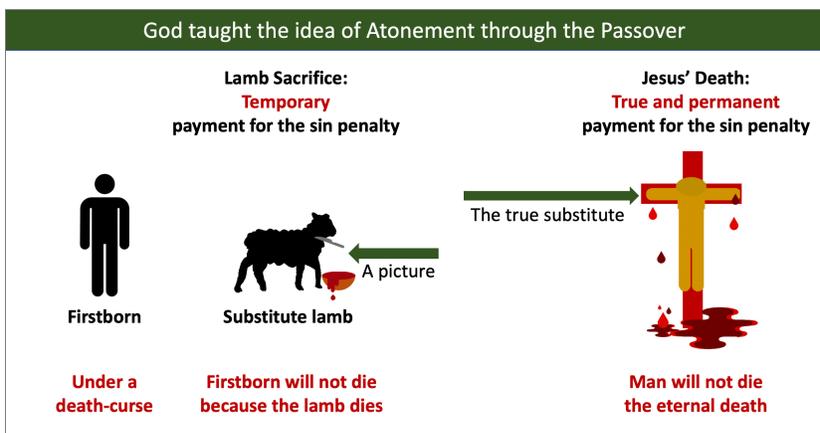
The Passover Lamb... **...is a picture of...** ...Jesus, the real substitutionary sacrifice for man.

**Isaiah 53:5–6, 10–11**

<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our rebellion,  
 crushed for our sins.  
 He was beaten so we could be whole.  
 He was whipped so we could be healed.  
<sup>6</sup> All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.  
 We have left God’s paths to follow our own.  
 Yet the LORD laid on him  
the sins of us all.  
<sup>10</sup> But it was the LORD’s good plan to crush him  
 and cause him grief.  
 Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,  
 he will have many descendants.  
 He will enjoy a long life,  
 and the LORD’s good plan will prosper in his hands.  
<sup>11</sup> When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish,  
 he will be satisfied.  
 And because of his experience,  
 my righteous servant will make it possible  
for many to be counted righteous,  
for he will bear all their sins.

At the Passover, God also used the blood of an animal to explain the concept of atonement, or the payment of sin. If a lamb shed its blood (died) in place of the firstborn, God would allow the firstborn to live. The lamb’s blood was a temporary payment.

What the lamb did was a picture of what Jesus did.



When Jesus shed His blood for man, God accepted Jesus's death as the true and permanent payment for man's sin. Sinful people cannot come before God but Jesus' blood paid for man's sin, removing it from us so we can come before God.

### 1 John 2:2

He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

Our feelings are not involved in salvation. It is a physical, objective, legal work done on our behalf by Yahweh. God offers a way of salvation through Jesus Christ's work on the cross. When we trust God, He does the saving. Just like at the Passover, Christ is our substitute lamb, dying on our behalf, paying for our sin penalty. Because He died for us, we do not need to die the eternal death.

Do we have faith in God and His promises? With what we know of God, do we believe that God has done what He promised and justified us? And because He has justified us, God will finish the job and raise us with imperishable resurrection bodies at the appointed time so we can be with Him. He guarantees that our justification is secure. He taught us through Abraham how He declares us righteous through faith. Then He gave us the picture of Noah being safe in the ark and the firstborn being safe in the house as comfort and assurance for us that our salvation is indeed secure.

We must never confuse justification and sanctification, or we will end up thinking that we can lose our justification. The period of the **Conquest** helps us understand this better.



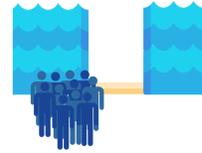
God knows we cannot look into anyone's heart to see if they are believers or not. So in Hebrews 11, He commends to us those who had been justified by faith.

Looking at many of them, we see that they remained justified even though they did not live consistently sanctified lives. For example:

- Abraham was justified (Hebrews 11:8, 17) but at times, he showed a lack of faith in God. (His sanctification was poor at times.)
- Moses was justified (Hebrews 11:24, 27, 28) but he did not get to enter the Promised Land because of his disobedience to God. (His sanctification faltered.)

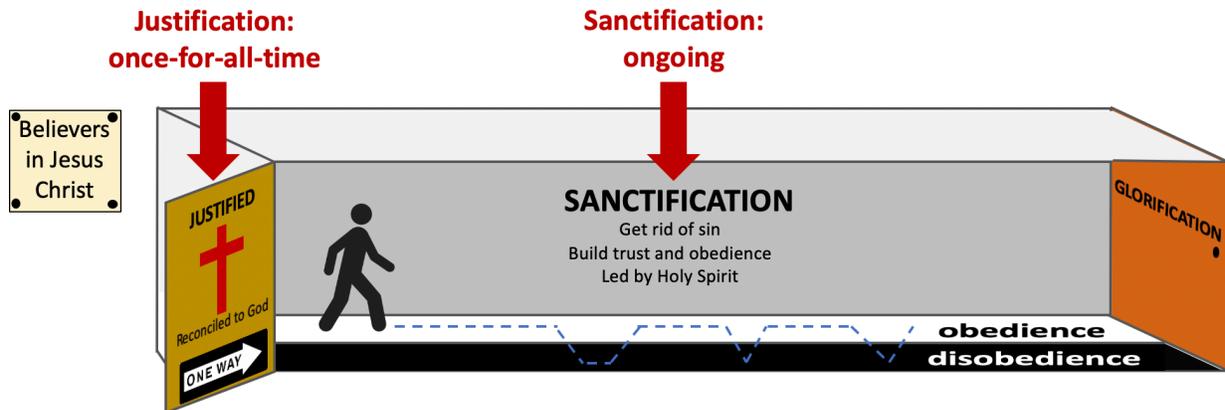


- The Israelites were justified (Hebrews 11:29) when they killed the lamb and painted their doors with its blood at the Passover, but they started worshipping idols and rebelling against God during the Conquest and Settlement period. (They failed at their sanctification!)



Yet all of them remained justified.

Just like them, believers have eternal security in our justification.

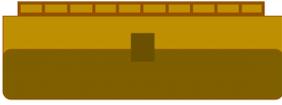


We must be clear that justification should lead to sanctification but they are both distinct. Justification is “once-for-all-time” while sanctification is ongoing.

Sanctification continues throughout a believer’s lifetime. Some believers will be sanctified a lot, others hardly at all. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit and requires our participation. (Think of the Conquest and Settlement period.)

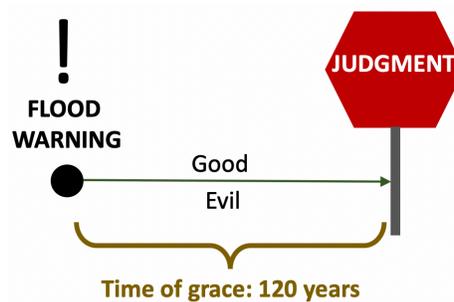
But justification is God’s work and His alone. Justification cannot be lost. We didn’t get justified by works and we can’t keep our justification by works. It is God who keeps us justified. (Think of God declaring Abraham righteous.)

## 4. Why doesn't God get rid of all the evil in the world?

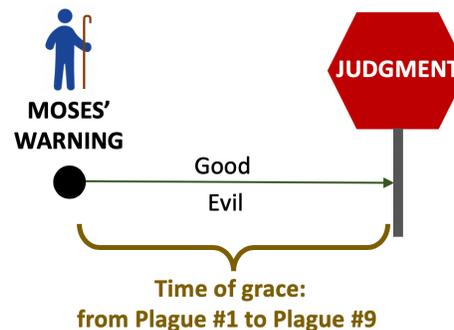
<p><b>Truths:</b></p>  <p><b>Global Flood:</b> A picture of grace before judgment</p>	 <p><b>Exodus:</b> A picture of grace before judgment</p>	 <p><b>Conquest and Settlement:</b> The Holy War as a picture of the final judgement</p>
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Over and over in God's record of history, we see God judging evil and getting rid of it.

At the **global Flood**, we see God extending a grace period of 120 years, giving evil people time to change their minds and accept the way of salvation that He was offering. Then when the grace period was over, God exercised global judgment, thus wiping out evil from the whole world.

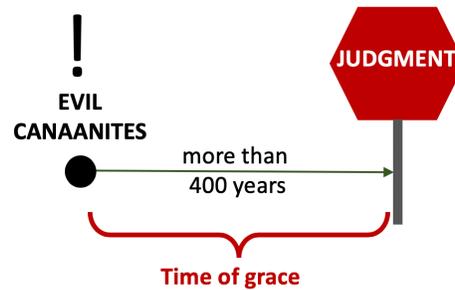


At the **Exodus**, and particularly at the Passover, we see the same thing.



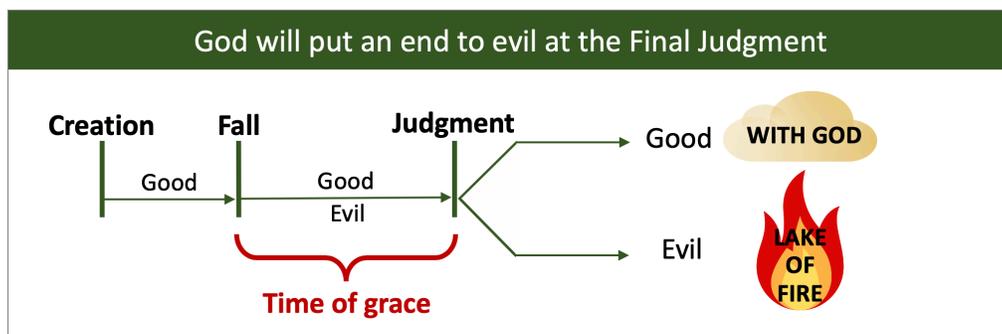
God gave warnings to both the Egyptians and Israelites that He was coming in judgment over all firstborns. He provided a way to escape (the Passover lamb) and when the time arrived, He came in judgment. Every household had a death: either the firstborn died or the lamb died in place of the firstborn.

During **the Conquest** phase of Israel's history, God announced that He was using Israel to wipe out all the evil people residing in the land. God was getting rid of evil.



While God was getting rid of evil in a decisive way at each of these points in history, these events were also a picture of how Yahweh will judge all evil one more time at the final global judgment. God does intend to wipe out evil from creation and confine it forever in the lake of fire.

Before that happens, God is extending a grace period to all people.



If they accept the way of salvation that He offers, He will take care of their sin problem, declare them righteous and restore a relationship with them. But those who reject His offer will suffer the final judgment.

#### **Luke 17:26–27**

<sup>26</sup> "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. <sup>27</sup> In those days, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came and destroyed them all.

God wants us to learn from what He did in the past so we have a warning picture of what He will do in the future. The Flood, Exodus and Conquest were mini-examples of Him getting rid of evil on a "small" scale. At the final judgment, He will get rid of evil permanently on a global scale.

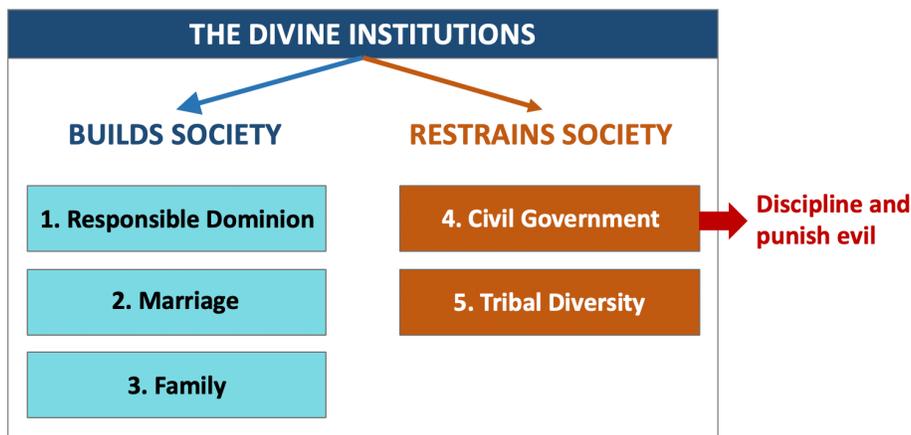
## 5. Governments are man-made institutions that Christians should rebel against.

**Truths:**



**After the Flood:**  
Fourth Divine Institution of civil government

Civil authorities and governments are God's idea. In giving man the responsibility of handling capital punishment, God was giving man the role of creating an authority structure that had the ability to pronounce a death sentence for the crime of murder. This means that mankind had to create a government structure to rule over human society.



God's purpose in giving this institution was to slow down the spread of evil.

Yahweh knew He was giving sinful man a serious responsibility. He knew that this institution was open to abuse. We can see throughout history how evil governments have abused their power and abused their peoples. But God still gave mankind this institution.

The Bible says that these authorities have been put in place for our good and as believers, we are told to do our best to obey them.

### **Romans 13:1–5**

<sup>1</sup> Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. <sup>2</sup> So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

<sup>3</sup> For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. <sup>4</sup> The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you.

They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. <sup>5</sup> So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

Though they are not anywhere near perfect nor good, without governments, society would quickly descend into chaos. The Bible asks us to respect authority but we understand that God is our ultimate authority.

If the government we have becomes grossly evil, then as believers, we will need to stand up for God's truth and use, wherever possible, legal and official channels to resist the evil that is coming from the government.

## Applying the Faith in Action Exercise to Our Lives

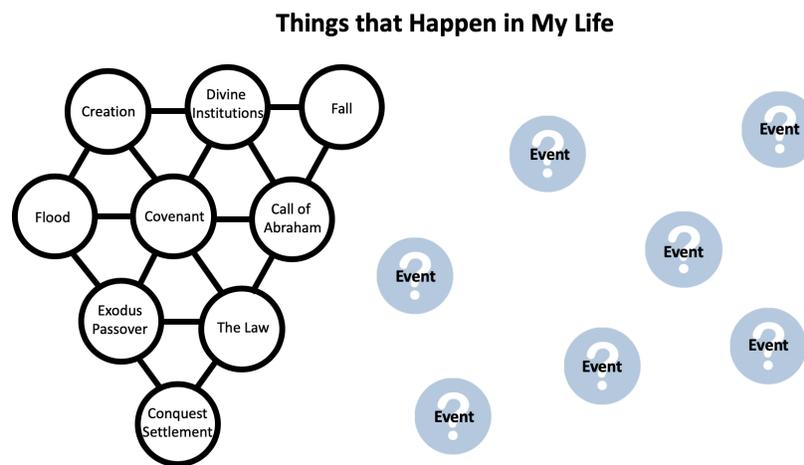
In this exercise, we showed how we should try to understand and answer life’s questions from the Bible’s perspective. Every day, as we experience events in our own lives, we should practise constantly putting that event into the context of the biblical framework of truth.

Whenever we just stare at the event, we get spiritually distracted. For example, someone has treated us poorly and made us very angry. If we just focus on that, the event could take over our whole day, week, month, year or even life. We focus on this small event (one tree) so much that we forget that this tree is part of a bigger forest. We never get to see the forest.



But God wants us to see the forest. When we live the Christian life, we need to always put our individual life events into the big picture of what God has revealed in the Bible.

As we learn more about the Bible and God, each new biblical event will interlock into our biblical framework, making it bigger and stronger.



Let’s continue fitting everything that happens in our lives into this framework so that we see our lives in the proper biblical perspective. And let’s continue asking God to help us live well, respond well and love Him and others well.



Pre-reading for next lesson: Genesis 14:1–24; Deuteronomy 17:14–20; 1 Samuel 8–15