

BOOK 3: THE FALL OF ISRAEL—THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Answers •
Family
Bible Devotional

A faith-building walk
through the Bible

MIKE & LIBBY WILD



Answers
IN GENESIS®

Answers Family Devotional
Book 3: The Fall of Israel—The Life of Christ

ISBN: 978-1-9844-0297-4

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Core questions from lessons 22, 34 adapted from the Westminster Catechism (public domain).

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 16 were directly adapted from lessons in the Answers Bible Curriculum.

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Introduction

A strong, foundational understanding of God’s Word is the only answer for our families and future generations.

As Christian parents, we can list dozens of ways that the godless culture around us threatens the well-being of our children. However, instead of focusing on the negative and helplessly watching children walk away from the church, we can proactively build a strong and sure foundation in our children—a foundation built on the unchanging Word of the unchanging God.

Teaching God’s Word clearly, systematically, and consistently provides an anchor for our children to cling to in an age of skepticism. Understanding God’s Word enables our children to understand their sinfulness before a holy God and their need for a savior. Understanding God’s Word prepares and equips them to face the anti-biblical culture around them and to emerge resolute in their faith.

Our children are our first disciples, and if we want them to thrive in a world that grows more hostile to the gospel every day, they must know why they believe what they believe. In order for our children to remain steadfast in God’s Word, they must know it for themselves.

God and his true story are the focal point of this Bible devotional. We will be discovering the historical events given in the Bible as they happened (chronologically), bringing attention to God’s attributes and grand plan. We will be tracing redemption through the Bible as well as seeing God’s amazing purposes (and how we fit into them) as it applies from before the beginning until the consummation of the ages.

While this is not a comprehensive devotional on every biblical topic, it will enable your family to study the clear, consistent, and thematic teachings in God's Word.

God has given us everything we need for life and godliness so that we might teach our children to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1). Let us study together as families for the glory of our good and gracious God!

How to Use This Devotional

This devotional is the third in a series of five books that covers material from the beginning all the way to the consummation of the ages and the new creation. The goal is for you to develop a biblical perspective of the world past and future, understand God's redemptive plan which was set in place from the beginning, and realize God's purpose for you and your family.

These devotions have been carefully created based on over 20 years of real-life experience raising four boys in biblical truth while church planting cross-culturally in Asia Pacific. Credit must be given to Trevor McIlwain for his curriculum *Beginning on Firm Foundations*, which we taught from for many years in a tribal context. Trevor's work gave us much inspiration toward the creation of this devotional.

For you to get the most out of this devotional, we offer these guidelines.

1. Don't rush. This might be the hardest challenge you face!

Make sure that you set aside in your daily or weekly schedule the appropriate time to read and discuss each devotion. You and your children will need that time to marinate on each lesson. It won't take long for your family to "taste and see that the Lord is good!" Soon you will see the constant patterns and themes that permeate the Bible from beginning until the end. You may want to spend several days on one devotion, depending on your schedule. Feel free to pause any of the devotionals at any time and save the rest of it for the following day.

2. Read the core questions.

The core questions are foundational truths of the Christian faith. We encourage you to begin each lesson with the core question. You might even make it a goal as a family to memorize a few.

3. Read all scripture portions.

God's Word is where the power lies. We know that the clear reading of God's Word will not return void in the hearts of the hearers. Make it a practice to differentiate the reading of scripture and the devotion sections. When you get to a scripture reading, look it up in your Bible. This is a good opportunity for dad, mom, or older siblings to have a part in the devotion by taking turns reading the Bible portions. From the first day, we want to point clearly to the authority of God's Word and allow it to do its work in the hearts of our children. Some devotionals have longer passages to read than others. Feel free to read as you have time and pick up with the next portion the following day.

3. Don't skip devotionals.

These devotions are based on over 20 years of Bible teaching in different languages, cultures, and contexts. Each is important and builds on the previous one. Each has purpose and will direct your family toward a confident biblical worldview. If you are faithful to read and teach from each one, we trust that by God's grace the same good results that we witnessed among our own children and the remote Wano tribe will be seen among your own children and loved ones.

4. Go over the discussion questions.

The discussion questions provide opportunities for you to review and apply the lesson with your children. We recommend that you not only end each devotion with the questions but start tomorrow's with a quick look back at the previous lesson's questions.

5. Encourage discussion with your children and loved ones.

During the body of each devotion, or during the discussion questions, encourage your children to discuss what they are hearing. This allows them to feel a part of the study and show what they are learning.

6. Review throughout the day.

Look for opportunities to review or back up teaching that you are learning through your study of God's Word together with your children. This shows them that all times are good times to discuss God's Word, not just during the devotion time. Impart a holistic, Christian worldview by reinforcing and living out what you are learning through this devotion.

May the Lord bless you and your family as you embark on this chronological journey through the Bible. Keep on the path until the end and you will be rewarded by a truly biblical worldview, which is the foundation for living lives that glorify the Lord.

Mike and Libby Wild



1

God Loves Israel

Is God's faithfulness dependent on our faithfulness to him? *No, God is and always will be faithful to his plan, promises, and children.*

Throughout the first two books in the *Answers Family Bible Devotional* series, we have studied God's work in the lives of his people since the beginning of time and have seen many of his amazing attributes on display. We have looked at the first four Seven C's of History: Creation (God created all things in six days); Corruption (Adam's sin brought the curse of death on God's once-perfect creation); Catastrophe (the descendants of Adam and Eve continued to sin so much that God judged their wickedness with a worldwide flood); and Confusion (after the flood, Noah's grandchildren continued to disobey, so God confused their languages, causing them to spread over the earth as he had commanded them to).

Between Confusion and the next C, Christ, which we will come to later in this book, we looked at the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, how he brought the Israelites out of Egypt and established them in the promised land (Canaan), and how he continued to call the Israelites to repentance and faith in him through prophets during the time of the judges and the kings of Israel and Judah. Throughout the next few lessons, we will discover God's continued

work among his people as he points them toward the redeemer he has been promising since the beginning.

With this lesson, we will study the book of Hosea, which offers us a living picture of God's amazing mercy and love for his people.

[Note to parents: Hosea is a book that beautifully, yet graphically, illustrates the infidelity of the Israelites toward their creator through the marriage of Hosea and Gomer, who is a prostitute. Due to the nature of the content, the read-aloud scripture portions are few. Feel free to add verses depending on the age of your children.]

Building a Foundation

Building a proper understanding of God and his Word is much like building a structure. First there is preparation—the ground has to be cleared and leveled. Then the foundation is laid. Then the structure is built. Our understanding of God and his Word also starts with preparation: we prepare the ground of our hearts by learning the basics of who God is and what he's done. Over time, we build a foundation as we discover more of who God is. The structure and the framework are added as we learn how God unfolds mankind's history through the Bible.

The Bible has depth and complexity that surpasses any other book, yet it is not too difficult to understand. The Bible is the only collection of books that hold the absolute truth about our origins, Creator, and history, yet it is relevant to our lives today. When we face new trials and emotions, an account in the Bible may comfort us in a new way. The Bible is a unique collection of books which has a singular message: our God, the God of the universe, the maker of heaven and earth, is the hero of history (or his-story). There is no one like him! My hope is that those truths have been building a strong foundation in your heart that you will continue to build on for years to come.

Hosea the Prophet

The account of Hosea gives another way to see God's love and faithfulness. Hosea was a prophet of God. He was a contemporary of Isaiah, Amos, Jonah, and Micah. He prophesied in the northern kingdom of Israel through the reigns of four kings of Judah (Hosea 1:1).

Though he prophesied for more than 60 years, Hosea is considered one of the minor prophets because his book is relatively short. In his writing, Hosea refers to Israel as Ephraim and Jacob interchangeably. Ephraim was one of the larger tribes that had settled in the north after the conquest.

Hosea the Example

The Lord made Hosea's life an example to the people of Israel and to us today. He and his wife, Gomer, showed how God's chosen people, the Israelites, betrayed God.

God had chosen the nation of Israel to be a light of truth and salvation to the world, but they weren't. God had promised to love, protect, and provide for Israel as long as they followed his law. But over and over, Israel missed the mark. They continued to sin.

We may want to judge Israel and think we are more righteous than they were. But we are actually no different from Israel. We are all born into sin, born apart from the living God. We are unable to keep God's laws perfectly and are desperately unable to save ourselves from our state of sinfulness. We continue to choose to worship false gods (things that are more important to us than God) instead of the one true God.

Gomer was a young woman who sinned by giving herself to men she wasn't married to. She didn't have a good reputation in her community because of her behavior. The Lord told Hosea to go to Gomer and take her as his wife. Hosea was likely confused by this command, but he trusted the Lord and obeyed. Together Hosea and Gomer had several children.

Read Hosea 1:3–9.

Hosea loved Gomer despite her past sins. Gomer had children who needed her, she had a home, and she was provided for. Yet she was not content—she wanted what others had and wanted to do as she pleased. She traded her new life for the lifestyle she had before.

This is a picture of how Israel worshipped the gods of the neighboring nations, coveted the goods of the people around them, and enjoyed the sinful activities of other cultures. The people of Israel wanted to do as they pleased rather than answer to God and his law.

What a terrible experience for Hosea! His heart was likely broken by the way Gomer had treated him. She had sinned against her husband by breaking her marriage vows. Most people would feel sad, hurt, angry, or bitter if they were Hosea. But after Gomer left, the Lord told Hosea to get Gomer and bring her back home! Hosea was willing to follow God's direction even though he had been treated badly.

Hosea the Redeemer

Read Hosea 3:1–2.

Hosea obeyed the Lord and bought back (or redeemed) Gomer from the slave market and loved her.

Read Hosea 3:4–5.

Hosea's dedication to his wife was to be a picture of God's greater dedication to Israel. What man can't do perfectly God always does perfectly.

Our Redeemer

God instructed Hosea to write this book to showcase God's love, mercy, forgiveness, and faithfulness to his children. Israel sinned repeatedly against God over many years. God showed his mercy and his love by taking them back, forgiving them, and promising to never leave them.

Hosea's love story is also about us! Just as sin separated Israel from God and Gomer from Hosea, our sin separates us from God. But just as Hosea showed his wife love and forgiveness and God showed Israel love and forgiveness, God shows us love and forgiveness through the promised redeemer, Jesus Christ, whom we will learn more about later in this book!

In the next lesson, we'll look at another lesson God wanted to teach Israel through Hosea and Gomer.

Discuss

1. **Who is Hosea?** *Hosea was a prophet of God.*
2. **How did God use the account of Hosea and Gomer?** *He used Hosea and Gomer to showcase God's love, mercy, faithfulness, and forgiveness to his children.*
3. **Was Gomer content with God's provision of a loving husband, children, and a home?** *No, Gomer chose to trade her new life for the sinful life she had before. Gomer wanted to do as she pleased.*
4. **How is this a living picture of the relationship between Israel and God?** *God promised to provide Israel with what she needed and wanted if she followed God, obeyed God, and enjoyed God's blessings so that the nations around her would see her God was different and praise him. Yet time and time again Israel turned her back on God and followed false gods. The purpose God had given them was to know God and glorify him, yet Israel was not able to fulfill this purpose.*

