

# He Gave Us Prophets

Lesson 3

The People of the Covenant

Lesson Guide



**thirdmill**

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Our goal is to offer free Christian education to hundreds of thousands of pastors and Christian leaders around the world who lack sufficient training for ministry. We are meeting this goal by producing and globally distributing an unparalleled multimedia seminary curriculum in English, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish. Our curriculum is also being translated into more than a dozen other languages through our partner ministries. The curriculum consists of graphic-driven videos, printed instruction, and internet resources. It is designed to be used by schools, groups, and individuals, both online and in learning communities.

Over the years, we have developed a highly cost-effective method of producing award-winning multimedia lessons of the finest content and quality. Our writers and editors are theologically-trained educators, our translators are theologically-astute native speakers of their target languages, and our lessons contain the insights of hundreds of respected seminary professors and pastors from around the world. In addition, our graphic designers, illustrators, and producers adhere to the highest production standards using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques.

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## HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

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- **Before you watch the lesson**
  - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
  - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
  - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
  - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
  - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
  - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
  - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

## Notes

### **I. Introduction (0:28)**

### **II. Humanity in Covenant (1:20)**

God established covenants between himself and his people through representative heads: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David.

Adam and Noah were universal covenants. They were established between God and all of humanity.

#### **A. Central Concerns (3:21)**

##### **1. Adam (3:28)**

The covenant with Adam is traditionally known as the covenant of works.

Three pillars were established in the days of Adam that endure for all of history:

- human responsibility
- human corruption
- human redemption

These basic pillars:

- established the structures of divine-human interaction throughout all history
- extend to the entire human race

## **2. Noah (6:17)**

Added feature: stability for the physical universe.

God was demonstrating his patience with the human race.

God has given an orderly world so that we can fulfill our human destiny as his image.

God established divine patience and the reaffirmation of our human destiny as images of God.

**B. Prophet's Dependence (8:51)**

As God's covenant emissaries:

- Old Testament prophets focused most of their attention on the nation of Israel.
- But they were also emissaries to the nations of the world.

**1. Sins of the Nations (9:50)**

The prophets usually pointed to the sins of the nations and threatened God's judgment against them.

**2. Redemption for the Nations (10:31)**

Old Testament prophets:

- Drew attention to the severe violations of the nations against God.
- Announced that one day God would redeem a people from every tribe and nation of the earth.

**III. Israel in Covenant (12:43)**

God made three major covenants with Israel: Abraham, Moses and David.



**A. Abraham (13:37)**

God's covenant with Abraham was the first to identify Israel as the one chosen family to bear God's gracious redemption to the entire world.

**1. Central Concerns (14:06)**

God chose a special nation.

God promised Abraham many descendants and a special land.

**2. Prophet's Dependence (14:53)**

The prophets recalled the covenant God made with Abraham whenever they spoke about God:

- giving land to his people
- multiplying their numbers

**B. Moses (16:22)**

Moses' covenant plays a vital role in the positive redemption of the human race.

**1. Central Concerns (16:51)**

The covenant between God and Moses focused on the law of God.

The Mosaic covenant focused on the regulations of covenant life. Its laws bring:

- blessing to those who obey
- curse to those who disobey

**2. Prophet's Dependence (17:29)**

Prophets prosecuted the covenant by reminding Israel of her responsibility to be faithful to the Law of Moses.

**C. David (18:35)****1. Central Concerns (18:59)**

David's covenant focused on:

- building God's people into an enormous empire
- the establishment of David's family as the permanent dynasty over God's people

**2. Prophet's Dependence(19:58)**

God promised that eventually the kingdom of David would be a magnificent, worldwide kingdom.

**D. The New Covenant (21:12)**

All the promises given to God's people in the earlier covenants were to be realized in the period of the new covenant.

Old Testament prophets longed for the day of this grand covenant.

**IV. Salvation in Covenant (23:24)**

Old Testament prophets did not think of people in terms of the tidy categories of "saved" and "unsaved."

**A. Outside Covenant (24:29)**

During the days of the Old Testament, those outside the covenant community were cut off from the possibility of salvation.

**B. Visible Covenant (timecode)**

The visible covenant community includes all of those in the Old Testament days, who were a part of the nation of Israel:

- believers
- unbelievers

The visible church mixed with believers and unbelievers may rightly be called:

- “the church”
- “the kingdom (of God)”
- “the House of God”
- “the Family of God”

When we use terms like “elect” or “chosen,” we usually mean elected for salvation. But, the prophets did not mean this very often.

God’s election in the prophetic vocabulary was not election to salvation but election to covenant blessing.

**C. Invisible Covenant (33:00)**

The invisible covenant community: the full number of human beings who come to saving faith and will spend eternity in the blessings of God.

The invisible church is made up of true believers only.

The invisible church has a secure destiny of salvation.

Old Testament prophets believed that there was an invisible covenant community: the faithful remnant that had exercised saving faith.

To be in covenant was not the same as being redeemed or eternally saved.

**V. Conclusion (39:09)**



3. Describe the central concerns and the prophets' dependence upon the covenant with Abraham.

4. Describe the central concerns and the prophets' dependence upon the covenant with Moses.



5. Describe the central concerns and the prophets' dependence upon the covenant with David.

6. How were the Old Testament prophets influenced by the new covenant?

7. Describe the category of those who were outside the covenant community.

8. Describe the category of those who were within the visible covenant community.



## Application Questions

1. The prophets spoke of the theme of redemption and knew God always intended to redeem a people from every nation. How does this teaching affect your understanding of missions?
2. How should the covenant with Moses affect believers today?
3. How were the promises that were given to God's people in the Old Testament realized in the new covenant? How should this understanding affect your view of Scripture as a whole?
4. How do the three distinctions of salvation in relation to covenant enhance your understanding of the church today?
5. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study? Why?

## Glossary

**Abraham** – Old Testament patriarch, son of Terah, father of the nation of Israel with whom God made a covenant in Genesis 15 and 17 promising innumerable descendants and a special land

**Adam** – The first man; husband of Eve; man with whom God made the covenant of foundations in which humanity was to fill and subdue the earth

**Assyria** – Empire located in northern Mesopotamia in the ancient Near East that invaded and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel around 722 B.C.

**circumcise/circumcision** – The Jewish tradition of excising the foreskin of the male penis instituted by God as a sign and seal for his covenant people in Genesis 17:10-14

**covenant** – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

**covenant of works** – God's covenant made with Adam that emphasized the goals of God's kingdom and the role of human beings in his kingdom

**David** – Second Old Testament king of Israel who received the promise that his descendant would sit on the throne and reign forever

**Edom** – Name of the nation descended from Esau

**elect** – Term used for those chosen by God for covenant blessings

**Hosea** – Prophet during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel

**invisible church** – All people throughout time that have been united to Christ for salvation

**Jeremiah** – Old Testament prophet from about 626-586 B.C., also called the "weeping prophet"; prophesied about the future of Judah and of the new covenant to come

**Jezebel** – A town of Issachar where Jehu carried out a massacre against the house of Ahab; the prophet Hosea's oldest child whose name symbolized that God was threatening to destroy Israel

**Jonah** – Prophet called to preach during the reign of Jeroboam II from around 793-753 B.C.; sent to warn Nineveh of God's judgment and was swallowed by a large fish when he refused to go

**Judah** – One of the twelve tribes of Israel; Jacob's fourth son from whose offspring the promised Messiah was to come; name of the southern kingdom after the nation of Israel was divided

**Lo-Ammi** – Hebrew name meaning "not my people"; the prophet Hosea's third child whose name symbolized that God would disown Israel

**Lo-Ruhamah** – Hebrew name meaning "not loved"; the prophet Hosea's second child whose name symbolized that God would soon withdraw his covenant blessing from Israel

**Moses** – Old Testament prophet and deliverer who led the Israelites out of Egypt; man with whom God made a national "covenant of law" and who administered the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant to the Israelites; also appeared with Elijah at Jesus' transfiguration

**Nahum** – Prophet who ministered in Judah sometime between 663-612 B.C.

**national covenant** – A covenant made with an individual who represented the nation of Israel (Abraham, Moses, and David)

**new covenant** – The covenant of fulfillment in Christ; first mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31

**Nineveh** – Capital of Assyria; known for its wickedness; city where God sent the prophet Jonah to issue a warning of judgment

**Noah** – Man who, under God's direction, built an ark and survived the Flood; individual with whom God made a universal covenant that promised the enduring stability of nature

**remnant** – Term used in the Bible to refer to a group of faithful Israelites who would be spared the judgment that would come upon the unfaithful

**universal covenant** – A covenant made with an individual who represented all of mankind (Adam and Noah)

**visible Church** – People that are regularly part of the gathered church; those who publicly profess faith in Christ but may or may not have true saving faith

**Westminster Confession of Faith** – An ecumenical doctrinal summary composed by the Westminster Assembly of Divines and published in 1647