

He Gave Us Scripture: Foundations of Interpretation

Lesson 9

Modern Application &
the New Covenant

Lesson Guide



thirdmill

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Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.

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.

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In order to accomplish our distribution goals, Thirdmill has forged strategic partnerships with churches, seminaries, Bible schools, missionaries, Christian broadcasters and satellite television providers, and other organizations. These relationships have already resulted in the distribution of countless video lessons to indigenous leaders, pastors, and seminary students. Our websites also serve as avenues of distribution and provide additional materials to supplement our lessons, including materials on how to start your own learning community.

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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.

- **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 (0:20)

II. Fulfillment (2:52)

When the new covenant in Christ finally arrived, it wasn't exactly what people had imagined.

A. Old Testament (3:52)

Old Testament hopes for a new covenant rose out of words God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The Book of Restoration (Jeremiah 30:1-31:40) rehearses several descriptions of the exile and the blessings that would follow after the exile.

From the Old Testament perspective, Israel's restoration would take place at the culmination of history in "the latter days," or in "the last days."

Those who returned to the Promised Land failed to serve God, and the blessings of the new covenant were postponed (Daniel 9:24).

B. Intertestamental Period (12:18)

Intertestamental period: the time between the Old and New Testaments

The vast majority of rabbis spoke of the new covenant epoch in terms of two great ages of history:

- "This age": Israel's prior history and current circumstances during the intertestamental period
- "The age to come": the time when God's purposes for history will be fulfilled

The vast majority of rabbis taught that the transition from this age to the age to come would take place with the appearance of the Messiah.

C. New Testament (14:47)

Jesus announced that the kingdom of God began with his earthly ministry; it would grow over time and culminate when he returned in glory.

Paul said that the “mystery” regarding the last days had been kept hidden from people in the past but was now being revealed in Christ (Ephesians 3:3-5).

Inaugurated Eschatology (“the now, but not yet”) meant the fulfillment of the age of the new covenant was to take place in three stages:

- Inauguration: Initiated in Jesus’ first coming and in the ministries of his apostles and prophets (Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 2:19-20).

- Continuation: Extends throughout church history as Christ spreads the church through the gospel (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Ephesians 3:9-10).

- Consummation: Will take place when Christ returns and fulfills God's ultimate purposes for all of history (John 6:39; Ephesians 1:9-10).

III. Application (24:49)

By examining Scripture from different vantage points, we're more equipped to apply the Bible to our lives.

Christ's followers are to apply the Scriptures to the modern world by studying the Bible while keeping in mind the inauguration, continuation and consummation.

A. Guidelines (27:35)

Every application of Scripture involves appropriately connecting original meaning to contemporary audiences.

1. Old Testament (29:15)

The Old Testament refers to six major covenants, but the Old Testament books were written in the covenant epochs of Moses and David.

It's essential to look for ways New Testament authors applied the Old Testament to all three stages of the new covenant.

2. New Testament (33:47)

New Testament books were initially written for people during the inauguration of the new covenant, but they have many implications for us in the continuation of the new covenant.

Differences between today and the times of the New Testament:

- Appeals for guidance could be made directly to individual apostles and prophets.
- Widespread issues could be decided by the interactions of the church's foundational leaders (Acts 15).
- New Testament contains many examples of miraculous and supernatural events.
- New Testament authors wrote about doctrinal and practical issues that were important for the inauguration of the new covenant.

If we understand the original meaning, we can apply it to our time by taking into account developments within the new covenant age.

B. Example (38:36)

Nearly every book in the Bible touches on the theme of warfare against evil spirits and the nations that follow them.

To see how the theme of warfare applies to our lives, we must view it in light of the three stages of the new covenant epoch in Christ:

- Inauguration: Some aspects of the theme of war against evil in the world were fulfilled uniquely in Jesus' earthly ministry

- Continuation: Christ initiated the final defeat of evil, but this war is still a part of our experience throughout the history of the church.

During the continuation, we are at war with Satan and other evil spirits, rather than at war with people.

- Consummation: Jesus will complete the war against evil when he returns in glory.

When the final defeat of sin and death has taken place, Christ will reign and invite all of his followers to reign with him in victory.

To apply any biblical theme more fully, we must see how it is viewed in light of all three stages of the new covenant age in Christ.

IV. Conclusion (53:00)

Application Questions

1. Should the Old Testament outlooks on the new covenant impact your current ministry? Why or why not?
2. What impact has God's grand hope for the future, found in Jeremiah 31, had on your personal calling and purpose?
3. What lesson can we learn from Israel when we read of God's decision to postpone the full extent of the new covenant in places like Daniel 9:24?
4. How are you living in anticipation of Christ's return and the time of future glory? Give specific examples.
5. Is knowledge of the inauguration, continuation and consummation of the new covenant a useful resource in evangelism? Explain your answer.
6. How will the general guidelines for applying Scripture aid you in your current ministry or area of influence?
7. When applying Scripture today, what do you consider to be the most challenging aspect of appropriately connecting original meaning to your audience?
8. The New Testament was written initially for Christians in the early church. With this in mind, how can you relate your own experiences to the experiences of those in the early church?
9. Find a prominent theme in the Bible and illustrate it through the stages of the new covenant using the general guidelines for application.
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

application – Appropriately connecting the original meaning of a biblical document to contemporary audiences in ways that impact their concepts, behaviors and emotions

Book of Restoration – Name for a segment of the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:1–31:40), which includes several descriptions of the exile and the blessings that would follow after the exile

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

Daniel – Prophet taken to Babylon as a young man in the first deportation of 605 B.C.; ministered from at least 605-539 B.C.; known for his ability to interpret dreams and for his devotion to God, even when thrown into a lion's den

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

epoch – A distinct period of time in history; in theology, a period of time established by divine revelation and characterized by a substantial and long-lasting transition that distinguishes it from other periods of time

inaugurated eschatology – View of the end times that says the age to come has begun (been "inaugurated"), but hasn't yet come in all its fullness; the "already, not yet"

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

intertestamental period – The time between the Old and New Testaments

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

Jerusalem Council – Meeting in Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15 where the apostles and church leaders addressed concerns in the early church; in particular, whether or not Gentiles were required to follow the Mosaic law to be saved

latter days – Expression used by Old Testament prophets to describe the period after the exile and by New Testament writers to describe the New Testament period; also "the last days" or the final culmination of history

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

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

Promised Land – The land that God promised to give as an inheritance to Abraham and his descendants

Son of David – Messianic title that referred to David's long-awaited, righteous descendant who would save God's people; frequently applied to Jesus in the New Testament (especially in Matthew)

the age to come – Phrase used by rabbis and leaders in Israel to describe the future age of righteousness, love, joy and peace that would follow the exile; time when all of God's purposes for history would be fulfilled

this age – Phrase used by rabbis and leaders in Israel to describe the present age of sin, suffering and death