

# **BACON:**

## **The Bible Study**



**Respect the Law**  
**Embrace the Grace**

# BACON: The Bible Study

## SESSION 2: Bacon Grace

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### LEADER PREP



### Setting the Heart

The juxtaposition of the New Testament with the Old Testament begs many questions, such as: Was Jesus “Plan B”? Did God change His mind? Did Paul and other church leaders make it all up in order to eliminate the messy sacrifice system? The answer to all these questions is a resounding “no.” In fact, prepare your heart for this session by meditating on the passages below, Old Testament passages that give a nod to New Testament ways.

<sup>31</sup> “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

**Jeremiah 31:31-33**

<sup>18</sup> “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. <sup>19</sup> See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

**Isaiah 43:17-19**

### Digging In: *Paradigm Shift*

Imagine for a moment that you are part of a Jewish Christian family living within months of Jesus’ resurrection. Your family has accepted the gospel message. Also, you have been brought up to observe sacred rituals as part of your relationship with God: sacrifices at the synagogue, festivals in Jerusalem, cleansing rituals at home, food rituals (such as “no pork”) at the meal table. Suddenly all that has changed. With the new covenant of grace in place, not only are those rituals not needed, to practice them would be a slap in the face of grace. Yet, these practices are part of your family and heritage. Admittedly, it would be an adjustment to not have these faith practices be part of your family life.

The Apostle Peter was from one such family, and he had a difficult time with the adjustment, even though He had been with Jesus when Jesus said things like this: “Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them” (Mark 7:15). Peter, then, was the perfect selection as a mouthpiece for life under the new covenant.

Acts 10 and 11 represents one of the most important pivot points in Scripture. You will quickly recognize the familiar scene, but read Acts 10-11:1-18 from your Bible or e-Bible through the filter of God’s “new thing.” Look for anything that describes God’s “new thing.”

### Taking It Inward: *Questions*

Peter’s vision had direct and indirect impact on his faith practices.

**A. Direct Impact:** What did his vision address directly?

**B. Indirect Impact:** What did his vision address indirectly? What did it open doors for Peter to do?

**Digging Deeper: *The Law from the View of the New Testament***

So, the question remains: if Jesus and the grace that comes with Him was the plan all along, why even mess with the Law in the first place? If God was going to clear the deck on clean vs. unclean in a single vision with Peter, why even mess with the complicated clean/unclean system at all? Good questions. In fact, the Apostle Paul posed this very question. The short answer? God had something He wanted to show us through the detail of the law.

In the passages below, look for anything that describes the Law and anything that describes how we can have a relationship with God today. Write down your observations in the space beneath each verse reference.

Galatians 3:18-29

Hebrews 9:11-15

**Taking It Inward: *Sacrifice in Super Slow-Motion***

Thoughtfully respond to these questions based on Galatians 3:18-29 and Hebrews 9:11-15.

**How did the Law prepare us for Jesus?**

**How does the Law give insight into the sacrifice that Jesus gave?**

The Law shows us in super slow motion what happens when we accept Jesus' sacrifice covering our sin: A lamb without blemish is chosen, it is slaughtered, its blood atones for sin. Jesus accomplished all of that on the cross. The dietary laws (don't eat pork) show what happens when the Holy Spirit sanctifies us: we are set apart for sacred use, declared clean. You might ask, "Why not just start with Jesus?" And you might answer that God actually did start with Jesus. It just took awhile to unfold.

**Digging Deeper: *Embrace the Grace***

In Session 1 we looked at the different eras of righteousness and honed in on the era of Moses/Israel. Let's take a minute to hone in on our era, the era of the Gentiles. As you read the passages below from your Bible, look for the following:

1. How are we to achieve a relationship with God?
2. What do you learn about grace?

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 5:1-2

Galatians 3:14

**Taking It Inward: *Grateful for Grace***

Use the questions below to help yourself personalize the Scriptures you just explored:

How do we have a right relationship with God today?

How does this contrast with God's people in the Old Testament?

To what extent are you grateful that you live in the era of grace?

To what extent are you grateful that you have the Law to inform you of what Jesus did for you?

**Putting Into Practice**

The book of Galatians was written to explain that new Christian believers do not need to become Jews (such as, getting circumcised) before becoming Christians. Paul used his most colorful and emphatic language of all his letters to show how this makes a mockery of grace—our channel to a right relationship with God.

But in many ways we still do this today. Think about how we create our own rules to define a right relationship with God. Write down any that come to mind.

What can you do to embrace the grace that God has freely given? Close your time by meditating further on the passages you've explored in this session. Let God keep teaching you about the era of grace you get to experience. Then consider any or all of the following action steps.

- Write down one internal adjustment you can make (e.g., evaluate any spiritual rules you've adopted).
- Write down a task you can do to strengthen your grip on grace (e.g., study the theme through the New Testament).
- Write down a name of a friend to whom you can be an agent of grace (e.g., someone in need of the gospel message, someone needing the message of grace).

Finally, from this point forward, breathe a prayer of thankfulness whenever you eat bacon or see a bacon meme. Obviously grace provides much more benefit to us than simply getting to enjoy bacon. But it's nice to have an occasional reminder through the aroma (and meme phenomenon) of bacon.

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## SESSION 2: Bacon Grace

### SESSION GUIDE



### Materials

Before your session, gather the following:

- Print out student journal pages and Scripture sheets for your students.

Each student will need:

- A Bible or Bible app, pen, student journal pages, and Scripture sheets.

### Open

After your group has gathered, open your time with a brainstorm discussion on any of these questions:

- What's your favorite way to eat bacon? A BLT (bacon, lettuce, tomato) sandwich? Over a salad? On pizza? With other meat like chicken? With other meat like bacon?
- What's your favorite bacon-flavored item that has nothing to do with bacon, such as: bacon ice cream, bacon chewing gum, bacon chap stick/lib balm?
- What's your favorite Kevin Bacon movie?

### Digging In: *Paradigm Shift*

Read the following or share it in your own words:

Imagine for a moment that you are part of a Jewish Christian family living within months of Jesus' resurrection. Your family has accepted the gospel message. Also, you have been brought up to observe sacred rituals as part of your relationship with God: sacrifices at the synagogue, festivals in Jerusalem, cleansing rituals at home, food rituals (such as "no pork") at the meal table. Suddenly all that has changed. With the new covenant of grace in place, not only are those rituals not needed, to practice them would be a slap in the face of grace. Yet, these practices are part of your family and heritage. Admittedly, it would be an adjustment to not have these faith practices be part of your family life.

The Apostle Peter was from one such family, and he had a difficult time with the adjustment, even though He had been with Jesus when Jesus said things like this: "Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them" (Mark 7:15). Peter, then, was the perfect selection as a mouthpiece for life under the new covenant.

Ask students to read the following passage from their Bibles and then discuss the questions that follow. Invite students to take notes on your discussion in the space provided on their journal pages.

**Acts 10:9-16**

**What was Peter's first reaction to killing and eating the animals?**

**Was Peter proud of his spiritual history?**

**Taking It Inward: Questions**

Pause for a moment and ask students to write on their journal pages any questions they have at this point. Then ask for volunteers to voice their questions, such as:

- *If Jesus and the grace that comes with Him was the plan all along, why even mess with the Law in the first place?*
- *If God was going to clear the deck on clean vs. unclean in a single vision with Peter, why even mess with the complicated system of clean/unclean at all?*

**Digging Deeper: The Law from the View of the New Testament**

After discussing a few of their questions, eventually steer the discussion to this question:

**Why was the Law necessary if Jesus was the plan all along?**

Explain that students are going to explore this question on their own in a personal retreat with Scripture. Point out the Digging Deeper passages (Galatians 3:18-27; Hebrews 9:11-15) on their Scripture sheets. You may want to mention that these verses are from The Message version, a more informal paraphrase that provides a fresh take on these passages. As students read the verses, invite them to do the following:

1. Draw wavy bacon lines  over anything that describes the Law.
2. Draw a cross over anything that describes how we have a relationship with God today.

**Taking It Inward: Sacrifice in Super Slow-Motion**

Ask your group to think about these questions personally and then process them as a group.

**Based on these verses in Galatians and Hebrews, how did the Law prepare us for Jesus?**

**Based on these verses in Galatians and Hebrews, how does the Law give insight into the sacrifice that Jesus made?**

Share with your group:

The Law shows us in super slow motion what happens when we accept Jesus' sacrifice covering our sin: A lamb without blemish is chosen, it is slaughtered, its blood atones for sin. Jesus accomplished all of that on the cross. The dietary laws (don't eat pork) show what happens when the Holy Spirit sanctifies us: we are set apart for sacred use, declared clean. You might ask, "Why not just start with Jesus?" And you might answer that God actually did start with Jesus. It just took awhile to unfold.

**Digging Deeper: Embrace the Grace**

Share in your own words:

In Session 1 we looked at the different eras of righteousness and honed in on the era of Moses/Israel. Let's take a minute to hone in on our era, the era of the Gentiles. As you read the passages from your Bible noted under *Digging Deeper: Embrace the Grace*, look for answers to the following:

1. How are we to achieve a relationship with God?
2. What do you learn about grace?

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 5:1-2

Galatians 3:14

**Taking It Inward: *Grateful for Grace***

After a few minutes, call for your group's attention and process these passages together using the questions below.

**How do we have a right relationship with God today?**

**How does this contrast with God's people in the Old Testament?**

**To what extent are you grateful that you live in the era of grace?**

**To what extent are you grateful that you have the Law to inform you of what Jesus did for you?**

**Putting Into Practice**

Share in your own words:

**The book of Galatians was written to explain that new Christian believers do not need to become Jews (such as, getting circumcised) before becoming Christians. Paul used his most colorful and emphatic language of all his letters to show how this makes a mockery of grace—our channel to a right relationship with God.**

**But how do we still do this today? In what ways do we create our own rules to define a right relationship with God?**

**What can you do to embrace the grace that God has freely given?**

Close your time by meditating further on the passages you've explored in this session. Let God keep teaching you about the era of grace you get to experience. Then consider any or all of the following action steps.

- **Write down one internal adjustment you can make (e.g., evaluate any spiritual rules you've adopted).**
- **Write down a task you can do to strengthen your grip on grace (e.g., study the theme through the New Testament).**
- **Write down a name of a friend to whom you can be an agent of grace (e.g., someone in need of the gospel message, someone needing to embrace the message of grace).**

Close by asking students to breathe a prayer of thankfulness whenever they eat bacon or see a bacon meme. Obviously grace provides much more benefit to us than simply getting to enjoy bacon. But it's nice to have an occasional reminder through the aroma (and meme phenomenon) of bacon.

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STUDENT



### Digging In: *Paradigm Shift*

Acts 10:9-16

What was Peter's first reaction to killing and eating the animals?

Was Peter proud of his spiritual history?

### Taking It Inward: *Questions*

### Digging Deeper: *Embrace the Grace*

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 5:1-2

Galatians 3:14



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### SCRIPTURE SHEET



### Digging Deeper

#### Galatians 3:18-27 (The Message)

<sup>18-20</sup> What is the point, then, of the law, the attached addendum? It was a thoughtful addition to the original covenant promises made to Abraham. The purpose of the law was to keep a sinful people in the way of salvation until Christ (the descendant) came, inheriting the promises and distributing them to us. Obviously this law was not a firsthand encounter with God. It was arranged by angelic messengers through a middleman, Moses. But if there is a middleman as there was at Sinai, then the people are not dealing directly with God, are they? But the original promise is the *direct* blessing of God, received by faith.

<sup>23-24</sup> Until the time when we were mature enough to respond freely in faith to the living God, we were carefully surrounded and protected by the Mosaic law. The law was like those Greek tutors, with which you are familiar, who escort children to school and protect them from danger or distraction, making sure the children will really get to the place they set out for.

<sup>25-27</sup> But now you have arrived at your destination: By faith in Christ you are in direct relationship with God. Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—Christ’s life, the fulfillment of God’s original promise.

#### Hebrews 9:11-15 (The Message)

<sup>1-15</sup> But when the Messiah arrived, high priest of the superior things of this new covenant, he bypassed the old tent and its trappings in this created world and went straight into heaven’s “tent”—the true Holy Place—once and for all. He also bypassed the sacrifices consisting of goat and calf blood, instead using his own blood as the price to set us free once and for all. If that animal blood and the other rituals of purification were effective in cleaning up certain matters of our religion and behavior, think how much more the blood of Christ cleans up our whole lives, inside and out. Through the Spirit, Christ offered himself as an unblemished sacrifice, freeing us from all those dead-end efforts to make ourselves respectable, so that we can live all out for God.