



In the beginning
GOD
created the heaven
and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

SUNDAY
SCHOOL *Superintendent*

Summer Quarter June | July | August 2026

Sunday School Superintendent

SUMMER QUARTER

June, July, August 2026

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Editorials

BY DAVID J. CHAMBERS

Our Patient and Merciful God

This quarter will explore the history of God's people, starting with Moses interceding for their lives, detailing their devastating experience of exile, and ending with the promise of restoration. You will cover centuries of history in a short thirteen weeks. There will be various prophecies fulfilled within the passages you study and many more that point forward to later or end times. Several themes take a prominent place in this series—each will help people grow in their understanding of God's attributes, His relationship with His people, and why we can have confidence in the promises of God.

First, you will see countless examples of God's long-suffering. This does not mean that God is suffering in a human sense, but rather that He is patient with His people and their rebellion. God described Himself as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 34:6). His first response to Israel was not destruction but waiting for them to return to obedience to His covenant with them. It would be generations of unfaithfulness before the exile. God was patient with His people and called them to repentance.

There are many applications for us. God is patient with us, and this should inspire us to be long-suffering with

others. A short fuse is not a Christian virtue. Remind your teachers that God is slow to anger. May we all "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19).

Second, mercy is a common refrain in the lessons. Mercy is God withholding the punishment His people deserve. The people of God could not earn His mercy. They received mercy simply because they were God's people. He was kind to them even when they rebelled against Him. As Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:22-23, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." God showed His mercy to His people even during the exile. You will want to mention this during your lessons regularly.

Another key point is the importance of godly shepherds. One of the main complaints in this quarter's lessons is that the spiritual and civic leaders of Israel were failing to shepherd faithfully. The Lord lamented that His "people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place" (Jer. 50:6). The shepherds also lied to the sheep (23:16), fed themselves at the cost of the sheep (Ezek. 34:3), and abused the sheep (Jer. 23:1-8).

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Restoration is another prominent feature in these passages. God promised Israel the land of Canaan as an inheritance. This promise went back to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). They took the land under the leadership of Joshua and divided it among the tribes of Israel. It was their land, it was their inheritance, and it was from the Lord. But they were kicked out of the land due to disobedience. God cannot break a promise, and He cannot lie (Num. 23:19). Even while the people were exiled from the land under Babylonian oppression, God was working things together to bring them out of exile and back to Himself.

It is important to draw out the lessons of restoration that abound this quarter. Many of the people in your classes will struggle with assurance of their salvation. Some might believe that their sin is unforgivable. But all who repent and trust in Christ will be forgiven (1 John 1:9). They will be re-

stored and made right with God. Given the nature of the lessons this quarter, this is the perfect time to help those who struggle with God's forgiveness.

Another theme of this quarter's Scripture texts is that God is sovereign and in control over the nations. The only reason Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom and Babylon the Southern Kingdom is that God used them to accomplish His purposes (Isa. 14:24-27; Jer. 20:4). These nations would be judged by the Lord and wiped from the face of the earth. Urge your classes to find their strength in the Lord, not world powers. Nations rise and fall, but God and His kingdom will endure forever.

Last, there are numerous prophecies about the promised Messiah. Jesus would be the King Israel needed. He would be better than Saul, David, and all those who came after them. He would be the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. He would rule with justice from the throne of God forever. He fulfilled the law and reconciled God's people to Himself. Jesus is the point of all redemptive history. He leads all redeemed people to the new heaven and the new earth. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Notice the connections between the Old Testament proclamations and their New Testament fulfillment in Jesus.

Israel had a tumultuous history. God was patient with them as He guided them from Egypt to the Promised Land. They had a history of God giving them victory over their adversaries, but when peacetime came, they frequently turned from God to the worship of idols. When political pressures arose, their kings were tempted to create alliances with foreign powers instead of relying on God. We can learn from their bad example and turn to our merciful and forgiving Lord.

Moses Prays for Mercy

Lesson Text: Numbers 14:11-24

GOLDEN TEXT—“Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now” (Numbers 14:19).

OPENING MOMENTS

Suggested Song (Adults)

“Amazing Grace” (Newton)

Suggested Song (Children)

“Trust and Obey” (Towner)

Icebreaker

Can God’s mercy be earned? Explain.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Moses’ mediation**
(Num. 14:11-19)
2. **The Lord’s mercy**
(Num. 14:20-24)

KEY ISSUES

Have you ever been at the receiving end of mercy? Perhaps you were caught doing something wrong or made a mistake that resulted in serious problems. Either way, you knew you were in trouble and prepared yourself for the worst. But instead of receiving punishment, you were warned or, better yet, forgiven. It is a strange thing when we receive mercy. It is humbling, exciting, and sometimes a bit confusing. Most of all, when we are given mercy, it is a welcome blessing!

Mercy is often described as not getting what you deserve, and if any situation fits that definition, it is Numbers 14:11-24. Israel was at the threshold of the Promised Land. Everything God had promised them was a short walk away. But fear of the land’s inhabitants

overwhelmed them, and they turned against the Lord (13:25-33). And as they prepared to murder Moses and Aaron (14:10), God appeared at the tabernacle and proclaimed judgment. He declared to Moses, “I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they” (vs. 12). Considering their grievous rebellion against the Lord, that would have been a just consequence.

But Moses did not desire to be the head of a new nation. He stepped in between God and Israel as a mediator. Moses did not pray for mercy based on Israel’s righteousness. He did not argue that they were deserving of the Promised Land according to their own merit. No, Moses called on the Lord to remember His promises and begged for mercy.

Think about what Moses did here; put yourself in his sandals for a moment. A mob just tried to murder him and install a new leader. Then they planned to return to Egypt. After all that, the first thing Moses did was mediate between the people and God through prayer. The very people who wanted to kill Moses were saved from death and destruction because of his intervention.

This highlights one of our calls as Christians. Jesus commands His followers to pray for their enemies and those who persecute them (Matt.

5:44). Moses had to step in the gap between Israel and the Lord. As the nation raged, Moses mediated for them. As God's chosen leader, Moses was the one set apart to receive instruction and commands from the Lord.

Notice how Moses went about requesting mercy. He told the Lord that the nations would take notice of Israel's destruction. God had carried the people out of Egypt (Ex. 12:31-42), and He sustained them in every way while in the desert through the provision of manna (16:1-36) and water (17:1-7). To destroy them now would have caused the nations to mock the Lord. They would have said that God could not save His own people (Num. 14:15-16). God would not be mocked. By starting at this point, Moses was highlighting the glory of God. God's glory is clearly seen in His mercy and long-suffering. And so the nation was spared.

How are we to understand that? Did God change His mind? Is He fickle and easily persuadable by our prayers? Elsewhere, Jonah proclaimed that Nineveh would be overthrown, seemingly without any possibility of repentance. Yet when the city repented, God relented (Jonah 3:4-10). Did God fail to keep His promises of judgment?

The key to understanding passages like these is Jeremiah 18:5-12. God promised Jeremiah that if He declares judgment against a nation but it repents, He will relent of disaster. Likewise, if a nation forsakes Him, it will be judged. Even when the possibility of repentance is not declared, the possibility of repentance and forgiveness is always present. If people repent, God promises that He will always forgive!

Calling on God's promises and pleading for forgiveness is not an insult against Him. We can respectfully ask God to remember and keep His promises found in His Word. He does not forget them. It is the privilege of the people of God to respectfully call

out to the Lord for all things in prayer (Phil. 4:4-7).

As Moses was Israel's mediator, Christ is our Mediator. He died for us, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18). He continues to intercede for us (Rom. 8:34).

But while the nation was spared, the people who rebelled still faced consequences. The generation that had lived in Egypt would not enter the Promised Land due to their disbelief (Num. 14:22-24).

Sometimes we think that God has not shown mercy because there are consequences for our actions. But we must remember that even though we face temporal consequences, God's mercy and forgiveness are secure for all those who trust in Him. We cannot outpace the mercy of the Lord. All who trust in Christ have been at the receiving end of mercy, and it is perfect mercy.

BRINGING IT HOME

People sometimes think that God's mercy is not enough for them. They believe there is no way that God could ever forgive what they have done. But that understanding runs against everything mercy is. For God's mercy to be mercy, it must be given to the undeserving. One cannot merit or earn mercy, for then it would be a just reward. Mercy is freely extended to all those who repent of their sin and trust in the Lord (Jer. 4:1; 1 John 1:9).

When we receive mercy, we are then called to show mercy. As the apostle said in James 2:13, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Because of the great mercy we have through Christ, we are likewise called to be people of mercy and forgiveness. One way we can practice this is by praying for our enemies.