



PATHWAY BIBLE GUIDES

Jesus Through Old Testament Eyes



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Pathway Bible Guides
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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

These studies investigate how the New Testament uses the Old Testament to present the gospel of Jesus. It traces how the significance of the events of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and present rule can only be properly understood when viewed through the glasses of the Old Testament.

There are eight studies in all. The first study outlines the general method to be followed: because the apostles used the Old Testament to interpret the significance of the events of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and present rule, they have provided us with an example and a pattern that we should follow. The seven studies that follow work through the events of Jesus' life systematically, demonstrating that the use of the Old Testament is crucial to understanding these events.

As the Bible (not to mention the world around us) shows, Jesus' life can be (and often is) badly misunderstood. But, thankfully, the coming of God's Son did not occur in a vacuum. God had graciously been preparing the way for many hundreds of years, through the events and prophecies recorded in the pages of the Old Testament. When the Old Testament sets the parameters for understanding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we can have enormous clarity and confidence that we have rightly understood the life and ministry of our Saviour.

It is my prayer that these studies will help you to see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ more clearly as you see him presented “in accordance with the Scriptures” (I Cor 15:3-4).

Matthew Jensen

November 2012

1. UNDERSTANDING JESUS



Getting started

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor 1:22-24)

Why do you think there are so many different views about Jesus? What is at stake if the identity of Jesus is misunderstood?

4. What are “the Scriptures” that Paul refers to as explaining the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection?

5. How are the Corinthians saved?

Read Luke 24:13-49.

6. Why don’t the two disciples recognize Jesus as they walk with him?

7. What does Jesus do for the disciples to help them understand what he had just done? What impact does this have on them?

8. What similarities can you see between Luke's account and Paul's presentation of the gospel in I Corinthians 15?



To finish

What should we use to understand Jesus' death and resurrection correctly? How will this help us to avoid misunderstandings about Jesus? What is the danger in misunderstanding Jesus?



Give thanks and pray

- Give thanks to God for the gospel that saves—the gospel of Jesus' death for sins and resurrection to life.
- Ask God to help you correctly understand the gospel events in light of the Old Testament, and to enable you to hold on to the gospel and not go elsewhere.

FOR THE LEADER

What are Pathway Bible Guides?

The Pathway Bible Guides aim to provide simple, straightforward Bible study material for:

- Christians who are new to studying the Bible (perhaps because they've been recently converted or because they have joined a Bible study group for the first time)
- Christians who find other studies¹ too much of a stretch.

Accordingly, we've designed the studies to be short, straightforward and easy to use, with a simple vocabulary. At the same time, we've tried to do justice to the passages being studied, and to model good Bible-reading principles. We've tried to be simple without being simplistic; no-nonsense without being no-content.

The questions and answers assume a small group context, but it should be easy to adapt them to suit different situations, such as individual study and one-to-one.

Your role as leader

Because many in your group may not be used to reading and discussing a Bible passage in a group context, a greater level of responsibility will fall to you as the leader of the discussions. There are the usual responsibilities of preparation, prayer and managing group dynamics. In addition, there will be an extra dimension of forming and encouraging good Bible reading habits in people who may not have much of an idea of what those habits look like.

Questions have been kept deliberately brief and simple. For this reason, you may have to fill in some of the gaps that may have been addressed in, say, an Interactive Bible Study. Such 'filling in' may take the form of asking follow-up questions, or using your best judgement to work out when you might need to supply background information. That sort of information, and some suggestions about other questions you could ask, may be found in the following leader's

notes. In addition, a *New Bible Dictionary* is always a useful aid to preparation, and simple commentaries such as those in the *Tyndale* or *Bible Speaks Today* series are often helpful. Consult these resources after you have done your own preparation.

On the question of background information, these studies are written from the assumption that God's word stands alone. God works through his Holy Spirit and the leaders he has gifted—such as you—to make his meaning clear. Assuming this to be true, the best interpreter and provider of background information for Scripture will not be academic historical research, but Scripture itself. Extra historical information may be useful for the purpose of illustration, but it is unnecessary for understanding and applying what God says to us.

The format of the studies

The discussion questions on each passage follow a simple pattern. There is a question at the beginning of each discussion that is intended to get people talking around the issues raised by the passage, and to give you some idea of how people are thinking. If the group turns out to be confident, motivated and comfortable with each other and the task at hand, you may even decide to skip this question.

Alternatively, if the group members are shy or quiet, you may decide to think of related types of questions that you could add in to the study, so as to maintain momentum in a non-threatening way.

After the first question, the remaining questions work through the passage sequentially, alternating between observation, interpretation and application in a way that will become obvious when you do your own preparation. The final question of each discussion, just before the opportunity for prayer, could be used in some groups to encourage (say) one person each week to give a short talk (it could be 1 minute or 5 minutes, depending on the topic and the people). The thinking here is that there's no better way to encourage understanding of a passage than to get people to the point where they can explain it to others. Use your judgement in making the best use of this final exercise each week, depending on the people in your group.

In an average group, it should be possible to work through the study in approximately 45 minutes. But it's important that you work out what your group is capable of, given the time available, and make adjustments accordingly. Work out in advance which questions or sub-points can be omitted if time is short. And have a few supplementary questions or discussion starters up your sleeve if

your group is dealing with the material quickly and hungering for more. Each group is different. It's your job as leader to use the printed material as 'Bible Guides', and not as a set of questions that you must rigidly stick to regardless of your circumstances.

Preparation: 60/40/20

Ideally, group members should spend half an hour reading over the passage and pencilling in some answers *before* they come to the group. Not every group member will do this, of course, but encourage them with the idea that the more they prepare for the study, the more they will get out of the discussion.

In terms of your own preparation as leader, we recommend you put aside approximately *two hours*, either all at once or in two one-hour blocks, and that you divide up the time as follows:

- 60 minutes reading the passage and answering the questions yourself as best you can (without looking at the leader's notes or Bible commentaries)
- 40 minutes consulting the leader's notes (plus other resources, like commentaries). Add to your own answers, and jot down supplementary questions or other information that you want to have available as you lead the discussion. Make sure you write everything you need on the study pages—the last thing you want to do is to keep turning to the 'answers' in the back during the group discussion
- 20 minutes praying about the study and for your group members.

This 60/40/20 pattern will help you to focus on the Bible and what it's saying, rather than simply regurgitating to the group what is in the leader's notes. Remember, these notes are just that—notes to offer some help and guidance. They are not the Bible! As a pattern of preparation, 60/40/20 also helps you to keep praying for yourself and your group, that God would give spiritual growth as his word is sown in your hearts (see Luke 8:4-15; I Cor 3:5-7).

If, for some reason, you have less or more time to spend in preparation, simply apply the 60/40/20 proportions accordingly.

1. Such as the Interactive Bible Study (IBS) series also available from Matthias Media.

LEADER'S NOTES

1. UNDERSTANDING JESUS

► Remember 60/40/20



Getting started

People (mis)understand Jesus in many ways today. But this is not just a 21st-century phenomenon. Even in the first century many people misunderstood Jesus, particularly his death. We are told in 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 that Jews wanted miraculous signs and Greeks wanted wisdom, and so Jesus' death was a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks.

The opening questions in our first study are designed to make people acknowledge that there are many (mis)understandings of Jesus. This should cause them to start thinking about the basis for their own understanding of Jesus. Since Christians hold that the death of Jesus is the power and wisdom of God, there is a lot at stake—indeed, our very salvation itself. But why do Christians think that Jesus' death is the power and wisdom of God? On what basis is this judgement made? These are the questions that this study aims to answer. The answer will then become the basis of the rest of the studies as we think about Jesus' life, death, resurrection and present rule.

Studying the passage

The questions from 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 are designed to demonstrate that Paul's gospel preaching has three components. First, Paul outlines the events of Jesus' life—his death, burial, resurrection and appearances. Second, these events have a particular significance: Jesus' death was “for our sins”. Third, the reason Paul can attribute this significance to Jesus' death is because the Scriptures say so. Paul looks at these events through the glasses of the Scriptures, and so is able to explain their theological significance. In this context, “the Scriptures” are the writings of the Old Testament. Without these writings Paul would not have understood Jesus' death, just as the Greeks did not understand it because they

were looking for something wise by human standards, and misguided Jews did not understand because they were looking for a miraculous sign. Hence, the basis for a right knowledge of Jesus is to understand him in light of the Old Testament.

The significance of this model for understanding Jesus must not be missed. The Corinthians (like all Christians since) are saved when they rightly understand the events of Jesus' death and resurrection—and this can only happen when the Old Testament is used as the interpretative key.

This point is reinforced in the reading and questions from Luke 24:13-49. In these verses the disciples do not understand that Jesus had to die and rise again, because they do not understand the Scriptures. On two occasions Luke tells us that their lack of understanding is removed when Jesus opens their minds to the Scriptures (vv. 27, 45), because it was the Old Testament Scriptures that foretold that the Christ would suffer, die and rise again on the third day.

When someone considers the Old Testament and then looks at Jesus, they will understand not only what happened to Jesus, but also its significance for themselves.



To finish

The closing questions reinforce the main point that we understand Jesus properly only in light of the Old Testament. This is significant because it is what makes or breaks our understanding of Jesus, and thus our salvation.



Give thanks and pray

At the end of each study you will find a few suggestions of things to give thanks for and pray about. It might also be a good place to think and pray for non-believing friends and family who misunderstand Jesus because they do not come to him through the eyes of Scripture.



Our world today overflows with ideas and misunderstandings about Jesus. Who was he, really? What did he think about himself? How can we get at the truth about him today, 2000 years later? Amid the enormous diversity of views on offer, is there any way to really grasp the truth about Jesus?

In this series of eight studies, Matthew Jensen answers these crucial questions by guiding us through several key Bible passages, showing that amid the competing opinions, there is a way forward: seeing Jesus as he saw himself, through the 'glasses' of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Jesus Through Old Testament Eyes shows how and why the Old Testament is the indispensable key to properly understanding the life and ministry of the most extraordinary person who ever lived. It will help you to grow in your understanding of the Bible's big picture, and in your appreciation for the Lord Jesus and all he accomplished.

8 studies. Leader's notes included.

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Straightforward Bible studies for small groups

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