

JESUS

SWEETEST NAME I KNOW

WHO JESUS IS
AND WHY IT MATTERS

by

pam gillaspie

Leader's Guide

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Let me sum up *Sweeter than Chocolate!* Bible studies for you in two words—flexible and joyful!

This Bible study series is designed to flex with your life and give you the option to go as deep as you desire each week. If you're just starting out and feeling a little overwhelmed, stick with the main text and don't think twice about the sidebar assignments. But if you're looking for a challenge, take the sidebar prompts, roll up your sleeves, and dig to your heart's content! As you move along through the study, think of the sidebars and *Digging Deeper* boxes as the elastic that will help this study fit you perfectly.

Did you know that a little flexibility can bring a lot of joy? When a study has the ability to flex to meet you, an amazing thing happens. Guilt starts to melt away and pursuing God through His Word takes on a new sense of joy. What was once a hard obligation becomes a sweet opportunity to commune with God.

So whether you're new to the Book or have been studying it for years, this joy-based study will flex to meet you where you are and push you as far as you care to go . . . and maybe even one step further!

Life has a way of ebbing and flowing and this study is designed to ebb and flow right along with it!

Enjoy!

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Sweeter than Chocolate

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JESUS

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WHO JESUS IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

An Inductive Study of Christology

Week One

Who Do You Say I Am?

BEFORE CLASS

Hot Topics:

Who is Jesus? Who do others say He is? Who do you say He is?
Why does it matter?

There is perhaps no question in life that when answered differently leads to such divergent paths as the question: *Who is Jesus?* If He's not God, live like you please. If He is, only what pleases Him ultimately matters.

Class-at-a-Glance

Segments	2 Hour Class	1 Hour Class	Topic
Segment 1:	45 min.	20 min.	Class Basics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Ground Rules • How to Use this Study
Segment 2:	15 min.	10 min.	Get Them Talking
Optional Break	15 min.	OMIT	
Segment 3:	15 min.	10 min.	Inductive Study Basics
Segment 4:	30 min.	20 min.	Background Information
			Jesus "Before Christmas"
			Who do you say He is?

Inductive Focus: Key Words

Key words help unlock the meaning of biblical texts. They are typically repeated and point toward the main focus of a passage. In studying inductively, **MARKING** key words is a practice that can help people to see main concepts on the page.

Throughout this study, one key word we'll be watching for constantly is *Jesus* paying close attention to what He calls Himself, what others call Him, and how the biblical writers refer to Him.

Help your students learn to explore key words and to **MARK** pronouns and synonyms of key words also.

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BEFORE YOU START**HOW TO LEAD THIS STUDY:****The Basics**

Well here you are! You've either been called, appointed, or dragged into leading a Bible study. Regardless, here is some good news – *Sweeter than Chocolate!* is designed to be flexible to both students and teachers alike, to give newer teachers the help they need, and to give more seasoned teachers wings to grow their gifting. With this in mind, please use the Leader's Guide to help you to prepare to lead a *Sweeter than Chocolate!* group. Always remember that it's a guide, not a strict set of step-by-step rules and edicts.

Although presented as a 6-week study with weekly homework, *Sweeter than Chocolate!* can be used over a longer duration of time with "homework" sections done either at home or during class time. If class time is limited, as is often the case for Sunday School, leaders may choose to work through smaller portions of a lesson together. Thus, it is possible for this 6-week Bible study to flex and expand to fill a 12-week session or even more depending how deep you and your students decide to go.

For those who have ample time and are running a 6-week study, consider adding an additional week or two for a technology day or a guest speaker on a topic of interest. That person could be a pastor, local Bible professor, or someone well-versed on a particular topic in the text. With the advance of technology, it's now possible to bring in people from other parts of the country or the world to talk to your class via tools like Skype. This is a way to mix things up and keep the class on their toes by bringing in additional material. It also gives you the flexibility to match the class length to the needs of things like, say, the church calendar. Hey, it's reality!

Some of you who are reading this Leader Guide are thrilled to be leading, because you have the spiritual gift of teaching. You may find that you don't even use this guide – that's fine! If God has gifted you to teach and you like doing your own research and prep, that is great!! Praise God! Go entrust to the faithful who will be able to teach others also! Others of you, undoubtedly, have been dragged in kicking and screaming. (That was me for a few years while I was still resisting my gifting!) Somebody had to lead and you were drafted. It is my deep hope that you will find help in this guide to make your leading experience not only less traumatic, but filled with great joy!

Small groups or Sunday School classes may decide to simply talk through the questions that are in the lesson, but study groups will benefit by bringing in some additional talk points and material.

* Skype is a free service that allows you to use the internet to video conference in guest speakers or those who just want to listen in to your class. Learn more at www.skype.com.

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About the Leader Guide

This leader guide is a basic outline, a road map of one way to go in a class discussion. Just like there are many ways from Chicago to Chattanooga, there are different ways to run a class.

Student pages on the left will orient you to where you are in the lesson. Some post-40s like me won't be able to read them, but they give us visual clues nonetheless. Each week we'll suggest a time frame for running the class one or two hours. You'll find additional background information and some suggested discussion questions. Always be watching for opportunities to help your students move from Observation and Interpretation to Application. We want them to learn the truths of Scripture not so they can win at Bible trivia, but that their thinking will be renewed and their actions will more and more reflect the One they belong to (Romans 12:1-2).

For the sake of space, typically only suggested discussion questions are listed. Occasionally we'll fill in an answer if it's not self-evident. Also, when possible we'll leave space for you to fill in your own thoughts so you don't have to go flipping back and forth between the student book and the leader guide. Finally, you may look at the material and think, "There is no way that I can cover all this in the allotted time!" If that's the case, you can pick and choose from the elements to craft your lesson.

Inductive Focus

Each week we'll focus on one facet of inductive study to help students build their skills and confidence in the inductive process.

Starting on Time

One way to start on time every week is to read through the week's main text(s) at the beginning of class. In doing this you will reinforce the importance of continually being in the text of Scripture itself. As odd as it may sound, when we study deeply the temptation to stray away from the text and toward commentaries can be intense. By reading the text every week and starting promptly (even if it is just you and your most prompt student!), you will reinforce the importance of the text and gain the added bonus of training stragglers to arrive on time.

START CLASS HERE**SEGMENT #1: CLASS BASICS****Introductions and Ground Rules**

- **Introduce yourself**
- **Have class introduce themselves**
- **Set boundaries**

Make sure to allocate adequate time the first week of class for general introductions and ground rules. If you're teaching men or a mixed group, estimate based on the size of your class. If you're teaching women, take the time you think this will require and double it. Asking everyone to share their name and respond to a specific question will help keep things moving. If you ask for "a little bit about yourself," you're sure to get more than a little bit! Start out by introducing yourself in a concise manner to set the tone. Feel free to use an icebreaker game or other ideas you have to help people connect.

You'll also want to establish ground rules during Week One. The time to set effective boundaries in any relationship is the first meeting. A boundary can always be relaxed, but it is very difficult to establish or strengthen one if you do not set it properly at the start. This applies both to how you will lead your class discussions as well as how you will allow your class to interact with you throughout the week. Depending on your situation, you may ask them to contact you primarily by e-mail and make certain times of the day off-limits. My classes know I rarely answer the phone when my kids are home from school. That is my boundary. When they are home, my primary job is being their mom. Your class will respect this and perhaps even learn the importance of proper boundaries in their own lives from your example.

Let your class know that it is your job as the teacher/facilitator to keep the discussion on track and that you may from time to time have to reel a person in, stop a rabbit trail, or discontinue until after class an interesting, but off-topic discussion. Also let them know that you do not have all the answers. No one has all the answers, even those who have studied a lifetime. While acknowledging your limitations may seem uncomfortable at first, you'll find it is freeing for everyone! If someone asks a question you can't answer, either look into it further yourself or (preferably) assign it to the questioner for further study. This will draw out future teachers – who come back with it answered and prepared to share. Assigning questions also helps people begin discerning what makes a germane question.

Encouraging your class to ask questions and helping them to learn how to ask right questions is a huge part of your job as a teacher. Still, as important as questions are, more questions can be asked than we have biblical answers for. Sometimes you will simply have to answer with an honest, "I don't know."

CROWD BREAKER

In the book of Hebrews, we're told that Abraham "when he was called . . . went out, not knowing where he was going."

Where is the most interesting place God has had you live so far?

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

[page 2]

Basics of the *Chocolate* study guide and philosophy

- **WEEKLY STUDY** material
- **FYI** boxes
- **ONE STEP FURTHER** and other sidebar boxes
- **DIGGING DEEPER** boxes

While the study is self-explanatory, reinforce its flexibility with your students. Direct them to the “How to use this study” page of their books and encourage them to find a level of study that brings joy and not guilt. They can do more one week, less the next; they can mix and match and find the fit that is right. You may have students who are overburdened and overbooked. Piling on and guiltting them with a ton of homework will not fix the problem. Rather, help them find the joy and sweetness of God’s Word and ask His Spirit to begin healing through the power of the Word. Take some time to review student page 2 with them and let them know you believe in them and their ability to use this material.

Take special care in stressing the flexibility to long-time Precept-Upon-Precept students as many have a finish-every-question-at-all-cost mentality. Such discipline in studying God’s Word is beautiful. The every-last-question mind set, however, can throw people off with the *Chocolate* series. Because the material is designed to flex to very advanced students, the volume of material can overwhelm people who force themselves through every question and sidebar. Assure your class that most students won’t finish every question every week by design. Some weeks they will, but probably not every week. If every student finished every week, the study would not be flexing to meet the needs of the most advanced students. The goal in allowing the material to flex is not to have people study less; it is to have each person take the next appropriate step from where they currently are and to study and apply more as they are continually drawn into deeper relationship with Jesus.



page 2

SEGMENT #2: GET THEM TALKING

[page 4]

Discussion Question:

Talk through the introductory questions on Workbook page 4 all together or in small groups.

How would you answer the question Jesus posed to Peter? Who do you say I am? Why?

How did you come to this view?

What do you base your beliefs on?

What questions do you hope to find answers for during this study?

SEGMENT #3: INDUCTIVE STUDY BASICS

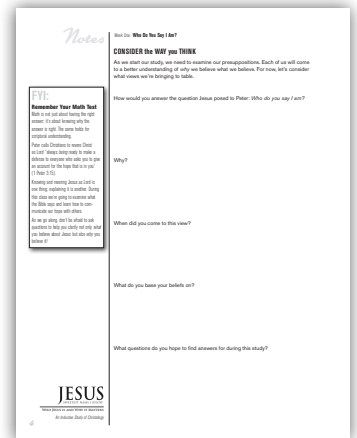
Observation | Interpretation | Application

If your students are unfamiliar with inductive Bible study, be sure to take some time and give them the basics. They will catch up and catch on as we go, but giving them an overview will help put them in context! You'll want to impress on your students that inductive Bible study simply means the Bible is our main source of truth. Before looking for insights from people and commentaries about the Bible, we get into the Word of God itself. We go to the primary source and learn to discover truth for ourselves. Inductive Bible study involves three basic components: observation, interpretation, and application.

1. Observation

This is a very interactive process, well worth the time because the truths you discover for yourself will be accurate and profound. It begins by asking the five W and H questions.

Who is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? Who is the author speaking to?



page 4

What subjects and/or events are covered in the chapter? What do you learn about the people, the events, and the teachings from the text? What instructions are given?

When did or will the events recorded occur?

Where did or will this happen? Where was it said?

Why is something said? Why will an event occur? Why this time, person, and/or place?

How will it happen? How will it be done? How is it illustrated?

Careful observation leads to interpretation – discovering what the text means.

One important part of observing the text involves identifying key words. A key word helps to “unlock” the meaning of the text. It is vital to understanding the text and is often repeated. As we study Jesus, every mention of His name or synonyms is going to be very important.

2. Interpretation

The more you observe, the greater you’ll understand God’s Word. Since Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture we’ll be looking at contexts and cross-references to help us understand God’s message that was communicated to the original audience. Observation and interpretation lead to application.

While we’ll be studying much from the Gospel accounts, we’re also going to do a lot of cross-referencing especially in the book of Matthew as we look at the original contexts of the Old Testament quotations. In this instance we’re going to be looking through a more Jewish lens.

3. Application

After we’ve observed the text and discovered the meaning, we need to think and live accordingly. Although the text of Scripture has one interpretation – what God inspired the author to write to his original readers – we can have numerous applications. The result is a transformed life – the more you and I are in the Word of God and adjusting our thinking and behavior to its precepts for life, the more we are changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ! He is the living Word of God who became flesh, the Savior of the world, our coming King of kings!

It is exciting to learn and know about the faith of others. It is transforming to live what we have learned!

SEGMENT #4: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[page 6-14]

Key Talk Point:

- “From the Foundation of the World”—The Son’s Pre-Incarnate Existence

Context/Comments: Because Jesus was born into the world as a human baby, it can be easy to fall into thinking that He had a beginning. The first grouping of homework texts focus on His pre-existence. It is always good to read the texts aloud before discussing and come back to them often.

John 17:1-2, 24: John 17 is referred to as Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer. In it He repeatedly addresses God as Father and specifically refers to Himself as His Son. The Father’s love for the Son, according to verse 24, predates the foundation of the world. While his contemporaries knew Jesus as the son of a local carpenter in Nazareth, He claims to have existed with the Father before the world was created.

Ephesians 1:2-4: Not only did the Son exist before the foundation of the world, Paul says that it was before the foundation of the world that God the Father “chose us” in Christ. Verse 5 explains that He “predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself.” Those who are “in Christ”—and this phrase occurs throughout Ephesians—have been united to Christ through His death and resurrection. (See also Galatians 2:20.)

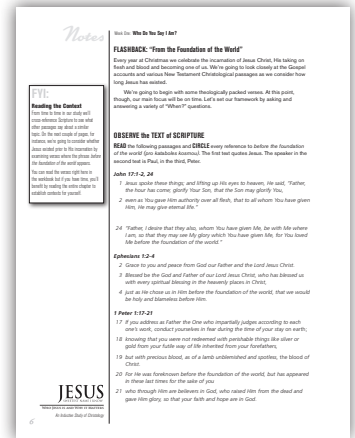
1 Peter 1:17-21: Peter says that people are not redeemed by perishable things as silver or gold, but are redeemed by Christ’s precious blood, which is like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. Jesus is the perfect sacrificial lamb. John the Baptist declares the same in John 1:29 when seeing Jesus approach saying, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” Although Christ appeared “in these last times” God’s plan for His sacrificial death was in place “before the foundation of the world.”

Sample Discussion Questions:

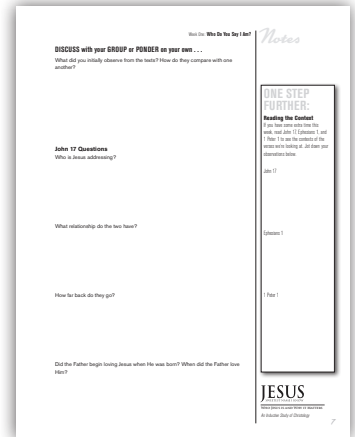
What truths recur in these texts?

Was there a broad consensus regarding Jesus’ pre-incarnate existence? (see also 1 Peter 1:20)

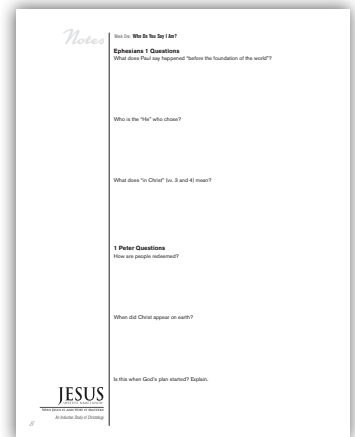
How do the audiences differ?



page 6



page 7



page 8

In addition to Jesus being from “before the foundation of the world,” what other truths do these texts attest to?

How does the biblical view of Jesus differ from other views of Jesus?

How is Jesus pre-incarnate existence significant?

What does God choosing you in Christ before the foundation of the world imply for your life?

How do each of these truths tie to your behavior?

Key Talk Point:

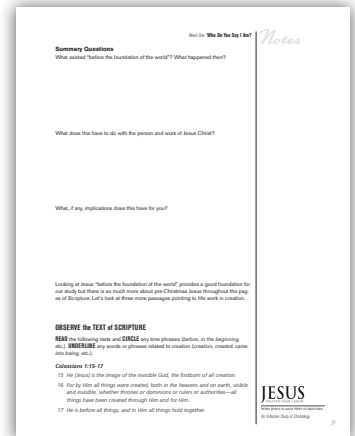
- The Son’s Work in Creation

Context/Comments: The next set of verses point to the work of the Son in creation.

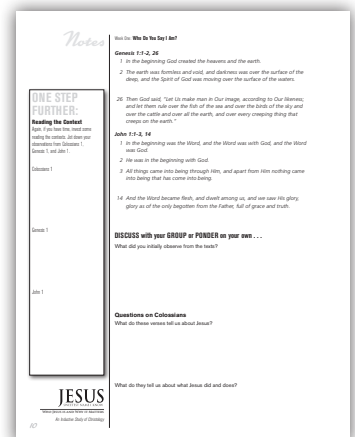
Colossians 1:15-17: It’s important in this text to help your students reason through the meaning of “firstborn.” The Greek word *prototokos*—from *protos* (first) and *tiko* (to bear)—in this context means the highest-ranked subject in a class. Here the reference is to Christ’s supremacy over creation, His preeminence. According to the text all things were created “in” or “by” (Greek: *en*) Christ and He is (Greek) *pros* all things, meaning either “before” (chronologically) or “prior among” (qualitatively) or both. Help your students locate data in the text that support each.

Genesis 1:1-2, 26: As far back as Genesis, there is evidence of plurality in God’s nature. The word that translates “God” in these verses is the plural *elohim*. While the original readers did not deduce a trinity from these verses we know the NT’s trinity operated in the OT from the beginning of history.

John 1:1-3, 14: John says in verses 1-2 that in the beginning “the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In verse 14 he defines the Word as the one who “became flesh”—Jesus Christ. John 1:1 is a text regularly mistranslated by Jehovah’s Witnesses. They claim the verse should be translated to read, “and the word was a god” (italics mine). This is not upheld by the rest of Scripture. Assure your students that



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when we get to the deity chain in Week 3 that they will have a good tool to share with their friends—including Jehovah’s Witnesses—that spans the pages of Scripture.

Sample Discussion Questions:

What do these texts tell us about the Son’s involvement with creation?

What else do we learn in these texts about the Son?

What implications do these truths have for us today?

Is the Son still involved in the world? If so, how and why?

Key Talk Point:

- Who do you say I am?

Context/Comments: The setting of Peter’s confession is Caesarea Philippi, a city located about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee in the Golan Heights area.

Matthew 16:13-17: Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ (*kristos*)—this Greek term translates the Hebrew *mashiach* (messiah) which John alone in the NT transliterates into Greek in his Gospel (1:41; 4:25). He also confesses Him as “the Son of the living God.” When Jesus asks, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”, He affirms Peter’s answer and adds that His Father in heaven revealed this to Peter. Others who did not have this revealed truth thought that Jesus was someone else: John the Baptist (Herod), Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

Sample Discussion Questions:

How did Peter know who Jesus was?

How does God reveal this information to people today?

What difference did the truth about Jesus make in Peter’s life?

What difference is it making in your life?



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page 12

Week Two

Who is this Son of David?

BEFORE CLASS

Hot Topics:

“Son of David” may be just another phrase to those who have only a nodding acquaintance with Old Testament. To Jews and other careful Old Testament readers, though, “Son of David” is a weighty term pointing to a coming Messiah who is yet to be revealed as the Old Testament closes. This week we’ll look at God’s covenant with David to see how Jesus fulfills the covenant and answers the Old Testament’s big open question: *Who is this Son of David?*

Class-at-a-Glance

Segments	2 Hour Class	1 Hour Class	Topic
Segment 1:	10 min. 20 min.	OMIT 10 min.	Review basic concepts
Segment 2:	15 min.	10 min.	Davidic Covenant: 2 Samuel 7:4-29, Matthew 1:1-2, 16-23
Segment 3:	15 min.	10 min.	Jesus Fulfills Isaiah’s Prophecies: Isaiah 7:10-16, 9:6-7, 11:1-5
Optional Break	15 min.	OMIT	
Segment 4:	15 min.	10 min.	Jesus Fulfills Micah’s Prophecies: Matthew 2:4-6, Micah 5:2-6
Segment 5:	15 min.	10 min.	Jesus Fulfills Other Prophets: Matthew 2:15, 21-23; 3:1-4; Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:13-17
Segment 6:	15 min.	10 min.	Inductive Focus: Asking Questions Summing Up and Looking Ahead

Inductive Focus: Asking Questions

Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? At the heart of inductive study sit these six questions. Indeed, these questions are the heart of biblical exegesis, drawing the meaning out of the text of Scripture. The questions help us focus on the author’s message to his original hearers.

Once you begin the question-asking process, it becomes clear that not every question can be asked of every verse while other verses require the same type of question be asked more than once. We’ll hone in on this more closely in the lesson plan.

For now, help your students know that asking questions is a fluid process in which one question answered often points to a necessary follow-up question.

It is like having a conversation. You don’t ask canned questions that don’t work in context, you ask questions appropriate to the conversation that will yield as much information as possible.

Although it will take some time to begin thinking in terms of questions, assure your students that they will probably be reading with this in mind before they know it.

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START CLASS HERE

SEGMENT #1: Review

Review Basic Concepts

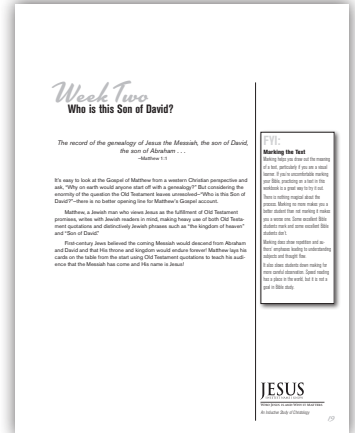
A little review each week will cement the basics and give your class the framework for a lifetime of study. Although we'll focus on specific inductive tools each week, keeping the basic components of **OBSERVATION**, **INTERPRETATION**, and **APPLICATION** in front of your class consistently will equip them for a lifetime of handling God's Word. And always, always remind them that the goal is transformation! We don't learn for the sake of learning; we learn because God uses His Word to transform us and conform us more and more into the image of His Son. Familiarity with the basics will give your students confidence as they work through their homework and begin applying and living the texts.

Review Questions:

What are the components of inductive Bible study?

*What is **Observation** and why is it important? What question does it answer?*

*How is **Interpretation** different from **Observation**?*



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What do we need for proper **Application?**

Application needs to be grounded in the single intended meaning of the text, it's interpretation.

Be aware that at this point, you can run into two distinct problems:

1. Some people do not want to apply. They seek knowledge only and bristle at application.
2. Others want to apply the text without dealing first with what it said to the original hearers. They want to know "What this means to me" before answering "What this meant to them."

It is important for you the facilitator to continually guide your class toward application that comes from the text. When discussions veer toward speculation on the text or discussion that does not issue in life-change, redirect them to consider what the Author intends.

For those who gravitate toward opinion-based comments and ungrounded applications, gently direct them with such questions as, "Where do you see that in the text?" Continually point them to the text and appropriate application. It may take some repetitions, but they will learn.

What did we learn last week about the Son's pre-incarnate existence?

Where does the Bible teach this?

Why does it matter?

Explain the meaning of firstborn in Colossians 1:15? In what sense(s) is Jesus the "firstborn of all creation [or 'every creature']?"

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SEGMENT #2: Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:4-29, Matthew 1:1-2, 16-23)

[pages 20-25]

Key Talk Points:

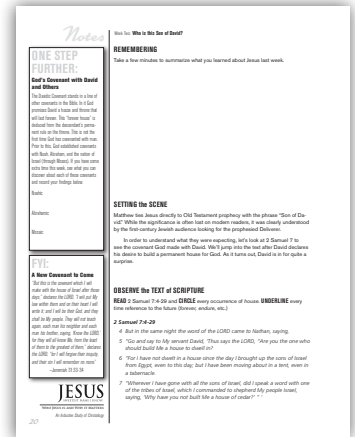
- Jesus is the answer to the big unanswered question of the Old Testament: *Who is this son of David?*
- Jesus perfectly fulfills the promises to David and to Abraham.
- How did people miss this? (We'll address a potential answer more in the next section.)

Context/Comments: As you talk through these related texts, help your students see the connection between David and Jesus. While Solomon constructed the physical temple, the house for God's name (v. 13), he could never sit on an eternal throne. In fact, he finished his life poorly after his foreign wives turned his heart from following God fully. A forever house requires more than a mortal man to occupy it. Jesus fulfills entirely what Solomon could never be.

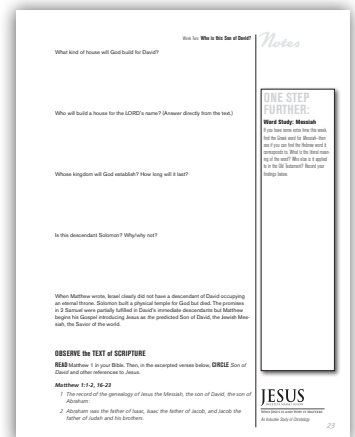
2 Samuel 7:4-29 Second Samuel 7 begins with David dwelling securely in a house of cedar because of the faithfulness of the Lord His God. House (*bayit*) appears 15 times in 2 Samuel 7 with a variety of meanings. Although Nathan initially gives David the go-ahead to build the temple because he says "the LORD is with you [David]," he takes it back after God gives him different instruction in a vision and words at night. David wanted to build a physical house, a temple, although God had never asked for anything other than a tabernacle. Instead of allowing David to build the temple, God says He will build David a house (a dynasty) and David's son (Solomon) will end up building the temple. Although the Son who will ultimately fulfill the covenant will endure forever, the line leading up to Him will not be perfect. God will correct the iniquity of these intervening sons without taking the kingdom from them as He had done to Saul (vv. 14-15). In addition to "house" (*bayit*), other words of note in this section are "forever" (*olam*) which occurs eight times, "established" (*kun*) used five times, and "kingdom" (*mamlakah*) used three times.

Matthew 1:1-2 Matthew immediately ties Jesus the Messiah (*christos*, i.e. Christ) to both David (2 Samuel 7, as we observed earlier) and Abraham (Genesis 15:1).

Matthew 1:16-23 Matthew refers to Jesus three more times with the term *christos* (twice translated into English by "Messiah" and once "Christ") in this section (vv. 16, 17, 18) and gives background on both the events surrounding and the purpose for His birth. He then makes the first in a string of repeated appeals to the prophets saying that Jesus' virgin birth was foretold by the prophet Isaiah.



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Sample Discussion Questions:

What different ways is the word "house" used in 2 Samuel 7?

How does Jesus fulfill the promise to David?

Why was Solomon only a partial fulfillment?

What does David's response to God's offer reveal about his character? Does it remind you of any other biblical character? (See Moses—Exodus 3:11.) What can we learn from it about receiving God's blessings well?

How does Jesus fulfill the promise to David? The promise to Abraham?

What benefits do we reap today from those promises? What difference can this truth make in how you think and act?

Additional Teaching:

If you have time you may want to give more background here about other covenants, particularly the Abrahamic Covenant since Matthew ties Jesus directly to both David and Abraham.

Notes

See 10: **Who is the Son of David?**

- 16 Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.
- 17 In all the generations from Abraham to David and fourteen generations, from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.
- 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.
- 19 And Joseph being righteous and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.
- 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."
- 21 "She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
- 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:
- 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

DISCUSS with your GROUP or Ponder on your own . . .
What are your initial observations on the text?

FOR THE DISCUSSION
How do these verses tie in to the promises? How often does Matthew use the term "Messiah"?

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Notes

See 10: **Who is the Son of David?**

What significant comment from Jesus is part of according to the passage? What did God promise in each of these covenants?

How was Jesus concerned? Why is the significant?

What does the script say Jesus will do?

What prophet spoke of the virgin birth?

LOOKING AT THE ORIGINAL PROPHECIES
The Gospels are more readily read than the prophecies to which they refer. It's likely that you've read the Gospels several times and have not checked out the Old Testament prophecies cited. We're going to do the prophetic for study of Matthew.

Remember, Matthew writes to a primarily Jewish audience. As we look at the Old Testament prophecies we'll gain a better understanding of how he used these verses to proclaim Jesus as the Jewish Messiah to the Jewish people.

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SEGMENT #3: Jesus Fulfills Isaiah's Prophecies (Isaiah 7:10-16, 9:6-7, 11:1-5)

[pages 25-31]

Key Talk Point:

- Virgin birth promise hidden in plain sight.

Context/Comments: After explaining that Mary was a virgin carrying a child by the Holy Spirit, Matthew quotes Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:14) to show that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy. There is a sense in which this is a promise hidden in plain sight since an earlier fulfillment took place in a less-miraculous way during the time of Isaiah and Ahaz. Let's look further.

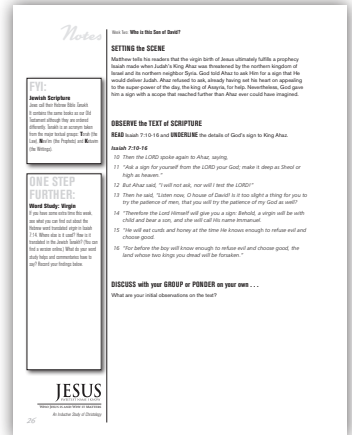
Isaiah 7:10-16 The year is 735 BC and Ahaz, king of Judah, is in a tough military and political situation with Israel's King Pekah and Aram's (Syria) King Rezin coming against him for his refusal to unite with them against invading Assyrians. Assyria, the world power of the time, will eventually conquer Israel in 722 BC but not Judah because God will turn the king away during the days of Hezekiah. Judah will fall later to the Babylonians. God calls Ahaz to depend on Him for deliverance from Israel and Aram but he sides with Assyria instead. When Ahaz rejects God's offer of a sign, God gives him the sign anyway.

When modern readers encounter the phrase "a virgin will be with child and bear a son," they immediately think miracle. For the original hearers, though, this was a common blessing bestowed on impending marriages—that a virgin bride would soon marry and bear a child. In the context we see that Israel and Aram will no longer be threats by the time the prophesied child is old enough to know good from evil.

Matthew takes this prophecy and applies it to Jesus and a miraculous birth, along with two other texts from Isaiah talking about this promised Child.

Isaiah 9:6-7 Isaiah 9 opens with a prophecy of a great light shining on the people of Zebulun and Naphtali (the area in which most of Jesus' early ministry takes place) and in verses 6 and 7 describes the Child who will be born. It is clear this is no ordinary child.

- The government will rest on His shoulders.
- His name will be called:
 - Wonderful Counselor
 - Mighty God
 - Eternal Father
 - Prince of Peace
- There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace.



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- He will sit on David's throne and over his kingdom forevermore.

Two names of the Child that stand out are "Mighty God" and "Eternal Father." Lest we think the Hebrew phrase for "Mighty God" is inferior in some way to what we typically see used of God, we find the exact phrase in Isaiah 10:21 where the text talks about a remnant of Jacob returning to the "mighty God." One title that may run under some students' radar is "Wonderful Counselor." "Wonderful" (*pele*), however, carries a sense of miraculous and is used almost exclusively with reference to things God, Himself, says or does.

Isaiah 11:1-5: Although judgment will come to Judah in 586 BC and the line of Davidic kings will cease for a time, a shoot will spring forth from the stem of Jesse (King David's father). David's line will not be cut off as the enemies of God have been. A branch from Jesse's root will grow and judge with righteousness and decide with fairness. As Jacob foretold, the scepter will not depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10).

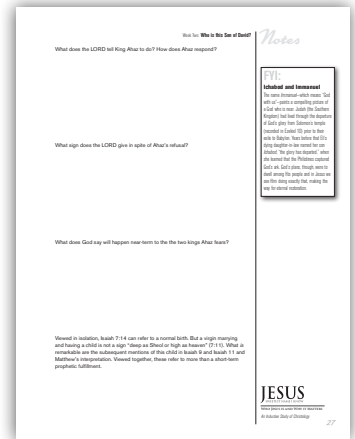
Sample Discussion Questions:

How did the Jewish people miss the prophesied Messiah?

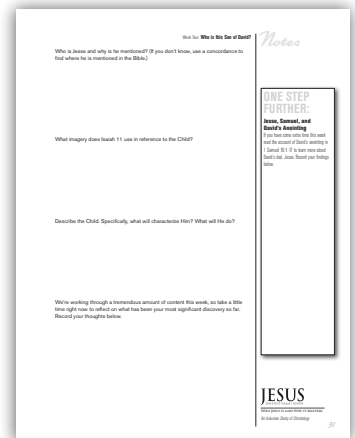
What kind of Messiah were they looking for?

How does Matthew's interpretation help explain the prophecies?

How do people today miss the Messiah?



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OPTIONAL BREAK

SEGMENT #4: Jesus Fulfills Micah's Prophecies (Matthew 2:4-6, Micah 5:2-6)

[pages 32-36]

Key Talk Points: Where will the Messiah be from?

Context/Comments: While Micah clearly points to Bethlehem as the Messiah's birthplace, remind your students that Isaiah 9:1-2 associates Him with the northern portion of Israel—Zebulun and Naphtali. Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, is located within the borders of Zebulun. Naphtali encompasses the western half of the Sea of Galilee where he did much of His ministry. Luke 2 recounts the circumstances that brought Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.

Matthew 2:4-6 Jacob first said that the scepter would not depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10). Here Matthew harkens back to the prophet Micah's word that a Ruler who will shepherd God's people Israel will come forth from Bethlehem in Judah. Isaiah says the light will appear in Zebulun and Naphtali; Micah says the Ruler will come forth out of Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Matthew also applies Hosea's prophecy of God's calling His son out of Egypt to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus' return from their flight to Egypt to escape the murderous King Herod.

Micah 5:2-6 Micah's prophecy not only tells where the Ruler will be born, it also gives critical information about Him. Born in Bethlehem, the King's "goings forth" (NAS; "coming forth" ESV) are, literally, "from the days of eternity" (NAS; "from ancient days" ESV). He will shepherd God's people and be their peace. Remind your students that Isaiah says the Child will be the "Prince of Peace" and that John, particularly, refers to Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Sample Discussion Questions:

What did you learn about where the Messiah will be from?

What critical prophecy concerning where the Messiah will spend His time did many of the Jews miss?

How did Jesus fulfill all of the "Where?" prophecies? (Bethlehem, Zebulun-Naphtali, and Egypt.)

Does this build your confidence in the reliability of God's Word? Explain.

Notes

Who is the Son of David?

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE
READ Matthew 2 looking for the names of Israel's tribes. The Magi visit, the flight to Egypt, and the return to Israel. In Matthew 2:4-6 **ORISE** every reference to location.

FOCUS
 1. They said to him, "The birthplace of kings, for this is what has been written by the prophet:
 4. AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LITTLE OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH: FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL."

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own ...
 Where and when is Jesus born?
 Who comes to visit Him and why?
 Who is threatened by the birth? Where does he get his information?
 According to Matthew 2:6, where Bethlehem both was prophesied?

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Notes

Who is the Son of David?

Where is Bethlehem in relation to Mary and Joseph's home town? (Check on a Bible map if needed.)

How is Messiah described in the prophet's quotation? What details does the text give?

What prophet is Matthew quoting?

What do we know about the Magi? Who were they? What did they bring? What did they do?

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE
READ Micah 5:2-6 and read **ORISE** every reference to the Old Testament prophecies. **ORISE** every reference to what He will do. Put a **TRIMBLE** under every reference to God.

Matthew 2:4-6
 2. "But for you, Bethlehem (Ephrathah), too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from of old, from the days of eternity."
 3. Therefore the self will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of his brethren will return to their side of Israel.

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SEGMENT #5: Jesus Fulfills Other Prophecies (Matthew 2:15, 21-23; 3:1-4; Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:13-17)

[pages 36-43]

Key Talk Points:

- Jesus fulfills over 300 specific prophecies.
- John the Baptist fulfills prophecy in preparing His way.

Context/Comments: Jesus fulfills over 300 Old Testament prophecies.

Matthew 2:15, 21-23 As mentioned, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 with regard to God calling His Son out of Egypt. God used Moses to deliver the nation from Egyptian slavery, but also called His Son out of hiding in Egypt. Joseph took Jesus and Mary to Egypt because God told him to in a dream. Later He told him in another dream to return. In verse 23 Matthew says that Jesus living in Nazareth was “to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’” Unlike most references to the prophets which are easily identifiable, this one is not; no recorded prophecy matches.

It’s possible that Matthew is tying “Nazareth” to the Hebrew root *netzer* (branch or shoot). Another possibility is that he is referencing Nazareth as a humble, lowly city. There are a number of reasonable explanations for the quotation though none go back to a specific chapter and verse.

Matthew 3:1-4 Matthew identifies John the Baptist as the one Isaiah says will prepare the way of the Lord. He comes preaching a message of repentance, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” John is a strange messenger who resembles the biblical prophet Elijah, wearing clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt and eating the simple food of locusts and wild honey.

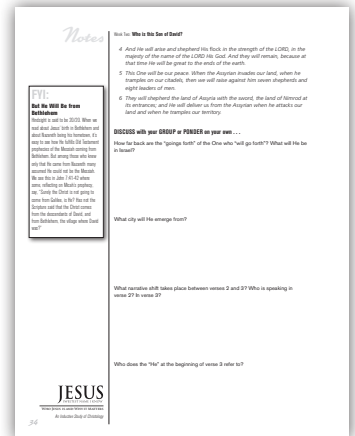
Isaiah 40:3-5 Isaiah tells us more than Matthew quotes. In preparation for the coming Lord, the land is to be smoothed before Him, valleys filled in, mountains leveled. Earthly kings typically demand pomp and circumstance, but this royalty will come humbly, carried on the back of a borrowed donkey.

Matthew 3:13-17 Although John prepares the way for Jesus, Jesus asks John to baptize Him. In fact, when John objects to this, Jesus says, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Both herald and Heralded preach the same message of repentance and return to God.

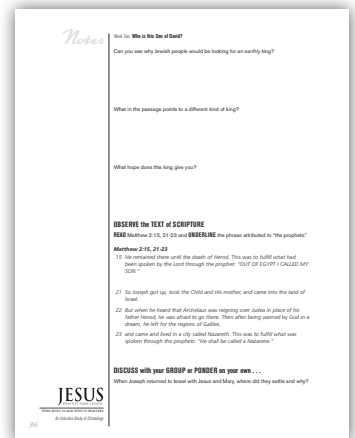
Sample Discussion Questions:

What the prophecies were fulfilled in the flight to and return from Egypt?

What prophecy does John the Baptist fulfill?



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What message does he bring? How does it compare with Jesus' message?

What additional information does Isaiah 40:3-5 give that Matthew doesn't quote?

What does Jesus ask in Matthew 3:13-17? What follows? (We'll ask more questions about this in the following section!)

SEGMENT #6: Inductive Focus: Asking Questions – 5 Ws and H
 [pages 42-43]

Key Talk Points:

- Address 5 W and H questions (*Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?*) to the text.
- Ask logical questions and follow-ups.
- Relax!

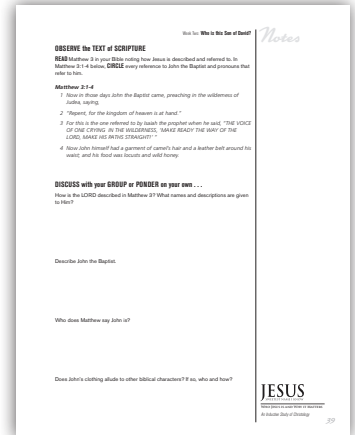
Context/Comments and Practice:

Take some time to lead your class in addressing questions to Matthew 3:13-17. I've included some to get you started. You'll notice that some of the questions I ask have to do only with this text; other times I refer to additional scriptures. Again, the questions I've listed are just to get you started. Encourage your students to help you compile a thorough list of questions to ask of the text.

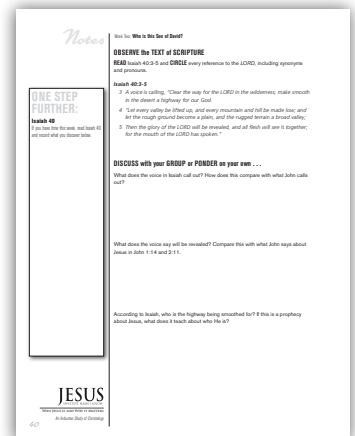
I often run into students who feel discouraged because they have so many questions. You probably do, too. In truth, these are the ones who show the best potential for biblical study. Having lots of questions is a good thing!

Matthew 3:13-17

- 13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.
- 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"
- 15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.



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16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

What is the immediate context of the passage?

Where is the event taking place?

Who was Jesus going to see? Why?

How does John respond?

What does he think should happen? Why?

What key word did you notice in this section? What else do you know about it?

How can you find out more?

Why does Jesus want John to baptize Him?

When does He want him to do it?

How does He answer John?

Is His answer clear?

Was it clear enough to John? How do you know?

What happens after Jesus is baptized?

What does John see?

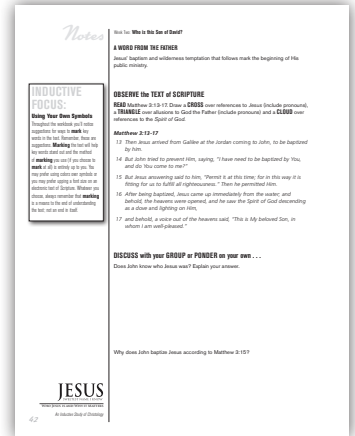
What does the voice from heaven say?

When in Jesus' life does this happen?

Wrap-Up Questions:

What is your key take-away point this week?

How will you live it out?



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Week Three

Recognizing the Son of David

BEFORE CLASS

Hot Topics:

Just as some people don't believe in Jesus today, some didn't believe Him when He walked the earth in front of them. This week we'll look at people in Jesus' day who believed Him and others who didn't. God's ways are not man's ways. We'll see that many "religious professionals" rejected the Messiah while simple foreigners were granted eyes to see and hearts to believe.

Class-at-a-Glance

Segments	2 Hour Class	1 Hour Class	Topic
Segment 1:	10 min. 5 min.	OMIT 10 min.	Review
Segment 2:	15 min.	10 min.	Inductive Focus: Cross-Referencing
Segment 3:	15 min.	10 min.	Blind Men: Matthew 9:26-31 Pharisees: Matthew 12:1-23
Optional Break	15 min.	OMIT	
Segment 4:	30 min.	10 min.	Canaanite Woman: Matthew 15:21-31
Segment 5:	15 min.	10 min.	Triumphal Entrance: Matthew 20:29-21:16
Segment 6:	15 min.	10 min.	Jesus Questions the Pharisees: Matthew 22:41-46

Inductive Focus: Cross-Referencing

Cross-referencing is simply reading what the Bible says about similar topics in different locations. There was a day when finding cross-references in the Scriptures depended on your flat-out knowing the Book backward and forward or relying on someone to point you where you needed to go. Over the years, scholars have written books full of cross-references, others have compiled concordances, and slowly but surely we have gained access to more and more tools which ease the once cumbersome task of cross-referencing.

Cross-referencing helps us gain a better understanding of the broader context of Scripture.

Often we still rely on other people to tell us where to look for cross-references. This is okay if we have reliable sources telling us where to dig, but it keeps us dependent on others to, well, cut the steak for us.

We'll look at more of the specifics of cross-referencing in the lesson!

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START CLASS HERE

SEGMENT #1: Review

Review Basic Concepts

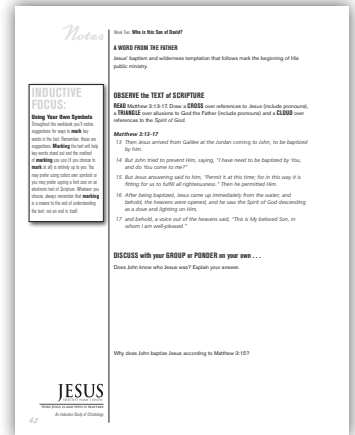
Review Questions:

What are the components of inductive Bible study?

How do the components function together?

What risks do we run if we don't correctly observe the text? (Misinterpretation and misapplication)

What risk do we run if we don't apply personally?



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SEGMENT #2: Inductive Study Focus on Cross-Referencing

While this study and most other studies include cross-references, it is important to equip your class to find them “for themselves.”

Before we jump into the *how* of cross-referencing, we need to ask the *why*. Two basic assumptions underlie the reason we pay close attention to cross-referencing Scripture. First is the belief that the entire Bible is true. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” The related presupposition is that because the whole Bible is true, Scripture interprets Scripture. We don’t need to go to external sources, although they can be helpful at times. The best commentary on Scripture is Scripture itself.

So how do we go about cross-referencing? Just like you can take more than one route between cities, there are different ways to go about cross-referencing. I’m going to describe three basic ones that I use and compare them to travel so hopefully you’ll get a better feel for the differences between them.

Get them from someone else. Most Bible studies and many study Bibles give you cross-references. This is like letting someone give you a car ride. You trust that the driver will take you to the right place. If you have a sense of where you’re going, you can usually sniff out a mistake, but you are largely at the mercy of whoever has the information, just like the passenger is at the mercy of whoever has the keys. Is this a bad thing? No. It is one way we learn.

The better the source, the better off you’ll be. Also, the more you do this, the more familiar you will become with the biblical material and the better able you will be to handle the text yourself as time goes on. It’s easy to get stuck here, though, so be careful that you don’t find yourself forever needing someone else to tell you where to look. The risk here, obviously, is that the driver takes you way off course. So if you’re taking a ride in this car, choose your driver carefully.

Use books/technology. While I welcome cross-referencing help from teachers and commentators, I often use concordance searches with Logos Bible Software to help me locate references in Scripture. Simply searching on the name “Moses” in a concordance will bring you to every mention of Moses in the Word of God. I compare this to driving in a new town with a GPS. You get exactly where you’re going, but you’re not always positive of your surroundings. When you cross-reference like this, it’s important to pay attention to your context, the textual surroundings, so that you handle the text appropriately.

There are many free online concordances on websites such as www.blueletterbible.org, www.studylight.com, www.crosswalk.com, and others. While technology is pretty reliable for returning accurate results, you still need to stay awake because programs are programmed by fallible human beings. Ever try to get to a Dairy Queen with your GPS and end up in the middle of a field? The same thing happens from time to time with electronic concordances. Enough said?

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Reading with synthesis in mind. The final way that I find cross-references is simply through reading the Bible with the big picture in mind. Obviously this doesn't happen overnight. Over time, however, as you start understanding how God's redemption fits together, you begin to become aware of places where one author of Scripture quotes or alludes to another and you begin to pick up on common themes in the text. This is when the fun really starts!!

Again, it takes some time, but reading with the big picture in mind is the most hands-on approach to cross-referencing you'll find. It is like strapping on a backpack and walking to your destination with only a compass in hand. Hard work? Yes, but satisfaction when you arrive like you can't imagine and the confidence that comes with discovering truth for yourself!

SEGMENT #3: Blind Men “See” the Lord of the Sabbath While Pharisees Miss Him (Matthew 8-9, Matthew 9:26-31, and Matthew 12:1-23)

[pages 45-53]

Key Talk Points:

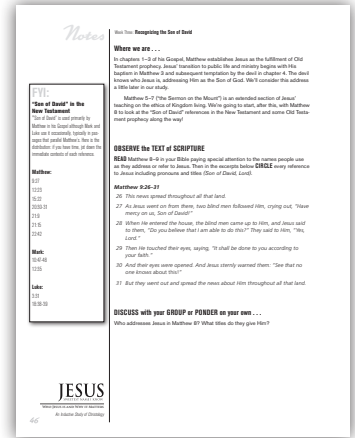
- God enables blind men to see (in two senses) Jesus.
- Pharisees are blinded by their own rules.

Context/Comments: In this grouping of verses, help your students see the two contrasts between sight and blindness. What kinds of sight and blindness are there?

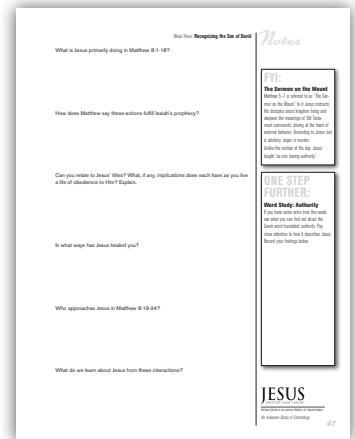
Matthew 8-9 Jesus heals a variety of people in these two chapters. While many believe He's Lord (*kurios*), a few “see” even more, addressing Him as the “Son of David.”

Matthew 9:26-31 Earlier in Matthew 9, while the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy for forgiving sins, a synagogue official with a dying daughter looks to Jesus for healing. Jesus brings the girl back to life. Our account picks up immediately following this.

Although the scribes cannot “see” the Son of David, two blind men do. Just verses earlier, Matthew (then a tax collector) followed at Jesus' call. The blind men cry out for His help, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” When Jesus asks if they believe He can heal them, they answer “Yes Lord [*kurios*].” While many sighted and educated refuse to believe the Savior, two blind men do. Jesus heals them out of the public eye. He even tells them to keep quiet, but they “spread the news throughout the land.”



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Sample Discussion Questions:

Describe some of the people Jesus heals in Matthew 8–9. How do they compare with one another?

What titles do they address Him with?

Which people address Him as the “Son of David”?

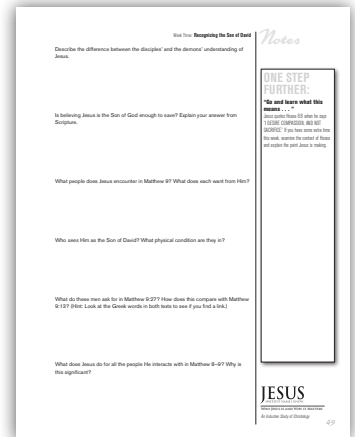
What significance does this term have?

What does healing have to do with being Messiah according to Matthew?

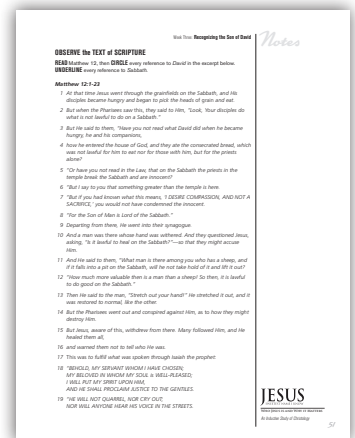
Matthew 12:1-23 While two blind men confess Jesus to be the Son of David (and so will a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15!), the Pharisees—like the scribes who accuse Him of blasphemy—reject Him altogether.

Sabbath activity is a continual point of contention between Jesus and the Pharisees. The first instance in Matthew appears in chapter 12. When the Pharisees call out Jesus’ disciples for picking and eating grain on the Sabbath, Jesus shows their innocence by appealing to the Scriptures, and He declares Himself greater than both the temple and the Sabbath. The Son of David points to David’s own actions in seeking consecrated bread for his hungry men. God’s Law had been countermanded by man’s tradition. Jesus would not subject Himself to Pharisaic interpretations. While the Pharisees and religious leaders added to the Law, Jesus cuts to the core of the Law with a truth from Hosea: “I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE” (v. 7). Then He counter-asserts: “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (v. 12).

He then turns the tables on the Pharisees and heals a man. While the Pharisees are angered, the people—including the Gentiles as Isaiah has prophesied—are amazed and begin asking, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?”



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Sample Discussion Questions:

What is a Pharisee?

How did the Pharisees of Jesus' day behave? What rules did they live by?

Have you seen people like this?

Why do people make extra rules?

What makes sense about it?

Why is this kind of behavior wrong?

How can we guard our hearts to keep from becoming Pharisees?

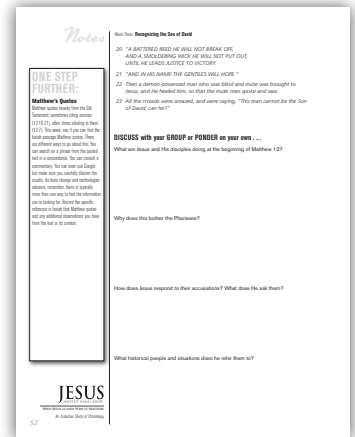
OPTIONAL BREAK SEGMENT #4: A Great-Faith Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:21-31)

[pages 54-58]

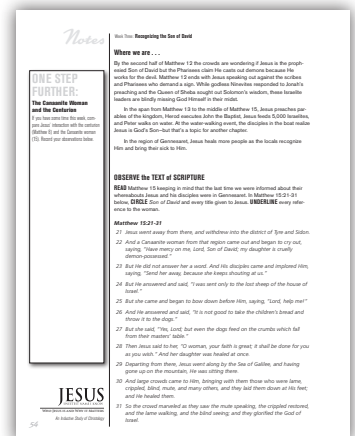
Key Talk Point:

- A woman displays great faith!

Context/Comments: Jesus withdraws and moves northwest into the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. While the scribes and Pharisees generally didn't submit to Jesus' lordship (Nicodemus, and later Paul, did) and were rather combative, Matthew recounts a "Canaanite"—long-time arch enemies of the Jewish people—approaching Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. Like the blind men of chapter 9, she addresses Jesus both as "Son of David" and "Lord" and appeals to Him for mercy.



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As you walk your class through this passage, be aware that the account often evokes emotion. Help your students look directly at the text and let it speak for itself.

Help your students see that while the disciples are desperately trying to send the woman away, Jesus does not give them what they want. Instead, He makes two statements related to His immediate mission:

1. I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
2. It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

In sharp contrast to the disciples who simply want her gone, Jesus commends the woman for her great faith.

Help your students stick with the text. What we know is this: At the end of the encounter, Jesus commends the great faith of a woman who recognizes Him as the Son of David and calls Him Lord. Wouldn't you love for Jesus to say this to you? ". . . Your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish."

As you talk through this, challenge them to consider the context: Jesus told the woman that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but earlier He told Israelites that they were worshiping God in vain (15:9) and told His disciples that the Pharisees are blind guides who will be uprooted (15:13-14). Remind them that in Matthew 8:11 He already indicated that salvation was not for Jews only: "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. . ."

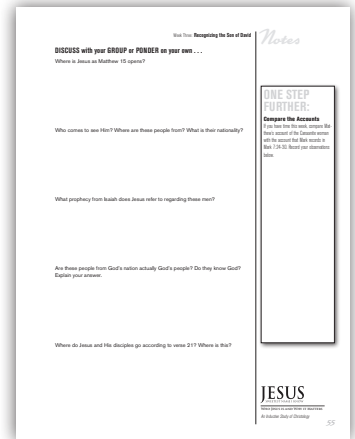
Sample Discussion Questions:

Are there elements in this account that caused you discomfort? Why?

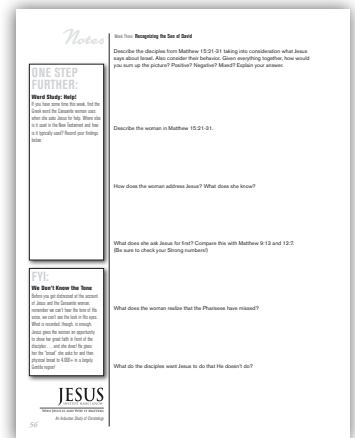
How do inductive questions help hold us to the text?

How do contexts help understanding?

Who do you think Jesus was more pleased with in Matthew 15, His disciples or the Canaanite woman? Explain your answer from the text.



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page 56

SEGMENT #5: On the Road to Jerusalem (Matthew 20:29-21:16)

[pages 59-62]

Key Talk Point:

- Simply witnessing miracles does not make spiritually blind eyes see.

Context/Comments: On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus passes through Jericho. Two more blind men confess Him as “Son of David” and “Lord.” Jesus touches their eyes and heals them.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, crowds familiar with Him hail Him as the Son of David shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David: BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!” (v. 9). Remember, He had been doing most of His miracles in the area of Galilee to the north so while many from that region are familiar with Him many in Jerusalem are now seeking to find out who He is (v. 10). While the children in the temple know who Jesus is—they shout “Hosanna to the Son of David”—the chief priests and scribes, some eye-witnesses to healings in the temple, are unconvinced and indignant. Those God gave eyes to see, see (Matthew 13:13-15, cf. Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 6:8-10). Simply witnessing miracles does not open spiritually blind eyes.

Sample Discussion Questions:

What event takes place in this text?

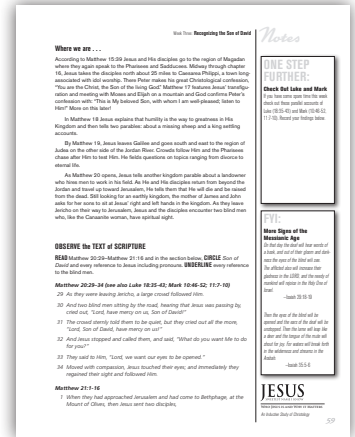
What are the mixed reactions to Jesus? What are some of the reasons for them?

What prophecies does Jesus fulfill in this section of the text? How clear are they?

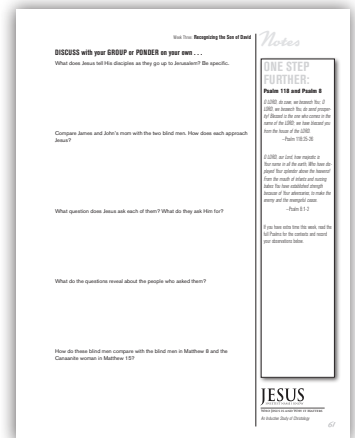
Were the miracles clear?

What witness are the scribes and chief priests confronted with? How do they respond to it?

Why are some people today not “convinced” about Jesus?



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page 61

SEGMENT #6: Jesus Questions the Pharisees (Matthew 22:41-46)

[pages 63-67]

Key Talk Point:

- Pharisees unable to answer Jesus' question about the Messiah.

Context/Comments: While the Pharisees usually ask the questions, Jesus turns the tables with His own query: "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" The Pharisees answer correctly saying "The son of David." Tragically they have missed the truth that the One asking the question is *Christ in the flesh*, David's promised Son.

Jesus further confounds them by pointing to Scriptures showing that David's Son has a higher rank than David himself because David calls this promised Son "Lord."

The Messiah is the Son of David. Jesus is the Messiah. And Jesus is greater than David. The Pharisees knew the Messianic Son of David was coming, but most rejected Jesus.

Sample Discussion Questions:

Explain as simply as you can Jesus' line of reasoning.

What does it reveal about the Pharisees?

What does it reveal about the Son of David?

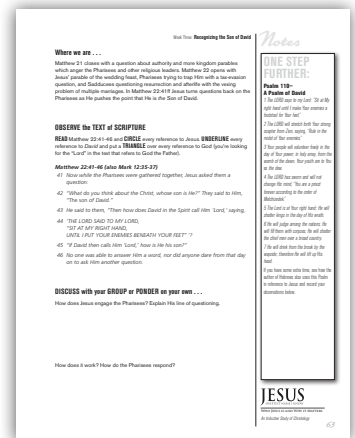
Wrap-Up Questions:

What have been your biggest takeaways this week?

How is truth you're learning changing the way you think and act?



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page 63

Week Four

Is Jesus “God”?

BEFORE CLASS

Hot Topics:

Your students have almost certainly heard that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man if they have been exposed to ongoing teaching and preaching from God's Word. But have they ever discovered it for themselves in God's Word? This week, if they do their homework, they may see it for themselves. If they don't, you can walk them through these compelling Scriptures again in class. They will not read more important words than these.

Class-at-a-Glance

Segments	2 Hour Class	1 Hour Class	Topic
Segment 1:	15 min. 15 min.	OMIT 10 min.	Review
Segment 2:	15 min.	10 min.	Inductive Focus: Context
Segment 3:	15 min.	10 min.	The Word Before Abraham
Optional Break	15 min.	OMIT	
Segment 4:	15 min.	10 min.	Image and Nature
Segment 5:	15 min.	10 min.	My God and Glory
Segment 6:	15 min.	10 min.	Signs

Inductive Focus: Context

Context is the setting in which something dwells. We make sense of words by understanding what is around them. The word *bank*, for instance, can have several meanings, but we can't know which is correct until we have context. Bank means something very different when I say "I deposited money in the bank," than it does when I add "On the way, I got my car stuck in a [snow] bank." Just as context helps us understand the meaning of a word in a sentence, it also helps us make sense of a sentence within a paragraph, a chapter within a book, etc. This week we'll trace scriptures about the person and work of Jesus Christ, paying close attention to contexts of each verse we look at.

JESUS
SWEETEST NAME I KNOW

WHO JESUS IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

An Inductive Study of Christology

START CLASS HERE

SEGMENT #1: Review

Review Basic Concepts

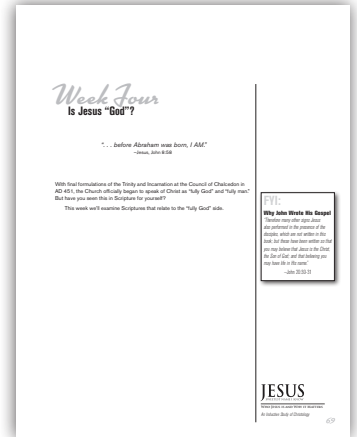
Review Questions:

What are the components of inductive Bible study?

What is the most important thing you've learned or been reminded of regarding Jesus up to this point?

SEGMENT #2: Inductive Focus: Context

As you walk your students through the Deity Chain in class, help them identify the context of each of the verses as you go. Context is king in matters of interpretation, so it is critical to read contexts, particularly when studying topically. One of the reasons a general book-by-book approach to Bible study is so helpful is that reading near context, at least, is built in. Running across the pages of Scripture, however, as we have done this week and as you will do in class requires that we carefully examine context to make sure that we are accurately handling the Word.



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SEGMENT #3: The Word Before Abraham

[pages 70-74]

Key Talk Point:

- The pre-incarnate existence of the Son.

Passage Sequence:

John 1:1, 14 (JOHN: THE WORD “WAS WITH GOD AND WAS GOD”; “THE WORD BECAME FLESH”)

John 8:58-59 (JESUS: “BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS BORN, I AM”)

Exodus 3:14-15

John 8:24 (also Deuteronomy 32:39 and Isaiah 43:10)

John 10:30-33

Context/Comments: In this grouping of texts help your students see the pre-incarnate existence of the Son. Those who have had encounters with Jehovah’s Witnesses might stall the conversation at **John 1:1**. Remind them that we want to see the full context of God’s Word.

John begins by talking about the Word who was with God and was God. Without context, we’d be at a loss to know who he was talking about. John, however, defines Him further as “the true Light” and then says in **John 1:14** that “the Word became flesh” and defines Him specifically as Jesus in verse 17. Putting the texts together, John says Jesus is the Word who is God and who is from the beginning.

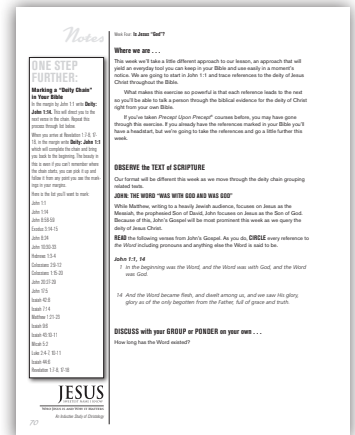
In **John 8:58-59** Jesus declares the same truth when He says, “. . . Before Abraham was born, I am.” The claim to pre-date Abraham is big, but context suggests the Jews saw it as more because they attempt to stone him.

Likely the Jews believed Jesus was alluding to **Exodus 3:14-15** where God calls Himself, “I AM.” Up to this point, God had not revealed His name. Jacob asked for it, but while God responded with a question and a blessing, He did not answer (Genesis 32:29). Generations later when Moses asks God what His name is, God answers: “I AM WHO I AM” . . . “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (**Exodus 3:14-15**).

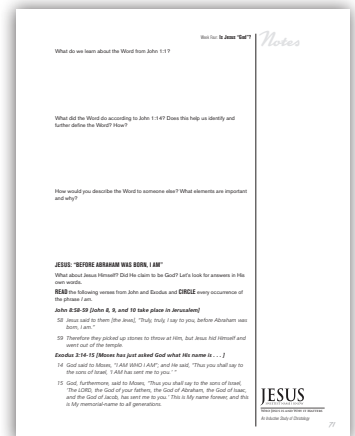
In **John 8:24** Jesus tells His listeners that they will die in their sins unless they “believe that I am He”—that is, that He is God. Although not in our Deity Chain, a couple more verses that help unpack this verse are Deuteronomy 32:39 and Isaiah 43:10 below.

Deuteronomy 32:39

*See now that I, I am He,
 And there is no god besides Me;
 It is I who put to death and give life.
 I have wounded and it is I who heal,
 And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.*



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Isaiah 43:10

"You are My witnesses," declares the Lord,
"And My servant whom I have chosen,
So that you may know and believe Me
And understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
And there will be none after Me.

Jesus couldn't be clearer than He is in John 10:30 when He says, "I and the Father are one." The Jews pick up stones to stone Him. They fully understand His claim but consider it blasphemy: "You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

Sample Discussion Questions:

How does the context identify the Word in John 1:1?

How does the context help us understand the Jews reactions to Jesus?

What is the main truth from these passages?

What cultural lies does it stand against?

Notes page 72 containing text from John 10:30-38 and Isaiah 43:10, a list of 32 numbered notes, and a 'DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP OR PARTNER' section.

page 72

Notes page 73 containing a 'ONE STEP FURTHER' section with questions about John 8 and Exodus 2, and a 'JESUS' logo at the bottom.

page 73

OPTIONAL BREAK

SEGMENT #4: Image and Nature

[pages 75-77]

Key Talk Point:

- The Son is the exact image of and has the exact nature of the Father.

Passage Sequence:

Hebrews 1:1-4

Colossians 2:9-12

Colossians 1:15-20

Context/Comments: While all of the texts we’re looking at tie together and build on one another, the next grouping focuses on the image and nature of God.

In **Hebrews 1:1-4**, the author of Hebrews tells us a number of things about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

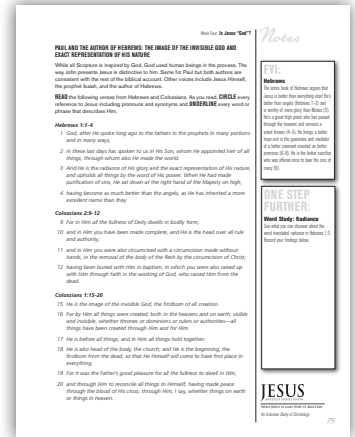
- In these last days God has spoken to us in His Son.
- God has appointed the Son heir of all things.
- God made the world through the Son.
- The Son is the radiance of God’s glory.
- The Son is the exact representation of God’s nature.
- The Son upholds all thing by the word of His power.
- The Son made purification of sins.
- The Son sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

While the text only refers to “God” in Hebrews 1:1-4, the term “Father” is introduced in verse 5 and verses 1–4 speak of the relationship between the first two Persons of the Trinity.

The term “radiance” (v. 3, *apaugasma*) gives the picture of rays of sunlight shining from the sun. They are one and yet distinct—one does not exist apart from the other.

The Greek word (v. 3, *charakter*) translated “exact representation” was used with respect to the ancient process of die-cutting and inscribing. Just as a coin took on the exact image of the die it was pressed from, so the Son is the exact image of the Father, impressed with His nature.

Colossians 2:9-12 also shows unity and distinction in the Godhead. Paul says “in Him [Christ] all the fullness of Deity [*tes theotetos*] dwells in bodily form”—in other words all that God is dwells bodily in Christ. Christ is not “part God”; the fullness of God dwells in Him. The distinction is evident again in verse 12 where Paul tells us that God raised Christ from the dead.



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In **Colossians 1:15-20**—a passage sometimes referred to as a “hymn”—a key repeated phrase is the Greek *pas* which is variously translated as “all,” “all things,” or “everything.” While neither Jesus nor Christ appear in this text, the context clearly shows that Christ is the key subject. In the Son, human eyes can see the invisible God. All things were created “by” (or “in”) Christ and also “through” and “for” Him. Without Him, nothing holds together. He is the Creator and the glue that holds creation together. Not only is creation “through Him”; reconciliation is as well. And if there is any doubt as to who this One is, we see that peace is made through “the blood of His cross.” Jesus is supreme.

All (*pas*). . .

- The Son is the firstborn of **all** creation.
- **All things** were created “by” (or “in”) the Son.
- **All things** have been created through and for the Son.
- The Son is before **all things**.
- **All things** hold together in the Son.
- The son will come to have first place in **everything**.
- It was the Father’s good pleasure for **all** the fullness to dwell in the Son.
- It was the Father’s good pleasure to reconcile **all things** to Himself through the Son.

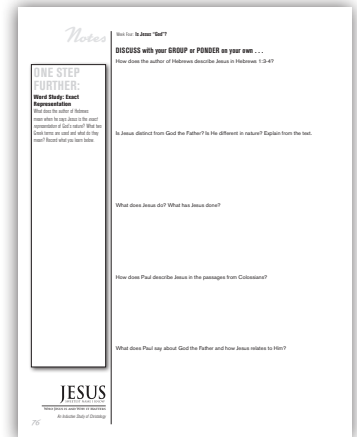
Sample Discussion Questions:

What is the common thread in these verses?

What truths do we learn about the Father and the Son?

From these verses how can you explain Jesus’ relationship to creation?

From these verses how can you explain the deity of Jesus Christ?



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SEGMENT #5: My God and Glory

[pages 77-79]

Key Talk Points:

- Jesus accepts Thomas’s title of “My Lord and my God.”
- God shares His glory with no one.
- Jesus shares His Father’s glory.

Passage Sequence:

John 10:27-29

John 17:5

Isaiah 42:8

Context/Comments: When Thomas encounters the resurrected Christ in **John 20:27-29** and is able to see and touch His hands and side, His response is both wonder and worship. He declares, “My Lord and my God!” Note that Jesus not only accepts these titles; He also affirms them: “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

In His high priestly prayer recorded in **John 17**, Jesus asks the Father for something that God will share with no one—His glory. He also says He has had this glory before the world was. Although He will return to the Father still incarnate, He will again be glorified with Him.

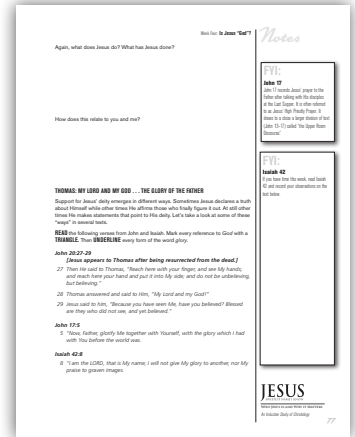
Isaiah 42:8 teaches that the LORD (YHWH) does not give His glory to another. Jesus, however, is one with God the Father.

Sample Discussion Questions:

What is significant about Thomas’s statement and Jesus’ response?

How does glory reflect on Jesus’ relation to the Father?

What do these verses show us about Jesus’ view of Himself and His relationship with the Father?



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SEGMENT #6: Signs

[pages 82-86]

Key Talk Points: Jesus fulfills countless Old Testament prophecies.

- He is born of a virgin
- He is born in Bethlehem
- He is the Alpha and Omega.

Passage Sequence:

Isaiah 7:14 (ISAIAH AND MATTHEW: THE SIGN OF A VIRGIN)

Matthew 1:21-23

Isaiah 9:6

Isaiah 43:10-11

Micah 5:2 (MICAH: THE SIGN OF BETHLEHEM)

Luke 2:4-7, 10-11

Isaiah 44:6 (ISAIAH AND JESUS: GOD THE FIRST AND THE LAST)

Revelation 1:7-8, 17-18

Context/Comments:

ISAIAH AND MATTHEW: THE SIGN OF A VIRGIN

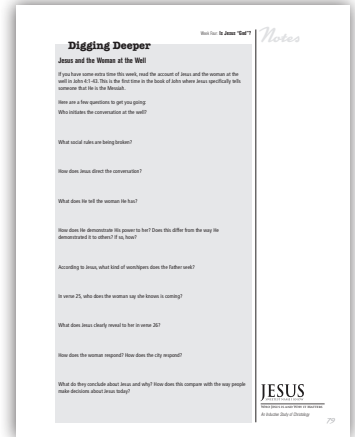
We first looked at **Isaiah 7:14**, **Matthew 1:21-23**, and **Isaiah 9:6** in Week 2 (see Leader Guide pages 20–21). See how much your students recall about Isaiah’s prophecy of the virgin birth and Matthew’s application to Jesus.

The New Testament announces the coming of a Savior and declares Jesus to be Him over and over again. Remind your students of the significance of **Isaiah 43:10-11** which says there is only one Savior, God Himself. This Jesus is God Almighty.

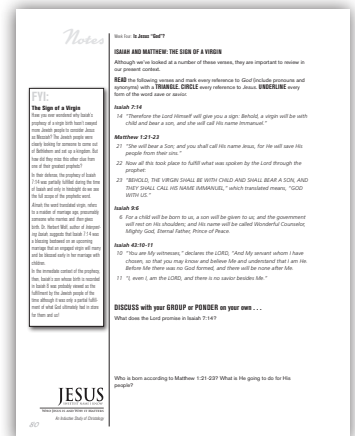
Although not in the Deity Chain we’ve been marking, this truth is also expressed in Hosea 13:4: “Yet I have been the LORD your God since the land of Egypt; and you were not to know any god except Me, for there is no savior besides Me.”

Note the similarity of Peter’s declaration in Acts 4:12 with reference to Jesus, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

There is only one Savior (God) and He became incarnate as John describes in John 1:1, 14.



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MICAH: THE SIGN OF BETHLEHEM

For discussion of **Micah 5:2** again, see Week 2 (Leader Guide page 22).

Luke 2 teems with prophetic fulfillment. The Savior will be a light in Galilee of the Gentiles, He will be born in the line of David, in Bethlehem, the city of David. The bread of life is born in Bethlehem (the house of bread). Mary and Joseph, two simple people, travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the decree of a political ruler and in doing so fulfill a prophecy from ages past. An angel declares this fulfillment to shepherds (vv. 10-11) saying that the Child born in the city of David is a Savior—who is Christ the Lord.

ISAIAH AND JESUS: GOD THE FIRST AND THE LAST

Isaiah 44:6 quotes the LORD (YHWH), King of Israel, Israel's Redeemer, and the LORD of hosts. Unlike idols and so-called gods that come and go, rise and fall, the LORD is eternal – the first and last. He is entirely unique. He alone is God.

Similar phrasing occurs in **Revelation 1:7-8, 17-18**. In Isaiah, the LORD declares Himself to be the first and the last (“I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me”). In Revelation, Jesus makes the same claim (“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last”).

Revelation refers to God as “Alpha and Omega” in **Revelation 1:8**, Jesus as “first and last” in **Revelation 1:17**. In the intervening verses (12-16) John presents a picture of Jesus that brings to mind Daniel’s description of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9, 10:6).

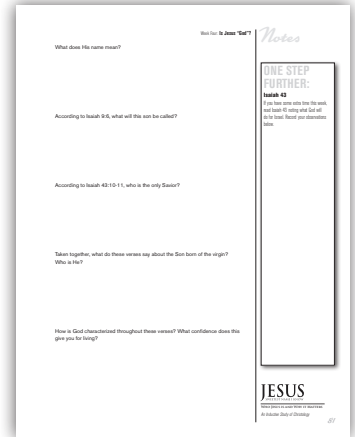
When John sees Jesus, he falls at His feet as a dead man. The risen Christ is not to be trifled with. He is God from eternity past. Alpha and omega, beginning and end. Fully man, but also fully God!

Sample Discussion Questions:

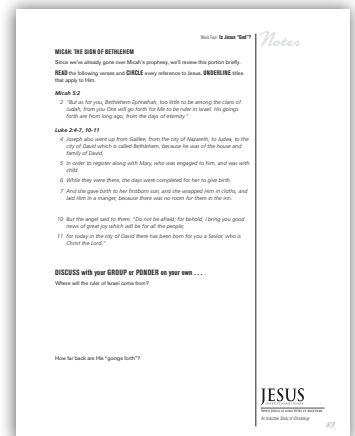
What do you recall about Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin birth and Matthew's interpretation of it in his Gospel?

How does Jesus fulfill the Micah 5:2 prophecy?

Explain from the texts how God in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New describe themselves with “the first and the last.”



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Wrap-Up Questions:

What have been your biggest takeaways this week?

How are these truths changing the way you're thinking and acting?

Notes

Read for Is Jesus "God"?

What is the Child called in Luke 2:11?

Agnes, who is the only Easter according to Isaiah 43:11?

Therefore, who is the Child?

ISRAEL AND JESUS: GOD THE FIRST AND THE LAST

Our final two passages tie together God's words through the prophets Isaiah and John.

READ the following verses and **BE** each phrase that begins with a "I am"

Isaiah 43:1

John 1:1

Isaiah 44:6

John 1:9

John 1:10

John 1:11

John 1:12

John 1:13

John 1:14

John 1:15

John 1:16

John 1:17

John 1:18

John 1:19

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John 1:97

John 1:98

John 1:99

John 1:100

JESUS

Who Jesus Is and Why It Matters

An Inductive Study of Christology

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Notes

Read for Is Jesus "God"?

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PENPAL on your own...

What does the LORD say about Himself in Isaiah 44:6? Let everything He says mean.

Who does Revelation 1:7 describe? Explain your reasoning.

Who does Revelation 1:8 refer to? Explain your reasoning.

Who is described in Revelation 1:17-18? Explain your reasoning.

Who is "The first and the last"? What significance does this have for you today?

JESUS

Who Jesus Is and Why It Matters

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Week Five

Is Jesus “Man”?

BEFORE CLASS

Hot Topics:

On the assumption that Jesus is fully God, how then can He be man? Throughout history, many have assumed this is impossible. So now we need to go back to the Scriptures and see if this is true. Today we'll look at three key passages.

Class-at-a-Glance

Segments	2 Hour Class	1 Hour Class	Topic
Segment 1:	15 min. 15 min.	OMIT 10 min.	Review basic concepts Overview
Segment 2:	15 min.	10 min.	Inductive Focus: Word Studies
Segment 3:	20 min.	10 min.	Philippians 2:5-11
Optional Break	15 min.	OMIT	
Segment 4:	20 min.	15 min.	Hebrews 1
Segment 5:	20 min.	15 min.	Isaiah 52:13–Isaiah 53

Inductive Focus: Word Studies

There are word studies and then there are word studies. Many people believe the way you do a word study on a Greek or Hebrew word is to look it up in a Bible dictionary and if you really want to go over the top, you look it up in two of them! While this is part of doing a thorough word study, it leaves out some critical steps for students who want to discover truth for themselves.

Studying a biblical word first involves identifying the word in the original language (Greek for the New Testament and Hebrew for the Old Testament*) and looking at how the word is used throughout the rest of the Bible. As you look for the meaning, you'll want to give more weight to uses of the word in the immediate context and then elsewhere by the same author.

After investigating how the word (and others in its word family) is used you can check in Bible dictionaries and word study books to compare your findings.

Jumping to a word study book before doing your own concordance work is similar to reading a commentary before studying the text of Scripture for yourself.

We'll look at this more closely as we move through our lesson.

*With rare exceptions of pinches of Aramaic.

JESUS
SWEETEST NAME I KNOW

WHO JESUS IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

An Inductive Study of Christology

START CLASS HERE

SEGMENT #1: Review

Review Basic Concepts

Review Questions:

What are the components of inductive Bible study?

*What is **Observation** and why is it important? What question will this answer?*

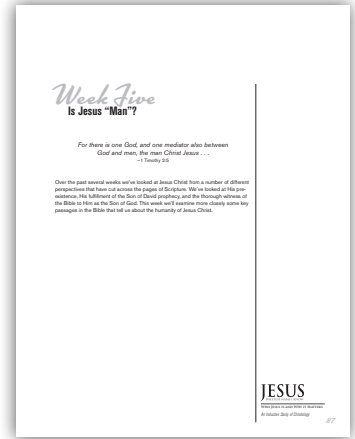
*What is the biggest takeaway **Application** you have had thus far?*

SEGMENT #2: Inductive Focus: Word Studies

Doing a word study from scratch involves identifying the word in its original language and seeing how the same word and others from the same root are used throughout the Word of God. When looking at the usage, pay closest attention when the same word is used in the text and context you're looking at, then move to the chapter, the book, the author, and the Old or New Testament. In the case of a term from the Greek New Testament, you can check its use in the LXX (Greek OT).

Once you've done your own research, then compare your findings with your word study reference books and commentaries. For a listing of helpful word study tools, see the Appendix of the *Sweetest Name I Know* workbook.

Note: If you have access to a computer, Internet, and projection equipment, this is a great time to show your students how to run concordance searches online.



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SEGMENT #3: Philippians 2:5-11

[pages 88-91]

Key Talk Points:

- Jesus did not stop being God when He took on flesh.
- Jesus humbled Himself; the Father exalted Him.

Context/Comments: In the verses preceding our text, Philippians 2:1-4, Paul drives home the truth that we are to have the mind of Christ. Paul first uses *phroneo* (to think, to mind) in Philippians 2, in verse 2. (Your students may know that this word is also key in Romans 8.) Part of Christ-likeness is humility. As Christ humbled Himself, so His followers are characterized by “humility of mind” (v. 3). Paul continues on in Philippians 2:5-11 to give a snapshot of Christ’s mindset.

Christ’s Mindset according to Philippians 2:5-11 . . .

He existed in the form (*morphe*) of God – (He was God).

He did not grasp at equality with God (the Father).

[Rebellion is grabbing for authority that is not ours. The Son is “in the form of God” so He *does not* grasp at equality with God.]

He emptied (*kenoo*) Himself.

He took the form (*morphe*) of a bond-servant.

He was made in the likeness (*homoioima*) of men.

He was found in appearance (*schema*) as a man.

He humbled (*tapeinoo*) Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross.

[The Son **LOWERS** Himself; The Father **ELEVATES** the Son.]

God highly exalted (*huperupsoo*) Him.

God bestowed the name above every name on Him.

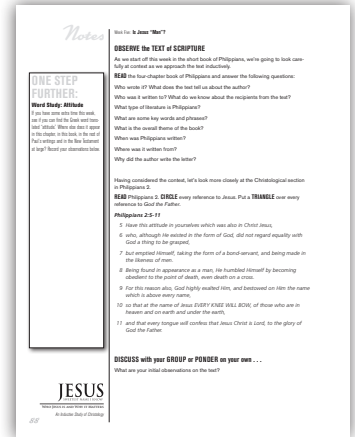
Every knee will bow to the Son.

Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ (Messiah) is Lord.

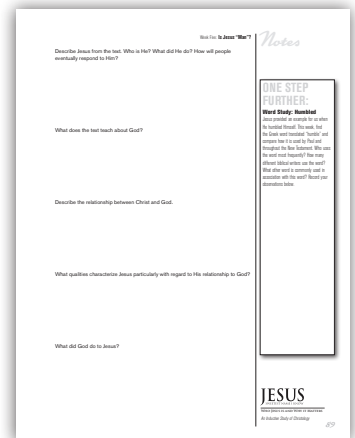
At the name of JESUS every knee will bow to the glory of God the Father.

Sample Discussion Questions:

What specifics does this text teach about Jesus?



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Who is He? How does He act?

What does this text teach about Jesus deity?

How will all people eventually respond to Jesus?

OPTIONAL BREAK

SEGMENT #4: Hebrews 1:1-14

[pages 92-95]

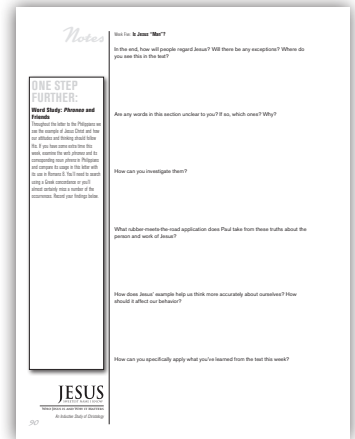
Key Talk Points:

- The Son is the exact representation of God's nature.
- God refers to the Son as "God."

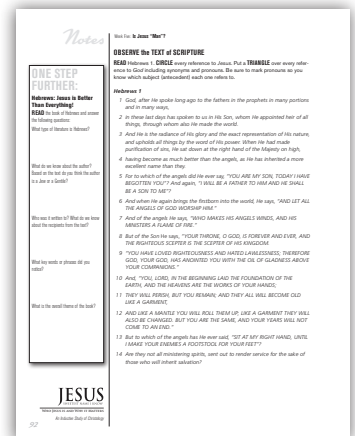
Context/Comments: According to Hebrews 1:1-4, the Son is the exact representation of God's nature. (To review further comments on Hebrews 1:1-4 refer to last week's note on pages 38-39 of this Leader Guide).

Verses 5 through 14 run through a string of Old Testament quotations where God the Father speaks of or talks to God the Son saying such things as:

- You are My Son.
- Let all the angels worship Him.
- Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
- Therefore, God, Your God has anointed You.
- You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth.
- You remain.
- You are the same.
- Your years will not come to an end.
- Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.



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According to Hebrews 1, the Son is Ruler, above the angels, Creator, unending; He is Lord and God.

The text also quotes extensively from Old Testament sources. You may want to have your students refer to the ones listed below:

v. 5 from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14

v. 6 (source uncertain: possibly from the LXX [Greek] text of Deuteronomy 32:43)

vv. 8-9 from Psalm 45:6-7

vv. 10-12 from Psalm 102:25-27

v. 13 from Psalm 110:1

Sample Discussion Questions:

What attributes of God does Hebrews apply to the Son?

What truths about the Son are only true of God?

How do you explain the deity of Jesus based on Hebrews 1?

SEGMENT #5: Isaiah 52:13–Isaiah 53

[pages 99-105]

Key Talk Point:

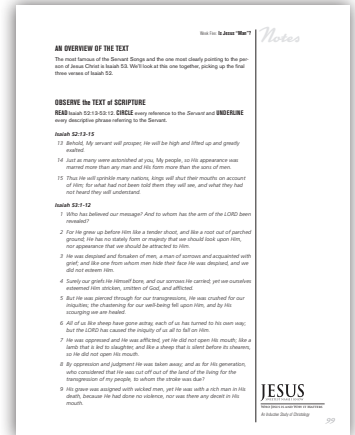
- The description of Isaiah's suffering Servant matches the Gospel accounts of Jesus.

Context/Comments: How do Jewish people miss Jesus in Isaiah 53? Most identify the servant of Isaiah 53 as the nation of Israel. Certainly that nation has suffered greatly throughout history; no one will argue that. The people have not, though, been sinless and thus able to bear the sins of others; they did not willingly offer themselves; they were not righteous; and so they could not justify others.

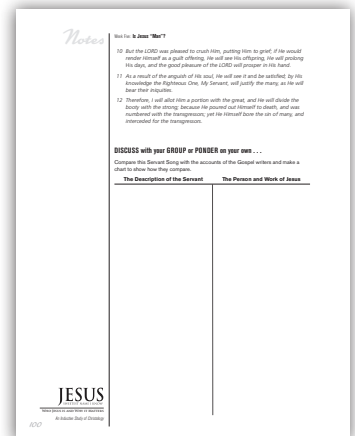
The prophecy of Isaiah, however, matches perfectly with Jesus, the sinless sinbearer. Many of the descriptions are self-evident and observable throughout the Gospels. Here are some specific references to *others*.

- He was like a tender shoot (see Isaiah 11:1 – “a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse”).
- He had no stately form or majesty (born into a carpenter's family).
- He was despised and forsaken.
- He was a Man of sorrows.
- He was acquainted with grief (can be translated illnesses).
- He bore our griefs (disease/illness) and carried our sorrows.
- He was pierced for our transgressions (John 19:34, Zechariah 12:10).
- He was crushed for our iniquities.
- He was chastened for our well-being.
- He was scourged for our healing (Matthew 27:26).
- He was oppressed.
- He was afflicted.
- He was silent before adversaries (Matthew 27:14).
- He was cut off for the transgression of the people (Galatians 3:13).
- He made His grave with the wicked.
- He was with the rich in His death (Matthew 27:57).
- He gave Himself as a guilt offering (Galatians 2:20).
- He is called the Righteous One.
- He is God's Servant (Mark 10:45).
- He will justify the many.
- He will bear their iniquities.
- He poured out Himself to death.
- He bore the sins of many.
- He interceded for the transgressors.
- He was Sinless:
 - He did no violence.
 - He deceived no one.

Sinners cannot be sin bearers for others. According to verses 8-11, the righteous Servant was “cut off from the land of the living through the sin of my people [i.e. Israel], who deserved the punishment” (v. 8) yet he “had done no injustice and had spoken no falsehood” (v. 9). (Jewish Publication Society. [1985]. *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society). These statements make it impossible for the sinless Servant to be the nation who deserved the punishment.



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Discussion Questions:

How is the Servant described? How does Jesus match these descriptions?

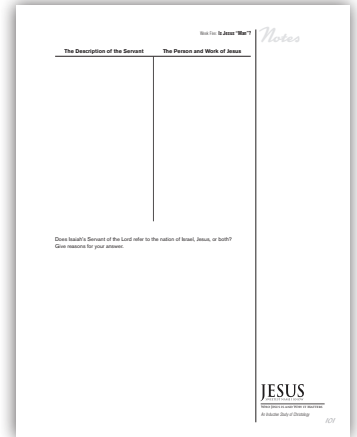
What will the Servant do? How does this compare with what Jesus did?

What characteristics of the Servant rule out ordinary people?

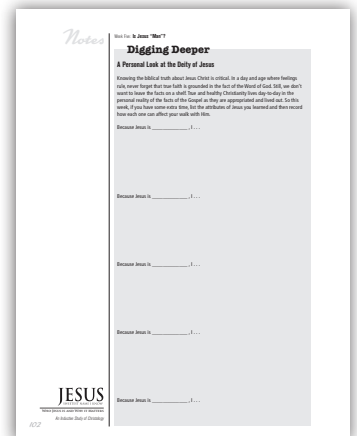
Wrap-Up Questions:

What have been your biggest takeaways this week?

How is the truth you're learning changing the way you're thinking and acting?



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Week Six

Is Jesus High Priest and King?

BEFORE CLASS

Hot Topics:

Jesus doesn't save us only in the future. He is our Great High Priest and King now, a very present help in time of trouble.

Class-at-a-Glance

Segments	2 Hour Class	1 Hour Class	Topic
Segment 1:	15 min.	OMIT 10 min.	Review
Segment 2:	30 min.	15 min.	1 Corinthians 15:1-8 – The Gospel
Optional Break	15 min.	OMIT	
Segment 3: Segment 4:	20 min. 20 min.	10 min. 15 min.	Inductive Focus: Application Hebrews and Thessalonians
Segment 5:	20 min.	10 min.	Revelation

Inductive Focus: Application

Application is always grounded in accurate observation and interpretation of a scripture. It always comes out of what the original authors intended to say to their readers.

Sometimes application is believing a truth; other times it's obeying commands like the one to imitate the godly thoughts and actions of others or to avoid the ungodly ones.

Application is not an add-on to study. It is the heart of why we study. Through it God conforms us more and more into the image of His Son.

JESUS
SWEETEST NAME I KNOW

WHO JESUS IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

An Inductive Study of Christology

START CLASS HERE

SEGMENT #1: Review

Review Basic Concepts

Review Questions:

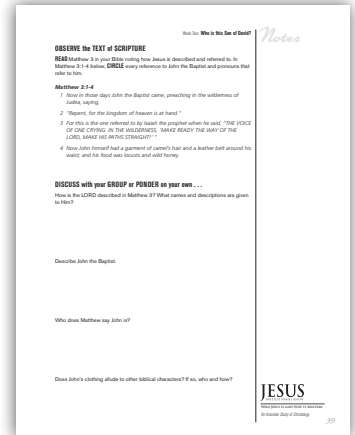
What are the components of inductive Bible study?

What is **Observation** and why is it important? What question does this answer?

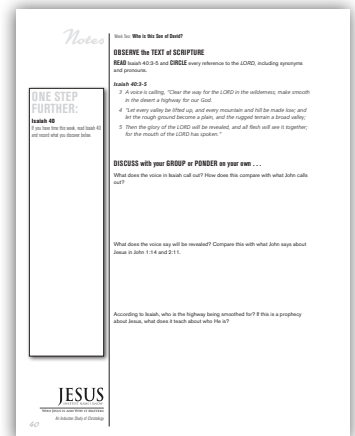
How is **Interpretation** different from **Observation**?

What do we need for proper **Application**?

What has been your biggest **Application** point in the class?



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SEGMENT #2: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

[pages 109-111]

Key Talk Point:

- Identifying key components of the Gospel.

Context/Comments:

The Gospel is all about Jesus and Paul lays it out clearly in the first verses of 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. In fact he uses the noun “gospel” (*euaggelion*) and the corresponding verb “preached” (*euaggelizo*) three times in the first two verses alone.

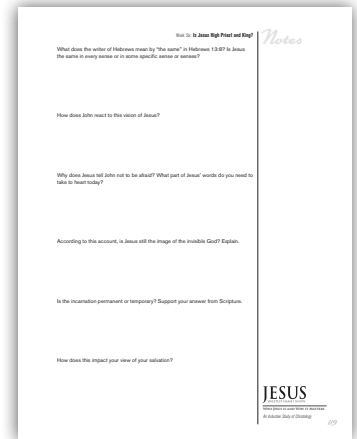
Paul reviews how the Corinthians received the Gospel (favorably) and stand in it and explains how it saves them if they retain it and have not believed in vain.

Then in just five verses he lays out the core of the Gospel message:

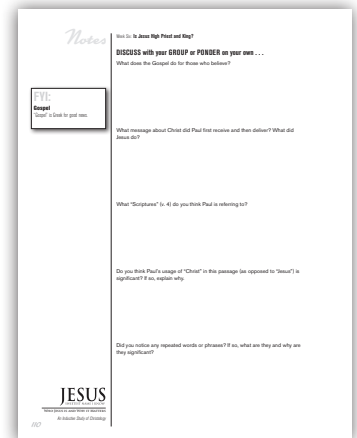
- Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
- He was buried.
- He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (The passive indicates that God raised Him. See also Acts 2:24, 10:40, 13:30, 34; Romans 10:9.)
- He appeared. (This is also passive, literally “He was seen by.”)
 - Cephas
 - the twelve
 - more than five hundred brethren
 - James
 - all the apostles
 - Paul

Paul gives the basic components to the Gospel. Christ died, was buried, was raised, and appeared. Any “gospel” that denies these truths is false.

Paul supports the death, burial and resurrection with “according to the Scriptures.” Remember that on the road to Emmaus, Jesus explained everything that had happened to Him according to the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:13-35). Paul gives overwhelming current-to-his-day evidence of Jesus’ post-resurrection days. Using the word appeared (*horao*) four times, Paul presents a great number of witnesses to the risen Christ.



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Sample Discussion Questions:

What are the key elements of the Gospel message? Why is each significant?

How would you present this message to someone who doesn't yet know Jesus?

OPTIONAL BREAK

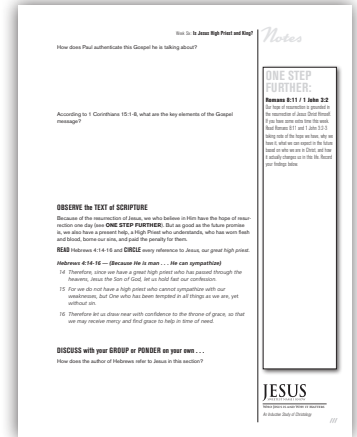
SEGMENT #3: Inductive Focus: Application

- Key Talk Points:** We apply from:
- truths
 - commands
 - godly examples

Context/Comments: Few Christians have sat in a Bible study and not heard sooner or later their well-meaning leader ask, “What does this mean to you?” While how the word applies in life is of paramount importance, “What does it mean to you?” is not the way to get there. “What does it mean to you?” is ungrounded, subjective, and entirely relative. When we set out to apply Scripture, we do so having carefully observed the text and having done our best to interpret what the message was to its original audience. How we apply the text to our lives must be grounded in the intended meaning to the original audience. Sometimes this is clear and easily applied across time and culture: God is holy! Believe it. Clear! Do not steal! Don't do it. Clear! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and might! Obey. Clear!

The Bible is not just a compilation of stories of ancient people. It is God's revealed truth. The psalmist sums this up when he says in Psalm 119:160, “The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.”

Although Scripture does not always gives us specific directives, it is nonetheless revealed truth (both historical and theological) which we are to learn from. Paul gives a great example in 1 Corinthians 10:11-12 of learning from an Old Testament historical account—in this case the grumbling Israelites—saying, “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”



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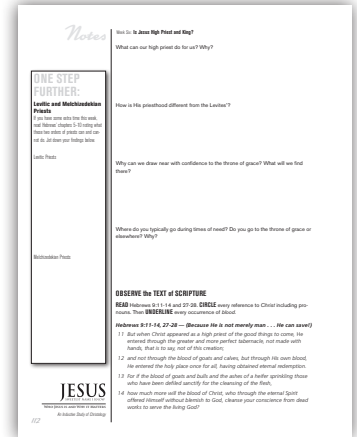
Hebrews 6:12 calls us to be “imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Throughout the Word of God we have examples of lives lived by God’s power and hearts set against Him. We can find lessons both about what to do and what not to do. Even men and women of faith did not always behave faithfully. This is a huge way that we learn from Old Testament readings. We observe how people lived their lives, either aligned with God or at odds with Him, and take those lessons to heart.

Sample Discussion Questions:

What parts of Scripture do you find easiest to apply?

What parts of Scripture are harder?



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SEGMENT #4: Hebrews and Thessalonians

[pages 111-117]

Key Talk Points:

- Jesus can sympathize with everything we go through.
- Jesus' blood is effective.
- Jesus gives hope for those who “are asleep.”
- Jesus is always alive to intercede.

Context/Comments:

The Current Help

Hebrews 4:14-16, after stating that nothing is hidden from God’s sight, presents Jesus as the Son of God and our great high priest. We can hold fast because our high priest has been tempted just like we are so He can sympathize with us and our Lord can give us needed mercy and grace.

Because He can sympathize and because He overcame, we can approach Him for help with confidence.

Hebrews 9:11-14, 27-28 reveals this great high priest after describing Levitic priest in the opening verses of the chapter. The contrast is vivid: those who offer animal sacrifices that can never take away sins contrast with Jesus, who offered Himself to cleanse and free people to serve the Living God. The contrast throughout Hebrews 9 is also between “shadow” and reality. In Old Testament times, sinful priests entered a man-made tabernacle to offer animal blood to cover people’s sins. While these “sanctified the flesh,” they could not cleanse the spirit. So these priests pointed forward to Christ, the high priest who offered His own blood in the perfect tabernacle “not made with hands” and “not of this creation” and obtained eternal redemption and internal cleansing of sin.

Unlike the blood of the bulls and goats which had to be offered day after day, Christ’s blood is sufficient. His was a once-for-all sacrifice. After He made it, He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3). God spoke in His Son (Heb. 1.1), Christ was “offered once to bear the sins of many,” (Heb. 9:28), and He “will appear a second time for salvation” (Heb. 9:28) for those waiting for Him. Do note the use of “Christ” in this section. The emphasis is on Jesus the Messiah.

The Future and Eternal Hope

Christian hope is grounded in who Christ is and what He did. As Christ died and was raised, Scripture assures us that those who are in Him will be also.

In **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**, the key words are *koimao* (asleep/fallen asleep) and its synonym *nekros* (dead) which contrast with *zao* (alive) and *perileipomai* (remain).

Paul wants the Thessalonians to be clear about what Jesus is to those who have died and to those who are alive when He returns. He says he doesn’t want them to be “uninformed” (Greek: *agnoein*—to be without knowledge). In it you can hear our English word agnostic. Ignorant people need God’s truth to have proper hope in the face of death. His message in these verses is that death for the Christian is not the same as death for the unbeliever. When a Christian dies, they “fall asleep” in Jesus and as God raised Jesus from the dead, so He will raise those who are dead in Christ. Death will still bring grief, but not the same grief those without hope have. The hope of the Christian and the comfort we can extend to one another is this: all who are in Christ will forever live with the Lord.

It is easy to think of Jesus’ incarnation as simply a blip on the eternal radar where he took a few years to become man and then returned to celestial business as usual. The biblical account, however, indicates that when Jesus became incarnate, He took on humanity forever. **Hebrews 13:8** says “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Although His resurrected human body did not have the spatial constraints ours do, it bore many similarities. Jesus walked and spoke and ate. His resurrected body still bore the marks of crucifixion. Other high priests were prevented by death from continuing, but this high priest who remains forever can continue to sympathize with our weakness.

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Sample Discussion Questions:

What was the role of the Levitic priest?

How does the role of the Melchizedekian priest differ?

How does Jesus "minister" (as priest) to believers in their day-to-day living?

How does Jesus' work change believers' view of death?

What has been your biggest takeaway regarding Jesus as your Great High Priest?

SEGMENT #5: Revelation

[pages 118-122]

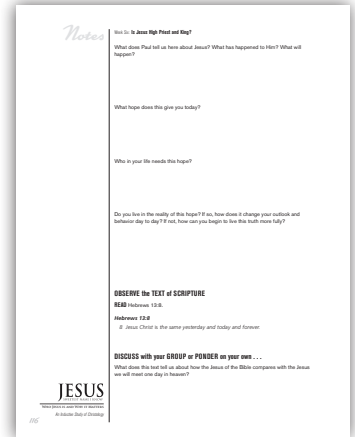
Key Talk Point:

- The resurrected Christ is coming back for us!

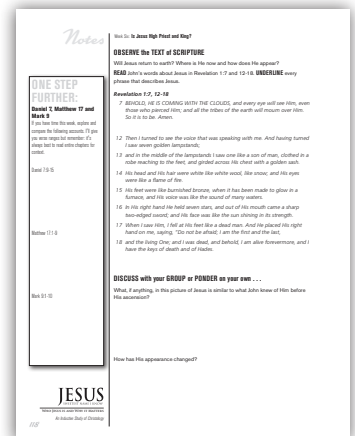
Context/Comments:

John tells his readers in **Revelation 1:7** that Jesus—who was crucified, buried, risen and ascended—is coming back! When He does, all will see Him, believers and unbelievers alike, and all the nations will mourn over Him.

Though one of Jesus' closest companions while He walked on earth, John falls like a dead man at the glorified Christ's feet when He appears in **Revelation 1:12-18**. John recounts His voice and appearance which is reminiscent of the vision in Daniel 7.



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In **Revelation 19:11-16**, John sees heaven opened and gives his readers yet another picture of Jesus. The humble carpenter who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey is now in heaven seated on a white horse. He no longer comes as a sacrifice but as a righteous judge. John says He is called “Faithful and True” and that “He judges and wages war.” This Jesus is the same Jesus who walked with John, but now he is described in His resurrected glory.

The gentle Shepherd of John 10 who guards His own, now leads the armies of heaven and wears a blood-dipped robe. Those who do not belong to Him fear “the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:16). He is called “Faithful and True,” “The Word of God,” and “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” He comes bringing the wrath of God that His sacrifice has propitiated for those who have believed in Him.

John gives us final record words from Jesus in **Revelation 22:20**: “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Just prior to this, in **Revelation 22:12-16**, Jesus declared the following:

- He is coming quickly.
- He will reward according to deeds.
- He is the Alpha and the Omega.
- He has sent His angel to bring this message to the churches.
- He is the root and descendant of David.
- He is the bright morning star.

In the middle of Jesus’ declarations, John comments on the futures of two kinds of people—those who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and enter into the eternal city and those who do not. Those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb have the right to the city and its tree of life. Those on the outside perish in the lake of fire.

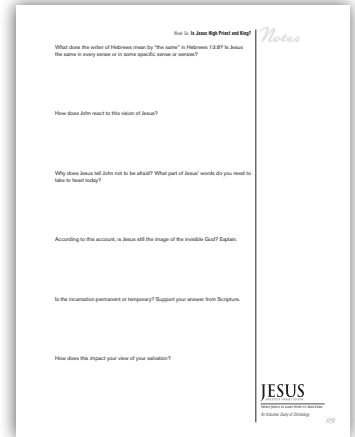
Sample Discussion Questions:

Describe Jesus from the Revelation accounts.

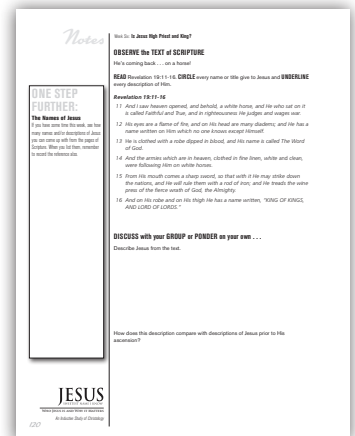
How does the description of Jesus in Revelation compare to that in the Gospels?

How does this square with the Jewish hope for a ruling Messiah?

How does the truth that Jesus is coming back impact how we live today?



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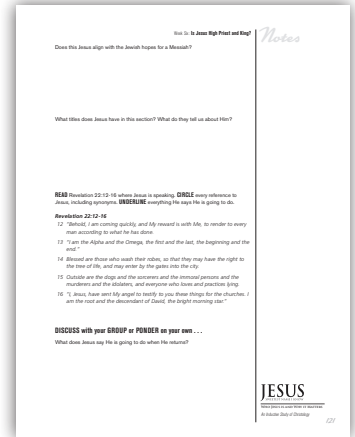


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Final Wrap-Up Questions:

What has been the biggest truth that you've learned in this study?

How will you remember it and live it out?



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