

The Bible

Teaching Objective:

To build trust in the Bible as the Word of God

OVERVIEW

“The Jesus Gift” is a series of study guides based upon the Bible. So, it makes sense to begin with an introduction to the Bible. This study guide has two main parts. Firstly, it looks at the Bible’s own claim that its ideas originated with God, and secondly, it provides evidence for this claim by looking at one of the Bible’s most compelling prophecies found in Daniel 2. In addition, the prophecy of Daniel 2 provides evidence for God existence and provides a first look at the wonderful eternal future that God has in store for us.

TIPS FOR BIBLE STUDY

LESS IS MORE. Sometimes it’s tempting to share too much in a Bible study. You might share too many verses and/ or go too long. In the moment, this might seem like everything is going wonderful. But there’s a catch. Next time your friend thinks about chatting with you about the Bible, they will remember how much time it took last time, and they might not be up for another marathon session. One hour and fifteen minutes is a good amount of time for these Bible studies. This will give you fifteen minutes to catch up on what’s been happening in each other’s lives, and one hour to unpack the topic.

FLEXIBILITY. Everyone you study with will be different. They will have different knowledge, experiences, and beliefs. For this reason, Bible studies are almost never one size fits all. Also, every person who gives a Bible study will come with different knowledge, experiences, and yes even beliefs! For these reasons you might find yourself wanting to customise your studies and this is encouraged! On the website, at the end of each study, you will find the option to download the guide as either a PDF or a Word document. The Word document is there so that you can modify the guide so that it suits you and those you’re studying with.

FONTS. If you choose to use the Word document, you might find that all the fonts look different to the guides online. If this is the case, you will need to install the correct fonts onto your computer. The two fonts you need are “Arvo” and “Open Sans” and can be downloaded at: thejesus.gift/fonts



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TEACHING POINTS

Discuss: What has been your experience with the Bible?

- This question is about listening to your friend and better understanding the prior experience and knowledge that they are bringing to the Bible study. Instead of assuming, it's better to ask.
- Tip: pay attention when you go to your first Bible verse. If you can see that they have no idea where to find it, take some time to show them how to use the Bible's table of contents. Also, you might find it helpful to buy two copies of the same Bible so you can share page numbers.

2 Peter 1:20-21

- The Bible speaks about many far-reaching ideas (God, heaven, life-after-death, morality, etc.). According to this verse, the ideas written about didn't originate with the authors themselves (it wasn't their own interpretation of these things), but the ideas originated with God.
- There are a few key words in these verses. You might like to point them out and ask what they think they mean. Here are three key words and how you might define them.
 - Prophet: a messenger of God. Someone God has chosen to speak directly to with messages that they are then to share with the people around them (the messages are not always about the future).
 - Prophecy: the message given to the prophet (again this isn't always about the future).
 - Scripture: the message when it's been written down.
- With this understanding of the above three words, you can point out that the Bible is a wonderful collection of messages, that God has given to his messengers throughout history, that have been written down and preserved for us. This is why it's sometimes called the word of God. It's a collection of messages from God to us. Wow!

2 Timothy 3:15-17

- This verse makes a big claim. Namely, that ALL of Scripture (the Bible) is inspired by God (has originated in some way with God).
- It's also shows us several reasons why God has given us the Bible. Verse 15 gives us one of the most important reasons, to provide us with all the wisdom we need to be saved. And it does this ultimately by introducing us to Jesus. You might ask the question: According to these verses, why has God given us the Bible?
- Remember that the big point in both verses is that the Bible's own claim is that it's not just a normal human book, but that it's a book that originated with God.

Daniel 2:1-6, 7-13, 14-19, 24-30

- Now we start on part two of this Bible study. Daniel 2 has one of the most amazing and easy to understand prophecies in the Bible. This remarkable prophecy provides compelling evidence that the Bible did in fact originate with God.
- These verses cover the story leading up to this prophecy. Take it in turn reading each section of verses and provide a quick summary of the story at the conclusion of each. This will help avoid getting lost in a big amount of text.



Daniel 2:31-35

- Here we get to the content of the dream. Before you read, ask the person you're studying with to try and imagine the scene as it is being described.
- When you are finished, retell the details of the dream using the first two images (found at the bottom of the bible study guide online).
- Alternatively, you might like to ask the person you are studying with to retell the dream.

Daniel 2:36-43

- Imagine if you were to go down to the street and ask 10 people what this dream might mean, how many different responses do you think you might get? Probably 10 (you might like to give some examples - asteroid colliding with our world etc.)! The great thing is that the Bible doesn't just tell us what the dream was but also what it means.
- Read through this section of the dream and use image #3 to help describe the predictions. Hold off from giving the interpretation until you have finished looking at all the predictions.

The Dream's Fulfillment:

- As you can see, this dream is a timeline of the rise and fall of kingdoms from the time of Daniel and into the future. This is astounding! And since this dream was written about 2500 years ago, we can now go through the history books and examine to see if this dream has proved true.
- Now use image #4 and describe how each component of the dream has been fulfilled. Try to remember and share a couple of simple facts about each kingdom. Details that connect to the specific details of the prophecy will be most helpful.
- Here is a quick overview of each kingdom:
 - **BABYLON:** The first kingdom is easy to identify since Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar directly that "You are that head of gold". So, the head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar and by extension the mighty kingdom of Babylon.
 - **MEDO PERSIA:** The city of Babylon was extremely fortified and considered unconquerable. However, Cyrus the Great, did just that! After several successful military battles, he set his eyes on Babylon itself, but the city was too fortified to conquer in the traditional way. An ancient version of the story claims that Cyrus diverted the Euphrates River (that ran under its walls) and marched in while the self-assured city was having a drunken feast. Other historians suggest that since the Babylonian king had become unpopular with the people, some soldiers sympathetic to Cyrus may have simply let them in. Either way, in unconventional manner, the Babylonians were defeated by Medo Persia (who had been inferior in many ways, especially in terms of luxury and magnificence).
 - **GREECE:** Next came the kingdom of Greece, led this time by Alexander the great. Alexander became king at the age of 20 and wasted no time marching his armies towards the Persians. Nothing and no one could stand in his way. With victory after victory, he soon gained control of all of Persia. By the age of 30 he ruled the world from Egypt to India.



- **ROME:** Next came the mighty kingdom of Rome. Beginning as a small town in central Italy, Rome went on to rule a vast empire comprising of most of Europe, western Asia and northern Africa. Rome's strength was in its military might. It was a kingdom that crushed whatever got in the way of its power. A most striking example of this was the crucifixion of Jesus.
- **EUROPE AND BEYOND:** According to the dream, the "iron kingdom" wouldn't be conquered as a whole but would be divided within. This is exactly what happened. The empire was first divided between the East and West. Barbarian tribes waged war and destabilised the empire further. The once great empire crumbled into pieces that were never to come together again. Today, many small nations comprise the land once controlled by Rome.

Daniel 2:44-45

- Now it's time to look at the last part of the prophecy. Since every other part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, we can have confidence this last part will be as well.
- Highlight that this last part of the prophecy happens during the time of the feet. This is the part we are living in!
- Soon God is going to bring an end to the kingdoms of this world and will establish a new kingdom that will never be conquered. This will be God's everlasting kingdom. A place of perfect love and joy. We will unpack this more as we continue through our Bible guides.

THE GIFT OF JESUS

In this series of study guides "The Gift of Jesus" refers to the story of Jesus. In this story, God rescues us by sending us the gift of his Son Jesus so that we might be forgiven, saved, and live forever. Each bible guide will have a section called "The Gift of Jesus" that will connect the topic being studied to this story of Jesus.

In this guide, this section highlights that the story of the Bible is this story of the gift of Jesus.

LIVING IT OUT

Every study guide will finish with some questions to help unpack and apply the meaning of the study. This is one of the most important parts of the study, so try and leave enough time for it at the end.

During this section, you might like to share what the prophecy of Daniel 2 means to you personally (maybe it's one of the reason you believe in God, trust the Bible, have hope in the future, etc.).



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