

STUDY AHEAD: WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

This resource will enrich your understanding of the Bible, and prepare you for the following weekend's message and for group discussions.

WAYS TO USE IT

1. Look up the verses in your **Bible** (use an easy-to-read version) or type the Bible verse reference into your **internet** search engine.
 2. You might want to use an **additional sheet** of paper for your answers. Date it and add it to the commentary notes in your binder if you're using one.
 3. Study **as many or as few** of the verses as you'd like. Choose the ones that you're interested in.
 4. **Questions are included** to help you interact more reflectively with the Bible verses and topics.
 5. Spaces are below each question so you can **write a brief answer**.
 6. **NOTE: Matthew=Mt; Mark=Mk; Luke=Lk; John=Jn**
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#1. THE NOT-SO-SILENT YEARS (9/30/18)

Study the settings and the cast of characters into which Jesus entered.

This first study will include verses from all four Gospels, and focus on the political and religious climate in the region of Palestine during the world-wide Roman rule.

In the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son... (Galatians 4:4)

A. POLITICAL SETTING AND CAST (Roman Empire)

1. Caesar Augustus--reigning Roman Emperor (Lk 2:1-3)

How powerful was this ruler? A census is for taxation.

Which month of the year is named after him?

2. Tiberius Caesar--2nd emperor, adopted son of Augustus, minor player (Lk 3:1)

3. Herod the Great

His phobia (Mt 2:1-12,16,19,20)

He rebuilt the Jewish temple (Jn. 2:20)

What does his violent reaction to the Magi's visit to bring gifts to a 'new king' reveal?

4. King Herod--Tetrarch of Galilee (also known as Herod Antipas)

(Lk 3:1; Mt 14:1-10; Lk 23:6-12)

What kind of a man was he? How did he treat John the Baptist and Jesus?

5. Pontius Pilate (Lk 3:1; Mt 27:11-26; Jn 18:28-40)

How strong was Pilate as a Roman leader over the Jews?

6. Tax Collectors

Jews collected taxes from their fellow Jews for Rome in a practice of corruption.

Jesus calls Levi. He was Matthew, the Gospel writer! (Mk 2:14-15)

Baptized by John, desiring to change (Lk 3:3,12,13)

Jesus' care for them (Mt 21:31,32; Lk 18:11-13, 19:1-10)

How did Jesus and John view the tax collectors differently than the Jewish leaders did?

7. Political Form of Death Was By Crucifixion (Mk 15:6-15)

Barabbas was released; Jesus was crucified (Acts 2:23,24)

God ordained this gruesome form of death to be used during Jesus' time on earth. How does that impact you?

B. RELIGIOUS SETTING AND CAST

1. Pharisees--major players, religious leaders against Jesus

Rejected John's offer for baptism (Mt 3:1,7-8; Lk 7:29-30)

Legalism/Rules (Mk 2:23-24; Mk 3:1-6)

Pride (Mk 8:11; Lk 18:11; Jn 8:3,5)

False piety (Lk 18:10-12; Mk 1:22,27)

Hatred of Jesus (Lk 6:6-7,10-11)

Jesus condemns them--"7 Woes" (Mt 23:13,15,16, 23, 25, 27, 29)

How did the Pharisees' heavy yoke of "religion" powerfully impact the Jewish people?

2. Traditions of the Elders

Excessive extra teachings added to the laws of Moses (Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9)

What do you admire about Jesus' authority?

3. Sadducees

Didn't believe in the supernatural (Mt 22:23-33; Acts 23:6-10)

What is one example of their views?

4. Sanhedrin--Jewish ruling counsel, the elite religious group of 70 elders led by Annas & Caiaphas the high priest

Determination to kill Jesus (Jn 11:45-48,53; Mt 26:59)

Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Jn 18:12-14,19-23)

Secret believers Nicodemus and Joseph (Jn 3:1-2; Jn 19:38-39)

What were they all afraid of? What was their death scheme?

5. Synagogues--Jesus (Lk 4:15-16; Mt 4:23; 13:54)

Jesus went to the local synagogues on the Sabbath where the O.T.

Scriptures were read. (Christians meet on 'resurrection day'.) His example of gathering to read Scripture is noteworthy. *Thoughts?*

6. Samaritans--a mixed race of Jew and Gentile, not liked by the Jews

Samaria--the route from Galilee to Jerusalem

Samaritan leper (Lk 17:11-19)

Samaritan woman (Jn 4:3-9, 39-42)

Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37)

How did Jesus raise the social value of the despised Samaritans?

7. Herod the Great's Temple--rebuilt before the birth of Christ

Impressive (Mt 24:1)

Jesus dedicated (Lk 2:21-22)

Center for the Jewish festivals (Lk 2:41)

Jesus at 12 yrs old in the temple (Lk 2:42,43,49)

Satan tempts Jesus (Mt 4:5-6)

Misuse of temple (moneychangers) (Jn 2:13-16)

Temple curtain torn, separating the Holy of Holies from humanity (Mt 27:50-51)

Jesus predicts its destruction (Mt 24:1,2)

The Romans allowed a temple and an active religious life. The timing was significant to the ministry of Jesus. Why?

8. There was a true remnant of believers who waited with HOPE for the coming of Messiah

Simeon (Lk 2:25-35)

Anna (Lk 2:36-38)

Zechariah & Elizabeth (Lk 1:5-6)

Mary (Lk 1:26-31)

Joseph (Mt 1:18-21)

How do these people encourage you to keep believing in God and His promises?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

1. Read Isaiah 40:13,14 and Romans 11:34.

Human reasoning would NOT have chosen these political or religious settings to send JESUS into such a hostile environment. *How do these verses about God and His ways impact you?*

2. *Is your current setting difficult, or are the people God has allowed to be in your life difficult? How has Jesus' example inspired you? (courage, prayer, ability to trust God's ways etc.)*