

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE®**

Advanced Bible Study

TEACHER GUIDE | WINTER 2021-22 | CSB



STUDY 1:

*Irrefutable: Prophecies
that Point Us to Jesus*

STUDY 2:

*How to Avoid
Life's Pitfalls*

LEADING SOMEONE TO THE GREATEST DECISION OF ALL

One of the great joys of leading a group in Bible study is seeing group members deepen their walk with Christ. Everyone's walk with Christ begins with an initial decision to follow Him in repentance and faith. There may be people in your group who have not made that decision yet. Take advantage of your time with them to talk about becoming a Christian.

As you tell your own story about coming to Christ, share these key truths:

1. We are all sinners, and each of us needs to acknowledge before God that we are sinners. That acknowledgement involves repentance, which is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Refer to Romans 3:23; 6:23; and Acts 3:19.
2. The only way a person can receive the gift of forgiveness is by faith in Jesus as God's Son. Use verses like Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; and John 14:6 when talking about faith in Christ.
3. Confessing your faith in Jesus Christ means confessing Him as Savior and Lord. Share Romans 10:9-10,13.

Invite the person to pray a prayer similar to this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I'm sorry for all the wrong I've done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

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DON'T MISS THIS!

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Get instant updates about new articles, giveaways, and more. **@BibleMeetsLife**

EXTRA!

Every week, you'll find additional discussion questions and creative teaching ideas to help you tailor each session to the needs of your group. You'll also find links to magazine articles and the *Family Connection* page for parents.

www.BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra

FAMILY CONNECTION

Family Connection helps parents connect with their students and kids by talking about what they're learning in their different Bible study groups. *Family Connection* makes it easy for parents to engage their children in spiritual conversation. *Family Connection* is available at **BibleStudiesforLife.com/FamilyConnection**.

DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Both *Advanced Bible Study* and *Advanced Bible Study Teacher Guide* are available as PDFs in a digital download. Go to **www.BibleStudiesforLife.com**.

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Advanced Bible Study Teacher Guide sometimes lists websites that may be helpful to our readers. Our staff verifies each site's usefulness and appropriateness prior to publication. However, website content changes quickly, so we encourage you to approach all websites with caution. Make sure sites are still appropriate before sharing them with participants, friends, and family.

HOW TO USE

WHAT'S INSIDE

Teaching Plan—Each session has a two-page teaching plan. Use it in accordance with Advanced Bible Study, utilizing the teaching outline to guide your class through the passage and its key emphases as detailed in the Advanced Bible Study commentary. Engage class members by leading a discussion of key points, asking questions, and inviting their insights.

Optional Idea—We learn in a variety of ways. This additional teaching idea will encourage your class members to use different senses, enhancing their learning and deepening their understanding.

Dig Deeper—This is an illustration or fact not readily drawn from the passage that can add depth and meaning as you teach.

PRAY

Because the Holy Spirit is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to “rightly divide the word of truth” as you teach your class. Read the Bible passage several times, asking the Holy Spirit to show you its meaning and application.

PREPARE YOUR CLASS MEMBERS

Encourage your class members to read Advanced Bible Study prior to class time. In addition, you may consult one of the following Personal Study Guides or commentaries:

- ▶ Herschel Hobbs Commentary
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Young Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Senior Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: KJV Adult
- ▶ Bible Studies for Life: Daily Discipleship Guide

Some class members may prefer to read their book after class as a way to follow up and reflect on what they have learned and discussed.

Introduction

IRREFUTABLE: PROPHECIES THAT POINT US TO JESUS

Was Jesus of Nazareth simply a good man and an engaging speaker who was, unfortunately, misunderstood by both religious leaders and His own followers, or was He something more—much more? When we read the Old Testament in light of what the New Testament reveals about Jesus, we discover that the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus were not events that just happened. The life and mission of the Messiah was planned long before Jesus was born. By looking at just those prophecies that point to His birth, we see irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan:

Share Christ. The Christmas season is an ideal time to point others to Jesus Christ. We gain confidence in sharing His story as we see how His life is a part of God's grand design planned long ago. The birth of Jesus is not just a quaint story we tell at Christmas; it was prophesied centuries earlier.

WRITERS:

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SESSION 1**God with Us****THE POINT**

Jesus is Immanuel—God with us.

LIFE CONNECTION

The world's religions are an attempt to explain God and how we can reach God. All these religions fall short because humanity falls short. We can't reach God on our own. Christianity reveals a wholly different approach: God reached out to us. In Jesus Christ, God came to earth to show us who God is and to provide a way back to our Creator. Jesus truly is Immanuel—God with us.

ISAIAH 7:14; MATTHEW 1:18-25

^{Isa. 7:14} Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel. [...] ^{Matt. 1:18} The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. ²⁰ But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because 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 See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her ²⁵ but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.

Teaching Plan

GET INTO THE STUDY

OPENING QUESTION: *When have you tried something that was beyond your ability?*

- ▶ What people can accomplish is astonishing. Yet some things are beyond our ability.
- ▶ The world's religions all fall short in their efforts to reach God. Christianity reveals that God reached out to us by sending Jesus.
- ▶ Display **Pack Item 1: Irrefutable Prophecies That Point Us to Jesus** poster to introduce this study.

See **OPTIONAL IDEA** on page 10 for a creative way to introduce Isaiah 7:14.

STUDY THE BIBLE

ISAIAH 7:14

The virgin birth was foretold hundreds of years before Jesus' birth.

Isaiah the prophet foretold Jesus' birth 700 years before it happened.

- ▶ We look to others for things only God can give. Use the information in "The Setting" (pp. 8-9 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to set up this session.
- ▶ Distribute copies of **Pack Item 2: Prophecies** handout for a list of messianic prophecies: where they are found and fulfilled in Scripture.
- ▶ Use the paragraphs that begin "Interpreters often jump ..." (p. 9 in *Advanced Bible Study*) to show how Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled.

God's astonishing sign was that a virgin would conceive and give birth to this special child.

- ▶ Discuss the significance of the phrase *the virgin will conceive*, using the paragraphs that begin "In the typical ..." and "The Hebrew word ..." (p. 10 in *Advanced Bible Study*).

- ▶ Display **Pack Item 3: Jesus' Birth and Early Childhood** map to show locations that were significant in Jesus' early life.
- ▶ Ask: How does the name *Immanuel* bring hope for the people of Isaiah's time and for us today?

MATTHEW 1:18-19

God fulfilled His promise through Mary's pregnancy.

Matthew's words reflect Isaiah's prophecy that Mary had conceived the child from the Holy Spirit.

- ▶ Say: When God speaks, His words have the power to save.
- ▶ Discuss how Matthew connected Jesus' birth to Old Testament prophecies, using the paragraph that begins "Matthew began ..." (p. 12 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ How is our own faith strengthened when we recall the ways God keeps His promises in our lives and in the lives of other believers?

Matthew's words reflect Joseph's dilemma.

- ▶ Discuss Joseph's dilemma when he heard the news that Mary was pregnant, using the paragraph that begins "In verse 19 ..." (pp. 13-14 in *Advanced Bible Study*).
- ▶ Ask: In what ways was Joseph caught between compassion and the law? Say: Righteousness must be measured with compassion.
- ▶ Say: It would have been legal for Joseph to divorce Mary, because of her pregnancy outside of marriage. Joseph's initial decision to "divorce her secretly" was a compassionate choice. (See page 14 in *Advanced Bible Study*.)
- ▶ Emphasize that God will fulfill His promises through those who are faithful to Him.

MATTHEW 1:20-25

Our faith, like Joseph's, must be grounded in the truth that God is with us.

Optional Idea

To introduce Isaiah 7:14, place a chair in the front of the room and invite a volunteer to sit in the chair. Place a bottle of water on the floor, just out of reach of the person sitting in the chair. Invite the group to imagine for just a moment that this bottle of water represents God. Ask: What are some ways that people through the ages have tried to “reach” God? (examples: by working, doing good things, building idols, building the Tower of Babel, and so on.)

Invite the person in the chair to try and reach the bottle of water, but he must remain seated in the chair. When he cannot reach the bottle of water, urge him to “try harder.” Comment to the group, that no matter how the person tries, he cannot reach the bottle of water. Point out that all the world’s religions have tried to explain how people can strive to reach God—but these religions all fail, because we cannot reach God through our own power.

Next invite another volunteer to pick up the bottle of water and bring it to the person in the chair. Stress that when we could not reach God, He reached out to us by sending Jesus Christ to earth to help us understand God and to provide a way back to our Creator. As you turn to Isaiah 7:14, instruct the group to listen for how the Bible tells us Jesus truly is Immanuel—God with us.



Dig Deeper

Life presents a wide variety of situations to us. We enjoy high points for sure, but we also have many difficulties. As we navigate the tough times, there are sure to be instances when we need more help than any physical, human person can offer. In Psalm 23:4, David stated, “Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me, your rod and your staff—they comfort me.” We find no greater comfort than God being with us. With Jesus, humanity has experienced God.

Humanity has experienced God through Jesus in two ways. One was physically, while He was on earth. The best explanation of this is in the miracles He performed. All who either received or witnessed

His miracles, experienced God. In Luke 7:1-10, Jesus healed a centurion’s servant. Jewish elders were sent to ask Jesus to come and heal the man. And He did. By this one miracle the centurion’s servant, centurion, and Jewish elders all encountered God.

The second way humanity has experienced God through Jesus is spiritually. More specifically, Christ in the believer. Romans 8:9-10 states, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. Now if Christ is in you....” The powerful work of Jesus in the believer’s life is the way people encounter God today without actually meeting Him face to face. From that moment forward the believer is able to experience God.