



A Gentle Ramble through the Bible

STUDY GUIDE

THE 2nd MISSIONARY JOURNEY

*Everything is free, but copyrighted.
That means you can download the files for use in your personal study.*

*You can even download the files for use in group studies
as long as you give credit where credit is due*

*and as long as you don't charge for the materials or information.
That's super important to me.*

*No charging people to learn about God.
Period. Got that?
Okay, then. Have at it!*

Scripture references labeled "NIV" are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

All others are my own translation unless otherwise indicated.

Contents - THE 2nd MISSIONARY JOURNEY

REFERENCE	3
Tools for Your Backpack	3
CLASS #144: Son of God	4
Christians and Pagans	4
CLASS #145: Paul’s Vow	5
What Could It Mean?	5
CLASS #146: The Wrath To Come	6
The Believers	6
CLASS #147: The Wrath To Come	7
The NonBelievers	7

REFERENCE

Tools for Your Backpack

Click here to get to the [Reference Material](#).

There you will find:

- [How to Approach a Difficult Passage](#)
- A handy table of [Nations of the Bible](#)
- Links and info on free and low-cost [Bible study tools](#)
- Some great info on the [Twelve Tribes of Israel](#)
- An [Index of the Psalms](#) showing authors (if known) and showing which stories or passages each psalm relates to
- A very helpful [Table of the Kings of Israel and Judah](#) side-by-side, along with the names of the prophets called to speak the word of the Lord to them
- A helpful framework for [making sense out of the books of the Prophets](#)
- A chart organizing the chapters of [Jeremiah in Chronological Order](#)
- [Maccabees Chronology](#) showing material covered in each class as we go along
- [Timeline of the Gospels](#)
- [Timeline of Acts and the Undisputed Letters of Paul](#)

CLASS #144: Son of God

Christians and Pagans

From the beginning his mother knew that he was no ordinary person. Prior to his birth, a heavenly figure appeared to her, announcing that her son would not be a mere mortal but would himself be divine. This prophecy was confirmed by the miraculous character of his birth, a birth accompanied by supernatural signs. The boy was already recognized as a spiritual authority in his youth; his discussions with recognized experts showed his superior knowledge of all things religious. As an adult he left home to engage in an itinerant preaching ministry. He went from village to town with his message of good news, proclaiming that people should forgo their concerns for the material things of this life, such as how they should dress and what they should eat. They should instead be concerned with their eternal souls.

He gathered around him a number of disciples who were amazed by his teaching and his flawless character. They became convinced that he was no ordinary man but was the **Son of God**. Their faith received striking confirmation in the miraculous things that he did. He could reportedly predict the future, heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead. Not everyone proved friendly, however. At the end of his life, his enemies trumped up charges against him, and he was placed on trial before Roman authorities for crimes against the state.

Even after he departed this realm, however, he did not forsake his devoted followers. Some claimed that he had ascended bodily into heaven; others said that he had appeared to them, alive, afterward, that they had talked with him and touched him and become convinced that he could not be bound by death. A number of his followers spread the good news about this man, recounting what they had seen him say and do. Eventually some of these accounts came to be written down in books that circulated throughout the empire. Now, read the footnote.¹

1. How does this make you feel? What questions does it raise?
2. How do we know Jesus is who the Bible says he is? What, exactly, are you basing your own faith on?

¹ Per Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament : A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Sixth Edition, Oxford University Press, 2016, p44-46. This is the story of Appollonius of Tyana, a great neo-Pythagorean teacher and pagan holy man who lived about the time of Jesus. Btw, I can't say enough great things about this particular textbook of Ehrman's. Highly recommend it for New Testament studies.

CLASS #145: Paul's Vow

What Could It Mean?

In Acts 18:18 we see Paul cutting his hair “because of a vow he had taken.” What in the world does cutting hair have to do with vows? We know Paul operates within a Jewish context, so the best place to look for clues is in the Hebrew Bible.

In Genesis 28:20-22, Jacob vows that if the Lord will protect him and bring him home safely, he will become a worshiper of God and will give back to God a tenth of all God gives him.

In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah, who is barren, vows that if the Lord will give her a child she will dedicate the child to the Lord's service for life and his hair will never be cut.

Another reference is in Numbers 6:1-21. It describes a “Nazirite vow” where a person dedicates themselves to the Lord for a particular season. During this time the person neither eats nor drinks anything coming from a grapevine, and they do not cut their hair. Whatever vows they have made (promises they made to the Lord) they must fulfill. And when the season is over, they shave off their hair and include it in an offering to the Lord.

There are tons of rules in the Law of Moses around making a vow to the Lord and being sure to complete it. You can search the word “vow” in the Hebrew Bible to find them.

The common denominator in them all is “dire need” on the part of the one making the vow and a promise by them to offer some sacrifice (not necessarily an animal) if the Lord will help them through it.

1. What could Paul's dire need have been in Corinth? The events of significance here were meeting Aquila and Priscilla, being rejected by the Jews and telling them their blood is on their own head and he'll go to the Gentiles from now on, and being dragged before the proconsul by the Jews. Paul is worried enough that the Lord sends him a vision of reassurance of his safety.
2. Paul seems to always be in mortal danger. If this is his dire need, why does the Lord protect him sometimes and does not seem to protect him at others?
3. **Psa 91:9-12 (NIV)** “If you say, ‘The LORD is my refuge,’ and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

Is this true or not?

CLASS #146: The Wrath To Come

The Believers

In class we looked at 1 Thess 3:13 where Paul refers to Jesus coming with “the holy ones,” and 1 Thess 1:10 where he talks about the Thessalonians waiting for Jesus to come and “**rescue us from the coming wrath.**”

Jesus had something to say about this too--not much, actually. He only talked about it when his disciples questioned him specifically about what he meant when he said the Temple would be destroyed. In Luke 21 Jesus told them their lives would be rough. He said there would be earthquakes, famine, wars and disease.

Luk 21:16-19 (NIV)

16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. **17** Everyone will hate you because of me. **18** But not a hair of your head will perish. **19** Stand firm, and you will win life.

1. If they will go through all these terrible things, including execution, then what does he mean that “not a hair of your head will perish”?

Then Jesus rolls into End Time prophecy, which we saw in class is typical of prophets once they get going.

Luk 21:20, 22-24 (NIV)

20 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. **21** Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, **let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.** **22** For this is the time of punishment [*can also translate as vindication or defense*] **in fulfillment of all that has been written.** **23** ... There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. **24** They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

2. Does this track with what we heard in class from the prophet Zechariah? Does this sound as if the people of Jerusalem will suffer? Taken with verse 16-19 above, does it sound as if believers will suffer along with them?

Luk 21:27-28, 36 (NIV)

27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28** When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." ...**36** Be always on the watch, and **pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.**"

3. Is it possible that believers will be caught up in the suffering? Might we be affected by the consequences of decisions made by others? Is what Jesus said different than what Paul said?

CLASS #147: The Wrath To Come

The NonBelievers

Last week we took a close look at what might or might not happen to **believers** on the Last Day when the Gentile nations of the world gather to attack Israel, **specifically Jerusalem**. Today let's think about the implications for **nonbelievers**.

As always, remember that these are ancient texts from various sources written in cultures hundreds of years apart. Our goal here is to compare samples from various time periods and authors, including Paul, and then compare that with what Jesus taught. This whole discussion may make you very uncomfortable. That's okay. Lean into it. We're bringing to light all the dark corners of our theology.

What we ran across in the lesson:

1Thess 4:13-15 (my paraphrase) We don't need to tell you the Day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. You already know this. **Other people** may be saying, "We are secure. All is at peace," but they will be shocked when **their ruin** descends on them all of a sudden. There will be no escape for them.

Here's a little of what Zechariah said about the Day of the Lord:

Zech 14 (my paraphrase) On that day, Jerusalem will be plundered, houses ransacked, women raped, and half of the people taken captive. But the Lord will show up. On that day, he will stand on the Mount of Olives and it will split in two, and everyone will flee. The Lord God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there will be neither light nor dark. It will be unique. Living water will flow from Jerusalem, and the Lord will be king over all the earth.

And the Lord will strike all the *nations and animals* who attacked Jerusalem with a plague. Their flesh, their eyes, and their tongues will rot even as they stand. All the people stricken will panic.

The survivors of that plague will travel *as a people* from their nations to Jerusalem every year to worship the King, the Lord God of the Armies. And those who don't, won't get rain that year. [Zechariah specifically reiterates this bit, naming the Egyptians in particular even though Isaiah (Isa 19:25) names Egypt in "that Day" as blessed first and foremost by the Lord.]

1. Is the plague language here a reflection of how the ancient culture in Zechariah's time (520 BCE) understood the results of warfare and imagined the treatment of the defeated people? Remember, they were just defeated by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. Or should this be taken literally, say as a result of nuclear warfare? Would the Lord use nukes? If you placed your thoughts on this slider bar where would you land?

Ancient understanding
of warfare

Take this literally

(See next page)

2. Do any of the above say anything about this being about sending unbelievers to hell or does it sound more like immediate physical consequences that lead to repentance (a change of mind) rather than spiritually eternal punishment?

Jesus rarely talked about the End Time, and when he did (Matthew 24) he confirmed it would be awful for everyone and to stay away from Jerusalem if at all possible. He said it could happen at any moment. And he said, "The one who perseveres/endures/bears up to the end will be saved/healed/preserved/rescued" and that when he comes the angels will gather to him his elect/chosen/favorites (I read this as "friends he's appointed to tasks") from the four winds and ends of the heavens.

Then he tells four stories in Matt 24:45-25:46 about a servant put in charge of the care and feeding of the other servants, ten bridesmaids remaining watchful (or not), about people investing (or not) what their master gave them while he was away, and about the King separating "sheep" from "goats" (those who had compassion on others and those who did not). The consequences, respectively were, being cut into pieces and assigned a place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, being locked out of the wedding party, being thrown into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and going to eternal punishment in eternal fire.

3. Well, which of the four punishments is it? They are not all possible at once. Or is Jesus simply using common stories and familiar cultural scenarios to make a point? If so, what would be the overall point?
4. The first three stories are clearly parables. The fourth one does not sound like a parable. But if the end result is literally "eternal punishment in eternal fire" why the different endings in the three explanatory parables?
5. So can we really know for sure, literally and physically, what will happen on the Last Day? If Jesus didn't talk about it much at all, what **did** Jesus focus on?
6. How can we respond when people want to pin down the details of "the Day of the Lord"?