

Leader's Guide for

Time Travel through the Bible

A video curriculum resource to
introduce young people to the Bible

PRODUCED BY
International Lutheran Laymen's League



Distributed by
Vision Video
PO Box 540
Worcester, PA 19490
Phone: (610) 584-3500
Fax: (610) 584-6643
Email: info@visionvideo.com
Web: www.visionvideo.com

Table of Contents

Preface	3
Notes for the Leader	3

PART ONE

Section 1	
Archaeology	5
What God Should We Serve?	6
The Promise Made	7
Section 2	
Deliverance From Slavery in Egypt	8
The Land	9
Section 3	
Sacrifices	10
The Exile and the Return	11
The Glory of Rome	12
The Jerusalem Temple	12
Section 4	
Insecurity and Security	14
The Bethlehem Star	15

PART TWO

Section 1	
Jesus Arrives in the Promised Land	17
Jesus Leaves the Promised Land	17
Section 2	
Growing Up Around Nazareth	18
Jesus Returns to the Promised Land	18
The Word of God	20
The Temple Experience—Jesus, Age 12	20
Section 3	
John, the Voice	21
The Essenes and the Qumran Community	21
Hypocrisy	23
Section 4	
The Jordan River and Qumran	24
The Baptism of Jesus	24
God Preserves the Scriptures	25
Birth of a New Nation	25
Section 5	
Capernaum—Ministry Headquarters	26
Capernaum	26
The Cana Wedding	26

Time Travel through the Bible

Leader's Guide

PREFACE

“Time Travel Through the Bible” is a two-part program which transports the viewer to Biblical times via the archaeologist’s shovel. Hosted by Jonathan Frakes of “Star Trek: The Next Generation,” exciting new discoveries in Biblical archaeology are presented to intrigue high school and college youth and add flesh-and-blood reality to Biblical characters.

Part 1 begins with the stunning discovery of Abraham’s birthplace by British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley in 1922, then goes on to probe the “mega-ego” of Rameses the Great, presumed pharaoh of the exodus, and concludes with an in-depth portrait of the greatest builder and perhaps most paranoid ruler of the ancient world, Herod the Great.

Part 2 presents down-to-earth historical and archaeological information about the places Jesus called home as a boy and what it was like to grow up as a Jewish youth in the 1st century. John the Baptist’s boyhood is traced, tying the famous discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Qumran community where John may have found refuge. Then a reenactment of a Jewish wedding like the one at Cana and an in-depth look at the amazing archaeological finds in Capernaum, center of Christ’s Galilean ministry.

This two-part series is for classroom instruction and self study at home. The background material is intended particularly for the home viewer and makes the story easier to understand. Suggested Bible readings and questions may be used or omitted, as the viewer sees fit. They are intended as starter questions to promote class discussion.

NOTES FOR THE LEADER

1. Preview the video before group use. Make notes about the video. Anticipate questions—for many this will be new information, new impressions, things they want to talk about because they can relate to the video.
2. Use the introduction from the discussion guide; tell your group what to expect in the segment you are using. Present the segment. Afterwards, allow the students to offer reactions before you begin the discussion questions. The comments may suggest the subject in which they are most interested. **BE FLEXIBLE!**
3. You may be limited in discussion. Be selective. You know your group. Choose questions and comments that help your group members grow in understanding their life, their Lord, and their own faith.
4. Everyone should have a Bible to check references during discussion.
5. At the session’s end, take a moment to summarize. Make sure your group feels it has accomplished something. Make a conclusion about some aspect of our Lord’s life and its significance for our personal faith.

PART ONE

Part 1 is divided into four sections:

Section 1 (12 minutes)

An introduction to Biblical archaeology; Abraham's home life and the culture of Ur.

Section 2 (12 minutes)

Abraham finds a different home—the move to Canaan; the Israelites in Egypt; the promise fulfilled as Moses brings them to the Promised Land.

Section 3 (14 minutes)

Canaanite idol worship; God's displeasure with Israel for following this practice; the resulting captivity, return, and rebuilding of the temple; Israel under Roman rule: Herod the Great.

Section 4 (10 minutes)

Herod kills his wife, fearing for his throne; building the fortress of Masada; the Birth of the King (Jesus); the Star of Bethlehem and the Magi; Herod kills the babies of Bethlehem.

Section 1

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY and ABRAHAM'S UR

First view Section 1 of the video; it is about 12 minutes long.

Archaeology catches the interest of the scholar and the man on the street. The intrigue of accidental discoveries in far off places revives childhood fantasies of high adventure. As Christians seek to understand more of God's revealed Word, the science of Biblical archaeology should mean much to all of us.

The Christian has more than an academic interest in ancient history. Biblical archaeology helps a person's faith become historically oriented. The Christian pictures the Savior who was born when Caesar Augustus was the Roman Emperor and when Herod the Great was king of the Jews. Through Biblical archaeology, events of Old and New Testament can be placed into historical context.

The Christian affirms that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. The Word became flesh. He entered at a point in history. He suffered and died. Now we use the archaeological spade and bring to light the past through the knowledge of the present.

1. Just think! Jonathan Frakes helps us to understand the Bible even better.
 - a) Did you get the idea of his two time machines? (the telescope and the shovel)
 - b) How does each one help you understand history better?
 - c) Did you catch all those big words he used? (civilizations, extinct, scholars, excavate)
2. In the 1920s Sir Leonard Woolley of England led a team of archaeologists to modern Iraq to search for Abraham's Ur.
 - a) Why would the discovery of Ur be so important to those people? Why to us?
 - b) What is a ziggurat? (a terraced temple tower)
 - c) When was it constructed? (3700 B.C.) To worship whom? (the moon god, Nanna)
3. Can you locate ancient Ur on a world map? (eastern end of the Fertile Crescent, near Euphrates River, about 100 miles upstream from the Persian Gulf)
4. Other important discoveries in Ur— Ur's Royal Cemetery:
 - a) Were other people buried with the King? (Yes, 10 musicians also in the Great Death Pit)
 - b) Besides people, what else was discovered in the Royal Cemetery?
 - c) From the discoveries made at Ur, what did Woolley conclude?

WHAT GOD SHOULD WE SERVE?

In Joshua's last message to the Israelites (Josh. 24:1-28) he gives an overview of history from Abram's call out of Ur up to his own time. It's interesting to see what he says about Terah and the family (vs. 2).

1. Does that mean that Abram could have "served other gods" also?
2. Did that surprise you about Abram's early life?
3. Still, God in His love called Abram to be an ancestor of the promised Messiah, and, of course, God's chosen people—the Israelites.
 - a) What gods do we sometimes serve who fail us, also?
 - b) Do we sometimes find ourselves making religion fit the way we want to live rather than living the way God wants us to live?
 - c) How does God call you back?
4. The Amorites come from the west to conquer Ur. They had help from an eastern nation. The fall of Ur plus the ineffectiveness of the chief moon god, Nanna, to avert this catastrophe must have had a strange effect upon Abram— a major upheaval in his life. "What good is it to have religion if religion won't help you when you need it?" is maybe what Abraham was thinking.
 - a) Have you ever had similar thoughts? Think of some shattering experience in your own life when it seemed that all the props were being pulled out from under you (losing a loved one, moving from friends and acquaintances, a breakup of a relationship with a close friend, etc.).
 - b) Did a crisis situation make you feel open to God's call to serve Him or did it make you feel God was impervious (didn't care) to what was going on? Explain your responses.

THE PROMISE MADE

1. Then came God's call to Abram (Gen. 12:1-3). The Bible doesn't say anything about Abraham's faith here, but it does say something about Abraham's actions (verse 4).

a) Does his action help you to understand better what God says about obedience in the following Bible references? 1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 7:21; Luke 10:36-37

b) When we do actions that please God, what does this prove about our faith according to James 2:18?

2. Abraham came from a civilization that was extremely advanced for that time. They seemed to have developed the world's first system of mathematics, including the study of fractions, square roots, cube roots, and geometry. Notice the "tablet house." Abram probably attended one like this.

a) Describe the kind of schooling Abram had. (Monitor with big stick, sit on hard rock, write on soft clay, absolute silence)

b) Would you have liked to go to school there?

3. Abram's calling gives to the people of Israel, at the time the Book of Genesis was written, a clear identity as God's chosen people. The promise which accompanied the call had two parts. 1) Abram would be the father of many nations, and 2) his descendants would possess the land (Gen. 12:7-9 and 13:14-18). The promise of the possession of the land waited for centuries before it was fulfilled.

a) Why was the land of Palestine (name called at time of Christ) so important to Israel in Old Testament times?

b) What did it say about God and God's promise to Abraham?

c) Why do you suppose God included something so specific as a particular region of the Middle East in His promise (Gen. 12:1)?

When you take care of someone's property, you really are called a steward. When you see "our" property as really belonging to God, how will your attitude be different from someone who views it strictly as "mine, all mine?" Who really owns all things?

Section 2**DELIVERANCE FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT**

(Before this discussion, view Section 2 of the video; it is about 12 minutes long.)

Now there is a gap of about 400 years. Nothing is said in the video about Abraham's son Isaac or of his grandson Jacob (later named Israel). It is Jacob's son Joseph who brings his family to live with him in Egypt. Joseph is an important figure—second in command to the Pharaoh. There is a tremendous famine in Egypt, extending into Canaan where Jacob and his 11 other sons live. They hear about extra food in Egypt; check out Gen. 37-50.

1. This segment of the video portrays the awesome power and splendor of Rameses the Great (II), ruler of Egypt.
 - a) How old was he when he was given responsibility and even a harem? (10) Tell about his early life.
 - b) What responsibilities did he have?
 - c) What responsibilities did you have at the same age?
2. The Israelites have been made slaves. Several generations pass.
 - a) If you have lived there as a slave of the second or third generation, what might be your attitude toward Egypt? Toward your future? Toward your children's future?
 - b) Compare what may have been the attitudes of God's people in Egypt with the experience Paul describes in Rom. 8:18-25 or with the bitterness expressed by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 20:14-18).
 - c) If similar feelings come to you, what acts of God can reassure you and inspire you with hope?
3. God is ready to lead His people out of Egypt. Pharaoh changes his mind again and sends 600 chariots to recapture the fleeing Israelites. Pharaoh loses badly. Now Moses takes time to praise God for this deliverance. Do we?
 - a) Read together Ex. 15:1-18 ("The Song of Moses"). This is repeated throughout Scripture in various places.
 - b) Compare Ps. 136:10-15; Rev. 15:3-4. How can the Jewish exodus help us to better understand the cross?
4. An important part of the story begins.
 - a) Did anything especially impress you as God led His people out of Egypt? (To better understand the importance of the Red Sea Crossing, read Ps. 77:11-20, Ps. 74: 12-13, and Is. 51:10).
 - b) As God used water to save His people from Egypt, how does He use water today to save babies and adults? What importance does this have for you?

THE LAND

1. The land of Canaan was part of the original covenant given to Abraham. The land was mentioned many times in Old Testament history; the people were to know that this was God's gift to them and not something they had earned. Does this have a parallel to the salvation story? (Heaven is our gift; we didn't earn it or deserve it.)

2. Possessing the land was linked to keeping the covenant on Israel's part. Note Deut. 8:6-20. Although it was divided for the clans of Israel, it still belonged to God. See Lev. 25:23. Why is this so important to remember when we say, "That is mine!"?

a) Do you think the Promised Land is as important to the Jews today as it was to the Jews during Jesus' time? Why or why not?

b) Do you think God's promise in Gen. 17:8 is true today? Why or why not?

3. The Israelites conquered Canaan; Joshua was their leader. The first city they attacked west of the Jordan River was Jericho. The battle plan is written in Joshua 6. Read it.

a) What is a "shofar"? (ram's horn)

b) What was its purpose in the battle?

c) Notice how much of God's dealing with His people is connected with water. Jericho's main water source is a spring, Elisha's Well. What would happen if an enemy were to control the spring?

d) It might be interesting to note how God stopped the Jordan River from flowing so the Israelites could pass over. (See Joshua 3: 16.)

Section 3

SACRIFICES

(Before this discussion, view Section 3 of the video; it is about 14 minutes long.)

God wanted the Children of Israel to remove the foreign nations from the Promised Land. They failed to do so; Baal worship was not exterminated. Some Israelites in the north began to worship Baal, sacrificing their children. Even though Isaiah and Jeremiah had warned the people about God's anger, they continued to sin. Read Deut. 12:29-31, 2 Kings 23:1-10, Is. 57, and Jer. 32:26-35 to see the horrible sins that violated God's law.

For a long time, archaeologists could find no evidence of child sacrifice in the land of Palestine. Then a discovery was made in Carthage in North Africa. Carthage imported Baal worship from Palestine in Old Testament times. A modern grave robber was caught stealing a stone artifact from the city. Finding the cave from which it was taken, officials discovered thousands of artifacts. They were tombstones inscribed to the god Baal. Under almost every tombstone was found a small jar containing the ashes and charred bones of a sacrificed child.

God did permit the Babylonians to come into the land in 586 B.C. to conquer Judah, destroying the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, and carrying many people to Babylon as hostages.

1. Think about sacrifice.

- a) Why do you think the Children of Israel— God's own special people— would offer their children as sacrifices to an idol?
- b) Part of the answer is given by Jesus (John 6:51-66). It is an old question: "How can a person please God?" Sacrifice—even human—seemed like one answer. How do people today attempt to please God? What is the only way to please Him?
- c) Make a list of reasons for sacrifice (Heb. 9:16—10-18). Compare Old Testament sacrifices with Christ's sacrifice.

2. You may have been shocked to see the ashes of little babies burned alive. What about abortion today? Is this similar to pagan practices? Discuss.

3. It is important to know the difference between the sacrifice of Christ and your own forms of self-sacrifice. The first is a sign of God's love for us. The second is a response to that love. The first is a payment for guilt; the second is a thank offering for God's lifting the burden of guilt.

- a) Read Matt. 16:24-25, Luke 9:59-62, and Luke 14:26-33. Is Jesus asking His followers to make sacrifices? If yes, why? If no, what is He asking?
- b) Is discipleship that consists of self-sacrifice more God-pleasing than discipleship that comes without any great trouble? Why or why not?

THE EXILE AND THE RETURN

Sin brings enormous consequences. The people of God turned their backs on their covenant with God and worshiped whom they pleased. God, in His righteous anger, permitted the Northern Kingdom to be conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. along with the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C.

Hoshea, the last king of the Northern Kingdom, refused to pay tribute to Assyria and was imprisoned. His capital, Samaria, was besieged for three years, then stormed and conquered in 722 B.C. More than 27,000 people were deported to Nineveh and surrounding cities and only the very young and old were left behind. Foreign settlers were sent to replace the exiled people.

Judah, the Southern Kingdom, rebelled against Babylonia in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar deported the cream of the population to Babylon (2 Kings 24:14; Jer. 52:28). The attack on Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and its ultimate destruction (along with burning the temple) added to the captives sent to Babylon (2 Kings 25:11 and Jer. 52:29).

Think about living in Babylon, hundreds of miles from your homeland. The year is 540 B.C. You are Jewish exiles, parents of children who had not seen Palestine or its beautiful temple in Jerusalem. Your feelings may reflect what the psalmist said in Ps. 137.

1. How would your thoughts and feelings about God, the future, faith, and hope differ from the Israelites in Egypt before Moses came? How might the thoughts and feelings of Israelites during the two captivities be the same?
2. Today many people have been exiled from their homelands and families because of religion or politics. Make a list of people—individuals or groups—who are exiles. What adjustments do exiles make? How should the church respond to refugees?
3. People may experience personal exile while living in their own country. This may occur in personal relationships with others. People leave the church, many during their teenage years. Some return later in life; others don't. Children may feel that parents exile them. The same is true for feelings of parents about their children.
 - a) How can such exiles be eliminated?
 - b) How are such personal exiles and returns similar to the experience of the Israelites? How do they differ?
 - c) What does the return of the remnant in 539 B.C. by the order of Cyrus, King of Persia, say about God's faithfulness to the covenant-promise given to Abraham (2 Tim. 2:13)? What does it say about the importance of our own trust in God?
 - d) The Bible tells us that "whom God loves, He disciplines." Divine punishment had a purpose: to win the people back to God. How is God's purpose in discipline often misunderstood by those He disciplines?
 - e) How does God change people? Read Eph. 2:5, 10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 1:19; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9.
4. Why was building the temple given top priority by the remnant who returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4)? What did this say about the effect of the exile upon the Jews' previous idolatry?

THE GLORY OF ROME

The ruins of Rome are proof of the wealth and culture it had. Visitors can visualize the tremendous building projects—the Circus Maximus, the Forum, the many marble temples and statues scattered through the city.

Rome was the head of a powerful empire. It took General Pompey only three months of fighting to bring Palestine under his control. It was to this puppet state of Rome that Herod returned after being crowned by the Roman Senate as “King of the Jews.”

During the time of the great Roman Empire which had its beginnings in the 1st Century B.C., Jesus Christ was born. Roman rule is mentioned in the Christmas story (Luke 2) when the ruling emperor, Caesar Augustus, issued his decree for universal taxation. This brought Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem (Matt. 1; Luke 2).

THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE

The Jerusalem temple may have been the largest in the world. Certainly, it was the center of Jewish worship—as Jesus said, “My Father’s house, a house of prayer” (Luke 19:45-46). Herod employed thousands of people to rebuild, restore, modify, and enlarge the temple and its enclosure. Covering 36 acres, it was a marvel of the ancient world.

Scripture mentions David’s desire to build God a permanent structure (2 Sam. 7:2) but God forbade it. He allowed David to collect materials, gather treasure, and purchase the site (1 Chron. 22:8; 2 Sam. 18-25). But David’s son Solomon began the construction in his fourth year as king and completed it seven years later near what today is called the Dome of the Rock in Old Jerusalem.

When Cyrus allowed the first Jewish exiles to return in 537 B.C., they commenced the rebuilding of the temple under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 1:32-3, 8-10). Ezra 3:12 points out it was much inferior to Solomon’s Temple. The Maccabees later used this temple as a fortress to resist the onslaughts of Pompey for three months in 63 B.C.

Herod attempted to ingratiate the Jews to himself by providing work in the remodeling of the existing temple. The 90-foot-high walls surrounding the temple mount were finished in only 3 years, but work continued on the total structure until 64 A.D. The construction took more than 80 years. Barely 6 years after that, it was destroyed by the Romans, never to be rebuilt again.

To understand events in the life of Jesus it is important to look at the function and design of the temple. The outer court was surrounded by a portico. Here the scribes held schools and debates (Luke 2:46; 19:47). Here were the merchants and money-changers (John 2:14-16; Luke 19:45-46). This was called “The Court of the Gentiles,” an area where Gentile converts to Judaism (proselytes) could worship. Closer to the temple was a raised enclosure called the Women’s Court which contained the 13 chests for gifts used for the expenses of the services (Mark 12:41-44). Only men were allowed into the Court of the Men (Court of the Israelites), raised above the Court of the Women. On certain occasions Israelite men were permitted to enter the Priests’ Court to surround the altar of burnt offering.

The plan of the sanctuary copies Solomon’s plan with a 30 by 90 ft. enclosure separated by a curtain: the Holy of Holies and the Most Holy Place. The inner sanctuary (an empty room) was 30 feet wide, 60 feet high, and sepa-

rated from the priests' workroom by a thick veil (the Temple curtain—Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38). The golden candela-brum, the table of showbread, and other objects were used by the priests in the adjoining room—and were carried off by the Romans in 70 A.D.

In Matt. 27:51 the “curtain of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.” Now Jesus is the direct Way to the presence of God. Zech. 6:12 speaks of the Messiah as the One “who shall build the Temple of the Lord.” Matthew says (12:6) that Jesus is even “greater than the temple.” He is the place where God and man come together. The significance of the temple was fulfilled in and transcended by Jesus Christ (John 4:21-23).

1. Why was the temple important to the faith and life of the Old Testament believer? What motivates Christians today to build beautiful churches? Read Ezra 3. Are our motives different from the Israelites who rebuilt the temple after the exile?

2. Jesus loved the temple. He did everything He could to preserve it as the house of prayer (Luke 19:45-46); He taught there (Luke 21:37-38); and when He had to prophesy its destruction, He did so with grief and tears (Luke 19:41-55; Matt. 24:1-2).

a) How do you explain Jesus' love for the temple if He really came to replace it—to stop animal sacrifice and the office of the priesthood?

b) If we thought of our churches as places where God dwells in all His majesty, how would this affect our worship?

3. Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple (Matt. 24:1-2). The Roman General Titus led the troops, encircled the capital city, and broke through its last defenses in 70 A.D. Jesus said, “Something greater than the temple is here” (Matt. 12:6). He was speaking of Himself. Even John 2:13-22 states that the temple was replaced by Jesus Himself. As you discover the meaning behind these passages, comment on these statements:

a) I no longer have to offer sacrifices to God for the forgiveness of sin. (Heb. 9:23-28 and 10:11-14)

b) I no longer need a temple priest to offer up prayers on my behalf. (Rom. 5:1-2 and Heb. 4:14-16)

c) God is no longer limited to a specific place but may be worshiped anywhere at anytime by anyone. (John 4:21-24)

d) God does not confine His dwelling to a building but chooses to dwell in me. (1 Cor. 19-20)

4. When we use the wrong emphasis or priority, we may think of houses of worship as being more important than doing the will of God (Matt. 6:1 and 7:21; Luke 10:37). Which is more important?

Section 4

INSECURITY and SECURITY

(First, view Section 4 of this video; it is about 12 minutes long).

1. Herod was a man determined to make a name for himself and be in control. What do you think of his brutal methods? Do modern political figures seem as ruthless as Herod? "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely;" can brutal practices be justified by "good" goals for the people being governed?
2. Fear for his throne caused Herod to murder his favorite wife, Mariamne, and three of his sons. Someone said, "It is safer to be Herod's pig than Herod's son," meaning that being a half-Jew, Herod would respect the Jewish rule about not eating pork, but didn't care about the lives of anyone he suspected. How can absolute monarchs "get away" with acts of violence? Who stopped him, and how?
3. Herod, an extremely cautious man, went to great lengths to fortify and equip the fortress called Masada. It stands in the middle of a hot desert, 1,300 feet above the surface of the land, on the southwestern edge of the Dead Sea. It could be entered by only one narrow path called the Snake Path. It was Herod's ultimate symbol of security. Yet, Herod the Great died in Jerusalem in 4 B.C., and Masada fell to the Romans in 73 B.C. over a three-year siege. Where did Herod place his trust? In whom or what do you trust to keep you safe? Give an example.

What compels men like Herod to build and fortify palaces like Masada? Do people in power have fears different than ordinary people? What might they be? Do people build "citadels" today for their own security?

- a) People think security is important. Everyone wants to feel safe and comfortable. What do we fear? What things make us feel secure?
- b) The secret to security is found in the words of Jesus. Read Luke 12:32; notice the context of this verse. How do you think the disciples of Jesus understood His words? How do you interpret Jesus' words?
- c) What words of God have been helpful during feelings of insecurity?

THE BETHLEHEM STAR

1. In our scientific age when we seem to explain almost everything, we need to listen to God and believe His promises in Jesus Christ. Jonathan Frakes presented an explanation for the Christmas Star (the triple conjunction of the two planets Jupiter and Saturn). Another theory is that this may have been a comet or a nova or an exploding star. God may have created a special star for this very important occasion. Are there any other theories? Since none can be proved, which one do you prefer? Why?

2. Many today regard astrology as superstition, but the ancient world thought of it as a science. The Magi were led by this bright light to seek the newborn King of the Jews.

a) What information about God is available today through the sciences?

b) In our scientific age, why do people seem fascinated by astrology and base some of their behavior on superstition?

3. The written Word of God helped the Magi locate the Christ-Child. If these people came from Persia, they may have had previous access to Old Testament Scriptures from Jewish Rabbis. Num. 24:17 gives information about the Messiah's coming, and Micah 5:2 was quoted by the Jerusalem Rabbis to pinpoint the place of Christ's birth. For the Biblical account of the Wise Men, read Matt. 1:22-23, 2:4-6, 14, 17, & 23.

a) Why did Matthew emphasize the fulfillment of prophecy in the story of the Wise Men?

b) How does Matthew's stress on fulfillment affect your faith?

The end of Part 1 showed the singing of a special Christmas anthem. Luke has four beautiful canticles or "little songs" which are associated with Christmas happenings: Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55); Zechariah's Benedictus (Luke 1:68-79); the angels' Gloria in Excelsis (Luke 2:14); and Simeon's Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:29-32).

a) What do they say about God's activity that is relevant to other times of the year? To all the history and experience of His people?

b) How do they describe the results of the Lord's activity in the lives and attitudes of His people?

c) What do they say about God's purpose in sending the Savior?

5. The Christmas song in the film was recorded in spring. The singers, however, seemed to be singing enthusiastically, as if it were Christmas Eve. What are some benefits of celebrating Jesus' birth other than in December? What decorations would be appropriate for the celebration in spring? In summer? In fall?

PART TWO

Part 2 is divided into five sections:

Section 1 (about 10 minutes)

Jewish worship objects; Hasidic Jews; Jewish population in Alexandria, Egypt; Herod the Great, his life and his death.

Section 2 (about 16 minutes)

Nazareth—occupations and culture—shepherding, farming, commerce; synagogue education for children; prayer rituals, Bar Mitzvah.

Section 3 (about 13 minutes)

Birth of John the Baptist; the Essene community at Qumran; the Isaiah Scroll and its significance for John's ministry; modern day conservative Jews of the Mea Shearim district in Jerusalem.

Section 4 (about 7 minutes)

John baptizes Jesus; the beginning of Jesus' public ministry; the Essenes hide scrolls when Romans attack the area; Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947. Dr. Sukenik and his work with the Cave of the Letters; the death of the Messiah's forerunner.

Section 5 (about 12 minutes)

Early ministry of Jesus; Capernaum becomes His headquarters; finding His first disciples; the Sea of Galilee and its fishing industry; a typical Jewish wedding; archaeologists find Peter's home in Capernaum.

Section 1

(First, view section 1 of the video.)

The promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1 -3) was fulfilled in Jesus' birth. Intervening history led to the fulfillment and demonstrated God's faithfulness. Kingdoms rose and fell, but God's kingdom endured. His purposes were achieved. This segment gives background on the childhood, youth, and early ministry of Jesus.

JESUS ARRIVES IN THE PROMISED LAND

The murderous intentions of King Herod forced the holy family to flee. They went to Egypt, possibly Alexandria, a city teeming with Greek and Roman culture but having the largest urban Jewish population.

The splendor and civilization at Alexandria are seen in the gifts which Eratosthenes, Euclid, and Heron gave to the world. Greek and Egyptian influence merged with the invention of a common god, Serspis.

Meanwhile, in Israel, King Herod agonizingly is dying. He is given an elaborate funeral in his mountaintop mausoleum, the Herodium.

1. Read Matthew 2. The Wise Men (Magi) were looking for "the one who has been born king of the Jews." But He wasn't in Jerusalem; He was in Bethlehem, in the Judean hills.

- a) Why was it important that Jesus be born at Bethlehem?
- b) What was the Magi's interest in the child?
- c) The Wise Men were told by the Jerusalem rabbis to find Jesus in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). What kind of Messiah does the prophecy from Micah talk about?

2. We don't know how long Joseph and Mary lived in Bethlehem before the Wise Men came to visit. But at the time of imminent danger God sent Joseph a dream.

- a) What do you learn about Joseph (Matt. 2:13,14)? What was his relationship with God?
- b) How does God speak to you today? How do you respond to Him?

JESUS LEAVES THE PROMISED LAND

1. It is possible that Herod learned from the Wise Men the approximate time they had discovered the star and figured out the age of Jesus.

- a) What does Herod's order to kill the baby boys in Bethlehem reveal about his relationship with the true God?
- b) Was it necessary for Jesus to live in Egypt? (Read. Hos. 11:1 before you answer)

2. Read Jer. 31:15. To what passage in Matthew 2 is this referring?

3. If you were Joseph, how would you feel about this dream coming to you in Egypt? Does God seem to be controlling Joseph's life? What about your life?

4. Herod had an agonizing death. Why did his life end like that?

Section 2**GROWING UP AROUND NAZARETH**

(First, view Section 2 of the video.)

Wow! Look at the faith of this man Joseph: 1) told to marry Mary even though he had intended to annul the engagement secretly; 2) told by God to take the young Child and His mother, Mary, and sneak off to Egypt; 3) told by God to go back home. Imagine the trust and obedience that must have taken!

Returning to his homeland, Joseph learns that Archelaus is ruler of Judea. Joseph might have been happy to live around Jerusalem. Instead, God warns him not to go there. He went instead to Nazareth. This fulfilled a prophecy (Matt. 2:23). Joseph and Mary were God-fearing people. Joseph might have taught Jesus all phases of Jewish life, beginning with prayers and devotions at home, synagogue school education, worship experiences in Jerusalem, and working with His hands at an honest trade.

JESUS RETURNS TO THE PROMISED LAND

1. Read Matt. 2:19-23. Joseph is told to return to Israel.

a) Who is the ruler of Galilee?(Nazareth is a town in Galilee.)

b) Verse 22 makes it appear that Archelaus was as bad a person as his father, Herod the Great. Were Joseph and Mary wise in their location of a home? Why?

c) Jesus grew to adulthood in Nazareth. What was the purpose of synagogue school? Who went? Why?

2. Read Mark 6:3 and Matt. 13:55. The people wondered about Jesus and realized that his foster-father, Joseph, was just a carpenter. Ponder Jesus' humanity by considering that He may have worked for a time as a wood craftsman.

a) As a good father, Joseph might have taught Jesus carpentry. Might they have manufactured and repaired farm implements? Think of some of Jesus' parables that dealt with agricultural topics.

b) Identify them from these Bible references:

Mark 4:1-9 (Sower, Seed, & Soil)

Mark 4:26-29 (Seed Growing Secretly)

Matt. 20:1-16 (Laborers in the Vineyard)

Matt. 13:24-30 (Tares Among the Wheat)

Mark 4:30-32 (Mustard Seed)

c) Are there other statements of Jesus which refer to work, labor, or agriculture? What attitude toward agriculture and work do these parables and sayings convey?

d) Where in worship do we emphasize work? Should we give it more emphasis? Why or why not?

3. What comfort and encouragement come from seeing Jesus as a working man acquainted with daily labor?

4. Prayers were spoken standing up. They were—and are—messages to God. It was natural to stand to read from the scrolls: they were God's message. Why might the Jewish man or boy cover his head while reading from the scrolls or praying? What attitude toward prayer did you observe?

Read Deut. 6:6-9; Deut. 11:18; Matt. 23:5; and Ex. 13:9, 16. God wanted His people to bind His words for a sign upon the hand and as frontiers between their eyes. The Jewish leaders interpreted this in a literal sense. Their "phylacteries," or "remembrancers," were strips of parchment or vellum one inch wide and 12 to 18 inches long. They were placed inside small leather boxes. Frakes called "tefillin" and attached to the forehead (representing the intellect and the mind) or to the left arm (representing the heart). Why don't we walk around today with these boxes on our arms or foreheads? What are we supposed to understand by these commands?

6. The title "Messiah" (in Hebrew) and "Christ" (in Greek) means one who has been anointed or set apart for a specific task. Now put together a job description for Jesus' work as the Messiah. You might word it as an oath of office spoken by government officials.. The presidential inauguration is similar to the Old Testament practice of anointing for a specific office. See Heb. 10:5-10 for an example of an oath of office or job description. An alternate activity might be to make a resume reflecting Jesus' qualifications for the position of "Messiah."

7. Now write a job description or resume for yourself as a Christian.

THE WORD OF GOD

1. Recall points from the video that speak of reverence for the written Word of God. The list might include:
 - the great synagogue at Alexandria
 - the beautiful temple in Jerusalem
 - the ways God's Word was proclaimed and handled in those buildings
 - the teaching and prayer practices of local synagogue schools
2. Make a list of places and practices that reflect reverence for God's Word in our churches, homes, schools, and communities.
 - a) What are similarities between the two lists?
 - b) What are differences?
3. What spiritual value is there in doing the same religious rituals each day or week? What value is there in creating new, contemporary religious rituals?
5. What is the difference between religious education and religious training? How was each illustrated in the video? What is the value, and what might be some dangers, in each?

THE TEMPLE EXPERIENCE—JESUS, AGE 12

Jonathan Frakes mentioned that age 12 was important for Jewish boys. This was Bar Mitzvah—their “confirmation.” They were permitted to read and study the Scriptures without needing another person to interpret. They were considered a “son of the Law” and were responsible for their actions. They were permitted to take part in the three great festivals of the church year at Jerusalem.

1. Read Luke 2:41-52—the account of the 12-year-old Jesus attending Passover in Jerusalem.
 - a) What kind of relationship does Jesus have with His parents? What kind do you have?
 - b) Is Jesus disobedient in this story? Why or why not?
 - c) What does this account reveal about Jesus' priorities?
2. Make a list of Jesus' character traits.
3. Does Jesus seem to know His mission in life? Does it seem that Mary and Joseph are aware of it?
4. How well do Mary and Joseph understand Jesus? How well does Jesus understand them?
 - a) How well do your parents understand you? How well do you understand them?
 - b) If you could change anything between you and your parents, what would it be? Why? What could you do to make a better relationship?

Section 3

JOHN, THE VOICE

(First, view Section 3 of the video.)

Isaiah called John the Baptist “the voice of one crying in the wilderness,” announcing the coming of the Messiah. We actually know little about John. Luke says his father was a temple priest. Tradition says he lived in Ein Karem, a small town near Jerusalem. John grew up in the desert. Tradition says he was orphaned as a child. You saw the desert landscape and caves near Qumran, where John may have been raised. From here he may have gone to the Jordan River where he baptized Jesus, heralding Him as the promised Messiah.

This episode tells of a monumental discovery in 1960 in the “Cave of the Letters.” It was around 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem; residents of Qumran hid their scrolls in the hillside caves nearby. They had moved there to escape corrupted contemporary society. They wanted a righteous society unmarred by evils.

THE ESSENES AND THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

The Essenes were a Jewish sect in Palestine at Jesus' time. Although not mentioned in the New Testament, they might have influenced the entire Jewish community. John the Baptist may have been adopted as an orphan by this celibate monastic community of men. The Essenes were responsible for writing the scrolls found in the cave.

1. The Jewish religious groups in Jesus' day did not believe He was the Messiah or the Son of God. Many who believed in Jesus came from outside these religious groups.

- a) Why was it difficult for religious people at Jesus' time to call Him the Messiah? Why was it easier for outsiders to believe?
- b) Is it easier today to witness to someone who is a member of a non-Christian religion, or to someone who has no religious belief? Why or why not?

2. John may have learned about a baptism for repentance from the Qumran community. His understanding of the Messiah could have been rooted in their understanding of Scriptures, especially Isaiah. Notice that John used baptism as part of his work with the people. Read Matt. 3:5-12 and John 1:28. How did John react to the kinds of people and groups who come for baptism? Did he turn anyone away? What does John say about those who come for the wrong reasons?

3. The Qumran community excluded the lame, the blind, the imperfect. The early Christian community invited everyone to God's banquet table (Luke 14:7-24). In what ways do you see the church today as exclusive? As inclusive? If it is exclusive, how can we make it like the early church?

4. The Essenes tried to be better in order to be accepted by God. We must be on guard against “work righteousness.” If you do something right, will God bless you for it? Talk about it.

5. They removed themselves from the world to make themselves better.

a) Is this God's plan for us? What makes us “right with God?”

b) To what extent are we to be in the world or out of the world?

6. We have said that John the Baptist could have been raised by the Essenes in the Qumran community. Some historians say this MAY have happened. What we know for sure about John is what the Bible tells. Read from Scripture to get an accurate picture about John:

Birth predicted to an elderly couple	Luke 1:5-7
A prophet to tell about Jesus	Luke 1:76-79
Grew to manhood in Judean wilderness	Luke 1:80
Received his prophetic call	Luke 3:2
Prepared the people for the Lord	Luke 1:17
Radically condemned	Matt. 3:10
Established order	Luke 3:9

HYPOCRISY

There are Jewish people today who act like the Essenes. They are frustrated with Jewish society and seek to live alone in the Mea Shearim district of Jerusalem. They marry and raise families and are a strict sect, forbidding women that appear immodestly dressed from even entering their district. They let sideburns grow into long ringlets and wear clothing as it looked in the 1700s. They are the Hasidic Jews (Hasidim), and would be thought of today as “modern day Pharisees.”

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were devout laymen whose spiritual ancestors had preserved the language and the Law during captivity under the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians. They felt obedience to the Law was the measure of Israel's good fortunes and were confident that God favored those who obeyed by sending the Messiah to deliver them from the hated Romans. Pharisees were popular with the common people because their actions demonstrated the truth of their belief. However, Jesus accused them of making empty rituals of obedience to the Law. In many ways their actions represented the opposite of their spoken beliefs and betrayed God's original intentions for the Law.

1. Jesus demanded more from His followers than religious observance. Worship and obedience to God's Word was a matter of the heart, mind, spirit, and will. Genuine religion had to be demonstrated in behavior. Read Lev. 26:3-17; Deut. 10:12-13; and Eccl. 12:13-14. What reasons for outward obedience to the Law are given? Do the words still apply to Christians living? Why or why not?
2. Talk about times you felt you were hypocritical about religion. Why did you feel that way? What did you do about it? Recognizing sin in ourselves (hypocrisy) may lead to God's gracious forgiveness.
3. Frakes said that the Dead Sea Scroll promising “deliverance of God's people” was viewed by some people as being fulfilled in a new way when the Jewish people became a nation in 1948. But, is this true? What deliverance is meant in Is. 61:1-3? Jesus quoted this in the Nazareth synagogue when He read from the Old Testament. Read Luke 4:16-19; of whom was the Prophet Isaiah speaking? What did Jesus mean when He said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21)?

Section 4

THE JORDAN RIVER AND QUMRAN

(First view Section 4 of the video.)

After Jesus' baptism, He went into the wilderness to be tempted. From there He began to preach, heal, and teach.

John the Baptizer pointed to Jesus the Messiah. While John's preaching had value, it seems His whole life was a preparation for a one-sentence proclamation, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Even more important is the Father's declaration: "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." "Son of God" is a title which gives us clues to the mystery of Jesus. In Jesus, God draws near to His people. In Jesus, God accepts His people and declares them righteous. In Jesus, God frees us for a life of service to Him through our fellow man. Jesus' substitutionary work (fulfilling the Law and paying sin's penalty) brought peace between God and men.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

1. The four gospels present little detailed information about the early lives of John and Jesus. Biographical information is limited because the purpose of the gospels is more than this.
 - a) Why were the gospels written (John 20:20-31; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:14-17)?
 - b) What other purposes do the gospels serve?
2. The video describes a long period of preparation by John. It might be said that His ministry came to a climax in one short sentence ("Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world") and by performing one act (administering baptism to Jesus). Do you know of similar long preparations for short ministries?
 - a) How did John prepare for ministry?
 - b) How does his preparation compare to the way people prepare for ministry today?
3. John's brief ministry was significant—an important part of God's plan to save His people.
 - a) Why did God want the Messiah to have a forerunner (Luke 1:57-80; 3:1-22; 7:18-35)?
 - b) Read 1 Tim. 2:4. This is God's will. How can we be forerunners to carry out His Plan for the salvation of the world?
4. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus was known as "Son of God" only to people to whom God revealed it (Matt. 16:17).
 - a) Read Mark 6:14-16. Who did people think Jesus was?
 - b) How did God reveal to us that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Dead Sea Scrolls are manuscripts written earlier than any others discovered. They show how the Scriptures have been passed from generation to generation. Their discovery reveals archaeology's role in opening the pages of Holy Scriptures.

GOD PRESERVES THE SCRIPTURES

1. Scriptures show the life of Jesus and reveal what is necessary to know about Him and about God's plan for salvation. God is the Source of the revelation and the Subject of it. Imagine the excitement when Biblical scholars first realized the age of these manuscripts. How was God's hand evident in their discovery?
2. Discoveries shown in the video have provided much information on the Biblical world, its people, and their culture.
 - a) Have these discoveries made the Biblical story and its people more real? Why or why not?
 - b) When Biblical archaeology supports events reported in Scripture, how can this be helpful in building up faith?

BIRTH OF A NEW NATION

From 70 A.D. to 1948 A.D.—almost 1,900 years without a homeland!

Fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls were being examined by Prof. Elazar Sukenik, professor of Archaeology at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, at the very time that the United Nations was debuting a resolution to grant the Jewish people a legitimate homeland. Since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the end of the Jewish economy in 73 A.D. with the fall of Masada, the Jewish people had not claimed a homeland.

- a) Since the Jewish people had been without a homeland since 73 A.D., should the United Nations have allowed them "home?" (Think about Deut. 34:4 and Josh. 1:13-15).
- b) Why did the Arab nations want to keep Israel from having a homeland? Are they right in claiming the homeland as their very own? Why or why not?

In 1917 the British were mandated to rule Palestine. Arabs and Jews were living there. Following World War 11 the United Nations determined to end bickering between Jews and Arabs who claimed the country as their own. On Nov. 29, 1947, the U.S. passed the "Jewish State" resolution which divided Palestine. A portion of the land went to the Jews and another to the Arabs. The Jews accepted it; the Arabs did not. The next day, Nov. 30, Arabs began to attack Jewish settlers and continued through the first five months of 1948.

On May 14, 1948, Palestinian Jewish leaders proclaimed the rebirth of the State of Israel. The next day, seven neighboring Arab nations declared war on Israel. Israel won. An armistice was signed between Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. Palestine was divided into Israel and Jordan. In June of 1967 war broke out between the Arabs and Israel again. It ended after six days of fighting with Israel occupying the entire Sinai peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank of the River Jordan.

1. Are wars the answer to solving problems with another country? If someone says something bad about you or does something to anger you, do you have the right to strike back? (See 1 Tim. 1:18-19 and 2:1-8; Luke 22:47-51; and Eph. 4:17-32.)
2. What does God say about seeking vengeance? (Check Rom. 12:14-21.)
3. Why are the Israeli people intent upon keeping their land?

Section 5

CAPERNAUM—MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS

(First view Section 5 of the video.)

Capernaum, a thriving city on the Sea of Galilee, was the center for Jesus' public ministry. Here He called His first disciples: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. He showed great pleasure in attending a wedding feast, and here He performed His first miracle, changing water to wine. The synagogue ruins of Chorazin and Capernaum tell of life in those days.

Archaeology at Capernaum points out the significance of early Christian worship sites. In Bethlehem and Capernaum, eight-sided churches were built at places of historical significance in Jesus' life. During the excavation of the church in Capernaum, the house of Peter, where Jesus made His home during His three-year ministry, was discovered.

CAPERNAUM

It was customary for a great man to have disciples who spent much time with him as their teacher. Jesus chose His disciples. The video shows the calling of Peter and Andrew. Read Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11. The reference here is to the calling of all the disciples.

1. How did the four fishermen respond to Jesus' call (Matt. 4:18-22)? Notice anything unusual about their response? How do you think Zebedee feels?
2. Read some of the earlier verses in Matt. 4. Do you find any indication that these four fishermen heard Jesus preach before? (Note vs. 13 & 17).
3. In Mark 1:17, what did Jesus say He would make of Peter and Andrew? Do you call yourself a "fisher of men?" How could you do this job better? With whom do you think God is leading you to share Christ in the next few days?
4. Luke adds the account of a miracle. Why might the miracle especially impress Peter? Was Jesus trying to impress these fishermen? Why or why not?

THE CANA WEDDING

The video showed a wedding like those at Jesus' time. The Yemenites have weddings like this today. The video and the Bible reading in John 2:1-11 show Jesus' first miracle.

1. Would you have expected Mary, the mother of Jesus, to approach her Son when the wine ran out? Does it seem like Jesus is upset with His mother in verse 4? Why or why not?
2. Is Jesus saying "no" to His mother? His actions should give you a clue. For whose benefit is Jesus changing the water into wine?
3. Whose faith is being strengthened by seeing this miracle? Has the "wine ever run out" in your life? Has Jesus ever said to you, "My time has not yet come?" How does this story help you trust Jesus more?