



A Survey of the New Testament

Teacher Guide



Walking With God and His People: Hope for God's Kingdom Copyright © 2013 by Christian Schools International

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Each generation stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Over the history of Christian Schools International, many people have been involved with creating sound Bible curricula to assist teachers in telling God's story. We are very grateful for their efforts and the sound foundation upon which we can build. This latest effort, *Hope for God's Kingdom* (a second edition of *Hope of the World*), continues that building process.

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Introduction

Our Opportunity

Teachers—all teachers—have an important opportunity. We all have the privilege of equipping, training, and shaping the next generation. But teachers of God's Word have a particularly weighty opportunity. Every day, we are asked to communicate to students the most important message of all: the truth of God, found in Scripture. We are asked to point students toward the One in whom all meaning and hope is found. And we are asked to help students orient their lives around this good news, this amazing offer of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our students need this truth. They need guidance in how to navigate life in a fallen world with all its disappointments, temptations, and pain. Our students hear an array of messages from the surrounding culture: many different "solutions" promise happiness and fulfillment. But only God's Word contains the true solution to the brokenness inside us and around us. We have the opportunity to present and display this solution, and it is our sincere hope that students will see the message of Scripture outshining the messages of our culture. We are convinced that only this true story will allow students to properly understand who we are, what went wrong with the world, and what the remedy is.

Yet we often feel the need to be better equipped. We ourselves could use some guidance. We wonder how we can best present the Bible in a way that would draw our students toward Christ. How can we best nurture their faith? And how do we do this day after day? How do we turn the truth of a book as large and complex as the Bible into daily lessons that are both meaningful and age-appropriate? We want to move our students beyond mere knowledge of characters and events, but how do we connect all the pieces into a coherent whole? How can we tie all the daily lessons together into one compelling story that will become the true story guiding their entire lives?

Our Hope

Our hope with this curriculum is to provide teachers with just such a resource. We hope to help teachers connect the pieces of the Old Testament and New Testament into one gripping story that tells the truth about ourselves, about this broken world, and about the redemption offered in Jesus. Many of us like this idea of connecting all the small stories of the Old Testament and New Testament into one big story, but we are unsure how to implement it. How exactly would you summarize the story of the whole Bible? How would it all tie into one plot—with rising action, resolution, and all those other elements that make up a story?

This curriculum offers teachers a resource for bringing the many into one—the many events, many characters, many testimonies of God's love into one plot that ties all the books of the Bible together. Having a structure on which to hang all the pieces of the Bible will help you turn eighty different lessons about God's love into one compelling story of God's love. It will help your students not to miss the forest for the trees. And it will help you teach in a way that shapes hearts and minds.

Understanding the Bible as a Connected Whole

The second edition of this curriculum has been crafted around one unfolding plot, which you and your students can learn to narrate, illustrate, and retell to each other. We have told the Old Testament story as the best recent biblical scholarship has defined it: the story of a kingdom. We will see that throughout Scripture, God the King has desired to establish a kingdom of holy people making the Earth a holy place. The Old Testament ended with God's dream for holy people and holy place still unfulfilled. The project had been placed in the hands of Israel, a representative of all humanity. But the mission was left incomplete, with a record of unfaithfulness and rebellion in its place. The kingdom project was left hanging in the balance.

This is where students will enter the New Testament story—in *Hope for God's Kingdom* students will learn to tie the events, people, and teachings of the New Testament back to the Old Testament story, where the plot was first set in motion. Specifically, they will learn to see why Jesus had to come, as the only hope for God's kingdom.

Students will reenter the story of Israel, this time in first-century Palestine, where Israel remains in exile under the Roman Empire. The local scene is dominated by competing Jewish sects and Herodian kings, but over it all hangs the shadow of the Roman Empire—the last and greatest of all ancient kingdoms, the pagan empire that could make the whole world do its bidding. Somehow, through temple, law, and a coming messiah, the people of Israel hoped and longed for the overthrow of their pagan captors and the fulfillment of God's promises to restore their nation. For it was through Israel's restoration that salvation would come to the rest of the world.

It was amidst these national hopes and dreams that a prophet from Galilee—Jesus of Nazareth—came announcing good news: Israel's redemption was coming! God would finally fulfill his promises for a kingdom of holy people and holy place. But the good news came with a jarring twist: God would indeed bring down Israel's greatest enemy—not the Roman Empire, but the sin and rebellion that had caused Israel's exile—an enemy that was still alive and well inside God's people.

Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom in a way that was unexpected and, often, unwelcome. He announced a very different kingdom from what anyone would have anticipated—a kingdom that welcomes enemies instead of crushing them, that exalts the lowly while rejecting the noble—a kingdom where conventional wisdom is turned on its head! It was to be a kingdom of paradox, led by the most unusual king ever seen in history: One who came as the servant of all, who came to conquer by dying.

Students will see all the Old Testament themes of holy people and holy place coming together in Jesus. They will see Jesus fulfilling Israel's mission by being the perfect holy person, who was righteous in every way that Israel had failed. They will learn to see Jesus as the perfect holy place, the temple where God and humanity could finally commune, only because of a cleansing sacrifice. They will see Jesus' great act of redemption as a new exodus, bringing God's people out of their slavery to sin and the forces of evil.

Encouraging Head, Heart, and Hands

This curriculum directs students to move beyond merely knowing about God's kingdom to participating in God's kingdom. Since true faith involves the whole person—the head, heart, and hands—we have designed each lesson to involve components of knowledge, conviction, and living. We believe that when students truly grasp the beauty of God's kingdom, their hearts will be stirred, and they will desire to use their lives in service to it.

The story of God's kingdom being established here on Earth stirs our hearts because it is an epic tale of good versus evil. It contains all the elements of suspense, heartbreak, violence, betrayal, and love that make for the best film or novel. Teens will be challenged and compelled by the radical nature of the kingdom. They will encounter a God who is not just a friend who helps us in our troubles, but a king who created us and makes demands of us. He is not content to let us lead comfortable lives, focused on fulfilling our dreams. Rather, he conscripts us into the service of his kingdom, fulfilling God's plan for the world. He will not settle for half our hearts. He is intent on turning our lives upside down and reorienting them around his kingdom. The radical nature of what we will encounter disrupts our neat categories and compels a fresh hearing.

The story of God's kingdom not only stirs our hearts but also moves our hands to action. Students will see that God gave us an important mission to spread his kingdom here on Earth. We each have the high status of being commissioned by the King to carry out his purposes. How we use our time and our talents is of great importance because we can either have influence for eternity as we build up an everlasting kingdom—or we can live only for ourselves. Our actions are significant. The message of God's kingdom changes how we live.

We hope that the truth of Scripture will move from students' minds into their hearts, leading them to embrace Jesus Christ and producing lives of joyful service and obedience.

The Task of the Teacher

If we desire students to become excited about knowing and living out the Bible's truths, it is important that teachers demonstrate and model this same passion themselves. When it comes to engaging students, your own enthusiasm does as much as or more than the written material. That is why it is important for us to attend to our own spiritual lives—our own walk with the Lord, our own study of the Word, our own participation in the church—because it is difficult to give to others what we ourselves are not experiencing.

How do we maintain the sort of spiritual vibrancy that will overflow into our teaching? Philippians 2:12–13 instructs us to "continue to work out" our salvation, for "it is God who works in you." We must exercise ourselves in our faith, all the while asking and relying on the Holy Spirit to work in us. Prayer is vital to anyone teaching God's Word; we need the Lord to help us understand, teach, and live out Scripture in a way that points students toward Christ. Yet even when we fail to be the teachers we desire to be, we should be reassured that God's grace works in and through our weakness. He can use even our imperfect attempts to work in students' lives.

The teacher also has the task of creating a classroom environment where learning can take place effectively. Classroom dynamics can either enhance or detract from the effectiveness of the material. We must direct students' behavior toward reflecting the biblical truths we teach. The classroom should be a place where everyone is treated with respect and love, because the Bible tells us that all people are made in God's image. It should be a place where humility and openness to correction are demonstrated because we know that all of us have been broken by the Fall. The classroom should be a place of grace and hope, because nothing is outside the reach of God's redemption. Teachers play an important role in overseeing and directing these classroom dynamics.

Curriculum Implementation Suggestions

In this second edition of *Hope for God's Kingdom*, teachers will find that they are asked to serve less as lecturers and more as facilitators of learning as students engage the material in a variety of formats.

Lessons have been updated to involve more student participation, making the classroom an environment of discussion, small group discovery, and personal reflection.

As you explore the Teacher Guide, you will find that lessons follow this format:

- 1. The *Bridge* builds anticipation for the lesson's objective by introducing a question or idea, often tapping into students' prior knowledge. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate additional review of material, linking the lesson's objective to the larger framework.
- 2. The *Scripture Link* is a teacher-guided time of learning; teacher and students work through notes, activities, or discussion centered on the lesson objective.
- 3. The *Student Activities* are more student-oriented, asking the teacher to do more facilitating by circulating among students working independently or in small groups to extend the material.
- 4. The *Student Textbook* (or *Independent Practice*) portion can be done at the end of class or be assigned for homework. The reading will reinforce and extend the main ideas from the lesson as well as give an opportunity to think through questions that follow.
- 5. The *Looking Ahead* section presents the scriptural focus of the next lesson; teachers are encouraged to assign this as student reading outside of class.
- 6. The *Enrichment* section provides cross-curricular ideas for additional activities based on similar themes and concepts taught in the lesson.

Assessment is provided at the end of each unit in the form of a unit review and unit exam. Teachers are encouraged to find ways to include daily review of key ideas and add informal or formal assessment to daily lessons according to the needs of students. The Enrichment section often gives ideas for projects, quizzes, or essay assignments.

Teacher Preparation is given at the beginning of each lesson through an opening note, lesson highlights, and background information. Teachers are also encouraged to read the student text during their preparation, as the text reinforces the classroom objective, offering some extended content. Feel free to incorporate additional content from the text during class time.

Student Textbook. An important change in this second edition is that the student textbook is used to reinforce ideas rather than to introduce them. The textbook is intended to be utilized after the classroom lesson either as an extension activity during class or as homework.

Kingdom Video and Chart are intended to help teachers review the major themes of this curriculum throughout the year, whenever opportunity arises. These tools will help you connect any given lesson or unit into the larger structure of God's kingdom.

Pacing. This second edition intentionally has fewer lessons to allow the teacher more flexibility in how to implement them. Teachers can stretch lessons over two classroom periods when necessary.

Scope and Sequence Overview

Unit	Lesson	Reference
	The Plot Hung in Suspense	Various passages
	2. Approaching First-Century Palestine	Daniel 2
Unit 1	3. Politics and Geography in Palestine	Matthew 2
Setting the Stage	4. Religious Groups in Palestine	Matthew 16:1–12
	5. Cultural Setting in Palestine	John 2:1–12
	6. Preparing to Read the New Testament	3 John
	1. The King Is Born!	Luke 1:26–56, 2
	2. Jesus Relives Israel's Story	Matthew 3-4:11
	Early Ministry: A Different Kind of Leader	Mark 1:14—3:34
Unit 2	4. The Ethics of the Kingdom	Matthew 5-7
The King Arrives!	5. The Signs of the Kingdom	John 6
	6. The Secrets of the Kingdom	Matthew 13:1-52
	7. A Kingdom for Jews and Gentiles	Matthew 8:5-13, 10:1-20, 15:21-28
	8. The Church: A Kingdom Community	Matthew 18
	9. A Suffering King?	Mark 8:27—10:31
	Tensions Rising: Jesus and the Jewish Leaders	John 7—8:59
	2. Reaching a Breaking Point	John 9—11:53
	Arriving in Jerusalem: A Triumphal Entry?	Luke 19:28—20:47
Unit 3	4. Jesus and the Temple	Mark 11
The King Accomplishes	5. Jesus Foretells Coming Judgment	Matthew 24:1–25, 42–46
Redemption	6. A Feast for the New Exodus	Exodus 12, Luke 22:7–37
	7. Jesus' Arrest and Trial	Matthew 26 – 27:26
	8. Jesus' Crucifixion	Mark 15:16–41, John 19:16–42
	9. The Resurrection: Victory over Death	Luke 24, John 20
	10. Ascending to the Father	Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 1:1–11
	Introduction to the Gospels	Matthew 8:1–4, Mark 1:40–45, Luke 5:12–16
	2. Matthew: Jesus, the Jewish Messiah	Matthew 1:1–17
Unit 4	3. Mark: Jesus the Servant	Mark 1:1-13
The Gospels: Four Portraits of	4. Mark: The Disciples Fail to Understand	Mark 6:30-56
Jesus	5. Luke: Jesus Ministers to Outcasts	Luke 1
	6. Luke: Unique Stories and Parables	Luke 10:25—11:13; 16; 18:1–30
	7. John: Eternal Life in the Word	John 1:1–18
	8. John: Witnesses Testify to Jesus	John 1:19—4:54

	The Church Is Commissioned	Acts 1
	2. The Church Is Empowered	Acts 2
	3. The Church Faces Obstacles	Acts 3–6:7
	4. The Church Is Persecuted	Acts 6:8—8:3
Unit 5	5. The Church Spreads to Judea and Samaria	Acts 8:4–40
	6. The Church Gains an Apostle	Acts 9
Acts: The Church Spreads Christ's Kingdom	7. Gathering in the Gentiles	Acts 10–12
Kingdom	The Church Spreads into the Roman Empire	Acts 13–15:35
	9. The Church Spreads beyond Asia Minor	Acts 15:36—18:22
	10. Strengthening the Church	Acts 18:23—21:16
	11. Paul's Unlikely Path to Rome	Acts 21:17—26:32
	12. Paul's Unlikely Witness	Acts 27–28
	The Epistles and the Canon	2 Peter 1:12–21
	2. Preparing to Read the Epistles	1 John 1–5
	3. Structuring the Letters	Various passages
	4. Words for the First Century and Today	1 Timothy 5, Titus 2, Colossians 2
Unit 6 The Epistles: The Church as a	5. Ephesians: The Church of the Triune God	Ephesians 1
New People	6. Ephesians: The Church Body	Ephesians 2
	7. Ephesians: The Calling of the Church	Ephesians 3
	8. Ephesians: The Church in Action	Ephesians 4—5:20
	Ephesians: Personal Relationships within the Church	Ephesians 5:21—6:9
	10. Ephesians: The Church in Conflict	Ephesians 6:10–24
	Revelation: An Introduction	Revelation 1
Unit 7	2. Revelation: The Seven Churches	Revelation 2–3
Revelation: A Coming King and a	3. Interpreting Revelation	Revelation 4–8:1
New Earth	4. Judgment on Christ's Enemies	Revelation 17–19
	5. A New Earth	Revelation 21–22

CSI Bible Student Outcomes

Grades K-8	Grades 9–12		
1. Students know key Bible characters, events, and themes and are able to connect them.			
Retell Bible stories and organize stories, characters, events, and eras in sequential order.	Retell Bible stories and organize stories, characters, events, and eras in sequential order.		
Explain relationships between closely related characters and/or events.	Explain relationships between closely and distantly related characters and/or events.		
Know that broader themes such as salvation, covenant, and God's kingdom connect the stories of the Bible.	Know that broader themes such as salvation, covenant, and God's kingdom connect the stories of the Bible. Arrange these broader themes themselves into an organized,		
	branching structure, with God's kingdom as the broadest category and the other themes as subcategories.		
Know that the biblical story unfolded through the stages of Creation, Fall, and redemption.	Explain how God's kingdom unfolded through the stages of Creation, Fall, and redemption. Describe how redemption itself unfolded in stages.		
i all, and redemption.	Tie specific characters and events to the appropriate stage of Creation, Fall, or phase of redemption.		
Understand that leave fulfills the Old Testament and attractions	Understand that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and give examples of distinct prophecies or distinct roles he fulfills.		
Understand that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and give examples of distinct prophecies or distinct roles he fulfills.	Explain that Jesus fulfills not only distinct pieces of the Old Testament but also the overarching plot itself, centering on the history of humanity and of Israel.		
Know that the Old Testament focuses on the nation of Israel and identify the stages in Israel's history.	Identify how God's kingdom plan advanced as Israel grew from being a wandering people group to a settled nation to finally a unified kingdom under David. Explain why Israel's decline into a divided kingdom and then a conquered and scattered people group represented a devastating failure in the mission of God's kingdom.		
Tell the story of the whole Bible at a basic level.	Tell the story of the whole Bible at a more complex level.		
2. Students read the Bible in its historical and cultural context.			
Understand that Scripture is fully divine. Explain and defend the Bible as the infallible Word of God, for all times and places.	Understand that Scripture is fully divine. Explain and defend the Bible as the infallible Word of God, for all times and places.		
Know that the Holy Spirit inspired human authors.	Understand that Scripture is also fully human. Explain and defend the importance of the original human author and audience.		
Identify key authors of Scripture (Moses, David, Paul, John, etc.).	Identify key authors of Scripture (Moses, David, Paul, John, etc.).		
Know key facts about the lives and historical contexts of these	Know extended facts about the lives and historical contexts of these authors as well as the audiences to whom they wrote.		
authors.	Practice finding the original meaning of a passage by asking what the original author was trying to teach his original audience.		
Explain the basic chronology of the history of God's people.	Explain a more detailed chronology of the history of God's people.		
Know how historical empires, events, and figures affected the story of God's people.	Know how historical empires, events, and figures affected the story of God's people.		
Describe ancient Near Eastern religious practices.	Describe ancient Near Eastern culture with greater depth, including religious, social, political, and economic dimensions.		
Use various reference materials appropriately for the sake of historical research (maps, study Bibles, concordances, online tools, etc.).	Use various reference materials appropriately for the sake of historical research (maps, study Bibles, concordances, online tools, etc.).		

3. Students read the Bible in its literary context.	
Identify the divisions of Scripture into Pentateuch, history, Gospels, Epistles, etc.	Identify the divisions of Scripture into Pentateuch, history, Gospels, Epistles, etc. Link key events in Israel's history to the book or section where they are described.
Recite the books of the Old and New Testaments in order.	Recite the books of the Old and New Testaments in order.
Know the basic genres of literature included in Scripture.	Identify extended types of literature in the Bible, including narrative, proverb, poetic dialogue, psalms, prophecy, etc.
Know the characteristics of various genres.	Know the characteristics of various genres.
Begin using knowledge of genre characteristics to identify and analyze a passage.	Apply principles of interpretation for various genres at an extended level. Identify changes of genre within a passage. Analyze the use of imagery and parallelism in Hebrew poetry. Identify
	idioms used in Hebrew narrative. Explain the complex ways in which prophetic literature can speak of future events.
4. Students understand the importance of geography to the biblical st	ory.
Identify key geographic features of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.	Identify key geographic features of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.
	Describe the importance of land and place in the ancient world and in the Bible's kingdom theology. Tie the concept of "holy place" to Creation, Fall, and redemption.
Describe the impact of geography on Bible stories.	Explain the connections Scripture draws between various holy places (Eden, Canaan, temple, heaven).
	Understand and defend that God's plan of redemption involves physical, not just spiritual, realities.
5. Students understand what the Bible teaches about God.	
Explain the work of God as both Creator and Redeemer.	Explain the work of God as both Creator and Redeemer.
Identify the attributes of God revealed in a particular story, whether	Identify the attributes of God revealed in a particular story, whether holiness, love, justice, etc.
holiness, love, justice, etc.	Explain the primary images the Bible uses for God and their significance in the ancient world.
Know that God's character is unchanging throughout the pages of Scripture.	Explain and defend that God's character is unchanging throughout Scripture, whether Old or New Testament.
Explain that God is gracious and loving but that he is also holy and	Explain that God is gracious and loving but that he is also holy and requires our obedience.
requires our obedience.	Explain that God's covenants with humanity involve elements of both blessing and responsibility. Identify components of grace, as well as requirements of loyalty in each of his covenants.
6. Students understand what the Bible teaches about humanity.	
	Describe that God created humanity to be his image-bearers.
Describe that God created humanity to be his image-bearers.	Explain the ancient and royal connotations behind God's creation of humanity in his image, and explain the role God envisioned for them.
Explain how sin has alienated people from God, creation, others, and themselves.	Explain how sin has alienated people from God, creation, others, and themselves.
Explain how God has worked to restore humanity to a right relationship with him, with creation, with others, and with themselves.	Explain how God has worked to restore humanity to a right relationship with him, with creation, with others, and with themselves.
Identify the offices of prophets, pricets, and kings throughout Saria	Identify the offices of prophets, priests, and kings throughout Scripture, as well as examples of individuals called to those offices.
Identify the offices of prophets, priests, and kings throughout Scripture, as well as examples of individuals called to those offices.	Connect the general calling of all humans as prophets, priests, and kings to the particularized, heightened offices of prophet, priest, and king.

7. Students understand what the Bible teaches about creation.	
Identify that God created all things good, including this physical world.	Identify that God created all things good, including this physical world.
Explain humanity's responsibility to care for God's creation as stewards.	Explain humanity's responsibility to care for God's creation as stewards. Explain humanity's responsibility to enhance creation by making culture.
Identify how creation was distorted because of the Fall.	Identify how both creation and culture have been distorted because of the Fall.
Explain that God's redemption extends to creation as well as to	Explain that God's redemption extends to creation as well as to humanity. Contrast Scripture's promise of humanity dwelling on a renewed
humanity.	Earth with the idea of dwelling forever in a heavenly spirit-world. Narrate the story of Scripture, ending with God's dwelling coming down to a new creation.
8. Students draw from Scripture an entire framework or Christian wor	rldview for approaching every issue.
Explain how Scripture answers the basic human questions: Where did we come from? What went wrong? What is the remedy?	Explain how Scripture answers the basic human questions: Where did we come from? What went wrong? What is the remedy? Narrate and illustrate the Bible's overarching story for others.
Be familiar with the framework of Creation, Fall, and redemption.	Apply the framework of Creation, Fall, and redemption to questions raised by culture.
Use biblical teaching to examine cultural values and practices.	Use biblical teaching to examine cultural values and practices. Discern the principles that biblical authors taught their ancient audience and apply them appropriately to our modern world.
9. Students apply biblical teaching to their hearts and lives.	
Understand that salvation is a free gift, something we can never merit.	Understand that salvation is a free gift, something we can never merit.
Understand that sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like our Savior.	Understand that sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like our Savior.
Identify personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus.	Identify, discuss, and apply personal practices conducive to a growing relationship with Jesus.
Understand what God values and what he desires for humanity.	Understand that what God values and what he desires for humanity are expressed in his law. Explain how God's law can be summarized in ten, and ultimately in two, commandments. Explain how these serve as the basis for ethical living.
Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and thus having great significance.	Respect and love themselves and others as being created in God's image and thus having great significance.
Apply biblical learning to both our actions and the attitudes of our hearts.	Apply biblical learning to both our actions and the attitudes of our hearts.
Consider ways we might serve others better.	Consider ways we might serve others better.

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Unit 1

Setting the Stage

Unit Outline

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Unit 1

Setting the Stage

Unit Summary

1. The Plot Hung in Suspense Various passages

Approaching First-Century Palestine Daniel 2
 Politics and Geography in Palestine Matthew 2

4. Religious Groups in Palestine Matthew 16:1–12
5. Cultural Setting in Palestine John 2:1–12

6. Preparing to Read the New Testament 3 John

Unit Highlights

- ▶ Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament plot centering on the kingdom of God being established here on Earth.
- Israel failed to establish God's kingdom and spread it to other nations.
- ▶ Jesus proclaimed that he was ushering in God's kingdom.
- ▶ Jesus came as an Israelite to redeem scattered, exiled Israel.
- ▶ The people of Israel were under the dominion of the Roman Empire, a pagan nation.
- ▶ Persia had controlled Palestine at the close of the Old Testament, but the Greeks and then the Romans gained control during intertestamental times.
- ▶ Palestine had a period of independence after the Maccabean revolt, a defining moment in Jewish history.
- ▶ Jesus was born during the Pax Romana, a time of peace under Caesar Augustus.
- Greek was the universal language at that time.
- ▶ Palestine was small, but its location was important. Its economy was largely based on agriculture.
- ▶ The New Testament was written to record the testimony about Jesus and to encourage churches in continuing the mission he had given them.
- ▶ The New Testament books can be divided into histories, letters, and prophecy.
- ▶ The more we know of the historical background to the New Testament, the better equipped we will be to find its meaning.
- ▶ The entire New Testament was authored during the time of the Roman Empire.

Background

This opening unit seeks to tie the New Testament story back to the Old Testament story. Since the Old Testament makes up 75 percent of Scripture, we must review the plot that was already in motion in order to understand why Jesus had to come. We will be reminded that the Old Testament story centers on the kingdom of God being established here on Earth. God had commissioned humanity with filling the Earth with holy people and turning it into a holy place, making it his kingdom. After humanity rebelled against God's kingly rule, he nevertheless created a plan of redemption centering on the nation of Israel. The Old Testament tells the story of Israel: the small, representative group that was to be God's new holy people, living in a new holy place and spreading God's glory to the

rest of the world. It is this project that was left hanging in the balance because of Israel's failure to remain faithful to God. We must see that Jesus came as the answer to the question: How will Israel—and through Israel, all humanity—be redeemed? The rest of the curriculum will answer that very question as we unfold how Jesus brought Israel's mission to completion and then passed it on to his followers, the church. Through Jesus, God's kingdom has finally come to Earth.

This opening unit also gives students the tools for a deeper study of the New Testament by providing them with the literary and historic context of the New Testament. Students will begin by examining the New Testament's literary background, learning when the books were written, how to best interpret them, which genres they include, etc. Students will then gain historical background leading up to a study of the Gospels. They will learn about the rise of the Greek and Roman empires during the intertestamental period and see how God used these empires to prepare the world for the coming of his Son. Students will then focus more intently on Palestine, learning about its geography, history, culture, and the people who lived there. Special attention will be paid to Jewish religious groups.

Lesson 1

The Plot Hung in Suspense

Bible Reference: Various passages

Lesson Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to review the Old Testament story, which has been hanging in suspense during the intertestamental times. Students will see that the New Testament functions as the completion of the Old Testament story of God's kingdom. Students will be reminded that the Old Testament plot centered on the nation of Israel as God's plan of redemption.

Lesson Highlights

- * The Old Testament, making up 75 percent of Scripture, lays out the plot of the biblical story. The New Testament records the resolution to this plot.
- * In order to understand why Jesus had to come, we must understand what had been set in motion in the Old Testament.
- * The biblical story centers on the kingdom of God being established here on Earth.
- * God created the world to be his kingdom and gave humanity the role of spreading his kingdom.
- * Humanity fell into sin and spread destruction instead of God's kingdom.
- * God chose to redeem humanity through the people of Israel.
- * Israel was to be God's new holy people, living in a new holy place and spreading redemption to the rest of the world.

Preparation/Materials

- ✓ Teacher resource sheet, see page 45 (electronic copy available at www.csionline.org/high_school_bible_resources)
- Kingdom of God video clip handout, one per student
- ✓ Kingdom Diagram video clip, www.csionline.org/ high_school_bible_resources
- ✓ Old Testament Story handout, one per student

Background

We often study the Old Testament separately from the New Testament, but this approach involves some pitfalls. We too often easily lose sight of the overarching narrative that connects the two and overlook how the Old Testament plot propels us forward into the New Testament. We would rarely stop a movie at the height of suspense, just before the resolution. But we often do this with our study of Scripture. Or perhaps the problem is that we don't see the Bible as one large story with one unified plot, the way we do with other stories and movies. We know that Jesus came to fulfill certain symbols or promises from the Old Testament, but not how he came to fulfill the entire Old Testament itself. We focus on the few pieces of the Old Testament that we know Jesus fulfilled—the animal sacrifices, the priesthood, etc.—but we aren't clear how to connect Jesus with the Book of Leviticus or how to connect the Book of Leviticus with all the other Old Testament books. We lack a meta-narrative (overarching story) to tie all the smaller stories together.

This New Testament curriculum builds on CSI's Old Testament curriculum, God's Unfolding Kingdom, and continues the same overarching story begun in that material. This lesson will review the Old Testament story of God's plan to build a kingdom here on this Earth. This plan for a glorious kingdom began at Creation, when God told humanity to multiply and have dominion over the Earth, filling the world with holy people and making it a holy place. The plan appeared to be over when humanity rebelled against God, but God in his grace began a work of redemption. He called one particular family—Abraham's family—to be his redeemed, holy people once again living in a holy place. This nation of Israel was then supposed to spread redemption beyond the land of Canaan, so that all nations would hear and be brought to the Lord (Genesis 12:3).

But unfortunately, Israel proved to reflect the rest of humanity. Even with all the opportunities they had been given to be forgiven of their sins and enjoy a covenantal relationship with God, Israel repeatedly turned away from God, like an adulterous spouse. They didn't just "commit sins"; they abandoned their relationship with God. Israel, the hope of salvation for the rest of the

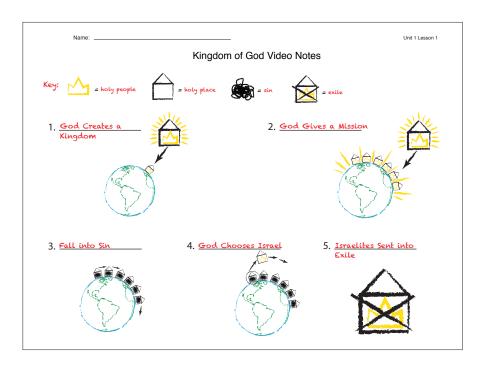




world, ended in failure and exile. Was God's plan of redemption over? The last Old Testament prophets promised that God still had a plan for Israel, but how that plot would be resolved was left hanging in suspense.

Lesson Steps Bridge

- 1. Explain that this year we have the exciting task of studying the New Testament.
- Open these questions for discussion:
 - The New Testament seems to be the part of the Bible that Christians feel most comfortable with. Why do you think that is? (Answers will vary.)
 - What percentage of the Bible do you think the New Testament makes up? (Allow guesses.)
- 3. Explain that the New Testament makes up the last 25 percent of Scripture, while three-fourths of the Bible's story is in the Old Testament.
- 4. Let's compare that to a two-hour movie. If you missed the first 75 percent of a movie and saw only the last 25 percent, how much of the movie did you miss? (You missed the first hour and a half and only caught the last 30 minutes.) Would you understand the ending very well? (No, it wouldn't be very meaningful.)
- 5. Explain that, similarly, we're not going to understand the New Testament well if we don't know the Old Testament. Just as a movie has a plot and then a resolution, so the Old Testament lays out the Bible's plot and the New Testament lays out the resolution: Jesus.

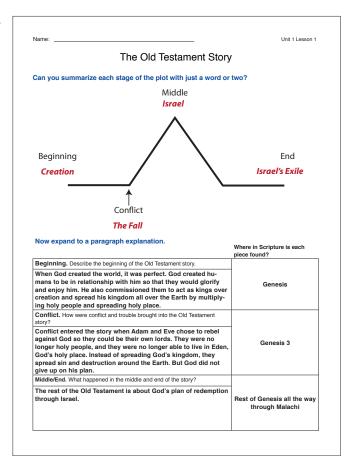


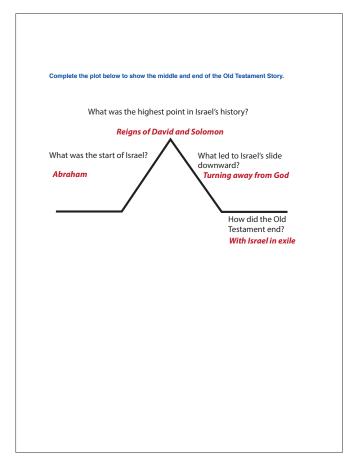
Scripture Link

- 1. Review students' knowledge of the Old Testament's big story, from *God's Unfolding Plan*. When we studied the Old Testament we learned to put all its stories together into one big story. What key terms did we use to summarize that story? (God's kingdom, holy people, holy place.) You may use the teacher resource sheet to guide your review.
- 2. Ask students to explain that further. (God has always wanted this Earth to be a holy place full of holy people. He wants to rule over holy people as their king.)
- 3. Distribute the **Kingdom of God** video clip handout. Encourage students to take additional notes or record additional labels other than those required.
- 4. Play the **Kingdom Diagram** video clip (csionline.org/high_school_bible_resources), stopping when the New Testament portion begins.
- 5. Using the teacher key, discuss key concepts from the video clip. Make sure students understand what the images and diagrams convey.

Student Activities

- 1. Distribute The Old Testament Story handout.
- 2. Explain that we want to review the story of the Old Testament, taking the ideas from the video clip but rephrasing them in our own words. Just as every story has a beginning, middle, and end, so we need to recap the beginning, middle, and end of the Old Testament story.
- 3. Guide students through a discussion focused on completing the handout.
- 4. You may want to tie in "holy people" and "holy place" themes at these points of Israel's history:
 - Start of Israel: God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him holy people (descendants) and a holy place (Canaan).
 - Slope upward (as Israel is being established and reaching its height):
 - a. The exodus—God rescued Israel from Egypt and led them to Canaan (the Holy Land).
 - b. The conquest—God gave Israel the land of Canaan to be his holy place.
 - c. Prophets—God revealed himself and his plan of salvation through Moses and other holy prophets.





- d. Priests—God set up a system of sacrifices administered by holy priests so that Israel could be forgiven.
- e. Kings—God set up a royal line through the house of David so that Israel would have a holy king to help them advance God's kingdom.
- f. Height: The reign of David and Solomon was the highest point in Israel's history; its fame was starting to spread to other nations. The temple was established as God's holy place.
- · Slope downward:
 - a. Solomon and Israel's other kings turned away from God.
 - b. The nation turned to idol worship; they didn't just "sin"—they abandoned their relationship with God.
 - c. The Israelites were no longer holy people, and Canaan was no longer a holy place, so God punished them through exile (invasion and scattering).
- Ending: Israelites were living in exile, scattered throughout pagan empires. Some (not all)
 Israelites believed in God's promises and were waiting for God to rescue them as the prophets
 foretold.

Independent Practice

Have students read **The Plot Hung in Suspense** (page 10) in the student text and answer the reflection questions.

1. Why can't we just stick to a study of the New Testament? Why will the lessons keep going back to the Old Testament? (Since the Old Testament makes up 75 percent of Scripture, it lays out the plot. We can't really understand or value the resolution without knowing the plot. Similarly, we cannot understand Jesus until we understand what he came to fulfill.)

- 2. Why did God focus his efforts on just one nation (Israel) for the majority of the Old Testament? (Israel was God's plan for redeeming humanity. They were to be the "rescue group"—God chose them out of the rest of the world so that they would be different and holy, and so others would see this and be drawn in. God wanted them to restart his kingdom of holy people living in a holy place. They were to spread around the Earth and bring the news of redemption to all nations.)
- 3. Why was Israel's exile such a devastating event for believing Israelites? (God seemed to have undone his work for Israel. They lost their status as a nation and lost their land. It wasn't just Israel's fate but the world's fate that was devastating. What would become of God's plan of redemption? How would his promises be fulfilled?)

Looking Ahead

Have students read Daniel 2 in preparation for Lesson 2.

Enrichment

- ▶ Have students outline the covenants that God made with his people in the Old Testament through Abraham, Moses, and David. Ask them to record the role that each covenant played in moving the Old Testament story forward. They can also record the blessings and the responsibilities communicated in each covenant.
- ▶ Discuss with students their personal study of the Bible. Do they regularly read the Bible on their own? What portions do they avoid? Have them brainstorm ways that they could improve their devotional life and gain more from Scripture, sharing any practices that have helped them personally.
- ▶ Literature. Ask students to review the elements of plot (setting, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, etc.) and the purpose of each. Then allow students to brainstorm in groups what each element of the Bible's plot might be (the setting was Creation, the conflict was the Fall, etc.). Discuss the groups' ideas as a class.

Unit 1

Lesson 2

Approaching First-Century Palestine

Bible Reference: Daniel 2

Lesson Objective

Students will be introduced to the empires that ruled Israel between the Old and New Testaments, incorporating Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue (representing the empires coming after Babylonia). Students will see how God used historical events to advance his purposes and to prepare the world for the coming of his Son, Jesus.

Lesson Highlights

- * God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, as Daniel interpreted his dream, that four kingdoms would arise after Babylon fell.
- * The kingdoms following Babylonia would be Persia, Greece, Rome, and then the greatest of all, the kingdom of God.
- * Jesus would come to Earth to usher in God's kingdom during the time of the Roman Empire.

Preparation/Materials

- ✓ Intertestamental Period handout, one per student
- A Dream of Five Kingdoms handout, one per student
- ✓ Visual of A Dream of Five Kingdoms handout (optional)

Background

There had been much conflict in Palestine in the years before Jesus' birth. The Maccabees had rebelled against their Greek Seleucid rulers, reacting violently against the desecration of the temple and other rules that were not in keeping with the Jewish faith.

The Jews longed to be free from foreign, pagan rule. The Jewish people were united in their distrust of Rome, but they were allowed to carry out their religious practices and have some voice in how they were governed.

Lesson Steps

Bridge

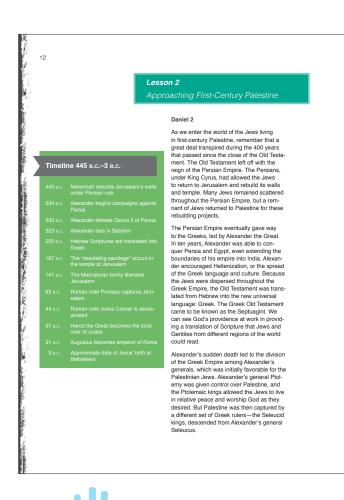
- Ask students how many years they think passed between the last book of the Old Testament and the opening verses of the New Testament. (About 400 years.)
- Explain that this time between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament is called the intertestamental period. This time period will be the focus of this lesson.

Scripture Link

- Distribute the handout Intertestamental Period.
 Have students fill in the blanks and take additional notes as you provide information from the teacher key.
- 2. Have students read Daniel 2:31-45.
- Ask a student to summarize what happened in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (found in verses 31–35).
- Explain that this dream was a prophecy of the empires that would rise after Nebuchadnezzar's time. Students will explore this further in the activity.

Student Activities

- Distribute the handout A Dream of Five Kingdoms. Have students refer to the Intertestamental Period handout in order to complete this handout.
- Read the instructions aloud. You may want students to work independently, in groups, or continue to guide them in a class discussion. Be aware that students may need guidance on the summary questions on the back.
- 3. If students work independently, review the answers as a class.
- Make a visual of A Dream of Five Kingdoms handout (optional) to guide your review.





Independent Practice

- Have students read **Approaching First-Century Palestine** (page 12) in the student text and answer the reflection questions.
- List three characteristics of the Greek empire. (Answers include that Alexander conquered other nations quickly, that Greek became the universal language, and that Greek culture spread.)
- 2. What difficulties did the Jews face when the Seleucids instead of the Ptolemaics took control of Palestine? (The Seleucids tried to force the Jews to worship Greek gods. Worship of Zeus in God's temple in Jerusalem led to the Maccabean revolt.)
- 3. How did the Jews feel about the empires that ruled them? (They were angry about being ruled by foreign powers because they wanted to be free to live and practice their religion as they desired.)

Looking Ahead

Have students read Matthew 2 in preparation for Lesson 3.

Enrichment

- ▶ Social studies. Students can do additional research about the Roman and Greek Empires. Examples of research topics include Alexander the Great, Augustus, Mark Antony, Pompey, the Maccabees, and the Pax Romana.
 - ▶ Have students research the importance of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.
 - ▶ Have students research the Apocrypha, and ask them to read and then report on one of the books.

Intertestamental Period **Guided Notes**

While in exile, the Israelites were under the rule of five different pagan nations

Assyria

- Known for a strong military _, they were very cruel ; it was not uncommon butcher, mutilate, or skin alive their enemies They used these techniques to create the largest empire up to that time
- 2. God used them to take the ___ northern kingdom of Israel into captivity
- Their capital was in _____Ninevah___, (You probably remember hearing of Ninevah in the story of Jonah. Now you can understand why it was hard for Jonah to go to Ninevah and offer them repentance. It wanted God to judge these cruel people, not forgive them!)

Babylonia (the Chaldean empire)

- 1. Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah _. They were not as harsh as the Assyrians but they still scattered to peoples (such as the Jews) within their empire the way the conquered peoples Assyrians did.
- 2. Babylon was one of the oldest cities in the ancient world tal of several previous civilizations.
- It reached its height under <u>King Nebuchadnezzar</u>. You may remember that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were educated in the court of Nebuchadnezzar.
- The Babylonian Empire was known for the hanging gardens (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World). Nebuchadnezzar built these gardens for his wife.
- 5. It was also known for incredibly thick walls . It was thought that because of them Babylon They diverted the flow of the Euphrates River which ran under the walls, and slipped in through the hole that was left. Daniel prophesied that Babylon would fall the same night that it did.

- Site of modern day ______. At its height, it stretched from Greece to India to Egypt.
- Well-organized government, excellent roads for traveling instead of bartering
- Cyrus the Great _, one of most powerful and wise conquerors who was 3. Led by _ merciful to his captives. He let conquered people keep their own religion return back to their homelands customs and

A Dream of Five Kingdoms

Read Daniel 2:24–49 to identify each portion of the statue. Since the dream foretold each new kingdom in chronological order, your answers will also follow chronological order

Next, summarize from your class notes how God used this kingdom to advance his redemptive purposes.

Material used: Gold

Kingdom represented: Babylonia

advance his plan for salvation?

God used the Babylonians to take his people into exile for a time. Because the Babylonians were not as ruthless as the Assyrians, a remnant of God's people would return to Palestine.



Material used: Silver

Kingdom represented: Persia

How did God use this kingdom to advance his plan for salvation?

The Persian kings allowed the Jewish people to return to Jerusa-lem and rebuild the temple.

Belly and Thighs

Material used: Bronze

Kinadom represented: Greece

dom to advance his plan for

The Greek language and culture unified people in the Greek empire and later in the Roman guage, Greek, allowed for the rapid spread of

the gospel message.

Legs and Feet

Kingdom represented: Rome

How did God use this kingdom to advance his plan for salvation?

At the time of Jesus' hirth the Roman Empire was at neace Good roads had been established throughout the empire, and this network assisted travel and thus the spread of the gospel.

4.	He allowed	Jews	to return and rebuild their	wall	and then their temple in
Jerusalem		salem			

Greece

1.	Alexander the Great	conquered	Persia.

- 2. Greek became the universal language and culture.
- During this time, Greek rulers tried to force Greek culture and religion __living in Israel
- Maccabean revolt: ______ were independent for ______ years.
- The <u>Jews</u> revolted against the <u>Greeks</u>
 the altar in Jerusalem The Jewish religion. when they sacrificed a pig on __. The Greeks did this to _____ dishor
- Judah Maccabee led a rebellion that overthrew the local Greek rulers.
- Hanukah originated from this time period.

Rome

- We have often heard these _____positive ___ characteristics of the _____Roman Empire such as:
 - trade and travel _ (due to safety, good roads), Improved trace and travel (due to safety, good roads), peace (rax
 Romana, a time of no wars), prosperity and achievement (such as building amphitheaters and aqueducts)
 - Also good to have a universal common language that
- The Romans also allowed ________ leaders to rule ________, but they chose a family that would do what Rome wanted. _______ in the Bible are from this family. Many Jews did not the Herods , since they compromised with Rome
- 2. Roman rule, however, was still very negative to Jews for these reasons
 - Rome was very powerful and ruled by intimidation.
 - They had _____ forceful laws ____ and ____ heavy taxes ____ that they levied on their provinces.
- any Jewish attempts at freedom _. (Several Jewish revolutionaries had tried to be a "messiah" or a saving king for Israel, and they had all been crushed.)
- Thus, the <u>Jews</u> felt <u>trampled on</u> and <u>oppressed</u> by these <u>pagan</u> rulers. Rome did not honor <u>God</u> or <u>God's law</u> any more than the previous empires had.
 The <u>Jews</u> were looking for a king to <u>rescue</u> them from <u>Rome</u>.

Summary Questions

- Why is this handout called "A Dream of Five Kingdoms"? Only four kingdoms were represented on the statue. What is the fifth kingdom, and how is it symbolically represented in the dream?
 - The fifth kingdom is a kingdom that God will set up that will never be destroyed, according to verse 44. It is symbolically represented as a rock cut out of a mountain, not cut by human hands.
- Daniel 2:44 explains that the fifth kingdom will begin during the time of the fourth kingdom. What does that mean? How was that prophecy fulfilled in history?
 - Jesus was born during the time of the Roman Empire—the fourth kingdom mentioned in the dream. Jesus is the one who brought the fifth kingdom—the kingdom of God—to Earth.
- According to verses 34–45, what did Daniel say will become of the first four kingdoms? Explain what you think this means.
 - According to verses 34 and 45, the rock will smash the other kingdoms to pieces. Those kingdoms will then be blown away by the wind. This means that the kingdoms of this Earth, which think they are all-powerful, will actually all fall and disappear. But the kingdom of God will triumph over all of them. It will never disappear
- 4. According to the same verses, what did Daniel say will become of the fifth kingdom? Explain what you think
 - This rock that represents the kingdom of God will grow to be a huge mountain that fills the whole Earth. The kingdom of God will never die out; instead, it will triumph and spread everywhere. Jesus' kingdom will keep growing and spreading; it will have people from all nations of the Earth in it. His kingdom will never end.
- 5. Daniel said that the fourth kingdom would be "partly strong and partly brittle" and that the people would not remain united (verses 42–43). From what you have learned in world history, how did Daniel's prediction come true?
 - The fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire, and it is true that the Roman Empire did not remain united. It was split into two pieces, east and west, and the western half fell to the barbarians. Daniel was correct that the empire was partly strong, because it was a glorious empire while it lasted, but it was partly brittle because it would collapse to the barbarians.