

BOOK 4: THE LIFE OF CHRIST—THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

Answers •
Family
Bible Devotional

A faith-building walk
through the Bible



MIKE & LIBBY WILD

40
"READ &
DISCUSS"
DEVOTIONS

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ISBN: 978-1-9844-0298-1

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Cover design: Jon Seest
Interior layout: Diane King
Project editor: Stacia McKeever
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Core questions from lessons 10, 13, 22, 25, 31, 34, 35 adapted from the Westminster Catechism (public domain).

Core questions from lesson 12, 21, 23, 26, 28, 30, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 adapted from the Heidelberg Catechism (public domain).

Chapters 1, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 28, 29 adapted from lessons in the Answers Bible Curriculum.

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Introduction

A strong, foundational understanding of God’s Word is the only answer for our families and future generations.

As Christian parents, we can list dozens of ways that the godless culture around us threatens the well-being of our children. However, instead of focusing on the negative and helplessly watching children walk away from the church, we can proactively build a strong and sure foundation in our children—a foundation built on the unchanging Word of the unchanging God.

Teaching God’s Word clearly, systematically, and consistently provides an anchor for our children to cling to in an age of skepticism. Understanding God’s Word enables our children to understand their sinfulness before a holy God and their need for a savior. Understanding God’s Word prepares and equips them to face the anti-biblical culture around them and emerge resolute in their faith.

Our children are our first disciples, and if we want them to thrive in a world that grows more hostile to the gospel every day, they must know why they believe what they believe. In order for our children to remain steadfast in God’s Word, they must know it for themselves.

God and his true story are the focal point of this Bible devotional. We will be discovering the historical events given in the Bible as they happened (chronologically), bringing attention to God’s attributes and grand plan. We will be tracing redemption through the Bible as well as seeing God’s amazing purposes (and how we fit into them) as it applies from before the beginning until the consummation of the ages.

While this is not a comprehensive devotional on every biblical topic, it will enable your family to study the clear, consistent, and thematic teachings in God's Word.

God has given us everything we need for life and godliness so that we might teach our children to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1). Let us study together as families for the glory of our good and gracious God!

How to Use This Devotional

This devotional is the fourth in a series of five books that covers material from the beginning all the way to the consummation of the ages and the new creation. The goal is for you to develop a biblical perspective of the world past and future, understand God's redemptive plan which was set in place from the beginning, and realize God's purpose for you and your family.

The scope and content of these devotions have been carefully created based on over 20 years of real-life experience raising our four boys in biblical truth while church planting cross-culturally in Asia Pacific. Credit must be given to Trevor McIlwain for his curriculum *Beginning on Firm Foundations*, which we taught from for many years in a tribal context. Trevor's work gave us much inspiration toward the creation of this devotional series.

In our cross-cultural work today, we use an evangelical teaching approach that lets the message unfold chronologically from Genesis to Revelation. When working with people (of any culture) who know little or nothing of Jesus Christ, we introduce themes, important key terms, or people at the point where they first appear in the Bible. This approach has proven to be effective, especially among people who have never heard the name of Christ in its proper context. We plan to publish another series that follows this approach in the future.

The Answers Family Bible Devotionals take a different approach. For this series, we assume most families are church attenders and hear about the Lord and Savior Jesus regularly and have a basic understanding of biblical themes and terminology. Because of this, we bring Jesus and New Testament teachings into the Old Testament discussions early on—beginning in Genesis. The series, written in coordination

with the staff at Answers in Genesis, closely follows the emphasis on apologetics in AiG's Answers Bible Curriculum.

While the Bible's message is timeless, we can adapt our presentations to fit our audience (1 Corinthians 9:20–22). Both approaches honor the Bible and make it the focus of study, and both approaches challenge readers to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

For you to get the most out of this devotional, we offer these guidelines.

1. Don't rush. This might be the hardest challenge you face!

Make sure that you set aside in your daily or weekly schedule the appropriate time to read and discuss each devotion. You and your children will need that time to marinate on each lesson. It won't take long for your family to "taste and see that the Lord is good!" Soon you will see the constant patterns and themes that permeate the Bible from beginning until the end. You may want to spend several days on one devotion, depending on your schedule. Feel free to pause any of the devotionals at any time and save the rest of it for the following day.

2. Read the core questions.

The core questions are foundational truths of the Christian faith. We encourage you to begin each lesson with the core question. You might even make it a goal as a family to memorize a few.

3. Read all scripture portions.

God's Word is where the power lies. We know that the clear reading of God's Word will not return void in the hearts of the hearers. Make it a practice to differentiate the reading of scripture and the devotion sections. When you get to a scripture reading, look it up in your Bible. This is a good opportunity for dad, mom, or older siblings to have a part in the devotion by taking turns reading the Bible portions. From the first day, we want to point clearly to the authority of God's Word and allow it to do its work in the hearts of our children. Some devotionals have longer passages to read than others. Feel free to read as you have time and pick up with the next portion the following day.

4. Don't skip devotionals.

These devotions are based on over 20 years of Bible teaching in different languages, cultures, and contexts. Each is important and builds on the previous one. Each has purpose and will direct your family toward a confident biblical worldview. If you are faithful to read and teach from each one, we trust that by God's grace the same good results that we witnessed among our own children and the remote Wano tribe will be seen among your own children and loved ones.

5. Go over the discussion questions.

The discussion questions provide opportunities for you to review and apply the lesson with your children. We recommend that you not only end each devotion with the questions but start tomorrow's with a quick look back at the previous lesson's questions.

6. Encourage discussion with your children and loved ones.

During the body of each devotion, or during the discussion questions, encourage your children to discuss what they are hearing. This allows them to feel a part of the study and show what they are learning.

7. Review throughout the day.

Look for opportunities to review or back up teaching that you are learning through your study of God's Word together with your children. This shows them that all times are good times to discuss God's Word, not just during the devotion time. Impart a holistic, Christian worldview by reinforcing and living out what you are learning through this devotion.

May the Lord bless you and your family as you embark on this chronological journey through the Bible. Keep on the path until the end and you will be rewarded by a truly biblical worldview, which is the foundation for living lives that glorify the Lord.

Mike and Libby Wild



1

Jesus' Authority over Death

How do we know that Jesus is truly God? *We know that Jesus is truly God because he has all the attributes of God—Jesus is more powerful than death.*

As we've studied the Bible from the beginning, we have been learning about the Seven C's of History: Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, Confusion, Christ, Cross, and Consummation. We traced human history from the beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden. From those first two people have come all the beautiful variety of people groups and languages we have today. We are all part of the same family!

We also share the same problem: Adam disobeyed God's command in the garden, and because of his sin, each of his descendants is born as a sinner. Each of us chooses to disobey God, and the punishment for sin is death and eternal separation from God forever. Adam's sin corrupted God's originally perfect creation.

We have been studying the solution to our sin problem—the person of Jesus Christ! He is the redeemer whom God had promised to send over and over since the beginning. He is the Christ—God's anointed one.

We studied the birth of Jesus, which was broadcast by shepherds and welcomed by kings. And then we moved on to study his perfect life, recorded in the Gospels, which helps us know how we should live when we follow him. This is where we will pick up in this book.

When Jesus was in his 30s, he began teaching, healing, and revealing himself as the Messiah. His ministry lasted about three years. During his first year of ministry, Jesus traveled around Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, teaching about eternal life, healing people from illnesses and demon possession, and correcting the false religion of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. The Pharisees rejected Jesus and sought to kill him, but the people followed Jesus eagerly. They liked the results of the miracles that he performed.

In today's lesson, we'll see Jesus' power and authority over our greatest enemy—death. One of the hardest trials in life is the loss, or death, of a loved one. Death is a consequence of sin, and it hurts whenever it happens, whether it's someone old or young or whether it's a long illness or an accident.

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

Let's find out what Jesus did to show compassion for a mother who just lost her only son to death.

Read Luke 7:11–17.

This account took place after Jesus healed the servant of a Roman centurion in Capernaum. He went to a town called Nain. At the gate of the town was a funeral procession for a man who had died. His mother (a widow) and a crowd were carrying out his body.

When Jesus saw her, he felt compassion for her. Jesus understands the pain and sadness we feel when someone we love dies, and he told the mother not to weep.

We know this man was truly dead since he was being carried out to be buried. He definitely had no breath or pulse. Jesus touched the bier, which was under the dead man, to stop the men carrying it and told him to arise. And the man sat up and spoke! Jesus gave him to his mother. The mother likely felt overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, while the crowd was seized with fear and glorified God.

They just witnessed something miraculous. A miracle is something only God can do. There is no human or scientific explanation for what happened. A man was dead, but Jesus brought him back to life. It would be terrifying to see a dead person sit up and talk! But the crowd recognized that the miracle came from God and that a great prophet had arisen among them. God had visited his people.

And news about Jesus spread around Judea and all the surrounding country.

Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter

Raising the widow's son is the first of three specific accounts recorded in the Gospels of Jesus raising the dead. The second account is about a 12-year-old girl who was deathly sick, and her parents were very worried.

When you get sick, what are some things your parents do to help you feel better? Some sicknesses, like colds, sick stomachs, or allergies, your parents can treat at home. They can give you medicine, take your temperature, and help you rest. But what if it's something serious, or they don't know what's making you sick? What would they do then? They might take you to the doctor or call an ambulance if it's an emergency.

We are blessed to live in a time and place with hospitals, doctors, nurses, and good medicines. Back in Jesus' day, they didn't have those things. Parents couldn't rush their kids to the hospital. Doctors couldn't give blood tests or take X-rays to see what was wrong. People suffered with conditions for years without relief. Parents had nowhere to go when their children were ill.

But reports about Jesus' miracles were spreading. People heard that he could do amazing things, like restore sight to the blind, cure leprosy, make the lame walk, and cast out demons. For one desperate father named Jairus, Jesus was his only hope to save his sick daughter. But could he get Jesus to come in time?

Accounts of Jairus' daughter and the sick woman are found in Matthew 9, Mark 5, and Luke 8, but we will read from Mark's account.

Read Mark 5:21–43.

Jairus was a well-respected man given the responsibility for the synagogue, a Jewish place of worship and studying the Scriptures. But when he got to Jesus, Jairus showed humility and desperation. The Luke 8 account says that his only daughter was dying.

Jairus showed faith in Jesus' power to heal because he believed if Jesus came and laid hands on his daughter, she would be made well. Jesus went with Jairus, but two things slowed him down: the crowd pressing around him and the sick woman who touched him for healing.

Think about this from Jairus' point of view. He knew his daughter didn't have much time—she was at the point of death. He found out that Jesus was nearby and hurried to find him. Jesus agreed to come—what a relief—but a huge crowd of people blocked the way! The Gospel writers said that the crowd thronged, or pressed around, Jesus.

Have you ever been crowded like this before? Maybe you had to cram onto a bus or train, or maybe you were in a large crowd at a sporting event or concert? It can be scary if the crowd is so tight that you have trouble breathing or seeing where you're going.

A woman who was sick for 12 years took advantage of the crowd and touched Jesus' garment for healing. She had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all her money, but she had gotten worse. This woman was desperate for healing and believed that Jesus had the power to heal her. Her faith was so strong that she believed she just needed to touch his clothes to be made well.

Jesus is sovereign, omnipotent, and omniscient. So why did he ask who touched him if he already knew? He wanted the woman to come forward and share what had happened. Jesus praised her faith before the whole crowd. Jesus also knew what would happen to Jairus' daughter while he stopped to talk to the woman—the daughter died.

When Jairus got the news that his daughter had died, he was told to just go home and stop bothering Jesus. It was too late—his daughter was dead. Jairus believed Jesus could heal his daughter, but did he believe Jesus could do anything now that she was dead? He must have because he didn't give up; he continued on to his house with Jesus and the three disciples.

The people mourning, wailing, and playing flutes (Matthew's Gospel records this detail) laughed when Jesus said the girl was only asleep. Jesus sent them away from the house, so he was alone with his disciples and Jairus' family. Jesus took her hand and called her to rise. Immediately she stood up and walked. Jairus and his wife were amazed and overjoyed to see their only daughter alive and healthy.

Jesus showed great power with his miracles of raising people from the dead. He showed attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, mercy, and love. You would think he'd want everyone to know he was God. But Jesus was always obeying the will of God the Father, and the time was not right for everyone to know about all his miracles. Jesus also wanted to be known for bringing the gospel, not just for

doing miracles. Plus, his enemies might have tried to find and kill him before the time was right to give his life in Jerusalem.

Jesus demonstrated his power as God the Creator by restoring life to people who were dead. He raised the only son of a widow, and he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. The disciples saw these miracles and recorded the accounts, so we know they are true.

Both of the resurrections Jesus performed in today's lesson happened shortly after the death of the individuals. But in another lesson we'll learn about one Jesus performed days after the person died.

Jesus' raising people from the dead showed his power over death. Jesus also provided victory over death through his own resurrection. When Jesus died then rose on the third day, he conquered death so that those who trust in him can have eternal life. No false god or religious leader has defeated death as Jesus did. The grave couldn't hold our Savior!

At the consummation, Jesus will ultimately conquer death so that it will no longer exist. In the new heaven and the new earth, there will be no more death, sadness, pain, or sickness like we have now. This is a wonderful promise for children of God.

Discuss

1. How do we know the man Jesus raised from the dead was truly dead? *He was being carried out for burial.*
2. Jesus is omniscient, which means he knows everything. Why did he ask who had touched him in the crowd? *He wanted the woman to come forward and share what had happened and then praised her faith before the whole crowd. He also knew that Jairus' daughter would die while he waited.*
3. Which C of the Seven C's of History did Jesus show power over?
Corruption
4. Jesus praised the faith of the sick woman and told Jairus to believe. Does this mean that we have to have faith before God will heal? *Allow discussion. What about the widow or the young man? Did they show faith before Jesus raised the son to life? Allow discussion. No. The dead son definitely couldn't show faith! And Jesus raised him to life with no evidence of faith on the part of the widow. We can't know the woman's heart, but her faith isn't mentioned in the text. Jesus acted out of compassion. Jesus healed people to show he was God and to glorify the Father, not to measure people's faith. God can choose to heal or not to heal, and he can get the glory in either situation. God knows what is best for us and promises to comfort his children when they are suffering. The comfort we receive from God can help us comfort others who are also suffering. This doesn't mean we shouldn't believe God can heal or pray for healing. God wants us to ask for healing, but we must never judge someone as having too little faith to be healed. The answers to prayer are always in God's hands.*

