

A LIGHT FOR  
FOREVER

DIVIDED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

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# How to Use *Truth for Living*

## **Truth for Living:**

A comprehensive, trustworthy curriculum that presents the truth of God's Word without compromise. The curriculum plan includes through-the-Bible courses as well as topical courses. Perfect for adults who want a guide in using all of God's Word as God intended.

As you prepare to teach these lessons, keep these two factors in mind:

- The FOCUS of productive adult Bible learning is the learner. The intent of teaching is not teaching, but learning—the learner's learning.
- The GOAL of productive adult Bible learning is an appropriate life-response to Biblical truth. You do not teach simply to impart information; you teach so that the Holy Spirit of God can use the truths of the Word of God to change the child of God into the image of the Son of God.

## **The Lesson Plan**

Each *Truth for Living* lesson has three distinct parts. GETTING STARTED is the attention-getter. The questions and activities “set the table,” as it were, for the study. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES is the heart of the lesson. A series of study questions leads the teacher and learners through the Biblical text. MAKING IT PERSONAL applies the truth to life.

As is true of any teaching experience, you can adapt the parts of the lesson to fit your particular class. You may choose to alter the beginning activities or change the focus of the application. You will find more material in the study than you can probably cover in one class session.

## **The Study Book**

This leader's guide is designed to accompany the Bible study book. We encourage you to distribute Bible study books to your learners. Urge them to complete the study before class. The more your learners have studied on their own, the better the class discussions will be. Most of the questions in the leader's guide are picked up from the Bible study book. You will notice the question numbers in parentheses after the questions. The answers to the questions are in italics following the questions.

## **Other Resources**

The resource CD has PowerPoint presentations for every lesson. They incorporate the resource visuals and provide a good way for teachers and learners to track the lesson. The resource CD also has Prezi presentations for some of the lessons. Instructions for using the Prezi presentations are on the CD. Other resources include lesson outlines and verse cards.



# Preface

*A Light for Forever* presents the Divided Kingdom of Israel, a time of highs and lows in Israel's history. It emphasizes God's *lamp* in Jerusalem, a symbol of His promise to David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne and rule forever. That descendant is Christ, Who first came to die for the sins of the world and provide eternal life to all who trust in Him. Christ is coming back one day to sit on David's throne and establish His Kingdom in fulfillment of God's promise.

God faithfulness to the house of David and the opportunity to participate in Christ's Kingdom should both encourage and motivate your learners to love God with all their hearts and to live with eternity in full view.

Emphasize God's faithfulness and care as you teach these lessons. The dramatic circumstances at times in the episodes reveal just how awesome God is.









# God's Plan for Lighting the World

## Topic

Christ, the Light

## Theme

God's plan to provide salvation through Christ, the light of the world, is unstoppable.

## Desired Learner Response

The learner will praise God for His unstoppable, sovereign power.

## Materials

- Resources 1 and 2

## Scripture Focus

Gen. 3:15; 1 Kings 11:36; 2 Kings 8:19; Isa. 9:2; Luke 1:67–79; 2:25–32; Matt. 4:12–17; 17:1,2; 24:27–31; John 8:11; Rev. 21:22, 23

## Summary

This lesson puts the divided kingdom of Israel into a historical perspective beginning with creation and ending with God's yet future eternal kingdom on the new earth. God's plan from eternity past has been to provide Christ as the redeemer, or light, for humanity. God promised Christ to Abraham, Judah, and David. Simeon recognized the new born Jesus as the One to give light to those in darkness. Later, Jesus revealed Himself as the light of the world. In the future, Christ will return to reign on earth before giving light to the new earth for all eternity.

## Outline

### I. Promises about the Light

- God's promise to Adam
- God's promise to Abraham
- God's promise concerning Judah
- God's promise to David

### II. Preservation of the Light

- God's plan for the light
- God's protection of the light

### III. Personification of the Light

- Simeon pointed to the Light
- Jesus portrayed His light

### IV. Permanent Place for the Light

- Jesus will provide His light
- Jesus will perpetuate His light

## Memory Verse

*"Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever" (2 Chronicles 21:7).*

## GETTING STARTED

### The Real Eternal Flame

The Olympics have a long-standing tradition of lighting a torch in Greece and carrying it to the site of the next Olympic games. The flame is supposed to be eternal, but weather, mishaps, and protesters have all been to blame for an occasional extinguished flame. But that is not a problem, for the real Olympic flame is kept burning in a lantern in a highly secretive location.

**ASK:** How would you feel if the lantern with the *eternal flame* was under your constant care?

**ASK:** What would you do if you accidentally extinguished the *eternal flame*? Would you tell anyone?

There are no serious consequences if the Olympic flame were to be extinguished. The person to blame might be embarrassed, but no one would get hurt or die. There is an eternal flame, however, that is of tremendous importance. That flame, guarded by our sovereign God, is the subject of this lesson.

### Stubborn Candles

Two stubborn candles refused to light at a couples' wedding in Iowa. Wisely, the candle lighter moved on. One of the ushers, however, was determined to get the candles lit. During the pastor's prayer, he crept to the front of the auditorium with an Aim 'n Flame in hand to solve the problem. But the prayer didn't last as long as he hoped. Everyone looked up to see him awkwardly stretching to reach the candles with his Aim 'n Flame clicking away. He realized the attempt was hopeless and that he had just made matters worse.

**ASK:** What experiences do you have with candles not lighting during a wedding ceremony? (Q1)

**ASK:** What effect did the stubborn candles have on the outcome of the wedding? (Q2) *Unlit candles don't have any effect on the outcome of a wedding. The ceremony is still legal and binding.*

The Bible refers to a metaphorical lamp that God lit. That lamp is the subject of this lesson. We will learn that nothing could ever extinguish its flame. The lamp will burn forever because God guaranteed it would.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

During the Divided Kingdom, God kept a metaphorical lamp lit in Jerusalem as a symbol of His promise to one day send Christ as the saving light of the world (1 Kings 11:36; 2 Chron. 21:7). This lesson will focus on that light and its place in history, starting with creation and ending with God's yet future kingdom on the new earth.

## I. Promises about the Light

### A. God's promise to Adam

Genesis 2 ends with Adam and Eve fellowshiping with God in the perfect Garden of Eden on a perfect earth. But Satan had already rebelled against God. He lurked in the Garden of Eden as Adam and Eve went about their days enjoying God and His world. Eve soon gave into Satan's temptation. Adam did the same. As a result, they and this earth were never the same. We could say the light went out in their hearts. They became darkened and blinded to the light of truth (2 Cor. 4:4).

God was obviously not pleased, but He was not surprised. His plan to redeem humanity was not a last-minute emergency measure to rescue humanity from sin.

**READ:** Revelation 13:8. **ASK:** When did God plan to send His Son, the Lamb of God, to die for the sins of the world? (Q3) *Since the foundation of the world, or before He created anything.*

Genesis 3:15 says, *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* This verse is the *protoevangelium*, or the first reference to the gospel in the Scriptures. God is talking to Satan, who had empowered the serpent to deceive Eve. God predicted that Satan's *seed* will bruise Christ's heel, a reference to the crucifixion. But Christ, the *seed* of the woman, will in turn crush Satan's head by rising from the dead. That is exactly what happened. Christ's resurrection sealed Satan's fate. Christ will one day condemn Satan to the Lake of Fire to burn forever in indescribable agony (Rev. 20:10).

Satan has opposed Christ throughout history, and he will continue to do so until he is finally confined for all eternity. Satan's opposition was evident in particular throughout the history of the Divided Kingdom. But his fate was already determined. There was nothing he could have done to quench the *lamp* God set up for Himself in Jerusalem.

### B. God's promise to Abraham

God's plan of redemption became clearer when He called Abraham to the Promised Land and made a covenant with him there. The Abrahamic Covenant includes God's promise to give Abraham's descendants the Promised Land as well as to bless all the nations of the world through Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 15).

Abraham and Sarah eventually had Isaac, God's chosen son through whom the world was eventually blessed. We know from Scripture that Jesus Christ is that blessing. He came to earth in the line of Abraham to give His life on the cross.

**READ:** Galatians 3:28. **ASK:** To which nationalities does God offer salvation? (Q4) *All of them.*

God saves all people who come to Him for salvation. They become heirs according to God's promise to bless the nations through Abraham (Gal. 3:28, 29).

### C. God's promise concerning Judah

God further defined His plan of redemption when He made promises concerning Judah, Abraham's great grandson. Abraham's son Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob, later called *Israel*, had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. Before he died, Jacob blessed his sons. His blessing on Judah is particularly important to God's plan to save the world.

**READ:** Genesis 49:8–12. **ASK:** What would be true of the tribe of Judah according to verse 10? (Q5) *There would be a line of rulers from the tribe of Judah until Shiloh came as the final ruler over the nations of the world.*

*Shiloh* in verse 10 is most likely a reference to Jesus, Israel's Messiah. God selected Judah as the son through whom the Messiah would come to rule the world. Later, God identified a specific king in the tribe of Judah through whom Messiah would come.

**READ:** Matthew 1:1–6. **ASK:** Who was the first king in the line of Judah? (Q6) *David.*

### D. God's promise to David

Like He did with Abraham, God made a covenant with David that included a promise concerning Jesus Christ.

**READ:** 2 Samuel 7:12, 13, 16. **ASK:** What did God promise to David concerning his throne? (Q7) *David's throne would be established forever.*

**READ:** Matthew 1:7–11. **ASK:** What happened to end the string of kings on David's throne? (Q8) *The line of kings ended when the Babylonians came to take Judah captive.*

Even though David's royal line ceased to sit on Judah's throne, the line of descendants continued through the captivity and Judah's return to the Promised Land (Matt. 1:12–16). Jesus was born in the line of David as a member of the tribe of Judah and in fulfillment of God's promise to bless the world through Abraham.

Jesus will return someday to establish His Kingdom on earth (Rev. 19:11–16). He will rule as a descendant of David and will fulfill God's promise to establish David's throne.

## II. Preservation of the Light

### A. God's plan for the light

What we don't learn from reading Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1 is the fact that God split Israel into two kingdoms after Solomon's reign: the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The split was part of God's judgment on Solomon for worshiping false gods. Despite the judgment on Solomon, God planned for David's line to continue to sit on Judah's throne throughout the Divided Kingdom.

**READ:** 1 Kings 11:29–36. **ASK:** Why did God give one tribe to Solomon's son Rehoboam to rule? (Q9) *So David would always have a lamp before God in Jerusalem.*

## **B. God's protection of the light**

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had no good kings. They opposed God and often warred with Judah. Many of Judah's kings were also bad. But God's plan to keep David's royal line going never wavered. God did not cut off the house of David even when Jehoram, one of Judah's evil kings, married the daughter of Ahab, the most notorious of Israel's kings (2 Kings 8:16–19).

**READ:** 2 Kings 8:16–19. **ASK:** Why did God not remove David's house from the throne of Judah when Jehoram lived like wicked king Ahab? (Q10) *Because He promised to give David and his sons a lamp forever.*

Jehoram was not the only peril that David's royal line faced. In this course we will learn more about those perils and God's sovereign protection of His light in Jerusalem. Nothing could stop God from working His plan of redemption through the dark days of the Divided Kingdom.

## **III. Personification of the Light**

David's royal line survived the Divided Kingdom and the subsequent years of captivity. As we have already seen in Matthew 1:1–16, Jesus was born into the house of David according to God's plan. Jesus personified God's light.

### **A. Simeon pointed to the Light**

Shortly after the birth of John the Baptist, Zacharias prophesied concerning John's ministry (Luke 1:67–79). The prophecy focused on Jesus' light, calling Him the *dayspring from on high* (1:78). Jesus' light *dawned* on those who sat *in darkness and in the shadow of death* (1:79). When Christ was born a few months later, Simeon recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of God's plan.

**READ:** Luke 2:25–32. **ASK:** What did Simeon say about Jesus? (Q11) *That Jesus is God's salvation and that He is a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and glory to Israel.*

Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and David. God's light survived the troubling days of the Divided Kingdom and broke forth at Jesus' coming to earth.

### **B. Jesus presented His light**

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, He recognized His role in God's redemptive plan, teaching that He is the *light of the world* Who gives the *light of life* (John 8:12). The life that comes through Christ is eternal and is available to all who believe in Christ (John 3:16).

Christ veiled His glorious light while He was on earth. But on one occasion Jesus revealed His glory to three of His disciples. Matthew wrote that Christ's *face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light* (Matt. 17:2).

The New Jerusalem will be 1,400 miles long, wide, and tall. On our present earth, the New Jerusalem would cover about half of the United States.

**READ:** Matthew 17:1–5. **ASK:** What did God say about Jesus that He could not say about any of the kings in the line of David? (Q12) *The He was well pleased with Jesus.*

Jesus is the reason God protected His lamp in Jerusalem. None of the kings in the royal line, including David, were qualified to be the light of the world. We would all be utterly lost if Jesus did not come as the perfect light of life.

#### IV. Permanent Place for the Light

##### A. Jesus will provide His light

Jesus offered to be Israel’s king, but the Jews rejected His light. They loved darkness instead and crucified Him to try to end His mission. But Jesus did not stay in the grave. He arose victorious over death and darkness and ascended to Heaven to await the day when He returns to set up His Kingdom. When Christ returns, He will sit on David’s throne in Jerusalem on earth for one thousand years (Rev. 20:4). After the Millennium, He will create a new heaven and new earth complete with an astoundingly huge New Jerusalem (21:1, 2, 15, 16).

**READ:** Revelation 21:22, 23. **ASK:** What unique role will Jesus play on the new earth? (Q13) *He will be the light for the new earth.*

The glory Christ revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration will shine brilliantly throughout the new earth.

##### B. Jesus will perpetuate His light

How long will Jesus’ light last on the new earth? Forever! Jesus will have no enemies threatening Him on the new earth. His light will shine eternally as a witness to God’s glory. It will never be extinguished or even diminished. And since Christ’s light will fill the new earth, it is conceivable that there will never be any shadows.

**READ:** Revelation 21:24–26. **ASK:** What comes to your mind when you think about living forever in a world without sunshine or even one shadow of darkness? (Q14)

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 2 to review God’s plan for lighting the world.



## MAKING IT PERSONAL

### What if . . . ?

**ASK:** What would life be like if God’s *lamp* in Jerusalem had been extinguished during the days of the Divided Kingdom? (Q15) *Life would be hopeless. There would be no salvation and no purpose for living.*

**ASK:** Have you taken God’s sovereign plan of salvation for granted? Explain. (Q16)

**ASK:** Express your appreciation for God's sovereign provision of salvation. (Q17)

### God Is Still Working

The God Who worked over thousands of years to provide you with a light for forever is still working today. His plan includes your life, and His power to carry out His plan has not waned.

**ASK:** What might God desire to do through you? (Q18)

**ASK:** Express your trust in Him to use your life to accomplish your will. (Q19)

### Summary and Memory Verse

Use resource 1 to review the response for this lesson: Praise God for Jesus, the Light for forever.

Encourage your learners to memorize 2 Chronicles 21:7. Give them an opportunity to quote the verse in class next week.

