

Discussion Guide

Section #14: STRUGGLE FOR FAITH AND PROPHECIES OF HOPE

Read to the Group: For the next 1,400 years, until the Savior was born here on earth, God arranged for Priests to carry out special religious observances. Once a year the main highest Priest went behind a sacred veil, which separated the people from the holy presence of God. There the priest represented the whole nation before the Lord.

Later in *God's Story* we will see a supernatural disaster happen to this thick, ornate curtain. Watch for this event and see if you can figure out how it might be vitally significant to you.

God communicated with the Jews through judges, kings and prophets. But most of the people, most of the time, rebelled against God and His leadership and broke His laws.

Group Questions:

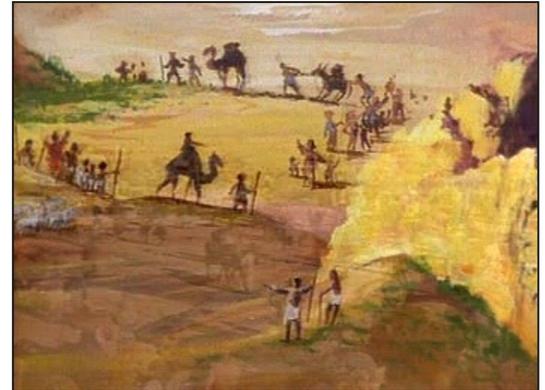
1. How did God punish the Israelites for their rebellion and for killing His prophets?
2. How did God show that He did not give up on His people despite their rebellion?

Leader Information: Punishment: He took them out of their own land. Love: Continued to speak through the prophets and sent prophecies of the coming Savior. Prophets delivered messages from God.

God gave a guideline in the Bible on how to test people who claimed to be prophets. If their short term prophecies all came true, 100%, then their long-term prophecies could be trusted. If their short-term prophecies failed to be accurate, they were to be executed!

Group Question:

1. Name as many of the prophecies listed in the video as you can remember.



Show the Following Segment from the *God's Story* video:

“Finally, after forty years” (Camel caravan and people in valley)... through... “Many hundreds of years before the Savior came” (Closing of the scroll) 3 minutes, 41 seconds



Leader Information: Get your copy of the list (*Handout #2*) and check off the prophecies they name. After they recall as many as they are able, pass out a copy of Handout #2 to each person. Either you or members in the class who are comfortable reading out loud should read down the whole list. You should acknowledge each one they remembered as you come to them.

Read to the Group: These are only a few of the over 200 prophecies written in the Old Testament section of the Bible that describe the coming Savior.

Group Question:

1. If Jesus did actually fulfill these prophecies, how do you think the prophets were able to accurately predict these details, some written 1,000 years before He was born?

Read to the Group: Either there was some kind of trick or God really told the prophets what would happen because He already knew. The odds would be more than 1 in a million that even just a few of those prophecies would happen to the same man. But those seen in the video, and hundreds more, were all fulfilled in Jesus!

No one can dispute that the prophecies had been foretold, because they were written down in the Old Testament part of the Bible that the Jews used in worship. But once again knowing the facts does not always turn people to the truth.



Transition Statement: We will see in the next three sections that the esteemed religious leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees and Sadducees, had the Scripture prophecies, yet most of them did not accept Jesus as the promised Savior. They wanted a King to bring their nation to world prominence, but had no interest in trusting Jesus as a Savior from sins.

Group Question:

1. Can anyone imagine why they might have rejected Jesus?

Leader Information: Possible answers... Perhaps they were so self-righteous and blinded by pride that they did not recognize the sin in their lives? Perhaps they were more interested in imposing their beliefs on people than in following the Words of the Bible? Maybe they wanted the people to look up to them and were jealous when people showed interest in Jesus? (If the group brings these possibilities up or if you briefly mention them, keep the ideas in a question form).

Read to the Group: As we watch the next three sections together, perhaps we can discover why so many of the religious leaders rejected Jesus as the promised Savior?

Group Questions:

1. Do you remember in the story of Moses how we discovered the qualities that God looks for when he chooses leaders?
2. What qualities does God treasure in a leader?

Leader Information: God selects people to use as leaders when they show humility, flexibility, love toward others, trust in Him, and obedience to His Word. God finds no pleasure in those who do not trust Him. He will not use as leaders people with arrogance, pride, those who ignore His Word, and those who substitute their own rules for His laws.

Read this Scripture to the Group:

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

When Jesus came He said,

“He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever shall exalt himself shall be dishonored; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:11-12).

Leader Information, Scripture:

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Psalm 10:4).

“A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Proverbs 29:23).

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither allow you them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13).

Transition Statement: When we see the next sections of the video, let's try to discover which of the qualities we discussed show up in the religious leaders and which show up in the life of Jesus. We will finally get to see the arrival of the Savior now (*or* next time when we meet).