

**THE
FORGOTTEN
JESUS**

ROBBY GALLATY

LifeWay Press®
Nashville, Tennessee

Published by LifeWay Press® • © 2017 Robby Gallaty

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ISBN 978-1-4627-4292-9 • Item 005793415

Dewey decimal classification: 232.95

Subject headings: JESUS CHRIST \ RABBIS \ JUDAISM—CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES

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Printed in the United States of America

Groups Ministry Publishing • LifeWay Resources
One LifeWay Plaza • Nashville, TN 37234-0152



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ROBBY GALLATY



Robby Gallaty has served as the senior pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, since 2015. He wasn't always a pastor, though.

For three years Robby battled a drug addiction that ravaged his life. A \$180-a-day heroin and cocaine addiction drove him to steal \$15,000 from his parents. After living without gas, electricity, and water for months; losing eight of his friends to drug-related deaths; watching six friends get arrested; and completing two rehabilitation treatments, Robby remembered the gospel that a friend shared with him in college and was radically saved on November 12, 2002.

Eight months later David Platt, a seminary student and church member at the time, asked Robby to meet weekly for accountability, prayer, and Bible study. For the next two years David instilled a passion for missions, expository preaching, and disciple making in Robby's life. He also encouraged Robby to go back to school to pursue theological education.

Robby earned his master of divinity in expository preaching in 2007 and his PhD in preaching in 2011 from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Today Robby's gospel conviction and evangelistic zeal compel him to passionately make disciples who make disciples.

In addition to his leadership at Long Hollow, Robby is also the founder of Replicate Ministries and the author of several books, including *Growing Up, Firmly Planted*, *Rediscovering Discipleship*, and the LifeWay Bible study *Knowing Jesus*.

Robby and his wife, Kandi, have two sons: Rig and Ryder.

HAMILTON BARBER helped develop and write the content for this Bible study. Hamilton works as a content writer and an editor at Long Hollow Baptist Church. He holds a BA in English from the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga. Hamilton has edited books and Bible studies for Replicate Ministries and self-published a volume of poetry in 2017. He and his wife, Morgan, live in Hendersonville, Tennessee.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This Bible study provides a guided process for individuals and small groups to examine Jesus' historical, cultural, and religious context as an Eastern rabbi. This study follows a six-week format that examines these topics:

Week 1: Considering Jesus' Jewishness

Week 2: Jesus' Childhood

Week 3: Jesus' Teaching Ministry

Week 4: Messianic Miracles

Week 5: The Last Week

Week 6: Words from the Cross

Each week is divided into two days of personal study. In these studies you'll find biblical teaching and interactive questions that will help you understand and apply Jesus' words and teachings from a Hebrew mindset.

In addition to the personal study, six group sessions are provided that are designed to spark conversations based on brief video teachings. Each group session is divided into three sections:

1. "Start" focuses participants on the topic of the session's video teaching.
2. "Watch" provides key ideas presented in the video and space to take notes.
3. "Discuss" guides the group to respond to and apply the video teaching.

Consider going deeper in your study by reading the book on which this Bible study is based. *The Forgotten Jesus: How Western Christians Should Follow an Eastern Rabbi* (Zondervan) is ISBN 978-0-3105-2923-1.

DO YOU KNOW THE

JESUS

OF THE BIBLE?

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was a Jewish man who was raised in a Jewish culture, was reared by exceptionally devout Jewish parents, and lived according to Jewish laws. He was circumcised on the eighth day of His earthly life and was dedicated to the Lord. As Jesus grew up, He regularly attended the synagogue on the Sabbath, participated in every biblical feast, studied and memorized the Scriptures, learned a trade from His father, and started His rabbinic ministry at age thirty—all according to Jewish customs of the time.

At the age of thirty, Jesus selected and called twelve Jewish men to forsake everything, learn His teachings, and carry on His mission. Consequently, prior to His death, most of Jesus' followers were Jews who professed faith in Him as the Messiah but still celebrated the Jewish festivals, worshiped in the temple, and observed the Sabbath.

If we look at Christianity today and compare it to the way it began, we might notice that the Jewishness of both its founder and its original followers has been lost. In this study we'll put ourselves in the shoes of the people who physically walked with Jesus. They observed His actions, heard His voice, lived in the same culture, and knew the same stories. Once we've put ourselves into the mindset of a Hebrew, we'll take a look at some of Jesus' teachings, which will come alive to us as never before.

I pray that through this Bible study you'll get to know Jesus—the historical, physical Jesus who walked and lived and breathed—and that you'll be changed by your encounter with Him.

WEEK 1

**CONSIDERING
JESUS'
JEWISHNESS**

START

Welcome to group session 1.
Use the following content to start the session.

Have you ever taken a painting class? One of the first things you're taught is to sketch your painting in pencil before breaking out the colors. This way you can make sure all the lines are in place, the shapes are where they need to be, and the outlines fit the picture you'll eventually create. This penciled outline is important because it lets you know where all of the colors need to go.

Do you prefer to outline, sketch, or plan something you write, draw, or say, or do you prefer to be more spontaneous?

In His most famous sermon Jesus said something we sometimes have difficulty understanding:

Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

MATTHEW 5:17

In the New Testament the Law and the Prophets refer to what we call the Old Testament. Jesus was saying that instead of abolishing or destroying the Old Testament Scriptures or setting them aside, He came to fulfill them—literally, to fill them full.

In many ways the Old Testament commandments can be understood as the pencil sketch of God's purposes, and Jesus is the proverbial paint. The full picture of who God was and what He was doing wasn't complete when God gave the Jewish people the law and established a relationship with them. He brought it to completion in the person of Jesus.

As we study Jesus in His historical, cultural, and religious context, we'll begin to see Him in a different light. In the process we'll learn how twenty-first-century Westerners can follow a first-century Eastern rabbi.

Watch and discuss video session 1.

WATCH

Jesus is saying, “I’ve come to fill it full. I’ve come to interpret it correctly.”

Jesus isn’t saying the order has been fulfilled. He’s saying it’s been interpreted correctly, in a way for you to understand it.

Westerners think on one hand. It has to be one or the other.

Easterners think on two hands.

You don’t appreciate the New Testament because you don’t understand the Old.

VIDEO SESSIONS AVAILABLE AT LIFEWAY.COM/FORGOTTENJESUS

DISCUSS

It's easy to operate from a mindset that reflects the culture we live in, especially when we talk about God. Jesus' culture often thought about God quite differently than we do.

What are some words you would use to describe God?

Do those words bring to mind any specific images for you? How do they help you see God more clearly?

Hebrew culture thought less in terms of dictionary words and more in terms of images or feelings.

Think of a picture that describes God. What do the characteristics of that image—such as smell, feel, and sound—say about God?

As we embark on a journey to rediscover an ancient Eastern rabbi as twenty-first-century Westerners, a useful starting point is to place ourselves in His context.

Why is it important to see Jesus through a Hebrew lens?

What are some examples of Greek thinking (A or B) and Hebrew thinking (A and B) in Scripture?

Developing a common understanding is often the first step in bringing two different cultures closer together. By learning how Jesus and the people around Him lived and thought, we'll be able to experience His teachings and understand His commands in a way that's both accurate and immediately applicable to our everyday lives.

How do you think studying Jesus' culture will help us better understand and obey His teachings?

READING PLAN

Read the following Scripture passages this week. Use the acronym HEAR and the space provided to record your thoughts or action steps.

DAY 1

Luke 2:1-24

DAY 2

Luke 2:25-52

DAY 3

Matthew 2

DAY 4

Mark 1:1-20

DAY 5

Mark 1:21-45

DAY 6

John 1:1-18

DAY 7

John 1:29-51

HIGHLIGHT · **E**XPLAIN · **A**PPLY · **R**ESPOND

REFLECT

During this study we'll walk together through Scripture to see Jesus' ministry in its proper context. When we discover the truth of God's Word for ourselves and let it take root in our hearts, it will change us.

For some people, the idea of studying Scripture by themselves is daunting. They feel they need special knowledge or a seminary degree to interpret and apply it. That couldn't be further from the truth. You can use a simple, four-step method called HEAR to clearly hear from God's Word.

THE HEAR METHOD

<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Example</i>
HIGHLIGHT	
As you're reading, select a passage from your reading to focus on.	"I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).
EXPLAIN	
Examine the context of the verse. What do you think the purpose of this verse is in the context of the passage at large?	Paul told the church in Philippi that he had discovered the secret of contentment. No matter the situation, Paul realized that Christ was all he needed and that Christ would give him strength to persevere.
APPLY	
How does this passage speak to you personally? What action steps is it calling you to take? What condition of your heart is it correcting?	In life I'll experience many ups and downs. My contentment isn't found in circumstances. Rather, it's based on my relationship with Jesus. Only Jesus gives me the strength I need to be content in all of life.
RESPOND	
Record a prayer or commit to an action you can take in direct response to the passage.	Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. In Your strength I can endure any situation I must face.

As you work through this study over the coming week, use the HEAR journal to help you discover Scripture in a fresh way.

PERSONAL STUDY 1

CUTTING A COVENANT

To Western, twenty-first-century ears, certain things in the Old Testament can seem foreign, bloody, and violent.

Read Genesis 15:9-11.

God came to Abram and initiated a covenant with him. God's instructions to Abram were specific. He was to bring five different animals that were to be killed in different ways. The beasts were to be killed and halved, and the birds were to be killed and left whole.

Think of what Abram was feeling as he brought these animals out to the site of the slaughter, as he was killing them, and as he was arranging them as God told Him to. It would have been a brutal scene, perhaps difficult to stomach. But God mandated this arrangement for a specific reason. Such an intentional act would have impressed Abram with the seriousness of the agreement to come.

Have you ever entered a serious agreement with someone?

What did you do to let the person know you were extremely serious?

The preparation of the scene was also the preparation of Abram's heart. He knew by the end of it that God meant precisely what He was about to say: the covenant to come was sealed in blood, in sacrifice, and in gravity.

Interestingly, the preparation of this covenant was relatively standard in the ancient world. When two people wanted to seal a deal with each other, depending on the gravity of their agreement, the scene would be more or less bloody. Traditionally, after the preparation of this covenant ceremony was finished, both of the parties involved would step into the aisle of blood between the severed animals and say aloud to each other, "May what was done to these animals be done to me if I do not keep this covenant."¹

At this point Abram was most likely feeling immense pressure. Not only had he prepared a ritual slaughter, but he was also about to enter a covenant with God—one that required both parties to be perfectly righteous. The only way Abram could uphold his end of this bargain was to be sinless—something he could never fulfill.²

When have you felt that you were in over your head?

How did you feel? In what way did your predicament appear impossible without God's intervention?

Read Genesis 15:12.

When the text tells us that Abram fell into a deep sleep that was accompanied with "great terror and darkness," it's using a Hebrew euphemism usually associated with death. Rather than signifying that Abram died, however, it signals

to the reader that what came next was absolutely out of Abram's control. God, in His sovereignty, was making a deal he knew Abram stood no chance of fulfilling in his own power.

Verses 17-21 describe the rest of what happened. God, represented by a smoking pot and a flaming torch, moved between the elements of the covenant sacrifice. Because Hebrews think in pictures, we can rightly assume that both of these carried significant weight in a Hebrew's mind.

What's an item that carries special significance for you?

**What does interacting with that item make you think of? Is it a memory, like a childhood heirloom?
Is it an action, like a favorite baking dish?**

M. G. Easton explains that this smoking pot "was a large pot, narrowing towards the top. When it was heated by a fire made within, the dough was spread over the heated surface, and thus was baked."³

Aided by the previous explanation, list images or feelings that come to mind when you think of a smoking, burning pot.

Where else do you see fire in Scripture? Why do you think God is associated with a consuming fire?

By bringing these three elements together—Abram's deep sleep, the burning pot, and the flaming torch—God was demonstrating that He would be the one responsible for keeping both sides of the agreement. Abram was a human like the rest of us. He sinned, struggled, and lived imperfectly, but those shortcomings didn't disqualify him from the promise God made to him in the covenant. He soon received his son Isaac and later became the father of many nations. All this happened because God took the responsibility for fulfilling His covenant promises.

Read Luke 22:20.

Under Abram humankind entered a covenant with God that was forged with the blood of sacrificed animals. Jesus ushered in a new covenant—this time forged with His own blood. God initiated this new covenant, provided the blood of His own Son, and upholds the terms of the covenant. All that's required of us to enter this covenant is faith in Christ. Through faith we accept that Christ fulfilled our portion of the covenant on the cross, and we allow ourselves to be covered by His sacrifice on our behalf.

What do you think is required for us to enter God's presence? How could we ever live up to that standard?

How did Jesus take up our end of the covenant the same way God took up Abram's? What ramifications does Jesus' fulfillment of the covenant have for your life today?

1. John Mark Hicks, *Come to the Table: Revisioning the Lord's Supper* (Orange, CA: New Leaf Books, 2002), 28.
2. Ray Vander Laan, *Prophets and Kings*, Faith Lessons, film (Israel: Ray Vander Laan, 1996).
3. M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (New York: Cosimo, 2005), 269.

PERSONAL STUDY 2

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

This is one of those introductory questions we ask people we've just met because the answer tells us a lot about who the person is. If we meet someone from Zambia, for instance, we can assume they probably have an entirely different set of interests, tastes, and experiences from someone who was born in, say, Tennessee.

In the Hebrew tradition, though, where you're from refers to more than geographical location; it also refers to the people you're from. Who raised you says a lot about the way you were brought up and probably informs much of the way you think about and interact with the world.

Where are you from? What are your hometown and family like?

What aspects of your personality do you think are influenced by where and whom you're from?

When Philip, one of the twelve disciples, first found Jesus, he found his friend Nathanael and said:

*We have found the one Moses wrote about
in the law (and so did the prophets):
Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.*

JOHN 1:45

There are two ways we can and should read Philip's introduction of Jesus as "the son of Joseph, from Nazareth." The first is fairly obvious: Jesus' father was Joseph, and they lived in Nazareth. But by being disconnected from the culture, we might miss the fact that "the son of Joseph" was a way rabbinic literature referred to the Messiah.¹

Another Joseph is one of the most famous figures in the Old Testament. Try to list at least five key moments from Joseph's life.

Read about one key moment in Joseph's story:

Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was a son born to him in his old age, and he made a robe of many colors for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not bring themselves to speak peaceably to him. When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped off Joseph's robe, the robe of many colors that he had on. Then they took him and threw him into the pit.

GENESIS 37:3-4,23-24

Joseph's rejection by his brothers is the first major turning point in his story. It sets the other parts in motion. Rejection is never easy to bear, but if we've been rejected, we're in good company. Many biblical heroes were rejected, among them Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:16 shows us something interesting about Jesus. His earthly father, Joseph, like the Old Testament Joseph, was the son of a man named Jacob. The Old Testament Jacob was renamed Israel by God. Just as his son Joseph was rejected by his brothers, Jesus was rejected by Israel's sons—the nation of Israel.

Describe a situation of rejection you've had to endure.

Explain how rejection could be used for God's glory or for your good.

After Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, he became a servant in the house of a man named Potiphar. Joseph eventually gained so much favor that he was put in charge of all of Potiphar's household. But all wasn't well yet.

Read Genesis 39:6-9,16-20.

Even in the face of great temptation, Joseph remained faithful to his master and to his morals. This fact is easy for us to see in hindsight, especially if we already know the end of this story. But we can't discount the pressure Joseph felt in that moment.

**Take stock of your life. What's one sin
that you would be most likely to give in to?**

What are ways the enemy tempts you in this area?

**What safeguards can you establish
to keep from falling into that sin?**

Joseph had a specific response to the temptation before him: he ran far away from it. In much the same way, Jesus experienced temptation from Satan himself. The enemy came to Him on three separate occasions in the desert, and each time Jesus had a specific response for him (see Matt. 4:1-11). Joseph avoided falling into temptation by fleeing; Jesus resisted temptation by quoting the Word of God.

When in prison for a crime he didn't commit, Joseph found himself in the company of a butler and a baker. The butler was eventually spared, while the baker was condemned (see Gen. 40). Similarly, when Jesus was sent to the cross, He was hung between two criminals—one of whom found salvation, the other of whom didn't.

One of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other answered, rebuking him: "Don't you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? We are punished justly, because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

LUKE 23:39-43

Why do you think Jesus told only one of these men that he would be with Him in paradise?

What did the criminal do that made Jesus offer Him salvation?

The life of Joseph illustrates that he is a type of the Messiah, that is, a foreshadowing of the kind of person the Messiah would be. Though Joseph himself wasn't the savior of the world, he offered salvation to his family and other people during a famine (see Gen. 47). By this point Joseph had become second in command to Pharaoh. Because God told him a famine was coming, Joseph had prepared a massive amount of grain in storehouses, enough to sustain his entire kingdom and other people who came to him for help.

In an even more poignant way, Jesus provides nourishment that sustains for all eternity. Like Joseph's storehouses of grain, Jesus' provision can come through no other source.

What avenues to ultimate fulfillment does the world promise us?

In what ways does the world's fulfillment eventually run dry?

How have you experienced dissatisfaction with the world's promises?

How has Jesus satisfied your soul's hunger?

Throughout the Old Testament and embedded in its culture lie shadows of the Messiah to come, all of which were realized in the person of Christ. As you come to know the real, historical Jesus, pray that He will reveal Himself to you more and more clearly so that you can follow Him passionately.

1. Roger Liebi, *The Messiah in the Temple* (Dusseldorf, Germany: Christlicher Medien-Vertrieb, 2003), 290.