

Aim of lesson

To help the young people to realise the truth of the Bible by highlighting some of the many understated links which demonstrate its truthfulness and internal harmony.

Bible background

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Preparation required

Familiarise yourself with the content of the students' notes so that you can help them work through the examples. If there are other examples on which you are particularly keen, use them instead - your enthusiasm will communicate itself to the young people.

There are probably too many examples in the notes for you to deal with properly in one lesson. Depending on the abilities and number of young people in your group, you may like to divide the examples between them; each student could research one or two and report back to the others. Two of the examples: "Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years' captivity" and "Healing on the Sabbath" are a little harder than the others and you may like to bear this in mind.

If you can have a map which shows Carchemish, the young people may be interested to know where it is.

Suggested outline of lesson

The key points are summarised here:

The generation gap between Isaac and Rebekah

Sarah's infertility followed by pregnancy in her old age would lead to a generation gap and make Isaac nearer Rebekah's age.

Spices in Egypt

By piecing together the narrative, we find there was a market in Egypt for the products the Ishmaelites were carrying. A large amount of spices was used in the burial of the Lord Jesus, illustrating that this would have been a significant trade.

Transporting the tabernacle

The objects Gershon had to carry were much lighter than the furniture Merari carried, so the Gershonites didn't need so many wagons and oxen.

Giants

The only Anakites not exterminated by Joshua lived in the area Goliath came from, years later. Three different authors - Moses, Joshua and Samuel - give us a harmony spanning some 400 years.

The section which follows, about Caleb's inheritance, is a little harder to work out. It demonstrates how Caleb was given land around Hebron, one of the cities where giants were found, and that this land was still known as Caleb's inheritance many years later. Without the account of Joshua, there would have been no connection between Caleb and this part of the country mentioned years later in David's time.

Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years' captivity

Jeremiah prophesied that the people of Israel would be captives in Babylon for 70 years, and wrote the exiles a letter promising that they would then return and the Babylonians would be overthrown.

The relationship between Darius I and Cyrus is not entirely clear, but it seems that Cyrus, the Persian, was overall ruler, and that Darius, the Mede, was in charge of the province of Babylon, so they were co-rulers. In the book of Daniel we read of his prayer to God about the prophesied return, and in Ezra chapter 1 we hear of God's reply. There is harmony between the Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezra narratives, which need to be put together to give the full story.

The two summary tables should read, give or take a year or two:

	Date
Battle of Carchemish, Babylonians became ruling nation in the Middle East.	605 BC
Babylonians defeated, and the Jews allowed to return to their land.	537 BC
So Israel had served the Babylonians for how long?	68 years
	Date
Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem and burned the temple.	586 BC
The rebuilding of the temple completed	516 BC
So the temple had been destroyed for how long?	70 years

Peter's wife

Two independent passages, written by different people, confirming Peter was married.

Healing on the Sabbath

Matthew chapter 8 does not tell us what day of the week it was or why the sick weren't brought to him until evening. The other narratives show us that they waited until the Sabbath was over so as not to break the law. The references to Peter's mother-in-law show that it was the same occasion. Don't forget Hebrew days run from sunset to sunset.

Striking Jesus

Matthew does not tell us Jesus was blindfolded. They were testing his prophetic powers by asking who struck him. The gospel records are completely harmonious.

Relevance to our lives

By putting together incidental snippets of information, the veracity of the Bible narrative shines through. The exercise of looking at some of them should help strengthen personal faith in the truth of the Bible and also give us confidence to talk about it to others.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, thank you for preserving your word. Help us to strengthen our faith and confidence in its truth by what we have discovered. Amen.

Other suggestions for activities

1. If the students have been excited by this lesson, encourage them to read J.J.Blunt's "Undesigned Coincidences", available from the Christadelphian Office. The language is a bit archaic but the information is fascinating. You may like to think of giving them a copy as a present or prize.
2. The 'Reading the Bible Effectively' seminars also contain references to many 'Bible Echoes'. You may be able to use some of these - or if your ecclesia is presenting the seminars, the young people may be able to attend.