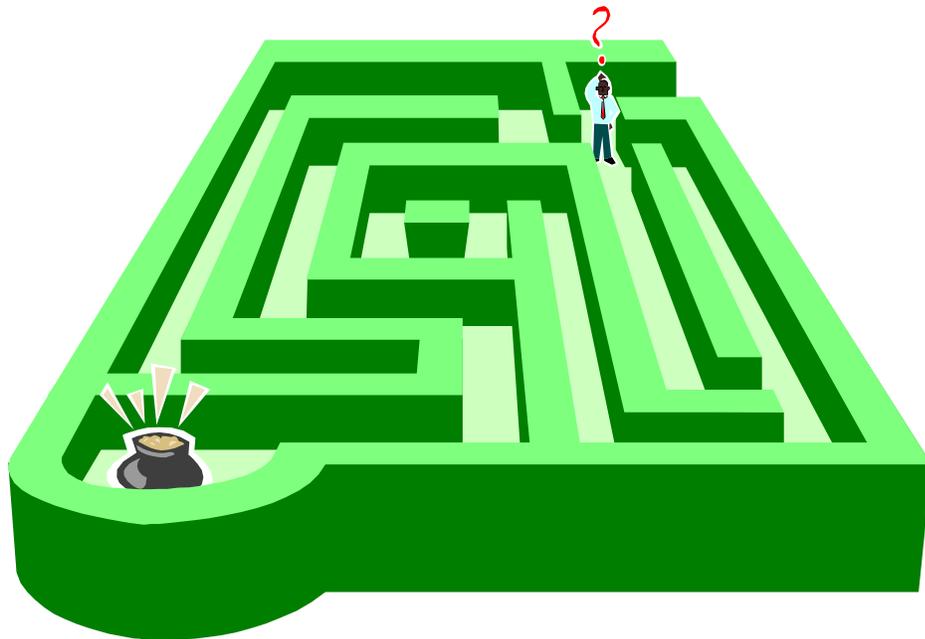


Searching For The Truth

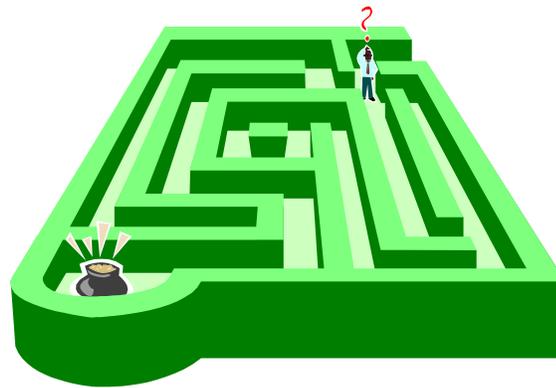
-- Leader's Guide --



Grace Fellowship

Searching For The Truth

-- *Leader's Guide* --



A 5-week investigative study designed to enable an individual to discover for himself what the Bible teaches about Itself, God, Man, Jesus Christ, and Becoming a Christian

Keyed to the New King James Version

(306) 466-4423 ***Grace Fellowship*** <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimmil/>

(Much thanks to the saints at Milipitas Bible Church, whose Bible study provided the main framework of this study.)

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Introduction

Our Approach: (Written for the benefit of the student)

1. We tried to put this study together in such a way that someone from any background would benefit. You may or may not go to church. You may or may not believe in God. We are trying not to assume anything on those issues. All we are assuming is that you are interested in learning for yourself what the Bible teaches.
2. That is our purpose – to help you discover for yourself what the Bible teaches about itself, God, man, Jesus Christ, and becoming a Christian.
3. Most of our time will be spent reading and discussing specific parts of the Bible. This way you can read for yourself and come to your own conclusions about what the Bible teaches. Many people are intimidated by the Bible. And, yes, parts of it are not easy to understand. However, most of it is not too difficult. So the focus will be on reading specific parts of the Bible and discussing their meaning.
4. This focus on the Bible will help us have direction and make progress. It is easy to get bogged down in debating the thousands of human opinions about God. But that is not our goal here. Our goal here is to study together what the Bible teaches.
5. If you have questions that sincerely trouble you about the Bible, or Christianity, or Jesus Christ, we want you to ask them. We want to deal with every question that comes up honestly and sincerely. We will do the best we can to point you to specific passages in the Bible which can answer your questions.

Using This Material:

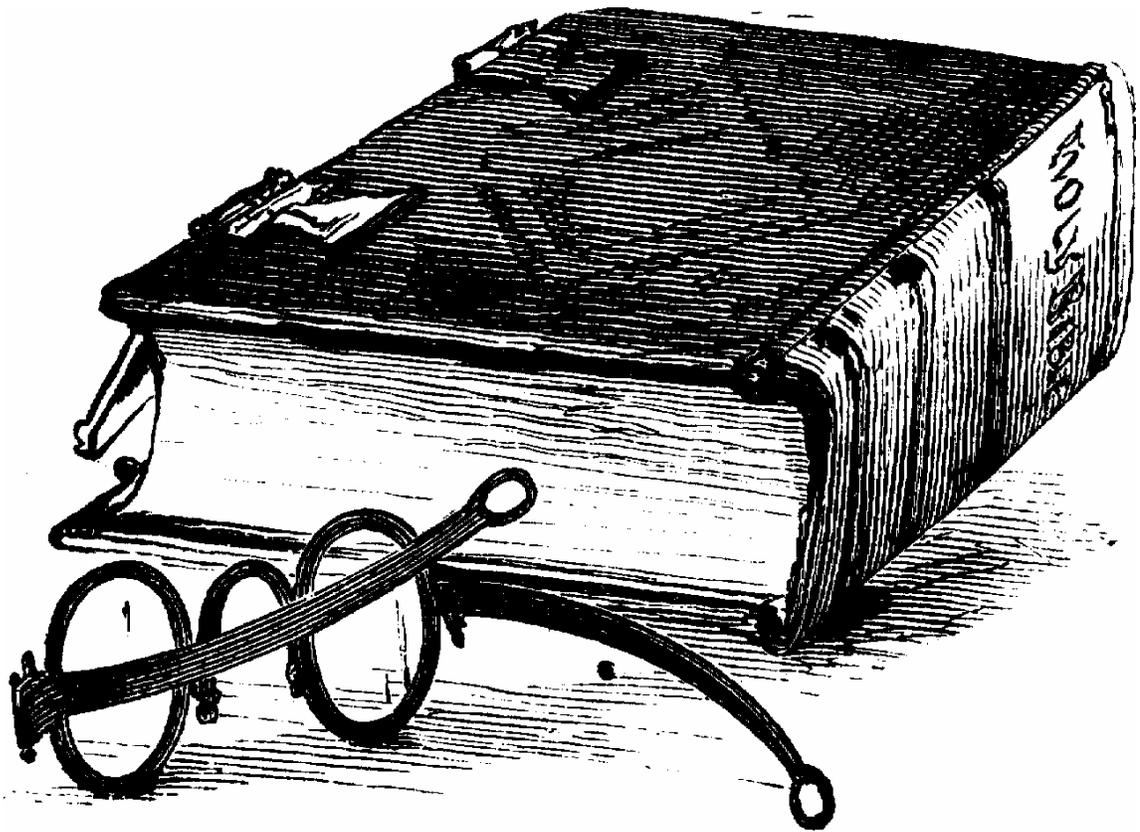
1. Each week there will be material for you to study ahead of time. You will need to read various passages of the Bible and seek to answer various questions related to those passages. Our guess is that it will take you about an hour. Schedule ahead of time when you will do this studying.
2. How can you find the different places in the Bible? We will give you the page number of the version that we distribute, to make it easier for those who are not familiar with the Bible. Then we will also give you the chapter and verse.
3. If you come up with a question during your own studying, just jot it down. Then be sure to bring it up next week.
4. Be sure to do the studying. It will help the discussion time next week be most productive. But if you do not get to it, come anyway.

Notes For The Study Facilitator:

1. The purpose of this study is for you to help a non-Christian discover the truth of God's Word. It can be used in a one-on-one study, or in a small group. Your job is to guide the non-Christian through the Scriptures, so that they *understand* the truth of the Word of God. It is the Holy Spirit's job to *convince* them of the truth, and grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth and the possession of everlasting life.
2. The answers to the questions posed in this study are provided underneath the questions. Most of the questions are very straight forward and can be answered easily by examining the Biblical text. You should do the study yourself before you meet with your non-Christian friend. In this way, you will be prepared to answer their questions and help them to discover the truth of God's Word.
3. Your attitude as the facilitator is one of the most significant factors in determining the spirit and tone of the discussions. Your love of God and respect for the authority of the Bible will be contagious to those who smell the aroma of life, even though you may never express it in words. Your love and openness toward the person(s) in the group will help them to open up as well. Your attitude and genuine enjoyment of the discussion will be infectious. Make sure that your own heart is thrilled with the truths that you proclaim. Love God and describe Him in lavish terms, as would be expected from a true worshipper.
4. As you begin to ask the group the questions in the guide, it will be helpful to keep several things in mind. First, the questions can often be used just as they are written. If you wish, you may simply read them aloud to the group. Or you may prefer to express them in your own words.
5. There may be times when it is appropriate to deviate from this study guide. For example, a question may have already been answered. If so, move on to the next question. Or your friend may raise an important question not covered in the guide. Take time to discuss it! The important thing is to use discretion. There may be many routes you can travel to reach the goal of the study.
6. Avoid answering your own questions. If necessary, repeat or rephrase the question until it is clearly understood. An eager individual or group quickly becomes passive and silent if they think you will do most of the talking.
7. Don't be afraid of silence. People may need time to think about the question before formulating their answers (especially if they did not get their homework done!). Try to discern the difference between fruitful silence (when people are thinking) and blanks (when your question seems unclear or irrelevant).

8. Be affirming! People will contribute much more eagerly if they feel their answers are genuinely appreciated. One way to be affirming is to listen attentively whenever someone speaks. Another way is to verbally acknowledge their contribution.
9. Be willing to admit your own ignorance or faults. It is easy for us to feel that we must have all the right answers to every question that is raised. Admitting that you don't know the answer may help your friend see that you are human too. You can always research the answer and address it at your next session. Remember, the Bible is the authority, not you.
10. Since the student is not a believer yet, avoid asking them to pray. If you are going to include public prayer as part of your study, it would be best for you to do it, and to keep it brief.
11. Make a point of ending on time. If you have told your friend that the studies will last for an hour and a half, then keep your commitment. It is better for your friend to leave the study desiring more than wishing he had less!
12. Pray fervently for the salvation of your friend! Place your confidence in the power of the gospel and the saving ministry of the Holy Spirit. If your friend comes to faith in Christ, continue to disciple them and seek to bring them into the communion of the church.
13. Above all, be much in communion with God all the week long. This is the example of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself as He walked on this sod. Then, like Moses, whose face shone after seeing the back parts of God, your "face" will declare that you have spent time gazing upon the glory of the Lord in the Word. Let your affections be obvious as one who knows and enjoys God. May others catch a glimpse of the fact that the enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.
14. In closing I would like to leave you, the teacher, with some thoughts by Jonathan Edwards as you prepare to lead this study of great and eternal truths of God. Press home these truths on the conscience with a pungency (*a great word - be sure to look up its meaning!*) which tends to awaken, convince, humble, and edify. May the hearer be alarmed. Men by nature are "secure". They do not realize that God sees their sin and will call them into account for it. They are stupidly senseless to the importance of eternal things. Let us bring their consciences face to face with the divine holiness and majesty of God. Let us show them why they have a reason to fear God. Remember, it is not a proclamation of facts or knowledge for its own sake that we are after. We live in an age where there is so little sense of the evil of sin, and so little love to God, heavenly-mindedness, and holiness of life. People do not need so much to have their heads stored as to have their hearts touched, and they stand in need of the sort of teaching and preaching which has the greatest tendency to do this. May we proclaim the Word of God with zeal and fervency, for the glory of God.

What The Bible Teaches About Itself



What The Bible Teaches About Itself

We have two goals for this section. First, we want to help you become familiar with the Bible as a book, so that you will be comfortable studying it in the weeks to come. Second, we want to look at what the Bible claims about itself.

An Overview Of The Bible

Turn to the Table of Contents in your Bible. You will see that the Bible is divided into two sections – the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament.”

The Old Testament: This section of the Bible includes books written before the time of Jesus Christ, describing what God was doing in the history of the world from creation right up to the time of Christ.

The New Testament: This section of the Bible includes books written after the time of Jesus Christ, elaborating on what God was doing during the time before Christ, and explaining what God is doing in the history of the world from Christ on into the future.

There are 66 different books in the Bible -- the Old Testament consists of 39 books, while the New Testament consists of 27 books.

Turn to the first book in the Old Testament, the book of Genesis (page 1). Notice that there are chapter divisions. Notice also that each chapter is divided up into verses. These chapter and verse divisions help us find passages quickly. (In this class we will also use page numbers; however, page numbers will vary, depending upon the edition of the Bible that you have.)

Now turn back to the Table of Contents. Notice that some books in the Old Testament have titles like “First Samuel” and “Second Samuel.” Why the division? In those days books were written on scrolls – either of pieces of leather sewn together, or of papyrus (a reed which was split and interwoven to make a paper-like material). It was difficult to handle a scroll longer than 30 feet. This is why some books were divided into two parts. So First Samuel is part one of the book of Samuel; Second Samuel is part two.

Now look at the New Testament books. Although some New Testament books also have “First” and “Second” in their titles, the reason is not the same as it is for the Old Testament books. These are different letters written at different times. For example, First Corinthians is the first letter we have which Paul wrote to the church at Corinth (a city in Southern Greece). Second Corinthians is the second letter we have which Paul wrote to Corinth.

Note: In the Supplementary Material section there is a table with a brief description of each book in the Bible. You can use this as a reference tool as you continue your studying.

Clarifying The Question

People have many different opinions about the Bible. Some view it as a moral guidebook, others as an interesting historical document, others as an out of date piece of literature.

But our question is not how *other people* view the Bible. Our question here is how does *the Bible* view the Bible? Or in other words, what does the Bible teach about itself?



Read Psalm 19:7-11 (page 535).

1. List six different titles used in this passage for Old Testament Scripture. (19:7-9)

The law of the Lord - the testimony of the Lord - the statutes of the Lord - the commandment of the Lord - the fear of the Lord - the judgments of the Lord.

The “fear of the Lord” may sound odd as a descriptive title of Old Testament Scripture. It is probably referred to as “the fear of the Lord” here, because it promotes proper reverence for God, and secures a proper regard for His name and worship. In other words, the Scriptures teach men to fear the Lord, and give a full account of the worship of God (which is often meant by the fear of God).

2. List seven different adjectives used to describe Old Testament Scripture. (19:7-9)

Perfect – sure – right – pure – clean – true – righteous

3. List six different effects Old Testament Scripture has on people. (19:7-8,11)

Converts the soul – makes wise the simple – gives joy to the heart – enlightens the eyes – warns God’s servant – brings great reward

4. How does the psalmist describe the value and desirability of God’s Word? (19:10)

It is more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb.



Read Hebrews 1:1-2 (page 1173).

1. Has the God of the Bible chosen to communicate with man?

Yes, these verses show that the God of the Bible speaks to us. He has chosen to communicate to us.

2. How did God speak to our forefathers “in the past”?

He spoke “in the past” in Old Testament times through the prophets.

3. How did God speak to man “in these last days?”

God has spoken “in these last days” by His Son, Jesus Christ, whom He sent into the world.

So the Bible teaches that there really is a God. This God has not remained silent. He has not hidden himself from us. He has chosen to speak to us, to communicate to us, even to the extent of sending His own Son.



Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (page 1168).

1. Where did all of Scripture originate from?

It has its source in God. He breathed it into existence.

2. "Inspiration of God" literally means "God-breathed." What do you think “God-breathed” means?

Of course God is a Spirit, and thus does not possess a body. Thus, God does not literally breathe. This must obviously be interpreted figuratively. In Genesis 2:4-7 and Psalm 33:6, God’s breath is associated with the impartation of life and His creative activity. A synonym for “breathed” would be “created” or “produced.” You might say that God breathed the universe into existence and then He breathed the Bible into existence. Thus, these words have proceeded from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)

3. What is Scripture useful for?

Scripture is useful for teaching (doctrine), rebuking (reproof - i.e. exposing error), correcting, and instruction in righteousness.

4. Do we need anything besides the Scriptures to do “every good work”? (3:17)

No, Scripture in itself is able to equip the “man of God” for every good work.



Read Exodus 9:13-16 (page 60-61) **and Romans 9:17** (page 1111)

1. Who is speaking in Exodus 9:13-16?

The Lord, the God of the Hebrews

2. In Romans 9:17, Paul quotes Exodus 9:16. What can we learn about the nature of Scripture by comparing these two passages?

“Scripture” is equated with God speaking. When Scripture speaks, God speaks.



Read John 10:35 (page 1054).

1. What did Jesus say was impossible to happen to the Scriptures?

Jesus said it was impossible for the Scriptures to be broken.

2. What do you think it would mean for the Scriptures to be “broken”?

It means that the Scriptures stand unchanging and indestructible in their truthfulness. They are unaffected by human denial, ignorance or criticism. No power or ingenuity of man can alter them. They cannot be made void and of no effect. They are infallibly true.



Read Mark 7:1-13 (page 987-988).

1. What did Jesus say Moses’ words (the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) were? (7:10,13)

The Word of God.

2. What did Jesus rebuke the Pharisees for? (7:13)

Nullifying the Word of God by holding to their man made traditions.



Read Luke 24:26-27; 44-47 (page 1039-1040).

1. Into what three categories did Jesus divide the Old Testament Scriptures? (24:44)

The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

2. Who is the central subject of the Old Testament Scriptures? (compare Jn.5:39 – page 1047)

Jesus Christ.

3. What two aspects of Christ's ministry did the Old Testament Scriptures primarily speak about? (24:26-27; 46)

His sufferings and His glory (His death and resurrection and ascension as Lord).



Read John 14:26 and John 16:13 (page 1060-1061).

1. What three things did Jesus promise the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles?

The Holy Spirit would 1) teach them all things; and 2) bring to their remembrance everything Jesus had said to them, and 3) tell them what is yet to come.

2. What books of our New Testament are the fulfillment of these three promises?

Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would remind the apostles of everything He had said to them was fulfilled in the accurate gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, and guide them into all the truth was fulfilled when the Spirit of God gave them direct revelation about how the church should function and how we should live, recorded in the epistles of the New Testament.

Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would tell the apostles what is yet to come was fulfilled in the prophetic portions of the New Testament, such as 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4 & 5, and the book of Revelation.

Note that Jesus made these promises to the apostles. They were men who had been commissioned by Jesus for a specific ministry. This verse is not a promise that the Holy Spirit will personally give believers today new revelation concerning doctrinal

truth. It was a promise made to the founding apostles that they would have the God-given ability to write New Testament Scripture with perfect accuracy.



Read 2 Peter 1:20-21 (page 1192).

1. What does Peter say that Scripture does not have its origin in?

Scripture does not originate in the will of man. This does not mean that the men that God used to write the Bible were robots or human dictating machines. Different literary styles are clearly evident in the Bible. God caused each man's personality and background and so engineered circumstances to cause them to write exactly what He wanted them to write.

How could fallible men produce an infallible book? Consider the virgin birth. Mary was a fallible human being like every other human being, but God enabled her to bring forth a perfect human being (Jesus Christ). Likewise, God supernaturally enabled fallible men to bring forth an infallible revelation from God.

2. How did Old Testament prophets receive, speak and write down their message? (compare Jeremiah 30:2 – page 772)

The Old Testament prophets received their revelation directly from God. They spoke and wrote it as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.



Read 2 Peter 3:15-16 (page 1194).

1. What did Paul write with in all his letters? (3:15)

The wisdom that God gave him.

2. What does Peter call Paul's letters? (3:16)

Scripture.

Food For Thought

1. Based on all we have read in the Bible so far, how does it describe itself?

The Bible teaches that it was written by God, and thus is His perfect revelation to man. It is perfect, sure, trustworthy, and right. It is adequate to enable us to perform every good work. It can't be broken. The Bible is not a collection of human opinions, but rather is God's communication. Its central subject is the person and work of Jesus Christ (especially His death and resurrection and Lordship).

2. Do you find it difficult to accept the idea that God has communicated to us in a book? Why or why not?

If there really is a God, and He did create the world, and He did create humanity – it makes sense to think that He would communicate to us. It makes sense to think that He would give us clear information about who He is and what He is doing in the world.

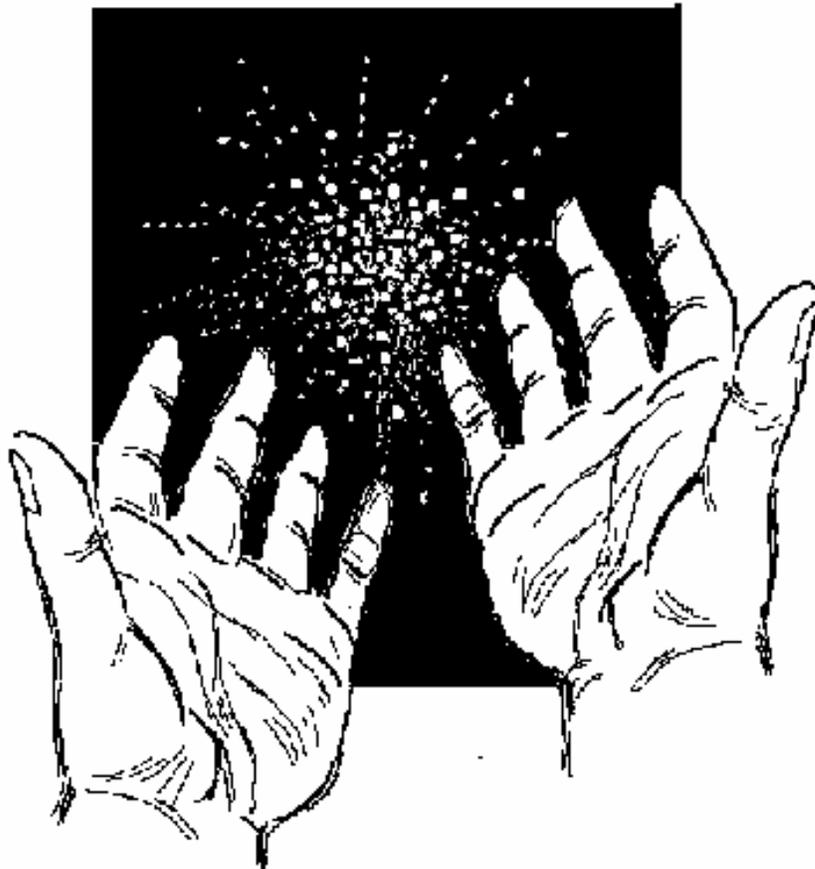
3. Do you view what the Bible says about itself as bad news or good news?

The Bible says that this is good news for us – very good news! It means that we are not left in the dark. We are not left to choose between conflicting human opinions. It means that we have a source of truth that is really true – absolutely true, without error. We have a source of truth that we can bank on for the rest of our lives. The Bible is saying that it is like no other book. It stands apart from all other human literature. All other human literature originates from men and women. But not the Bible. It originates from God.

4. Since this is true, what does it mean for us?

God is big enough to create this whole universe, and detailed enough to create DNA. And this God wrote a book telling us what He is up to and what we are here for. How important is it then to learn what this book says? How does this make you feel, finding out that you have a source of truth that is perfect, will never fail you, and will direct you in every decision you face?

What The Bible Teaches About God



What The Bible Teaches About God

What Is God Like?

This is a huge question. But again, our goal is simply to understand what the Bible says about this question. The Bible paints a very clear picture of who God is.



Read the following passages. Note what is said about God, and then summarize each passage in your own words.

Isaiah 44:6-8 (page 711). *The God of the Bible is the one true and living God..*

Isaiah 45:12 (page 714). *God is the one who created us. He created the universe.*

Daniel 4:34-35 (page 873). *God is the sovereign ruler over all.*

Daniel 5:23 (page 874). *God owns His creation; gives each one life and breath; and as such demands us to glorify Him..*

John 4:24 (page 1042) and Psalm 50:21 (page 555). *God is spirit. He is not like a man.*

Isaiah 45:5-9 (page 713). *God is Lord of all His creation. Woe to (i.e. cursed be) whoever strives with his Maker.*

How would you summarize what the above passages teach about God?

They teach that God is not just an impersonal force or higher power. Rather, He is a personal being who thinks, feels, purposes, and takes action. There is one true God who rules over all His creation. God is very different from us. He is spirit. He deserves and demands our worship, love, and obedience.



Read Psalm 90:2 (page 580).

1. How long has God been in existence?

God has been “from everlasting.” He has always been. In other words, if we could look back before anything was created, God would be there. If we were to go back even further in time, we would never find a time when God was not.

This is not easy to understand. Everything in the world around us has had a beginning. How could God not have a beginning? As difficult as it is to comprehend, it is not unreasonable. If there really is a God, it would make sense that He has no beginning. Otherwise, whatever brought Him into existence would be greater than He is. God is unique. God is not a "thing". So when man says, "Everything must have a beginning," that is only true for created things. Cause and effect can only be applied to created beings. God alone is the uncaused, self-sustained One.

2. How long will God be in existence?

God is "to everlasting." He will always be.

Summary: *God is eternal.*



Read Jeremiah 23:23-24 (page 765).

1. How big is God?

The Bible teaches that God fills the heavens and the earth. Since God created the heavens and the earth, He must be infinite in space.

2. Is there any place in God's universe in which He does not dwell?

No, He is everywhere.

Summary: *God is everywhere.*



Read Revelation 19:6 (page 1216).

1. How much power does God possess?

The Bible teaches that God is almighty – that is, He is infinite in power and authority. Since He is the creator of all things, He has authority over all things. Omnipotent means that God is all powerful.

Summary: *God is infinite in power and authority.*



Read John 17:24 (page 1062 - 1063)

1. What does Jesus say God was doing before the creation of the world?

Before creation there was love between God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. God was rejoicing in the perfections He saw in His only begotten Son (John 1:14 – page 1041).

2. Do you think God was lonely before He created the world?

No, God was not lonely. Before creation He was full of love and joy in the fellowship of the Trinity.

Summary: *God is full of joy in the fellowship of the Trinity.*



Read Acts 17:24-25 (page 1090).

1. What does Paul say about God's needs?

Paul says that God does not need anything. This does not mean that He has no feelings or no desires. He does. But it does mean that God is fully sufficient in Himself.

Now when you think about this it is good news. If God was needy, then we might get the impression that He intended to use us or manipulate us for His needs. But God needs nothing. From eternity past God has been full of joy in the fellowship of the Trinity.

Summary: *God has no needs.*



Read Isaiah 43:7 (page 710).

1. Why did God create us?

The Bible teaches that God created us for His glory. He is glorious – infinite in His perfections, and full of joy in the fellowship of the Trinity. He created us so that we could have the joy of beholding His glory. The Bible teaches that there exists a Being who is greater than our minds can possibly conceive, and that He created us to have the heart-filling joy of knowing Him. From before creation God was full of joy in His perfections. He created men and women to share the joy He had in His glory.



Read Psalm 16:11 (page 532).

1. Where are we supposed to find joy?

We are supposed to find joy in God's presence, and at His right hand. We were created with a huge capacity for joy. We were created to be gripped by greatness, moved by majesty, in awe of glory. This capacity for joy was put in us by God – and can only be satisfied in beholding God Himself.

2. What are at God's right hand?

Eternal pleasures are at God's right hand.

Summary: *God created us to share the joy He had in His glory.*



Read Isaiah 6:1-5 (page 671 - 672).

1. What did Isaiah see in his vision? (6:1)

Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord, seated on a throne, high and exalted.

2. Why do you think the seraphs covered their faces and feet? (6:2)

The seraphs covered their face probably because they were unable to look upon the dazzling glory and infinite perfections of His being. They cover their feet, probably because they recognize their creatureliness, and thus their "separateness" from God. They realize their unworthiness to stand in His presence.

3. What attribute of God did the seraphs (angels) repeat three times?

The holiness of God.

4. What was Isaiah's immediate response to this awesome revelation of God's holiness?

He saw himself as a guilty and polluted sinner. Now Isaiah saw himself as ruined and undone in God's presence. By saying, "Woe to me," Isaiah was pronouncing judgment upon himself. Isaiah realized that, because of his sin, he ought to be cursed by God. He stood in God's presence, naked and exposed in his sin. He was absolutely devastated by a sight of God's holiness.

Summary: *God is devastatingly holy.*



Read Nahum 1:2-3, 6 (page 918).

1. What will God do with His enemies? (1:2,6)

God will take vengeance and pour out His wrath upon His enemies.

2. What can we be sure that God will not do with the guilty? (1:3)

God will not leave the guilty unpunished.

3. What three words are used in 1:6 to describe God's attitude toward those that rebel against Him?

Indignation – anger – wrath.

The Bible teaches that God is just – that is, He will punish His enemies in His fierce anger and wrath.

Summary: *God is just, and will punish His enemies.*



Read John 3:16 (page 1043)

1. Why did God send His Son?

God sent His Son because God delights to express His love and grace by saving men and women from His wrath that they deserve, and giving them the gift of eternal life that they might praise and worship Him for His grace.

Summary: *God delights to save sinners for His own name's sake.*

Food For Thought

1. Make a list of all the qualities of God you have discovered from your study of the Bible?

God is spirit.

God is the sovereign Creator.

God is eternal.

God is everywhere.

God is infinite in power and authority.

God is full of joy in the fellowship of the Trinity.

God has no needs.

God created us to share the joy He had in His glory.

God is devastatingly holy.

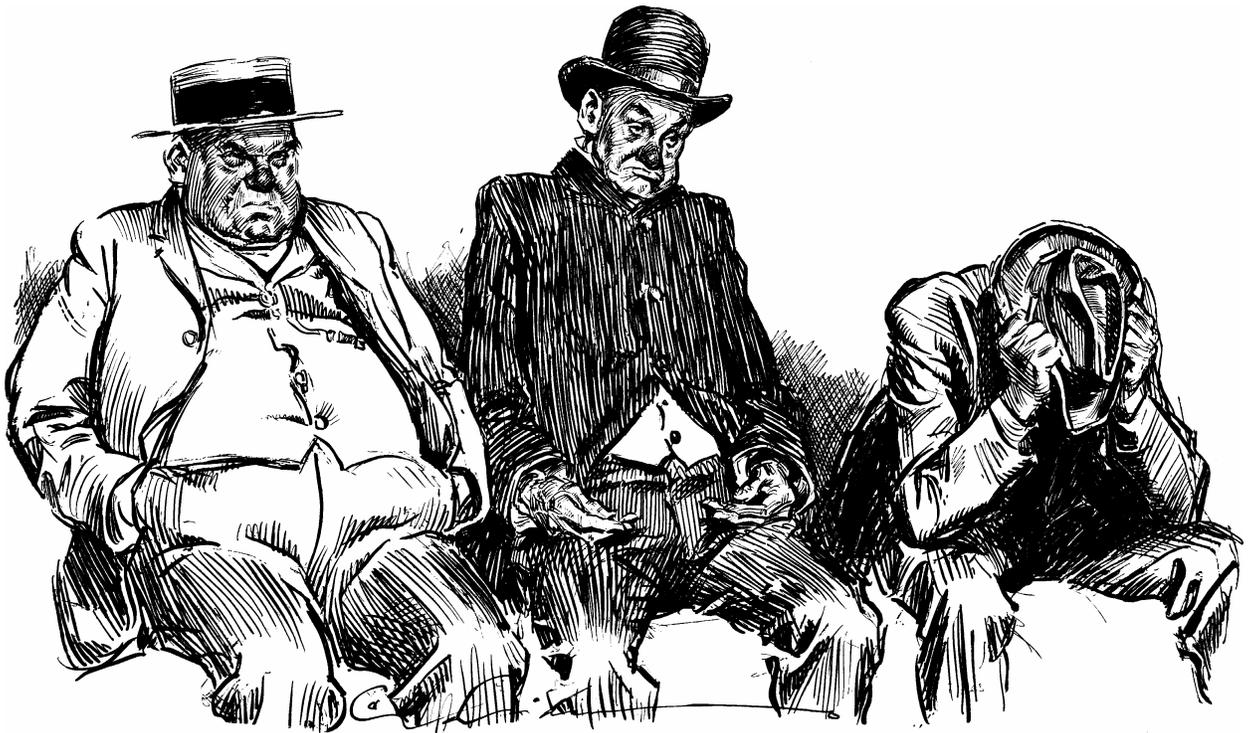
God is just, and will punish His enemies.

God delights to save sinners.

2. What was the most difficult thing to accept about God from your study of the Bible? Why?
3. If what the Bible says about God is true, what would it mean for us?

It would mean that He is an awesome God that we must reckon with. Because He is infinite in power and authority and everywhere at the same time, we cannot escape His justice. Because He is holy and just, He will punish all sin. Unless God Himself in wisdom, devises a way for us to be saved, we are without hope in this world.

What The Bible Teaches About Man



What The Bible Teaches About Man

Introduction:

Some people believe that man is basically good, and given the proper environment and education will make righteous choices. Others believe that children are born as blank slates, with no bias toward good or evil. Again, our concern is not to discover the opinions of *men*, but rather to discover what the *Bible* teaches on this subject.



Read Romans 1:18-23 (page 1104)

1. Why is it that no one can say to God, “I never knew about you”? (1:19-20)

Because God has made much about Himself plain to every man through what they can see in creation.

2. When God revealed Himself to man in the creation of the world, how did mankind respond to Him? (1:21-23)

Instead of glorifying God or giving thanks to Him, they worshipped other things instead. The Bible calls this idolatry.

3. Not many people today turn away from God to worship statues and animals. What are some things that people worship today?

Money, possessions, power, fame, family, pleasure, sex, etc.

4. What happened to men and women because they turned away from God? (1:21-23)

Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. That is, their thinking was corrupted. Instead of setting supreme value on God as their precious treasure, they valued and worshipped the things of this world.

5. As a result what did God do to them? (1:24,26,28)

God gave them over to their sinful desires (sexual immorality, homosexuality, and every kind of wickedness). Instead of restraining them from their sin, He let them indulge in it as they pleased, like a dog owner releasing the leash on his dog, to allow the dog to run after a skunk.



Read Romans 3:9-12 (page 1106).

1. How many of the human race have sinned?

Every member of the human race has sinned (except for Jesus Christ).

2. How many unsaved people seek God?

There are none who seek God. If any man seeks God, it is because God has first sought Him out, and granted Him a new heart to seek Him.

3. What is sin? (compare Romans 3:19-20 – page 1106, and 1 John 3:4 – page 1196)

Sin is lawlessness. (Not desiring to under His revealed will - wanting to be our own Lord. It is not loving God supremely and not loving our neighbor as ourself.) Thus, sin is our rebellion against God, our turning away from Him. Some people turn away from God in socially unacceptable ways – murder and robbery for instance. Others turn away from God in socially acceptable ways. They do the “right” things, but not because they love and trust God.



Read Romans 5:6-10 (page 1108).

1. In what four ways are those, for whom Christ died, described? (5:6,8,10)

- without strength – ungodly - sinners – enemies.



Read Romans 6:23 (page 1109).

1. How are wages different than a gift?

Wages are given for work that is performed and are our due. We have earned them. However, a gift is given freely. You can not earn or deserve a gift, else it would cease to be a gift. Thus, the Bible teaches that we have earned and deserved the paycheck of death, whereas eternal life comes to believers freely as a gift of grace.

2. What does sin result in?

Death.

3. What kind of life comes to us as a gift from God?

Eternal life.

4. Then, what kind of death must the Bible be speaking of which comes to us as a result of sin?

The Bible must be speaking of eternal death, for it is contrasted with eternal life. Thus, by our sin we have earned and deserved everlasting death or hell.



Read Ephesians 2:1-3 (page 1146).

1. What is the spiritual condition of all unsaved people? (2:1)

Unsaved people are dead in transgressions and sins. Although they may possess biological, social, and even religious life, they are in a state of spiritual death. This means that an unsaved person is absolutely cut off from all communion with God. They are separated from the life of God (Eph.4:18), without hope and without God in the world. Furthermore, they are powerless to change this condition.

2. What do they follow after? (2:2)

They follow after the ways of this world and the ways of the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

3. Who is the ruler of the kingdom of the air? (compare Ephesians 6:11-12)

The devil.

4. What do unsaved people live to gratify? (2:3)

They live to gratify the cravings of their flesh.

5. What are unsaved people by nature? What does “by nature” refer to? (2:3)

Unsaved by nature are objects of God’s wrath. In this text, “nature” refers to what we are by physical birth. Thus, the Bible teaches that all mankind are born into this world in a state of condemnation and alienation from God (Ps.51:5; 58:3; Rom.5:12-21).



Read Titus 3:3 (page 1171).

1. How does the Bible describe people before God saves them?

The Bible describes unsaved people as foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. Furthermore, they live in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

2. What is an unsaved person's relationship to passions and pleasures?

He is enslaved to passions and pleasures.



Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 (page 1161).

1. When Jesus Christ returns in glory with His mighty angels, what will He do to those who do not know God nor obey the gospel? (1:8-9)

He will punish them with everlasting destruction and shut them out from His presence and glorious power.

2. How long will they be punished for?

They will undergo everlasting punishment.



Read Revelation 14:9-11 (page 1212 - 1213).

1. How does the Bible describe hell in this passage?

The Bible describes hell as the wine of God's fury poured out full strength into the cup of His wrath. It also describes hell as a place where men are tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb.

Though 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 state that the unsaved person will be shut out from God's presence, this passage states that he will be tormented in the presence of Jesus Christ. The only way to reconcile these two passages is to assert that the unsaved person will be shut out from God's gracious presence, but continue in God's wrathful presence for all eternity.

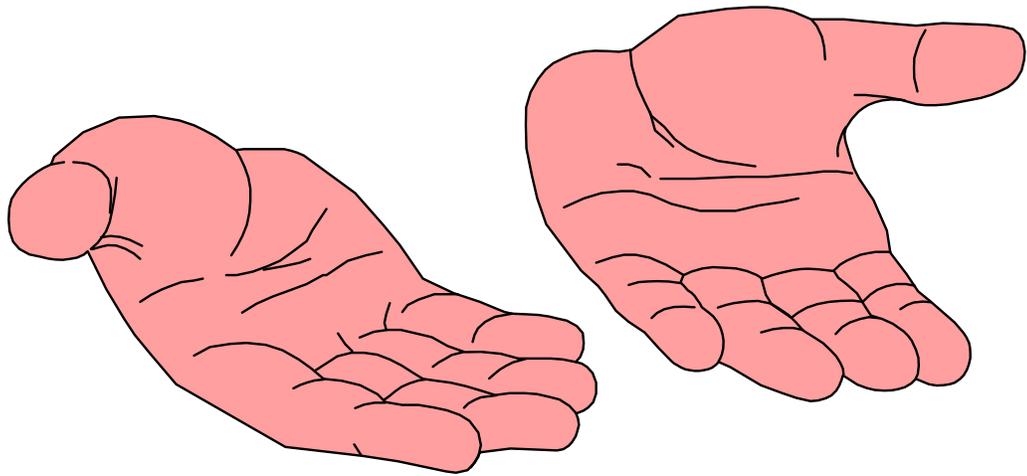
Food For Thought

1. Summarize in your own words what the Bible teaches about man before he is saved?
2. Does the Bible teach that man is basically good, or basically evil?

The Bible teaches very clearly that man is basically evil, as seen in the passages above. It is true that man carries with him remnants of God's image, which accounts for any of his good actions (humanly speaking) However, his heart is deceitful and beyond cure (Gen.6:5; Jer.17:9).

3. What parts of this study do you find easiest to understand and agree with?
4. What parts of this summary do you find the hardest to understand and agree with?

What The Bible Teaches



About Jesus Christ

What The Bible Teaches About Jesus Christ

Introduction

Our purpose in this section is to examine what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ. Who was he? What was his purpose?

There are many opinions current in the world today about Jesus Christ. Some say he was a good man. Others claim he was a prophet of God or a great religious leader. But again – our purpose is to see what the Bible teaches.

What are the Primary Sources for Learning about Jesus?

The Bible contains four biographies of Jesus Christ. They are called “gospels,” which means “good news.” These books describe what Jesus Christ said and did.

The *Gospel of Matthew* was written by Matthew, a wealthy tax collector who left his tax business and followed Jesus Christ. The *Gospel of Mark* was written by Mark, who was a good friend of Peter and who decided to follow Jesus as a young man. The *Gospel of Luke* was written by Luke, a doctor who traveled with the apostle Paul after becoming a follower of Jesus. The *Gospel of John* was written by John, a fisherman who followed Jesus.

Why do we have four different biographies of Jesus Christ in the Bible? Well, imagine four people standing on separate corners of an intersection witnessing an accident. The four testimonies, although essentially the same, will vary according to where they were positioned and what details especially caught their attention. By combining four testimonies, any event would be more thoroughly recorded. This is the effect of the four Gospels. The sum of the four gives a quadrasonic record of Jesus’ life. Four biographies – written by four different men. Each one highlights different aspects of Jesus’ life, but they speak with an amazing consistency.



What do the following passages teach about Jesus?

Matthew 14:22-33 (page 960 - 961). *Jesus Christ has power over nature. He walked on water and calmed the winds, proving that He is worthy of our worship. Also, in light of Job 9:8, we see that Jesus is God manifest in human flesh.*

Mark 3:1-5 (page 982). *Jesus was angry when people were destroyed by religion.*

Mark 11:15-17 (page 994). *Jesus was angry when God the Father was dishonored.*

Mark 15:39 (page 1001). *When a soldier watched Jesus die, he concluded that Jesus was the Son of God.*

Luke 7:36-50 (page 1014). *Jesus receives the worst of sinners and can forgive their sins.*

John 11:38-44 (page 1055 - 1056). *Jesus has the power to raise the dead.*

Jesus left a deep and powerful impression on everyone around him. Rich tax collectors left everything to follow him, as did poor fishermen, and prostitutes. A soldier who watched him die concluded that he was the Son of God. Was he? What did Jesus claim for himself? Who did he say that he was?

Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

That is, did he claim to be a very good man, a prophet of God, a religious leader, or something more?



Read Mark 14:61-64 (page 999).

1. What did the high priest want Jesus to tell him?

The high priest wanted Jesus to tell him whether he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One.

2. What did Jesus say about himself?

He said that He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One. "The Christ" was a term for the Messiah promised to the Jewish people in the Old Testament.

3. Who does "the Son of the Blessed One" refer to?

The Son of God.

4. What did Jesus say about how they would see him in the future?

Jesus said they would see Him sitting on the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven. This statement is significant because to sit at God's right hand is a position of equality with God the Father. Jesus is saying He will come back to earth in order to judge the world.

5. Why did the high priest accuse Jesus of blasphemy?

The high priest accused Jesus of blasphemy because he understood that He was claiming to be God.



Read John 10:30-33 (page 1054).

1. Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus?

The Jews tried to kill Jesus because they knew that Jesus was making himself out to be God.



Read John 14:9 (page 1059).

1. What did Jesus claim about himself?

Jesus claimed that if someone had seen Him, they had seen the Father.

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

As we have seen, Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, equal with God the Father. That's why the Jews tried to kill him. For them, it was the height of blasphemy for a mere man to claim to be equal with God. It seems that they didn't stop to consider whether Jesus could possibly be telling the truth. Jesus' claim to be God was either true or false. If it was false, then either Jesus knew it was false or thought it was true. If Jesus knew his claim was false, then he was a liar of the worst sort, for he would be leading people away from God in order to believe a lie. In that case, Jesus was not a good man, but rather a very deceitful and evil man.

If Jesus thought his claim to be God was true, when in reality he was only a mere man, he would be a lunatic. He would be on a par with the man who thinks he is Elvis Presley come back from the dead. People like that are usually placed in insane asylums. Those are really the only options we have if Jesus' claim to be God was false. You can't have Jesus as a good man, and great religious leader, but not God. If Jesus was not God, he is not a good man, and certainly not a great religious leader. The only other option is that Jesus was telling the truth, and thus is Lord and God. You can either accuse him of being a liar, dismiss him as a lunatic, or fall down before him as God, but don't claim that he was a good man. He simply hasn't left that option open to us!

Do you think Jesus was a liar, lunatic, or Lord and God? Why?



Read **Acts 2:36** (page 1071) and **Philippians 2:5-11** (page 1152).

1. What position or role did God the Father give to His Son?

God the Father exalted Jesus as Lord.

2. What does that mean as far as your life is concerned?

Christ is every man's Lord right now. Christ is your Lord whether you like it or not. No one makes Christ Lord (God the Father has done that already!). We are to submit to the Christ who is Lord! Christ is thus the only person with the authority to either save any man or damn any man. (Matt. 28:18; John 17:1-3; John 5:22) and He must do one or the other with every man. God has highly exalted Christ and put us into His hands. If sinners would realize this awesome truth, they would fear the Lord and seek His mercy.

What Does The Rest of the New Testament Teach About Jesus?



Read the following passages and summarize what each one teaches about the identity of Jesus Christ:

John 1:1-3,14 (page 1041). *Jesus has existed from the beginning with God, and He is God. Furthermore, He is the creator of all things.*

John 20:30-31 (page 1067). *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing a man can have life in His name.*

Colossians 1:15 (page 1154). *Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God.*

Hebrews 1:1-3 (page 1173). *Jesus is the heir of all things, the creator of the universe, the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of God's being, and the sustainer of all things.*

Romans 9:5 (page 1111). *Jesus is God over all, forever praised.*

Titus 2:13 (page 1170). *Jesus is our great God and Savior.*

The entire New Testament agrees. Jesus Christ was a unique man. But He was more than a man. He was actually the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. He was fully God and fully man.

What Did Jesus Claim He Came To Do?



Read the following passages and specify what Jesus taught was the purpose of his coming:

Mark 10:45 (page 993). *Jesus came to serve and give His life a ransom for many. Jesus knew He would die. This was part of His purpose in coming. His death would be a ransom payment. Our sin had made us guilty before God. Justice demanded payment – and it was to be eternal death in hell. But Jesus gave His life as the ransom – the payment that justice demanded.*

Luke 5:31-32 (page 1011). *Jesus came to call sinners to repentance, not the righteous. The Bible teaches that we are all sinners. Jesus, then, came to call us to repentance. “Repentance” means to change the course of our life.*

Luke 19:10 (page 1031). *Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Like a lost sheep in the howling wilderness, all men are “lost” and will perish unless Christ comes to them and saves them.*

John 3:16-18 (page 1043). *Jesus came so that believers might not perish in their sins, but instead receive eternal life and be saved.*

Summary: Jesus came to pay the ransom, call us to change the course of our life, seek and save sinners, so that they would no longer face eternal death, but instead have eternal life. He came to save a people who would be true worshippers of the True God - a people who would gladly honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

Food For Thought

1. What, in this lesson, is the most amazing thing that you learned about Jesus?

What The Bible Teaches About Becoming A Christian



What The Bible Teaches About Becoming A Christian

Introduction

Think back to last week's study. We saw that the Bible teaches that God sent Jesus to be a ransom – to pay the debt owed because of our sin. God sent Jesus to call us to repentance. God sent Jesus to seek and save sinners. God sent Jesus that those who believe might not be condemned, but have eternal life. God sent Jesus that there would be a redeemed people who would worship God in spirit and in truth - a people who would live for the glory of God.

In this study we want to discover what the Bible says happens to someone when their ransom is paid – when they change their ways to God's way – when they are saved – when they receive eternal life. What can be done to be saved from the wrath to come? What will God do to make them Christians?

What Must Someone Do To Be Saved?



Read Acts 16:25-34 (page 1089).

1. What does the Bible teach someone must do to be saved? (16:31)

They must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Christianity is not a set of rules. Christianity is not a set of ceremonies. It is not a certain feeling. It is not joining a group or a cause. Christianity is a Person! The Lord Jesus Christ has done the work and is the acceptable Person to bring us into a right relationship with God. There is nothing to "DO." Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Read James 2:14-26 (page 1185).

1. What kind of “belief” do you think the demons have? (2:19)

The demons have a belief which amounts to intellectually understanding and agreeing to certain facts – like the fact that there is a God, and that Jesus Christ is God's Son. The demons believe all these facts, but that kind of belief does not save anyone.

2. What quality characterizes saving faith?

Saving faith will be accompanied by corresponding actions. It will lead to repentance and will produce good works. Where there is no repentance and resultant works to verify faith, there is no saving faith. Someone might scream out in the middle of a church service, "There is a bomb in this building that is timed to go off in 30 second. Run!" I could say that I believed that man, but if I stayed in my seat, I would prove that I didn't really believe him at all. Likewise, a man can profess to believe in Jesus Christ, but if his life does not demonstrate a change in actions, his supposed faith is in vain. God did not say, "You admit these facts are true and you will be saved." No, He said, "You repent from your rebellion and receive My Son and you will be saved." Often people make the tragic mistake of confusing the mere knowledge of facts, even though the facts may be biblical, with the reality of experiencing the power of the truth explained in the facts. This was the tragic mistake made by the Jews (Rom. 2:17-27). They thought they were saved because they acknowledged the truthfulness of the Bible message, yet they never came to the Son in repentance and faith (See 1 John 5:11-12).



Read Acts 2:38 (page 1079).

1. What did Peter say a person must do to be saved?

Peter said a man had to repent (and demonstrate his repentance through baptism) to be saved. This helps us understand what kind of believing saves someone. It is a believing which includes repentance.

2. What does it mean to repent? (use an English dictionary or Bible dictionary to find its meaning).

To repent means that we turn away from our sin – our independence from God. To believe means that we turn toward Jesus Christ, and depend completely on Him to forgive us, satisfy us, and guide us for the rest of our lives. Faith acknowledges Jesus as the rightful Lord of all.

We can either hold on to our sin and its deceptive and passing pleasures and perish eternally, or "give up" our sin and cling to Jesus Christ and be saved. Repentance is giving up our sin; faith is clinging to Jesus Christ.

Note that the Bible never talks about "accepting Jesus as your Savior." Christ is not offered to sinners in the Bible as only a Savior. He is presented to sinners as the Lord who is, by virtue of His finished work, the sufficient and only Savior. (Acts 2:36; Luke 2:11; Rom. 10:9; Col. 2:6; Phil. 2:11). The problem is not merely that sinners refuse to believe that certain things are true, but rather, it is their refusal to bow their heart and life to the Lord that those truths set forth.

What God Does To Save Sinners

The Bible teaches that there is nothing we can do to be saved from the wrath to come. We have nothing that we can bring to God to merit anything but condemnation (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 1:18-25). We are a condemned people, cut off from God as His enemies. We have nothing to barter with God. The only hope for you or for me, the only hope for mankind, is the gospel of the grace of God, revealed to us in the love of Christ as He suffered and bled and died upon Calvary's cross. The gospel is the good news of what God has done for sinners. To reject Christ, who is the Way, is to reject the only hope that you as a sinner have.



Read Romans 4:5 (page 1107).

1. Whom does God justify (declare righteous and treat as such)?

God justifies the ungodly - those ungodly who do not work, but look unto the Lord Jesus Christ.



Read Romans 5:1-2 (page 1107).

1. How can God justify a sinner who deserves wrath and condemnation?

A sinner is justified with God only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Read Matthew 11:27-30 (page 956).

1. How shall a sinner go to Christ?

It is with our sins that we go to God, for we have nothing else to go with that we can call our own. It is with all our burden; it is with our thirst. We are beggarly poor (Matt. 5:3). We come receiving His yoke - we come humbly submitting to the Lord of glory; gladly acknowledging Him as Lord and King.



Read 1 John 4:9-10 (page 1197).

1. How might a sinner live, instead of dying an eternal death?

Through Jesus Christ who is life (see also John 14:6).

2. What did Christ become for those who have come to Him in humble repentant faith?
[Note: "propitiation" refers to a sacrifice that turns away the wrath of an offended God, so that God is satisfied to the point that the wrath is turned to favor]

He became the propitiation for our sins. Also, the word translated "propitiation" is the same word as the "mercy seat" which was the lid upon the ark of the covenant, which was sprinkled with blood and covered the tablets of stone - the curse and condemnation of sinful man.



Read 1 Peter 5:6 and James 4:6 (page 1191) and **James 4:6** (page 1186).

1. Who are the people that God resists?

God resists the proud.

2. If one is to reject God's way (Christ) and keeps going in their own way, what would such a one be?

Proud!

3. Who is exalted by God? Who receives grace?

God exalts and gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God!



Read Hebrews 10:26-31 (page 1180).

1. What can anyone who rejects the Word of God, and spurns the grace of Christ, expect?

They can only expect the fiery judgment of God.

2. According to God Himself, is this a big deal?

God Himself speaks of this as a fearful thing!

3. Whose promise of punishment is this?

The God who cannot lie - the God who is omnipotent - is the God who makes this promise!



Read Ephesians 2:4-5 (page 1146).

1. What does God do when He saves someone? (2:5)

He makes him alive together with Christ.

2. What two attributes of God are the reason He does this? (2:4)

His rich mercy and great love.

3. Sinners are saved by what? (2:5)

God's grace.

4. What is grace? (use an English or Bible dictionary)

Grace is the "undeserved favor" of God. It is God's kindness and goodness toward those who do not deserve it and have not earned it, but rather deserve His wrath. He gives it freely to those He saves.

When God saves someone, He grants them spiritual life. That is, he takes a person who is completely cut off and separated from God, and imparts His very life to them, by causing the Holy Spirit to take up residence in their hearts. Now, an individual can commune with Him, delight in Him, and obey Him.

Although all men need this spiritual life, there is absolutely nothing they can do to give themselves this life. The reason is simple – the life does not come from themselves or other people, but from God. Only God can grant this life. Just as a corpse cannot give himself physical life, so a person dead in sin cannot give himself spiritual life. God alone can do this great work!

This is a Christian according to the Bible. He is not just someone who agrees intellectually with certain doctrines, as important as that is. He is not just someone who goes to church, as helpful as that is. He is not just someone who tries to do good, as vital as that is.

- He is someone whom God has enabled to see the light of Jesus.
- He is someone whom God has reconciled to Himself through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- He is someone whom God has made spiritually alive.
- He is someone who loves God because God has first loved him.

Concluding Questions

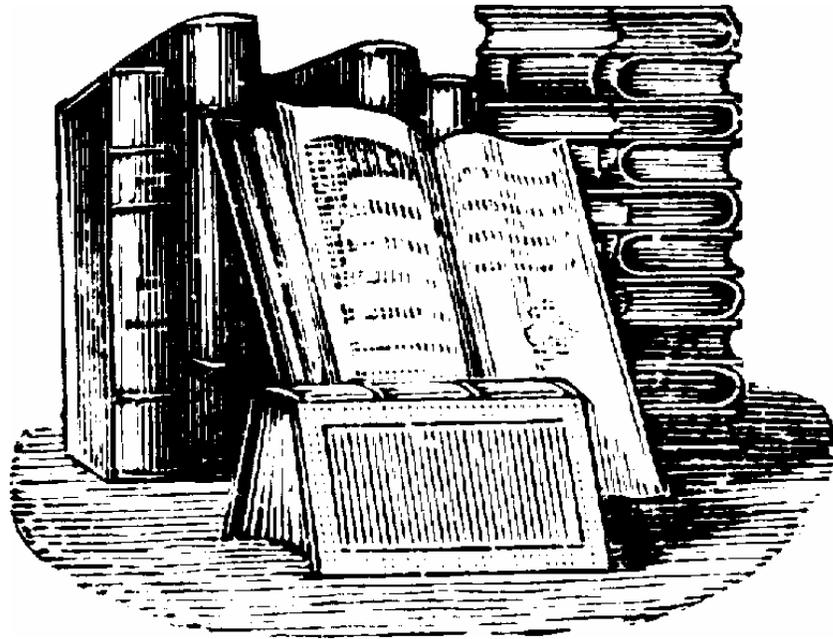
1. In the past what did you think it meant to be a Christian?
2. What new thoughts have you discovered in this study?
3. If God so hates sin, what do these truths mean for you if you reject Christ and continue on in another way?

(If one is to face the God against whom he rebels as a filthy sinner and continuing rebel, it would have been better for that one if he had never been born.

May you see and know through this study that your only hope of salvation and a right standing before a holy and righteous God is the Person of the bleeding, dying, resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself became the Substitute for sinners, and who by Himself suffered the full payment for sin in His body on the tree. Only in Christ can a poor hell-deserving sinner stand righteous before a holy God.

Supplementary

Material



A Description Of Each Book In The Bible

The Old Testament

Book	Description
Genesis	History: Creation, Fall, Flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
Exodus	History: God delivers Israel from Egypt through Moses
Leviticus	God's laws for Israel's worship and conduct
Numbers	History: Israel's sin, their wandering in the wilderness
Deuteronomy	Moses' sermons to Israel; God gives His Law a 2 nd time
Joshua	History: God leads Israel into the promised land
Judges	History: Israel repeatedly turns away from God
Ruth	History: an illustration of God's faithfulness
1 Samuel	History: Samuel, Saul, David
2 Samuel	History: David
1 Kings	History: Solomon's reign, his sin, Israel divided
2 Kings	History: Israel's sinfulness; God's punishment in the exile
1 Chronicles	History: another perspective on David
2 Chronicles	History: another perspective on Solomon
Ezra	History: part of Israel returns after the exile
Nehemiah	History: another group of Israelites return
Esther	History: God's protection of His people while in exile
Job	History: Job's trials and trust in God
Psalms	Songs and prayers set to music
Proverbs	Words of wisdom
Ecclesiastes	Solomon's insights
Song of Solomon	A love poem
Isaiah	Prophecy: God's warnings and promises to Judah
Jeremiah	Prophecy: God's warnings and prophecy to Judah
Lamentations	A lament for Judah after God punished the nation
Ezekiel	Prophecy: God's words to Jewish exiles in Babylon
Daniel	Prophecy & History: God's faithfulness to Daniel in Babylon
Hosea	Prophecy: to Israel, before the exile
Joel	Prophecy: to Judah, before the exile
Amos	Prophecy: to Israel, before the exile
Obadiah	Prophecy: to Edom, before the exile
Jonah	Prophecy: to Assyria, before the exile
Micah	Prophecy: to Judah, before the exile
Nahum	Prophecy: to Assyria, before the exile
Habakkuk	Prophecy: to Judah, before the exile
Zephaniah	Prophecy: to Judah, before the exile
Haggai	Prophecy: to Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the exile
Zechariah	Prophecy: to Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the exile
Malachi	Prophecy: to Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the exile

Note: sometimes "Israel" is used to describe the whole nation of Israel. But after Solomon's death in 931 B.C. the northern and southern sections of the nation divided – becoming two nations. The northern portion was called "Israel." The southern portion was called "Judah."

The New Testament

Book	Description
Matthew	What Jesus said & did
Mark	What Jesus said & did
Luke	What Jesus said & did
John	What Jesus said & did
Acts	A continuation of "Luke" – what God did in the early church
Romans	Paul's letter to the church at Rome
1 Corinthians	Paul's first letter to Corinth
2 Corinthians	Paul's second letter to Corinth
Galatians	Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia
Ephesians	Paul's letter to Ephesus
Philippians	Paul's letter to church of Philippi
Colossians	Paul's letter to church at Colossae
1 Thessalonians	Paul's first letter to church at Thessalonica
2 Thessalonians	Paul's second letter to church at Thessalonica
1 Timothy	Paul's first letter to Timothy, his representative in Ephesus
2 Timothy	Paul's second letter to Timothy
Titus	Paul's letter to Titus, his representative in Crete
Philemon	Paul's letter to Philemon, a Christian whose slave had run away
Hebrews	A letter encouraging believers to persevere
James	Letter from James, Jesus' brother
1 Peter	Peter's first letter
2 Peter	Peter's second letter
1 John	John's first letter
2 John	John's second letter
3 John	John's third letter
Jude	Jude, Jesus' brother, warns against false teachers
Revelation	John's vision of Jesus' promises, and warnings, and ultimate victory