

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE



2015 LEADERS GUIDE

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Class # 1
“Know Why You Believe”
INTRODUCTION WEEK

FORMAT OF CLASS AND LESSON PLAN FOR THIS WEEK AND FOLLOWING WEEKS:

NOTE: Most scriptures appear in the Leader’s Edition, but only appear as the reference in the Student Edition. This is by design, so the student can get to know their Bible.

A) The first week spend time getting to know the students and what school they go to. Ask each one as they go around the room their name and school. They’re Jr. High kids and usually bashful, some might even tell you they don’t know!!

B) Talking at this point is good. After finding out who they are you might want to ask a few questions of each to “break the ice.” The goal in the first meeting is to begin to build some community, introduce them to you, to each other and to the material they will be going through this school year in Sunday School class.

“Good Ice Breaking Questions” that usually work. Have each student tell you:

- 1) Their favorite / worst school subject. Why?**
- 2) Their absolute most favorite spot on earth.**
- 3) Their favorite color.**
- 4) Something we wouldn’t know about them unless they told us (where they were born, their father is an Elvis impersonator, whatever...)**

C) Last year many of the students completed the section of material called “Know What You Believe.” In that class they covered the basics of what Christianity is and what Christians believe.

D) If these students have come through our elementary school program they were introduced to our through the Bible teaching program. We have a teacher based curriculum that brings them through the Bible beginning in the book of Genesis and finishing in the book of Revelation. In Jr. High they cover “Know What and Know Why You Believe.” This year is “Know Why.”

E) YOUTH GROUP. Encourage these students to be part of our Friday night Youth Group, if at all possible come out yourself. Over the next several years we are going to be focusing some of our best energies on “making disciples” of these students.

F) After you’ve heard from the students about their lives, who they are and where they are from. Tell them your story. Tell them your Christian testimony. Tell them about your family. Let them get to know you.

G) Review the schedule for the year with them. Tell them we are trying to help them understand why Christianity is true and that we want them to be able to answer any questions that people ask them. Tell them we will be answering the following questions:

- 1) Why Believe in God anyway and what is God like?**
- 2) How do I know the Bible is God's Word?**
- 3) How do I know Jesus is God's Son?**
- 4) Did the prophecies of the Bible come true? What about future prophecies?**
- 5) Why is Christianity the Only Way?**
- 6) What about Science and the Bible?**
- 7) What about Miracles?**
- 8) What about other religions?**
- 9) What about evil? Did God create it?**
- 10) Did Jesus rise from the dead? (We'll spend a few weeks on this and Easter related topics in the spring.)**
- 11) Tell them we'll have session on where Thanksgiving came from?**
- 12) We'll also have a session on the meaning of Christmas.**
- 13) The last two teaching sessions we will talk about salvation, how to be saved and how to lead somebody to the Lord.**

H) Encourage them to bring Bibles

I) End every session with prayer. Last year we asked everybody to pray for the person to their left and their school. After awhile they figure this out and sit appropriately. At that point you might want them to pray for the person to their right.

J) Please learn the names of these kids and pray for them regularly.

K) Tell them this will be the guiding scripture for their time together this year:

1 Peter 3:15 (New Living Translation)

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

If you still have time after you’ve done all of this in your first session you can discuss the following questions based on the above verse from first Peter:

1. What did Peter instruct his readers to be prepared for? (3:15)
2. How were these readers to give the reason for their hope in Christ? (3:15)
3. Why are believers to keep a clear conscience? (3:16)
4. How prepared are you to explain your hope in Christ?
5. What can you do to be better prepared for discussions about Christ with non-Christian friends?

L) In the weeks to come we will have a handout for each student with definitions and places to fill in the blanks. These sessions will match your notes except that every place that is on their handouts will be framed on your notes with the blank spot they have underlined on your.

EXAMPLE OF WHAT A LESSON WILL LOOK LIKE:

=====

DEFINITION

(A) The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man, His creation. The Bible forms one continuous story; the story of humanity in relation to God. From the beginning to the end, the Bible has one great theme; the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

(B) The word Bible is taken from the Greek word ‘biblos’ simply meaning book. It is ‘the’ book; there is no other book like it as we shall see. It is the revelation of God and the words and voice of God Himself!

So as you are teaching a lesson their notes will include ONLY the boxed section and will have blanks to fill in where your page has an underline. This is what theirs will look like:

The Bible is God's _____ of Himself to man, His creation. The Bible forms one _____; the story of humanity in relation to God. From the beginning to the end, the Bible has one great theme; the Person and work of _____.

=====

M) We have loads of resources to help you grow n your own walk and understanding. We'll be passing some of these resources on to you throughout the year.

Let us know if there is anything else we can help you with as you seek to help these students, "Know Why They Believe."

N) After the first of the year we will be promoting camp programs for the kids.

Thanks for your efforts in making disciples out of these young lives. May the Lord richly bless you and give you endurance as you work at this vitally important task!!!

Class # 2
Why Believe in God Anyway?

(I) EXPLORING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GOD

READ PSALM 19 This Psalm tells us that God has shown Himself to us two ways (1) Through Nature (2) Through His Word – The Bible

Here's some discussion questions to jump into the class with, followed by what others have said and answering some thorny questions.

1. What do the heavens and skies have to say to us? (19:1)
2. On what two themes did David focus in this psalm? (19:1-14)
3. In what way do the heavens "display knowledge"? (19:2)
4. How far does the voice of the heavens extend? (19:3-4)
5. What role did God's law play in David's life? (19:7-14)
6. What words did David use to describe God's law? (19:7-14)
7. What power does God's law have in the lives of His people? (19:7-14)
8. How did the psalm writer describe the worthiness of God's law? (19:10)
9. What results from keeping God's laws? (19:11)
10. What did David say about our faults? (19:12)
11. What two types of sins or faults do we need God's help with? (19:12-13)
12. What was David's desire and prayer? (19:13-14)
13. What can we learn about God from nature?
14. What has nature taught you about God?
15. What steps could you take to be more open to God's Word?

REMEMBER THAT THE STUDENT HANDOUTS HAVE THE SAME NOTES AS YOU, EXCEPT YOU HAVE MORE. THE NOTES THEY HAVE ARE YOUR NOTES WITH THE FRAME AROUND THEM. SOME OF THEIR NOTES HAVE BLANK SPACES FOR THEM TO FILL OUT. THESE ARE UNDERLINED ON YOUR NOTES.

(II) EXPLORING WHAT SOME OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT GOD

<p><i>I shall always be convinced that a watch proves a watchmaker, and that a universe proves a God. - Voltaire</i></p>
--

Voltaire definitely was not a believer. In fact just the opposite. He was a philosopher and author who lived in the 1700's. He was a primary figure in the movement that came to be called the "Enlightenment" where people came to the conclusions that we didn't need God and people would figure out all the problems of people. Nevertheless, he made the observation that things that are created must in fact have a creator.

Imagine taking a watch apart and then putting all the pieces in a bag. Once they are in the bag shake it up and let the pieces fall to the floor. How many times do you think you would have to toss the pieces into the middle of the floor until it reassembled itself as a watch? Right. It would probably never do so. Complex things do not assemble themselves by chance. SOMEBODY puts them together and sets them in motion.

Besides even if the pieces came together to function as a watch (which certainly would never happen) somebody still made some very complicated mechanisms that each interact with each other in order to make functioning clock. Anything created requires a creator.

(III) REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN GOD

(A) THERE ARE THREE MAIN REASONS WE BELIEVE GOD EXISTS

- 1) The Bible tells us so. Over the next several weeks we'll see why we can trust the Bible in everything it says
- 2) The Created Order tells us so. Look around and you will see that God exists. It's obvious.
- 3) Atheists who say God does not exist have no proof for their statement and cannot prove it. It is impossible to prove God does not exist.

(B) DOES THE BIBLE TRY TO PROVE GOD EXISTS

1) No. The Bible doesn't try to prove that God exist. Right from the very first verse it asserts that He does

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

2) Here's what the Bible says about those who don't believe n God:

"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1).

Only a foolish person would deny that God exists. The fact of His existence should be obvious to all.

3) As we move through this study this year we will often come back to the issue of God existing and creating the world.

4) Offer tapes to any students who would like to learn more about this. We have a five tape series for free in the bookstore.

(IV) ARE THERE ANY PROOFS THAT GOD EXISTS?

A) Yes, many!

B) HERE ARE FEW THE PROOFS (as to belief in a personal and knowable God)

1) The REVELATION of the universe - Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20

Psalm 19:1 (NIV)

1

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Romans 1:20 (NIV)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

2) The RECORDS that are readable and available for study) II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21) The Bible's contents have proven it to be true and it speaks of the existence of God

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV)

¹⁹ And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

a) Consider its UNITY - 40 authors; 1588 years

b) Consider its HISTORICAL INFORMATION - nations, events, dates, persons, places, etc.

c) Consider its WISDOM AND MORAL VALUES

d) Consider its TRANSLATION AND DISTRIBUTION – it is translated and distributed more than any book in history

e) Consider its FULFILLED PROPHECIES

2) THE REALITY of Jesus Christ and His claims

3) The REALIZATION of personal experience (prayer, work of Holy Spirit, miracles, new birth, the thousands who have experiences God's love.)

C) FIRST CAUSE

1) This means everything that exists or happens is caused to happen. If there is a universe in which we live it came from somewhere. It could not have just been by chance. Larry Richards has written a wonderful book on this available called, "It Couldn't Just Happen."

D) PEOPLE

1) Don Stewart, co-writer with Josh McDowell said, "We learn something about God and His existence from the way in which we are made. Human beings are rational, intelligent beings – reflecting, in some ways, their Creator. All of us feel the need to worship something greater than ourselves. All of these truths points to the existence of God."

E) THE WATCH AND THE WATCHMAKER

1) We have briefly touched on this one. A man named Thomas Aquinas is said to be the first one to use this argument. Don Stewart continuing on the theme above said this about the watchmaker:

"One of the oldest illustrations that is used to point to design is that of a watch. When a person examines a watch it bears the marks of design. There are a number of parts of the watch that are put together for a purpose. They are arranged in such a way as to regulate the motion of the watch in order to tell time.

Two things can be inferred from looking at the design of a watch. First, the watch had to have had a maker. Second, the maker had a purpose in mind when designing the watch. We make these conclusions even though we never saw the watch being made, never saw the watchmaker, or had no idea how the work could be done.

In the same manner, when we look at the universe and its intricate design we assume that it had a Designer who wisely made it for a purpose. The belief in a Designer is not affected by the fact that we did not see Him, did not observe His construction, and cannot understand how He did it."

Class # 3
“The Bible: God’s Word, Part 1”

Have the students read the scriptures out loud one by one and discuss the implications, observations and reactions from each one.

(I) WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ITSELF

- A. "All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Tim. 3:16)

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- B. "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever." (I Pet. 1:24)

1 Peter 1:24 (NIV)

²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

- C. "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets own interpretation, for prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1: 20-21)

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- D. Read Psalm 19. Some things we can learn about God by looking at nature. However, other things (salvation, the fall, etc.) we can learn only as God "reveals" them through His Word.

(II) THE BIBLE ANSWERS LIFE'S BASIC QUESTIONS

- A. Where did I come from? (Origins)

- B. Who am I? (Identity)
- C. Why am I here? (Purpose)
- D. What happens when I die? (Destiny)

(III) WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE

- A. Witness of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Read John 14:26.

John 14:26 (NIV) ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

- 2. Internal Witness

- B. Witness/Testimony of Jesus
 - 1. "Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17)

- C. Witness of the prophets/fulfilled prophecy.

- D. Witness of the Apostles
 - 1. Would you die for a lie? Here is a listing of how the original Apostles died still claiming that they had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.
 - a. Peter - Crucified upside down
 - b. Andrew - Crucified
 - c. Matthew - The Sword
 - d. John - Natural, but put in burning oil for his faith and banished to the island of Patmos.
 - e. James, son of Alphaeus - Crucified
 - f. Philip - Crucified
 - g. Simon - Crucified
 - h. Thaddaeus - Killed by arrows
 - i. James, brother of Jesus - Stoned to death
 - j. Thomas - Spear thrust
 - k. Bartholomew - Crucified
 - l. James, son of Zebedee - The sword

- 2. The Apostles were witnesses of the resurrection:

Luke 24:48 (NIV) ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

John 15:27 (NIV) ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Acts 1:8 (NIV) ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 10:41 (NIV) ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Acts 13:31 (NIV) ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV) ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Acts 3:15 (NIV) ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Acts 4:33 (NIV)

³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

I John 1:2

E. The witness and history of archaeology.

(IV) SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- A. Written over a period of 1600 years.
- B. Over 40 authors (written by kings, prisoners, shepherds, doctors, Rabbi, tax collector, military, generals, fisherman, politician.)
- C. Written in different places.
- D. Written in three languages: Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic.
- E. The Bible deals with every major issue in life and speaks of many controversial issues; yet always without contradiction!
- F. The Bible contains history, law, medical information, poetry, songs, biographies, correspondence.
- G. No book has been published more than the Bible. The Bible is translated into well over 3,000 languages.
- H. No book has ever survived through more persecution and criticism than the Bible.

- I. The Bible has been the inspiration for more music, art, stories, plays, than any book in history.
- J. The Bible is the accurate historical document of its time.
- K. The Bible is the accurate archeological book of its time.
- L. The Bible is a book of prophecy. Three hundred concerning Christs' first coming, and 300 concerning His second coming, and hundreds concerning history.
 - 1. The Bible says that it may be discarded if the prophecies it contains fail: Deut. 18:20-22; 13:1-4; Matt. 7:15-20.

Deuteronomy 18:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰ But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death."

²¹ You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?"

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 (NIV)

¹ If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder,

² and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them,"

³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁴ It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.

Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV)

¹⁵ "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

- M. The Bible has changed the lives of millions even though criticized by hundreds.

(V) BASIC REVIEW OF THE BIBLE

(A) What is the Bible?

(1) The Bible is God's Word revealed to us.

(a) Heb.1:1-2

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

¹ In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

(2) The Bible has many writers but only one author.

(b) II Timothy 3:16

2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

(B) Why has God given us His Word?

(1) II Tim. 3:17

2 Timothy 3:17 (NIV) ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(C) The Bible is broken into two major sections.

(1) Old Testament

(a) 39 Books

(2) New Testament

(b) 27 Books

(3) 66 Total Books

(D) The Bible has one single unifying theme.

(1) Jesus Christ

(E) The Old Testament is an account of a nation. (Israel)

(F) The New Testament is an account of a Man. (Jesus Christ)

(G) The Nation was founded and nurtured of God to bring the Man into the world.

Class # 4
“The Bible: God’s Word, Part 2”

(I) INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Since all faith and practice in the Christian walk is derived from the Scriptures, we will do well to understand what the Bible says about itself. We will begin our study by examining the Scriptures in the hope of understanding how God communicates to us and what our response should be. We will be defining and using words which we will be using in our study concerning God's Word to us.

The word Bible simple means 'Books', while Scripture means "writings." When Biblical writers referred to the Scripture they were speaking of a specific body of writings: The Word of God. Jesus as well as the Apostles recognized these writings to have come directly from God.

Have the students read the scriptures following the explanations and insights you just read. Have them fill in the blanks when it applies.

(II) II TIMOTHY 3:16 SAYS

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

A. All Scripture is inspired by God. (II Tim. 3:16)

2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is (inspired KJV) God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

1. Inspired means God-Breathed.
 - a. Not meaning Scripture to be 'inspiring' like other literature.
 - b. This is the out-working of God.
 - c. Not that God only works 'through' Scripture.
 - d. These are actually the words of God.
- B. Scriptures are profitable for:
 1. Teaching
 - a. Common sense living (Proverbs)
 - b. About the personality of God
 - c. About the condition of man
 2. Reproof and Correction
 - a. False ideas about God and false worship practices.

- b. False ideas about man's personality and purpose.
 - c. False ideas about values and standards of living.
3. Training in Righteousness
 - a. By teaching correct method of relationship to God.
 - b. By teaching proper values and behavior.
 4. Training For Service (Ministry)
 - a. How God would be served.
 - b. Service towards fellow man (poor, etc.)
 - c. Operation and purpose of the church.

(III) WHAT EXACTLY DO WE MEAN BY INSPIRATION?

- A. That the original Scripture is totally free from error.
 1. It means that Scripture therefore is infallible.
 2. That everything is accurately recorded, not that everything is "true."
 - a. Satan lied to Eve.
 3. Assures us of supernatural intervention to prevent error.
 - a. Luke reports his accumulated information. (Luke 1)
 - b. Chronicles and Kings report history.

(IV) WHAT DO WE MEAN BY REVELATION?

- A. God "Revealing" Himself to man.
 1. Word means "unveiling"
- B. God does this in a 'general' way.
 1. Through nature (the stars declare Your handiwork).
 2. Through conscience (Romans 1)
- C. General revelation has limits.
 1. It is not infallible.
 - a. Fallen nature darkens our minds.
 - b. Sin has bias against truth. (Rom 1:28)

Romans 1:28 (NIV)

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

- c. Minds are limited.
- D. Does not teach us about redemption.
 1. If we were sinless general revelation might be sufficient.

2. Conscience deals with law, justice and wrath.
3. Christianity's distinctive feature: Salvation.

(V) HOW DOES GOD THEN SPEAK TO US?

- A. Through His Word
 1. Knowledge which we cannot know except God convey it.
 2. Teaches us of sin, fall, Trinity, incarnation, redemption, Satan, Eternal life, etc.
 3. Discloses new truth not accessible to the ordinary or unaided mind.

(VI) HOW DID GOD CONVEY HIS WORD?

- A. Sometimes in audible voice.
 1. i.e. Commandments to Moses.
- B. Sometimes by dictating to prophets.
- C. Sometimes through visions.
- D. By supernaturally preserving tribes, researchers from error.
- E. By actually writing. (i.e. Ten Commandments)
- F. Through personalities writing spontaneously.

"Thus saith the Lord" is used 359 times in Scripture, but could actually be placed before every book, chapter, paragraph, sentence, word, and letter.

(VII) THE BIBLE ON THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURES

Have the students read these scriptures in a circle around the room, noting their insights, observations, reactions and questions.

(A) Exo. 19:7 "...and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him."

(B) Exo. 20:1 "And God spake all these words."

(C) Exodus 24:4, 12 "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them'."

(D) Exodus 25:21 "...the testimony, which I shall give thee."

(E) Exodus 31:18 "...stones...written with the finger of God."

- (F) Exodus 32:16 "...stones...written with the finger of God."
- (G) Job 23:12 "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."
- (H) Isaiah 34:16 "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: No one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate, for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them."
- (I) Jeremiah 30:2 "Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying; 'Write thee all the word that I have spoken unto thee in a book'."
- (J) Jeremiah 36:1-2 "...This word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying; 'Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words I have spoken unto thee...'"
- (K) Daniel 10:21 "but I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth. (Spoken by an angel)"
- (L) Hosea 8:12 "I have written him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing."
- (M) Zech. 7:12 "Yea, they make their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in by the former prophets..."
- (N) Matt. 22:31 "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying..."
- (O) Scripture is the transmission of God's Word to us, through the Holy Spirit, through the prophets.
- (P) Luke 1:70 "As he spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began."
- (Q) Acts 1:16 "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
- (R) Hebrews 1:1, 2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds."
- (S) 2 Peter 1:19-21 "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star

arise in your hearts; knowing first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any interpretation, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

(VIII) 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 ON INSPIRATION

2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed (inspired KJV) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

(A) SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE FOR

(1) Teaching

- (a) Common sense living (Proverbs)
- (b) About the personality of God. (What God wants us to know.)
- (c) About the condition of man.

(2) Reproof and correction

- (a) False ideas about God and false worship practices.
- (b) False ideas about man's personality and purpose.
- (c) False ideas about standards and values.

(3) Training in righteousness

- (a) By teaching correct method of relationship with God.
- (b) By teaching proper values and behavior.

(IX) REVELATION IS GOD'S SELF-DISCLOSURE OF HIMSELF

(A) "Thus saith the Lord," appears 359 times in Scripture, could be put before all chapters, books, and verses.

(B) IT IS NOT:

(1) Mechanical writing or any process by passing human mind

- (a) 2 Peter 3:2 Apostles knew they were writing God's commandments.

2 Peter 3:2 (NIV)

² I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

(2) Obliterating of personality, style, or outlook of those used to pen Scripture.

(3) Not to be equated with "inspiredness" of great literature.

Class # 5
“The Bible: God’s Word, Part 3”

WE’VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE WORD OF GOD. TODAY WE’LL TRY AND ANSWER A FEW MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT IT. HERE ARE THE QUESTIONS:

(1) HOW CAN I KNOW THE BIBLE IS WITHOUT ERROR?

(A) 2 Peter 1:20-21 assures us that God's Word is true and reliable.

(B) There are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament fulfilled during the life and ministry of Jesus. If we analyze the probability of one person fulfilling just eight, the probability would be 1 in 10 with 17 zeros after it! We can understand why Peter declares that the written word of prophecy is more sure.

(C) 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that all Scripture finds its origin in God.

(D) Titus 1:2 tells us that God cannot lie.

(2) DID JESUS BELIEVE THE BIBLE WAS TRUE?

Jesus believed the all of the people of the Bible lived and that the stories of the Bible were true. In fact Jesus affirmed some of the most unusual and controversial accounts in scripture. Take out your Bibles and look up the following scriptures that Jesus affirmed as being true. This study is taken from Net Bible Institute operated free of charge by Don Stewart.

1. The People Were Actual People

The first thing we find Jesus confirming about the Old Testament is that the people mentioned in its pages truly did exist. They were not mythical characters.

A. Abraham

Jesus confirmed the existence of Abraham. He said:

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad
(John 8:56).

John 8:56 (NIV)

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

B. Isaac And Jacob

The patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, were real people according to Jesus.

And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:11).

Matthew 8:11 (NIV)

¹¹ I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

C. The Queen Of Sheba

The Queen of Sheba actually came to visit Solomon.

The Queen of the South shall rise up against this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here (Matthew 12:42).

Matthew 12:42 (NIV)

⁴² The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

D. Solomon

Solomon himself, the great king, was a historical person.

yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these (Matthew 6:29).

Matthew 6:29 (NIV)

²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

E. Elijah

Elijah was a genuine prophet. When asked about Elijah returning to this earth, Jesus clearly said that he was returning.

And He answered and said, Elijah is coming and will restore all things (Matthew 17:11).

Matthew 17:11 (NIV)

¹¹ Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things.

F. Elisha

The story about Elisha the prophet and Naaman the leper was also confirmed by Jesus.

And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian (Luke 4:27).

Luke 4:27 (NIV)

²⁷ And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian."

G. Zechariah

Zechariah the prophet was also acknowledged by Jesus.

from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation (Luke 11:51).

Luke 11:51 (NIV)

⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

H. Sodom And Gomorrah

Jesus believed that Sodom and Gomorrah were actual cities that were judged by God.

Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city (Matthew 10:15).

Matthew 10:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

I. Tyre And Sidon

The account of Tyre and Sidon, the cities that were judged in the Old Testament, was confirmed by Jesus.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you (Matthew 11:21,22).

2. The Stories Were Factual

As we look at the way Jesus treated the Old Testament, we discover that He assumed the various stories to be factual.

A. Moses Given Circumcision

Jesus stated that it was God who gave the people the rite of circumcision through Moses.

On this account Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man (John 7:22).

John 7:22 (NIV)

²² Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath.

B. The Manna In The Wilderness

The provision of the manna, given to the children of Israel while they were in the wilderness, was confirmed by the Lord Jesus.

Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat' (John 6:31).

C. David Eating The Bread Of Presentation

The story of David and his men eating the bread of presentation was acknowledged by Jesus.

But He said to them, Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? (Matthew 12:3,4).

D. David The Writer Of Certain Psalms

Jesus taught that David was the writer of certain of the Psalms.

He said to them, Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying (Matthew 22:43).

Matthew 22:43 (NIV)

⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,

E. Moses Wrote The Law

According to Jesus, the Law was indeed given by Moses.

And Jesus said to him, See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them (Matthew 8:4).

F. The Suffering Of The Prophets

The fact that the prophets suffered was used by Jesus as an example of how His disciples will suffer.

Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:12).

G. Episode With Lot's Wife

The story of Lot's wife, turning into a pillar of salt, was used by Jesus as an example of not looking back.

Remember Lot's wife (Luke 17:32).

3. Jesus Confirmed Some Of The Most Controversial Stories

In addition, Jesus confirmed some of the most ridiculed stories in the Old Testament. It is almost as though He went out of His way to put His stamp of approval on them.

A. Adam And Eve

Jesus believed in the Genesis account of creation - which includes the direct creation of Adam and Eve.

And He answered and said, Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, For this cause a

man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh (Matthew 19:4-5).

He used Adam and Eve as an example of God's purpose in marriage.

B. Cain And Abel

The account of Cain killing Abel is rejected today in many circles, but Jesus believed it occurred.

from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation (Luke 11:51).

C. The Flood In Noah's Day

Was there really a Flood, in the days of Noah, that God sent to destroy the earth? Jesus assumed there was.

For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus compared the circumstances surrounding Noah's Flood as similar to those at His Second Coming.

D. Jonah And The Great Sea Creature

Jesus also believed the story of Jonah and the great sea creature literally occurred. In fact, He used it as a sign of His resurrection:

But He answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up against this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here (Matthew 12:39-41).

E. Daniel

Though the authorship of Daniel is often rejected today, Jesus believed that he was a true prophet.

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) (Matthew 24:15).

All of these disputed and ridiculed accounts of the Old Testament were confirmed by Jesus as actually occurring. Furthermore, He used certain of them as illustrating some of the most important events in His own ministry - including His resurrection and Second Coming. Since He demonstrated Himself to be God's Son, His testimony settles the matter - these stories did occur.

4. Spoke Of Prophecy Being Fulfilled

Jesus said that certain predictions, recorded in the Old Testament, were fulfilled in His life and ministry.

And He began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4:21).

This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You' (Matthew 11:10).

And He said to them, Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him (Mark 9:12,13).

because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled (Luke 21:22).

Jesus considered the predictions of the Old Testament as being authoritative - He assumed they needed to be fulfilled.

Conclusion

As we examine the attitude of the Lord Jesus toward the Old Testament we find Him viewing it as totally trustworthy. Jesus believed the people actually existed and the stories literally occurred. This includes some of the most controversial accounts such as Adam and Eve, Noah, and Jonah. He never cast doubt on any of parts of the Old Testament, on the contrary He believed all of it was equally authoritative. Consequently, Christians, to be consistent, should have the same view as Jesus.

Complete Testimony

Therefore, we have the witness of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Jesus Himself that the Old Testament was inspired by God.

Class # 6
“Jesus: God’s Son, Man of History”

Jesus made some pretty radical claims about Himself. We’ll begin by looking at the claim that Jesus makes on our lives. He is God, as we’ll see next week, and has the right to make these claims on our lives.

(I) DEFINITION OF LORDSHIP

2 Corinthians 5:14, 15

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

- the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the daily submission and surrender of our entire self to the authority and leadership of Jesus, recognizing His sovereign right to rule over us. (Colossians 1:18).

Colossians 1:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

(II) WHAT IS CHRIST’S PLAN FOR HIS DISCIPLES?

(A) Luke 9:23 states the heart of discipleship.

Luke 9:23 (NIV)

²³ Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

(B) Deny yourself - Putting the Lord and others first; refusing to live my life to please myself.

(C) Take up your cross daily - Submitting our will to the will of God. Luke 22:42.

Luke 22:42 (NIV)

⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

(D) Follow me - Following Jesus and no one or nothing else. Matthew 4:19; 1 Peter 2:21.

Matthew 4:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

1 Peter 2:21 (NIV)

²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

(E) The whole principle of Lordship is the removal of self off of the throne of one's life, and the invitation to Jesus to sit on the throne and rule, trusting Him to do what is best for us.

(F) The battle of submission: two reasons why people do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of their life.

(G) We're afraid God may ask us to do something we don't want to do.

(H) We are not sure that God has our best interest at heart. Jeremiah 29:11.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

(III) HOW DO I KNOW IF JESUS IS LORD OF MY LIFE?

(A) We show our love for Jesus by obeying His commands. John 14:15, 21, 23.

John 14:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

John 14:21 (NIV)

²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 14:23 (NIV)

²³ Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

(B) We must read the Word of God, see what God's will is for our lives and then we must do it. James 1:22-25.

James 1:22-25 (NIV)

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at

his face in a mirror

²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

²⁵ But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

(IV) WHAT IS THE BLESSING OF PUTTING CHRIST FIRST IN MY LIFE?

(A) 1 Peter 3:15-16

1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)

¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

(B) Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

(C) Romans 6:22

Romans 6:22 (NIV)

²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

(D) The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the most crucial issue of any Christian's life. We are all aware of those around us who are reaping in their lives the by-products of their lack of obedience. Jesus has our best interests at heart. We must give Him our entire life and we must live only for Him daily. Only then will we experience the full life that He has promised us. As we continually confess Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, we are assured of true faith living in our hearts. (Romans 10:9-10)

(E) More passages concerning discipleship

1. Lives:

Gal. 2:20

Galatians 2:20 (NIV) ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ

lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Phil. 1:20; 2:13

Philippians 1:20 (NIV)

²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Rom. 12:1-2; 6:4-13

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 6:4-13 (NIV)

⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--

⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

¹³ Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

I Cor. 6:19-20

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV) ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

2. Time:

Eph. 5:15-16

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV) ¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Colossians 4:5

Colossians 4:5 (NIV) ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

I Peter 1:17-19

1 Peter 1:17-19 (NIV) ¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

3. Actions:

Luke 6:46-49

Luke 6:46-49 (NIV)

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

⁴⁷ I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice.

⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

John 13:13-15

John 13:13-15 (NIV) ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Col. 3:17-23

Colossians 3:17-23 (NIV)

¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is

on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.
²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

Gal. 5:16-18

Galatians 5:16-18 (NIV) ¹⁶ So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹⁷ For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

4. Thoughts/Words:

Ps. 19:14

Psalms 19:14 (NIV) ¹⁴ May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Pro. 3:5-6

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Col. 3:1-3

Colossians 3:1-3 (NIV)

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

5. Possessions:

Mat. 6:19-21

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

II Cor. 9:6-8

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NIV)

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Pro. 3:9

Proverbs 3:9 (NIV) ⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

Class # 7
“Jesus: God’s Son, Man of History: Part 2”

So who is Jesus? He is demanding our all. For the next two weeks we will see that Jesus is God. How can that be when we thought God was God and Jesus was Jesus? It’s comes down to an understanding of what people have labeled “the Trinity.” God is “three in one.” How can that be? Let’s take a look....

THE ONE TRUE GOD

Christianity has all of its roots in the Old Testament religion of the Jews. It is quite accurate to say that Christianity is actually Jewish.

To fully understand the Jewish religion and its God, YHWH, we must understand something of their background. The first real Jew was Abraham. The Bible informs us that Abraham's father was actually an idol worshipper (Joshua 24:2). *Joshua 24:2 (NIV)*² *Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods.'* All of civilization at this time worshipped a variety of different gods. There were sun-gods, rain-gods, gods of luck, gods of fate, and even unknown gods. In brief, anything that could not be explained by the human mind was attributed to a god. We will call this condition of many gods "pluralistic society." By this we mean that there were many explanations for the universe, meaning and existence and a corresponding god for each answer. This is the environment that Abraham lived in.

Abraham was a regular sort of guy, there was nothing "special" or different about him other than the fact that God decided to "reveal" Himself to him (Gen. 12:1). **Genesis 12:1 (NIV)**
“¹ The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.” The fact of the matter is that God "chose" to "reveal" Himself to Abraham for no reason at all except that He decided to. The calling of Abraham was a total act of grace, yet Abraham did choose to follow. When God did choose to reveal Himself, He did so as the ONE TRUE GOD, a personal God with a name and personality, thereby making all other "gods" false and the product of the unaided imagination man. He was YHWH, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is important to realize that we also live in a pluralistic society and that God has chosen to "reveal" Himself to us as the ONE TRUE GOD. May this cause us to be grateful and thankful!

(I) THE ONE TRUE GOD

- A. The Bible continually reinforces the idea of ONE TRUE GOD.
 - 1. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord."
(Deut. 6:4)
 - 2. "First...last...besides me there is no God."

- (Isa. 44:6-8)
3. "There is none else, there is no God beside me."
(Isa. 45:5)
 4. "There is one God."
(I Tim. 2:5)
 5. There is no other God but one.
(I Cor. 8:4)

(II) ALTHOUGH GOD IS ONE, HE IS PLURAL IN NATURE

(the idea is one of "compound unity.")

- A. "Let 'US' make man in 'OUR' image, after 'OUR' likeness."
(Gen. 1:27-28)
- B. Elohim = God in the plural.
- C. Father speaking, Servant and Spirit mentioned.
(Isa. 42:1; Mt. 12:18)

Isaiah 42:1 (NIV)

¹ "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Matthew 12:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

- D. All three members at the same time.
(Isa. 48:16-17)

Isaiah 48:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ "Come near me and listen to this: "From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there." And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me, with his Spirit. ¹⁷ This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.

- E. Baptismal formula.
(Matt. 28:19)

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

(III) CHRIST IS REFERRED TO AS GOD

- A. "The Word of God...the Word was God."
(Jn. 1:1, 18)

John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

- B. God calls the Son God.
(Heb. 1:8)

Hebrews 1:8 (NIV)

⁸ But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

- C. YHWH attributed to the Son the New Testament.
(Ps. 24:7; I Cor. 2:8)

Psalms 24:7 (NIV)

⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

1 Corinthians 2:8 (NIV)

⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

- D. "Unto us a child is born...mighty God, everlasting Father."
(Isa. 9:6)

(IV) SPIRIT IS REFERRED TO AS GOD

- A. Never grieve God's Spirit.
(Eph.4:30)

Ephesians 4:30 (NIV) ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

- B. Holy Spirit is called God.
(Acts 5:3-4)

Acts 5:3-4 (NIV)

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the

land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

- C. The Lord is that Spirit.
(II Cor. 3:17)

2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

(V) WHY IS THIS SORT OF THING EVEN IMPORTANT?

- A. If there isn't one true God than one god is as good as another.
- B. Wherever this concept is misunderstood, another plan of salvation follows.
 - 1. Jews, because of their misunderstanding of Deut. 6:4 crucified Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (NIV) ⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

- 2. Cults always deny this doctrine.
- 3. It answers theological questions; thereby, making the Bible a unity.
- 4. We can know we are right and this is important.
- 5. 1 X 1 X 1 = 1

(VI) JESUS AS GOD REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Read these and compare the Old Testament with the New Testament

CREATOR

Job 33:4-----Heb. 1:8-12
Gen 1:1-----Jn. 1:3

FIRST AND LAST

Isa. 48:12-----Rev. 1:17
Isa. 44:6-----Rev. 2:8
Isa. 43:10-----Rev. 22:13

SAVIOR

Ps. 106:21---Jn. 4:42
Is. 43:3-----Acts 5:31

ROCK

I Cor. 10:4- Deut. 32:4
II Sam. 22:32-I Pet. 2:6-8

I AM (EGO EIMI)

Exo. 3:13-14
Jn. 8:58
Jn. 13:19, 18:5

JUDGE

Joel 3:12-----II Tim. 4:1
Gen. 18:25----II Cor. 5:10
Rom. 14:10

KING

Jer. 10:10---Matt. 2:1-6
Isa. 44:6-----Lu. 23:3
Ps. 47:8-----Jn. 19:21

SHEPHERD

Isa. 40:11---Jn. 10:11

Ps. 100-----Heb. 13:20

Ps. 23-----I Pet. 5:4

LIGHT

Isa. 60:20---Jn. 1:9, 8:12

Ps. 27:1-----Lu. 2:32

Gen. 1:2 - The Spirit in creation.

Ps. 139:7-10 - The Spirit is present everywhere.

Heb. 9:14 - The Spirit is eternal.

Acts 5:4 - The Spirit is called God.

Jn. 20:28 - Thomas says "My Lord and my God", Jesus doesn't argue.

I Jn. 5:20 - His Son, Jesus Christ, this is the true God.

Jn. 1:1 - The Word was God.

Jn. 1:3 - All things were made through Him.

Matt. 18:20 - For where two or more are gathered...Jesus is everywhere.

Class # 8
“Jesus: God’s Son, Man of History: Part 3”

(I) HE IS THE ONLY WAY, TRUTH AND LIFE!

A) We continue to look at why we believe that Jesus is God. We also need to look at this important verse that Jesus made about Himself.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**B) C.S. Lewis said of this verse that it only leaves us three alternatives:
LIAR, LORD, LUNATIC**

1) LIAR. If He was a liar you would have to ask why He would lie about this. After all it is a matter of eternal salvation. Or he was the devil come to deceive people and to get them to put their faith in one who could never save.

WHAT ARE THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THIS?

2) LORD. He was exactly who He said He was.

WHAT ARE THE ARGUMENTS FOR OR AGAINST THIS? IT SEEMS INDISPUTABLE THAT HE WAS WHO HE SAID HE WAS. THE MIRACLES, THE PROPHECIES, HIS LIFE ALL POINTED TO THE FACT THAT HE TWAS IN FACT THE SON OF GOD. IF HE WAS HE IS.

3) LUNATIC. This argument says that the person who created the greatest moral, ethical and religious system in all of history was nuts. The argument is too far-fetched.

(C) JESUS IS GOD

(I) JESUS POSSESS ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**(A) Omnipresent (God is Everywhere)- Matthew 28:18-20
Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)**

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

(B) Omnipotent (God is All Powerful) Matthew 28:18

(C) Omniscient (God Knows Everything) John 16:30

John 16:30 (NIV)

³⁰ Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

(D) Eternal John 1:1, 2

John 1:1-2 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

(E) Holy-Acts 3:14

Acts 3:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

(F) Creator-Colossians 1:16, 17

Colossians 1:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

(II) JESUS IS CALLED GOD I N THE NEW TESTAMENT

(A) John 10:29-33

John 10:19-33 (NIV)

¹⁹ At these words the Jews were again divided.

²⁰ Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"

²¹ But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

²² Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter,

²³ and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade.

²⁴ The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

²⁵ Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me,

²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

³¹ Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him,

³² but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For

which of these do you stone me?"

³³ "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

(B) John 20:28

John 20:28 (NIV)

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

(C) Who is called God in Hebrews 1:8?

Hebrews 1:8 (NIV) ⁸ But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom."

(III) THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

(A) Webster's definition of unique "being the only one".

(B) Unique in His virgin birth:

(C) Prophesied in Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

(D) Fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

²⁵ But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

(E) Unique in His sinless life-Hebrews 4:14-16

Hebrews 4:14-16 (NIV)

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

(F) Unique in His death:

(1) Why did He die? 1 Peter 3:18

1 Peter 3:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

(2) He was separated from the Father for the first time-Matthew 27:46.

Matthew 27:46 (NIV)

⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

(G) Unique in His resurrection from the dead (can not be disproved).

(1) It is recorded in the Bible-Matthew 28;

(2) Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20, 21

(3) Witnessed by over 500 people-1 Corinthians 15:1-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (NIV)

¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

(4) Because of His power over death and sin, we too have spiritual power in our lives. (1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 56, Romans 5:10)

1 Corinthians 15:12-14 (NIV)

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1 Corinthians 15:56 (NIV)

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

Romans 5:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

(5) The Christian faith rests on His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:17)

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

(IV) CHRIST DESIRES TO LIVE HIS LIFE THROUGH HIS CHILDREN

(A) Galatians 2:20

Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

(B) What do I receive in exchange for my life before Christ?

(C) How do I allow Christ to live through me?

(V) THE ONLY LIFE THAT PLEASED THE FATHER WAS THE SON'S

(A) Luke 9:35

Luke 9:35 (NIV)

³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."

(B) The only way to the Father is through Jesus, John 14:6. There is only one life that pleased the Father - Jesus.

Class # 9
“Thanksgiving”

The story of the Pilgrims and Thanksgiving is the story of Christianity in the origins of our nation. It is true that not everyone coming to the “New World” came for religious reasons, many came for a new beginning, hopes for economic prosperity and other reasons. But that those who came to Plymouth Rock for religious reasons is disputed by nobody. After some very severe trials they found an opportunity to give thanks to God and have left us with the tradition of Thanksgiving.

We have a Thanksgiving service, which is a meeting of giving thanks, and an opportunity to share with those who might not have as much as us. Encourage any of the students who can to come out and help us either Wednesday evening or Thursday during the day. There is plenty to do.

We’ll be provided you with a curriculum for this day that explains clearly the Christian origins of the holiday.

THANKSGIVING

INTRO:

* Ask the students what they know about thanksgiving.

* Ask them why it is called “Thanksgiving”

(I) Explain to the students “holidays”

A) The dictionary says this about them:

- 1) A day on which custom or the law dictates a halting of general business activity to commemorate or celebrate a particular event.
- 2) A religious feast day; a holy day. HOLIDAY = Holy Day
- 3) A day free from work that one may spend at leisure; a day off.

(II) TELL THEM THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE KINDS OF “HOLIDAYS”

A) National Holidays

- 1) Veterans’ Day
- 2) Independence Day
- 3) Various Nations has different ones...

B) Religious Holidays

- 1) Christmas (or is it? Easter? or is it?)

C) Universal (mostly) Holidays

- 1) New Year’s Day

(III) ASK THEM IF THEY CAN NAME ALL OUR BASIC HOLIDAYS ON THE CALENDAR AND IDENTIFY THEM AS EITHER (1) NATIONAL (2) RELIGIOUS (3) UNIVERSAL

A) They are:

- 1) New Years Day
- 2) Martin Luther King Day (January)
- 3) Presidents Day (February)
- 4) Easter (March or April)
- 5) Memorial Day (May)

- 6) US Independence Day (July 4th)
- 7) Labor Day (September)
- 8) Columbus Day (October)
- 9) Veterans Day (November)
- 10) Thanksgiving (November)
- 11) Christmas (December)
- 12) Of course there are many other possibilities such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc. But the ones above are the recognized ones we celebrate.

B) After talking about the different holidays try and determine what kind of holiday Thanksgiving is.

C) Thanksgiving is the only explicit Christian holiday of American origin. It was a day when after much struggles the early Pilgrims "gave thanks" to God for all He had provided.

(IV) THE STORY OF THANKSGIVING

A) We've enclosed a copy of the history and traditions of Thanksgiving for each student to read and review out loud together.

Count the number of students and divide the 14 paragraphs accordingly. Try not to embarrass or force any students that don't want to read.

+++++

ARTICLE ON THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving Day is observed each year as a national holiday on the fourth Thursday of November (between November 22nd and 28th).

The Historical Events that Created the Holiday

Thanksgiving Day originated with the Pilgrims who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts in the early 1600s. The Pilgrims were devout Christians who wanted to separate themselves from the established Church of England. In 1620 they emigrated to America to build their own church in a new land so that they could have freedom of worship.

Shortly after the Pilgrim colony was established in Plymouth the English settlers received help from friendly Indians. Samoset, an English-speaking chief from Maine who was visiting Massasoit, a local chief friendly to white men, built a bridge of friendship between the Pilgrims and the neighboring tribe. He also introduced them to Squanto, an Indian who would later be described by the Pilgrim leader as "a special instrument sent of God for their good, beyond their expectation." Prior to the arrival of the Pilgrims, Squanto worked with English traders as an interpreter and even visited England on two occasions. Upon returning from his second visit, he discovered that

his whole tribe had died due to a plague. Living with a neighboring tribe, he "adopted" the English Pilgrims and taught them how to survive in the new land.

In April of 1621 Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn the Indian way, and by harvest time in the autumn they realized they had more than enough corn to get them through the second winter. As their leader, Governor William Bradford declared that a day of public Thanksgiving should be observed in October. The Indian chief Massasoit and ninety of his men not only came for the festivities, they hunted for much of the food: five deer and more than twelve turkeys. The Pilgrims provided the vegetables from their harvest and baked many kinds of fruit pies. Opening the celebration was a prayer by William Brewster, thanking God for providing for all their needs and for the friendship of the Indians. In addition to the meals there were contests of foot races, wrestling and shooting (gun and bow). And, in the end, this initial day of thanksgiving lasted for three days.

In April of 1623 the annual planting of corn was once again underway, but a dry spell in the month turned into a drought that lasted from the third week in May until the middle of July. Conditions were desperate, and according to a Pilgrim named Edward Winslow, they chose "to humble ourselves together before the Lord by fasting and prayer. To that end, a day was appointed by public authority, and set apart from all other employments." The results were immediate and phenomenal. In the words of Winslow,

But, O the mercy of our God who was as ready to hear, as we were to ask! For though in the morning, when we assembled together, the heavens were as clear and the drought as like to continue as it ever was, yet (our exercise continuing some eight or nine hours) before our departure, the weather was overcast, the clouds gathered on all sides. On the next morning distilled such soft, sweet and moderate showers of rain, continuing some fourteen days[!] and mixed with such seasonable weather, as it was hard to say whether our withered corn or drooping affections were most quickened or revived, such was the bounty and goodness of our God!

Governor Bradford phrased it this way in his account, Of Plymouth Plantation, "And He was pleased to give them a gracious and speedy answer, both to their own and the Indians' admiration that lived amongst them. . . .For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving." It is possible that this second day of thanksgiving was observed on July 30, 1623.

The Historical Process that Shaped the Holiday

Long before there was a "National" holiday the various colonies in America observed a day of thanksgiving. The Massachusetts Bay Colony had their first thanksgiving day in 1630 and frequently in following years until 1680, when this observance became an annual festival. Connecticut set aside a day for giving thanks in 1639, and by 1641 it was an annual event. In the colony of New Netherlands (today, the state of New York) the Dutch observed such a day in 1644 and occasionally thereafter.

During the Revolutionary War against England in the 1770s the American Continental Congress appointed at least one day of thanksgiving each year (except for 1777) and encouraged the governors in the different states to observe it in their region. George Washington, the first President of the United States, issued a proclamation that the entire nation set aside November 26, 1789 as a day for prayer and for giving thanks to God. In 1795 Washington appointed another day of thanksgiving, and twenty years later President James Madison did the same thing at the conclusion of the War of 1812 with England.

But the establishment of a national religious holiday of giving thanks to God on one special day each year was largely the result of the efforts of one lady: Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. From 1827 when she was editor of the Ladies' Magazine in Boston, she argued for a national day of thanksgiving. When her magazine consolidated with Godey's Lady's Book, her opportunities for influence increased since this grew to a circulation of 150,000, the largest periodical in America. Writing personal letters to the governors of every state and to the President, she persuaded many of the governors to set aside the last Thursday in November for Thanksgiving. Her efforts for a national holiday finally paid off when she persuaded President Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of the Civil War, to establish such a day. In her final editorial (September 1863) she wrote these words:

Then he said unto them, Go your way and eat the fat and drink the sweet and send persons unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto the Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. – Nehemiah 8:10

Thus commanded the inspired Leader of the Jews when they kept the "Feast of Weeks"; in a time of national darkness and sore troubles shall we not recognize that the goodness of God never faileth, and that to our Father in heaven we should always bring the Thanksgiving offering at the ingathering of the harvest?

Wise lawgivers and great patriots have acknowledged the salutary effect of appointed times for national reunions *which* combine religious sentiment with domestic and social enjoyment; thus feelings of benevolence are awakened and gratitude to the giver of all the blessing is seen to be the great duty of life. Owing to the different economy of different churches among Protestant denominations, except the Christian Sabbath, all our religious commemorations are partial and local.

Can we not then, following the appointment of Jehovah in the "Feast of Weeks," or Harvest Festival, establish our yearly Thanksgiving as a permanent American National Festival which shall be celebrated on the last Thursday in November in every State of the Union? Indeed, it has been nearly accomplished. For the last twelve or fourteen years the States have made approaches to this unity. In 1859 thirty States held their Thanksgiving Festival on the same day - the last Thursday in November.

The Contemporary Observance of the Holiday

In America the heart of the Thanksgiving holiday is the Thanksgiving dinner. This is observed not only in almost every home but also by the President at the White House in Washington. In keeping with the association with the Pilgrims and their thankfulness at harvest time the favorite meat is roast turkey, the favorite fruit is cranberries, and the favorite dessert is pumpkin pie. An ancient harvest symbol, the cornucopia or horn of plenty, has also become associated with this holiday.

For some people the emphasis on giving thanks to God for blessings experienced during the year is central to the holiday, but for many the healthy emphasis on family reunion overshadows or replaces the focus on God and His blessing. Thanksgiving has also become a day for parades and football games that some attend in person but most watch on television.

(V) DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A) Explain what you knew about the reasons the Pilgrims came to America.

B) What did you think about what Abraham Lincoln said about Thanksgiving?

C) Were you aware that in the past God had been such an open part of Thanksgiving and that thanks to God was the purpose of the day?

D) What did you think about the paragraph by Lincoln where he spoke of God judging us for our national sins yet still being gracious to us?

SPEND SOME TIME GIVING THANKS OR READING A FEW OF THESE SCRIPTURES WHICH TALK ABOUT GIVING THANKS

Psalm 30:12 that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.

Psalm 35:18

**I will give you thanks in the great assembly;
among throngs of people I will praise you.**

Psalm 75:1

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." A psalm of Asaph. A song.

**We give thanks to you, O God,
we give thanks, for your Name is near;
men tell of your wonderful deeds.**

Psalm 79:13

Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture,
will praise you forever;
from generation to generation
we will recount your praise.

Psalm 105:1

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

Psalm 106:1

Praise the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Psalm 106:47

Save us, O Lord our God,
and gather us from the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.

Psalm 107:1

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Psalm 118:1

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Psalm 118:29

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Class # 10
“Prophecy: History in Advance”

That the Bible is a book of accurate prophecy sets it apart from other books and other religions. We’ll take a general overview and look at prophecy in the Bible today. Over the next two weeks we’ll look further in to Bible prophecy and its fulfillment. We’ll be using our Bibles this morning to look up these scriptures and see them for ourselves.

The prophecies of the Bible concern Jesus, nations, people, events and all of them have been accurate.

Let’s look at a variety and overview of scriptures and next week we’ll look at some more specific ones.

(I) BIRTH PROPHECIES

A) John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. John said so himself. In the Old Testament, the prophecy shows John preparing the way for Yahweh God.

Isaiah 40:3

Isaiah 40:3 (NIV)

³ A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

Malachi 3:1

Malachi 3:1 (NIV)

¹ "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

Matthew 3:3

Matthew 3:3 (NIV)

³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

Mark 1:2-3,7-8

Mark 1:2-3 (NIV)

² It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"--

³ "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

B) In the familiar prophecy of the naming of Jesus, Jesus is called Immanuel ("God With Us").

Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 3:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Jeremiah 31:22

Jeremiah 31:22 (NIV)

²² How long will you wander, O unfaithful daughter? The LORD will create a new thing on earth-- a woman will surround a man."

Matthew 1:23

Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

C)In this prophecy of Jesus' birth, Jesus is called God.

Isaiah 9:6

Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Psalms 72:18

Psalms 72:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds.

D) Jesus comes in the Spirit to the temple.

Malachi 3:1

Malachi 3:1 (NIV)

¹ "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

Luke 2:27-32

Luke 2:27-32 (NIV)

²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,

²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

(II) REDEEMER / SAVIOR PROPHECIES

A) God Himself will redeem Israel from all of their sins and the Messiah will suffer and pay the price for our sins. So the Messiah is God.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah 52:13-15 (NIV)

¹³ See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him-- his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness--

¹⁵ so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV)

¹ Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Psalm 22:1-31

Psalm 130:3-4,7-8

Psalm 130:3 (NIV)

³ If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

Psalm 130:4 (NIV)

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

Psalm 130:7-8 (NIV)

⁷ O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Acts 20:28

Acts 20:28 (NIV)

²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Revelation 5:9

Revelation 5:9 (NIV)

⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

B) Yahweh / Jesus, the Truth and the Life.

Jeremiah 10:10

Jeremiah 10:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.

John 14:6

John 14:6 (NIV)

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1 Jo 5:11-12

1 John 5:11-12 (NIV)

¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

(III) TO BE TRUSTED IN PROPHECIES

A) The New Testament terminology that calls Jesus a Rock that causes men to stumble and an offence and a snare, is originally used in the Old Testament of God.

Psalm 18:2

Psalm 18:2 (NIV)

² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Isaiah 8:11-15, 44:6-8

Isaiah 8:11-15 (NIV)

¹¹ The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said:

¹² "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it.

¹³ The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread,

¹⁴ and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.

¹⁵ Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured."

1Corinthians 10:4

1 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV)

⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Ephesians 2:20

Ephesians 2:20 (NIV)

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

1Peter 2:4-8

1 Peter 2:4-8

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--

⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁶ For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,

⁸ and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for.

(IV) GOD / JESUS UNCHANGING PROPHECIES

Malachi 3:6

Malachi 3:6

⁶ "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

Psalms 102:27

Psalms 102:27

²⁷ But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

James 1:17

James 1:17

¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Hebrews 1:12, 13:8

Hebrews 1:12

¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Hebrews 13:8

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Exodus 3:14

Exodus 3:14

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

John 8:58

John 8:58

⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

(V) RETURN TO EARTH / JUDGEMENT PROPHECIES

In Acts, after Jesus ascended back into heaven from the Mount of Olives, an angel appeared saying that Jesus would come back in the same way. The Old Testament states the same thing, saying that that person will be Yahweh God.

Zechariah 14:3-5

Zechariah 14:3-5

³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle.

⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

⁵ You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

Job 19:25-27

Job 19:25-27

²⁵ I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Acts 1:11

Acts 1:11

¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Matthew 25:31,24:30

Matthew 25:31

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Matthew 24:30

³⁰ "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

Mark 13:26

Mark 13:26

²⁶ "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Luke 21:27

Luke 21:27

²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Zechariah 12:10

Zechariah 12:10

¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Revelation 1:7

Revelation 1:7

⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

Class # 11
“Prophecy: History in Advance: Part 2”

This week we will talk about prophecy that has been fulfilled in our lifetime.

TEACHERS: We’ve included in your tape package a tape on this subject.

(I) BIBLE PROPHECIES ABOUT THE WORLDWIDE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS

Deut. 28:15

However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

Deut. 28:49

The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young.

Deut. 28:64

Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods--gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. This passage is a switch of gears, from one nation (Babylon) to all nations throughout all the earth...

(II) THE BEGINNING OF THE SCATTERING

Deut. 28:68

The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

After the rebellion 1.5 million Jews were loaded up to Alexandria, chief port of Egypt. Because there were so many they could not even be sold into slavery and began to give them away -- this was then the beginning of the Jews being scattered throughout all the earth.

(III) The land itself will be a witness, as well as the people to what the Lord had done.

Deut. 29:22-29

Your children who follow you in later generations and foreigners who come from distant lands will see the calamities that have fallen on the land and the diseases with which the LORD has afflicted it. ²³The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur-- nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in

fierce anger. ²⁴All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?"

Mark Twain speaking of this land in "Innocence Abroad" (1869) said, "There is not a solitary village, not for 30 miles in either direction. There are a few small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride for ten miles in one direction anywhere hereabouts and not find ten human beings. Of the beauty of the land I cannot say enough, some mountainous desolation and ONE tree. A grave and ghastly land.

(IV) FROM NEGEV TO GAILEE, PALESTINE HAD A REPUTATION AS THE MOST RUINOUS NATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST..

Luke 21:20-24

"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. ²²For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. ²³How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Romans 11:25-27

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

(V) REBIRTH OF THE NATION ISRAEL

Isaiah 11:11-16

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.

(VI) Second Regathering....from the four corners....will be a united, not divided nation

¹²He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. ¹³Ephraim's jealousy will vanish, and Judah's enemies will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim.

(VII) HOW THEY WILL RESETTLE THE LAND

¹⁴They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west;

a) Before 1948, Mediterranean

b) THEN EASTERN PALESTINE (post 1948)

together they will plunder the people to the east.

c) THEN MODERN DAY JORDAN (1967)

They will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them.

Isaiah 14:1-3

The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob.

²Nations will take them and bring them to their own place. And the house of Israel will possess the nations as menservants and maidservants in the LORD'S land. They will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors. ³On the day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended!

(VIII) AS THEY RESETTLED NATIONS WOULD JOIN THEM. HAPPENED IN THE 40's & 50's OTHER NATIONS PAID JEWISH EXPENSES. THE JEWS CONSEQUENTLY HAVE TAKEN ARABS 'CAPTIVE.'

Isaiah 49:14-22

¹⁹Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away. ²⁰The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, 'This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.' ²¹Then you will say in your heart, 'Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these--where have they come from?' " ²²This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

(IX) THESE SCRIPTURES HAPPENED EXACTLY AS PROPHESED. TODAY, THE PROBLEMS IN ISRAEL ARE PROBLEMS ABOUT LAND OWNERSHIP.

AFTER THE HOLOCAUST PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT WAS THE END OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE FOREVER, BUT THEY AROSE LIKE NEVER BEFORE (Except perhaps during the Exodus).

THE LORD CALLED THE GENTILES AND THE GENTILES HAVE HELPED REBUILD AND REPOPULATE ISRAEL!

Isaiah 60:9

Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.

TARSHISH: WESTERN EUROPEAN DESCENT. CANADA, U.S., AUSTRALIA PAID FOR THE REBUILDING OF ISRAEL.

³⁷This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD. ³⁸"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹The measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah. ⁴⁰The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished."

(X) EXACTLY AS STATED!!! Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah was a walled city. For 18 1/2 centuries it remained that way. This prophecy speaks of 9 suburbs that will be built around the city. It has happened exactly like Jeremiah said:

**From 1885-1910: first suburb outside the Tower of Hananal
2nd by the Corner Gate
3rd Hill of Gareb
4th Down the Jaffa Road towards Goah
5th Moved north to Valley of Dead Bodies
6th Moved towards city walls to Heap of Ashes
7th Out to terraces and the fields
8th Out to Kidrin Valley
9th Last one built near Horse Gate
They will never be uprooted again! verse 40**

1 in 10 billion chance that you could get these built in that order! Yet here in our own lifetime!!!!

(XI) A SECOND REGATHERING

Isaiah 11:11-16

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.

Ezekiel 36:24

" For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

(XII) Israel today is populated by Jews from all nations.

In Israel's height they had 5 million inhabitants. Today they have 4.8. They have reached the heights of David's heyday.

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel 38:8

After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.

Brought into the land after it had been desolate for a long time.

Amos 9:9-15

¹¹"In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, ¹²so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things.

¹³"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. ¹⁴I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.

These passages from Amos were Menachim Begin's favorite passages of scripture!

(XIII) PROPHECIES OF A NEW NATION OF ISRAEL

(A) Isaiah 27:6

In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.

- * **This prophecy has been fulfilled.**
- * **Jaffa oranges are everywhere, except perhaps for Florida and California.**
- * **Israel is the number one exporter of oranges, bananas, pineapples and tomatoes**

(B) Isaiah 35:1-2

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, ²it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

Well it has done exactly that!!

(C) Isaiah 41:11-20

¹⁷"The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. ¹⁸I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. ¹⁹I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, ²⁰so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

EXACTLY AS PROPHESED.

- * **What was once a wasteland (no trees or grass) today has 200 million pines planted.**
- * **Fruit trees are everywhere**
- * **All the new vegetation has caused rainfall to double since 1940.**

(D) Isaiah 51:3

The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

The deserts have been turned into farmlands.

(E) Isaiah 54:3

For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

And they have from 1948 on.....

(F) Isaiah 61:4-5

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. ⁵Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

- * **All of the above.**
- * **Devasted for generations (plural)**
- * **Non-Jews work for Jews to rebuild their cities.**
- * **30% of the nation is not Jewish**

*** Cities as ancient as Gaza and Ashkelon are being rebuild as we speak**

(G) Ezekiel 34:25-31

I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. ²⁶I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. ²⁷The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. ²⁸They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. ²⁹I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. ³⁰Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. ³¹You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign LORD.' "

*** Rainfall and crops will increase. Has happened.**

*** 1966, 1967, 1968 Israel doubled grain each year.**

*** 70,000 tons; 150,000 tons; 300,000 tons**

*** Israel feeds itself; only 7 out of 240 nations do: U.S.; Denmark; Canada; Aussy; Argentina; Ireland; Israel**

Class # 12
“Prophecy: History in Advance: Part 3”

WHY JESUS IS THE MESSIAH
52 Bible Prophecies and Historical Facts

EACH PROPHECY IS LISTED AS:

- 1) THE PROPHECY**
- 2) REFERENCE TO THE PROPHECY**
- 3) FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY**

THE MESSIAH MUST...MEET CONDITIONS GIVEN BOTH IN THE O.T. AND IN THE N.T

PROPHECY: SOURCE AND FULFILLMENT.

Be the "seed of the woman that would "bruise " the serpent's "heel"

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Galatians 4:4

Galatians 4:4

⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

I John 3:8

1 John 3:8

⁸ He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Be the "seed of Abraham"

Genesis 12:3

Genesis 12:3

³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Matthew 1:1

Matthew 1:1

¹ A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Acts 3:25;18:18,22,18

Acts 3:25

²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'

Acts 3:18

¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

Gal. 3:16

Galatians 3:16

¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.

Be the "seed of Isaac"

Genesis 17:19;21:12

Genesis 17:19

¹⁹ Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Genesis 21:12

¹² But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

Matt. 1:2

Matthew 1:2

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers

Luke 3:34

Luke 3:34

³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,

Heb.11:17-19

Hebrews 11:17-19

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,

¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Be the "seed of Jacob" and the "star out of Jacob" who will "have dominion"

Genesis 28:14

Genesis 28:14

¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

Numbers 24:17,19

Numbers 24:17, 19

¹⁷ "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.

¹⁹ A ruler will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city."

Matthew 1:2

Matthew 1:2

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

Luke 3:34

Luke 3:34

³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,

Rev. 22:16

Revelation 22:16

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

Be a descendant of Judah

Genesis 49:10

Genesis 49:10

¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

Matt. 1:2-3

Matthew 1:2-3

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram,

Luke 3:33

Luke 3:33

³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,

Heb. 7:14

Hebrews 7:14

¹⁴ For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

Be a descendant of David and heir to his throne

2 Sam. 7:12-13

2 Samuel 7:12-13

¹² When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.

¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Is.9:6(7); 11:1-5

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 11:1-5

¹ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--

³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Jeremiah 23:5

Jeremiah 23:5

⁵ "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

Matt. 1:1,6

Matthew 1:1

¹ A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Matthew 1:6

⁶ and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

Acts 11:23

Acts 11:23

²³ When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

Romans 1:4

Romans 1:4

⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have eternal existence

Micah 5:1(2)

Micah 5:1-2

¹ Marshal your troops, O city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

² "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

John 11:14; 8:58

John 11:14

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,

John 8:58

⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Colossians 1:15-19

Colossians 1:15-19

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

Revelation 5:11

Revelation 5:11

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

Be the Son of God

Psalms 2:7

Psalm 2:7

⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Proverbs 30:4

Proverbs 30:4

⁴ Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!

Matt. 3:17

Matthew 3:17

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Luke 1:32

Luke 1:32

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

The rest of the scriptures (there are SO many) are not written out for the Leaders Guide, but students and leaders can look them up later.

Have God's own name, YHWH applied to him

Isaiah 9:5-6(6-7)

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Romans 10:9

Phil. 2:9-11

Come at a specific time, 483 years after the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem

Daniel 9:24-26

Matt. 2:1, 16, 19;

Luke 3: 1,23

We'll look specifically at this prophecy around Easter time.

Be born in Bethlehem, in Judah

Micah 5:1(2)

Matt.2:1;

Lk.2:4-7

Be born of a virgin

Isaiah 7:14

Matt.1:18-2:1

Luke 1:26-35

Be adored by great persons

Psalms 72:10-11

Matt.2:1-11

Be preceded by one who would announce him

Isaiah 40:3-5

Malachi 3:1

Matt.3:1-3

Lk.1:17,3:2-6

Be anointed with the Spirit of God

Psalms 45:8(7)

Isaiah 11:2, 61:1

Matt.3:16

John 3:34;

Acts 10:38

Be a prophet like Moses

Deut. 18:15,18

Acts 3:20-22

Have a ministry of binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives and announcing the acceptable year of the Lord

Isaiah 61:1-2

Luke 4:18-19

Have a ministry of healing the Gospels

Isaiah 35:5-6,42:18

Matt.11:5

Have a ministry in the Galilee

Isaiah 8:23-9:1(9:1-2)

Matt. 4:12-16

Be tender and compassionate

Isaiah 40:11, 42:3

Matt.12:15,20 Hebrews 4:15

Be meek

Isaiah 42:2

Matt.12:15-16,19

Be sinless and without guile

Isaiah 53:9

I Peter 2:22

Bear the reproaches due others

Psalms 69:10

Isaiah 53:12

Romans 15:3

Be a priest

Psalms 110:4

Heb.5:5-6; 6:20. 7:15-17

Enter publicly into Jerusalem on a donkey

Zechariah 9:9

Matt. 21:1-11

Mark 11:1-11

Enter the Temple with authority

Haggai 2:7-9

Malachi 3:1

Matt.21:12-24

Lk 2:27-38, 45-50

John 2:13-22

Be hated without cause

Psalm 69:5(4)

Isaiah 49:7

John 7:48, 15:24-25

Be undesired and rejected by his own people

Psalms 69:9(8)

Isaiah 53:2, 63:3

Mark 6:3

Luke 9:58

John 1:11,7:3-5

Be rejected by the Jewish leadership

Psalms 118:22

Matt. 21:42

John 7:48

Be plotted against by Jews and Gentiles together

Psalms 2:1-2

Acts 4:27

Be betrayed by a friend

Psalms 41:9

Matt. 26:21-25, 47,50; 55:13-15(12-14)

John 13:18-21

Acts 1:16-18

Be sold for 30 pieces of silver

Zechariah 11:12

Matt. 26:15

Have his price given for a potters field

Zechariah 11:13

Matt. 27:7

Be forsaken by his disciples

Zechariah 13:7

Matt. 26:31,56

Be struck on the cheek

Micah 4:14;5:1

Matt. 27:30

Be spat on

Isaiah 50:6

Matt. 26:67,27:30

Be mocked

Psalm 22:8-9(7-8)

Matt. 27:31, 39-44, 67-68

Be beaten

Isaiah 50:6

Matt. 26:67; 27:26,30

Be executed by crucifixion, by having his hands and feet pierced

Psalm 22:17(16)

Zechariah 12:10

Matt. 27:35

Luke 24:39

John 9:18,34-37;20:35

Revelation 1:7

Be thirsty during his execution

Psalm 22:16(15)

John 19:28

Be given vinegar to quench that thirst

Psalm 69:22(21)

Matt. 27:34

Be executed without having a bone broken

Exodus 12:46 Psalm 24:31(20)

John. 19:33-36

Be considered a transgressor

Isaiah 53:12

Matt. 27:38

Be "cut off, but not for himself"

Daniel 9:24-26

Matthew 2:1

Luke 3:1,23

Be the one whose death would atone for the sins of mankind

Isaiah 53:5-7,12

Mark 10:45

John 1:29, 3:16

Acts 8:30-35

Be buried with the rich when dead

Isaiah 53:9

Matt. 27:57-60

Be raised from the dead

Psalm 2:7, 16:10

Isaiah 53:9-10

Matt. 28:1-20

Acts 2:23-36,13:33-37

I Corinthians 15:4-6

Ascend to the right hand of God

Psalms 16:11, 68:19(18).110:1

Luke 24:51

Acts 1:9-11,7:55;

Hebrews 1:3

Exercise his priestly office in heaven

Zechariah 6:1

Romans 8:34

Heb. 7:25-8:2

Be the cornerstone of God's Messianic Believing Community

Psalm 118:22-23

Isaiah 28:16

Matt.21:42

Ephesians 2:20

I Peter 2:5-7

Be sought after by Gentiles as well as Jews

Isaiah 11:10, 42:1

Acts 10:45

Be accepted by the Gentiles

Isaiah 11:10, 42; 1-4, 49:1-12

Matt. 12:21 Ro.15:10

Class # 13
“Christmas Study”

A) HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

In the U.S. we have incorporated many traditions and rituals from many nations due to our melting pot atmosphere

- 1) There is no time given in scripture and you don't find the celebration of the day as a NT practice
- 2) Dec 25 (as Christmas) started 1,662 years ago when Pope Julius I decreed the previously a pagan holiday as a holy day of “Christ's Mass.”
 - a) Constantine's conversion lead to Christianizing maybe pagan practices.
 - b) Pope Gregory the Great wanted to transform pagan customs and said, *“It is impossible to cut off everything at once, because he who strives to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps, not leaps...”* And so steps and degrees it was...
- 3) Dec 25 = Pagan birthday celebration of Mithra, the Iranian (Persian) god of mystery
- 4) Dec 25 = Last day of week long celebration practiced in Rome called ‘Saturnalia’ day of Invincible Sun
- 5) A day of dancing; drinking and setting slaves free
- 6) Priests of medieval Europe tried to drown out the merrymakers by clanging the church bells on Christmas Eve
- 7) In Italy (Rome) ‘*carolares*’ would dress as wild animals. By the 14th century they were singing Christmas carols from door to door.
- 8) In 1647 England the Puritans outlawed Christmas. The commoners practiced it anyway and the mayors, marshals and sheriffs went around burning all the greens.
- 9) Mistletoe was an integral part of Norse, German and Celtic ceremonies. If two of the opposite sex met under the mistletoe and didn't kiss they would suffer ill fortune.
- 10) Holly which today speaks to many of Christ's crown of thorns and blood (from red berries) was then thought to be prophetic and when placed under your pillow you would dream of your future.

11) Christmas tree; Martin Luther or Saint Boniface

- a) Boniface cut down a Druid sacred oak in the 700's in an attempt to convert pagans to Christianity. When he cut it down it crushed everything in its path except for a tiny fir sapling that he said represented a miracle and the Christ child.
- b) Luther = lights to represents stars of heaven
- c) decorated after children go to bed as a picture of a marvelous transformation (Germany)
- d) In New England prior to Revolutionary War paper and wood lighted pyramids were the rage. Many 12 -20 foot ones were placed in the Boston Common.
- e) Evergreen has long been a symbol of immortality in Scandinavia. They would bring it home to appease the spirits.

12) WORSLING OF THE FRUIT TREES

- a) splashing cups of cider on trees hoping for good fruit in the following year (from England)

13) MANY BELIEVED ANIMALS COULD TALK ON CHRISTMAS EVE, INCLUDING New Englanders

- a) Thomas Hardy poem

14) SAINT NICOLAS

- a) Italian Charismatic bishop of Catholic Church
- b) Parents died young leaving a small fortune
- c) Gave a bag of gold to a distressed father who had no dowry three times the third time he threw it down the chimney
- d) Honored in northern Europe 'Klaus = Nick..'
- e) Said to fly through the air dropping candy
down chimneys or rewarding kids for good deeds.

15) ELVES & REINDEER: Who knows & who cares

- a) Middle of 19th century Americans changed

this Dutch figure into a fat, jolly elf with red clothes.

b) It was American Clement C. Moore who created modern Santa Klaus with poem "*Night Before Christmas*"

16) ARE THESE TRADITIONS WRONG?

a) Have as much liberty to incorporate them as we have to reject them.

b) Today 2/3 do not consider Christmas religious

17) GREATEST TRADITION OF ALL: Faith, Hope & Love and the greatest of these is love!

WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP (Matthew 2:2)

(I) PURPOSE OF HIS COMING (10)

1) TO DIE ON THE CROSS BRINGING GLORY TO GOD AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN TO MEN

John 12:27 *"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.*

2) HE CAME TO SAVE SINNERS

1 Tim. 1:15 *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst.*

3) TO GIVE US ABUNDANT LIFE

John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

4) SO THAT WE WOULD NOT PERISH, BUT LIVE

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

5) TO SHOW US ON EARTH THE FATHER

John 11:27 *"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."*

6) TO BE A LIGHT; RELEASE US FROM DARKNESS

John 12:46 *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

7) TO TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH

John 18:37 *"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.*

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

8) TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST

Matthew 18:11 *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

9) CAME TO BE A PREACHER

Luke 4:43 *But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."*

10) A TEACHER SENT FROM GOD

John 3:2 *He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

(II) THE EVENTS SURROUNDING CHRIST'S BIRTH (The Original Christmas Story)

A) INCREASE IN SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITY

(after 400 Silent Years)

- 1) Increase of Angelic Activity
 - a) To Mary
 - b) To Zecharias (father of John the Baptist)
 - c) To Joseph
 - d) To shepherds
- 2) An increase in dreams and visions
 - a) To Joseph
 - b) To Magi
- 3) An increase in prophetic
 - a) Anna a prophetess
 - b) Simeon knew he would live to see the Messiah
- 4) Signs, Wonders and Miracles
 - a) Not the least being the Star of Bethlehem
 - b) How about a virgin birth?

B) RAPID FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

- 1) Biblical Prophecy is Unique in it's fulfillment
 - a) Over 300 prophecies concerning his life

C) EVENTS SIMILAR TO THE SECOND COMING

1) Billy Graham in his book "The Holy Spirit" says, "As indicated by the prophets Hosea and Joel, as we approach the end of the age we may expect miracle to increase"

2) And I would add the fulfillment of prophecy.....
....where are we? a few weeks in Mark 13....
....the birth of Jesus the beginning of the last days

(III) THE RESPONSES TO HIS COMING

A) Cover the gamut

B) MAGI

- 1) Saw the star and came to worship
- 2) Overjoyed
- 3) Bowed down when they worshipped
- 4) They gave valuable gifts

C) KING HEROD

- 1) Disturbed
- 2) Looked for the child but for another reason
- 3) Furious with the Magi

D) MARY

- 1) Overjoyed
- 2) Humbled

E) JOSEPH

- 1) Obediant to what he didn't understand

F) YOU AND ME?

(IV) ISAIAH 9:2, 6-8

A) GOVERNMENT WILL BE ON HIS SHOULDERS

- 1) Kingdom Rule and Reign
- 2) All authority

B) WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

- 1) Advice and Direction
- 2) Policy and Consultation

C) MIGHTY GOD

- 1) Exalted; Powerful Above All Others
- 2) Omnipotent; Omniscience; Omnipresent

D) EVERLASTING FATHER

- 1) Care; Concern; Provision
- 2) Father: A man who has begotten a child

E) PRINCE OF PEACE

- 1) Peace with God
- 2) Peace with Men
- 3) Peace within Self
- 4) Peace among Nations (It's coming!)

CONCLUSIONS:

(1) God in Christ (Incarnation) did not come to take away all our problems -political or otherwise-but to be with us in them

(2) Thank God for His Indescribable Christmas gift....Share Him with your world!

LESSON # 14
KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
WHY DO WE SAY CHRISTIANITY IS THE ONLY WAY?

TODAY'S QUESTION:

There are many other belief systems and people that believe other things about God. Why do we say Christianity is the ONLY way?

(I) ONE OF THE STUDENTS READ THIS PASSAGE IN MATTHEW WHERE JESUS ASKS HIS DISCIPLES, “WHO DO PEOPLE SAY I AM?” (vss. 13 – 20)

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

²⁰ Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

A) WHY DID JESUS TAKE THEM TO CEASEREA PHILLIPI?

- 1) Because this was the ideal place to ask the question. People there worshipped many different “gods” there. Today people worship any different “gods.”
- 2) It was 120 miles from Jerusalem
- 3) It was where Herod had built a “temple” to honor Caesar. The ancient Romans were to worship their leaders.
- 4) It was a center for Baal worship.
 - a) Baal was a “nature god” a “fertility god”

5) The Greek god “Pan” had a shrine there

a) “Pan” means “all”

1) A place where “all” the gods were worshipped and honored.

6) People there worshipped many different “gods.” There could be no more appropriate place for Jesus to ask the question “Who do people say I am?”

B) THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER (vss 13 – 16)

ONE OF THE STUDENTS READ JESUS QUESTION IN VS. 13:

1) Jesus asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

C) THE ANSWER (vs 14)

1) “Some say”

a) The implication was and still is that people say MANY things about Jesus, but only one answer is right. Different people say different things about Jesus.

2) **SOME SAY JOHN THE BAPTIST**

a) A fiery, spiritual- political voice denouncing public, societal and private sins

3) **Some said Elijah**

a) Powerhouse of spiritual power & miracles

4) **Others said Jeremiah**

a) The weeping prophet

5) **Peter: “You’re the Christ**

a) MESSIAH, ANNOINTED ONE, SAVIOUR, LAMB OF GOD, INCARNATION, EMMANUAL: GOD W/US!

b) SON OF THE LIVING GOD!

E) JESUS RESPONSE (vs 17)

HAVE ONE OF THE STUDENTS READ JESUS RESPONSE TO PETER’S ANSWER

1) You’re right and You’re Blessed!

2) Flesh (Opinion polls, good ideas, much learning) didn’t Reveal that but God!!!

F) JESUS AFFIRMS PETER'S CONFESSION

- 1) Jesus then is agreeing that He is the Christ
- 2) Throughout scripture Jesus makes similar huge claims about Himself

(II) EIGHT CLAIMS JESUS MADE ABOUT HIMSELF

CLAIM #1 He claimed Authority to Forgive Sin

Matthew 9:2 *Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."*

CLAIM #2) He claimed that He –not just His teaching- was to be followed.

Matthew 4:19 *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*

Griffith Thomas, *"Christianity is the only religion in the world that rests on the person of its founder."*

CLAIM # 3) Took on Himself Old Testament Titles given to God

CREATOR

Job 33:4----Heb. 1:8-12
Isa. 40:48---Col. 1:12-17
Gen 1:1-----Jn. 1:3

FIRST AND LAST

Isa. 48:12-----Rev. 1:17
Isa. 44:6-----Rev. 2:8
Isa. 43:10-----Rev. 22:13

SAVIOR

Ps. 106:21---Jn. 4:42
Ps. 45:21-23-Jn. 4:14
Is. 43:3-----Acts 20:28

ROCK

I Cor. 10:4- Deut. 32:4
II Sam. 22:32-I Pet. 2:

I AM (EGO EIMI)

Exo. 3:13----Jn. 8:24
Isa. 42:10---Jn. 8:58

Deut. 32:39--Jn. 13:19, 18:5

KING

Jer. 10:10---Matt. 2:1-6
Isa. 44:6----Lu. 23:3
Ps. 47:8-----Jn. 19:21

SHEPHERD

Isa. 40:11---Jn. 10:11
Ps. 100-----Heb. 13:20

Ps. 23-----I Pet. 5:4

LIGHT

Isa. 60:20---Jn. 1:9, 8:12
Ps. 27:1-----Lu. 2:32

CLAIM # 4) Considered Himself Worthy of Honor Due God Alone

The Bible demands that only God be worshipped, yet throughout the New Testament Jesus is worshipped and receives worship:

Matt. 2:2 ...and asked, 'Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to **worship Him**'."

Matt. 14:33 "Then those who were in the boat **worshipped him**, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God'."

Matt. 28:9 "Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet and **worshipped Him**."

Lu. 24:52 "Then they **worshipped Him** and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Jn. 5:23 "that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, Who sent Him."

Jn. 9:38 "Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he **worshipped Him**."

Heb. 1:6 "And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels **worship Him**'."

CLAIM # 5) He Claimed a Unique Father/Son Relationship

called God His Father and Himself the Son of God

CLAIM # 6) Claimed to be the Judge of the Earth (Matt 25)

CLAIM # 7) Claimed people's eternal destiny rested in His hands

CLAIM # 8) Said He would give us what only God could give us

(III) OTHER VIEWS OF JESUS THAT PEOPLE HAVE

A) THEY SAY HE IS THE IDEAL PERSON

- 1) Emphasis on human potential and what we can “become”
- 2) Becomes a picture of the reach for goodness. Being a good person.
- 3) The supreme example of love and sacrifice.
- 4) Death of Christ becomes “inspiring” but a substitute for my sin.

2) THEY SAY HE WAS A GOOD TEACHER

- a) People accepting His heroism, but not His claims
- b) People accepting His values, but not His Person
- c) Applauding His stand on Women, Hypocrisy, Standing up to Authorities, Injustice, but rejecting Him as Messiah

3) PEOPLE ARE STILL CONFUSED ABOUT WHO JESUS IS

- a) Held in high esteem yes, but still confused

(IV) JESUS HOWEVER CLAIMED SOMETHING GREATER THEN THIS: HE CLAIMED HE WAS THE ONLY WAY!

A) John 14:6 “*Jesus answered, "I am **the way** and **the truth** and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.*”

B) Acts 4:12 *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*”

C) Jesus is claiming something far greater than anyone else has ever claimed....

D) He not only claimed that He was God, but that he was the ONLY EXCLUSIVE way to God

(V) LET’S LOOK CLOSER AT WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT HIMSELF:

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am **the way** and **the truth** and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

A) “THE WAY”

- 1) **This is not so much the opinion of Christians as it is the position of Jesus Christ Himself**

b) It is unfashionable today to say that our religion is right and others are wrong

c) It would seem presumptuous and arrogant to take this position unless of course the One making the statement were God and Jesus Christ was!

d) Jesus IS claiming there is:

1) ONE WAY

e) Truth then is found in a person: Jesus Christ.

f) It is not so much a question as to what should I believe, but whom do I trust?

1) If I can trust Him all the questions will be answered as we follow

g) Since Truth is a Person then we will experience the truth in the same way we KNOW people. Through Experience.

1) The Validity and Evidence of His Word & Works.

(VI) OPTIONS WE DO NOT HAVE:

1) “Jesus was an exemplary man and a great spiritual leader... I cannot however believe He is God....”

2) “All religions teach the same thing, so I just take the best from each.. that’s my belief..” God be faithful...

3) I’ve lived a good life, I never killed anybody... I don’t see how God could turn me away....”

SUMMARY (Material taken from Survival Course © 1998 Probe Ministries)

He was either a **Liar**, a **Lunatic**, a **Legend**, or our **Lord**.

A. Considering the Options.

1. **Liar.** Everything that we know about Jesus discourages us from selecting this option. It is incomprehensible that the One who spoke of truth and righteousness was the greatest deceiver of history. He cannot be a great moral teacher and a liar at the same time.

2. **Lunatic.** Paranoid schizophrenics do not behave as Jesus did. Their behavior is often bizarre, out of control. They generally do not like other people and are mostly self-absorbed. Nor do they handle pressure well. Jesus exhibits none of these characteristics. He is kind and others-centered, and He faces pressure situations, including the events leading to and including His death, with composure and control.

3. **Legend.** The greatest difficulty with this option is the issue of **time**. Legends take time to develop. Yet most of the New Testament, including Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, and all of Paul's Epistles were written by 68 A.D. An equivalent amount of time today would be the interval between President Kennedy's assassination in 1963 to the present. For people to start saying Kennedy claimed to be God, forgave people's sins, and was raised from the dead would be a difficult task to make credible. There are still too many people around who knew Jack Kennedy . . . and know better.
- 4.
5. **Lord.** In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis said, "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse."

CONCLUSION: We are called to accept Him as Lord of our lives as there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Jesus IS Lord!

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE

LESSON # 15 SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

We'll look at these two questions today.

- 1) What does the Bible say about the creation of the world.
- 2) Does science contradict the Bible?

(I) READ GENESIS 1:1

Genesis 1:1

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

A) The Bible says God is the creator of all of things, but the Bible also tells us there were some things going on **BEFORE** the creation of the heavens and the earth:

(1) THERE WAS SINGING AND SHOUTING

Job 38:6-7 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone-- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

B) FATHER AND SON FELLOWSHIPPING

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

C) THERE WAS LOVE

John 17:24 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

D) GOD WAS PLANNING FOR HIS KINGDOM

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

E) GOD WAS PREPARING US A SAVIOUR: HIS SON

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

F) JESUS WAS INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

(II) THE STATEMENT IN GENESIS 1:1 ANSWERS EVERY OTHER BELIEF THAT PEOPLE HAVE:

A) Atheism means there is no God

1) Genesis answers this by showing God Exists

B) Polytheism means there are many “gods.”

1) Genesis answers this by showing there is only ONE God .

C) Pantheism means everything is “god” including the creation, the heavens and the earth.

1) Genesis answers this by showing that God created everything and that He is not part of the Creation, but the Creator.

D) Humanism says not God, but people or humanity are at the center of the universe.

1) Genesis answers this by saying God, not man is the center of everything

E) Dualism teaches that there are two equally powerful forces in the universe, good and evil. God and the devil.

1) Genesis teaches that God is all powerful and He is totally good; evil is apart from Him.

F) Evolution teaches that the universe was not created but happened mostly by accident.

1) Genesis teaches that the Universe was created by God and that it did not evolve.

(III) THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE:

A) Some people have said that the Bible is behind the times in areas of science. The fact is that the Bible is far ahead of times in areas of science.

1) LONG BEFORE ANYBODY KNEW IT THE BIBLE SAID THE EARTH WAS SUPPORTED ON NOTHING

Job 26:7 He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.

2) LONG BEFORE THE ATOMIC AGE (20th century) THE BIBLE SAID THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE IS ATOMIC STRUCTURE (made of things we can't see)

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

3) LONG BEFORE THE AGE OF TELESCOPES THE BIBLE SAID THE STARS CANNOT BE NUMBERED

Jeremiah 33:22 I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

4) LONG BEFORE PEOPLE COULD HAVE KNOWN THE EARTH WAS ROUND THE BIBLE TAUGHT IT WAS

Isaiah 40:22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth

5) FORBIDDEN TO DRINK FROM STAGNANT STREAMS Leviticus 11:29-36
only in the last 100 years we have learned contaminated water can cause typhoid and cholera.

6) SECOND LAW OF THERMO-DYNAMICS, A RECENT SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING SAYS EVERYTHING IS WINDING DONE, THE BIBLE SAID IT THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO

Psalm 102:25-26 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.

(IV) SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT TRUE SCIENTISTS DON'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE, YET THE FACTS ARE THAT MANY OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL SCIENTISTS WERE BELIEVERS.

1) Louis Aggasiz (Founder of glacial science. He was a Creationist)

2) Charles Babbage (Creator of Computer. He was a defender of the Bible, known as an 'apologist')

3) Johannes Kepler (Laws of Planetary Motion. He believed the Bible literally)

4) Blaise Pascal (Probability Studies. He was a Christian writer who wrote about the Bible)

5) John Ambrose Fleming (Diode. Modern Electronics)

- 6) Issac Newton (Universal Laws of Gravitation)
- 7) Georges Cuvier (Comparative Anatomy. Creationist)
- 8) William Kelvin (Thermodynamics. Creationist)
- 9) Carolus Linnaeus (Modern taxonomy. Creationist)
- 10) Louis Pastuer (Germ Theory. Dedicated Christian)
 - a) Faith lead him to disprove spontaneous generation

(V) CREATION OR EVOLUTION?

The Bible teaches that God created the world, but evolution denies that. Let's look at the two and see which one makes more sense.

A) WHAT DOES EVOLUTION TEACH?

- 1) It teaches that a very long time plus Chance plus Nothing plus Nothing equals complexity, beauty, order, the universe we live in and life.
- 2) It teaches Out of Chaos Comes Increasing Order
- 3) It teaches that Life comes from non-life
- 4) It teaches there is no intelligence or design behind creation
- 5) It teaches that Mutations and Natural Selection are Helpful.

(VI) IMPLICATIONS OF CREATION

- A) You have meaning and purpose
- B) It's not chance
- C) You are loved
- D) You are God's workmanship
- E) There are moral absolutes
- F) The Bible is true
- G) There is salvation in Jesus Christ

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE

LESSON # 16
SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE (Part two)

Today is a video day.... give the students paper to write on

The video continues the question of science and the Bible and talks about evolution.

The title of the video is:

“Incredible Creatures that Defy Evolution”

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 17
WHAT ABOUT OTHER RELIGIONS

We've already seen that Jesus claimed to be and is the only way to God. Yet there are many other religions and cults.

There are four basic tests to compare other religions to Christianity. They are:

- 1) What does the group do with Jesus?
- 2) How is a person saved? In Christianity it is by grace, believing Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead. You'll see the other cults and religions trust in works.
- 3) What does the group do with the resurrection of Jesus?
- 4) How do they view the Bible?

Review together Biblical Christianity and then find a few groups that interest you and take a comparative look at what they believe about Jesus, the Bible and salvation. Read about them aloud, talk about them and discover together the differences...

Biblical Christianity

<i>Key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	Jesus Christ. Founded about A.D. 30-33, in the Judean province of Palestine (Israel today), under the Roman Empire.
<i>Key Writings</i>	The Bible, written originally in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament), and Greek (New Testament).
<i>Who Is God?</i>	God is triune (one God in the form of three persons, not three gods): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Often the title "God" designates the first person, God the Father. God is a spiritual being without a physical body. He is personal and involved with people. He created the universe out of nothing. He is eternal, changeless, holy, loving, and perfect.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity. As God the Son, He has always existed and was never created. He is fully God and fully man (the two natures joined, not mixed). As the second person of the Trinity, He is coequal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. In becoming man, He was begotten through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is the only way to the Father, salvation, and eternal life. He died on a cross according to God's plan, as full sacrifice and payment for our sins. He rose from the dead on the third day, spiritually <i>and</i> physically immortal. For the next 40 days He was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses. His wounds were touched and he ate meals. He physically ascended into Heaven. Jesus will come again visibly and physically at the end of the world to establish God's kingdom and judge the world.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or energy field. He comforts, grieves, reproves, convicts, guides, teaches, and fills Christians. He is not the Father, nor the Son, Jesus Christ.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	Salvation is by God's grace, not by an individual's good works. Salvation must be received by faith. People must believe in their heart that Jesus died for their sins and physically rose again, which is the assurance of forgiveness and resurrection of the body. This is God's loving plan to forgive sinful people.
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	Believers go to be with Jesus. After death, all people await the final judgement. Both saved and lost people will be resurrected. Those who are saved live with Jesus in Heaven. Those who are lost suffer the torment of eternal separation from God (they go to Hell). Jesus' bodily resurrection guarantees believers that they, too, will be

	resurrected and receive new immortal bodies.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Group worship, usually in churches. No secret rites. Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion). Active voluntary missionary efforts. Aid to those in need: the poor, widows, orphans, and downtrodden. Christians believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah promised to Israel in the Old Testament (Tanakh). Jesus said His followers would be known by their love for one another.

Information was taken from *Christianity, Cults & Religions* by Rose Publishing, 4455 Torrance Blvd. Suite 259, Torrance, CA, 90503.

Scientology

<i>Key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986). Founded 1954 in California. Current headquarters in Los Angeles, California
<i>Key Writings</i>	<i>Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health</i> and others by Hubbard. <i>The Way to Happiness</i> .
<i>Who Is God?</i>	Does not define God or Supreme Being, but rejects Biblical description of God. Everyone is a "thetan," an immortal spirit with unlimited powers over its own universe, but not all are aware of this.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus is rarely mentioned in Scientology. Jesus was not the Creator, and not an "operating thetan" (in control of supernatural powers, cleared from mental defects). Did not die for sins.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	The Holy Spirit is not a part of this belief.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	No sin or need to repent. Salvation is freedom from reincarnation. One must work with an "auditor" on his "engrams" (hang-ups) to achieve the state of "clear," then progress up the "bridge to total freedom."
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	Hell is a myth. People who get clear of engrams become operating thetans.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Members observe birth of Hubbard and anniversary of publication of <i>Dianetics</i> . Controversy follows the group world-wide. <i>Time</i> magazine and <i>Reader's Digest</i> have published damaging expose. Various media have reported that church leaders have had indictments and/or convictions for burglary, wiretapping, conspiracy, and other felonies.

New Age

<i>Key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	Based on eastern mystics, Hinduism, and paganism. Popularized in part by actress Shirley MacLaine, 1980s-90s. Beliefs vary.
<i>Key Writings</i>	No holy book. Use selected Bible passages; <i>I Ching</i> ; Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist writings; and Native American beliefs. Writings on astrology, mysticism, and magic.
<i>Who Is God?</i>	Everything and everyone is God. God is an impersonal force or principle, not a person. People have unlimited inner power and need to discover it.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus is not the one true God. He is not a savior, but a spiritual model, and guru, and is now an "ascended master." He was a New Ager who tapped into divine power in the same way that anyone can. Many believe he went east to India or Tibet and learned mystical truths. He did not rise physically, but "rose" into a higher spiritual realm.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	Sometimes a psychic force. Man is divine and can experience psychic phenomena such as contacting unearthly beings.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	Need to offset bad karma with good karma. Can tap into supernatural power through meditation, self-awareness, TM, and "spirit guides." Use terms such as "reborn" for this new self-awareness.
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	Human reincarnations occur until person reaches oneness with God. No eternal life as a resurrected person. No literal heaven or hell.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Can include yoga, meditation, visualization, astrology, channelling, hypnosis, trances, tarot card readings, and contact with spirits. Use of crystals to get in harmony with God (Energy), for psychic healing, for contact with spirits, and for developing higher consciousness, or other psychic powers. Strive for world unity and peace, and holistic health.

Judaism

<i>key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	Abraham of the Bible, about 2000 B.C., in the Middle East. Three main branches of Judaism, each with its own beliefs.
<i>Key Writings</i>	The Tanakh (Old Testament), and especially the Torah (first five books of the OT). The Talmud (explanation of the Tanakh). Teachings of each branch: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Writings of sages, such as Maimonides.
<i>Who Is God?</i>	God is spirit. To Orthodox Jews, God is personal, all-powerful, eternal, and compassionate. To other Jews, God is impersonal, unknowable, and defined in a number of ways. No Trinity.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus is seen either as an extremist false messiah or a good but martyred Jewish rabbi (teacher). Many Jews do not consider Jesus at all. Jews (except Messianic Jews and Hebrew Christians) do not believe he was the messiah, Son of God, or that he rose from the dead. Orthodox Jews believe the Messiah will restore the Jewish kingdom and eventually rule the earth.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	Some believe the Holy Spirit is another name for God's activity on earth. Others say it is God's love or power.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	Some jews believe that prayer, repentance, and obeying the Law are necessary for salvation. Others believe that salvation is the improvement of society.
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	There will be a physical resurrection. The obedient will live forever with God, and the unrighteous will suffer. Some Jews do not believe in a conscious life after death.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Meeting in synagogues on the Sabbath (Sabbath is Friday evening to Saturday evening). Circumcision. Many holy days and festivals, including Passover, Sukkoth, Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Purim. Jerusalem is considered to be the holy city.

Hinduism

<i>Key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	No one founder. Many sects. Began 1800-1000 B.C. in India.
<i>Key Writings</i>	Many writings, including the Vedas (oldest, about 1000 B.C.), the Upanshads, and the <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> .
<i>Who Is God?</i>	God is "The Absolute," a universal spirit. Everyone is part of God (Brahman) like drops in the sea. People worship manifestations of Brahman (gods and goddesses). People are God, but are unaware of it.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus Christ is a teacher, a guru, or an avatar (an incarnation of Vishnu). He is a son of God as are others. His death does not atone for sins and he did not rise from the dead.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	The Holy Spirit is not a part of this belief.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	Release from the cycles of reincarnation. Achieved through yoga and meditation. Can take many lifetimes. Final salvation is absorption or union with Brahman.
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	Reincarnation into a better status (good karma) if person has behaved well. If one has been bad, he can be reborn and pay for past sins (bad karma) by suffering.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Some disciples wear orange robes, and have shaved heads. Many Hindus worship stone and wooden idols in temples. Gurus demand complete obedience. Disciples meditate on a word, phrase, or picture. Yoga involves meditation, chanting, postures, breathing exercises. Foundation of New Age and Transcendental Meditation.

Buddhism

<i>Key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama). Founded about 525 B.C. in India. Offshoot of Hinduism.
<i>Key Writings</i>	The Tripitaka (three baskets), which has more than 100 volumes.
<i>Who Is God?</i>	Buddhism is mostly atheistic. Many buddhists do not believe in a God or Supreme Being of any kind. Others speak of the Buddha as a universal enlightened consciousness or as a god.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus Christ is not a part of this belief. Buddhists in the West generally view Jesus as an enlightened man.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	The Holy Spirit is not a part of this belief.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	Goal of life is Nirvana, to eliminate all desires or cravings, and in this way escape suffering. The Eightfold Path is a system to free Buddhists from desiring anything.
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	People do not have a soul or spirit. However, one's desires and feelings may be reincarnated into another person. No heaven or hell.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Eightfold Path recommends right knowledge, intentions, speech, conduct, livelihood, right effort, mindfulness, and meditation. Some Buddhist groups talk about an eternal Buddha (life force). Some Buddhist offshoots include Zen, Nichiren, Shoshu, and Tibetan (occultic) Buddhism.

Islam

<i>Key Person Or Founder, Date, Location</i>	Mohammed (570-632). About A.D. 610, in Mecca and Medina. Headquarters in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Main sects: Sunni and Shiite.
<i>Key Writings</i>	Qur'an (Koran), scripture in Arabic. <i>Hadith</i> (Mohammed's words and deeds). Biblical Law of Moses, Psalms, and Gospel of Jesus (the Injil) accepted by Qur'an, but considered by Muslims to be "corrupted."
<i>Who Is God?</i>	God (Allah) is one. God revealed the Qur'an to Mohammed through the angel Gabriel. God is a severe judge (though sometimes merciful) and is not depicted as loving.
<i>Who Is Jesus?</i>	Jesus is one of up to 124,000 prophets sent by God to various cultures. Abraham, Moses, and Mohammed are others. Jesus was born of a virgin, but is not the Son of God. Sinless. Not divine or God himself. He was not crucified (he ascended to heaven without dying). He is referred to as messiah and ayatollah (sign of God). Jesus will return in the future to live and die.
<i>Who Is The Holy Spirit?</i>	The Qur'an refers to Jesus as the spirit of God. Muslim scholars see the angel Gabriel as the Holy Spirit.
<i>How To Be Saved</i>	Humans are basically good, but fallible and need guidance. The balance between good and bad deeds determines eternal destiny in paradise or hell. God's mercy may tip the balances but it is arbitrary and uncertain.
<i>What Happens After Death</i>	Resurrection of bodies. Final day of reckoning and rewards. Eternal paradise for those who believe in Islam. Eternal hell for those who reject Islam.
<i>Other Beliefs Or Practices</i>	Followers are called Muslims. Go to mosque for prayers, sermons, counsel. Holy efforts to spread Islam (jihad). Five pillars of Islam: Confess that Allah is the one true God and that Mohammed is his prophet. Pray five times daily facing Mecca. Give alms (money). Fast during the month of Ramadan. Make pilgrimage to Mecca (once in a lifetime).

by Matt Slick This chart is a simplification of various groups and their beliefs. It is, to be realistic, an oversimplification. But it gives the reader an idea of where the groups stand.

Group Name	Founder	The Gospel	The Church	God	Jesus	Salvation	Jesus Resurrection
Christianity (The Truth to compare against)	Jesus Christ	That Jesus saves from sin	Those who are saved	Trinity: 3 Persons in one God	God in flesh	by Grace	Jesus rose in the same body he died in.
Christadelphianism	John Thomas (1805-1871) founded 1848	Faith in Christ and baptism	Members of their church	One God as one person	Created being. A man with a sin nature	Baptism is required	Yes
Christian Science	Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)	Religious beliefs of Jesus' teachings, not the atonement.	A collection of spiritual ideas	Impersonal Universal Presence	A man in tune with the Divine Consciousness, not the Christ.	Correct thinking	No
Islam	Muhammad	Faith in Allah and works	n/a	One God: Allah. Non Trinitarian	Created being. A prophet. Not God.	by Allah's grace and man's works	No.
Jehovah's Witnesses	Charles T. Russell (1852-1916)	Jesus opened the door for us to earn our	Members of their	One Person	Created being. Michael the archangel who	Keeping the commandments, being in their	No

	founded 1879	salvation	church		became a man	Organization	
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day saints (Mormons)	Joseph Smith (1805-1844) founded 1830	Jesus' atonement plus the Laws and ordinances of the gospel	Members of their church	Triad - 3 gods.	Created being. The brother of the devil and of all people	Resurrected by grace, saved by doing works.	Yes
Oneness Pentecostal	N/A	Faith in Christ and baptism	Members of their church	One Person modalism	God in flesh	By faith and baptism "in Jesus' name" in their church	Yes
Theosophy	Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) founded 1875	n/a	n/a	God is a principle	Created being. A great teacher	*	No
Unity	Charles Fillmore (1854-1948) founded 1889	The overall principles of Unity	A collection of spiritual ideas	Impersonal Universal Power	Created being. A man, not the Christ	Adopting the correct Unity thought principles	No

Way International	Victor Paul Weirwell (1917-1985)	Earned	Members of their church	One Person	Created being. A man, not God in flesh	By works	Yes
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KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 18
WHAT ABOUT EVIL

When you start to talk to people about God, one of the first objections they have is if God is a good God why is there evil and suffering in the world?

It's a good question. Let's talk about that today...

(I) THE MAIN PROBLEM IS SIN

Before people rebelled against God there was no sin, suffering, death or sickness.

These things are a result of people's rebellion against God in the garden

A) People were originally create in innocence and upright.

Ecc. 7:29

Ecclesiastes

7:29

²⁹ This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes."

Gen 3:8-13

Genesis 3:8-13

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

B) People had un-separated fellowship with God.

1. Gen 2:15-17

Genesis 2:15-17

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:8-13

Genesis 3:8-13

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¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

2. The separation we see testifies to our sinfulness.

C. People were given the earth to rule.

1. Gen. 2:19-20 (denotes ownership)

Genesis 2:19-20

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

2. Gen. 1:26, 28-30

Genesis 1:26-30

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over

all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

3. Gen 9:1-2 (even in this age)

Genesis 9:1-2

¹ Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.

² The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.

D. People were created in the image of God.

1. Gen. 1:26, 6:9

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 6:9

⁹ This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

2. I Cor. 11:7; Ja. 3:9

1 Corinthians 11:7

⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

James 3:9

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

E. What is the image of God?

1. Moral resemblance and sharing of the unique divine attributes.

a. Capacity for justice and compassion, for love and hate.

- b. Ability to relate to the past, present and future.
- c. Ability to need to establish long meaningful relationship
- d. Ability to communicate and "philosophize."
- e. Ability to choose, ability to create.

(II) WHEN PEOPLE SINNED AND REBELLED AGAINST GOD ALL OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD

A) Eve listened to Satan rather than God.

- 1. She set her will against God.
 - a. The will is a "free" thing affected by the mind, the soul, and the spirit.
- 2. "Aspiration" is a key word to understanding the fall.

B) Sin effected every aspect of life

- 1. Everything in us fell; mind, body, emotions, spiritual capacity.
- 2. The appetites of the flesh became lust.
- 3. The will is now in bondage to Satan. (Rom. 6:6)

Romans

6:6

⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

- 4. Man ceases to become upright and became a sinner.

5. Gen. 6:5

Genesis 6:5⁵ The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Job 14:4, 15:14-15

Job 14:4

⁴ Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!

Job 15:14-15

¹⁴ "What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous?"

¹⁵ If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,

Isa. 1:5-6

Isaiah 1:5-6

⁵ Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted.

⁶ From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness-- only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.

Rom. 3:10-18;

Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."

¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways,

¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know."

¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

6. Death did not exist before the fall.

7. A drastic change occurred in man's relationship with animals.

8. Sickness enters into the scene.

9. Hate, suspicion, murder, extended through ALL creation.

C) SUFFERING ENTERED INTO THE WORLD AS A RESULT OF PEOPLE SINNING AGAINST GOD

1. It wasn't God who brought it on, but people who sinned against Him

(III) IN ORDER TO HAVE CREATURES WITH MORAL FREEDOM, GOD ALLOWED EVIL CHOICES

A) Yet it is true that God does sometimes intervene with evil choices and does as He pleases

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Psalm 135:6 The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Daniel 4:34-35 *At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. [35] All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"*

B) GOD DOES SOMETIMES PERFORM ACTS OF DELIVERENCE

C) SOMETIMES HOWEVER HE CHOOSES NOT TO. WHY?

- 1) All things have a purpose, even seemingly senseless acts of evil
- 2) Jesus going to the cross looked pointless and evil, until we understand it on the other side of the resurrection.
- 3) This doesn't make us feel any better, but does help us understand.
- 4) **Romans 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

D) If God brought instant, perfect justice right now then everybody would instantaneously be sent to hell.

- 1) God is patient and long-suffering
- 2) Ultimate justice will come when Jesus returns.

E) Jesus said the rain falls on the just and on the unjust.
Matthew 5:45 *“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”*

(IV) WE SHOULD NOT BE CONTENT WITH SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS OF EVIL EITHER

A) We should never grow comfortable with evil

B) Evil can never be seen as an expression of God's goodness, although God can even use evil.

C) We should never assign our own evil to something outside of ourselves. We are responsible.

D) Sin is never good.

E) Evil is always an intruder.

FINALLY IN SUMMARY

A) “God does in fact weep over every sparrow and grieve over every evil and every suffering. So the suffering that Christ endured on the cross is literally unimaginable.”

*“We are not supposed to live at peace with evil and sin, but we are supposed to live at peace with God. We continue to trust in His goodness, His sovereignty, His mercy, and we continue to confess our own responsibility for sin.” **Robert Pyne in Humanity and Sin***

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 19, 20 21
RESURRECTION: Cornerstone of Christianity

We are moving towards Easter and the subject of our year-long study is “Know WHY You Believe.” We have previously covered WHAT Christians believe, including the resurrection, so now we’ll talk about WHY we believe. Some of the ground we cover will repeat the facts of the resurrection, but over the next couple of weeks we’ll work our way through this article that tells us what the resurrection is, as well as why we believe Jesus rose from the dead.

The best way to approach this study is to have a student read through the article and then stop at each scripture reference having another student read it and then perhaps talking about it for a moment...

The goal of reading together is to have some interaction together as we explore the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We’ve also provided some tapes for you that you may want to listen to.

Read and explore the article together over the next three weeks and try and get to the end. The week before Easter, we’ll be studying the customs and origin of Easter traditions.

**"... if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile;
you are still in your sins!"
(1Cor 15:17).**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. But what actually happened in 30 AD? Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Or does some alternate theory best explain what is known about that important year? This article will look at the evidences for the resurrection and evaluate alternate theories.

General Reliability of the Gospels

Before looking at the resurrection itself, the general reliability of the four Gospels included in the New Testament needs to be considered. They accurate records of the life and teachings of Jesus.

First, the writers assert to be writing literal history (Luke 3:1f).

Luke 3:1-2

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene--

² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.

They claim to be either eye-witnesses of the events or to have received their information from eye-witnesses (Luke 1:1-4; John 19:35).

Luke 1:1-4

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

John 19:35

³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

In studies of other ancient documents, historians still abide by "Aristotle's dictum that the benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself."

John Warwick Montgomery explains, "This means that one must listen to the claims of the document under analysis and not assume fraud or error unless the author disqualifies himself by contradictions or known factual inaccuracies" (Montgomery, p.29).

It is outside the realm of this paper to present a detailed account of how archeology has confirmed the Gospel records. However, one example that will be important in later discussions will be presented.

Luke records the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus as occurring during the "... reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea" (Luke 3:1). He also states that Pilate conceded to the crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:24).

Luke 23:24

²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand.

These statements are upheld by the Roman historian Tacitus (AD 55-117). He writes, "... Christ had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate" (Tacitus, p.365).

Secondly, the Gospels were all written in the first century. The first three Gospels are traditionally dated between 50-65 AD and the Gospel of John 80-95 AD (Criswell, pp.1327, 1498).

However, some have doubted this first century dating of the Gospel of John:

... radical criticism has attempted to date its composition during the middle or end of the second century. Such a view, however, was decisively refuted by the discovery in Egypt of the Ryland's papyrus fragment, which documents the circulation of the Gospel c. AD 135. The book must, therefore, be dated in the first century, and there is no compelling reason for rejecting the traditional view (Criswell, p.1498).

Given the first century dates, hostile eye-witnesses would have discredited the Gospel writers if they were recording inaccurate histories. However, there is no record of this occurring.

Background Information

Accepting the Gospels as being accurate records for non-supernatural events still doesn't prove the resurrection occurred. For this question, it needs to be ascertained whether any other theory adequately explains all the facts known surrounding the death and burial of Jesus and subsequent events. Following is a list of some of the points needing explanation.

Death of Jesus Christ:

All four Gospel writers record the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:33; John 19:18).

Matthew 27:35

³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Mark 15:24

²⁴ And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

Luke 23:33

³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left.

John 19:18

¹⁸ Here they crucified him, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

The Gospels are also clear in saying Jesus was dead before He was taken off the cross (Matt 17:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).

Matthew 17:27

²⁷ "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

Mark 15:37

³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

Luke 23:46

⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

John 19:30

³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John records that a soldier made sure of this fact by piercing Jesus' side with a sword (John 19:34). Mark says Pilate double-checked with the centurion to be sure Jesus was in fact dead before releasing the body (Mark 15:44f).

John 19:34

³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

Mark 15:44-45

⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died.

⁴⁵ When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived from 37-100 AD. He also mentions Jesus' crucifixion (Josephus, p.379). This passage has been hotly contested. Some believe the early Christians altered the passage. This belief has arisen because the passage appears too "Christian" for a Jew to have written it. However, an Arabic manuscript omits the questionable passages while retaining the phrase, "Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die" (quoted in Habermas, p.92).

The Jewish Talmud (70-200 AD) records, "On the eve of the Passover, Yeshu (Hebrew for Jesus) was hanged" (Quoted in Habermas, p.98). "Hanged" is used in the NT to describe crucifixion; so there is no contradiction (Luke 23:39; Gal 3:13).

Lucian, a second century Greek satirist writes of the early Christians that they, "...worship the crucified sage" (Quoted in Habermas, p.100).

So there is Jewish, Roman and Grecian collaborating evidence for the fact of Jesus' crucifixion. In these passages, there is not even a hint that Jesus was taken off the cross before he was dead.

Even if Jesus had been still alive when He was taken off the cross, the chance for His survival would have been slim. In 66 AD Josephus, "Discovered three of his friends being crucified. He asked the Roman general Titus to reprieve them, and they were immediately removed from their crosses. Still two of the three died any way" (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.49).

Burial of Jesus Christ:

When Jesus' body was taken down, it was bound in linen cloths with a hundred pounds of spices (John 19:39f).

John 19:39-41

³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.

⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.

This Jewish burial custom would have included covering the face (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.92). If He wasn't dead already, the covering of His face and the spices would have snuffed out any flicker of life left.

He was then laid in a new tomb and a large stone rolled in front (Matt 17:60).

Matthew 17:27

²⁷ "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

The Jews, remembering Jesus' prediction that He would rise from the dead, asked Pilate to provide a guard (Matt 27:62-66).

Matthew 27:62-66

⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.

⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'

⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how."

⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Greek scholar A.T. Robertson states that the grammar of verse 65 makes it clear that a guard of Roman soldiers was provided, "... not mere temple police" (Robertson, Vol. I, p.239).

A Roman guard consisted of 4-16 men and, "... was probably one of the greatest offensive and defensive fighting machines ever conceived" (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.55). Further, a Roman soldier falling asleep on duty would be punished by death (McDowell, *Evidence*, p.213).

Jesus' Empty Tomb:

Despite the above precautions, on Sunday morning following the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was empty. Again, all four Gospel writers record this fact (Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5f; John 20:2).

Matthew 28:6

⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Mark 16:6

⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

Luke 24:5

⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

John 20:2

² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Further, there was great excitement over bodies missing from tombs in Judea in the first half of the first century. This fact is known due to the discovery in Nazareth of a decree of Claudius (reigned 41-54 AD). It reads, "Ordinance of Caesar. It is my pleasure that graves and tombs remain perpetually undisturbed In case of violation I desire that the offender be sentenced to capital punishment on charge of violation of sepulchre" (Habermas, p.155).

The death penalty for grave robbing? Something must have happened in Israel to cause this kind of reaction from the emperor. Could it have been the missing body of Jesus and the subsequent preaching of the resurrection?

Records of the Resurrection:

Every Gospel describes appearances of Jesus to the disciples after He had been crucified (Matt 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20;21).

Luke, in the Book of Acts, writes of Jesus and the apostles, "... to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Paul also records a list of resurrection appearances in his first epistle to the Corinthians (1Cor 15:3-8). This passage is particularly important. It pre-dates the writing of the Gospels themselves. The epistle itself was written around 56 AD (Criswell, p.1622).

Preaching of the Resurrection:

The Book of Acts records the preaching activity of the apostles. It centered on the claim Jesus Christ had risen from the dead (Acts 2:22-36; 3:12-15; 10:34-43).

Acts 2:22-36

²² "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

²³ This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

²⁵ David said about him: "'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

²⁹ "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand

³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 3:12-15

¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism

³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--

³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree,

⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.

⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

This preaching activity is confirmed by extra-biblical sources. Josephus states, (Arabic version) "They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive" (quoted in Habermas, p.92).

Tacitus records, "But in spite of this temporary setback (the crucifixion) the deadly superstition had broken out afresh, not only in Judea, where it had started, but even in Rome" (Tacitus, p.365).

The Tacitus quote is also important in that it again confirms Luke. The Book of Acts records that the resurrection was first preached in Judea, more specifically Jerusalem (Acts 2). This is near the very place where Jesus had been crucified and buried (John 19:38-42).

John 19:38-42

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.

⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.

⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Finally, the disciples were so convinced Jesus had risen, they continued to preach the resurrection despite persecution and martyrdom. Luke records the slaying of James the apostle (Acts 12:2).

Acts 12:2

² He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

Josephus describes the stoning of James the Just (Josephus, p.423).

Clement, a disciple of the apostle Paul, wrote an epistle to the Corinthians about 95 AD (see Phil 4:3).

Philippians 4:3

³ Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

In the fifth chapter, Clement recounts the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul (Lightfoot, pp.3,59). John the apostle left a record of his own banishment in Revelation 1:9.

Revelation 1:9

⁹ I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

According to tradition, the other apostles were all also persecuted and martyred for the faith (Knechtle, p.116). This type of fortitude in men who formally forsook and denied Christ needs to be explained (Matt 26:56,69-75).

Matthew 26:56

⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Matthew 26:69-75

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Growth of Early Church:

The preaching of the apostles met with great success. The Christian movement grew rapidly despite the persecution. This growth is recorded in Acts and verified by the previous quote by Tacitus.

Tacitus also adds detailed descriptions of the horrendous persecutions the early Christians suffered (pp.365f). These points are also mentioned by Suetonius (secretary to emperor Hadrian, 117-138 AD) and Pliny the Younger (Roman historian, 112 AD; Habermas, pp.89f,95)

Change in Day of Worship:

And finally, the early Christians moved their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. The Church was initially exclusively Jewish. At that time, Jews had been worshipping on Saturday for 14 centuries. Something dramatic must have happened on a Sunday to cause this change in a centuries long tradition.

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 20
RESURRECTION: Cornerstone of Christianity

Alternate Theories

Numerous alternative theories to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ have been proposed over the centuries. They all attempt to explain what actually happened in 30 AD in Judea without appealing to the miraculous.

This article will evaluate some of the more important of these theories.

A) Stolen Body:

The **first alternative theory** to look at is the oldest. It is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 28:11-15. Here, the soldiers guarding the tomb are bribed by the chief priests to say, "His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept" (Matt. 28:13).

Matthew 28:11-15

¹¹ While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.

¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money,

¹³ telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"

¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble."

¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Paul Little comments, "That story is so obviously false that Matthew doesn't even bother to refute it! ... Who knows what goes on while he's asleep? Testimony like this would be laughed out of any court" (Little, p.25).

There are several other points which also don't hold up in this theory. First, how would the disciples have moved the stone without waking the guard?

Second, John records that the linens used to wrap the body were still in the grave (John 20:5-7). Why would grave robbers have taken the time to unwrap the body?

John 20:5-7

⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

⁶ Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there,

⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

Third, it is very unlikely all of the 4-16 men comprising a Roman guard would fall asleep. Remember, a Roman soldier falling asleep on the job would be executed. And if they were awake, they could have easily stopped the apostles. "The soldiers were a trained fighting unit. One soldier could have easily dealt with the entire group of disciples" (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.93).

Fourth, if the disciples had stolen the body, then they would have all been persecuted and killed for something they knew was a lie. "Men will die for what they believe to be true, though it may actually be false. They do not however, die for what they know is a lie" (Little, p.25).

Fifth, this theory doesn't account for the resurrection appearances of Jesus. The NT records that He appeared to over 500 people following His death (1Cor 15:6). So this theory breaks down at every point.

1 Corinthians 15:6

⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

A variant of this theory is the proposal the Romans or Jews were the thieves. But "Why would the authorities do the very thing that caused all their problems?" (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.95). Neither the Romans nor the Jews had any motive to steal the body.

B) Wrong Tomb:

This theory is the women in their grief went to the wrong tomb and everyone else followed suit. But Matthew records that during Jesus' burial, "Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb" (Matt 27:61)

⁶¹ *Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.* To suggest that two woman sat and watched a Man who had been very important to them being buried and then two days later to forget where He was buried stretches credulity.

Also, John states that he and Peter ran to the tomb immediately after being told by the women that they had seen Jesus (John 20:1-4).

John 20:1-4

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb.

⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. They did not follow the women. So John and Peter would have also had to have been mistaken about where their Master had been buried. Further, if they had gone to the wrong tomb, why was there empty linen clothes lying on the floor of the tomb? (John 20:5-8).

John 20:5-8

⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

⁶ Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there,

⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

Further, Jesus had been buried very near to where He had been crucified (John 19:38-42). So "... why did the high priests and other enemies of the faith not go to the right tomb and produce the body?" (Little, p.26).

And again, this theory doesn't account for the resurrection appearances.

C) Hallucinations:

To answer the question of the resurrection appearances, the hallucination theory has been put forth. The idea is the disciples wanted to see Jesus alive so much they only imagined seeing Him. This theory also breaks down on several counts.

First, the followers of Jesus were NOT expecting to see Jesus alive again. "Mary came to the tomb on the first Easter Sunday morning with spices...to anoint the dead body of Jesus" (Little, p.30; see Mark 16:1).

Moreover, "Christ's followers were caused to believe against their wills" (McDowell, *Evidence*, p.253). Thomas said, "Unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25; see also Luke 24:10-12, 24).

John 20:25

²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

Luke 24:10-12

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Luke 24:24

²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

Second, it wasn't only Jesus' followers who later preached the resurrection. James and Paul were initially skeptics; but they both became believers as a result of Jesus' appearance to them (1Cor 15:7f).

1 Corinthians 15:7

⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

Third, the resurrection appearances occurred in a wide variety of settings, to people of varying temperaments at different times. However, hallucinations, "... are very individualistic. It is very unlikely that two persons would have the same hallucination at the same time" (McDowell, *Evidence*, p.249). And it is even less likely 500 would have the same hallucination or different people at different times.

Fourth, "Hallucinations usually occur over a long period of time with noticeable regularity" (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.86). After the ascension, the appearances stopped except for the one to Paul several years later; but he makes it clear that this appearance was exceptional (1Cor. 15:8).

1 Corinthians 15:8

⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Lastly, this theory doesn't account for the empty tomb. To try to combine this theory with the stolen body theory will not do. Both theories break down on several points, not just one or two.

D) Swoon Theory:

This theory states that Jesus never really died. Instead, it is claimed, He just swooned on the cross and in the coolness of the tomb revived.

First, "This is a theory of modern construction All of the earliest records are emphatic about Jesus death" (Little, pp.26f). Keep in mind, the Koran was not written until 600 years after the time of Christ; whereas, the Gospels were all written in the first century.

Second, remember the story of Josephus' three friends? After hanging on crosses for only a short time, they were taken down. Yet, even with medical attention, two of the three still died.

Compare this situation with that of Jesus. Jesus was scourged before He was crucified (Matt 27:26). **Matthew 27:26**

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. Before being taken down, He had been on the cross for six hours and had a sword shoved in His side (Mark 15:25,33; John 19:34). Jesus was then laid alone in a tomb and a guard placed outside (Matt 27:57-65).

Mark 15:25

²⁵ It was the third hour when they crucified him.

Mark 15:33

³³ At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.

John 19:34

³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

Matthew 27:57-65

⁵⁷ As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus.

⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.

⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.

⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'

⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how."

Given the cruelty of Roman crucifixion and these added difficulties:
Is it possible to believe that he would have survived three days in a damp tomb without food or water or attention of any kind? Would he have survived being wound in spice-laden grave clothes? Would he have had the strength to extricate himself from the grave clothes, push the heavy stone away from the mouth of the grave, overcome the Roman guards, and walk miles on feet that had been pierced with spikes? (Little, p.27).

After all this, are we to believe, "He could appear to the disciples in such a way as to give them the impression that he vanquished death?" (McDowell, *Evidence*, p.234).

"Finally, if Christ did not die at this time, then when did He die and under what circumstances?" (McDowell, *Islam*, p.124). All records of the life of Jesus from the time end with the ascension.

E) Substitution Theory:

Some orthodox Muslims have proposed, "...God made someone else look like Jesus and that this person was crucified instead" (McDowell, *Islam*, p.107). Others have also made similar proposals (Baigent, p.379).

First, this idea has God involved in fraud and Jesus agreeing to the deception. This contradicts their known characters.

Second, Jesus was seen by thousands during his ministry. Surely someone would have noticed that the wrong man was being crucified. Also, Jesus' mother stood at the foot of the cross (John 19:25). Surely a woman can recognize her own son!

John 19:25

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Third, if the wrong man was crucified, he "... would have raged from the cross that he was not Jesus ..." (McDowell, *Islam*, p.107). Yet, no such cries are recorded by the eye-witnesses.

Fourth, this theory also ignores the question of the empty tomb and the nature of the resurrection appearances. Jesus said to have appeared to the disciples behind closed doors and disappear at will (John 20:19; Luke 24:31).

John 20:19

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Luke 24:31

³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

Fifth, as with the swoon theory, it also ignores the question of what happened to Jesus after 30 AD.

Sixth, this proposal has God killing an innocent bystander. Some Muslims have attempted to evade this problem by saying Judas was the victim (McDowell, *Islam*, p.107). But this idea contradicts Matthew's statement that Judas committed suicide (Matt 27:3-10). **Matthew 27:3-10**

³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders.

⁴ "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶ The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money."

⁷ So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners.

⁸ That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

⁹ Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty

silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel,
¹⁰ and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

And the question must be asked, "Who is the more reliable historian -- Matthew, an eye-witness, or Mohammed, who lived centuries later?"

Lastly, this theory was not invented until the seventh century. It is merely an attempt to explain an ambiguous statement in the Koran.

F) Passover Plot:

The next theory to study was promoted by Hugh J. Schonfield in his best-selling book, *The Passover Plot*.

Basically, the story line is:

Jesus of Nazareth was just another nice guy whose luck ran out.

Convinced that he was the Jewish Messiah, he connived to have himself arrested, drugged, crucified, and revived to fulfill the Jewish scriptures as he understood them.

Unfortunately for the comatose Jesus, a soldier jabbed a spear into his side before his henchmen could remove him from the cross. Later, all attempts to revive him were fruitless; his secret Jerusalem followers quietly buried him in a spot unknown to his Galilean disciples, who soon repeatedly mistook the beloved disciple, a young priest from Jerusalem, for Jesus himself.

Subsequently, the eleven prominent Galilean disciples and others began propagating the incredible message that Jesus had risen from the dead. Christianity was born (Babcock, p.245).

This theory suffers from several of the same problems as previous ones. What about the empty tomb that was being watched by a Roman guard?

How could the disciples have spent 3 1/2 years, day and night, with Jesus and then mistake someone else for him? How could the unknown man appear through locked doors and disappear at will? How could Jesus, who taught honesty and integrity His entire ministry, have involved Himself in such a deliberate, attempted deception?

As with the other theories, Schonfield rejects a large part of the known facts and only accepts the few points that fit his theory. It seems his own preconceived ideas and vivid imagination are utilized in developing this theory rather than historical fact.

G) Mystery Religions/ Gnosticism:

This suggestion is the apostle Paul merely utilized the prevailing beliefs of the mystery religions and gnosticism of his time and adapted their concepts of a dying and risen savior into his preaching.

First, this idea simply ignores all the known historical facts discussed previously in this paper.

Second, "In the case of the alleged mythical parallels ... the evidence suggests that the Gnostic redeemer myth does not predate the writing of the Gospels" (Blomberg, p.101). Further, "... all extant manuscripts with Redeemer Hymns are from AD 140 or later -- while Hymns of Philippians and 1 Timothy can be dated no later than the first century AD" (see Phil 2:5-11; 1Tim 3:16; Nash, p.228).

Third, "Aside from this weighty chronological consideration ... there are major differences in content between the Christian and Gnostic hymns" (Nash, p.228). The redeemer hymns have the god dying and rising annually (Nash, p.140). This cycle was usually in conjunction with the rebirth of spring (Blomberg, p.101). However, the Bible presents Jesus as dying only once and rising only once (Heb 9:24-28).

Lastly, it is doubtful that the redeemer myths actually record a bodily resurrection. "One can speak of a 'resurrection' in the stories of Osiris, Attis and Adonis only in the most extended of senses" (Nash, p.173).

H) Paul's Creation:

The last proposal to study is the most radical of the theories. It simply claims that Paul made up the whole idea of a crucified and risen Jesus because he thought it was a good idea.

This theory was suggested in the controversial movie of the late 1980's, "The Last Temptation of Christ". During the dream episode (while Jesus is on the cross), the following dialogue occurs between Jesus and Paul:

Jesus: I was never crucified, I never came back from the dead. I'm a man like everyone else. Why are you telling these lies...?

Paul: I don't care whether you're Jesus or not, the resurrected Jesus will save the world and that's what matters I created the truth out of what people needed and what they believed. If I have to crucify you to save the world, then I'll crucify you. And if I have to resurrect you, then I'll do that too, whether you like it or not (quoted in Ankerberg, p.34f).

This scene obviously ignores ALL the known facts. As with *The Passover Plot* and *Schonfield*, the producers of "The Last Temptation" are suggesting a rewriting of history in accordance with their preconceived ideas. There is no historical evidence supporting their proposal. And remember, Paul was beheaded for preaching this story he supposedly just "made up."

Summary:

Eight alternate theories have been investigated. All have been found wanting. None of them comes even close to explaining ALL of the known facts. All have logical and historical problems.

There are probably others that have been proposed over the centuries that have not been covered here. And most likely, even more will be put forth as time goes by. But all of these theories seem to have several things in common:

- 1) They start with the assumption that a miracle did not occur.
- 2) They always have to ignore at least some historical facts.
- 3) History is rewritten in accordance with the inventor's preconceptions.
- 4) The authors all seem to have very vivid imaginations.

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 21
RESURRECTION: Cornerstone of Christianity

Christ Has in Fact Risen!

So what actually happened in 30 AD? There is only one theory which avoids all of the pitfalls mentioned above. It is the theory that has been around since the beginning of Christianity. In fact, it is what founded the Christian faith.

Former skeptic Josh McDowell explains:

After investigating the major alternative theories proposed, only one conclusion takes into account all the facts and does not adjust them to preconceived notions. It is the conclusion that CHRIST HAS IN FACT RISEN – a supernatural act of God in history (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.102).

Ramifications:

This conclusion has profound ramifications. The resurrection is a Divine vindication of the words and actions of Jesus. Jesus said that the purpose of His crucifixion would be "... to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28).

At the Last Supper, Jesus "... took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matt 26:27f).

Just before He died on the cross, Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). What had been finished was all that is needed for the forgiveness of sin and attainment of eternal salvation. Jesus' resurrection three days later demonstrated that God had in fact accepted Jesus' death as the all-sufficient sacrifice (Rom 4:25; Heb 2:17; 9:24-28; 10:14).

Romans 4:25

²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Hebrews 2:17

¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.

²⁶ Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But

now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews 10:14

¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-21 The Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:12-21

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

(I) RESURRECTION: THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL (vss. 12 -21)

A) Our salvation hinges on the truth of the Gospel

B) There is no salvation if Christ is not raised

1) If He is raised He will raise us with Him

C) Cumulative Testimony of the witnesses is overwhelming

1) They saw Him after His Death

2) Seeing Him revolutionized the rest of their lives

D) Evidence of their changed minds and changed character

E) Willingness to die for the fact of the resurrection

1) They had already publicly quit, so they would not be trying to save face

F) Seen by Over 500 (Mathew 28:10)

1) Certainly 500 could not be deluded

G) If there is no resurrection then apostles are liars (vs 15)

1) Most ethical system of belief worldwide was propagated by deceitful men?? Hardly!

H) If there is no resurrection:

1) Apostolic Preaching is Meaningless

a) We should all go home now

b) More people in church than sporting events today or this week

2) Response to Gospel is empty and meaningless

3) If there is no resurrection Jesus is unable to save

4) Jesus is still dead

5) The dead in Christ are forever lost then

6) The whole Christian life is a meaningless joke!

a) If there is no life after death, why bother?

b) If there is no life after death, why suffer?

7) Not only would the apostles be liars, but us too

I) Truth is important

1) Christianity is true

2) The sacrifice of truth and absolutes has serious consequences

3) Facts are important

a) It is not just subjective experience

4) It's hard to go the distance when you're building on false beliefs

J) The Most Persuasive "sign" that Jesus was who He said He was is the resurrection

K) Having said that Christianity is based on truth, it is nevertheless experienced individually

(II) THE RESURRECTION: THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL (vss 18 -19)

A) Much of modern Christianity is centered around this life

- B) We should be looking forward to the blessed hope
- 1) This is how everybody has always lived
 - 2) The only thing that makes sense out of loss/suffering
 - 3) Read Revelation 22
 - 4) All creation groans and waits

**God promises:
"... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus
and believe in your heart
that God has raised Him from the dead,
you will be saved
(Romans 10:9).**

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 22
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

As we move towards the end of the Sunday School year, for the next four weeks we will discuss “the Christian Life and Experience.” As usual, we turn to the Bible to discover what the normal Christian experience looks like.

Our passage of scripture for the next four weeks will be from the Book of Acts 2:42 – 47:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. [43] Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. [44] All the believers were together and had everything in common. [45] Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. [46] Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, [47] praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

This passage defines the practice of the early church directly after it was founded by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost (fifty days after His resurrection.)

The four key elements of the practice of the early Christians in the early church were:

- 1) “They devoted themselves to the apostles “teaching (The Bible)”
- 2) “They devoted themselves to “fellowship”
- 3) “They devoted themselves to “prayer”
- 4) “They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread “worship”

Each week for the next four we will look at one of these aspects of the Christian life and experience.

BEGINNING WITH (and reviewing) THE WORD OF GOD

(I) AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

(A) The Bible contains 66 books:

- 1) 39 in the Old Testament
- 2) 27 in the New Testament

(B) The books are divided into chapters and verses for reference.

- 1) The chapters and verses we have in our Bibles are there to help us find our way around the Bible, they are inserted, they were not originally there.

(C) The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language.

(D) The New Testament was written in the Greek language. (Remember that our English Bible is a translation from these original languages.)

(E) Did God make a mistake? Why the need for a New Testament? What's wrong with the Old one? Read Hebrews 8:9-10.

Hebrews 8:9-10

⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

(1) The foundation of the “Old Covenant / Testament” with Israel was man's obedience to it (v 9).

(a) “Covenant” means, “A Promise Made, is a Promise Kept.”

(2) The foundation of the “New Covenant / Testament” is God's action on behalf of man. (Note the "I wills" in verse 10). It was enacted by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:20)

Luke 22:20

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

(II) BASIC TYPES OF SCRIPTURE

(A) Historical: narrative that lays foundation for future things, i.e., Genesis/Gospels.

(B) Poetical: song-like, worshipful or proverb-like. Psalms

(C) Prophetic: the Word describing future events, i.e., Isaiah, Revelation, portions of the Gospels.

(D) Instructional: Practical application of Scripture, i.e., Romans, Deuteronomy, Corinthians, Proverbs.

(III) BASIC THEMES OF SCRIPTURE

(A) God - Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:1; Psalms 103:1

Genesis 1:1

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Hebrews 1:1

¹ In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

Psalms 103:1

¹ Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

(B) Man/Creation - Genesis 2:7

Genesis 2:7

⁷ the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

(C) Sin - 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 3:23

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Romans 3:23

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

(D) Jesus - John 5:39, Luke 24:7, 44, 45

John 5:39

³⁹ You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,

Luke 24:7

⁷ "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again."

Luke 24:44-45

⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

(E) Redemption - Romans 3:24; 10:8-13

Romans 3:24

²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:8-13

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

(F) Salvation - Romans 1:16; 10:8-13

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Romans 10:8-13

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

(G) Satan/spirit world - Genesis 3:1, 2 Corinthians 4:4

Genesis 3:1-24

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

2 Corinthians 4:4

⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

(H) Prophecy - 2nd coming of Jesus - Revelation 4:20

Revelation 4:11

¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

(I) Man - Beginning and final end - John 3:17-19

John 3:17-19

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

(IV) BASIC DIVISIONS IN SCRIPTURE

Take out your Bible and follow along by opening your Bible and looking at the placement of the books as we talk about them.

(A) Old Testament: Historical preparation for the Messiah.

1) 5 books by Moses - Beginning of history and the section known as "The Law"

2) The five books of Moses are also known as "The Pentateuch" since Pent means "five."

3) The five books of Moses are followed the books of Israel's history Joshua – Esther

a) These books give the Messiah's preparation in history

4) There are several books in the Old Testament that are known as “the Poetic Books.”

a) Job – Song of Solomon

b) Included in these books is the Book of Psalms which contained much of the worship and many of the songs Israel sang

5) The books of Isaiah through Daniel are called “the Major Prophets”

a) They are called major prophets only because they are longer than the other books of prophecy in the Bible.

6) Hosea through Malachi are known as “the Minor Prophets” only because they are shorter than the other prophets.

(B) New Testament: Manifestation - Consummation of Christ.

(H) The Gospels: The life & works of Christ

(I) Acts: The further works of Christ through the Apostles.

(J) The Epistles: Church doctrine

(K) Revelation: Jesus' rule established

(V) BECAUSE THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT TO HELP US UNDERSTAND IT

(A) “The person without the Spirit does not understand the things that come from God.”
(1 Corinthians 2:14)

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

(B) The Holy Spirit will teach us and help us to remember (Read John 14:26)

John 14:26

²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

(VI) METHODS OF STUDYING GOD’S WORD

(A) Simply read the Bible and ask God to speak to you as you read it.

1) There are many Bible reading plans (the church offers a different one every year) to help you read through the Bible

(B) When you read a particular passage in the Bible ask yourself these questions:

“Who, What, When, Where, Why, How Come?”

C) Let’s explore how we might understand the Bible for ourselves by turning to Mark 4:35-41 reading the passage and answer those questions from the verses:

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."

³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

- (1) Who?
- (2) What is said about the person or people involved?
- (3) What does the person (people) say?
- (4) What? What is happening? What are the events; in what order?
- (5) Where? Where is the event taking place? Where are people going to or coming from?
- (6) When? When did the events take place?
- (7) Why? Why is this story included? Why here in the text? Why does one person say what he does? etc.
- (8) Wherefore? So what?
- (9) What difference would it make in my life if I were to apply this truth?

LESSON # 23
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE
PART 2: PRAYER

As we move towards the end of the Sunday School year, for the next four weeks we will discuss “the Christian Life and Experience.” As usual, we turn to the Bible to discover what the normal Christian experience looks like.

Our passage of scripture for the next four weeks will be from the Book of Acts 2:42 – 47:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. [43] Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. [44] All the believers were together and had everything in common. [45] Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. [46] Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, [47] praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

This passage defines the practice of the early church directly after it was founded by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost (fifty days after His resurrection.)

The four key elements of the practice of the early Christians in the early church were:

- 1) “They devoted themselves to the apostles “teaching (The Bible)”
- 2) “They devoted themselves to “fellowship””
- 3) “They devoted themselves to “prayer””
- 4) “They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread “worship””

Each week for the next four we will look at one of these aspects of the Christian life and experience.

THIS WEEK WE LOOK AT: PRAYER

Everyone engages in prayer at one time or another. Even that person who says "I don't believe in God," cries out when the crisis looms, "Oh God, help me!" We are all acquainted with prayer to some extent or another. Prayer is one of the greatest privileges

God has given man. We can come into the presence of God, the Creator of this universe, and talk with Him. And what's more, He always listens! Effective Prayer life (Chuck Smith - Pg.43) WE tell new believes that prayer is simply talking to God.

Look up the following scriptures and answer the questions about prayer.

(I) WHAT IS PRAYER?

(II) WHO SHOULD PRAY?

(A) Psalms 32:6

Psalm 32:6

⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

(III) WHO SHOULD WE PRAY TO?

(A) Matthew 6:6, 9

Matthew 6:6

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:9

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

(IV) WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR AND ABOUT?

(A) Philippians 4:6

Philippians 4:6

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

(B) Matthew 6:10

Matthew 6:10

¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

(C) Matthew 9:38

Matthew 9:38

³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

(D) 2 Thessalonians 3:1

2 Thessalonians 3:1

¹ Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

(E) James 5:13-16

James 5:13-16

¹³ Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

¹⁴ Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

(F) Ephesians 3:14-19

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father,

¹⁵ from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

(V) WHERE SHOULD WE PRAY?

(A) 1 Corinthians 1:2

1 Corinthians 1:2

² To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:

(B) Luke 19:46

Luke 19:46

⁴⁶ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

(C) Matthew 6:6

Matthew 6:6

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

(VI) WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

(A) Luke 18:1

Luke 18:1

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

(B) 1 Thessalonians 3:10

1 Thessalonians 3:10

¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

(C) Psalm 61:2

Psalm 61:2

² From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

(VII) WHY PRAY?

(A) Luke 22:40

Luke 22:40

⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

(B) Ephesians 6:10-12

Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

(C) Ephesians 3:20

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

(D) John 15:5

John 15:5

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

(VIII) HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

(A) Romans 8:26

Romans 8:26

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

(B) 1 John 5:14

1 John 5:14

¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

(C) Matthew 6:5

Matthew 6:5

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

(D) Jude 20

Jude 1:20

²⁰ But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

(E) 1 Corinthians 14:15

1 Corinthians 14:15

¹⁵ So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

(IX) HINDERANCES TO PRAYER

(A) Isaiah 59:2

Isaiah 59:2

² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

(B) 1 Peter 3:7

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

(C) James 1:6-8

James 1:6-8

⁶ But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;

⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

(D) Luke 18:9-14

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector.

¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

LESSON # 24
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE
PART 3: WORSHIP

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Our passage of scripture for the next four weeks will be from the Book of Acts 2:42 – 47:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. [43] Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. [44] All the believers were together and had everything in common. [45] Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. [46] Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, [47] praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

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- 4) “They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread “worship””

Each week for the next four we will look at one of these aspects of the Christian life and experience.

THIS WEEK WE LOOK AT: WORSHIP

Worship simply means “worthship.” That God is worthy of our lives and all we give to Him. Worship involves the giving of all of our life to God. We will look at putting Christ first and worshipping Him through giving, serving and building our life around Him.

(I) WORSHIPPING HIM BY MAKING HIM LORD

2 Corinthians 5:14,15 - the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the daily submission and surrender of our entire self to the authority and leadership of Jesus, recognizing His sovereign right to rule over us. (Colossians 1:18).

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Colossians 1:18

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

(II) WHAT IS CHRIST'S PLAN FOR HIS DISCIPLES?

(A) Luke 9:23 states the heart of worship is discipleship.

Luke 9:23

²³ Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

(B) Deny yourself - Putting the Lord and others first; refusing to live my life to please myself.

(C) Take up your cross daily - Submitting our will to the will of God. Luke 22:42.

Luke 22:42

⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

(D) Follow me - Following Jesus and no one or nothing else. Matthew 4:19; 1 Peter 2:21.

Matthew 4:19

¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

1 Peter 2:21

²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

(E) The whole principle of Lordship is the removal of self off of the throne of one's life, and the invitation to Jesus to sit on the throne and rule, trusting Him to do what is best for us.

(F) The battle of submission: two reasons why people do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of their life.

(G) We're afraid God may ask us to do something we don't want to do.

(H) We are not sure that God has our best interest at heart. Jeremiah 29:11.

Jeremiah 29:11

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

(III) HOW DO I KNOW IF JESUS IS LORD OF MY LIFE?

(A) We show our love for Jesus by obeying His commands. **John 14:15,21, 23.**

John 14:15

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

John 14:21

²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 14:23

²³ Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

(B) We must read the Word of God, see what God's will is for our lives and then we must do it. **James 1:22-25.**

James 1:22-25

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror

²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

²⁵ But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

(IV) WHAT IS THE BLESSING OF PUTTING CHRIST FIRST IN MY LIFE?

(A) 1 Peter 3:15-16

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

(B) Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

(C) Romans 6:22

Romans 6:22

²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

(D) The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the most crucial issue of any Christian's life. We are all aware of those around us who are reaping in their lives the by-products of their lack of obedience. Jesus has our best interests at heart. We must give Him our entire life and we must live only for Him daily. Only then will we experience the full life that He has promised us. As we continually confess Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, we are assured of true faith living in our hearts. (Romans 10:9-10)

(V) MAKING HIM LORD BY TITHING AND GIVING

(A) **TITHING** - A tenth of all income given to God for furthering His work in this world.

1) **Genesis 14:18-20** - Abram gives a tenth of everything.

Genesis 14:18-20

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,

¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

2) **Leviticus 27:30** - A tenth of everything belongs to God.

Leviticus 27:30

³⁰ "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.

3) **Proverbs 3:9** - Honor the Lord with the first fruits.

Proverbs 3:9

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

4) **Malachi 3:10** - Flood Gates open when we tithe

Malachi 3:10

¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

(B) **GIVING**: Above and beyond the tenth.

1) **II Corinthians 9:6-7** - attitude: cheerful, not reluctantly.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2) **Matthew 10:8** - freely you have received, freely give.

Matthew 10:8 ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

3) **Luke 16:10-13** - trusted servants

Luke 16:10-13

¹⁰ "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you

property of your own?

¹³ "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

(VI) MAKING HIM LORD BY SERVING

(A) SERVICE

1) Matthew 26:7-9 - wasting perfume?

Matthew 26:7-9

⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.

⁹ "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

2) I Peter 4:11 - serving in God's power.

1 Peter 4:11 ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

3) Luke 4:39 - at once she waited on Him.

Luke 4:39

³⁹ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

4) John 13:4-5 - our example washes feet.

John 13:4-5 ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

(VII) REVIEW OF WORSHIPPING HIM BY MAKING HIM LORD

1) God wants a people who want Him.

2) Selfishness and greed are taught and learned. God wants to break into these areas of our lives and free us from ourselves by instituting giving and service.

3) God desires us to serve Him and others in "His power".

- 4) God is looking for wise servants.
- 5) Serving and giving should be a joy, continually.
- 6) Everyone in God's family has a job and responsibility.

LESSON # 25
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE: PART 4
SALVATION:

As we finish out the Sunday School year we'll spend two weeks talking about what it means to be saved.

The final week of Sunday School we do not have any curriculum prepared, so you will want to think about what to do that day. Maybe do questions and answers, have a party, pray, talk or whatever you feel the Lord wants you to do with the students.

Have each student read a portion of the following article(s) stopping at appropriate places to explain, answer questions or to solidify a point.

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS

1) Don't get religion, get relationship. The first step is not about churches, personalities or organizations. It's about getting right with God. After that God can place you in a fellowship of believers where you can grow.

2) Don't judge Christ by Christians. Christians are just people. Leaders fall and fail, but you don't hear that much about the ones who serve God faithfully, never cheat on their wives or husbands, never get in trouble. Believe me, these far outnumber the ones you hear about. Billy Graham is a phenomenon to have been so faithful and well known with never a hint of scandal. Get your eyes off of men, and look to God for your answers. If you approach Him with an honest, questioning heart, He will satisfy your need to know. (Seek and you will find....)

3) Don't wait to get your life together before you get right with God. This is a "come-as-you-are" party. Jesus loves you right where you are. It's only he who can affect real change in your life, because real change only comes from the inside out. Our attempts at self-improvement usually are usually working from the opposite premise, and that kind of change seldom works, and NEVER works on the eternal level.

4) Don't make the mistake of thinking that you are too evil for God to forgive. The Bible says that "when we repent, He is faithful and just to forgive, and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness. If you are truly repentant, there is nothing that cannot be forgiven. Jesus loves YOU, no matter what your past.

5) Don't think that if you become a Christian, that you won't have fun anymore.

Hollywood, TV, books etc., have in general painted Christianity to be something for a bunch of losers.. dried up prunes of people who have lost their zest for life.

Not true. God will change your mind about what you think is fun, but true Christians have real joy in their lives and really know what real fun is. I'm glad the days of partying down and "having fun" without remembering what happened to me because I was passed out are over. What kind of fun is that?

Let's move along, with a few more facts to consider:

1) Everyone in the world has missed God, and needs to be saved. No matter who you are, without Jesus in your life, you are lost. No matter how good a life you may lead, you are lost without Christ. Men have fallen from godliness and need to have relationship with God restored, which can only happen through the cross of Calvary.

2) Your salvation cannot be earned. This is something God has done for us, we can't earn it, we must just receive it.

3) Your salvation cannot be learned. You don't need to go to Bible school to be saved. Wouldn't it be unfair if only theologically literate people could get right with God? No, God made this so simple that a 10 year old child can receive Jesus as savior. He truly made it so simple that "the foolishness of God would confound the wisdom of the world." It's a matter of faith, not intellect.

4) You must recognize your need. You ARE a foul depraved Godless person, as we all were before receiving Jesus. Even the good things you do have a selfish agenda if you really be honest. You must be willing to call sin, and turn from it, change your lifestyle completely, pick up your cross and follow Him. Difficult club to join, you say? Yes, and I want you to know it isn't always pretty. It's losing your life for His sake that you may gain it back. It's suffering sometimes because you do the right thing. It's not easy. Don't join if you're looking for an easy way. Yet, at the same time this life is filled with joy and satisfaction. Think of the life that Jesus led. Full of suffering, rejection and pain, and yet Jesus was the happiest most well-adjusted person who ever lived, because He did it God's way..

5) You must receive Him by faith. You won't know all the answers, you may not even have thought of many of the questions. It's a matter of knowing in your heart that what Jesus said is right, then acting on it.

What did Jesus say?

1) "I am the way, the truth, the life. No man shall see the Father if not through me. He didn't say, as many gurus and spiritual leaders do that He knew a way to get truth, He said He WAS the way the truth, the life. He also said He was the ONLY way. (A hard one for a lot of people, but I didn't say it, HE did.)

2) They that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Self explanatory.

So.. How do I receive Him?

It's so simple you may have a hard time believing it. No costly seminars to attend, no years spent in Bible school, only a simple prayer of faith.

Here are the steps, (not a formula, but steps)

1) Repent. Recognize your sinfulness and turn from your ways. Be willing to change what needs to be changed.

2) Receive His forgiveness. He died on the cross so that you may be forgiven. Your forgiveness was purchased 2000 years ago. Receive it now.

3) Don't wait for a bolt of lightning. Most conversion experiences are not dramatic. You may or may not experience an emotional release, it doesn't matter, we walk by faith, not sight.

4) Pray words to this effect: "Jesus, I need you in my life. I've not been tremendously successful without you, and so now I'm going to try it your way. I repent of every wrong thing I've ever done, and receive the forgiveness that You offer. I believe that You are God, and that you died on the cross and rose from death to conquer all the works of darkness. I surrender my life to You this day, and pledge to do my best to be obedient to You from this day forth. You have made me a new creation, and I am now "born again" of the Spirit of God. Because of You, I will go to heaven when I die. I pray all this in the Name of Jesus."

What now?

1) Go tell somebody! "If you confess Me before men, I will confess you before my father. I'd love for you to let ME know. E-mail me, or fax me, or whatever, I'd love to hear what God did for you.

2) Get a Bible.. Read it a little every day.

3) Go to church! *"Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together."* God's got a home for you.

4) Pray daily. Talk conversationally to God. The Spirit that is within you will put you in touch with Him. He does speak to us today, but you have to learn how to hear His voice.

5) Get baptized.

LESSON # 26
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“DO ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?”

Many people would say Yes but the Bible says **“No.”**

This is a difficult question and one that obviously bring up a lot of **discussion** and **disagreement**.

Two of the Bible verses that deal directly with are:

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Acts 4:12

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

These passages are pretty clear and pretty direct. Jesus says He is the only way, and Acts says there is no other name by which we must be saved.

We’ll come back to these scriptures, but let’s examine the question and try and understand what people are saying about the issue and ask some big questions.

(I) IT SEEMS REASONABLE BUT IT’S NOT LOGICAL

A) If God is a loving God and loves all people wouldn’t it make sense that all religions that claim to know God would make to God, including participating in an afterlife with Him forever?

B) There have make many explanations and analogies to explain how this works. Here’s one of the more popular:

Have a student read this to everyone.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

This is answer comes a Sikh (Sikhs are a religion from India) parable from told a number of different ways, but goes something like this. Somebody from a balcony sees a group of blind men trying to understand and elephant. One grabs the tail and says it’s “like a rope.” One feels the side and concludes the elephant is “like a wall.” One feels the legs and concludes “it’s like a tree.” One feels the trunk and says, “it’s like snake.”

The idea here is that all humans are living in relative darkness, groping around, trying to figure out life and understand God. The conclusion is that “all religions bring a piece of understanding to the table.”

The parable at first seems to make sense, but breaks down in the end.

- (a) It never tells us the truth about what an elephant is.
- (b) An elephant is not, part tree, part snake, part wall.
- (c) The parable fails to ever tell us who God is, what He is like or how He would be worshipped.

WHAT OTHER LESSONS CAN WE DERIVE FROM THIS ILLUSTRATION?

(II) THERE ARE SOME RELIGIONS THAT HAVE MANY GODS

A) In Hinduism some have estimated there are as many as **330 million gods**. Other say there are only 33 in Hinduism, others say that one god has given rise to the other gods.

We call this polytheism. Polytheism means **many gods**. They can't all be correct at the same time.

B) There are some religious movements that are known as **PANTHEISM**. This belief is that everything that exists is all part of the same existence, which itself becomes “god.” You and I are part of this, as is the material universe. Everything is God.

Both polytheism and pantheism cannot be correct at the same time. **One of them is wrong. Or both.**

C) If there is more than one “god” we have a problem. Namely, “Which one of them **created the universe?**”

Since there are various accounts of creation and creators, they cannot all be right at the same time. It is **impossible** and **impractical** that two gods created the universe at the same time or at different times.

D) As important as it is to answer “Who created the universe” is the question, “How do I connect with the One who created the universe?”

Jesus claims to be both the **Creator** and the One that connects us to God.

Have a student read Colossians 1:6

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Have another student read John 1:3

“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

(III) DO ALL RELIGIONS SHARE THE SAME VALUES AND VIEW OF GOD?

A) Surprisingly the answer is “No.” While to most people it seems all ‘religions’ promote peace, harmony, love and equality, it’s not true that all religions embrace the same values or attitudes towards life and lifestyles.

War, poverty, human rights, women’s rights are seen by various religions are not the same. Varna in Hinduism regulates people into certain ‘castes.’ How and to whom people are born determines these castes, which can rather distressing and paralyzing if you are born into a royal or “untouchable” caste. Since these castes, which often determine your lifelong work and economic status are determined by God, you cannot change them or move to another.

B) How women are viewed in different religions can be quite different. Islam in Saudi Arabia does not allow women to drive cars.

(IV) CONCLUSIONS AND DIGGER DEEPER

While it might be comforting to think that it does not matter which God you serve and worship, it simply isn’t logical. Logic means, “The proper or reasonable way of thinking about something.”

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES TOGETHER

□ **1 Timothy 2:5-6** For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

□ **1 John 2:23** Anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

□ **1 John 5:10-12** All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don’t believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don’t believe what God has testified about his Son. And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life.

- **1 John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.

- **Matthew 11:27** “My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

- **Acts 4:12** There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (JESUS).”

- **John 14:6** Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.

- **Hebrews 5:8-9** Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him.

- **John 1:11-12** He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

LESSON # 27
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF?”

This is perhaps one of the most frequently asked questions and one of the most common charges about the Bible. Many times when asked Christians who believe the Bible will simply answer, “No,” which is the right answer, but might not be taking into consideration why people are asking the question.

The most common reason people say, “the Bible is full of contradictions is because **they heard somebody else say it.**” The most common defense is to say, “it doesn’t have any contradictions,” but not knowing how to explain it.

The facts are that most people who say there are contradictions and those who say there are not have never examined the issue or the scriptures that are supposedly contradictions.

Anybody that is a serious student of the Bible will have to admit that there seem to be contradictions in the Bible. But are there any? Let look honestly at the question and some of the scriptures that supposedly contradict themselves.

(I) LET’S DEFINE WHAT A CONTRADICTION IS

A) The dictionary says:

- 1) The act of saying something that is **opposite** or **very different** in meaning to something else
- 2) A difference or disagreement between two things which means both cannot be true.

B) Using these definitions statements like, “President John F Kennedy was shot and died in Dallas in 1964” and “I just saw John F Kennedy talking on television, he is still alive” would be a contradiction.

C) To say “It is raining outside up to an inch and hour,” and “It’s not raining out, it’s a beautiful, clear day” would be contradictions.

D) Can you think of some contradictions? List some.

E) The ‘law of **non-contradiction**’ says something cannot be “A” and “not-A” at the same time.

F) If a violation of this principle could be found in the scriptures it would be a problem, If the Bible said Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and somewhere else that Jesus would be

born in Jerusalem, that would be a problem and a contradiction. It cannot be both at the same time.

(II) WHAT A CONTRADICTION IS NOT

A) It is possible for there to be two different accounts or viewpoints of the same incident, event or situation without it being a contradiction.

B) We need to see that a “difference” is not necessarily a “contradiction.”

Let’s examine what some might call a “contradiction”

C) Recognizing “a difference” is not necessarily “a contradiction.”

- Have one student read the account of Jesus healing in Matthew 20:29-34

- Have another student read the account in Mark 10:46-52

- Have another read the same account in Luke 18:35-42

- What ‘difference’ do you notice in these accounts?

- Just because an account is “different” and does not include all the same details, does not make it a contradiction. We often in our own lives will share about experiences different than others who experienced it with us.

- If one of the accounts would have said the men were not blind at all, that would be a contradiction. They simply choose to share some details others do not.

D) Some say the account of Judas hanging himself is contradicted in the scriptures. Preston Sprinkle, in a article for Relevant Magazine explains it this way:

Matthew 27:5 says that Judas hung himself, while Acts 1:18 says that he fell to the ground and burst wide open. These are two *different* accounts of Judas’ death, but they are not formal contradictions. A contradiction would be one passages saying, “Judas hung himself and died” and another passage saying, “Judas *didn’t* hang himself; rather, he threw himself from cliff and splattered on the ground.”

In the Bible, it could be that he hung himself in a high tree, and then the rope snapped and he fell headlong and burst all over the ground. Or maybe his attempt at hanging himself didn’t work (Matthew 27 doesn’t actually say he died from

hanging himself), and so he went and threw himself from a cliff, as recorded in Acts.

E) There is a **reason** that we have four different Gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are four different viewpoints of the same life and the same events. Sometimes they are almost exactly the same, sometimes there are subtle differences, sometimes what one includes the other writer does not. These are not ‘contradictions’ they are simply ‘different’ than each other. Many of the ‘so-called contradictions’ can be answered this way.

F) ANOTHER EXAMPLE. What was written on the cross? Some would say the Bible contradicts itself here, as each Gospel says something different.

“And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, ‘THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS’.” Matthew 27:37

“The inscription of the charge against Him read, ‘THE KING OF THE JEWS’.”
Mark 15:26

“Now there was also an inscription above Him, ‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS’.”
Luke 23:38

“Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, ‘JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS’.”
John 19:19

QUESTION: Which one is right? Or, are they all right?

ANSWER: Most likely Pilate had written, “This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews” There is no contradiction here, just a ‘difference’ in what was reported by each of the Gospel writers.

G) Preston Sprinkle gives another example with how numbers are used in the scripture. The Bible writers wrote and talked, not unlike the way we write and talk. When we say

things like, "I'll see you in an hour," do we mean in exactly sixty minute, to the second we will see you? Or do we mean in about an hour, and everybody understands this to be so? The Bible is no different.

Speaking of this Sprinkle says, *"For instance, 1 Chronicles 21:5 says that Judah had 470,000 valiant soldiers while the parallel in 2 Samuel 24:9 says they had 500,000. Is this a contradiction? Not if you read the passage according to the normal rules of language. We don't demand such precision in our daily speech; we round up or round down, and no one accuses us of lying."*

There are many such accounts in the scriptures, but we get the idea. We know that people round off numbers, make guesses as to how many people showed up for a meeting or a party. We say "a dozen" all the time, but usually that will mean a couple short of or a couple more than twelve. Nobody debates this or will say we are contradicting ourselves if we told one person, "A dozen people came to the party" and told somebody else it was eleven.

G) THE PARTING OF THE RED SEA IN EXODUS

In the Book of Exodus, one account says that God parted the Red Sea, while another account says that a strong wind from the east did it. Is this a contradiction or a difference?

ANSWER: A difference. God did it, but by sending a strong wind from the east. The most amazing part of the account is God sent it at the exact moment they were ready to cross!

H) One of the most quoted '**contradictions**' involves Judas, who betrayed Jesus. Let's read the two accounts and answer whether this is a contradiction or a difference.

Matthew 27:3-8

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

Acts 1:16-19

and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus-- he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

WHICH ONE WAS IT?

ANSWER: Both. He hung himself, and apparently at some point, the rope broke, or wild animals pulled him down, or something and he fell to the ground., maybe his weight pulling him down, and broke open. In this case, we get additional information. It seems like everybody wouldn't want to include the details Luke included in Acts. But Luke was a physician, an all of this would have been of interest to him.

Matthew tells us how he died. Luke includes what happened to him after his death. Simple.

LET'S REVIEW HOW AMAZING THE BIBLE IS WITHOUT HAVING ANY CONTRICTIONS

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- A. Written over a period of 1600 years.
- B. Over 40 authors (written by kings, prisoners, shepherds, doctors, Rabbi, tax collector, military, generals, fisherman, politician.)
- C. Written in different places. Fields, prisons, palaces.
- D. Written in three languages: Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic.
- E. The Bible deals with every major issue in life and speaks of many controversial issues; yet always without contradiction!
- F. The Bible contains history, law, medical information, poetry, songs, biographies, correspondence.
- G. No book has been published more than the Bible. The Bible is translated into well over 3,000 languages.
- H. No book has ever survived through more persecution and criticism than the Bible.

- I. The Bible has been the inspiration for more music, art, stories, plays, than any book in history.
- J. The Bible is the accurate historical document of its time.
- K. The Bible is the accurate archeological book of its time.
- L. The Bible is a book of prophecy. Three hundred concerning Christs' first coming, and 300 concerning His second coming, and hundreds concerning history.
 - 1. The Bible says that it may be discarded if the prophecies it contains fail: Deut. 18:20-22; 13:1-4; Matt. 7:15-20.

LESSON # 28
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE?”

(I) MIRACLES

The Bible can't exist if you **remove miracles** from it. From the very beginning the opening verse, we find what we define as miracles.

The dictionary defines a miracle as;

“a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.”

From the opening chapters of Genesis, to the Second Coming of Jesus, to the accounts of the prophet Elijah, Daniel, the life and ministry of Jesus, miracles are everywhere. If you remove the miracles from the Bible, the book completely falls apart. The Bible presupposes miracles.

We put miracles in the category of **“the supernatural.”** That means they are above, or outside of the realm of natural, or that which is natural. The universe is controlled by what we call “The Laws of Nature.” Miracles are possible with God for a few reasons:

- 1) The Laws of Nature are His Laws. He is the Creator and is not bound by the Laws
- 2) God stands outside of the creation. He is not part of the creation. He is the Creator. He can break in at any time and do anything He wants.
- 3) A miracle is “a divine intervention” into the regular course of the world

(II) ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE?

- A) If you believe in God, who is the Creator of everything, and is not part of
- B) The arguments against miracles is that they are violations of natural laws.
- C) This position assumes that ‘nature’ is the only thing that exists. That there is no God
- D) This position says that nothing can happen outside of the regular and normal “course of nature.”
- E) Again, if God exists, miracles are possible

(III) CAN SCIENCE PROVE OR DISPROVE MIRACLES

A) Science depends on what we call **“Scientific Method.”** Basically this means:

- 1) You have a theory. Make an observation
- 2) Test the theory
- 3) Replicate the theory (do it again)
- 4) Analyze the data.
- 5) Make a conclusion
- 6) Communicate the conclusion

B) Under this criteria some would say you can't test miracles and they don't hold up to scientific scrutiny and method.

- 1) This might be true for **some** miracles, like Elijah going to heaven in a chariot of fire. Read 2 Kings 2:1-18
- 2) It might be hard to “prove” that this even happened, so how would you prove if it were a miracle or not
- 3) There are other miracles that might lend themselves to more scientific scrutiny. The resurrection comes to mind.
- 4) We know that Jesus existed and died.
- 5) The resurrection of the dead happened. Many have undertaken to disprove, and often rather than disproving it they become believers instead.
- 6) Miracles do in fact happen and are under the control of God

(IV) THE NATURE OF MIRACLES

Norman Geisler has given us a list of the nature of Bible miracles

- 1) They are **under God's control**
- 2) They are not available on command
- 3) They are **supernatural in power**
- 4) They are associated with **good**
- 5) Associated only with truth

- 6) Can overpower evil
- 7) They affirm Jesus is God in the Flesh
- 8) Prophecies are always true
- 9) Never associated with occult practices

(V) THE NATURE OF MIRACLES

- A) They are **possible**
- B) They are believable.
- C) They happened in real time / history.
- D) They do not go against science
- E) They are not **myths**, or parables with moral meanings
- F) They are **real**, they happened, they happen, they will happen

(VI) THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

- A) Miracles show us that there is a God

(VII) SOME OF THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

You can look these up with your students

Jesus was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:25).

Jesus changed water into wine (John 2:6-10).

Jesus caused the disciples to catch a large load of fish (Luke 5:4-6).

Jesus cast out demons (Matt. 8:28-32, 15:22-28).

Jesus healed lepers (Matt. 8:3, Luke 17:14).

Jesus healed diseases (Matt. 4:23, 24, Luke 6:17-19)

Jesus healed the paralytic (Mark 2:3-12).

Jesus raised the dead (Matt. 9:25, John 11:43-44).

Jesus restored sight to the blind (Matt. 9:27-30, John 9:1-7).

Jesus cured deafness (Mark 7:32-35).

Jesus fed the multitude (Matt. 14:15-21, Matt. 15:32-38).

Jesus walked on water (Matt. 14:25-27).

Jesus healed the sick (Matt. 8:5-13, 9:22).

Jesus forgave sins (Mark 2:5).

Jesus calmed a storm with a command (Matt. 8:22-27, Mark 4:39).

Jesus was transfigured (Matt. 17:1-8).

Jesus rose from the dead (Luke 24:39, John 20:27).

Jesus appeared to disciples after resurrection (John 20:19).

Jesus ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:9).

LESSON # 29
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“WHAT’S SO SPECIAL ABOUT JESUS?”

Christianity is wrapped up in **Jesus**. What makes Jesus **unique?**

“Unique” means being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else.

There are many things that are “unique” to Jesus, which in fact qualify for Him to be Savior and Lord. There is no one else like Him. Now or ever.

Let’s examine some of them. We are in no way examining all of them.

(I) HIS PRE-HISTORY

The scripture teaches us that Jesus existed before the Creation. In fact it tells us that Jesus IS the Creator. His history was written before He appeared on earth. Jesus was not “created,” He is from everlasting to everlasting, which is why His history can be written in **advance**.

John 1:3

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Colossians 1:16

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

1 Corinthians 8:6

yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

John 1:10

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him

(2) BIRTH

HE WAS SPOKEN OF IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Psalms 72:11 *May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!*

Isaiah 9:6 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 53:3-7 *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*

Zechariah 9:9 *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*
Born of a Virgin

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

(3) HIS **DEATH**

Is **unlike** any other death, in that He came to die for our sins and take our place on the cross.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." – **1 Peter 2:24**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." –**John 3:16-17**

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
Isaiah 53:5

Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." **John 3:7-8**

JESUS THROUGH HIS DEATH IS ABLE TO BRING OTHERS TO HEAVEN

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:43**

(4) HIS RESURRECTION

He is unlike any other in His resurrection and that He would never die again, but ascended into heaven.

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 5:24-25

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

2 Timothy 1:10

but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Acts 14:22

Verse Concepts

strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

THE TOMB OF JESUS WAS / IS EMPTY

Luke 24:2-3 “And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”

JESUS RESURRECTION BROUGHT OTHERS TO LIFE! THIS ROMAN CENTURION, A COMMANDER OF ONE HUNDRED SOLDIERS TESTIFIES TO THE RESURRECTION.

Matthew 27:52-54 “The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

(5) HIS RETURN

After His life, death on the cross, resurrection, ascension into heaven, he is coming back again. Who else is like that?

Revelation 20:4

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Matthew 25:13

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Matthew 24:27

For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

(6) HIS DIETY (defined as ‘being God’) & HUMANITY

Jesus was fully God and fully man **100% God 100% man**. He wasn't 50% God and 50% man, but fully God and fully man. The following scriptures show that Jesus was God in the flesh

John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 5:18, "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."

John 8:24, "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins."

John 8:58, "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.'"

Exodus 3:14, "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

John 10:30-33, "I and the Father are one." 31 The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

(7) HIS ASCENSION

John 7:33

Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.

John 16:28

"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."

John 20:17

Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

John 14:2

"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

Mark 16:19

So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Luke 24:51

While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

(8) HIS SINLESSNESS

1 Peter 2:22

"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

1 John 3:5

You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

EVEN PONTIUS PILATE KNEW HE HAD NO SIN

Matthew 27:24

When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves."

John 19:4

Pilate came out again and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him."

John 8:29

"And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

Isaiah 53:9

His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

Nobody has ever been like Jesu and nobody will ever be.

LESSON # 30
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“WASN’T THE BIBLE WRITTEN BY PEOPLE?”

(I) 2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is God-breathed (*inspired according to some translations*) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...”

A) The Greek word for “inspired” means “*God breathed.*” God inspired or **revealed** to men what to write, so when we read the Bible, we are literally reading the words of God.

B) John MacArthur explains, *Men were in the process but it didn't originate with them and it didn't come from their desire and their will, they were used as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit and enabled to speak from God. They spoke divine words. God used them. It was their personality. It was their background, some of their insights, their experiences, their perceptions, but ever word was the word of God. That's the miracle of inspiration. Men...they were used...carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. That's what the Scripture says.*

C) There is only **ONE Author** of the Scripture: God, but many ‘writers’ those that penned the scripture

D) The claim is not made that those that penned the scriptures were perfect human beings, only that God used them and directed them while they were penning the scriptures.

1) The apostle Peter Made many errors in his life and his speaking

2) The apostle Thomas doubted

3) The apostle Paul expressed anger at John mark

4) Those used to “pen” the scriptures were not perfect in any sense of the word, but God nevertheless used them and guided the process through them in the formation of the scripture.

5) While there may have been faults in their lives, when penning scripture, God **preserved** them **miraculously** / **supernaturally.**

E) **Biblical inspiration** is the doctrine in Christian theology that the authors and editors of the Bible were led or influenced by God with the result that their writings may be designated in some sense the word of God.

F) Charles Ryrie says it this way: *“God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs “*

G) Larry Thiel, for InterVarsity, outlines some assumptions and talking points. For this session have the students work through his talking points.:

Assumptions People Have

- The Bible is not trustworthy, because it was written so long ago.
- Men (and not God) wrote the Bible for their purposes.
- All religions claim to have their own truth.
- It is arrogant to place the Bible above other religious texts.
- Books like The Da Vinci Code disprove the Bible.

Talking Points

- If there is a God, do you think God has to remain silent, or could God communicate if God wanted to? (Most will grant that God can do anything that God wants; otherwise we aren't talking about God)
- How would you feel if your professor never told you how to succeed in your class and left up to you to figure out, and that you only found out when you received your final grade? Do you think God would want to communicate something of Himself to His creation? Do you think it's reasonable that God would want to help us flourish in this life and know how to get to the next one? (Most grant that this sounds reasonable)
- Then the real question becomes...where has God shown up? Or, where and how has God communicated with us? It also seems reasonable that God would commit his story to written language so all people could have access to God.
- To answer this question one can study various religious texts (revelations) to determine which ones have the ring of truth to them.
- I'm drawn to Jesus because he appears to be God's ultimate answer to the question of number 3. Instead of men and women pointing to God, and speculating

about God, Jesus is the opposite. God coming to us. Thus, if you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus.

- If you have not studied this Jesus that would be a good next step. When you see the way he lived, the things he taught, the way he died, and the way he came back to life, you may decide that He can be trusted and followed.
- If you decide that He is God speaking to you, then, you can trust his view of the Bible which is that God moved humans to write down God's words for humans to flourish.
- This does not mean that everything that others have said about God is false. People can sometimes get things correct. Like caring for the marginalized is valued in virtually all religions. But if you come across a contradiction between Jesus and someone speculating about God, then you should stick with Jesus as the final authority.

LESSON # 31
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“DOES GOD EXIST?”

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

How do I know **there is a God?**

No one has **ever seen God.**

I have never seen the North Pole, but is there **evidence it exists?**

Is it necessary for me to see everything in order for me to believe it is there?

There are at least three reasons to believe that God exists.

- (1) There is Something **inside of us** that keep leading us to believe there is God
- (2) The **Scriptures and Jesus Christ** attest to God being there
- (3) **“Nature” or “Creation”** teach us that God is there.

(I) PEOPLE HAVE AN “INNER-SENSE” THAT THERE IS A GOD

A) On October 25, 2004, Time Magazine ran a cover article called the “The God Gene” with a line that asked, “Does our DNA compel us to seek a ‘higher power.’ Believe it or not some scientists say yes.”

B) Wayne Grudem says, “All persons everywhere have a deep, inner sense that **God exists**, that they are **His creatures**, and that He is their **Creator**.”

C) Romans 1:21 *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

This passage us what Time Magazine is telling us that people have an internal sense of God. However they reject God, for a variety of reasons. Not the least being that we want to do what we want to do with our lives and not be answerable to anyone.

D) Romans 1:19 tells us that there are some things about God that are evident to everybody. *“Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.”*

E) Romans 1:18 *“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness”*
This verse says that people “suppress the truth.” This is similar to what we try to do with a beach ball in a pool, when we sit on it and try and keep it under the water. It keeps trying to come out and get around us. It is difficult to keep the knowledge of God at bay and to get him out of our minds.

(II) THE SCRIPTURES AND JESUS SPEAK OF GOD AS EXISTING AND CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

Psalm 19:1-4

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.

Hebrews 3:4

For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

Romans 1:18-20

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Acts 17:29

"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

JESUS AS CREATOR

Colossians 1:16-17

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

(III) TRADITIONAL AND HISTORICAL ARGUEMENTS FOR GOD’S EXISTENCE (Don’t worry about remembering the names, but get the concepts)

A) COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT: This means that everything that is made is made. That everything that exists has a “first cause.” If the Creation which is so vast, so complex and so extensive, it’s “cause” must be God.

B) THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT says that everything in the universe is orderly. It all has a purpose. There is design. Since these things are true, the conclusion is that there is an intelligent Creator behind everything.

C) THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT says that since everything is “great beyond what we could ever, ask, think or imagine.,” than the One behind it all is greater than the Creation itself. It must be God!

D) THE MORAL ARGUMENT is the idea that everybody has some internal sense of right in wrong on the inside. The idea here is if everybody has the same internal compass, it must come from somewhere, and that somewhere is the God Who exists.

E) CADO The ministry of Evangelism Explosion uses the acronym CADO

- 1) **Creation**—every time you see a piece of machinery, you see an engine, a motorcycle, a car, even a bicycle, you know it has a creator.
- 2) **Art**— every time you see a piece of art, you know it has an artist.
- 3) **Design**— every time you see a wrist watch, you know it has a designer.
- 4) **Order**—every time you see order, like ten coke cans lined up on a counter, you know it has an “order-er.”

When we look around at the universe, what do we see? We see creation, art, design, and order. If everything else has a creator, artist, designer, and order-er behind it, isn’t it reasonable to expect that behind this incredibly intricate, complicated, and marvelous universe there is also a **Creator, Artist, Designer, and Order-er** behind it?

All we’re asking for is reason and consistency. Creation/Creator, art/Artist, design/Designer, Order/Order-er: logical, reasonable proof that there is a God behind this universe.

LESSON # 32
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“WHAT ABOUT EVIL?”

If God is good, why is there evil in the world?

The key to understanding the problem of evil is to understand that things are not the way that God initially created them or intended for them to be. Without a proper understanding of the “Fall of Humanity” we cannot fully understand the plan of salvation.

(I) MAN BEFORE THE FALL

- A. People were created in innocence and upright.
 - 1. Ecc. 7:29; Gen 3:8-13

- B. People had unseparated fellowship with God.
 - 1. Gen 2:15-17, 3:8-13
 - 2. The separation we see testifies to our sinfulness.

- C. People were given the earth to rule.
 - 1. Gen. 2:19-20 (denotes ownership)

- D. People were created in the image of God.
 - 1. Gen. 1:26, 6:9
 - 2. I Cor. 11:7; Ja. 3:9

- E. What is the image of God?
 - 1. Moral resemblance and sharing of the unique divine attributes.
 - a. In son much as man surpasses animals.
 - b. Capacity for justice and compassion, for love and hate.
 - c. Ability to relate to the past, present and future.
 - d. Ability to need to establish long meaningful relationships.
 - e. Ability to communicate and "philosophize."
 - f. Ability to choose, ability to create.

(II) THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN

The “fall” is the term used for when Adam and Eve our ancestors, who sinned and rebelled against God

Question: Why do we suffer the sin they committed?

- A. Eve listened to Satan rather than God.
 - 1. She set her will against God.
 - a. The will is a "free" thing affected by the mind, the soul, and the spirit.
 - 2. "Aspiration" is a key word to understanding the fall.
 - 3. We should notice the Scripture twisting going on.

- B. Total **Depravity**.
 - 1. Everything in us fell; mind, body, emotions, spiritual capacity.
 - 2. The appetites of the flesh became lust.
 - 3. The will is now in bondage to Satan.
(Rom. 6:6)
 - 4. Man ceases to become upright and became a sinner.
 - 5. Inability to do good (spiritually).
 - 6. Gen. 6:5; Job 14:4, 15:14-15; Isa. 1:5-6; Jer. 3:33, 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18;

(III) DEATH AND FALL

- A. Death did not exist before the fall.
- B. What did Adam and Eve see when their eyes were "opened?" (Gen. 3:7)
- C. A drastic change occurred in man's relationship with animals.
- D. Sickness enters into the scene.
- E. Hate, suspicion, murder, extended through ALL creation.
- F. “Cursed” is the ground (Genesis 3:17. There was a fundamental change in the ‘nature’ order and beauty of the Creation.

Mark Heard calls it “the pain that plagues creation.” We await for the redemption of heaven and earth, with the joy of eternal joys. Someday everything will be restored!

(IV) THE “FALL” BROUGHT SIN INTO THE WORLD AND EFFECTED ALL OF CREATION

A) Don Stewart gives eight responses to the question of evil in the world.

1) We Live In A Fallen World / Paradise Lost

The Bible recognizes that evil does exist. We live in a world that has fallen into sin.

2) God Is Not Responsible For Evil

Evil came as a result from the choice of humanity - not God. By giving humans choice there was the possibility to choose evil. You cannot give people free choice and then prevent them from choosing.

3) God Allows Evil To Exist By His Permission

Although we do not understand why He permits evil in every instance, we know that it only exists because He allows it. Evil cannot ultimately overcome.

4) God Can Overrule Evil For Good

We find that God overrules wickedness for the good. In the account of Joseph in the Book of Genesis, we are told that his brothers sold him into slavery - thinking they would never see him again. By God's grace, Joseph became a ruler of all Egypt

5) Evil Is Not Logical

Evil by definition, is not logical. It is random. Therefore we should not expect it to operate in a righteous way

Evil, by definition, is not logical. It is random. Therefore we should not expect it to operate in a righteous way

6) When People Break God's Laws, It Will Have Consequences

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow” Galatians 6:7

We cannot break the law of God without suffering the consequences

7) God's Is Involved in Solving The Problem Of Evil

God is directly involved in the problem of evil. Jesus, God's Son, came to die to deal with the problem of evil. He died on Calvary's cross to free humanity from pain and suffering, sin and death. Someday there will be a world when all these things will be non-existent.

Luke 18:7-8

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

8) There Is An Age To Come When Evil Will Be Done Away With

Evil will not win in the end

Revelation 21:4-5 (He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

SUMMARY:

Sin, rebellion against God resulted in a universe that felt all of the effects. Sin will be done away with and God will rule in peace for ever and ever!

Even so Come Quickly Lord Jesus!

LESSON # 33
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“ISN’T CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGION RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST WARS?”

No!

Contrary to popular belief and a charge that is leveled against Christianity, Most wars are not religious wars. Sam Harris, in his book *The End of Faith* that faith and religion are “the most prolific source of violence in our history.” Richard Dawkins has put it this way: “Religion causes war by generating certainty”. They are both plain, flat out, wrong!

(I) SIN IS THE CAUSE OF WARS

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man” (Mark 7:21–23).

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel” (James 4:1–2).

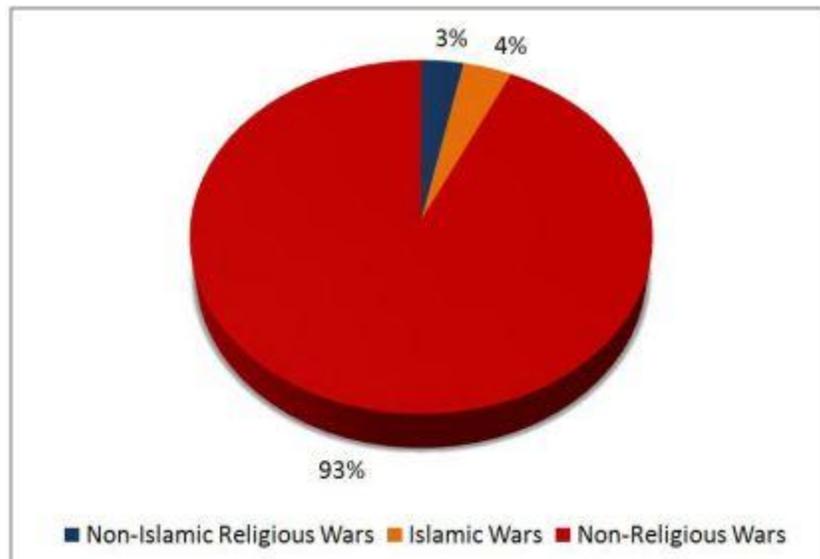
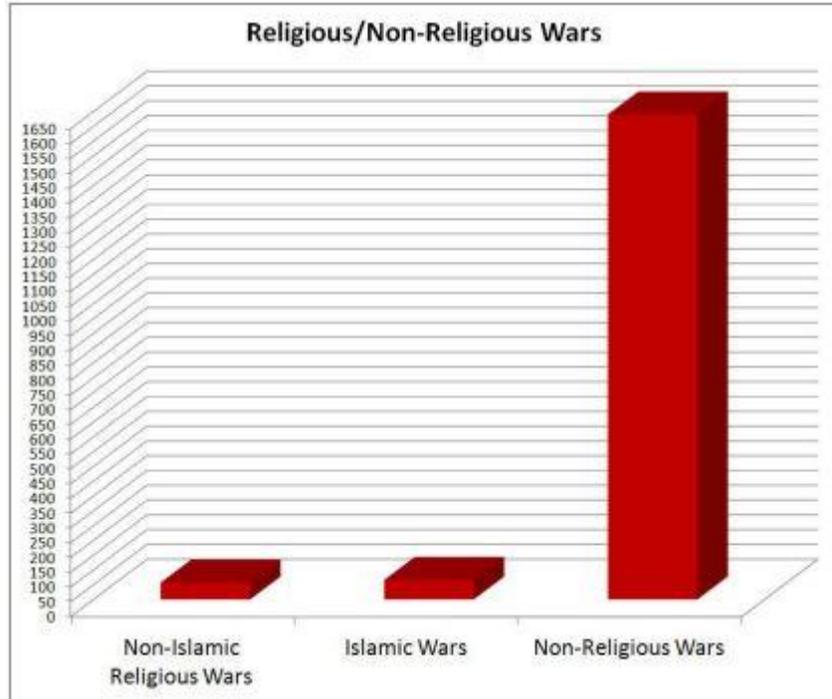
Sin is the cause of all wars.

(II) HISTORY AND THE FACTS BEAR OUT THAT RELIGION IS NOT THE CAUSE MOST WARS

On the contrary, only a small percentage of wars have a religious context, and Islam accounts for the largest number of those.

Robin Schumacher and Matt Slick have compiled some interesting statistics about wars and their origin.

“An interesting source of truth on the matter is Philip and Axelrod’s three-volume *Encyclopedia of Wars*, which chronicles some 1,763 wars that have been waged over the course of human history. Of those wars, the authors categorize 123 as being religious in nature, which is an astonishingly low 6.98% of all wars. However, when one subtracts out those waged in the name of Islam (66), the percentage is cut by more than half to 3.23%.”



That means that all faiths combined – minus Islam – have caused less than 4% of all of humanity’s wars and violent conflicts. Further, they played no motivating role in the major wars that have resulted in the most loss of life.

(III) NON-RELIGIOUS, ATHEISTIC AND COMMUNIST DICTATORS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR UNTOLD OF MILLIONS OF DEATHS

A) R. J. Rummel's work *Lethal Politics and Death by Government* gives these figures of deaths by non-religious dictators:

Joseph Stalin - 42,672,000 (Soviet Union 1920s – 1950s)

Mao Zedong - 37,828,000 (China 1900 – 1970s)

Adolf Hitler - 20,946,000 (Germany 1934 – 1944)

Chiang Kai-shek - 10,214,000 (China 1930s- 1970s)

Vladimir Lenin - 4,017,000 (Russia 1870s – 1930s)

Hideki Tojo - 3,990,000 (Japan 1880s – 1940s)

Pol Pot - 2,397,000³ (Cambodia 1930s – 1990s)

Rummel says: “Almost 170 million men, women and children have been shot, beaten, tortured, knifed, burned, starved, frozen, crushed or worked to death; buried alive, drowned, hung, bombed or killed in any other of a myriad of ways governments have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners. The dead could conceivably be nearly 360 million people. It is though our species has been devastated by a modern Black Plague. And indeed it has, but a plague of Power, not germs.”⁴

(IV) TOM PRICE OF OXFORD CENTER for CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS RESPONDS

A) What could a Christian say in response to this kind of challenge?

- 1) It's too simple to say that religion causes war and violence
- 2) Sometimes it's pretty clear that corrupt establishments or organizations use religion to justify crooked agendas.
- 3) The imperialistic bloodlusts of the crusades were not so much a product of the Christian invaders bible, but rather their own agendas.
- 4) Much of the conflict and war in the 20th century was the result of atheist ideologues. Religion gets the blame but history tells us quite a different story. The critic of religion needs to be able to offer an explanation for why the greatest butchers of the last 100 years turned to atheism and secularism for their justifications. Hitler leaned on the work of atheist philosopher Frederick Nietzsche and Stalin leaned on Karl Marx for support.

(V) THE BIBLE ADVOCATES PEACE

A) Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

B) Psalm 29:11 The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

C) Psalm 34:14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

D) Psalm 37:37 Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace.

E) Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

LESSON # 34
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT SEX & SEXUAL IMORALITY?”

A) The Bible teaches that God is the author of sex and morality. Jesus said it this way:

Mark 10:6

"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

B) This passage teaches us a few things:

- 1) Marriage is God's plan for sex
- 2) Marriage is between one man and one woman
- 3) Divorce is not God's plan or will (although we all know it happens)

C) Because something is accepted by a society ('mores') it does not mean that they are right:

- 1) Abandoned Street Kids in Brazil
- 2) Abandoned Infants in Ancient Cultures
- 3) Cannibalism
- 4) MANBLA (Man-Boy Love Association)
- 5) Mistresses in Europe (Ireland just legalized divorce)
- 6) "Post-Modern" society believes all "personal options" are equally good.
 - a) Our society says sexual expression is:
 - 1) A Right (I should be able to do anything I want)
 - 2) Necessary for emotional health
 - 3) Unlike food, air, water, sexual freedom is not a "need"

D) The Issues that come primarily into a Pastor's Office (and conversely) a counselor's office usually deal with:

- 1) Sex

- 2) **Money**
- 3) Relationships
- 4) Inner Peace

E) Homosexuality, Adultery, Fornication, Incest, Rape are all **equally** condemned in scripture.

F) Conversely all sexual behavior in scripture is to take place within the **context of marriage**

- 1) In which place it is considered good
- 2) Not just for **procreation** (Puritans taught this!)

(I) HOMOSEXUALITY (Genesis 18: 3-8)

A) While the Bible condemns homosexuality, it does NOT condemn homosexuals or anyone else for the matter

- 1) 1 Cor 6 in same categories as slanderers

B) Biblical References concerning homosexuality are Relatively Few

- 1) Wasn't an issue for Israel or the Jews
- 2) Paul deals with it most in the New Testament
 - a) More prevalent in Gentile World (wasn't common in the Jewish world)

3) Romans 1:26-27 *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

- a) **Lust:** Strong Inclination, Feeling, Drawing or Desire
- b) The Bible allows for the possibility of such temptation, but advocates resistance
- c) "Received in Themselves" (STDs?)

4) Leviticus 18:22-24 *Do not lie with a man as one lie with a woman; that is detestable.*

5) Judges 19 Similar to the Sodom account, but this time the man actually gave his daughter.

6) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

a) **Washed, Sanctified, Justified!!!!**

b) You 'were' (Fully Recovered Homosexuals)

1) They were not always recovering

c) Corinthian church at part "Ex-Gay"

C) The Bible does not recognize homosexuality as **biologically** constituted or heredity (not a "third sex")

1) Sees it rooted in man's fallen sinfulness

2) Sees it as psycho-social learned behavior

3) Views it as choice

D) What about 'modern science' and "In-born" (Born this way) Theory?

1) Is everything 'inborn' to be encouraged?

2) The Bible teaches our inborn natures is **selfish/sinful**

3) Some say alcohol, violence, schizophrenia are inborn

a) Yet we view these as Genetic Defects to be Resisted, Controlled or Corrected.

b) In actuality the verdict is still out

c) We all have a predisposition/propensity towards self-satisfaction and sin. That's what self-control (fruit of Spirit) is all about.

4) John Hopkins & Albert Einstein School of Medicine still maintain it is environment & **Choice**, not Genetics

5) Even Masters and Johnson say it is choice

6) What about Dr. Simon Lavay's recent 'discovery?'

a) In 35 cadavers he found brain neurons that were twice as large as normal.

b) What he didn't tell you:

1) He was gay

2) Sexual Orientations of heterosexuals in the group was never verified

3) Half died of AIDS

4) Not all results were consistent

5) 6 out of 35 in complete contradiction

6) Behavior can alter brain patterns

E) What else aren't we told?

1) The 10% of the population being gay figure is a **myth**

a) Surveys show fewer than 2% of males and 1% of women in last year

b) Think about your wedding//workplace

c) Kinsey Report which perpetrated the surveyed criminals, prostitutes and sex offenders

2) Only 2% of homosexuals are monogamous

3) 43% say they have had sex with 500 people

4) 79% have had sex with absolute strangers

5) None of those are **'normal'**

6) 50% of men & 85% of women were victims of abuse

F) If Homosexuality is so Normal, Why is it so **Dangerous?**

1) From British Journal of Sexual Medicine

- a) 50% have gonorrhea
- b) 1 in 5 have herpes
- c) 78% have or had STDs
- d) 2% of population has 50% of syphilis
- e) 2/3 of AIDS cases
- f) Life expectancy half of heterosexuals
 - 1) Median age of man dying AIDS: 39
- g) Only 3% of homosexuals are over 55
- h) Only 1% die of old age
- I) More dangerous than smoking, polluted or driving without your seat belt!

(II) **PROMISCUITY** (Lot's Influence on Daughters 18:3-8)

A) Greatest Deterrent to Promiscuity is **Home & Peer Groups**

1) A three year study by Stan Weed funded by U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services entitled: "*Predicting & Changing Teen Sexual Activity Rates* found 'greatest predictor of sexual intention transition' were:

- a) A Students value system (Deut 6)
- b) The Social System (peers and parents)
- c) Risk Behaviors (alcohol, drugs, truancy, steady dating)
- d) Personality Variables (affirmation needs, future orientation, rebelliousness)
- e) Information System (knowledge about sexuality and human reproduction)

B) Beliefs cause **Actions**, Actions have **Consequences**:

- 1) 60% of teen girls who had sex say wish they waited

- 2) 1 million pregnant teens each year 350,000 aborted
- 4) Psychology Today Survey: 51% of woman under 35 wish they had waited
- 5) Univ of Az Students, three different years:
 - a) 51% felt tremendous guilt
 - b) 42% of girls felt used

(III) INCEST (Genesis 19:30-38)

A) Should go without saying that it is evil

- 1) Look for a breakdown in even this
- 2) Sex trends towards violence & spirituality
- 3) Didn't talk about rape or gang rape. Expect to see more.

(IV) FINALLY MARITAL RESPONSIBILITY (Genesis 20)

A) Married people have the most frequent & satisfying sex.
 U.S. News & World Report, Time & other publications also reported

B) Marriage is not all about sex though

- 1) It is about love
- 2) It is companionship
- 3) It is about commitment (Where Abraham failed)
- 4) It is about nurture
- 5) It is partnership
- 6) It is a picture of the church
 - a) Christ gave all for me
 - b) He acknowledges me openly
 - c) He feeds me

(V) LESSONS

- 1) God knows what He is talking about and His way is best
- 2) God loves sinners and the world
- 3) The process of salvation is: Washed, Sanctified, Justified
- 4) Jesus did not come to condemn the world
- 5) When you are born again you start all over
- 6) We, just like the NT church live in a very sexual environment... Church then grew rapidly
- 7) God changes lives
- 8) Sin is a downward spiral
- 9) Two Biblical Options: (1) Marriage (2) Abstinence
- 10) Want an alternative Lifestyle? Try God!!!

How Cohabiting Today Can Ruin Your Life Tomorrow

Estimates vary as to how many people in America are cohabiting together (there is no way to actually know), but figures from the US Census Bureau show that there are over five million cohabiting people in the United States. As the graph above from USA Today shows, the numbers have been radically increasing over the last several decades. In the 1960's less than 5% of women lived with a man before they got married. In the opening years of the new millennium it is estimated that as many as 70% of women have lived with a man before they get married. But is cohabiting good? Is it good for you, and if not, why?

The simple answer is that God told us not to live in sexual relationships outside of committed marriage. Some think this is rather prudish, old fashioned and unenlightened. But recent research and studies have concluded--as usual--that God knew what he was talking about when he gave us the boundaries for successful living.

COHABITING MEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE COMMITTED AFTER GETTING MARRIED Psychology Today in its June 14, 2005 issue, reported a study by Scott Stanley of the Center for Marriage and Family Studies at the University of Denver. The study showed that men who lived with their spouses before marriage were on the average less committed to their marriages than those who did not. The bad news is that women tended to be just as committed as those who did not cohabit. So in the cohabiting relationship, *if* it ends in marriage, there is a strong possibility that the woman will be more committed to the relationship than the man. That's plain awful!

COUPLES WHO HAVE COHABITED BEFORE MARRIAGE CONSISTENTLY HAVE HIGHER DIVORCE RATES THAN THOSE WHO DON'T A frequently-cited source for this is a study by Pennsylvania State University researchers that appeared in 2002 in the Journal of Marriage and Family. Numerous studies have been pointing this out for many years. The fact is, living together before marriage is not healthy for the relationship and brings with it a much higher probability of the relationship breaking up *if* it ends in marriage.

LIVING TOGETHER DOES NOT NECESSARY LEAD TO STAYING TOGETHER Many of those who cohabit will cohabit again. How many people do you want to live with over the course of your lifetime? How many hopes do you want shattered? How many promises to you do you want broken? Stay away from cohabiting. It is not good for your relational or emotional health.

COHABITING COUPLES ARE MORE PRONE TO CHEAT ON EACH OTHER Well, duh! Our antennae should go up whenever anybody is hesitant to make a commitment to us. What are they afraid of anyway? "Well I don't want to

be tied down.” “Then, goodbye!” Preserve your dignity. You are worth a commitment. Studies show that cohabiting couples are more prone to cheating on each other than married couples. But we already know that from being alive and being around people. Spare yourself the pain. If he or she won’t commit, split!

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN AND COHABITING? It goes without explaining that this is a very difficult situation for children. It unnecessarily complicates their lives and leaves them insecure when the adults around them should be adding, not taking away from, stability in their lives.

BUT IT’S A GREAT ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENT! No it’s not. Married people are happier, healthier and richer than cohabiting couples according to the research. Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher in their book “The Case for Marriage” published in 2000, show this to be true. Married men even live longer!

YOU’VE GOT TO ADMIT THE SEX IS GOOD. Not so according to the surveys. Married sex is best.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? IN SEVEN YEARS WE’LL BE MARRIED BY COMMON LAW. Not true. There is no such thing in any state as an automatic common-law marriage after cohabiting together. If you want to be married in any state you need to declare your intentions.

We are happiest and most fulfilled when we are living the way God created us to live. After all, He made us. He knows what is right and good for us. May God give you the courage to do His will!

LESSON # 35
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“DO SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE CONTRADICT EACH OTHER?”

(I) THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE:

A) The Bible is not a **science book**, nor does it attempt to be a science book. It is the account of God, Who He is, How He would be worshipped and how He relates to humanity.

However, in terms of science, the Bible is far **ahead of the times**. When it delves in to the realm of science it is amazingly correct. It spoke of many of the things we know to be true in science long before the discoveries were made. There is no contradiction between science and the Bible, although people mistakenly think there is.

Here’s some **“scientific firsts”** that the Bible declared and were later affirmed by **“modern science.”**

1) EARTH SUPPORTED ON NOTHING

Job 26:7 *He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.*

2) PHYSICAL STRUCTURE IS ATOMIC STRUCTURE

Hebrews 11:3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

3) STARS CANNOT BE NUMBERED

Jeremiah 33:22 *I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.*

4) EARTH IS ROUND, NOT FLAT

Isaiah 40:22 *He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth*

5) FORBIDDEN TO DRINK FROM STAGNANT STREAMS Leviticus 11:29-36
(last 100 years we have learned contaminated water can cause typhoid and cholera)

6) SECOND LAW OF THERMO-DYNAMICS

Psalms 102:25-26 *In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.*

B) SCIENTISTS WHO BELIEVED

Many people say that thinking people or scientific people do not believe the Bible. This is simply not the case and many scientists who made important discoveries were not only believers, but said they did their science based on the Bible.

- 1) Louis Aggasiz (Founder of glacial science. Creationist)
- 2) Charles Babbage (Creator of Computer. Apologist)
- 3) Johannes Kepler (Laws of Planetary Motion. Literalist)
- 4) Blaise Pascal (Probability Studies. Christian author)
- 5) John Ambrose Fleming (Diode. Modern Electronics)
- 6) Issac Newton (Universal Laws of Gravitation)
- 7) Georges Cuvier (Comparative Anatomy. Creationist)
- 8) William Kelvin (Thermodynamics. Creationist)
 - a) Most damaging 'law' against evolution.
- 9) Carolus Linnaeus (Modern taxonomy. Creationist)
 - a) Scientific Classification
- 10) Louis Pastuer (Germ Theory. Dedicated Christian)
 - a) Faith lead him to disprove spontaneous generation

C) WHAT TO BELIEVE ABOUT SCIENTISTS

- 1) Scientists exercise faith
 - a) Issue of Origins is strictly faith
- 2) Scientific Theories Change
 - a Darwin: Long Time. New Breed: Short Time.
- 3) Statements by 'experts' Can/Must be challenged
 - a) Ordinary citizens can't question the experts?

b) Ultimate truth; not from experts, but THE Expert
Don Chittock

4) Scientists are not always objective

a) Louis More The Dogma of Evolution *“our faith in the idea of evolution depends on our reluctance to accept the antagonistic doctrine of creation.”*
Princeton Univ Press

b) Aldous Huxley (early advocate of evolution) *“I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning...for myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries it was an instrument of liberation..We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom...”* in Ends and Means

5) Science in This Case Can Only Describe

a) Can not observe the past

b) Past events cannot be repeated

D) SCIENTIFIC METHOD

1) Observe

2) Recognize the Problem

3) Form a Hypothesis

4) Test and Falsify the Hypothesis

(V) IMPLICATIONS OF CREATION

A) **Responsible** to a Creator

B) You have meaning and purpose

C) It's not chance

D) You are loved

E) You are God's workmanship

F) There are moral absolutes

G) The Bible is **true**

LESSON # 36
HARD QUESTIONS SERIES
“CAN WE TAKE THE BIBLE LITERALLY?”

People often ask, “Do you take the Bible literally?” The answer is, **“Yes.”**

But literally, just like you would any other book or conversation. The Bible, like books and conversations uses many different “forms of speech.” As a book, it needs to be approached reasonably and intellectually. As the Bible, the Revelation of God Himself, it needs to be approached spiritually. We will attempt to learn how to integrate the two. We will study Bible study methods, the theories and history of interpretation, as well as general principles involved.

(I) WHAT ARE HERMENEUTICS? (the word is Greek and means interpret)

- A. Science of **interpretation**
 - 1. Exegesis - proper practice of hermeneutics, taking out and expounding
 - 2. Icegesis - Improper practice of hermeneutics, putting in (heresy, false doctrine)

(II) WHO CAN UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE?

- A. **Christians**
 - 1. With a new heart (I Cor. 2:14)
 - 2. With a hungry heart (I Pet. 2:2)
 - 3. With an obedient heart (Ps. 119:90-100)
 - 4. With a disciplined heart (Matt. 7:7)
 - 5. With a teachable heart (Isa. 50:4)
 - 6. With the aid of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15ff)
- B. Three verses to interpret
 - 1. Ps. 115:17
 - 2. II Cor. 6:14
 - 3. I Cor. 15

(III) SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

- A. The Bible is God's Word.
- B. The Bible can be understood.
- C. The Bible is its own interpreter.
- D. We must respond to the message.
- E. The Holy Spirit is necessary.

(IV) WHO IS C. W. GABS?

- A. C = Context
W = Words
G = Grammar
A = Author's intention
B = Background
S = Scripture interprets Scripture

(V) HOW CAN C. W. GABS HELP US?

- A. Context
 - 1. What is the book written for?
 - 2. What is the paragraph about?
- B. Words
 - 1. Words have a tendency to evolve in meaning.
 - 2. Often our definition is not the authors.
 - 3. Some words have many meanings.
 - a. Prov. 14:15, Prevent = come before, anticipate
 - b. Ps. 59:10; 79:8; 88:13
 - 4. K. J. 500 archaic words
 - a. Let = hold back
 - b. Conversion = conduct

C. **Grammar**

1. Know the relationships between words
2. Understand their settings

D. **Author's Intention**

1. What was the writer trying to convey?
2. What prompted the writing?

E. **Background.**

1. Who was it written to?
2. What were they like?
3. Was anything in their culture strange?
4. Are there things we should know that would make understanding easier?

F. **Scripture by Scripture**

1. Scripture is unity
2. Scripture doesn't contradict itself.

(VI) **BIBLE LANGUAGE**

A. Ordinarily the Bible means what it says.

B. It does use figurative language.

1. The sun rising. We know the sun doesn't "rise." The Bible also knows this, but we all say it.

2. **SIMILES** Compare one thing to another. 1 Peter 5:8: "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion."

3. **ALLEGORIES** Uses words that don't 'really' apply to the situation or person, but is used to describe something. Jesus saying He was "The Good Shepherd" is one of these. He wasn't a shepherd and we are not sheep. Yet He IS a shepherd and we ARE sheep.

4. METAPHORS Describe something using “like” without always saying “like.” Jesus said, “You are whitewashed tombs.” Allegories and metaphors are closely linked together.

5. HYPERBOLE means to ‘exaggerate something.’ Jesus said, “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.” If you cut off your right hand, you can still sin with the other. But we get the point.

6. ANTHROPOMORPHISM is when we assign human characteristics to God. “The hand of the Lord” “The eyes of the Lord.”

7. APOCALYPTIC LANGUAGE It might be hard to know whether this language is literal or figurative when it says things like “The moon will turn to blood.” Or “The stars will fall from the sky.”

C. It does use symbols.

1. Who is the woman in Rev. 12:1-6?

2. Who is the dragon?

D. It does use **parables**.

1. Uses everyday experiences, images, people and places to give hidden or deeper messages. “Let he who has ears to hear, hear.”

E. It does use types.

(VII) PARABLES (RULES FOR INTERPRETATION)

A. Determine historical occasion and aim

B. Determine subject matter

C. Determine several parts, with reference to general design.

D. Consider context

E. Look for **one central truth**

(VIII) EXERCISE IN TITUS

- A. Lessons in Titus
1. Who is it written to?
 2. By whom?
 3. For what purpose?
 4. What action is to be taken?
 5. How and why?
 6. For whom is instruction included?
 7. What applications may be made?

(IX) SIX HONEST MEN

- A. Who?
- B. What?
- C. Why?
- D. Where?
- E. When?
- F. How?

(X) QUESTIONS TO ASK

- A) Should this passage be taken literally or is using other literary methods?
- B) Is it Poetry?
- C) Is it history?
- D) Should we just go with the plain meaning here, or is there more to it?
- E) Is this prophecy?
- F) Is there apocalyptic language in the passage?
- G) Is this a letter?

Question: What is the theme of Philippians?

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