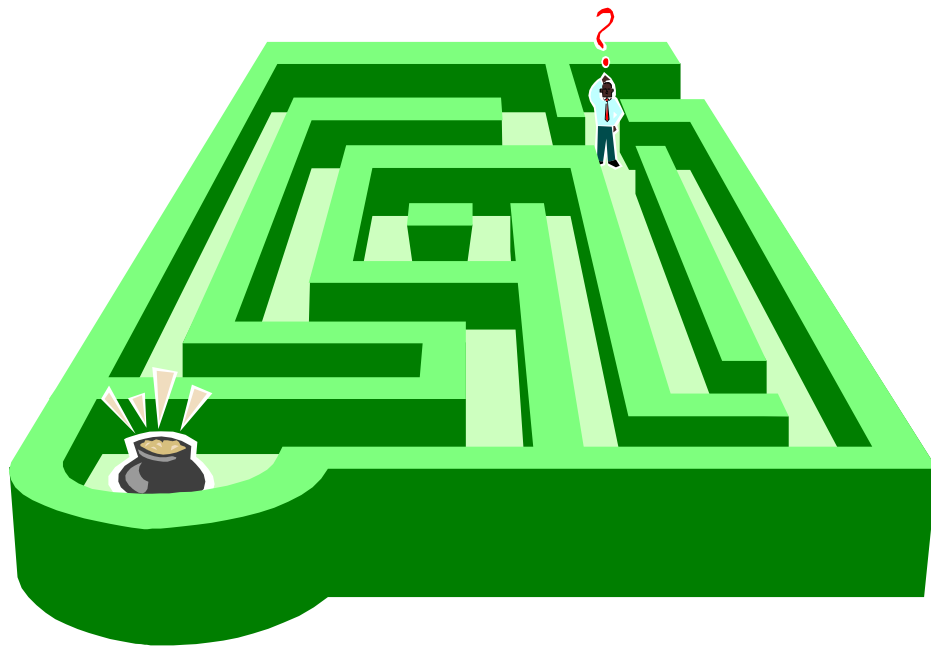
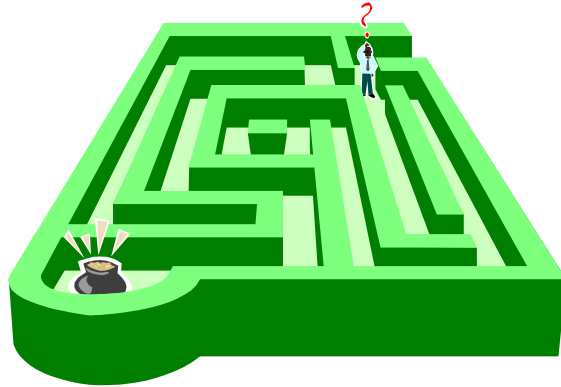


Searching For The Truth



Grace Fellowship

Searching For The Truth



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

Keyed to the New King James Version

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

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

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Introduction

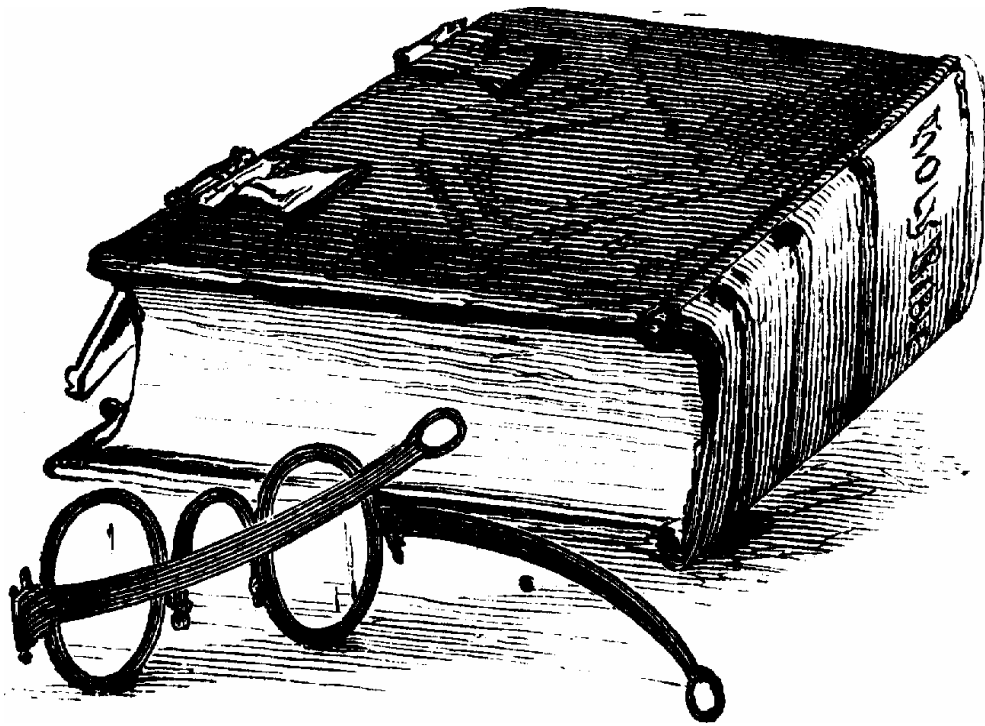
Our Approach:

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

Using This Material:

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

What The Bible Teaches About Itself



What The Bible Teaches About Itself

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

An Overview Of The Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Clarifying The Question

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

1. Where did all of Scripture originate from?

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

3. What is Scripture useful for?

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



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

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

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



Read John 10:35 (page 1054).

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

Food For Thought

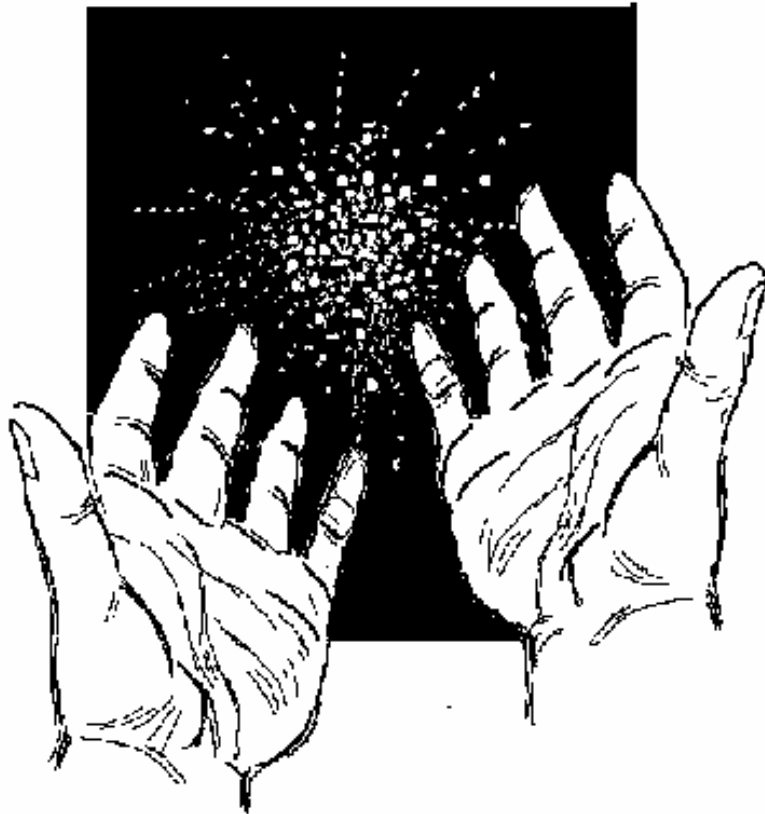
1. Based on all we have read in the Bible so far, how does it describe itself?

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

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

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

What The Bible Teaches About God



What The Bible Teaches About God

What Is God Like?

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

Read the following passages. Note what is said about God, and then summarize each



passage in your own words.

Isaiah 44:6-8 (page 711).

Isaiah 45:12 (page 714).

Daniel 4:34-35 (page 873).

Daniel 5:23 (page 874).

John 4:24 (page 1042) and Psalm 50:21 (page 555).

Isaiah 45:5-9 (page 713).

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



Read Psalm 90:2 (page 580).

1. How long has God been in existence?

2. How long will God be in existence?



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

1. How big is God?

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



Read Revelation 19:6 (page 1216).

1. How much power does God possess?



Read John 17:24 (page 1062 - 1063)

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

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



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

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



Read Isaiah 43:7 (page 710).

1. Why did God create us?



Read Psalm 16:11 (page 532).

1. Where are we supposed to find joy?

2. What are at God's right hand?



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

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

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

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

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



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

1. What will God do with His enemies?

2. What can we be sure that God will not do with the guilty?

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



Read John 3:16 (page 1043)

1. Why did God send His Son?

Food For Thought

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

2. What was the most difficult thing to accept about God from your study of the Bible? Why?

3. If what the Bible says about God is true, what would it mean for us?

What The Bible Teaches About Man



What The Bible Teaches About Man

Introduction:

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



Read Romans 1:18-23 (page 1104)

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

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

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

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

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



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

1. How many of the human race have sinned? (compare Romans 3:23)

2. How many unsaved people seek God?

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



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

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



Read Romans 6:23 (page 1109).

1. How are wages different than a gift?

2. What does sin result in?

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Read Titus 3:3 (page 1171).

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

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



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

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

2. How long will they be punished for?



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

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

Food For Thought

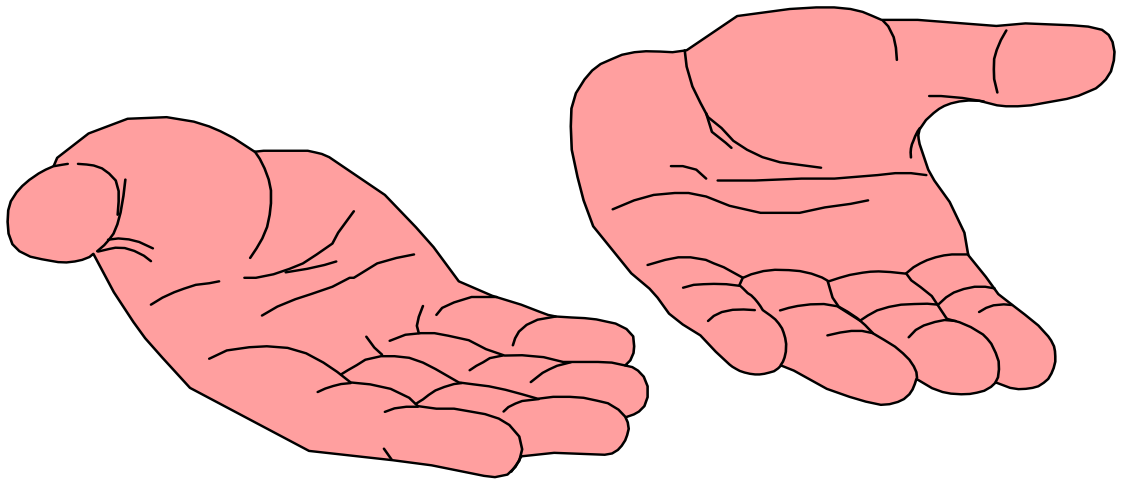
1. Summarize in your own words what the Bible teaches about man before he is saved?

2. Does the Bible teach that man is basically good, or basically evil?

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

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

What The Bible Teaches



About Jesus Christ

What the Bible Teaches About Jesus Christ

Introduction

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

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

What are the Primary Sources for Learning about Jesus?

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

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

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



What do the following passages teach about Jesus?

Matthew 14:22-33 (page 960 - 961).

Mark 3:1-5 (page 982)

Mark 11:15-17 (page 994)

Mark 15:39 (page 1001)

Luke 7:36-50 (page 1014)

John 11:38-44 (page 1055 - 1056)

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

Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

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



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

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

2. What did Jesus say about himself?

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

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

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



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

1. Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus?



Read **John 14:9** (page 1059).

1. What did Jesus claim about himself?
-
-

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

John 1:1-3,14 (page 1041)

John 20:30-31 (page 1067)

Colossians 1:15 (page 1154)

Hebrews 1:1-3 (page 1173)

Romans 9:5 (page 1111)

Titus 2:13 (page 1170)

What Did Jesus Claim He Came To Do?



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

Mark 10:45 (page 993)

Luke 5:31-32 (page 1011)

Luke 19:10 (page 1031)

John 3:16-18 (page 1043)

Food For Thought

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

What The Bible Teaches About Becoming A Christian



What The Bible Teaches About Becoming A Christian

Introduction

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

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

What We Must Do To Be Saved?



Read Acts 16:25-34 (page 1096-1097).

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



Read James 2:14-26 (page 1197).

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

2. What quality characterizes saving faith?



Read Acts 2:38 (page 1079).

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

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

What God Does To Save Sinners

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



Read Romans 4:5 (page 1107).

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



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

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



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

1. How shall a sinner go to Christ?



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

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

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



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

1. Who are the people that God resists?

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

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



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

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

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

3. Whose promise of punishment is this?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Concluding Questions

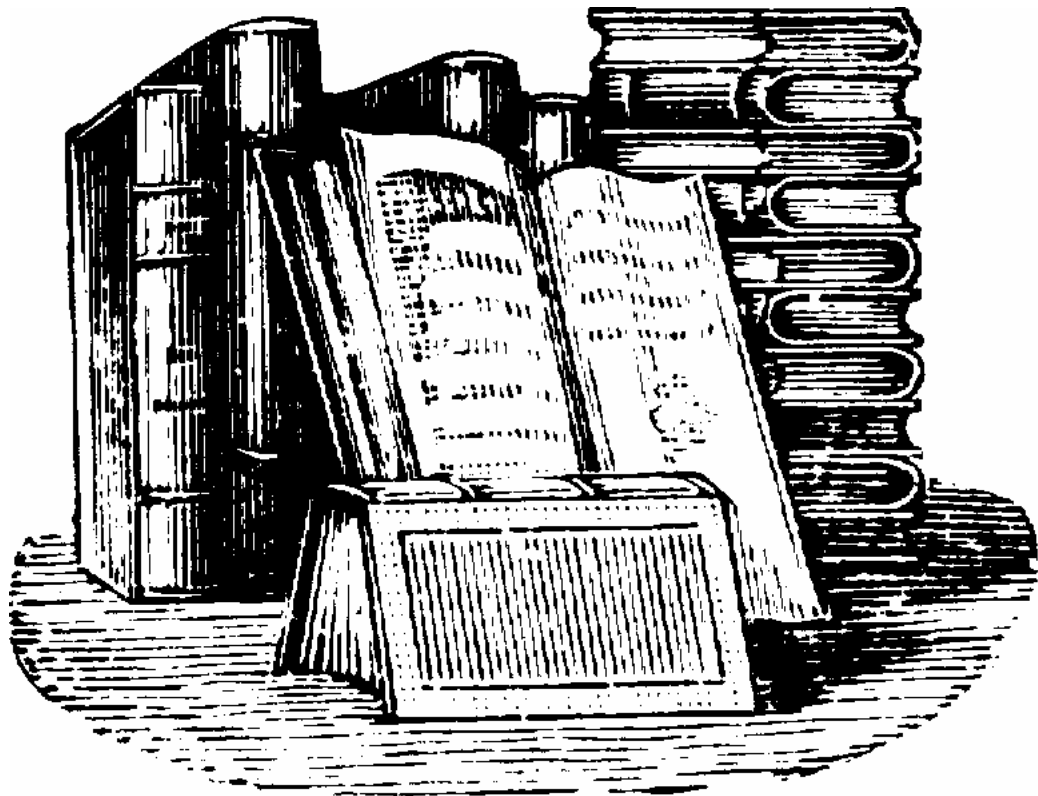
1. In the past what did you think it meant to be a Christian?

2. What new thoughts have you discovered in this study?

3. If God so hates sin, what do these truths mean for you if you reject Christ and continue on in another way?

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

Supplementary Material



A Description Of Each Book In The Bible

The Old Testament

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

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

The New Testament

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