

ROOTS PART ONE

# THE ESSENTIALS OF THE FAITH

LEGACY CITY CHURCH  
DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLES



# INTRODUCTION

John MacArthur once said, **“God's truth is the most important thing in the universe.”**

There is a lot of "truth" in this statement. Without knowing God's truth as revealed in His historical revelation (the Bible), we have no clue as to how to be saved and be made right with God. We have no real guideline as to how to worship God in a meaningful and acceptable manner. We have no solid foundation for purposeful, righteous, and godly living. When this happens, life is what we make it out to be, which leads us to a futile, if not destructive, lifestyle.

It's no secret that we live in a world where Christianity is often misunderstood, misrepresented, and misappropriated. False doctrines, subjective opinions, and man-made traditions have often caused believers and non-believers to be confused or misinformed about who God is, what Jesus did, and how Christians are to live. Scripture teaches that there is transformative power in the faithful teaching of God's Word (Romans 1:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13). When the Bible is water-downed or taught incompletely; it is stripped of its power. Listeners remain unconverted and believers never mature beyond what they are taught.

The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to "do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The Apostle Peter also instructed the church to be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you..." (1 Peter 3:15). In other words, church leaders are given the grand, yet sober task, of fully representing the Bible to the congregation. In turn, believers are to reciprocate by learning and growing in the faith. Jesus summarized the heart of the Christian life when He said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

## **Studying God's Word and growing in our faith is the purpose of the Roots Curriculum.**

Although it is not meant to be a replacement for studying the Word of God (the Bible), Roots is meant to be a vital supplement to Scripture, a resourceful guide to understanding the core themes and doctrines that define Biblical Christianity. The Roots series covers the foundations of the faith, which every believer must know, not only to understand their salvation in Christ but to be fully equipped for evangelism, serving in the church, holy living, and all matters related to a fruitful Christian life.

Part One of Roots introduces you to what is often called the "absolute essentials" of the Christian faith. It is what every believer needs to be convinced of in order to be assured of the genuineness of his or her salvation in Christ. Believers differ on secondary issues of Christianity (which will be covered more in depth in the following Roots courses), but all Christians must agree on the absolute essentials - or core doctrines (teachings) - of the Christian faith. This includes an accurate understanding of God, the Bible, the gospel, and godly living. Roots Part One will present these topics in a manner that is easy, thorough, and applicable.



## This course is designed with three groups in mind:

1. New believers: These are people who have recently become Christian. They are new to the faith and have little to moderate understanding of Christianity.
2. Seasoned believers: These are people who have been Christian for a considerably longtime. They know about the important topics of the Christian faith, but can benefit from learning it in a systematic fashion for their own edification and for teaching it to others.
3. Seeking unbelievers: These are non-Christians who have not committed their lives to Jesus Christ, but are interested in knowing more about the Christian faith.

## Roots has three main goals:

### 1. Assurance of salvation

This is the general objective of the Bible. The Bible was given, first and foremost, so that people would learn about God, His offer of salvation, and be a part of it.

1 John 5:11-13:

*"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."*

### 2. Equipping for ministry

The Bible was also written to teach us how to do ministry. It shows us how we find our spiritual gifting and to use it for serving others, both in and out of church.

2 Timothy 3:16-17:

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

### 3. Knowledge of God

The Bible rightly informs us of who God is and how we are to worship Him. The deeper we understand God, the more we will love and obey Him.

3 Exodus 33:13:

*"Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight."*



## CURRICULUM OUTLINE:

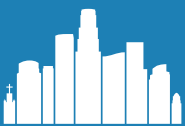
**Roots Part One covers these following five lessons in consecutive order:**

1. Why is the Bible Important?
2. What is God like?
3. Who is Jesus Christ?
4. What is the Gospel?
5. What is a Genuine Christian?

## INSTRUCTIONS:

After reading the introduction of this booklet please proceed into each lesson. There are 5 lessons within this book. In each lesson you will find an Introduction, Exploration, and Exercise.

**Please read through the Introduction and Exploration first and then proceed to answer the questions in the Exercise. After you have finished the Exercise, we encourage you to share what you have learned with a mature Christian.**



# Lesson One:

## Why is the Bible Important?



*I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man...But for this Book, we could not know right from wrong. Take all you can of this book upon reason, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier man.*



**Abraham Lincoln**



*Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the way of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!*



**Psalm 119:1-5**

## INTRODUCTION

Whether one loves it or hates it, the Bible is undeniably the most influential book ever written. It has sold more than any other books that have ever made the New York Times Bestseller list. It is the most widely distributed book in the world. The Bible has transformed the lives of countless people all over the globe. It has become the foundation for historical movements that fought for human dignity, protection of children, just treatment of women, slavery abolition, care for the sick, orphans, and poor, and liberty and freedom in many nations. It was even influential in the shaping of the United States Constitution and has become the basis for many scientific, prophetic, and historical discoveries.

What is the Bible? Is it a supernatural work that originates from God or is it merely a captivating piece of human literature? Is it all true or partially true? Is it relevant for today? If so, how much of it? How can I best benefit from its teachings?

In this lesson, you will learn:

- The nature of the Bible
- The meaning of the Bible
- The application of the Bible



# EXPLORATION

## THE NATURE OF THE BIBLE

The word Bible literally means "Books" It is also called the Scriptures, the Writings, the Law of the Prophets and Psalms, and the Canon. Most importantly, it is the Word of God. It is the complete message from God to man that describes who God is, who man is, and the meaning of life. It is the timeless, universal declaration from our Creator that addresses the issues of life and death, the universal problem of sin, and what we must do to get right with our God.

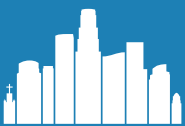
The Bible is a dynamic work. It is a collection of 66 separate books - 39 that make up the Old Testament and 27 that make up the New Testament. The Scriptures were written by approximately 40 different men, who wrote from three different continents and in three languages - Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic - spanning about 1,500 years (from approximately 1445 B.C. to A.D. 95).

Though the books of the Bible were authored by men, their origins are in God Himself. In other words, God oversaw, moved in, and directed the authors to write His words. God sovereignly worked in the hearts and minds of these men to document exactly what He wanted, at the same time not destroying the authors' individual personalities and writing styles when they penned their works.

God's general revelation is witnessed by all mankind - regardless of their geographical or religious background - as seen in His work in creation (Romans 1:18) as well as the human conscience that testifies of God's moral law (Romans 2:14-16). However, God's special revelation is only known through the Bible, which reveals the character and the work of God in salvation so that we know what we must do to be saved and to live a godly life (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Because the Bible completely originates from God, scripture is often called "God-breathed," as 2 Timothy 3:16 teaches. This means it is divinely inspired.

What does it mean that Scriptures are "inspired"? Several key ideas capture the essence of biblical inspiration:



**1. Inerrancy:** The Scriptures in the original manuscripts (copies) are without error, not only in the theological matters dealing with salvation and holy living, but also in its scientific, prophetic, geographical, and historical observations. The Scriptures in their original writings are perfect, spotless, and have no contradictions.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:7-8).

**2. Infallibility:** The Scriptures will never lead us astray or fail in matters of faith, practice, and life; and will accomplish all that it promises and purposes until the end of time.

"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

**3. Perspicuity:** The Scriptures are clear. Its teachings are able to be understood and followed by all who read it and seek to understand it. The bible was written to the simple person.

"The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:130).

**4. Sufficiency:** The Scriptures are complete and fully capable to address and instruct in all matters dealing with salvation and godly living. A person does not need to add to Scripture, subtract from it, or turn to other religious, mystical, philosophical, cultural, or humanistic resources to solve matters dealing with worship, morality, and ethics. The Scriptures are sufficient.

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanks giving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elementary spirits of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:6-8).

**5. Authority:** The Scriptures are fully authoritative and binding on all human beings. Every person on earth will answer to God for the choices they make in life, especially in response to the gospel.

"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people every where to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

All of these factors attest to the fact that the Bible is completely trustworthy and necessary for life. Knowing this, we should do our best to understand what the Word of God is all about.



## THE MEANING OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a historical documentation about the acts of God. The Bible is one great story of redemption. It describes how God created the world, how sin entered the world through mankind, the promise that God made to one day reverse the effects of sin, how that redemptive promise was made possible by the Lord Jesus Christ, and how the world will look once God restores all things at the end of history.

This is the broad storyline that runs through the pages of Scripture, all meant to show us the exact way to eternal salvation and abundant life. **Below is a list of every book in the Bible and their main themes and purpose. As you read through the explanation of each book, look for the themes of redemption.**

## THE OLD TESTAMENT (ALSO KNOWN AS OLD COVENANT)

**Genesis:** Chronicles the origins and early history of the universe, the human race, sin, tribes and languages, the nation of Israel, and God's promise of blessing and redemption.

**Exodus:** Explains how God redeemed the nation of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and made them His special people through establishing a covenant with them at Sinai.

**Leviticus:** Instructs the nation of Israel how she must live and worship as God's chosen people in response to His holiness and so that He might dwell among and bless them.

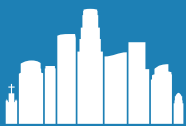
**Numbers:** Chronicles the failure of Israel to obey the Lord by faith and enter the Promised Land, the consequent discipline of the Lord bringing about the death of that entire generation of Israel during thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering, and the preparation of the next generation of Israel to enter the land of Canaan.

**Deuteronomy:** Provides a restatement of the Law by Moses after the wilderness wanderings to a new generation of Israelites who had not been present at its initial reception at Mount Sinai. It reminds them of the promises made to them, their responsibilities as God's special people, and the consequences of obedience and disobedience. It also prepares them to enter the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua.

**Joshua:** Describes how the Lord gave to Israel the land that He had promised beforehand, while also showing Israel's failure to possess the land completely because of her unfaithfulness.

**Judges:** Chronicles Israel's moral degradation after the death of Joshua, marked by a repetitive cycle of disobedience. This cycle in turn brings God's judgment through military subjugation from other nations, which in turn brings Israel to repentance, to which God responds by sending civil or military judges who provide temporary deliverance—until the next descent into disobedience.

**Ruth:** Chronicles the redemption of a Gentile widow named Ruth by Boaz, a relative of her deceased Israelite husband who became her kinsman redeemer. Ruth becomes the ancestor of David, who in turn is the ancestor and the ultimate King and Messiah (Jesus Christ).



**1 Samuel:** Traces the transformation of Israel from a spiritually corrupt and fragmented collection of tribes, to a united kingdom under God's chosen king, David, who foreshadows the ultimate King to come.

**2 Samuel:** Chronicles the reign of David, from the highlights of his ascension to kingship, his triumph over Israel's enemies, and the Lord's establishment of the Davidic Covenant. It also covers his failures as king and its painful consequences, thus highlighting the need for a better King to come.

**1 Kings:** Chronicles the descent of the kingdom of Israel from its great glory to its sudden division into two kingdoms—Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom)—and their subsequent decline.

**2 Kings:** Chronicles God's judgment on the kingdoms of Israel and Judah for their disobedience to His Word. This judgment is vividly displayed by the exile and captivity of these two kingdoms: the northern kingdom (Israel), exiled into Assyrian captivity; the southern kingdom (Judah), exiled into Babylonian captivity.

**1 Chronicles:** Provides a priestly perspective on the reign of David to Jews who had returned from exile, reminding them of the Davidic covenant and their spiritual heritage, and to exhort them to covenant faithfulness.

**2 Chronicles:** Provides a priestly perspective of the reigns of the kings in David's line, reminding Jews who had returned from exile about God's faithfulness to the Davidic covenant, despite the nation's disobedience and resulting judgment.

**Ezra:** Highlights God's faithfulness as seen in the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem, the reconstruction of the temple, and the spiritual reformation of the people.

**Nehemiah:** Chronicles the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem as well as the spiritual reforms of the people under the godly leadership of Nehemiah as governor and Ezra as priest. It also shows the faithful providence of God in the lives of His people despite opposition.

**Esther:** Displays God's providential preservation of His chosen people, even while in exile, in light of Satan's continuing effort to annihilate the Jewish line through Gentile persecution.

**Job:** Teaches that when faced with suffering, the appropriate response is not to seek from God the reasons for the suffering, but to fear and trust Him implicitly.

**Psalms:** Motivates the reader to worship God through a collection of poetic works dedicated to extolling the great acts and words of God in creation, world history, and the history of Israel.

**Proverbs:** Provides the young and simple with the necessary knowledge and wisdom they need to live fearfully and successfully before God.

**Ecclesiastes:** Warns readers, especially young people, of the vanity of life apart from God and exhorts them to fear and obey Him, by summarizing painful lessons learned through a failed pursuit of success apart from the revealed wisdom of God.

**Song of Solomon:** Magnifies the beauties and wonders of courtship, romance, and marriage, and affirms them as part of God's good creation.



**Isaiah:** Foretells the wrath to come upon Judah and the whole world because of their sins against a holy God, while also foretelling of the future comfort and salvation to come through the work of the Suffering Servant (Jesus).

**Jeremiah:** Pronounces God's judgment on depraved Israel and calls her to repentance.

**Lamentations:** Expresses deep anguish over Jerusalem's destruction by Babylon after she received her due punishment from God over her unrepentant sins.

**Ezekiel:** Warns Jewish exiles in Babylon that Jerusalem would be destroyed, that prophecies of a speedy return were false, and that exile would be lengthy, but also foretells an eventual return of the Jewish exiles to their land and that a final Messianic kingdom will one day be established.

**Daniel:** Encourages the exiled Jews by revealing God's prophetic program for them, both during and after the time of Gentile power in the world.

**Hosea:** Emphasizes the nature of God's faithful, covenantal love to Israel despite her spiritual unfaithfulness.

**Joel:** Describes the day of the Lord, which is God's judgment on the world in the last days.

**Amos:** Describes God's concern over the social injustice of Israel.

**Obadiah:** Details God's judgment against Edom for its mistreatment of Israel.

**Jonah:** Portrays the sovereignty and compassion of God on the unrighteous Assyrian capital of Nineveh in response to their repentance.

**Micah:** Describes God's concern over the social injustice of Judah.

**Nahum:** Details God's judgment on the Assyrian city of Nineveh. A century after her repentance chronicled in the book of Jonah, Nineveh returned to her idolatry, pride, and violence, thus incurring the judgment of God.

**Habakkuk:** Explains God's judgment on Judah through the Chaldeans. Habakkuk is perplexed at how God can use a more unrighteous nation to judge Judah, but God assures judgment of the Chaldeans as well, and the vindication of His righteousness.

**Zephaniah:** Denounces sin in Judah and the surrounding nations, announces imminent judgment through the Day of the Lord, and prophecies of future restoration.

**Haggai:** Calls the Jews who returned from exile to finish the reconstruction of the temple, which had remained in ruins even after Cyrus's decree for the Jews to return eighteen years prior.

**Zechariah:** Calls the Jews who returned from the exile to prepare the temple for the Messiah.



**Malachi:** Calls the Jews who returned from exile to repentance over their complacency towards God's faithful love and His Law, evidenced by their mixed marriages, withholding tithes, and social injustice. Malachi also reminds them that God's covenant promises remain true.

## New Testament (a.k.a. New Covenant)

**Matthew:** Presents Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's long-awaited Messiah and King. It was written to strengthen the faith of Jewish Christians and provide an apologetic tool for Jewish evangelism.

**Mark:** Presents Jesus as the Servant of man, who came preaching, healing, and teaching, and then finally dying for the sins of the world. This Gospel targets a Gentile—primarily Roman—audience.

**Luke:** Presents Jesus as the certain answer to the needs and hopes of the human race. Addressed specifically to a high-ranking Gentile official—Theophilus, this book is intended to give certainty in the historical person of Jesus, the Son of Man.

**John:** Presents Jesus as the incarnate LORD. Evangelistic in purpose, this Gospel was written to bring its readers to faith and life in Jesus as the Christ, as the Son of God, and as the revelation of grace and truth.

**Acts:** Describes the progress in the spread of the witness concerning Jesus from its origin in Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and on to the ends of the earth.

**Romans:** Explains to believers in the church in Rome the theology of God's righteousness. Paul also writes to prepare them for his visit and enlist their assistance in his effort to preach the gospel in Spain.

**1 Corinthians:** Confronts a church strongly influenced by its immoral context, and to answer specific questions the church had sent to Paul.

**2 Corinthians:** Defends Paul's apostleship while confronting false apostles.

**Galatians:** Provides a defense against the efforts of legalists to introduce works into the equation of salvation. Paul shows how God has always justified by faith—not works—and how the true life of faith is a life according to the rule of the Spirit, not the flesh.

**Ephesians:** Explains the spiritual position and privilege of believers that was given to them by God's grace, and reminds them of the obedience that must follow as a result.



**Philippians:** Explains Paul's present circumstances in prison in Rome, while exhorting the congregation to joyful pursuit of Christ despite the threats of persecution, pride and ambition, false teachers, and material need.

**Colossians:** Articulates the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ to a church facing the threat of false teaching that sought to syncretize and integrate Christ with other religious philosophies, including legalism, asceticism, worship of angels, and other pre-Gnostic trends.

**1 Thessalonians:** Encourages a young church in their vibrant, influential faith, and exhorts them in the basic church matters over which they had questions and struggles.

**2 Thessalonians:** Comforts a young church in the face of growing persecution, reminding them that the Lord will bring retribution to those who were the source of their suffering. It is also to correct false understanding and practice that had arisen since his first letter to them concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Timothy:** Instructs Timothy, and the church in general, how believers are to conduct themselves in the household of God. Addressed to Paul's son in the faith who was tasked with shepherding the Ephesian church, this epistle serves as a manual for young pastors about basic church order.

**2 Timothy:** Conveys Paul's final instructions and exhortations before his death to his son in the faith to persevere as a faithful man of God until the very end.

**Titus:** Instructs Titus—who was left by Paul on the island of Crete to serve the churches there—how to develop order, godliness, and doctrinal understanding in the churches.

**Philemon:** Makes a personal request to Philemon to forgive and restore his runaway slave, Onesimus. This epistle serves as a beautiful and practical model for Christian intercession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

**Hebrews:** Displays to a Jewish audience of both genuine Christians and Jews interested in the gospel message the superiority of Jesus Christ over the old, Levitical system. This epistle contrasts the incomplete, temporal provisions of the old covenant with the perfect, once-for-all provisions of the new covenant established through the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

**James:** Emphasizes to a Jewish audience in the Diaspora that saving faith is evidenced by tangible works of righteousness. It complements Paul's emphasis on justification by faith alone by adding that such saving faith always manifests in godly works.

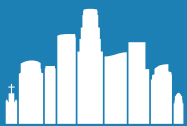
**1 Peter:** Encourages and instructs Christians to live obediently in every area of practical life despite the threats and persecutions of a hostile world.

**2 Peter:** Warns and instructs Christians to counter the growing influence of false teachers who were infiltrating the churches in Asia Minor.

**1 John:** Provides spiritual tests in an increasingly confusing church environment to determine and describe true and false believers in the church.

**2 John:** Emphasizes to a particular local group or house-church hosted by "the elect lady" the necessity of both truth and love in determining the basis for fellowship.

**3 John:** Encourages Gaius to continue the loving expression of hospitality to faithful missionaries of the truth, while warning against the prideful selfishness evidenced by Diotrephes.



**Jude:** Awakens Christians to the threat of false teaching and calls them to contend earnestly for the apostolic faith in light of the danger of apostasy.

**Revelation:** Encourages and exhorts churches facing stagnation, worldliness, false teaching, persecution, and judgment by revealing to them the culmination of the purposes of God through a picture of the end times, with Christ at the center.

## The Application of the Bible

*Now that we have taken a look at the divine nature of the Bible and its extraordinary content, we must read and apply God's Word. That is why Scriptures were given to us. It is God's message to all humanity, calling us to learn the Word and respond appropriately. That is why the commitment to learning the Word of God, especially by regular reading through the Bible, is important for the life of every believer. Scripture only comes alive in our lives when we apply it, and before we apply it, we must know it.*

There are four important principles for effectively applying the Bible to one's life:

### A. Read the Bible

The best way to understand the Bible, other than hearing it taught or preached, is to read the Word of God yourself. The key is to read the entirety of the Bible and not just the sections that seem easy or agreeable. If you pick and choose, you will have an unhealthy spiritual diet. You will not know many of the themes or spiritual lessons that God wants to teach you. A Christian's spiritual growth will never advance beyond His intake of the Word of God. This is why it is important we read through the bible, book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse.

**"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near."  
(Revelation 1:3)**

### B. Study the Bible

We must not only read, but study the Word. We must seek to understand its meaning as accurately and sensibly as possible. Though verses or passages have multiple applications, there is only one meaning that God intended to convey through the writers, and it is our job to learn that timeless principle in order to rightly apply that truth to our lives. Every text has one interpretation, one meaning, and many applications to life.

**"Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." (Acts 17:11)**

### C. Memorize the Bible

We benefit from the Bible by memorizing its contents, especially key passages dealing with the nature of God, the gospel, or godly living. Memorization helps with combating sin and temptation, sobering you in your spiritual walk, and inspiring your life of praise for God.

**"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."  
(Psalm 119:11)**



## The Application of the Bible

Finally, we take what we have learned from the Bible and we meditate on its message. We reflect on God's Word in order to understand how best to apply those lessons to our lives so as to make the wisest, most God-honoring choices in every situation.

***"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."***

***(Psalm 1:1-2).***

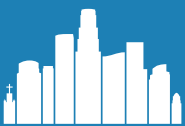
## EXERCISE

**1. What does 2 Timothy 3:16 say about the Bible? (Choose the correct answer)**

- Some of the Bible is inspired by God and some is inspired by men.
- The entire Bible is inspired by God.
- Only those parts that speak to me in a personal or relevant way are inspired by God.
- The matters dealing with salvation are true, but not necessarily the historical facts.

**2. How do the following verses show that God's Word is important?**

1. 2 Timothy 3:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Hebrews 4:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**3. List five reasons for knowing God's Word.**

- 1. 2 Timothy 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. 1 Peter 2:2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Psalm 119:11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Psalm 119:38 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Psalm 119:105 \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What is the overall message of the entire Bible (Choose the correct answer)**

- The Bible teaches you how to be a better person through its wisdom.
- The Bible teaches you how to achieve social, cultural, and political harmony in the world.
- The Bible teaches one of many paths to God, but the most effective way.
- The Bible teaches God's specific plan of redemption through the Savior Jesus Christ.

**5. Please write any questions or comments you might have about this session and bring them to class or to someone in leadership at your church.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. A great way to learn the Bible and to grow in your knowledge of and walk with God is to have a daily reading plan. Just as you eat food on a daily basis to keep your body nourished, so a daily investment into Scripture will keep your soul nourished (Matthew 4:4)**



**Daily Reading Plan** - Legacy City Church reads a chapter a day together and receives a daily devotional. If you would like to sign-up to join the **DAILY READING PLAN**, please go to [LegacyCityChurch.com](http://LegacyCityChurch.com) and click on the "Legacy's Compass Link."

Devote to reading Scripture daily using this suggested model for reading the Bible (A journal would be helpful for this exercise):

- **Prayer:** Confess sins. Ask for wisdom and understanding of Scripture. Humble yourself so you can properly hear the Word of God and learn from it.
- **Reading:** Read the given passage at least twice for a clear understanding of it. Read to understand the passage, especially in its literary and historical context.
- **Interpretation:** Identify the main idea of the passage. Moreover, jot down some of the spiritual lessons or principles that are apparent in the text.
- **Application:** Think about ways to apply those principles to specific areas of your life.

Choose a passage (ex. Psalm 1, Matthew 5:21-26) and use this model to complete your devotional. Be ready to share your observations during the next session.

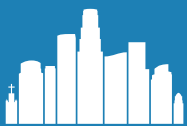
---

## MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

“Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!”

*Psalm 119:1*

---



# LESSON TWO:

## What is God Like?

“ Almighty One! I bend in dust before Thee; Even so veiled cherubs bend;  
In calm and still devotion I adore Thee, All-wise, All-present Friend.  
Thou to the earth its emerald robe hast given, Or curtained it in snow;  
And the bright sun, and the soft moon in heaven, before Thy presence bow.



**Sir John Bowring**

“ You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.



**Exodus 20:3-6**

## INTRODUCTION

National and global surveys of the past and the present reveal that a majority of people believe in the existence of God. It's not quite so difficult to believe that an all-powerful deity created this world and sustains life as we know it. The real question is, what is God like? When this question is asked, different opinions surface. We see evidence of this in the different world religions of the past and present, as well as the subjective, and often times fanciful, speculations of individuals.

So who is God? Does it really matter? How does a right understanding of God affect my life?

The answer to this question is important for every person living on earth. Just like a wrong view of your parents, your employer, and your government can have harmful consequences for your life, so too can a wrong view of Almighty God. God is a God of truth, and He created us for a specific purpose, which is why we cannot afford to make God who we want Him to be to fit our preferences. We must come to the Author on His terms. We must make it our life's pursuit to learn who God is and to be sure of it.

In this lesson, you will learn about the nature of God:

- The Trinity
- God's incommunicable attributes
- God's communicable attributes



# EXPLORATION

## THE TRINITY

The Bible affirms that there is one, and only one, God who created and controls the universe. The Bible teaches that this one God exists eternally in three separate, distinct Persons - The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. This teaching is known as the doctrine of the **Trinity**.

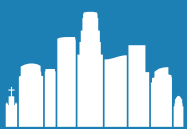
This doctrine means that the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. However, the Father is not the Son, just as the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. There are three distinct Persons within the Godhead, yet all are of the one and same essence of deity.

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are not three different Gods. On the other hand, God isn't one Person who creatively put on three different characters or roles throughout the Bible. God is Triune in personhood, but just one in essence. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all have the same attributes of God, but function differently in regards to their roles and relationships within the Godhead.

The doctrine of the Trinity is what distinguishes Christianity from all the other monotheistic (one-God religions). The definition is reasonably understood by many, but its truth is very profound. It is a mystery that is not easily grasped with our finite minds, much like the concept of eternity or the compatibility of God's sovereignty and man's free will. It is important that we recognize and accept it with humility because it is clearly taught in the Bible (ex. Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Heresies and "Christian" cults have surfaced in church history because of wrong understandings of the Trinity, ranging from modalism (one Person in God who acts as three separate characters) to tritheism (three distinct Gods). A true believer is one who is marked by a reasonably accurate understanding of the gospel, and one aspect of the gospel is understanding and accepting the Triune nature of God as part of His confession of Christ (Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:9; 1 John 5:20).

Understanding the true nature of God also involves understanding the eternal attributes of God. Because the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, each Person will have the same divine attributes. God possesses many attributes that we can never know experientially, since He is infinite and we are not. But there are other attributes that God has allowed us to know (although not perfectly in this life). This knowledge is the difference between God's **incommunicable attributes** (exclusive only to God) and **communicable attributes** (inclusive with mankind).



## INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:

- **Immutability:** God never changes. His nature and character are always the same. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:17-18).
- **Omnipresence:** God is everywhere at all times. He is not limited to one space at one time. (Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 139:7-12).
- **Omniscience:** God knows everything there is to know. He is the source of all knowledge in the universe. There is nothing past, present, or future of which God is not aware (Job 34:21; Psalm 139:1-6).
- **Omnipotence:** God is all powerful. He is more powerful than any created being, having enough strength to do anything (Jeremiah 32:17; Revelation 19:6).
- **Aseity:** God is independent. Whereas we are derived and dependent on God for our survival, God is fully independent in regards to His existence and attributes (John 1:3-4; Acts 17:28).
- **Eternality:** God exists forever. He has no beginning and no end. He has always existed and always will exist (Isaiah 44:6; 43:13).
- **Sovereignty:** God has supreme control over all peoples, events, and circumstances. There is nothing that is beyond God's control (Isaiah 45:23; 46:9-10).

## COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:

- **Righteousness:** God is the standard of what is right and good. He always acts in accordance with his righteous character. There is no unrighteousness in Him.
- **Justice:** God is perfectly just. When God judges, He gives what is owed or deserved according to the standard of His perfect righteousness. He is never unjust.
- **Holiness:** God is perfectly holy. He is unstained by the evils in the world. He is absolutely pure and perfect.
- **Love:** God loves perfectly. His love is unconditional and not based on the merit or appeal of the object. God only hates that which is evil.
- **Truth:** God is truth. He always acts faithfully in accordance with His nature, character, and promises. God never lies.
- **Mercy:** God's compassion is great, especially in pardoning the undeserving. Divine mercy is the just expression of God's compassion to those who have rebelled or dishonored Him.



God's communicable attributes are traits we understand and can act out to a certain degree, although not perfectly because of our fallen nature. However, when we go to be with the Lord in heaven, we will receive our glorified (heavenly) bodies, and only then will we be able to live out these attributes perfectly. However, the incommunicable attributes are traits that **only** God possesses, which is what makes Him the infinite, unfathomable, and wondrous God.

## EXERCISE

### 1. What is the correct definition of the Trinity (Choose an answer):

\_\_\_ The Trinity means there are three different Gods -Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

\_\_\_ The Trinity means that the one God played three different characters or personas - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - throughout history.

\_\_\_ The Trinity means that there is only one God who exists eternally in three separate Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

### 2. Name three incommunicable (exclusive only to God) attributes of God:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Name three communicable (inclusive with mankind) attributes of God:

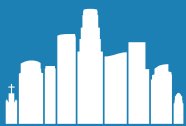
1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. How does understanding God's nature (who he is) and attributes (what he is like) affect you:

Prayer life? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



Moral decisions?

---

---

---

---

Response to trials or blessings?

---

---

---

---

Serving and helping others?

---

---

---

---

---

# MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK



***The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks down on the heavens and the earth?***



**Psalm 113:4-5**

---



# LESSON THREE:

## Who is Jesus Christ?

“

*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 the level with a man who says he is a poached egg—or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.*

”

**C.S. Lewis**

“

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

”

**John 1:1, 14**

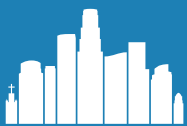
## INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ is the most renowned and influential person who has ever lived. There have been more messages and books written about Jesus than any other historical person. His teachings have produced lives of righteousness in countless people in the last 2,000 years. Christ has spawned graduate schools that base educational doctorates on His life, teachings, and ministry. History is even divided according to the life of Christ (B.C./A.D.)!

Interesting, and often times tragically, there have been more opinions about the identity of Christ than any other person who has ever existed. Orthodox Jews believe Jesus to be a good teacher at best and a deceiver at worst. Muslims believe Jesus to be one of many prophets. Hindus and New Agers believe Jesus to be an enlightened master. Liberal scholars believe Jesus to be a moralist. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe Jesus to be Michael the Archangel.

However, all of these views fail to take into account the biblical record of who Jesus claimed to be. He was not only a prophet and a good teacher. He was the Son of God, one of the Persons in the Godhead who left the eternal heaven and entered into human history to take on humanity. He was born of a virgin and lived a normal, but morally perfect, human life, all the while being fully God.

Having a right view of Jesus Christ is as important as having a right view of God. When one conjures up false views about Jesus other than the Jesus portrayed in the Word of God, he worships a false Christ and commits idolatry. This happens in many ways: disbelieving in Jesus' deity, humanity, sinlessness, virgin birth, resurrection, mission, etc. That is why it is important to know who Jesus is and what it is that He did that changed the course of human civilization.



In this lesson, you will learn about the nature of Christ:

- The humanity of Jesus
- The deity of Jesus
- The Savior Jesus
- The King Jesus

# EXPLORATION

## THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

Jesus Christ—the Son of God—became man! But Jesus did not arrive to earth from the sky as human already, nor did He possess another human body at His arrival. Rather, Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb by God the Holy Spirit. As with any other child, Jesus was born via a woman through a normal birth process, and lived the following 30 years of His life as fully human, with all the predictable limitations and weaknesses of a human being.

As a human, Jesus grew physically, emotionally, and cognitively (Luke 2:40;52). He was tired and slept (Mark 4:38). He became hungry and ate (Luke 4:2). He grew weary and rested (John 4:6). He was grieved and wept (John 11:35). He had all the body parts characteristic of a human male (Luke 24:39). As a man, Jesus was much like us all. The only difference is that He was without sin and this is referred to as the **incarnation**.

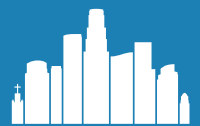
Jesus' sinless nature is only possible because He was also God, who cannot do evil (1 John 1:5). Christ was empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a perfect life (Matthew 3:16). Christ lived a perfect life of righteousness, which means He kept all of God's commandments without stumbling even once (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:2). This is what made Jesus qualified to go to the cross to die as a substitute for mankind. Every man is required to pay his own debt and cannot pay the debt of another (Psalm 49:7), but the God-Man Jesus Christ was the only person qualified enough to pay the debt of other human beings, which He did on the cross as a ransom to save those who would believe in Him for eternal salvation (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6).

## THE DEITY OF CHRIST

The man Jesus Christ was also completely God. Although He became human at one point in time, Jesus was always God in eternity past (Psalm 110:1-2), was God during His time on earth (John 8:58), and is still God today in heaven (Revelation 22:13).

Jesus possesses all the attributes of deity. He is immutable (Hebrews 13:8), omniscient (Colossians 2:2-3), eternal (1 John 1:1-2), sovereign (Matthew 28:18), true (John 14:6), and holy (Acts 3:14-15). He is also addressed in numerous titles indicating that He is God, including Immanuel (Matthew 1:23), Lord (Philippians 2:10-11), and "I Am" (the Jewish title reserved for God; John 8:58).

Jesus demonstrated His deity with the display of His powers to authenticate His gospel ministry. This includes calming the storm (Matthew 8:23-27), healing sicknesses and disease (Luke 4:40), casting out demons (Luke 4:33-36), and even raising people from the dead (John 11:43-44). He also asserted His deity by forgiving sins, which only God alone can do (Mark 2:3-12). There are many instances when Jesus' apostles also affirm the Godhood of Christ (Romans 10:9; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20).



It is important to stress again that when Jesus took on human flesh, He did not become any less God, as if His God nature went from 100% to 50%. He never ceased being a deity (Colossians 2:9) but rather added humanity to His deity (Matthew 17:1-8). He was as much God during His first venture on earth as He was in eternity past. This reality is called the **kenosis** - the one Person, Jesus Christ, exists simultaneously in two separate, but irreducible natures of God and Man.

So what does it mean when Philippians 2:6-7 declares that Jesus "emptied Himself"? What did Christ empty Himself of? The answer is that He emptied Himself of the use of some of His divine attributes and privileges, which were characteristic of Him in heaven before His incarnation. These include:

- Setting aside His glory (John 17:5)
- Setting aside His independent authority (Philippians 2:7)
- Setting aside the open display of His divine attributes (Matthew 24:36)
- Setting aside His eternal riches (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- Setting aside His face-to-face relationship with the Father (Matthew 27:46)

In humbling Himself, Jesus took on the form of a bond-slave, which is why He submitted Himself to the Father while on earth (Isaiah 53; John 5:30; 14:28). **Christ had to be man in order to die in man's place for man's sins (Matthew 20:28) and had to be God in order for His sacrifice to be perfect, let alone accept the trust and worship that only belongs to God (Romans 3:23).**

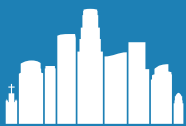
## The Savior Jesus

Jesus Christ is also the Savior of the world. He is the Messiah as prophesied many times in the Old Testament. Messiah means "Anointed One" or "Chosen One." The word Christ is the Greek equivalent of the word Messiah, so Jesus Christ's name is literally, "Jesus Messiah". In biblical times, anointing someone with oil was a sign that God was consecrating or setting apart that person for a unique role.

In the Old Testament, people were anointed for the positions of prophet, priest, and king. These separate offices were held by various men throughout the Old Testament epoch, but Scripture prophesies about one who will be the Deliverer of Israel - the one who will be the embodiment and fulfillment of all of these positions (Isaiah 42:1; 61:1-3).

Jesus Christ is that Deliverer. He is the Redeemer. He is the ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King. He came on a unique mission to save people from their sins and to lift the curse that sin brought upon God's creation. He did so by dying on the cross to take the sins of the world upon Himself in order to free believers from the eternal consequences of their sins, which is hell (discussed more in the next lesson).

That is why Jesus called Himself the Lamb of God (John 1:29), the Bread of Life (John 6:35), the Light of the World (John 8:12), the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25), the way the truth and the life (John 14:6). Jesus presents Himself as the one and only solution to humanity's sin problem. Those who repent and believe in His name will have all of their sins forgiven and have eternal life (John 3:16).



# The King Jesus

Jesus Christ is also the King of creation. As God, He reigns over all the earth. Christians are those who are eternally redeemed and destined to serve the Lord for all eternity as His subjects. Jesus Christ's earthly rule is prophesied in the Old Testament and is the long-awaited hope of Israel (2 Samuel 7:13; Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 14:9). Jesus is Israel's final King.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead three days after the crucifixion proved not only the validity of His atoning work but also proved the Father granted Christ the right to rule over His people (Ephesians 1:21). His ascension to heaven on the Mount of Olives demonstrates His exaltation by God (Philippians 2:9) to sit at the right hand of the Father in rule (Hebrews 1:3). After a time of Great Tribulation on the earth, Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead and to establish His kingdom on earth (Matthew 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 19-20).

## EXERCISE

### 1. Who is Jesus? (Choose the correct answer):

- Prophet
- Teacher
- Lord
- God
- King
- All of the above

### 2. Describe in a sentence the definition of the incarnation? Why did Jesus need to be God-Man in order to save sinners? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. What did Jesus not set aside in His incarnation? (Choose the correct answer)

- His independent authority
- Some of His deity or God nature
- His face-to-face relationship with the Father
- His glory



4. How has your understanding of Jesus' person changed? Is He who you thought Him to be? What implications do the truth of Jesus' identity have on your life?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. In light of knowing who Jesus really is, how can you best prepare for His second coming (2 Peter 3:14)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

## MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK



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

John 1:1



# LESSON FOUR:

## What is the Gospel?



*The gospel is not merely an introductory message to Christianity—it is the message of Christianity, and the believer would do well to give his life in the pursuit of knowing its glory and making its glory known. There are many things to be known in this world and countless truths to be investigated within the realm of Christianity itself; nevertheless, the glorious gospel of our blessed God and His Son Jesus Christ ranks high above them all.*



**Paul Washer**



*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*



**Romans 1:16**

## INTRODUCTION

There is no greater dilemma in life than the issue of death. All of us know that we have done evil countless times in our life, and our consciences testify that we will be held accountable for our actions. We know that we need forgiveness and a clean slate in order to enter heaven. But the question is: How?

Religions throughout the ages offer different solutions to the problem of sin and death. Islam teaches that salvation is by obedience to Allah and by following the Five Pillars. Judaism teaches that salvation is by following the Law of Moses. Buddhism teaches that salvation is by following the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

All of these religions believe that man can achieve salvation by his own merit and efforts. However, God's Word teaches that man cannot save himself. Every man is guilty and must be punished for every one of his wicked deeds. There is no hope in man's best attempts, which is why we need a Savior. We need God Himself to make the way possible, and He did that through the full and final work of Jesus Christ. This is the message of the gospel.

In this lesson, you will learn the gospel message through two points:

- The Problem (The Bad News)
- The Solution (The Good News)



# EXPLORATION

## THE PROBLEM (THE BAD NEWS)

### CREATOR

There is one God who exists eternally in three separate persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 3:17; 17:5). God is a personal being who created everything for His own pleasure and glory. The galaxy, which includes the earth and everything in it, is a testimony of His creative genius (Ps 19:1-3). The chief of all of God's creation is human beings, both men, and women. People are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27; 9:6), therefore they are loved by God like no other living creatures.

We are created for one purpose—to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7). We do so by loving Him, serving Him, praising Him, worshiping Him, and obeying Him. If there is a God (which the Bible presupposes from Genesis 1:1), then He is the creator of all things. And if God created all things, then it is only rational that we owe Him our lives and allegiance. There is really is no such thing as living for one's self as if there is no accountability to a higher power.

### STANDARD

Living a worshipful life implies that there is a set standard which we are called to live by. We are called to be holy, just as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16). God's standard of holiness is not some arbitrary way that He sets for humans in order to make their lives miserable, or something that He cannot attain Himself. This perfect standard is a reflection of His very nature, which is entirely righteous, good, pure, and lovely.

This perfect standard poses a frightening situation. When we look around, we see that nobody is holy. Everyone who has ever lived has failed to meet the standard. Everyone has strayed away not just once, but countless times. When we break God's Law, we sin against God.

What does sin look like in action? In the Ten Commandments, God tells us not to have any other gods before Him, not to worship idols, not to take the name of the Lord in vain, not to murder, not to steal, etc. In the New Testament, Jesus qualifies the Mosaic Law in the Sermon on the Mount by saying that lust and unjust divorce is equivalent to adultery (Matt 5:27; 31-32) and hatred to murder (Matt 5:19).

The Bible describes sins as deeds that we have done in thought, word, and deed, which even encompasses things that we support or encourage (ex. abortion, euthanasia, orgies, gay marriage, divorce, incest, false religions). There are also sins of omissions, which are things that we fail to do, such as ignoring the plight of the poor or speaking up on behalf of the innocent. There is really no neutrality when it comes to moral issues.

God's Law aims to do one thing: expose the depravity of man. The Bible makes the case for man's wretchedness when it says that he is enslaved to his love for sin (Jn 3:19; 8:34), does not understand the commands of God (1 Cor 2:14), and suppresses the truth about God in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18). Their depravity is supremely demonstrated when they scornfully reject God's Son, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:18), choosing instead to remain in the filth of their iniquity and the lusts of the world (1 Jn 2:16).



## JUDGMENT

When a person breaks God's Law, whether lying on an application or murdering his child, there are grave consequences. The Bible states that the guilty will ultimately pay for their sins by answering to God Himself on a Day of Judgment. It is a place described as outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 25:41). There the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched (Mk 9:48).

Revelation 20:11-15 describes the Day of Judgment as "the Great White Throne Judgment." Here, all unbelievers who have ever lived will stand before God to be tried for their sins. All the guilty from the age of Adam to the end of the millennial period will stand trial before the Lord Jesus (Acts 17:31). His angel will open books that will contain every sin committed by the guilty (Rev 20:12). The book is their criminal record to prove their guilt, and so they are without excuse on that day. Those who die in their sins will then spend eternity in the lake of fire in conscious torment, hell.

## The Solution (The Good News)

### INCARNATION

Living a worshipful life implies that there is a set standard which we are called to live by. Some 2,000 years ago, God the Son came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. He was the long-prophesied Jewish Messiah spoken of by the many Jewish prophets in the Old Testament. He was in the womb of a woman named Mary and was virgin birthed. Because He did not have a human father, but was conceived by God the Spirit, Jesus did not have an exclusively human nature. He possessed both a human and a divine nature.

Because Jesus was God, He lived a sinless life (Matt 3:12; Lk 4:18-19). This life means that Jesus kept the Law perfectly. He fulfilled God's standard and was entirely pleasing to the Father. He never lied, stole, cheated, lusted, coveted, murdered, failed to worship God above all else, etc. He was the standard of what it means to be the ideal human in God's eyes. He was the only man to have ever fulfilled God's command in Matthew 5:48, "you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The natural man does not understand the commands of God (1 Cor 2:14), and suppresses the truth about God in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18). Their depravity is supremely demonstrated when they scornfully reject God's Son, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:18), choosing instead to remain in the filth of their iniquity and the lusts of the world (1 Jn 2:16).

### ATONEMENT

Jesus' perfect obedience to the Law of God (often called His active obedience) qualified Him to be our substitute. Jesus was a blameless, innocent man who didn't need to die for anyone's sins. But He willingly chose to die for the transgressions of those who would believe (Jn 10:18). This choice is what made Jesus' substitution, and God's punishment of Him, to be a just act.

Christ gave up His life out of love for sinners (Lk 22:42; Jn 6:38; 15:13). **When Jesus was crucified on the cross, He took our guilt, punishment, and death sentence upon Himself, thereby bearing the wrath of God for our sins and satisfying divine justice** (called His passive obedience). God turned His eternal wrath away from sinners and thereby freed them from His judgment. Jesus paid our penalty for all the times we have broken His Law so that no guilt would be left on our record. This is what atonement means, most specifically penal substitution.



## RESURRECTION

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is a life-changing event that has major implications for the human race. It is the point in time in which Jesus died for the sins of the world. All of this is no good if Jesus had not resurrected from the dead. Death did not have the last word over the Lord Jesus. Three days later Christ conquered the grave and resurrected from the dead, appearing to His eleven disciples and over 500 eyewitnesses (Matt 28; Mark 16; Jn 20).

Some people wonder why Jesus' resurrection is so significant and why the death itself does not suffice as an end result. Here are two reasons:

1. If Christ had not resurrected, then it would not have proved His claim to be the Son of God. Many times during His ministry, Jesus made shocking and remarkable claims of deity, even performing miracles, signs, and wonders to bolster His teachings. The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God who also fulfilled the many prophecies of the Old Testament (Ps 16:10; Is 53:11).
2. If Christ had not resurrected, then no one can expect to resurrect in the future when they die. In other words, if Jesus was still dead, that means that His sacrifice was not perfect. He was merely a human being. Christ's resurrection is God's proof to the world the sacrifice was perfect. Not only does this give us hope of salvation, but also the hope of a glorified body fit for the New Heavens and the New Earth.

After giving His disciples the Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matt 29:18-20), Jesus ascended back to the Father in heaven, where He is to this day (Acts 1:9). This is the ascension. Jesus is forever God-Man, even after His death and resurrection. He now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven, interceding on our behalf as our great High-Priest (Heb 2:9; 4:14). **This intercession means that believers can approach God with confidence and find grace and mercy in times of struggle, weakness, and temptation.**

## RESPONSE

**Now that Christ has accomplished all the work on Calvary, what exactly is the sinner's responsibility? The Bible says we must repent (Lk 3:8; Acts 20:21; 2 Cor 7:10-11) and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in order to be saved (Jn 3:16; Rom 10:9).**

**Repentance** means change of mind and purpose, which leads to a new course of action. It is not just an intellectual acknowledgment of sin or even a feeling of guilt over it, but a change of direction, which is why John the Baptist expected true repentance to result in a different lifestyle (Matt 3:8). The sinner repents (turns away) from his sins and turns to Jesus, trusting in Him as Lord and Savior. **To trust in Jesus as Lord is equivalent to surrendering your autonomy and handing your life over to the King to live as His faithful subject.**

To have faith in Jesus as Savior means that you trust in what Jesus accomplished for you on the cross. This faith in Him means that you believe that His substitutionary atonement on the cross was good enough to save you from your sins and that your good works do not add or take away from His achievements on Calvary. Jesus paid it all on the cross so that by simply trusting in Him, like you would trust in armor to protect you in battle, He guarantees He will save you (Rom 10:9; 1 Jn 4:14).



When a sinner repents and believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he is made right with the Lord. This righteousness is the doctrine of justification. **Justification** by faith is the simple truth that a man is saved as a result of grace through faith – apart from works. Works, whether it is moral or religious deeds, happens as a result of the Christian’s conversion, but is not the means by which he is saved. It does not add to salvation in any form. It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone that we are redeemed.

At the moment of salvation, God not only takes our sins and places them into Christ’s account, but He takes the perfect life of Jesus (His righteousness) and credits it to our account. This is the doctrine of **imputed righteousness**. He imparts all the life accomplishments of Jesus to our lives as if we had done it all, so that our account is perfect and full before God. Because of Christ’s righteousness imputed into our accounts, God sees us perfect.

This great exchange of the cross, which only comes by our union with Christ through faith, is our basis for entering heaven. Only perfect people get to heaven, and our perfection comes not because of our own “perfection,” but a perfection that is given to us by faith in Christ. Once this Great Exchange occurs, we are saved. God gives us the gift of His Holy Spirit, who regenerates (spiritual rebirth) and indwells us permanently, to not only guarantee our eternal salvation (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22), but to also empower us for a holy, fruitful, and purposeful life while on this earth. He gives us new desires to want to please God (2 Cor 5:17). This is called **sanctification** - God setting us apart for a new life in Christ.

## EXERCISE

1. What is the gospel message? (Choose the correct answer):

- God blesses devout believers with prosperity and health.
- God gives Christians a meaningful life to make a difference in society.
- God saves wretched sinners by dying on the cross for them so they can be saved by faith in Christ.
- God requires man to have faith and to work a little bit to achieve their salvation.

2. Give a one sentence description of each point of the gospel message:

Creator: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Standard: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Judgment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



Incarnation:

---

---

---

Atonement:

---

---

---

Resurrection:

---

---

---

Response:

---

---

---

**3. Have you repented and trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? If not, what is holding you back? Will you make that life commitment today?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

## MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

“ *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* ”

Romans 5:8

---



# LESSON FIVE:

## What is a Genuine Christian?

““ *When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.*

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

““ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

## INTRODUCTION

During the last 2,000 years, Christianity has exploded all around the world. The Kingdom influence spread rapidly beginning in the 1st century and still has noticeable influence in many societies and cultures to this day. There are about 800 million people in the world who profess to be protestant Christian, from all different denominations ranging from Presbyterian to non-denominational.

If there are so many Christians around the world, why is it not more evident in their life? The term "hypocrisy" is a prevalent reputation of Christians. In truth, there are hypocrites in the church. These people have no love for God. They have no interest in the Bible. They hold to a false view of the gospel. They love what is sinful. They support ideas and movements that are clearly unbiblical.

It's important to understand that the New Testament repeatedly gives warnings and admonitions regarding false faith. In other words, Jesus and the apostles taught that within the visible church, there will be true and false converts. Both groups profess to be Christian, but one group is saved, and another is still lost. This is why this closing lesson is the most important teaching you can hear. Nothing is more important than to make your salvation sure in Christ.

In this lesson, you will learn:

- A False Disciple
- How God Plans Salvation
- How We Show Belief



## A False Disciple

Matthew 7:21-23 describes a sobering reality that in the final judgment, there will be many people who believed they were Christians, but in the end were exposed as false converts. It reads: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

In fact, this topic is the theme in many of Jesus' Gospel parables, such as the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9), the Good Fish and the Bad Fish (Matthew 13:47-50), the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30), and the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). All of these parables describe that in the kingdom until Christ's second coming, there will be true believers and false believers in the mix of the church. In the end, hypocrites and heretics will be eternally cast out of God's presence along with those who have openly rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The epistles also reveal this prophecy. Paul exhorts us in 2 Corinthians 13:5 to examine ourselves to see whether we are truly in the faith. John teaches that those who fail to display the love of God to others are those who still walk in darkness (1 John 1:11). Furthermore, he describes how "Christians" who desert the church, much like Judas, were never really part of the group to begin with (1 John 1:19). In other words, they were never saved. Jude describes false disciples as ungodly persons who are marked for eternal destruction (Jude 3).

What is the general difference between a true and a false believer? It is this: **True believers bear fruit in their lives, whereas false believers do not. True believers can't help but display godly works in their lives, whereas false believers do not.**

## HOW GOD PLANS SALVATION

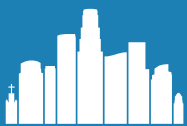
Before we discuss the specific traits that characterize a true believer in contrast to a false one, it is important to look at how God sovereignly designed salvation so that we see God's role in the salvation process. In turn we see what must happen in every believer's life if they claim to be Christian.

Romans 8:29-30 teaches: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

Notice in this verse five links in the chain of a Christian's life:

Foreknew-----> Predestined-----> Called-----> Justified-----> Glorified

The phrase "He also" is repeated, which shows that it is an unbreakable chain of events in a true Christian's life. The tense is also insightful. The unbreakable chain of events all occur in the past tense (and not the future tense). It demonstrates that salvation is written in eternity past with God. It is God alone who plans and brings salvation about. Even faith is a gift from God (2 Peter 1:1, Eph 2:8-9). That is why genuine disciples of Christ will never fall away from the faith or live like a pagan because his faith and character are being preserved by God as part of His eternal plan.



Because all sinners are born spiritually dead and depraved (Romans 3:10), no person has the will or moral capacity to choose God, either for salvation or for obedient godly living. It takes the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit to bring unprecedented spiritual life to the souls of men. That is why Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).

Being "born again" is to be **regenerated**. The Holy Spirit generates that new life into the sinner, the person simply cannot turn from his life of sin and believe in the gospel without the Holy Spirit. Just as you did not choose to be born, the Christian does not choose to be born again spiritually; it is a work of God. Jesus declared, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit" (John 15:16). 2 Corinthians 5:17 testifies to the truth of regeneration in every Christian's life when it says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away behold the new has come."

According to the pattern of Romans 8:29, and passages like 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Peter 1:3-5, every true believer will be an unending work in progress. This is not to say that he is morally perfect, but he will walk in the direction of obedience and persevere in that walk throughout his life. Those who fall away, abide by heretical doctrine, or live in gross, worldly sin as an unrepentant pattern of life demonstrate that they were never saved to begin with (1 John 2:19). That explains why some "Christians" fall away, follow heresies, or live like atheists.

### How We Show Belief

The fruits that come from a regenerated life will manifest in different ways. One of the marks of a genuine convert is that he will live a godly life. Those whom God has saved will be sanctified. There is no Christian who does not go through what is called progressive sanctification. Sanctification is the process whereby God sets aside a believer specifically for a lifetime of continual growth. That is why Hebrews 12:14 says that without sanctification, no one will see the Lord.

During this sanctification process, God bears fruit in a Christian (Matthew 13:8). There is no such thing as a fruitless Christian. A fruitless believer is basically an unregenerated person. Such a person needs to repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Putting on a parachute versus merely admiring a parachute is all the difference in the world between spiritual life and death.

Fruits that show true belief include:

- repentance from a sinful lifestyle (Rom 7:14; 1 Jn 1:8-10)
- selfless love for God (Ps 42:1; Lk 10:27)
- a healthy prayer life (Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1-4)
- humility (Matt 5:1-12; Jas 4:6)
- a worldview committed to God's Glory (Is 43:7; Jer 9:23-24; 1 Cor 10:31)
- spiritual growth (Lk 8:15; Jn 15:1-16; Eph 4:12-16)
- desire for God's Word (1 Pet 2:1-3)



- selfless love for others (1 Jn 2:9; 3:14)
- transformation of life (2 Cor 5:17)
- value of eternal things over earthly things (2 Cor 5:11; 2 Tim 4:8)

A final characteristic that the Bible teaches about the true Christian is that he will persevere in the faith. A Christian will remain a Christian until the day he dies, which is called the **perseverance of the saints**. He will never fall away, no matter what trial, tribulation, and persecution comes his way (Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6). God will preserve the believer as part of His salvation plan for all those whom He has elected (Romans 8:29).

There is sometimes a misconception regarding the relationship of faith and works in the Christian's life. Skeptics claim that believer's do not have to bear fruit—or obey—in their Christian life, or else that would constitute a works-based salvation. The role of "works" must be clearly understood. "Works" come as a by-product of salvation; it is not the means of salvation. Christians do works because they have been born again; they do not do works to be born again. Christians do works because they are saved; they do not do works to get saved. Jesus already did all the work for us to purchase our salvation. All we need to do is trust in what Jesus did. However, God commands us to obey His word as an act of worship onto Him, in response to what we have been made into—children of the eternal kingdom.

Philippians 2:12 states, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." **We as Christians are commanded to live a righteous life, yet God works in us the whole time, so we have the power to obey.** A life of holiness is our call as believers in Christ, and that life of worship will involve practices like learning God's Word, being baptized, communion, evangelizing, praying, fellowshiping with the saints, etc.

## EXERCISE

1. What did Jesus teach in Matthew 7:21-23?

---



---



---



---

2. True believers will bear \_\_\_\_\_ in contrast to false believers.

3. Write out God's role in the salvation of a believer (Romans 8:29):

---



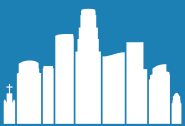
---



---



---



4. What does it mean to be born again? Why is being born again necessary in the Christian life? Is there such thing as a Christian who is not born again?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Name a few ways that Christians show they have salvation:

---

---

---

6. Do you have assurance of your salvation? What are some of the assuring signs? Are there any troubling signs? Can a true Christian ever lose their salvation?

---

---

---

---

---

---

# MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

“*Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*”

2 Corinthians 13:5

---

