

# CHRISTIANITY101<sup>ONLINE</sup>

KNOWING GOD IN A PERSONAL WAY

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# CHRISTIANITY 101

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**Christianity 101 Student Notes**—*Knowing God in a Personal Way*

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*Also in **Attachment 6** at the end of the book—with permission of Priority Associates, Inc.— is a shortened and edited article by Paul Barger entitled **Twelve Reasons People Hesitate To Follow Christ and What To Say.***

## *A Brief History*

**Christianity 101** is the introductory course of McLean University. Along with its sequel course — **Christianity 201**— it was designed and developed to help people like yourself begin and move ahead on their spiritual journey with Jesus Christ. Since 1990 thousands of students have benefited from reviewing these foundational truths of Scripture. To God be the glory!

## *For Further Information*

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# CHRISTIANITY 101 :: WEEK 1

*Can I Have a Personal Relationship With God?*

## INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY 101

### OUR GOALS FOR YOU

1. To help you establish or deepen your relationship with the God of the Bible
2. To help you understand how God has revealed Himself to us and what He has done for us
3. To help you understand some basic truths of the Christian faith

### OUR CURRICULUM FOR THE NEXT SIX WEEKS

**Week 1:** Can I Have a Personal Relationship With God?

**Week 2:** Who is Jesus Christ and Why is He Unique?

**Week 3:** Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?

**Week 4:** What Does Salvation Mean and Why Do I Need It?

**Week 5:** If I Need Salvation, How Can I Obtain It?

**Week 6:** How Can I Be Sure I'm Going to Heaven?

*Fill in dates for each week:*

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### OUR CLASS FORMAT, MATERIALS AND METHODS

**The format** takes a topical approach to the basics of the Christian faith. **The materials** include class handouts and worksheets, the Bible, CD's, and study supplements. **The method** is interactive with both lecture, informal Q & A, and short discussion exercises.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

What are some questions you hope will be answered in this course?

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## OUR KEY FOUNDATION—THE BIBLE

*Christianity 101* and its sequel courses operate under an important premise—***The Bible is God’s revealed truth.***

This means . . .

- The Bible is ***divinely inspired***.
- The Bible is ***fully accurate*** in its original form.
- The Bible is ***trustworthy***.
- The Bible is ***relevant, applicable and authoritative*** for our lives.

Because of this premise—that the Bible is God’s revealed truth—we’ve given you one CD by Lon Solomon called, ***“The Reliability of the Bible”***, Parts 1 and 2. We’re confident this information will answer many questions you may have about the Bible and also help you understand why you can put your full trust in the Bible as the Word of God. Please listen to them before next week’s class. This material is also summarized in **Attachment 1** at the end of this book.

Also, **Attachment 2** will give you other helpful information and answers to questions you may have about the Bible, while **Attachment 3** addresses non-biblical arguments for the existence of God.

## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is a collection of 66 different books: **39** Old Testament books and **27** New Testament books.

The Bible was written by about 40 different human authors in three languages over a period of 1,500 years.

The Bible never actually uses the word “Bible” to describe itself. Instead, it refers to itself as **scripture** which means **writing**.

The word **testament** means a legal, written declaration as well as a covenant and a witness.

- The Bible (Old and New Testament) therefore is a legal, written declaration, covenant and witness of God’s **character**, God’s **purposes**, and God’s **relationship** to His creation.
- The Old Testament points **forward** to the coming of Jesus Christ.
- The New Testament looks **backward** at His arrival and His impact on history and its eternal implications for the world—including you and me.

Indeed, the Bible as a whole presents one unified theme: God’s love and His desire for a relationship with us.

### Bible languages

The original languages of the Bible are:

- Hebrew (OT)
- Aramaic (OT)
- Greek (NT)

### Bible

“Bible” is from the Greek word **biblos** meaning “book.”

“Scripture” is from the Latin verb **scribere** meaning “to write” and from the past participle **scriptus**, “written.”

**TODAY'S TOPIC:**

*Can I Have a Personal Relationship With God?*

**HOW DOES GOD REVEAL HIMSELF TO ME?**

First, let's explore *how* God reveals Himself to us. God must reveal Himself to us before we can have a relationship with Him.

**DIVINE REVELATION**

**Revelation** is God making Himself known to mankind apart from human effort. All revelation has a supernatural basis because all revelation ultimately comes from God.

**TWO TYPES OF REVELATION**

- Knowledge of God from **outside** the Bible
- Knowledge of God from **inside** the Bible

**1. Outside the Bible**

Outside the Bible, in a very general way—through creation and conscience—God reveals Himself and His truth to mankind as members of the human race.

**Creation**

- ❑ **Psalm 19:1-4a:** *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (See also Psalm 8: 1,3-4)*

**Conscience**

- ❑ **Romans 2:15:** *...the requirements of the law [God's standards] are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness...*

Revelation from outside the Bible is limited. Creation and conscience do not reveal complete knowledge of God's character and plan of salvation, but they do bring people to the point where they can:

- assume the existence of God.
- understand something of God's divine nature and being.

And it gives mankind no excuse for ignorance or denial of God.

- ❑ **Romans 1:19-20:** *...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

**Two Light Switches**

God has turned on **two light switches** (creation and conscience). We make a choice to ignore them.

*This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. John 3:19*

**Seeking God . . .**

- ☐ **Deuteronomy 4:29:** *But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.*
- ☐ **Proverbs 8:17b:** *And those who seek me find me.*
- ☐ **Matthew 7:8:** *For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

**2. Inside the Bible**

Inside the Bible, God reveals Himself and His truth to mankind as sinners in need of a Savior.

- Man is separated from God because of sin.
- Man needs a Savior.
- Jesus Christ is that Savior.

**His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ**

- ☐ **Matthew 1:21:** *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*
- ☐ **John 3:16-17:** *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*
- ☐ **Acts 4:12:** *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*

If God **has** revealed Himself to us, surely He must be knowable. Let's explore what the Bible says about having a personal relationship with God. **Knowing facts about** someone and **having a personal relationship with** someone are two different things. Naturally we know about an acquaintance, but a personal relationship requires much more than that! So let's think about a personal relationship.

**A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP**

What's required for a personal relationship on a human level?

- Two persons
- A way to relate
- A choice to relate

Admittedly, a personal relationship with God is a unique kind of relationship with some unique considerations! If we are to relate to Him,

- 1. There must be a way for us to relate to God.**
- 2. There must be a choice to relate.**
  - a. God must choose to relate to me.
  - b. I must choose to relate to God.

These points are the outline for today's lesson and will help us answer the question, "*Can I Have a Personal Relationship With God?*"

The Bible is full of verses that answer this question with an unequivocal "YES"!

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**Reconciliation** is literally the act of "reuniting" two alienated parties, bringing them back into harmony.

## THERE MUST BE A WAY FOR US TO RELATE TO GOD

*What do we learn from Colossians 1:20 about the way for us to relate to God?*

1. Jesus reconciled me to God.
2. Jesus made peace through His Blood.

☐ **Colossians 1:20:** *For God was pleased . . . through him [Jesus] to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

## THERE MUST BE A CHOICE TO RELATE

*God must choose to relate to me—How has He done this?*

1. God Loved me and sent His Son.

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

2. God has reconciled me through His Son's physical death.

☐ **Colossians 1:22a:** *But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death . . .*

3. God stands at the door, knocks, and seeks entrance into my life.

☐ **Revelation 3:20:** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

*I must choose to relate to God—How do I do this?*

1. I must Hear.
2. I must receive. (*i.e., open the door, respond*)
3. I must believe.

☐ **Revelation 3:20:** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

☐ **John 1:12:** *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

## YOU CAN HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

It *is* possible not only to **know about** God but also to **have a personal relationship with** Him. The question is whether and when **you** will respond to God's invitation. Perhaps you already have or perhaps you will during the next five weeks.

*(More about how to start a personal relationship with God in Week 4 of **Christianity 101**)*

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Do you believe you can have a personal relationship with God? Why or why not?

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2. What is God's part in establishing this relationship?

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3. What is your part?

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**APPLYING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED TODAY**

In the coming weeks we're going to talk more about how you can have a personal relationship with God.

**WRAP-UP: SOME KEY POINTS**

1. The Bible is God's written revelation to man and is our basis for all Christian truth and teaching.
2. The Bible is divinely inspired and fully accurate and trustworthy.
3. The Bible is relevant, applicable and authoritative for our lives.
4. God has revealed Himself from outside and inside the Bible.
5. Having a personal relationship with someone and knowing facts about someone are two different things.
6. God wants us to know Him. He wants a personal relationship with us!
7. God has taken the initiative by providing for us the way to relate to Him through His Son Jesus Christ.
8. We must choose to relate to Him.
9. You can have a personal relationship with God.

**ACTION POINTS**

1. Review today's class notes.
2. Write down any questions that come to mind so we can discuss them next week.
3. Listen to Lon Solomon's sermons on CD (Week 1) entitled *The Reliability of the Bible, Parts 1 and 2*.
4. Learn memory verse #1.
  - ❑ **John 20:31:** *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
5. For your interest and information, take a look at **Attachments 1, 2 and 3** at the end of this book: *The Reliability of the Bible* summary, *Other Questions About the Bible*, and *Non-Biblical Arguments for the Existence of God*.
6. Read and answer the Week 2 preview questions.
  - Who did Jesus say He was?  
(John 10:30-33)
  - Who did Peter say Jesus was?  
(Matthew 16:13)
  - Who did Thomas say He was?  
(John 20:24-29)
  - Why did John write his Gospel account?  
(John 20:31)

**NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC:**

*Who is Jesus Christ and Why is He Unique?*

**Growing On Your Own**

*Take time this week to look up each verse in your Bible and read it in context.*

**Hints for Memorizing Scripture**

1. Read the verse in its context.
2. Seek to understand it.
3. Write out the verse and its reference on an index card.
4. Recite the verse aloud one phrase at a time. Do this several times.
5. Repeat the process several times daily during slack periods: while riding on the bus or subway; commuting to work in your car; coffee time or lunch break.
6. After memorizing the verse, review it later on a regular basis to keep it fresh in your mind!



# CHRISTIANITY 101 :: WEEK 2

## *Who is Jesus Christ and Why is He Unique?*

### MEMORY VERSE #1

- ❑ **John 20:31:** *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Last week we learned that if we want to know God in a personal way, we need to connect with Jesus Christ. So today we're going to do our best to answer the question, "*Who is Jesus Christ and Why is He Unique?*" All through history people have asked that question. Why is the answer to it so important? Three reasons!

### TODAY'S TOPIC:

#### *Who is Jesus Christ and Why is He Unique?*

1. **Jesus was God's ultimate revelation of Himself.**

- ❑ **Hebrews 1:1-2:** *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the [Old Testament] prophets at many times and in various ways **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.***

- ❑ **John 14:9b:** *Jesus answered: "... **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father ...**"*

2. **Jesus claimed to be the central theme of Scripture.**

- ❑ **John 5:39:** *You [Jewish leaders] diligently study the Scriptures [the Old Testament] because you think that by them you possess eternal life. **These are the Scriptures that testify about Me.***

3. **Jesus is God's plan of salvation.**

- ❑ **2 Timothy 3:15:** *and how from infancy you [Timothy] have known **the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.***

As we answer the question, "Who is Jesus Christ and why is He unique?" we also need to examine seven significant lines of evidence.

### SEVEN LINES OF EVIDENCE FOR THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Old Testament prophecy
2. Jesus' words
3. Jesus' works (miracles)
4. Worship given to Jesus
5. Statements of Jesus' contemporaries
6. Jesus' impact and influence upon history
7. Transformed lives

**Other Verses on Prophets and Prophecy**

God said He would predict things long before they came to pass to confirm that He is God and to demonstrate it through fulfilled prophecy.

❑ Numbers 23:19...God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

❑ Isaiah 48:3-5...<sup>3</sup>I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. <sup>4</sup>For I knew how stubborn you were; the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze. <sup>5</sup>Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.'

**OT: Old Testament**  
**NT: New Testament**

**Prophet Isaiah**  
about 750 - 700 BC

**Prophet Micah**  
about 740 - 690 BC

**1. THE EVIDENCE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY****Definition of a true, genuine prophet of God**

- ❑ **Deuteronomy 18:21-22:** *You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.*

As far back as 750 to 1000 BC—and in some cases even earlier—approximately 300 specific predictions were made concerning Jesus Christ as to His first and second coming. In particular, we will zero in on three of them which Jesus fulfilled in every detail. Later, you can look up others in our class notes on your own. Founders of other world religions **did not** fulfill prophecy as Jesus did. Here are three of the best known prophecies:

**HIS VIRGIN BIRTH**

**OT prophecy**  
**NT fulfillment**

**Isaiah 7:14**  
**Matthew 1:18-25**

- ❑ **Isaiah 7:14:** *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*
- ❑ **Matthew 1:18-25:** <sup>18</sup> *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*

**BORN IN BETHLEHEM**

**OT prophecy**  
**NT fulfillment**

**Micah 5:2**  
**Luke 2:1-7**

- ❑ **Micah 5:2:** *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*
- ❑ **Luke 2:1-7:** <sup>1</sup> *In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to his own town to register. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

## METHOD OF DEATH: HANDS/FEET PIERCED; NO BONES BROKEN

OT prophecies

Psalm 22:16-17, Zechariah 12:10b, Psalm 34:20

NT fulfillment

John 19:31-37; 20:25-29

- ☐ **Psalm 22:16-17:** <sup>16</sup> *Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and feet. <sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.*
- ☐ **Zechariah 12:10b:** *They will look on me, the one they have pierced.*
- ☐ **Psalm 34:20:** *[The LORD] protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.*
- ☐ **John 19:31-37:** <sup>31</sup> *Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. <sup>32</sup> The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. <sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup> Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. <sup>35</sup> The man who saw it has given his testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you may believe. <sup>36</sup> These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," <sup>37</sup> and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."*
- ☐ **John 20:25-29:** <sup>25</sup> *So the other disciples told [Thomas], "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." <sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed."*

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**King David**  
about 1000 BC

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**Prophet Zechariah**  
about 520 BC

## OTHER OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES AND NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENTS

Prophecy Specifics	Old Testament Prophecy	New Testament Fulfillment
Seed of Abraham.....	Genesis 12:3.....	Matthew 1:1-16
Tribe of Judah.....	Genesis 49:10.....	Hebrews 7:14
Lineage of David .....	2 Samuel 7:12, 13, 16 .....	Romans 1:3
Palm Sunday events.....	Zechariah 9:9 .....	Matthew 21:1-7
Betrayal for 30 pieces of silver.....	Zechariah 11:12-13.....	Matthew 26:14-15; 27:3-10
Lots cast for Jesus' coat.....	Psalm 22:18 .....	John 19:23-24
Burial.....	Isaiah 53:9 .....	Matthew 27:38, 57-60
Resurrection.....	Psalm 16:8-11.....	Acts 2:22-32

***Fulfilled prophecy shows that Jesus Christ was absolutely unique, different from the founders of other world religions because He fulfilled each and every Bible prophecy about the Messiah whom God had promised.***

So Bible prophecy is the first line of evidence showing Jesus' uniqueness as the prophesied Messiah.

## 2. THE EVIDENCE OF JESUS' WORDS

What specifically did Jesus say or claim about Himself?

- a. Claimed to be **one** in essence with God the **Father**.

☐ **John 10:30-31:** "I and the Father are one." Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him."

Such a claim by anyone **except the Messiah Himself** the Jews considered blasphemous and punishable by death.

- b. Claimed for Himself the same **Honor** ascribed to God.

☐ **John 5:23:** That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

- c. Claimed to be **sinless** by the very nature of His rhetorical question.

☐ **John 8:46:** "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?"

This means not only that Jesus did not commit **any** sin, but also in fact He possessed no sin nature.

- d. Claimed divine authority to **Forgive Sins**.

☐ **Luke 5:24a:** <sup>24</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . .

By this miracle (Luke 5:18-26) Jesus addressed the issue of human sin and was claiming the divine authority to forgive it. Later He accomplished the once-for-all removal of our sin problem by dying on the cross and shedding His blood. More on this subject in Week 3 of **Christianity 101**.

- e. Claimed to be the **Christ** (Messiah), the Son of God.

☐ **Matthew 26:63-64:** <sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." <sup>64</sup> "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

- f. Claimed to be the **I AM** [Jehovah] of the Old Testament.

☐ **Exodus 3:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

☐ **John 8:56-59a:** <sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." <sup>57</sup> "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" <sup>58</sup> "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" <sup>59</sup> At this, they picked up stones to stone him.

- g. Claimed to be the **way**, the only **Way** to God the Father, and to be **equal** with Him.

☐ **John 14:6,9:** <sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." . . . <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father..."

- h. Claimed to be the **Son** of **Man** and that He would **Rise** again from the dead.

☐ **Mark 9:31b:** He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."

**Jesus made claims of deity that no founder of any world religion proved or even dared to make.**

**Death by Stoning**

Leviticus 24:16.....Anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death.

**Jesus' Seven "I AM's"**

Jesus made seven claims about Himself: I am....

- "The Bread of Heaven"  
John 6:35,42,48,51
- "The Light of the World"  
John 8:12
- "The Door of the Sheep"  
John 10:7,9
- "The Good Shepherd"  
John 10:11,14
- "The Resurrection and the Life" John 11:25
- "The Way, and the Truth and the Life" John 14:6
- "The True Vine"  
John 15:1,5

**Son of Man**

"Son of Man" is a title or term which was reserved and used exclusively for the Jewish Messiah: both His earthly mission and His future triumph as Redeemer and Judge. Jesus applies this term to Himself 84 times in the Gospels. (See also Daniel 7:13-14)

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Can you recall any of Jesus' miracles?

Work with your neighbor to make a list.

Consider how these miracles show the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

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## 3. THE EVIDENCE OF JESUS' WORKS (MIRACLES)

*Jesus said,*

- ☐ **John 14:11:** *Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*

The following statements contain descriptions of different miracles that Jesus performed. Ask yourself, "Over what realm or aspect of life did Jesus demonstrate His divine power?"

- a. Jesus proved Himself to be God by revealing His power over **Nature**.

- ☐ **Luke 8:22-25:** <sup>22</sup> One day Jesus said to His disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. <sup>23</sup> As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. <sup>24</sup> The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. <sup>25</sup> "Where is your faith?" he asked the disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

- b. Jesus proved Himself to be God by revealing His power over **Demons**.

- ☐ **Luke 11:14:** *Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed.*

- c. Jesus proved Himself to be God by revealing His power over **Diseases**  
and **Sickness**.

- ☐ **Matthew 4:23-24:** <sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. <sup>24</sup> News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

d. Jesus proved Himself to be God by revealing His power over **Blindness**.

- ☐ **John 9:29-33:** <sup>29</sup> “We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup> The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. <sup>32</sup> Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

e. Jesus proved Himself to be God by revealing His power over **Death**.

- ☐ **John 11:43-44:** <sup>43</sup> When he had [prayed], Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out [of the tomb], his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”
- ☐ **Romans 1:4:** ...and [Jesus Christ] through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.

**Jesus did things that no founder of any world religion ever did. His miracles set Him apart and demonstrated His uniqueness and deity. Jesus’ greatest miracle and His most conclusive proof of deity, of course, was His prediction that He would rise from the dead, and then He proved it! No other religious leader has ever equaled this!**

For more information, see **Attachment 8, Will Jesus Really Return Someday?**

#### 4. THE EVIDENCE OF WORSHIP GIVEN TO JESUS

Those who knew and followed Jesus viewed Him as deity and worshiped Him accordingly.

##### **The Magi**

- ☐ **Matthew 2:11:** On coming to the house, [the Magi] saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

##### **The Disciples**

- ☐ **Matthew 14:33:** Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

##### **The Man Born Blind**

- ☐ **John 9:35-38:** <sup>35</sup> Jesus said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup> “Who is he, sir?” the [formerly blind] man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” <sup>37</sup> Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” <sup>38</sup> Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

**Jesus was viewed and worshipped as God. He never denied or rejected such worship.**

#### 5. THE EVIDENCE OF STATEMENTS BY JESUS’ CONTEMPORARIES

In the following statements were made by Jesus’ contemporaries. Ask yourself, “Who did **they** think Jesus was?”

- a. **John:** Jesus is the **Word** of **God** who became flesh.
- ☐ **John 1:1-2, 14a,:** 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning . . . 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, . . .

##### **Worshiped as Deity**

The most commonly-used New Testament word for **worship** (*proskuneo*) occurs in each passage we have cited. Generally it means to **prostrate oneself** in homage. In the verses cited here, context clearly implies worship of deity.

- b. **Peter:** Jesus is the **Christ**, the **Son** of the living God. **Salvation** is to be found in no one else.

❑ **Matthew 16:13-17:** <sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”

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

- c. **Thomas:** “My **Lord** and my **God**.”

❑ **John 20:27-28:** <sup>27</sup> Then [Jesus] said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” <sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

- d. **Paul:** Jesus is the **Image** of the invisible **God**.

❑ **Colossians 1:15:** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

In Jesus all the fullness of the **Deity** lives in bodily form.

❑ **Colossians 2:9:** For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.

Jesus Christ is our great **God** and **Savior** whose future appearing His followers await with anticipation!

❑ **Titus 2:13:** while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ . . .

- e. **The centurion:** “Surely this man was the **Son** of **God**!”

❑ **Mark 15:39:** And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God.”

- f. **The author of the book of Hebrews:** The Son [Jesus Christ] is the radiance of **God’s** glory and the exact **Representation** of His being.

❑ **Hebrews 1:3:** The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

**His followers, who saw and heard Jesus, viewed Him as the Son of God, not merely as a great moral teacher as founders of other world religions are viewed.**

Hundreds of fulfilled prophecies; Jesus’ personal claims and the claims of His contemporaries as to His deity; His sinless nature and sinless life; His miracles of various kinds including His resurrection from the dead, as well as the honor and worship given Him, show us that Jesus was unique, different from all other religious leaders before or since. These five witnesses give strong evidence indeed that Jesus is deity, fully divine, the Son of God. And, in addition, there is the witness of world history.

### Colossians 1:15-19

This Scripture passage describes the deity of Jesus Christ. In part we learn that he is:

- “The image of the invisible God” (i.e., exact representation)—v.15
- All-powerful, “all things created by Him”—v.16
- Eternal, “before all things”—v.17
- Self-sufficient—“all things hold together in Him”—v.17
- Divine—“all the fullness of God”—v.19

### Exact Representation

The Greek word translated **exact representation**, in essence, means that Jesus shows us exactly what God is like. You want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus!

## 6. THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

- Jesus split time in half— **BC** and **AD** .
- Jesus' **resurrection** changed the day of worship for first century Jewish believers from Saturday to Sunday—which continues for the Church to this day.
- Jesus' **Teaching** has changed western civilization: government, law, science, the arts, etc.
- Jesus instituted the two ordinances of **baptism** and the **Lord's Supper** which continue to this day.
- Jesus has **Inspired** men and women of faith to fight for the emancipation of children, women and slaves.
- Jesus has inspired acts of **compassion** and **Service** that have resulted in hospitals and orphanages as visible, tangible ways of bringing God's love to the sick and abandoned.
- Jesus has **emboldened** courageous men and women to give up their lives for their faith in Him.

*Someone stated correctly that history is "His story." All of the above facts can trace their roots to the gospel message about the deity of Jesus Christ.*

Finally, we must mention the seventh line of evidence to the deity and uniqueness of Jesus Christ . . .

## 7. THE EVIDENCE OF TRANSFORMED LIVES

*Disciples: **Before** the Resurrection*

- ☐ **Mark 14:50:** *Then everyone deserted him and fled.*
- ☐ **Mark 14:71:** *[Peter] swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."*

*Disciples: **After** the Resurrection*

- ☐ **Acts 4:13:** *When they saw the courage of Peter and John . . . they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*
- ☐ **Acts 4:18-20:** *[The leaders in Jerusalem] called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, ". . . we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

*Paul **Before** His Encounter before the Risen Christ*

- ☐ **Acts 9:1-2:** *Meanwhile, Saul [Paul] was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.*
- ☐ **Acts 22:20a:** *"And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval . . ."*

*Paul **After** His Encounter after the Risen Christ*

- ☐ **Romans 1:16:** *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.*

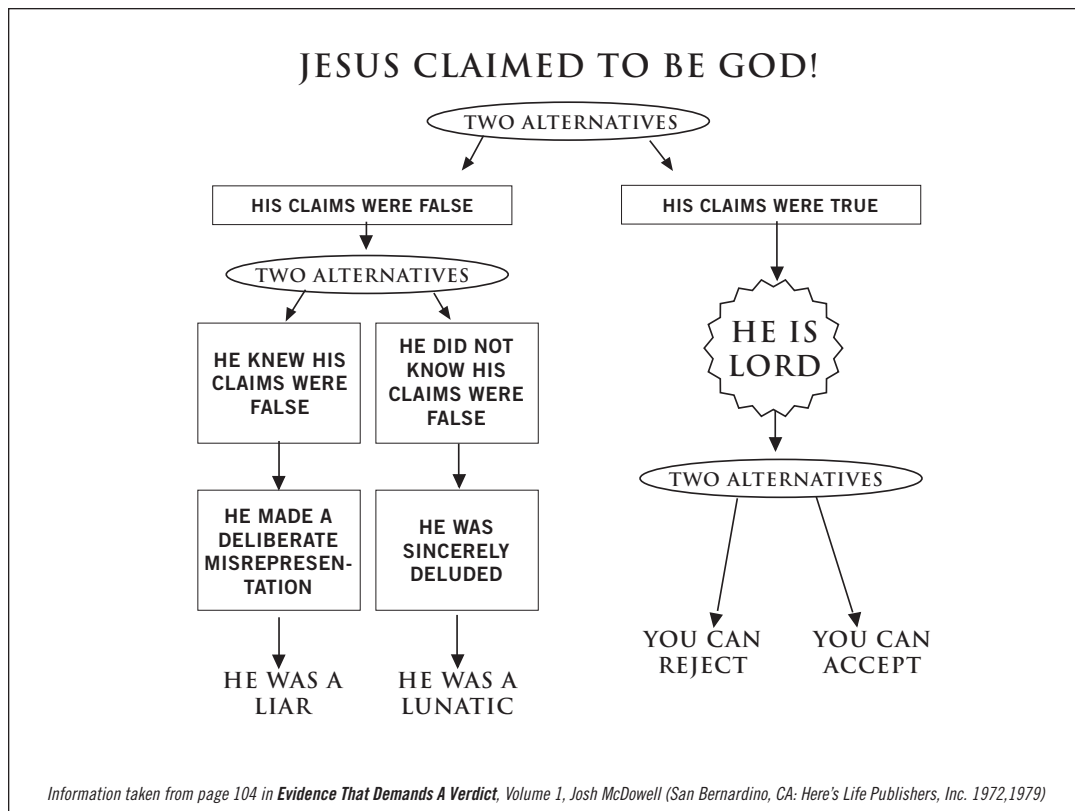
- ❑ **Galatians 1:23:** *[The apostles] heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."*

***Perhaps the most personal and tangible proof of the uniqueness and deity of Jesus are the totally transformed lives of all who have truly followed Him!***

Ultimately there must be the test of transformed lives. What about **you**? Do you want God to transform **your** life? Put God and His Word to the test! He invites and welcomes you.

In final analysis, a person must weigh the evidence and make a personal response to Jesus Christ's claims upon his or her own life. No response is a "no" response.

Either He was or He was not deity. There is no middle ground position that Jesus was merely a good man or a great prophet or a moral teacher. He did not leave these alternatives open to us.



Regardless of our decision, the Bible says that one day everyone will bow their knees before Him and will confess with their own mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord.

- ❑ **Philippians 2:10-11:** <sup>10</sup> *that at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, in heaven and earth and under the earth,* <sup>11</sup> *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The Apostle John ends his gospel account of Jesus' life with this challenge,

- ❑ **John 20:31:** *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. list 3 major world religious leaders from any time in history.

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2. What did they claim for themselves?

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3. How did they demonstrate that claim?

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## WRAP-UP: SOME KEY POINTS

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### Three Reasons Why Jesus' Identity and Uniqueness are Important

1. Jesus was God's ultimate revelation of Himself.
2. Jesus claimed to be the central theme of Scripture.
3. Jesus is God's plan of salvation.

### Seven Lines of Evidence to the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

1. Old Testament prophecy
2. Jesus' words
3. Jesus' works (miracles)
4. Worship given to Jesus
5. Statements of Jesus' contemporaries
6. Jesus' impact and influence upon history
7. Transformed lives

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## HOW JESUS WAS UNIQUE, DIFFERENT FROM THE FOUNDERS OF OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS

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1. Jesus fulfilled every Bible prophecy concerning the first coming of the Messiah whom God had promised.
2. Jesus was unique as to His conception and birth, His mission and ministry, and His sacrificial death on the cross.
3. Jesus made personal claims of deity.
4. Jesus was sinless.
5. Jesus claimed the authority to forgive sins and proved it.
6. Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine power — especially His Resurrection.
7. Jesus was worshiped in the same way as God Himself. His contemporaries thought He was divine.
8. His cumulative impact and influence upon world history and the transformation of millions of individual lives are incalculable.
9. Jesus resolved the problem of sin by dying on the cross. (next week)
10. Jesus had a dual nature: 100% God and 100% man. (next week)

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**Growing On Your Own**

*Take time this week to look up each verse in your Bible and read it in context.*

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**ACTION POINTS**

1. Review today's class notes.
2. Listen to Lon Solomon's sermon on CD (Week 2) entitled ***Who Is Jesus?***
3. Learn memory verse #2.

☐ **1 Corinthians 15:20:** *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*

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**NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC:**

*Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?*

# CHRISTIANITY 101 :: WEEK 3

## *Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?*

### MEMORY VERSE #2

- ❑ **1 Corinthians 15:20:** *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*

Week 2 topic—*Who is Jesus Christ and Why is He Unique?*—prepared us for today because it addressed head-on the crucial question of **who** Jesus Christ is. And **who** Jesus Christ is indeed related to the question.

### TODAY'S TOPIC:

## *Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

There are few Christian beliefs that are more important than the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is at the heart of the gospel message.

- ❑ **1 Corinthians 15:1-5:** <sup>1</sup> *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. <sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.*

If there was no resurrection, there is no salvation.

- ❑ **Romans 10:9:** *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

All of Christianity crumbles if it is not true.

- ❑ **1 Corinthians 15:12-19:** <sup>12</sup> *But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. <sup>15</sup> More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. <sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.*

Let's look then, at the proofs showing the truths of: 1) Jesus' death, 2) The empty tomb, and 3) His appearances after His death and resurrection.

## JESUS' DEATH

For Jesus to rise from the dead he must have truly died on the cross. Consider the following key points of evidence recorded in Scripture that show Jesus indeed died on the cross.

Scripture testifies that Jesus **died** \_\_\_\_\_. (Note that the Gospel writer, John, was an eye witness.)

- ☐ **John 19:30:** *When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

The Roman soldier's **behavior** \_\_\_\_\_ testifies that Jesus died.

- ☐ **John 19:31-33:** <sup>31</sup>*Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.* <sup>32</sup>*The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other.* <sup>33</sup>**But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.**

The soldier's actions **confirm** \_\_\_\_\_ the death of Jesus.

- ☐ **John 19:34:** *Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.*

Remember that the Roman soldier's job was to crucify (kill) all the victims. Under the threat of losing his own life for failing this task, he was highly motivated to ensure the death of Jesus. The soldier later testified to Pontius Pilate that Jesus was dead (Mark 15:44-45).

Those who **saw** \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus knew He was dead.

- ☐ **John 19:38-39:** <sup>38</sup>*Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.* <sup>39</sup>*He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.*

Based on this evidence, we can say with confidence that Jesus died on the cross. He did not faint or swoon as some skeptics have claimed. The evidence does not support it.

## THE EMPTY TOMB

Jesus' body was **prepared** \_\_\_\_\_ for burial, **placed** \_\_\_\_\_ in a rock tomb, and a rock **rolled** \_\_\_\_\_ over the entrance.

- ☐ **Mark 15:46:** *So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.*

The entrance was **sealed** \_\_\_\_\_ and a **guard** \_\_\_\_\_ placed around it.

- ☐ **Matt 27:62-66:** <sup>62</sup>*The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.* <sup>63</sup>*"Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'* <sup>64</sup>*So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."* <sup>65</sup>*"Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how."* <sup>66</sup>*So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.*

*"It is finished." (Tetelestai)  
This was a common term used in Jesus' day. It meant accomplished or finished. A servant would use the term to tell their master a task was completed. Also, a priest would use the term to state that a sacrifice was completed.*

*Modern medicine knows that the flow of blood and water was likely pericardial and pleural effusion from puncturing the heart and lung respectively. See Strobel, **The Case For Christ**, p. 199.*

*Archeology finds show that the rock covering an entrance like this was very heavy, possibly weighing as much as two tons, requiring many men to roll it away from the entrance.*

This evidence suggests that great efforts were made to keep Jesus' dead body in the tomb.

Early Sunday morning the tomb was **empty**.

❑ **Matthew 28:1-8:** <sup>1</sup> After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. <sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." <sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Note that the guards are still present and witnessed the angel rolling back the stone. Also, the angel's words and the women's presence show this was the correct tomb. Both women were at the tomb when he was buried (Matt 27:61). There is no chance they were at the wrong tomb.

All the gospel accounts testify to the empty tomb (see Mark 16:2-8; Matthew 28:5-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-8). In fact throughout history skeptics have not debated the fact of the empty tomb, but only differ as to why it was empty.

## JESUS' APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

Further confirming the bodily resurrection of Christ, the Bible describes ten different appearances of the risen Lord. Let's examine a few.

He appeared to the **women** at the tomb.

❑ **Matthew 28:8-9:** <sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

In the Jewish culture of this time a woman's testimony was not accepted as valid. The fact that the Bible lists this testimony attests to its authenticity rather than a manufactured story.

He appeared to the **disciples**.

❑ **John 20:19-29:** <sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord... <sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."... <sup>27</sup> Then he (Jesus) said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."... <sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Note several important facts from this passage:

1. Because of the **nail** marks in the His hands and side, they knew it really was Jesus.
2. Jesus appeared in **bodily** form (vv. 20, 27). He was not mere spirit or apparition.

*The Jewish Leaders thought about the "kidnap" scenario and asked that the grave be made secure. Ironically, these security measures provide additional proof of Jesus' resurrection.*

*The angel did not move the stone to let Jesus out, but to let the people in!*

3. In another account, (Luke 24:42-43) it is recorded that He ate some **fish** in their presence further substantiating the bodily resurrection.

❑ **1 Corinthians 15:6:** *After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.*

He appears to over **500** people. Most were still **living** at the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and could verify Paul's words.

### IN SUMMARY, WE HAVE SEEN THAT:

1. Jesus died on the cross.
2. His body was placed in a tomb and sealed.
3. On Sunday morning the tomb was empty.
4. Jesus appeared to many in bodily form.

The only valid explanation for these facts is the orthodox Christian doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

### Why is this important for you and me as believers in Jesus Christ? Five reasons:

1. If Christ did not rise from the dead then He is a liar, for He predicted it. (*Matthew 20:19*)
2. If Christ did not rise from the dead then He would not be alive to be High Priest, Intercessor, or Head of the Church. In addition He would not live to dwell and empower us. (*Romans 6:1-10; Galatians 2:20*)
3. The gospel message of saving faith in Christ depends upon it. (*1 Corinthians 15:3-8*)
4. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then our witness is false, our faith is empty, and we are without hope for the future. (*1 Corinthians 15:13-19*)
5. The truth of the resurrection assures us of our salvation and gives hope to all who believe in our future resurrection from the dead. (*1 Corinthians 15*)

*(Adapted from Charles Ryrie's Basic Theology, p. 308)*

Instead, we have all of these things because of the reality of the resurrection. We have a glorious hope because of our faith in the living Savior.

Harvard Law Professor, Simon Greenleaf said, "It was therefore impossible that they (the disciples) could have persisted in affirming the truths they had narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact (As quoted in Josh McDowell's *The Resurrection Factor*, p. 111).

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Why is the fact of the resurrection important to you? How will it change the way you view the future?

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When Jesus returns, those who have died will be resurrected just like Christ. For more on this great event, *Please see Attachment 8 : Will Jesus Return Someday?*

### WRAP-UP: SOME KEY POINTS

1. This lesson's truths are foundational for the Christian faith.
2. Jesus died on the cross. He did not faint or swoon.
3. His body was placed in a tomb and sealed.
4. On Sunday morning the tomb was empty.
5. Jesus appeared to many in bodily form.
6. The truth of the resurrection assures us of our salvation and gives hope to all who believe in our future resurrection from the dead.

### ACTION POINTS

1. Review today's class notes: *Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?*
2. Listen to Lon Solomon's sermons on CD (Week 3) entitled ***The Good News of the Resurrection*** and ***The Holy Spirit***.
3. Memory verse #3.  
☐ **Isaiah 53:6:** *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
4. Look over and answer the Week 4 preview questions.
  - What is the condition of humanity regarding sin?  
(*Romans 3:23*)
  - According to Romans 6:23a, what is the logical result of sin in our lives?
  - Who can give us eternal life?  
(*1 John 5:11*)
  - By what means do we receive it?  
(*1 John 5:13*)
  - Can I earn my way to heaven by good works?  
(*Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9*)

#### ***Growing On Your Own***

*Take time this week to look up each verse in your Bible and read it in context.*

## LIFE IMPACT

Describe one or more key ideas or insights that you can take from Christianity 101.

How has each impacted your life?

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# CHRISTIANITY 101 :: WEEK 4

## *What Does Salvation Mean and Why Do I Need It?*

### MEMORY VERSE #3

❑ **Isaiah 53:6:** *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Week 4—*What Does Salvation Mean and Why Do I Need It?*—because salvation from sin and its penalty was Jesus' primary mission.

### TODAY'S TOPIC:

*What Does Salvation Mean and Why Do I Need It?*

But first we need to ask “*What is salvation?*”

### A GENERAL DEFINITION OF SALVATION

What concepts or ideas should be included?

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**Salvation** is the act of saving someone's life—someone who is helpless, who is facing a life-threatening situation.

### A BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF SALVATION

**Salvation is God's spiritual** rescue **operation! God is rescuing us from the** penalty **of sin which is spiritual death.**

Because we are using this term **salvation** in a biblical context and spiritual sense, it's very important that we know what the Bible says: **first**, about **spiritual death**, our topic today; and **second**, about **spiritual life** and how we might experience it—our topic next week.

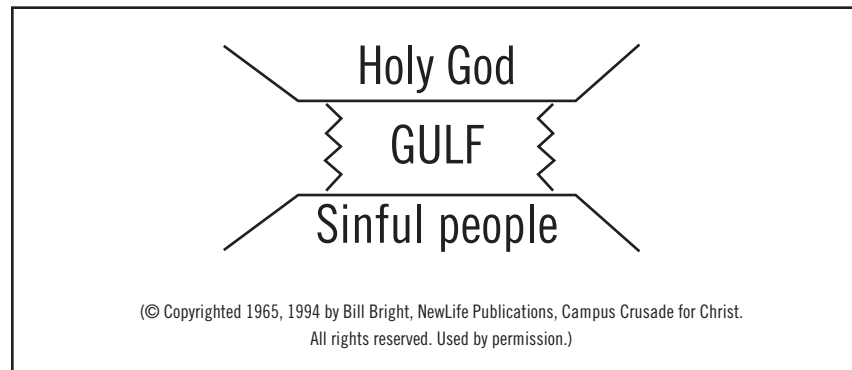
### THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL DEATH

As unpleasant as it is, we must address the concept of **spiritual death** because unless we understand that we are spiritually dead, we simply cannot understand our need for **spiritual life**. The concept of salvation would have no meaning or relevance for us.

## THE DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL DEATH

*Spiritual death is that condition whereby God and humanity are separated spiritually and morally.*

The following diagram illustrates our helpless situation—how we are spiritually dead, separated from God's holiness, separated from God's life and power. An infinite, impassable gulf separates us. The Bible calls it sin.



## GOD IS HOLY

God is holy—100% pure spiritually and morally. This is God's very nature.

❑ **Isaiah 6:3:** *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

Heaven is a perfect place because God dwells there.

❑ **Revelation 21:27a:** *Nothing impure will ever enter it . . .*

Likewise, on earth, God's standard is perfect.

❑ **Matthew 5:48:** *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfection.*

## MANKIND IS SINFUL

No one meets God's perfect standard.

❑ **Romans 3:23:** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, . . ."*

## THE DEFINITION OF SIN

**Sin is a falling short of God's moral and spiritual target.** If we're really honest, we readily admit we do not meet God's perfect standard in thought, word, or deed.

**Sin is directed against God.** This is the most characteristic feature of sin in all its aspects.

1. Sin is a **nature** — a propensity for sinning.
2. Sin is a **state** — an absence of God's righteousness.
3. Sin is an **act** — a violation of or disobedience to God's revealed will.

Sad to say, every one of us is in this ugly predicament.

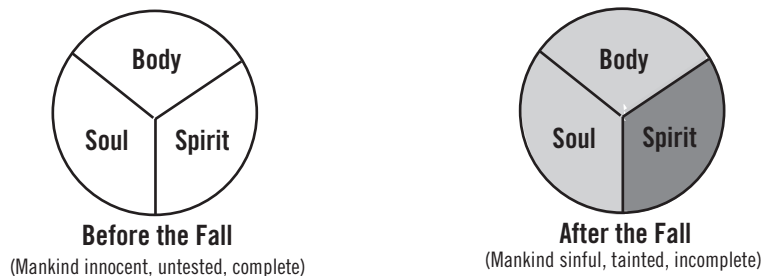
## HOW DID SIN COME INTO THE WORLD AND AFFECT US?

When Adam was created he was complete . . . in God's image!

- ❑ **Genesis 1:26-27:** *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness . . ." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

**There are three dimensions of our humanity: body, soul and spirit.** (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

When Adam sinned, he died spiritually. He did not die physically at that moment, but the spiritual dimension of his life became deadened and empty.



- ❑ **Genesis 2:16-17:** *And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*

The effects of Adam's sin passed to all his descendants—including us today.

- ❑ **Romans 5:12:** *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

## ALL OF US ARE SINNERS BY BIRTH AND BY BEHAVIOR

### 1. By birth

- ❑ **Psalms 51:5:** *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

From the moment we're conceived, the Bible tells us that a number of things are true about us. Study the Scriptures inside each of the following blocks. Discover seven ways that God sees and describes us.

1. We are **darkened** in our understanding.  
(We don't understand God, have no spiritual discernment.)
2. We are **separated** from the life of God.  
(We are disconnected like a light bulb without electricity.)
3. We are **ignorant** of our need for salvation.  
(We are unaware of our spiritual helplessness.)
4. Our hearts are **hardened**.  
(We are spiritually calloused, insensitive to God's touch.)

- ❑ **Ephesians 4:18:** *...they (i.e., the Gentiles, unbelievers) are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.*

### Soul and Spirit

*Soul pertains to the mind, will and emotions while spirit pertains to the dimension that understands the things of God.*

### The Fall of Adam

*Sin not only affected Adam. It affected all mankind! It affected not only the spiritual dimension of our lives, but also it affected us mentally, emotionally and physically—and all the rest of creation, too. Only God can reverse the effects of sin.*

### ❑ Romans 8:20-22

<sup>20</sup>*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

### ❑ Revelation 21:4

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

5. We are **alienated** from God.  
(We are estranged from Him, hostile toward Him.)
- ☐ **Colossians 1:21:** *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.*
- ☐ **Romans 8:7a:** *The sinful mind is hostile to God . . .*
6. Our minds are **blinded**.  
(We can't see what God wants us to see.)
- ☐ **2 Corinthians 4:4:** *The god of this age [Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
7. We are **dead** in our transgressions and sins.  
(There is no spiritual life in us.)
- ☐ **Ephesians 2:1-2a:** *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world . . .*

So from the moment we're conceived, we're spiritually dead and separated from God. We have a body and a soul, but the spirit is dead. As Lon Solomon has said, *"We're wired for sin!"* And because we're wired for sin, it affects all we think, say, and do.

Someone stated things well:

*"We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners."*

## 2. By behavior

- ☐ **Isaiah 53:6a:** *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each one of us has turned to his own way.*
- ☐ **Romans 3:23:** *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Because we are sinners—both by birth and by behavior—and because the spiritual dimension of our life is dead and empty, there is a natural, inborn desire in the human heart to fill that spiritual vacuum and to search for ways to fill it.

### Sin Not Restricted to Behavior

*In addition to our behavior, we are also sinners by our words and thoughts. The attitudes of our heart condemn us just as much as the commission of a sinful act. (See Matthew 5:22 and 5:28; 1 John 3:21)*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What is the source of our sin?

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2. Since our sin has this source, what can you do to change it?

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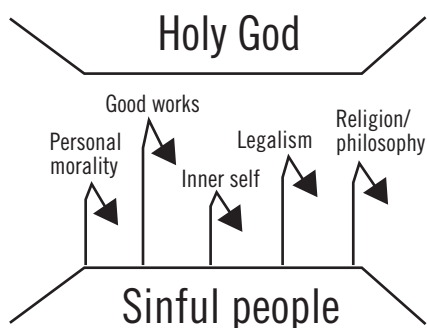
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The following diagram illustrates different ways by which sinful people attempt to bridge the moral and spiritual chasm between themselves and a holy, perfect God. Notice how the different arrows, aiming towards God, go only so far and fall short of their target. All such attempts are futile.

### OUR DIFFERENT ATTEMPTS TO REACH GOD



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#### 1. Personal morality

- **We say:** "If I'm **religious** enough..." or "I'm **better** than many other people I know."
- **God says:** "Everyone has **fallen short** of My perfect standard."
- ☐ **Jeremiah 17:9:** *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*
- ☐ **Romans 3:23:** *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

#### 2. Good works

- **We say:** "If my **good** deeds outweigh my **bad** deeds, maybe I'll get to heaven."

**Grace and Mercy**

**Grace** is receiving something I don't deserve (salvation, forgiveness, eternal life) while **mercy** is not receiving something I do deserve (God's judgment and punishment).

God's  
Redemption  
At  
Christ's  
Expense

- **God says:** "Heaven and salvation cannot be earned."

- ☐ **Titus 3:5a:** <sup>5a</sup>...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
- ☐ **Ephesians 2:8-10:** <sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**3. Inner self or spark of divine goodness**

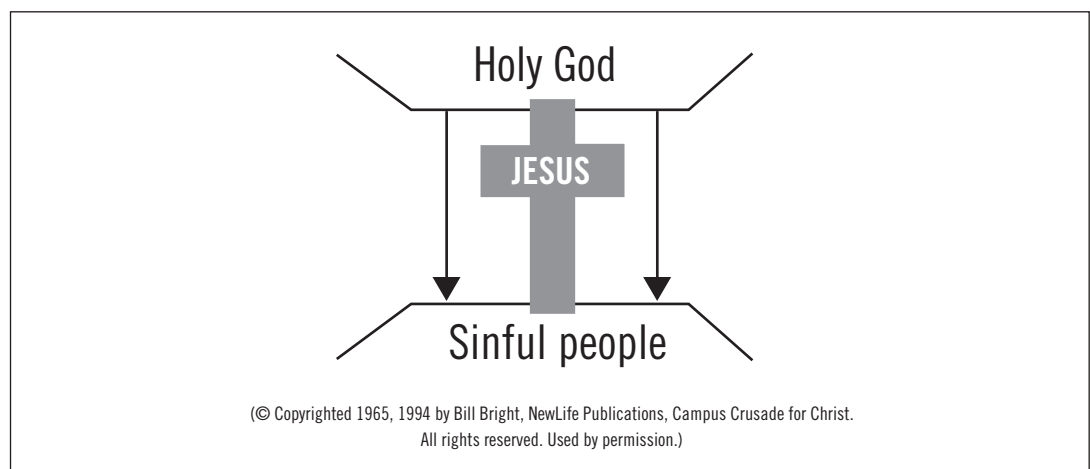
- **We say:** "If I can just get better in tune with my inner self goodness" or "If I can just nurture that seed of Divine goodness inside."
- **God says:** "Your inner self is rotten to the core. There's no seed or spark of righteousness at all!"
- ☐ **Psalm 51:5:** *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
- ☐ **Romans 3:10-11:** *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God."*

People have tried lots of things! Other attempts to reach God include:

- Legalism
- Religion
- Church attendance
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Crystals
- Philosophy
- Monasticism
- Offerings and sacrifices

All these approaches, however, boil down to mankind trying to bridge the gap between himself and God through his own efforts. Notice how God took a different approach. He took the initiative and provided a way across this gap, allowing us to relate to Him. God had to become a man to do it, and that man was Jesus. Through Jesus, God now freely offers to rescue us from spiritual death, hence the term **salvation**.

The next diagram shows how God—in His love for us—reaches down to us through His Son.

**GOD'S RESCUE OPERATION**

- ☐ **John 3:16-17:** <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

## GOD'S NATURE: LOVING AND JUST

1. God's nature is love. He wants everyone to be saved.

☐ **2 Peter 3:9:** *The Lord . . . is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

2. God's nature is perfectly Holy and just. He cannot allow sin to go unpunished.

☐ **Romans 6:23:** *For the wages of sin is death . . .*

The penalty for sin is death, separation from God. (Hell is the complete separation from God forever.)

## GOD'S SOLUTION

***The sacrifice of Jesus was God's solution. Jesus not only fully expressed the love of God, but also He satisfied God's righteous and holy requirements for dealing with sin.***

Only Jesus is qualified to be God's mediator for sin. Only Jesus—the perfect, sinless Lamb of God—voluntarily took upon Himself and bore our sins, became our sacrificial substitute and shed His righteous blood on the cross at Calvary. Thus, because of God's love for us, He sent His Son to die on the cross paying the price for our sins. With this price paid in full, we can then cross the gap, know God in a personal way, and receive eternal life by faith in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.

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

## JESUS CHRIST WAS 100% DIVINE

☐ **John 1:1:** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

☐ **Colossians 1:15:** *He (Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God . . .*

☐ **Colossians 2:9:** *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

***Because He was 100% divine***, Jesus Christ is qualified to be God's eternal sacrifice and divine mediator for sin.

☐ **1 Timothy 2:5:** *<sup>5</sup>For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

☐ **Hebrews 10:14:** *<sup>14</sup>because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

☐ **Hebrews 7:24-26:** *<sup>24</sup>but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

## JESUS CHRIST WAS 100% HUMAN

☐ **John 1:14a:** *<sup>14a</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...*

☐ **Philippians 2:5-8:** *<sup>5</sup>Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

**God is love**

☐ **1 John 4:8...** *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

**God is holy and just**

☐ **Isaiah 6:3...** *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

☐ **Revelation 15:3b...** *"Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages."*

**Because He was 100% Human**, Jesus Christ is qualified to be God's human substitutionary sacrifice to bear and take away our sin.

- ❑ **1 Timothy 2:5:** *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*
- ❑ **Isaiah 53:5-6:** <sup>5</sup> *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.* <sup>6</sup> *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
- ❑ **1 Peter 2:24a:** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree . . .*
- In eternity past, God in His wisdom had anticipated the dilemma, namely how to satisfy God's justice and wrath against sin while at the same time showing His infinite love for us.
- He accomplished both by sending His one and only Son to earth in human flesh to take and bear our sins upon Himself on the cross, then, in exchange, crediting His righteousness to our spiritual bank account. By doing this He demonstrated God's perfect love for us.

The Bible says,

- ❑ **Romans 5:8:** *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- ❑ **2 Corinthians 5:21:** *God made him who had no sin to be a sin offering for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

### THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT BLOOD SACRIFICES COMPARED

The Sacrifice	Old Testament	New Testament
The Nature of the Sacrifice	Blood ( <i>Leviticus 17:11</i> )	Blood ( <i>Hebrews 9:22</i> )
The Provider of the Sacrifice	Priest ( <i>Hebrews 10:11</i> )	God the Father ( <i>John 3:16</i> )
The Kind of Sacrifice	Specific animals ( <i>Leviticus 16:5; Hebrews 13:11a</i> )	Human—Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God ( <i>John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7b</i> )
The Place of Sacrifice	The atonement cover (altar) in the Most Holy Place ( <i>Leviticus 16:15-16; Hebrews 9:25</i> )	Heaven ( <i>Hebrews 9:24</i> )
The Frequency of the Sacrifice	Annually ( <i>Leviticus 16:34</i> )	Once for all time ( <i>Hebrews 9:26; 10:12</i> )
The Effectiveness of the Sacrifice	Temporary—a priest's work never done ( <i>Hebrews 10:11</i> )	Permanent—Jesus sat down, job completed ( <i>Hebrews 10:12</i> )
The Result of the Sacrifice Manward	Sins covered over temporarily—our sin debt ongoing ( <i>Hebrews 10:1-4</i> )	Sins removed permanently—our sin debt paid in full ( <i>John 19:30; Hebrews 9:26b</i> )
The Result of the Sacrifice Godward	Indirect, limited access to God ( <i>Hebrews 10:11</i> )	Direct, unlimited access to God ( <i>Hebrews 10:19-22</i> )
The Disposal of the Sacrifice	Taken outside the camp of Israel and burned ( <i>Leviticus 4:12; Hebrews 13:11b</i> )	Jesus Christ crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem ( <i>Hebrews 13:12</i> )

- In the Old Testament animal blood sacrifices were **repetitive**, **temporary** and only **covered over** the sins of the people of God. Such sacrifices had to be repeated annually by the high priest and could never remove sin and guilt.
  - In the New Testament God presents to us His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who **takes away** the sin of the world: **one time**, **permanent**, and **sacrifice** !
  - Just as one man, Adam, representing all mankind sinned and introduced death to the human race, so also Jesus Christ representing all mankind atoned for sin, defeated death, and restored spiritual life to all who trust and follow Him.
- ❑ **Romans 5:18-19:** *<sup>18</sup>Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. <sup>19</sup>For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Discuss how the ministry of Jesus shows both God's love and justice?

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## APPLICATION

### SO WHAT?

**What am I going to do about it?** Does it remain head knowledge? Or will I take the next step? Next week we will give you an opportunity to take the next step.

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**WRAP-UP: SOME KEY POINTS**

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1. Salvation is God's act of rescuing me from spiritual death.
2. God is holy and morally perfect.
3. Because of sin humanity is separated from God.
4. We are spiritually helpless and dead.
5. The spiritual dimension of our life seeks fulfillment.
6. All our attempts fall short of God's perfect standard.
7. In His mercy, God takes the initiative and reaches down to us making a provision for our sin—the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.
8. We can reach God only by trusting in and figuratively applying Christ's blood to our hearts and lives.

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**ACTION POINTS**

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1. Review today's class notes: *What Does Salvation Mean and Why Do I Need it?*
2. Listen to Lon Solomon's sermon on CD (Week 4) entitled ***What Jesus Did***.
3. For more detail about the blood of Christ: its meaning, significance and personal application, see **Attachment 5** at the end of this book.
4. Learn memory verse #4.  

 **1 John 5:11:** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*
5. Look over and answer the Week 5 preview questions:
  - What is our spiritual condition or status from God's point of view? (*Ephesians 2:1*)
  - Through what or through whom do we obtain spiritual life? (*John 3:16; 1 John 5:11*)
  - Do we need to complete any rituals or programs to receive this spiritual life? (*Ephesians 2:8-9*)
  - What one main point was Jesus trying to make to Nicodemus? (*John 3:1-8*)

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**NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC:**

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*If I Need Salvation, How Can I Obtain it?*

# CHRISTIANITY 101 :: WEEK 5

## *If I Need Salvation, How Can I Obtain It?*

### MEMORY VERSE #4

❑ 1 John 5:11: *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

### THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

Last week we zeroed in on the concept of **spiritual death**—separation from God. And you remember we said that until we understand the concept of spiritual death, we cannot begin to see our need for **spiritual life**. Salvation would have no meaning if there were nothing to be saved from or out of. So today we come to the important concept of spiritual life which is simple. However, many people don't comprehend it .

### TODAY'S TOPIC:

*If I Need Salvation, How Can I Obtain It?*

### THE WAGES OF SIN

❑ Romans 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What are **wages**?

From Romans 6:23 we learn three important things:

1. The ultimate result of sin is spiritual death—separation from God.
2. Eternal life is God's free gift.
3. This eternal life is in Jesus Christ.

### JESUS DESCRIBES THE SECOND BIRTH

❑ John 3:1-7: <sup>1</sup>Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." <sup>3</sup>In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." <sup>4</sup>"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

### SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SECOND BIRTH

1. Who was Nicodemus? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who were the Pharisees and in what were they trusting to get them into heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why at nighttime? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did Nicodemus believe Jesus was sent by God? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What do you suppose is the significance of Jesus repeating the words, "*I tell you the truth*"? (vv. 3, 5)  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What main point was Jesus trying to make?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECOND BIRTH

1. **Supernatural** — accomplished by God Himself alone.  
☐ **John 1:12-13:** <sup>12</sup>*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but **born of God**.*
2. **Spiritual** — accomplished through the agency of the Holy Spirit.  
☐ **John 3:6, 8:** <sup>6</sup>*Flesh gives birth to flesh, **but the Spirit gives birth to spirit**. . . <sup>8</sup>"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone **born of the Spirit**."*
3. **Scriptural** — accomplished through God's Word. (*specifically, God's message of salvation*).  
☐ **James 1:18a:** *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth. . .*  
☐ **1 Peter 1:23:** *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

Therefore, since God's Word tells us we are spiritually dead because of sin, a new birth is required. This new birth cannot come from religious observance, rule keeping or self—knowledge. It only comes from God through the Holy Spirit. Through this second birth we "cross over" from death to life.

#### Isaiah 40:8

*The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.*

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Christianity is unique in that it believes in salvation by faith alone in Christ alone, whereas all other belief systems are based on works. Discuss how some try to earn their salvation through works.

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**“CROSSING OVER” FROM SPIRITUAL DEATH TO SPIRITUAL LIFE**

- ❑ **Ephesians 2:1, 4-5:** *‘As for you, **you were dead** in your transgressions and sins . . . <sup>4</sup>But because of his great love for us, **God**, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>**made us alive** with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by **grace** you have been saved.*
- ❑ **John 5:24:** *I tell you the truth, whoever hears my Word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned: **he has crossed over from death to life.***

These verses talk about spiritual death and spiritual life.

- Before the second birth, I am spiritually **dead** .
- Only God can give me spiritual life in and through **Jesus Christ** .
- This transfer from death to life involves a step of **faith** when I hear God's Word and put my **trust** in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Once the transfer has taken place, the results are **permanent** and **final** .
- Notice carefully that my salvation is based solely upon God's **grace** , what God has done. (Ephesians 2:5)

**APPLICATION****HOW DO I “CROSS OVER” FROM SPIRITUAL DEATH TO SPIRITUAL LIFE?**

Remember memory verse #1!

- ❑ **John 20:31:** *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

**WHAT IS FAITH? WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO “BELIEVE”?****What faith isn't:**

- Faith **is not** simply intellectual understanding or mental assent.
- Faith **is not** a feeling.

**What faith is:**

- Faith is a choice.** It involves my mind and my will.
  - I choose to take action based upon understanding certain facts:
    - Who He was and is (*Son of God, Savior*)
    - What He has done for me (*atonement, reconciliation, forgiveness, redemption*)
    - What He has said to me (*the Scriptures*)
  - I choose to turn away from sin (*repentance*).
  - I choose to turn towards Jesus Christ and put my trust in Him alone for my salvation (*faith*).

**Grace**

**Grace** has been defined several ways:

- Unmerited favor
- Receiving something good that I do not deserve
- God's Redemption At Christ's Expense

- Atonement** is literally “a making at one”: the act of removing the root cause of enmity between two alienated parties.
- Reconciliation** is literally the act of “reuniting” two alienated parties, bringing them back into harmony. Closely related to “atonement.”
- Forgiveness** is granting someone free pardon for an offense, debt, sin, etc.
- Redemption** is literally “buying back”, payment to obtain the release of someone from captivity.

**FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS THAT SHOW HOW FAITH IS A CHOICE****1. Making a Marriage Vow**

Four levels or aspects of the couple's relationship

- a. Emotional
- b. Intellectual
- c. Physical
- d. Volitional (act of will)

Marriage involves a choice, a decision to exchange vows before God, before a minister—or priest or rabbi or justice of the peace—and in front of other witnesses before the marriage becomes legal.

**2. Cashing a Check**

Notice the components:

- a. Date
- b. Payee (recipient)
- c. Payment
- d. Giver
- e. Authorization
- f. Endorsement by the payee

Cashing a check also involves a choice, a decision: whether or not to endorse the check so as to validate it!

**3. Responding to a Knock at the Door**

When someone knocks at the door of your home or your room, again you face a choice, a decision!

- a. Tell him to go away.
- b. Ignore him. Hope he goes away.
- c. Open the door and invite him in.

☐ **Revelation 3:20:** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

**4. Joining the Tightrope Walker**

Intellectually, you know a world-famous tightrope walker can push a wheelbarrow safely across a tightrope high above Niagara Falls. You may have seen him do it a hundred times, but you exercise genuine faith and trust in the tightrope walker when you volunteer to sit in the wheelbarrow and allow him to push **you** across. Similarly with Jesus Christ, we need to “get in the wheelbarrow”. True faith requires trust. We need to cross over from death to life.

**The bottom line:** To possess believing faith means **to choose to take action** based on what you know about Jesus Christ and involves turning away from sin and putting your trust in Him.

We “**cross over**” by expressing our desire to God. The condition of our hearts is more important to God than the words we say, but here’s a suggested prayer someone might pray:

*Heavenly Father, today I’m putting my complete trust in Your Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead.*

*I realize I’m a sinner, but today I turn to You in repentance and faith. Thank You for forgiving my sins—all of them—and for giving me eternal life!*

*Dear Jesus, I need You. I open the door of my heart. Please come in and make me the kind of person You created me to be so that I may bring honor and glory to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Some of you have just reconfirmed an earlier spiritual commitment. But if you prayed this prayer with all sincerity for the first time, then welcome to the family of God!

Now that you have asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior and to give direction to your life you may or may not be expressing emotion depending on your personality, but you can be sure, all heaven is rejoicing! There’s a “celestial celebration” going on! In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus describes it this way,

❑ **Luke 15:10:** *I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

We encourage you to share your decision and new commitment with someone else right away. This verbalization of your faith in Jesus will confirm it in your heart.

❑ **Romans 10:9-10:** *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

## WRAP-UP: SOME KEY POINTS

1. God wants to give me spiritual life!
2. I am spiritually dead and remain that way until I receive spiritual life from God.
3. A person cannot have spiritual life apart from God.
4. I need to experience a new or second birth by “crossing over” from death to life.
5. I need to trust in Jesus: who He is, what He said, and what He did for me.
6. I can take this step by expressing my desire to God in prayer.

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## ACTION POINTS

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1. Read through today's class notes.
2. Review John 3:1-7 (*Gospel of John*).
3. Listen to the CD (Week 4) entitled ***A Story of A Changed Life***.
4. For your interest and for future reading: ***Seven Common Questions and Answers*** and ***Twelve Reasons People Hesitate To Follow Christ and What To Say***. (See **Attachments 6 and 7** at the end of this book.)
5. Read carefully **Attachment 8: *How Can I Be Sure I'm Going to Heaven?***
6. Learn memory verse #5.

☐ **1 John 5:11-13:** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who 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 so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

7. Read and answer the Week 6 preview questions.
  - Who has given us eternal life? (*1 John 5:11*)
  - In whom do we find eternal life? (*1 John 5:11*)
  - Why did John write these things? (*1 John 5:13*)
  - Can anyone or anything take away our salvation? (*John 10:28-29*)

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## NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC:

*How Can I Be Sure I'm Going to Heaven?*

# CHRISTIANITY 101 :: WEEK 6

## *How Can I Be Sure I'm Going to Heaven?*

### MEMORY VERSE #5

- ☐ **1 John 5:11-13:** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who 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 so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

In order to answer the question “How can I be sure I’m going to heaven?” **first** we need to look at some significant things that happen the moment Jesus enters your life, and **second**, we need to find out whether or not we can undo what God has done.

Last week as we ended our class, some of you for the first time prayed a prayer to “cross over from death to life,” as Jesus expressed it. You asked Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and trusted in his work on the cross to pay for your sins.

Others of you reaffirmed a previous commitment, and some of you are still unready, and we understand that, knowing God has His timing for all things.

The Bible tells us that when someone experiences a new birth and becomes a follower of Jesus, **at least eleven facts are true about us:**

### TODAY’S TOPIC:

## *How Can I Be Sure I'm Going to Heaven?*

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JESUS ENTERS MY LIFE?

1. I cross over from **death** to **life**.

- ☐ **John 5:24:** *I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*

2. God **forgives** all my sins!

- ☐ **Colossians 2:13c:** *He forgave us all our sins.*

3. I become a member of God’s **family**.

- ☐ **John 1:12:** *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

4. I am a **new creation**.

- ☐ **2 Corinthians 5:17:** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

5. God’s Spirit **lives** in me.

- ☐ **1 Corinthians 3:16:** *Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?*

6. God’s Spirit **anoints** and **seals** me.

- ☐ **2 Corinthians 1:21b-22:** <sup>21b</sup>*He anointed us,* <sup>22</sup>*set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

7. I am **complete** in Christ.

☐ Colossians 2:10a: *And you are complete in him . . . (King James Version)*

8. God gives me everything I need for **life** and **godliness**.

☐ 2 Peter 1:3a: *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness . . .*

9. I have **peace** with God.

☐ Romans 5:1: *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

10. I am totally free from God's **condemnation**.

☐ Romans 8:1: *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

11. I have **eternal life**.

☐ 1 John 5:11-13: <sup>11</sup>*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

We've just reviewed what happens when we invite Jesus Christ to enter our hearts and lives, but can we undo what God has done? Some times we may find ourselves asking questions such as:

- "Is there any way I can mess this up?"
- "Will God change His mind?"
- "Can I lose my salvation?"

## CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?

Let's examine the five blocks below and their Scripture verses to determine what someone (including yourself) would have to do to "steal" your salvation.

1. Someone would have to . . .

... **snatch** me out of the hand of God!

☐ John 10:28-29: *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.*

2. Someone would have to . . .

... break the **seal** of ownership which makes me God's possession.

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

3. Someone would have to . . .

... remove the **spirit** of God who lives in me!

☐ 2 Corinthians 1:21-22: *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

## 4. Someone would have to . . .

. . . **separate** me from the **love** of Christ!

- ☐ **Romans 8:35, 38-39:** <sup>35</sup>*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . .* <sup>38</sup>*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, <sup>39</sup>neither angels nor demons, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## 5. Someone would have to . . .

. . . enter heaven and erase my **name** from the **book** of life!

- ☐ **Philippians 4:3:** *Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*
- ☐ **Revelation 21:27:** *Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

If any one of these things were to happen, it would violate God's character and God's Word!

## SOME WARM-UP THOUGHTS

1. Describe a time in your life when you were feeling insecure.

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2. Name something you're absolutely sure about. What makes you sure about it?

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## OTHER POINTS OF ASSURANCE FROM SCRIPTURE

*God's Character*

1. God is **trustworthy**, so whatever God says is **trustworthy**.

- ☐ **2 Timothy 1:12:** *That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for the day.*
- ☐ **Isaiah 12:2:** *Surely GOD is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.*

*The work of God through Jesus Christ*

2. God **rescued** us and gives us **life** in His Son.

- ☐ **Colossians 1:13-14:** <sup>13</sup>*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*
- ☐ **John 6:40:** *For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

*The Truth Of God's Promises*

3. God has promised that those who **believe in** \_\_\_\_\_ (place their trust in) His Son, Jesus, will be **saved** \_\_\_\_\_ and have **eternal life** \_\_\_\_\_.

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

☐ **Acts 16:31:** *They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household."*

4. God has made a pledge never to **leave** \_\_\_\_\_ us nor **forsake** \_\_\_\_\_ us.

☐ **Hebrews 13:5:** *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

☐ **John 5:24a:** *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned. . .*

Therefore, since God is trustworthy, we can confidently place our faith in the work of Jesus Christ to save us, never to be condemned or forsaken.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Name something that might make you feel insecure about your salvation.

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Test each item against God's promises we've just discussed.

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**STUDY OF 1 JOHN 5:11-13**

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

- Who is the giver? **God**
- What has been given? **Eternal life**
- Where is it found? **In His Son**

Speaking to His heavenly Father, Jesus said about Himself,

- ❑ **John 17:2-3:** *For you granted him [Jesus] authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

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

1. What do the words “*He who has the Son*” mean?

**Has a relationship with the Son**

2. Who is the Son? **Jesus**

3. If someone has the Son, what else does he or she possess?

**Eternal life**

**Verse 13:** *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

1. The Apostle John uses the word **know**. He doesn't say **hope so** or **wonder about**.  
2. Facts can be known, and Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection are facts.

- ❑ **Luke 1:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

## ENVELOPE ILLUSTRATION

## OLD-TIME TRAIN ILLUSTRATION

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- FACT**      ➡      God and His Word  
**FAITH**      ➡      my trust in God and His Word  
**FEELING**      ➡      the result of my faith and obedience

**AN IMPORTANT REMINDER . . .**

***Our assurance of our salvation is not dependent upon how we feel at any given moment. We rely on God's character and on the promise of God's Word, not our feelings.***

The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the reliability of God Himself and His Word. The old-time train diagram, above, illustrates the connection between **FACT** (God and His Word), **FAITH** (our trust in God and His Word), and **FEELING** (our response to life's experiences).

A train is designed to be pulled by the engine, not the caboose. In the same way, ***we need to put our trust in the facts of God's trustworthiness and His promises.*** The more fuel of faith (trust) we put into the facts of God's promises, the more His power will be released in our life.

***If we rely on our feelings***, which are so often affected by circumstances around us, ***they may cause us to doubt our salvation.*** While feelings matter to us as people, our feelings should not be confused with the objective, supernatural reality of God and His promises. As the train moves forward, the caboose follows. In the same way, when we live a life of faith and obedience to God's Word, our feelings will follow in due time.

For more detail, read **Attachment 7: How Can I Be Sure I'm going to Heaven?**

**APPLICATION****SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

What exactly will you do the next time you experience doubt regarding your salvation?

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**NOW THAT YOU KNOW YOU CAN BE CERTAIN OF HEAVEN**

- You can now see how Jesus Christ is the center of life's most important decision. Perhaps God wants you to talk to someone in your life and help them make this same life-changing decision.
- Give thanks to God for what He had done for you with His irrevocable gift of eternal life. Do this by faith every time you doubt.
- Dedicate your life to serving God out of the overflow of a thankful heart.

**WRAP-UP: SOME KEY POINTS**

1. God is trustworthy; therefore, I can trust whatever God tells me in Scripture:
  - My salvation is secure in God's almighty hand.
  - God has given me His seal: the Holy Spirit.
  - The Holy Spirit lives in me.
  - Nothing can separate me from the love of Christ.
  - My name is written in the Lamb's book of life.
2. God has given me eternal life in His Son, Jesus Christ.
3. Scripture tells me that my salvation and my assurance of it rest upon what Jesus Christ has already done for me, not upon my feelings.

**ACTION POINTS**

1. Review today's class notes. Look up each Scripture reference.
2. Look up and read the following verses which illustrate the security and permanence of your relationship with Jesus Christ: Luke 10:20; John 5:24, 6:39-40, 10:27-29; Romans 11:29; Revelation 21:27.
3. Listen to Lon Solomon's sermons on CD (Week 6) entitled ***Eternal Security - Part 1&2***.
4. Register for and attend **Christianity 201**.
5. Memory verse for **Christianity - 201**.
 

❑ **1 Corinthians 3:16:** *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and God's spirit lives in you?*

**Growing On Your Own**

*Take time this week to look up each verse in your Bible and read it in context.*

**LIFE IMPACT**

Describe one or more key ideas or insights that you can take from Christianity 101.

How has each impacted your life?

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

## MY NEXT STEP

## Christianity 201: Growing in My Relationship with Jesus Christ

**Week 1:** Who is the Holy Spirit and Why Did He Come?

**Week 2:** How Can I Read and Understand the Bible?

**Week 3:** How Can I Communicate With God?

**Week 4:** How Can I Handle Sin and Temptation?

**Week 5:** How Can I Share My Faith?

### **Week 6:** How Do I Keep on Growing?

## ATTACHMENT 1

### *The Reliability of the Bible* by Lon Solomon

#### **What do we mean by “inspired”?**

Supernatural working of God whereby He caused the exact words He wanted to be written down in the Bible.

#### **What is revelation?**

God revealing truth to man that man would never figure out himself.

#### **What is inspiration?**

God overseeing the writing down correctly of His exact words.

#### **What is illumination?**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit to our mind and soul to read revelation and know and understand what we are reading.

#### **What do we mean by inerrant?**

There are NO errors in the Bible; wherever it speaks, it is right.

#### **What do we mean by infallible?**

The Bible cannot be in error.

*Survey of church leaders on “Is the Bible inspired?” Percentage who said “No”:*

*Lutheran 57%, Baptist 57%, United Presbyterian 81%, United Methodist 82%, Episcopalian 89%*

**Inerrancy is the linchpin of Christianity**—if we cannot trust that there was really an Adam or a Jonah, how can we be sure it is telling us the truth about the words of Jesus about the resurrection, or heaven and hell?

#### **So what proofs are there that the Bible is reliable?**

1. Changed lives of people who have believed  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

2. Archaeology confirms historical reliability

**Before:** Critics claimed that writing was unknown in 1500 BC, thus Moses couldn't have written first five books of OT

**Now:** Writing discovered to be practiced by uneducated slaves as far back as 3000 BC

**Before:** Critics claimed that Abraham never existed nor did the culture presented in Genesis exist

**Now:** His hometown Ur discovered; Sodom and Gomorrah discovered; clay tablets from Nuzi record many customs of Abraham's time to a tee

3. Fulfilled prophecy

*Incredibly detailed predictions have been fulfilled; some with a 1:400,000,000 probability of fulfillment.*

## OBJECTIONS

#### **What about all the places that the Bible disagrees with science?**

Duane Gish (creation scientist): “There is not one single FACT of science that disagrees with the Bible.”

**Hasn't the Bible changed through the years?**

The Dead Sea Scrolls proved that there was no change in 1,000 years.

**Isn't the Bible full of contradictions?**

"Show me one." [may contain mysteries and paradoxes, but not contradictions.]

**Doesn't God still have things to say? The Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others say so.**

Jude 3 says that the faith (God's truth) was "ONCE FOR ALL" entrusted to the saints; all claims for new revelation HAVE ALWAYS resulted in error and destruction to the souls of men.

**Do we believe everything?**

Check the words of Jesus. He spoke of many controversial areas as if they were fact: Adam and Eve, Jonah, Noah, hell, resurrection, judgment, eternal life—this of course hinges on WHO JESUS IS.

# ATTACHMENT 2

## Other Questions About the Bible

### I. HOW IS THE BIBLE ORGANIZED?

#### A. The Old Testament generally can be divided into the following sections:

<b>Pentateuch</b>	(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
<b>Historical</b>	(Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
<b>Poetic</b>	(Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)
<b>Major Prophets</b>	(Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
<b>Minor Prophets</b>	(Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

**Pentateuch** means “five books”—literally, “five scrolls.” It is generally recognized that Moses authored these five books.

#### B. The New Testament generally can be divided into the following sections:

<b>Gospels</b>	(Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
<b>Historical</b>	(Acts)
<b>Pauline Epistles</b>	(Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon)
<b>Other Epistles</b>	(Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude)
<b>Prophetic</b>	(Revelation)

### II. WHY IS THE BIBLE CALLED “THE WORD OF GOD”?

#### A. Because God uses this term.

- ☐ **Hebrews 4:12:** *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*
- ☐ **1 Thessalonians 2:13:** *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

#### B. Because the Bible itself claims its origin is from God.

- ☐ **2 Timothy 3:16a:** *All Scripture is God-breathed.*
- ☐ **2 Peter 1:21a:** *For [God’s message] never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God . . .*

#### C. Because the Bible declares that God was directing the human writers to write exactly what He wanted written—this process is called “inspiration”.

- ☐ **2 Peter 1:21b:** *...but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

#### D. Because the Bible explains God’s plans and purposes.

- ☐ **John 20:31:** *But these [recorded miracles of Jesus] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

- ❑ **2 Timothy 3:15-17:** *And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**E. Because the truth of Scripture is eternal just as God is eternal.**

- ❑ **Psalm 119:89:** *Your word O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*
- ❑ **Isaiah 40:8:** *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.*
- ❑ **Matthew 24:35:** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

**III. WHAT ABOUT THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE?**

**A. Inspiration is not selective or partial, it extends to all Scripture.**

- ❑ **2 Timothy 3:16a:** *All Scripture is God-breathed.*
- ❑ **Romans 15:4:** *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

**B. Inspiration means that God superintended the writing process: the actual words of Scripture not just the thoughts.**

- ❑ **2 Timothy 3:16a:** *All Scripture is God-breathed.*
- ❑ **Exodus 24:4a:** *Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.*
- ❑ **Joshua 8:34:** *Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law . . . just as it is written in the Book of the Law.*
- ❑ **Joshua 24:26a:** *And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. . .*
- ❑ **Jeremiah 26:2b:** *"Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. . ."*
- ❑ **Jeremiah 30:2:** *"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you . . .'"*
- ❑ **1 Corinthians 2:13:** *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*

**C. Inspiration means that the Bible is perfect and without error in its original form.**

- ❑ **Psalm 12:6a:** *And the words of the LORD are flawless.*
- ❑ **Psalm 19:7a:** *The law of the LORD is perfect.*
- ❑ **John 10:35b:** *And the Scripture cannot be broken.*

**D. How is inspiration related to revelation and illumination?**

Whereas **inspiration** describes how God superintended the writing process of Scripture, **revelation** is God making Himself known to us supernaturally—apart from human effort, and **illumination** is that process whereby the Holy Spirit enables believers to comprehend what God has recorded in Scripture.

**Flawless and Perfect**

The word translated **flawless** comes from a verb meaning **to be bright, to be pure, uncontaminated**. The word **perfect** means **complete, without blemish**.

## IV. WAS ANYTHING LOST OR LEFT OUT OF THE BIBLE?

### A. Are any books missing?

1. No, God could have and would have preserved the so-called “lost books,” if He had wanted them to be still available for our instruction. (For example, the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, 1 Chronicles 29:29; also the records of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer, 2 Chronicles 12:15).
2. There does exist a group of non-canonical books, that were written during the centuries between the Old Testament book of Malachi (circa 430 BC) and the Gospel of Matthew (circa 60-65 AD). These books are called **The Apocrypha**—literally, **hidden** or **concealed**. They do not appear in the Hebrew Old Testament but later were added by the Roman Catholic Church in 1546 AD. They were valued for private study and edification but were not approved for public reading.
3. The Apocrypha, however, do not belong in the canon.
  - a. They do not claim to be inspired.
  - b. The Jews did not accept them as inspired.
  - c. Jesus and the Apostles did not accept them.
  - d. The Early Church Fathers did not accept them. (100-400 AD)
  - e. The Reformers did not accept them.
  - f. The Roman Catholic Church did not add them until 1546 AD. (Council of Trent)
  - g. They contain contradictions and errors.

### B. How did we discover which books belong in the canon?

Jesus Himself confirmed the 39 Old Testament books with His own authoritative words throughout His ministry. They have never been in question. He went on to promise the New Testament through His apostles in John 14:25-26 and 16:13.

Also, the Early Church Fathers did not question the 39 OT canonical books, but when considering which books to include in the New Testament, basically they set three conditions:

1. Did the book conform to the rule of faith?  
In other words, did the doctrines contained in a given NT book agree with the normative body of faith in the Christian community? Were its teachings supported elsewhere in Scripture?  
Were there any doctrinal contradictions with other existing NT books?
2. Was the author an apostle or the close associate of an apostle?  
They defined an apostle as one who had witnessed the risen Christ.  
See Luke 1: 1-2, Acts 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, 1 John 1:1-2.
3. Did the book have widespread, continuous acceptance and use by the churches everywhere?  
Was the book generally accepted, collected, read and used by the people of God?

### **The Canon**

*The canon is the officially recognized list of books of the Bible that were generally accepted by the Christian Church as genuine and inspired.*

*Information taken from pages 494-495 of **An Introduction to the New Testament** by D.A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992)*

## V. BUT HASN'T THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED OVER TIME?

When the *Dead Sea Scrolls* were discovered in 1947, the scrolls predated the oldest available Old Testament manuscripts by 1,000 years. The later copies are practically identical to the text of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* written a millennium earlier!

As for the New Testament, Greek manuscript copies (in whole or in part) number more than 5,300 and show an amazing accuracy in the agreement of the copies.

Most differences in the Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts involve things like spelling variations, but none affect the foundational principles of the Christian faith.

The answer then is a resounding “NO.” The Bible you hold in your hands has been carefully and supernaturally preserved by God over the course of time.

## VI. AM I SUPPOSED TO TAKE THE BIBLE LITERALLY?

First, let's look at the definition of *literal*:

*In accordance with, conforming to, or upholding the explicit or primary meaning of a word or the words of a text.*

Better stated, we can say that to take the Bible literally is to take its text in the sense in which the writer intended.

So what determines the intent or the sense of a given text? Simple: context, context, context!

(More on this in Week 3 of *Christianity 201*)

## VII. IS THERE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TO AFFIRM THE BIBLE'S RELIABILITY?

### Yes—Archaeology

Let's allow the experts speak to this point:

*“Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history.”*

William F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*

*“It must be extremely significant that, in view of the great mass of corroborative evidence regarding the Biblical history of these periods, there exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point.”*

Henry M. Morris, *The Bible and Modern Science*

Because the Bible is *historically reliable*, when it says Jesus lived, He lived. When it says He spoke a certain parable or gave a certain teaching then that's exactly what He said. And of course, if it says that Jesus of Nazareth was publicly executed only to rise again from the dead—then it really did happen!

This is no small point. Critics will attack the Bible on this very point as they try desperately to undercut its reliability and ultimately its divine origin and authority.

# ATTACHMENT 3

## *Non-Biblical Arguments for the Existence of God*

### I. THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

- Everything that had a beginning had a cause.
- The universe had a beginning.
- Therefore, the universe had a cause [a Creator].

### II. THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

- Every design has a designer.
- The universe and life exhibit highly complex design.
- Therefore, there is a designer of the universe and life.

### III. THE MORAL ARGUMENT

- Every law has a lawgiver.
- There is an absolute moral law. [Fairness, justice, etc.]
- Therefore, there is an absolute moral lawgiver.

These three syllogisms demonstrate from a philosophical perspective that believing in an intelligent, moral creator of the universe—God—is reasonable.

***But philosophy approaches the existence of God on an intellectual level only.***

***Ultimately it is Scripture that leads a person to Jesus Christ.***

- ❑ **2 Timothy 3:15:** ...you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

***Only Scripture and the Spirit of God give revelation, faith, spiritual understanding and discernment to move from knowing about God to having a personal relationship with God***—which is why the Bible was written.

- ❑ **John 20:31:** But these [recorded miracles of Jesus] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

# ATTACHMENT 4

## *Will Jesus Really Return Someday?*

### IS JESUS CHRIST REALLY GOING TO RETURN?

Peter reminds us to remember the Scriptures of God to remain steadfast. The return of Jesus Christ to earth is one of the key biblical teachings that Christians should both affirm definitively and await anxiously. It is important to note, however, that His return has two distinct components. One is known as the rapture (see 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and the other is known as the Second Coming (see below). Most agree that these two events can be distinguished in the sense that the rapture is when Christ comes for His own people (the Church) and the Second Coming is when He comes with them in triumph and glory. How far apart these two events are in time is a disputed question, but their certain arrival is not.

For this section we will examine aspects of Jesus' return in a broad, general sense, as follows: Jesus' return was foreseen by Old Testament writers, further substantiated by Jesus' own words, and commonly cited by the New Testament writers as they exhorted believers to live rightly and "be ready."

### LET'S LOOK AT THE SCRIPTURES.

#### A. OT PROPHECIES JESUS' RETURN

1. In the OT, Jesus' return is referred to as the day of the Lord—a dreadful day of judgment.

❑ **Isaiah 13:9, 11a:** *See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger . . . I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins.*

❑ **Job 2:1b:** *Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming.*

2. Jesus' return will be a physical, bodily return.

❑ **Job 19:25, 26b:** *I know that my redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth . . . in my flesh I will see God.*

❑ **Zechariah 14:4:** *On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.*

#### B. JESUS SPOKE PLAINLY OF HIS RETURN

1. Jesus promised to return to remove His faithful from earth to be with Him in heaven.

❑ **John 14:3:** *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

2. Jesus promised that His return will be visible to the whole earth.

❑ **Matthew 24:27:** *For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

3. Jesus described the upheaval in the natural world that will accompany His return.

❑ **Luke 21:25, 26:** *There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea . . . the heavenly bodies will be shaken.*

❑ **Matthew 24:29:** *The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky.*

4. Jesus declared that His return is imminent and no one knows when He will return except God the Father.

❑ **Matthew 24:42, 44:** *Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. So you must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

❑ **Matthew 24:36:** *No one knows about the day or the hour . . . only the Father.*

## C. THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS AFFIRMED KEY ASPECTS OF THE SECOND COMING

1. Luke records the statement of an angel that Jesus would return visibly.

❑ **Acts 1:11:** *This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.*

2. Paul described how people on that day will possess a false sense of security only to be surprised suddenly.

❑ **1 Thessalonians 5:2-3:** *The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come upon them suddenly.*

3. Peter urged believers to live righteously in light of this coming event.

❑ **1 Peter 2:11b-12:** *Abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among [unbelievers] that, though they may accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

❑ **2 Peter 3:14:** *So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to [Jesus' return], make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*

4. Peter reminds us to remember the promises of God to remain steadfast amidst the scoffers.

❑ **2 Peter 3:3-5:** *First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised?" . . . But they deliberately forget [God's certain promises].*

# ATTACHMENT 5

## THE BLOOD OF CHRIST: ITS MEANING, SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Only blood can bring about divine forgiveness for sin.	Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22
2. In the Old Testament God instituted the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) to cleanse His people from their sins.	Leviticus 16:29-30, 34
3. God specified exactly how the Old Testament priests were to make atonement for sins.	Leviticus 16:5, 7-10, 15-16, 20-22
4. Old Testament sacrifices were repetitive and temporary. They only <b>covered over</b> sins.	Hebrews 10:1-4, 11
5. The New Testament shows that Jesus' blood sacrifice was perfect, permanent and final.	Hebrews 9:24-26, 10:12
6. The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who forgives and <b>takes away</b> our sins.	1 Corinthians 5:7b, John 1:29
7. Jesus paid with His own blood the impossible price we could not pay.	1 Peter 1:18-19, John 19:30
8. God specifies and requires personal application of the blood.	Exodus 12:3, 6b-7, 13a
9. Passover and the Lord's Supper are reminders of God's provision for sin.	Exodus 12:24-27, 1 Corinthians 5:7b, 11:23-26

## THE BLOOD OF CHRIST: ITS MEANING, SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

**Atonement** is literally "a making at one": the act of removing the root cause of enmity between two alienated parties.

**Forgiveness** is granting someone free pardon for an offense, debt, sin, etc.

### 1. Only blood can bring about divine forgiveness for sin.

- ☐ **Leviticus 17:11:** *For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*
- ☐ **Hebrews 9:22:** *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

### 2. In the Old Testament God instituted the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) to cleanse His people from their sins.

- ☐ **Leviticus 16:29-30, 34:** <sup>29</sup>*This is to be lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work—whether native-born or an alien living among you—<sup>30</sup>because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins . . .<sup>34</sup>This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites."*

### 3. God specifies exactly how the Old Testament priests were to make atonement for sins.

- ☐ **Leviticus 16:5, 7-10, 15-16, 20-22:** <sup>5</sup>*From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering . . .<sup>7</sup>Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. <sup>8</sup>He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. <sup>9</sup>Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. <sup>10</sup>But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat. . .<sup>15</sup>He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. <sup>16</sup>In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of*

*Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. . .<sup>20</sup>When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. <sup>21</sup>He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. <sup>22</sup>The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.*

**4. Old Testament sacrifices were repetitive and temporary. They only covered over sins.**

- ❑ **Hebrews 10:1-4, 11:** *<sup>1</sup>The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. <sup>2</sup>If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. <sup>3</sup>But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, <sup>4</sup>because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. . . . <sup>11</sup>day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*

**5. The New Testament shows that Jesus' blood sacrifice was perfect, permanent and final.**

- ❑ **Hebrews 9:24-26:** *<sup>24</sup>For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. <sup>25</sup>Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. <sup>26</sup>Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*
- ❑ **Hebrews 10:12:** *<sup>12</sup>But when this priest [Christ] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.*

**6. The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who forgives and takes away our sins.**

- ❑ **1 Corinthians 5:7b:** *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*
- ❑ **John 1:29:** *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

**7. Jesus paid with His own blood the impossible price we could not pay.**

- ❑ **1 Peter 1:18-19:** *<sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*
- ❑ **John 19:30:** *Jesus said, "It is finished" [literally, "paid"]. With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

**8. God specifies and requires personal application of the blood.**

- ❑ **Exodus 12:3, 6b-7, 13a:** *<sup>3</sup>Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household . . . <sup>6b</sup>when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. <sup>7</sup>Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs . . . <sup>13a</sup>The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*

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**Redemption** is literally "buying back", payment to obtain the release of someone from captivity.

**9. Passover and the Lord's Supper are reminders of God's provision for sin.**

- ❑ **Exodus 12:24-27:** <sup>24</sup>"Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. <sup>25</sup>When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. <sup>26</sup>And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' <sup>27</sup>then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Then the people bowed down and worshiped.
- ❑ **1 Corinthians 5:7b:** For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.
- ❑ **1 Corinthians 11:23-26:** <sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup>For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## ATTACHMENT 6

### *Seven Common Questions and Answers*

*by Jim Franks*

Before getting to the answers, let's go over some of the basics when faced with tough or difficult questions regarding our beliefs.

- It is OK not to know all the answers. No one expects you to know everything. It is fine to say, "I'm not sure of the answer to that one . . . I'll have to look into it and get back to you."
- All answers we provide should be biblically based. When using the Bible as our resource we can be assured of reliable answers:

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.  
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

- Remember that you are not alone. The Holy Spirit is there to help you. When faced with this situation, ask for God's help through the Holy Spirit and trust in Him for the results.

### **"WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD OF JESUS CHRIST? WILL THEY BE CONDEMNED TO HELL?"**

First, we need to remember that God has not chosen to give us the answers for everything:

*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)*

God's Word does not provide a cut and dried answer for this one. However, the Bible is very clear on several key points relating to this issue.

**First**, we know that God is just:

*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)*

From this we can rest in the knowledge that God will do the right and just thing for every person when they die. He will not make any mistakes. Everyone who should be in heaven will go there. Everyone who deserves to go to hell will go there.

**Second**, a person will not be condemned for failing to respond to the gospel message which they have never heard. They will be judged by their own code of ethics as stated in Romans 2:

*All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. (Romans 2:12-16)*

Even though everyone has a standard of some kind, they knowingly violate it, showing the inherent sin nature that all of us have from conception. (*Psalms 51:5*)

**Third**, everyone has enough information to know that God exists:

*... since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20)*

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. (Psalms 19:1-3)*

Once someone truly acknowledges the one true God and puts aside self to worship Him and know Him better, he or she will be given further light concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:7-11)*

*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13)*

**Fourth**, Nowhere in the Bible does it indicate any other way to be saved than through Jesus Christ:

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

**Finally** and probably the most important point for the person asking the question: All of us must face God when we die and must personally be responsible for the way we responded to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The very fact that they have raised the question shows they know of Jesus Christ and must make a decision for or against Him. Make your final point that they do know who Jesus Christ is and the Bible is very clear about the destiny of those who reject Him. (*John 14:6*)

## "IS JESUS CHRIST THE ONLY WAY TO GOD?"

As stated above in John 14:6, Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life with God in heaven. Christianity acknowledges man's sinful state and Jesus alone provides a way for sinful man to coexist with a perfect and Holy God. No other world religion resolves man's sin problem perfectly or permanently.

*... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ... (Romans 3:23)*

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)*

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. (1 John 2:1)*

Some may say that this is a narrow-minded philosophy, but they are ignoring some basic facts. God has made many laws that we must adhere to and obey every day if we want to live. Simple things like the law of gravity and the human need for oxygen are absolute laws we must obey. If we disobey these laws by walking off a high building or depriving ourselves of oxygen the result is certain—we will die! No sane person wanting to live will argue with or test these facts. No one claims these laws are unfair or narrow-minded. They just are. The results are equally certain for those who turn from Jesus Christ and reject His saving grace. “

## WHY DO THE INNOCENT SUFFER?”

In other words, “If God is all powerful and loving, why do the innocent suffer?”

We are faced with a world where there is much evil and injustice and it is natural to question why bad things happen to people. This is a question philosophers have wrestled with for centuries — so any pat answers would fall far short of adequate.

Again, God has not chosen to reveal to us as to why every event happens, but there are some facts from the Bible that speak to this issue:

**First**, when God created the earth, it was perfect and God gave man the choice to obey or disobey. When man chose to disobey, evil was introduced into the world. We call it sin. Since our actions impact others, this sin has an effect on others as well as ourselves. We now live in a fallen and imperfect world.

**Second**, if God chose to eliminate all evil in this world, who would survive? All of us have a basic sin nature in our hearts and even though we may not be an Adolf Hitler, we still have sin within us, and if God did choose to eliminate all evil, this world would vanish.

**Third**, we must not forget that there is another powerful force loose on this earth for a period of time.

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:10-12)*

Satan is here and has great influence under God's watchful sovereignty. A great biblical example of this is the entire book of Job. However, rest assured that Satan and his minions are already defeated by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and that their final destruction is a certainty. For now, it is part of God's plan that they exist and do their evil work on this earth.

Finally, we should remind those questioning us that God Himself stepped into this world in the person of Jesus Christ to give us a solution to the evil in us and to offer us a way to leave this evil behind when we die through the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

## “HOW CAN MIRACLES BE POSSIBLE?”

In an age of scientific inquiry, many are skeptical of things that are not measurable, logical, or repeatable under laboratory conditions. The question here really boils down to a more basic one: “Does God exist?” If someone accepts that God exists — a God that created all things and is omnipotent — then miracles are intellectually viable. However, if the existence of God is doubted, then miracles seem impossible since we can't duplicate them or explain the events. For a good reference for understanding arguments for the existence of God, please see *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis.

## **“ISN’T THE BIBLE FULL OF ERRORS?” OR “HOW CAN WE BE SURE THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE?”**

Listen to Lon Solomon’s CD’s *The Reliability of the Bible* and *The Holy Spirit: An Inspired Bible. So What?*

## **“ISN’T THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE PSYCHOLOGICAL?”**

Some will question whether Christianity is some sort of mass hypnosis or other phenomenon purely existing in a person’s mind or whether our faith is due to some conditioning that is part of our culture or upbringing. This is a gross oversimplification. Christian conversion has occurred for centuries from every conceivable background and personality. Thousands have testified boldly (sometimes to the loss of their lives) how a personal relationship with Jesus Christ totally transformed their lives. Only the true power of Jesus Christ can be the explanation of countless transformations from evil to good, of darkness to light.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

## **“WON’T A GOOD MORAL LIFE GET ME INTO HEAVEN?”**

This one is clearly answered in God’s Word:

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

Remember that God is holy and without sin. Nothing can enter into His presence that has any sin whatsoever. No matter how good we are, we have all fallen short of God’s perfect standard.

There are two types of sin:

- a. Our sin nature inherited through Adam at conception—a sin nature that is carried down genetically through all generations of mankind.
- b. Any act we do that falls short of the perfection of God. Actually the word “sin” is derived from an archery term meaning “to miss the mark”. The mark is God and His perfection. Therefore, no one is able to live a perfect, sinless life and enter into God’s holy presence based solely on his or her own efforts. Salvation and hence our eternal destiny, has nothing to do with our good works but is entirely dependent on Jesus being in our lives to speak for us when we stand before God.

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. (1 John 2:1)*

# ATTACHMENT 7

### *Twelve Reasons People Hesitate to Follow Christ and What to Say by Paul Barger*

#### **1. “I DON’T WANT TO GIVE UP ALL THE FUN IN MY LIFE.”**

This is primarily a misconception. Jesus Christ changes a person’s desires in life so he or she finds a new and deeper joy in things that are really important and significant in life. Scripture is full of examples of joy, enjoyment, celebration and laughter, and gives clear guidelines for living that reflects God’s best for us. Jesus said, “I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.” (*John 10:10b*)

#### **2. “I’M AFRAID I WILL LOSE CONTROL OF MY LIFE.”**

A large part of this concern is based on an inadequate understanding of God’s character of love, kindness and desire for man to exercise free will (see also question 8). Another part of this concern is that we feel we know what is best for us. It is important to realize that the God of the Bible is someone who knows everything about your life and has your very best welfare in mind.

In addition, being in control of your life is largely a myth anyway. Could you control when or where you were born? Or how you look? Or what family or culture you come from? Think of all the things about your life that you really can’t control!

God will never force you to submit to His plan for you. He has given us free will. To surrender control to Him is to acknowledge the reality that He alone is really in control of the events of our lives. To willingly trust Him with the direction of our lives results in the very best for us.

#### **3. “I DON’T WANT TO GIVE UP MY CAREER AND PURSUIT OF SUCCESS.”**

Actually, the Bible talks a lot about success. It does, however, couch the concept in terms of one’s relationship with Jesus Christ and not how much money one makes. God most likely wants your “light to shine” in whatever field you find yourself in. Of course, God may have a plan for your life that includes a career change. But if so, it will be something you find a growing desire for and will experience God’s very best in it.

#### **4. “I’M AFRAID I WILL BECOME A ‘WEIRD’ PERSON.”**

Do we have a personality change? Actually, no. We find a new reason and strength for living. What happens is that Christ changes us from the inside out—in ways that liberate who we really are. He enables us to become what He designed us to be, not something weird, but a person who reflects the beauty and ingenuity of the Creator.

#### **5. “MY FRIENDS WILL OSTRACIZE/REJECT ME.”**

There is certainly a grain of truth in this. As a new Christian’s values change, sometimes his friends don’t know what to think. Depending on how the new Christian expresses his feelings about this he can either send the wrong message to his friends or draw out their interest in what they see happening in his life. Some new Christians coming out of destructive lifestyles may need to limit their time spent with old buddies simply to minimize the influence of the old lifestyle they wish to escape. This can lead to feelings of rejection on both sides, but as the

believer stands firm and relies on Christ, his old friends will see someone with new strength and realize that they too can be free of some of the destructive things that drag them down.

## **6. “I’M TURNED OFF BY ALL THE HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH.”**

Unfortunately, there are a lot of hypocrites in the church! But there are hypocrites in all walks of life. It is important to realize that we cannot evaluate the claims of Christ based on the lives of those claiming to follow Him. The honest seeker and skeptic needs to look at the life of Christ and see if He lived consistently with His claims. If He is the way, truth and life, then we must grapple with Him and not be led astray from the truth by the inconsistencies of those claiming to be His followers.

## **7. “CHRISTIANITY IS JUST A PSYCHOLOGICAL CRUTCH FOR WEAK PEOPLE.”**

Far from being a crutch, Christianity in truth is more like an iron lung. We are designed to live in a vital relationship with the living God. To try to fill one’s life with anything less than that is an exercise in futility. Jesus does not want to be your crutch, He wants to be your life! Only one thing can really fill the “God-shaped vacuum,” and that is Jesus Christ. Some people come to Him in a time of difficulty because that is the only thing that breaks through their shell of pride and self-dependence.

## **8. “I’M NOT SURE THAT I CAN TRUST GOD WITH MY LIFE.”**

Frequently, this concern can stem from a limited or distorted view of God. For others, their negative view of God is shaped by the closest authority figures in their lives, their parents. Unfortunately in some cases, their parents may have been harsh, abusive, absent or withdrawn. If so, children grow up learning not to trust God because they project on God those qualities of the parent.

Some people tend to see difficult circumstances in life as a sign that God is unloving, angry with them or punishing them. While the Bible does not fully explain this paradox, it is clear that regardless of circumstances, God is compassionate, forgiving, and accepting.

Christ’s death on the cross is the ultimate display of the love and grace of God. All other circumstances must be evaluated in light of the cross. If God loved us enough to send His Son to die for us, then we can trust Him with every area of our life. The measure of His trustworthiness was demonstrated at the cross. (See Romans 5:7-10)

## **9. “I’M TOO UNWORTHY TO BE ACCEPTED BY GOD AND OTHER CHRISTIANS.”**

People who have made a lot of mistakes in their lives feel completely unworthy of God’s love. They know what is inside them and feel beyond help. This attitude, of course, is based on the idea that somehow we can merit God’s love and forgiveness, if only we can “clean up our act.” We are ALL unworthy. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul wrote that as a persecutor of the Church he was “chief among sinners.” And yet Christ forgave him and made him a prime example of the grace of God.

Some people also use this “I’m too unworthy” argument as an excuse to reject Christ, when in reality they don’t want to take responsibility for their past actions, nor are they willing to grapple with the attitude and behavioral changes they will need to make in partnership with God.

## **10. “I CAN’T LIVE UP TO THE COMMITMENT REQUIRED.”**

Many look at their lives and feel that they could never live up to the high standards of the Christian life. As a matter of integrity they don’t want to accept Christ and then not follow through on the commitment. The Bible clearly tells us that just as there is nothing we can do to merit God’s acceptance of us, neither can we live up to God’s standards in our own human strength. That is the good news of Christ. Jesus doesn’t ask us to struggle in our own strength to live the Christian life, but to trust in Him to produce His life in us. Again, this “I can’t” statement may just be a ploy and a rationalization to excuse oneself from coming to Christ (“The standard is just too high, so why try?”).

## **11. “I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE CHURCH; I DON’T FIT IN.”**

Churches come in all kinds of different styles. Some are very traditional, some very contemporary. People need to find the kind of church where they feel accepted and comfortable with the style of worship and teaching which at the same time puts a high value on studying the Bible and following Christ.

## **12. “I THINK YOU SHOULD JUST DO WHAT FEELS GOOD.”**

We need to operate not on the basis of what feels good, but what is right. Feelings are not reliable. They can change. People have felt “good” about “bad” systems as well as “good” ones. Nazism, communism and the cult of Jim Jones all began with good feelings. These examples show that the notion that truth is relative to the cultural setting or situation is inaccurate. Adultery, for example, is never right no matter what the cultural values are. According to the Bible, there are absolute standards given by God. God has given us clear guidelines for living that are for our very best and reflect a morality that is right and true.

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# ATTACHMENT 8

## *How Can I Be Sure I'm Going to Heaven?*

*by Richard Parke*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Maybe you haven't given it much thought, but it is vitally important for every true, regenerated believer to know that he has eternal life. You see, if someone knows his sins are forgiven, knows his salvation is secure, knows he has eternal life, and knows he's destined for heaven, then (1) he will thank God with his heart and mind and (2) he will be motivated to serve God with his words and deeds.

Some of the first verses a new Christian should learn are from 1 John 5:11-13:

❑ **1 John 5:11-13:** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who 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 so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Especially we should notice the phrase,

❑ **1 John 5:13:** *So that you may **know** that you have eternal life.*

Every believer in Jesus Christ can **know** with complete assurance that he has eternal life from the moment he receives Christ.

The question is how? HOW can we know?

### 2. TWO SOURCES OF ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

There are two primary sources for this kind of settled assurance which all of us need and want: God's witness to us and our witness to God.

Now, what do we mean by that?

#### a. God's Witness to Us

By this we mean God's witness, first, through His very nature and character; second, through His written Word; and third, through His Holy Spirit.

##### 1) God's nature and character

His love, His truth, His righteousness, His faithfulness. (*John 3:16, John 14:6, 1 John 1:9*)

We trust someone who loves us and whose consistency of character has proven to be credible.

##### 2) God's Word

Because of God's perfect nature and character, His Word is not retractable. If He makes an unconditional promise, He will never take back what He has said. (Numbers 23:19, Hebrews 6:17-18)

a) With respect to the genuine believer, God's gifts and calling are irrevocable.

(*Romans 11:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:24*)

b) God will never leave us nor forsake us. (*Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5b*)

c) God protects the believer. (*John 10:27-29, 1 Peter 1:4-5*)

d) God gives him eternal life. (*John 5:24, 1 John 5:11-13*)

### 3) God's Holy Spirit in us

a) The believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. (*2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30*)

b) The Holy Spirit in us bears witness with our human spirit that we belong to God's family.  
(*Romans 8:16, 1 John 4:13*)

### b. Our Witness to God

By this we mean our own character, thoughts, words and deeds.

Faith in God's witness to us is very important, but the Bible says that, faith, if it has no works, is dead (*James 2:17, 26*). Faith is far more than intellectual belief! The Apostle James goes on to say that, the demons also believe, and shudder (*James 2:19*). So real faith needs to prove itself in the everyday life of the genuine Christian. This doesn't mean that he is perfect, by no means. But his desire is to see God transform his life (*Romans 12:2*). Someone put it this way, "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

Let's look, then, at some of the evidences that a true believer should exhibit or at least progressively desire to exhibit in his life:

- 1) He confesses that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. (*John 1:14, 1 John 4:2*)
- 2) He believes that Jesus is the Messiah. (*1 John 5:1*)
- 3) He loves God progressively more and more. (*1 John 2:5*)
- 4) He has a personal conviction and assurance that he is born of God. (*1 John 5:19*)
- 5) He hungers for God's Word. (*Jeremiah 15:16, 1 Peter 2:2-3*)
- 6) He discerns spiritual truth. (*1 Corinthians 2:11b-16*)
- 7) He obeys the Word of God. (*John 14:23-24, 1 John 2:3-4*)
- 8) His behavior shows that Christ lives in him. (*1 John 2:6*)
- 9) His life bears fruit in spiritual character and deeds. (*John 15:5, 8*)
- 10) He practices righteousness. (*1 John 2:29, 3 John 11*)
- 11) He keeps himself morally pure. (*1 John 3:3*)
- 12) He does not practice sin—i.e. make a habit of it. (*1 John 3:9, 5:18a*)
- 13) He has a faith which overcomes the world and conformity to it. (*Romans 12:2, 1 John 5:4*)
- 14) He loves other Christians. (*John 13:35, 1 John 2:10; 3:14; 4:7, 11-12*)
- 15) He is willing to tell others about Christ. (*Psalms 107:2, 1 Peter 3:15*)
- 16) He is prepared to face persecution and affliction because of his stand for Christ. (*2 Timothy 3:12*)
- 17) He sets his mind on heaven and things of eternal value. (*Colossians 3:1-3*)

## 3. CONCLUSION

If we count upon God's witness to us concerning our own salvation and also observe God's work in us and through us as He transforms our character and conforms it to the image of Christ (*Romans 8:29*), then our lives will take on a boldness and a conviction that indeed we belong to a kingdom not of this world!

❑ **1 John 5:13:** *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*



## APPENDIX A

### *Christianity 101 Memory Verses*

#### Memory verse #1 for Week 2

**John 20:31:** *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

#### Memory verse #2 for Week 3

**1 Corinthians 15:20:** *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*

#### Memory verse #3 for Week 4

**Isaiah 53:6:** *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

#### Memory verse #4 for Week 5

**1 John 5:11:** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

#### Memory verse #5 for Week 6

**1 John 5:11-13:** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who 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 so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

#### Memory verse #1 for Christianity 201

**2 Timothy 3:16 -17:** *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

## HINTS FOR MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

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- Read the verse in its context.
- Seek to understand it.
- Write out the verse and its reference on an index card.
- Recite the verse aloud one phrase at a time. Do this several times.
- Repeat the process several times daily during slack periods: while riding on the bus or subway; commuting to work in your car; coffee time or lunch break.
- After memorizing the verse, review it later on a regular basis to keep it fresh in your mind!

## APPENDIX B

*Christianity 101 Recommended Books, Bibles  
and Web Sites*

(Many are available at the Bookstore)

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Basic Christianity***, John Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971)
- Bible Knowledge Commentary***, The, John F. Walvoord/Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Chariot Victor Books, 1987)
- Born Again***, Charles Colson (Tarrytown, NY: Revell, 1976)
- Case for Christ, The***, Lee Strobel (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998)
- Case for Faith, The***, Lee Strobel (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000)
- God You're Looking For, The***, Bill Hybels (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997)
- I'm Glad You Asked***, Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1982)
- Know What You Believe***, Paul Little (Wheaton, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987)
- Know Why You Believe***, Paul Little (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968)
- Knowing God***, J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973)
- Knowledge of the Holy, The***, A. W. Tozer (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1961)
- Mere Christianity***, C. S. Lewis (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1952, paperback, 1984)
- More Than a Carpenter***, Josh McDowell (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1977)
- New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, The***, Josh McDowell (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999)
- New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable, The***, F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960)
- Ready Defense, A***, Josh McDowell (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993)
- Reason Why, The***, Robert Laidlaw (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1972)
- Survey of Bible Doctrine, A***, Charles C. Ryrie (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972)
- Unger's Bible Handbook***, Merrill F. Unger (Chicago, IL: Moody Press)

# CHRISTIANITY 101

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## RECOMMENDED BIBLES

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**Life Application Bible**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991)

**NASB Zondervan Study Bible**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000)

**New American Standard Bible**, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1977)

**New International Version (NIV) Study Bible**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985)

**Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition**, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994) NASB, NIV, NKJ, KJV.

## RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

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***aomin.org***—Christian apologetics

***ariel.org***—Ariel Ministries (Jewish focus)

***biblegateway.com***—Scriptures (all versions) on line

***boundless.org***—Christian teen issues

***breakpoint.org***—Christian worldview issues

***campuscrusade.org***—Campus Crusade for Christ

***christianbook.com***—Christian books, videos, music

***crosswalk.com***—Christian portal

***equip.org***—Christian Research Institute

***family.org***—Focus on the Family

***familylife.com***—Family Life Ministries

***frontline.to***—Frontline

***gtv.org***—Grace To You

***icr.org***—Institute for Creation Research

***intouchministries.org***—In Touch Ministries

***jewsforjesus.org***—Jews for Jesus

***mcleanbible.org***—McLean Bible Church

***oneplace.com***—Christian portal

***precept.org***—Precept Upon Precept

***promisekeepers.org***—Promise Keepers

***reasons.org***—Reasons To Believe

***willowcreek.org***—Willow Creek Community Church

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