

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## Basics of the Christian Faith

Vickie Kraft

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### The Bible: The Word Of God

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**“The Scriptures: We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God without error in the original writings, and the supreme and final authority in doctrine and practice.”**

Parade magazine had an article by Carl Sagan about his experience with cancer. He said he didn't believe in an afterlife. He said Christians, Moslems, Jews and Hindus had told him they prayed for him. “While I do not think that, if there is a god, his plan for me will be altered by prayer, I'm more grateful than I can say.” Carl Sagan has studied astronomy. He was the current authority on the cosmos. Yet his study has led him to deny a Creator rather than worship Him. Isn't that what Romans 1:18-20 says?

#### **Read Romans 1:18-20**

We learn from creation that there is a God and He has great power. But God has revealed Himself even more extensively.

#### **Read Hebrews 1:1-2**

He spoke His Word through the prophets. But his final and most complete revelation of Himself is in His Son. Jesus reveals what God is like. How he thinks, feels, acts. And God has preserved the record for us in the Bible. The Bible is the source for what we believe about God, Christ, humanity, salvation, heaven? Does it matter what our authority is? Why should we trust the Bible? What evidence is there for us to let it be the authoritative book that informs and controls our lives?

*Bible* from Gr. *biblos*, book; *biblia*, books. The word not used in the Bible.

### **The Bible Is The Unique Word Of God**

The Bible is uniquely the Word of God.

There are two lines of evidence: external and internal.

#### **External Evidence**

##### **1. The continuity of the Bible**

It was written by more than 40 authors over about 1600 years, it is still one book, not a collection of books. The authors were kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physician, tax collector, statesmen, scholars, poets and farmers.

It was written from various countries, from Italy, Greece, Babylon, Persia and Israel. The human authors lived in different cultures and had different experiences. They were different in character and personality.

They wrote in 3 languages; Old Testament: Hebrew; Aramaic; New Testament: Greek.

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But the Bible is not an anthology of books by different authors. It has an amazing continuity and unity from Genesis to Revelation.

*The Paradise Lost of Genesis becomes the Paradise Regained of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation.*  
(Geisler & Nix. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, p. 19)

Doctrine is progressively unfolded throughout. Salvation is hinted at in Genesis 3, developed by promises and pictures in the OT, accomplished in the Gospels, explained in the epistles and brought to glorious completion in Revelation.

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## 2. The extent of biblical revelation

All the books of Bible were written in the early days of human knowledge when authors were not aware of modern discoveries. But what they wrote has never been contradicted by later discovery.

*Isaiah 40:22-He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth.* That was written 2800 years ago.

*Job 26:7-He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; He suspends the earth over nothing.* That was written 4000 years ago.

Archeology consistently produces evidence that supports biblical statements. (Hittites, Sargon)

## 3. Influence and publication of Bible

No other book has been published in as many languages. It still is a best-seller. The French atheist Voltaire said that it would be obsolete within a hundred years from his time and Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. But Voltaire has passed into history and the Bible continues to be circulated increasingly throughout the world. In fact, ironically, *only 50 years after Voltaire's death, the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles.* (Evidence, p. 23)

## 4. Manuscript evidence

Compared to the few manuscripts of ancient writings that are existent, there are 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the NT, some dating from as early as the second century.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, director and principal librarian of the British Museum said: *No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text, and no unbiased scholar would deny that the text that has come down to us is substantially sound"*

## 5. Unprejudiced authority of Bible

Human authorship has not resulted in prejudice in favor of man. The Bible records the sins and weakness of best of men (Abraham, Moses, David, Peter). It records lies and misconceptions of Satan and men (Job). It is a devastatingly honest record that is consistent with our instinctive knowledge of human beings today.

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## 6. The supreme character of the Bible

The Bible is a supernatural book revealing the person and glory of God as manifested in His Son. A person like Jesus Christ could never have been the invention of mortal man. Nor would we have invented him if we could. Contrast Greek mythology where their gods were magnified images of themselves.

### Internal Evidence

**Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** *Theopneustos=God-breathed.* Only here NT.

### Scripture is God-breathed

Scripture was breathed out by God. Inspiration refers not so much to authors but to the Word of God. While the authors were fallible and subject to error, God breathed out into their minds His infallible Word, so that what they wrote was the **inerrant** Word of God.

How did God tell the human authors what to write?

Not by mechanical dictation.

### Read 2 Peter 1:20-21

The human authors were moved or borne along, carried to the destination intended by God much as a boat will carry its passengers to its ultimate destination.

God used various ways to communicate His Word.

*Exodus 34:27. Write down these words.*

*The Word of the Lord came to the prophets: Jeremiah 1:2; Hosea 1:1;*

*Visions and dreams, Daniel 2:1; 7:1*

Therefore, the Scriptures are the very expression of God and must be as **absolutely authoritative** and **absolutely perfect** as He is or.

He is in error and fallible.

### Extent of Inspiration--ALL Scripture

God directed so that all the words that were used were equally inspired by God. *Verbal* means words, *plenary* means full.

It doesn't just **contain** the word of God, or is only the word when it **speaks** to you.

**1 Timothy 5:18**-Paul places **Luke 10:7** on the same authoritative level as **Deuteronomy 25:4**, calling them both Scripture. (*Graphe*)

**2 Peter 3:15-16**--Peter refers to Paul's writings as equal to the rest of Scripture.

### VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

Definition: The supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit in which He superintended the human authors of canonical Scripture, so that their individual personalities composed and recorded without error God's revelation to humanity in the words of the original autographs.

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The Spirit of God guided in the choice of the words used by the human authors in the original writings. Various books reflect the writers' personal characteristics in style and vocabulary, and their personalities are often expressed in their thoughts, opinions, confusion, prayers, or fears.

Luke was a physician and used medical terms.

Paul, a scholar of Greek literature, quoted from the Greek poets. (Acts 17)

God employed human writers and these men did not always understand all that they were writing (Daniel 12:8-9).

Nevertheless, under the guiding hand of God they produced the 66 books, in which there is amazing unity and constant evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in directing what was written.

## **Consistent Internal Testimony**

The Bible consistently claims to be God's Word throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Exodus 20:1ff; Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 17; 2 Samuel 22:31; 23:2; Psalm 19:7-11; 119:9,11,18,89-91, 97-100, 104-5, 130; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 55:10-11; 22:29; Mark 13:31; John 2:22; 5:24; 10:35; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Revelation 1:1-3; 22:18.

## **Testimony of Jesus**

### *Jesus and the OT*

Matthew 5:18; John 10:35. The Scripture cannot be broken.

He came in fulfillment of OT. Matthew. 1:22-33, 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 15:7-8; 21:4-5.

Psalm 110:1 and Matthew 22:43-44. Accurate even to very words. Holy Spirit and David.

Luke 24:27--all Scriptures concerning Himself were accurate. John 5:39-40

He quoted from OT in every important section of NT, often from books most disputed by liberals, e.g. Deuteronomy, Jonah, Daniel. Deuteronomy 6:16--Matthew 4:7; Jonah, Matthew 12:40; Daniel 9:27; 12:11--Matthew 24:15. It is impossible to question inspiration of OT without questioning the character and veracity of Jesus Christ. Christ's trustworthiness is at issue. He said, "I am the truth." He did not accommodate Himself to the misconceptions of His age, as has been charged by liberal critics.

### *Jesus and the NT*

Jesus predicted the writing of NT. John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:12-13. The Holy Spirit would do for the human writers of the NT what He did for the human writers of the OT.

The testimony of Jesus regarding the Bible is really determinative. If we believe that He is God, and sinless; if we believe that He is the Truth; then we have to accept His evaluation of Scripture as accurate. We may not understand everything perfectly. That's

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not essential. I don't understand anything about atomic energy, but I believe in it and I've seen evidence of its power. I've also experienced the power of the Scriptures even though I don't understand everything in it thoroughly.

A proper approach to the Bible involves recognizing that we cannot understand all that the Scriptures reveal, but what we are able to understand is beautifully harmonized and is the only accurate source of knowledge about God and faith in Him. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy as in Daniel, the testimony of Jesus, and the fact that the Holy Spirit uses it so effectively is compelling confirmation that the Scripture is breathed out by the all knowing, all-powerful God who loves us and made us His own through the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. Therefore we can trust the Bible as our authority for faith and conduct.

## **Biblical Authority**

**Definition: the divinely derived power of the written Word of God to communicate the character and will of God with certainty and assurance.**

### **The Scriptures Are Authoritative Because:**

1. They are God-breathed.
2. They were written by chosen men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
3. They were attested to by the Lord Jesus Christ--the second person of the Godhead.
4. They are the Word employed by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12. (1 Timothy 4:1) Sword of the Spirit. Living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, etc.
5. Their own claims are fully vindicated.

### **Reread 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Phillips)**

**All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for re-setting the direction of a woman's life and training her in good living. The Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the woman of God, and fit her fully for all branches of His work.**

## **Canonicity**

Canon means standard by which the books were measured.

### **Tests for inclusion in the canon**

1. **Is it authoritative?** (Thus saith the Lord ....)
2. **Is it prophetic?** (Was it written by a man of God?)
3. **Is it authentic?** (If in doubt, throw it out.)
4. **Is it dynamic?** (Did it have the God's life transforming power?)
5. **Was it received, collected, read and used--**by the people of God?

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## Test for New Testament

*Apostolic authority or approval was the primary test for canonicity.*

### Application

If this is true, what must be our response to God's Word? FAITH! We must believe it because it is inerrant and trustworthy and authoritative. If we believe it, we should desire to obey it. This is the only way to please God. That's why it's imperative that we read it, study it, meditate on it, and memorize it. Our minds must be saturated with the Scripture. Then we will recognize error when we hear it. The Scriptures will be a guardian over our minds to protect them. This requires effort on our part. It's not going to just happen! And you have an enemy who will do anything to keep you from consistency in your time with God's Word. But you also have the Holy Spirit who inspired the Word and who will make you able to understand it. He is greater and more powerful than our enemy. Depend on Him to help you.

God's Word should govern our standards of thought and conduct, no matter what the world says. In every circumstance of life, we have the choice to respond according to God's Word or our own feelings and the advice of others.

Is there an area in your life where you have been taught and corrected by the Scriptures? Have you reset the direction of your life? Is the Scripture equipping and encouraging you to serve the Lord?

Which do you choose to believe when the culture contradicts the Scripture, e.g., abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality?

What choice will you make when tempted to satisfy your sexual longings before marriage or outside of your marriage?

How will God's Word help you in handling difficult relationships with family or friends?

How will the Scriptures influence the kind of employee you are?

How can God's Word help you to forgive the sins of another?

How will it help you grow to maturity in Christ?

We are the most blessed of all people. We have a guide for life that has proved trustworthy for 3400 years. There's not another book in the world like it. God's Word alone is eternally trustworthy. It will never let us down, because God is faithful and true. But we can only find this to be true in our experience as we believe it and obey it. That is the key to life, joy and spiritual prosperity.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### Read Romans 1:18-21

1. What does God reveal about himself to all mankind? Through what means? What is their response? What is God's verdict?

### Read 1 John 5:9-12; John 1:18; Hebrews 1:1-4

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2. In what two ways has He further revealed Himself? What is significant about these two ways?

**Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

3. How much of Scripture is “God-breathed”? What is it useful for? Can you think of specific instances when it has done that for you?

**Read 2 Peter 1:20-21**

4. How did the human authors of the Bible know what to write? What methods did God use (Ex 34:27; Jer 1:2; Hos 1:1 Dan 2:1; 7:1; 8:17)?

**Read Matthew 5:17-19; John 10:35; Luke 24:27**

5. What was Jesus’ view of Old Testament Scripture? In light of His character, why is it important to know how He regarded it?

**Read Matthew 1:22-23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 15:7-8; 21:4-5**

6. What does the fulfillment of prophecy prove about the Old Testament? How does this strengthen one’s faith in its accuracy?

**Read John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:12-13**

7. How did Jesus predict the New Testament would be written? Who would be the Author?

**Read Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12**

8. How is the Scripture different from other books written hundreds of years ago, e.g. Shakespeare? What claims does it make for itself?

9. If all this is true, what should our attitude be towards the authority of the Bible? Can we trust it to be accurate? How much can we take to be true and authoritative? What should you be doing with it? See Joshua 1:8; 2 Timothy 2:1; Psalm 119:11, 105; James 1:22

## The Godhead

What is God like? Is He the Man upstairs? Is He a harsh Judge waiting for us to do something wrong so He can zap us? Did he create the world and set it in motion and then retreat from involvement with it? Or is He whatever a person wants him to be? Is it really possible to know God?

It would be impossible to find God or know Him unless He revealed Himself, and He has. We learned last week that He has revealed His deity and power in the created universe. We call that *General revelation*. But we needed more, and He revealed more. In what we call *Special revelation* He gave us His written Word, which He has protected and preserved through the millennia of human history. Then in further special revelation He sent His Son to show us tangibly and visibly what God is like.

## God The Trinity

**Read Deuteronomy 6:4**

**Read Isaiah 45:5**

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There is only one God. This is *monotheism*. The theme reverberates throughout Scripture. Yet we see other facts that can be confusing unless they are harmonized. There is only one true God. But the Bible also says clearly that there was a man, Jesus Christ who claimed equality with God and there is Someone called the Holy Spirit who is also equal with God.

**Read John 6:27; 20:28; and Acts 5:3-4.**

The Father is God; Jesus Christ is God; the Holy Spirit is God.

How can those facts be harmonized? This can't mean that we have three Gods, because God is One. That is why we believe in God as Trinity or Triunity. The word Trinity is not found in the Bible, but the concept is clearly there. For want of a better word, we believe that there are three Persons in the Godhead.

**Read Matthew 3:16-17.**

Jesus was being baptized, the Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven. All three persons of the Godhead were present.

**Read Matthew 28:19.**

This is the Great Commission. Notice that believers are to be baptized in the name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Triunity).

**Read 2 Corinthians 13:14.**

This benediction is clearly Trinitarian.

It's important to understand this from the beginning, because whatever is true of God the Father is true of Jesus Christ the Son and is true of the Holy Spirit. We mustn't assign lesser positions or attributes to the members of the Godhead. Even though there is order in the Trinity: the Son submits to the Father and the Spirit submits to the Son and the Father, they each are co-equally, co-eternally God. However, the New Testament reveals that they have different functions. The Father is presented as electing, loving and bestowing. The Son is presented as suffering, redeeming and upholding the universe. The Holy Spirit is presented as regenerating, indwelling, baptizing, energizing, and sanctifying.

There's communion, love and companionship within the Godhead. God is not lonely so that He created man for companionship. God is totally independent of His creation. Any relationship we can have with Him is initiated by Him. Let's look at the ways God is the Father.

God The Father

**Read Acts 17:28-29.**

God is the Father over creation.

**Read Ephesians 1:3**

God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Read Ephesians 3:14-15, Romans 8:15**

God is the Father of all who believe in Christ.



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The first thing then that we learn about our God is that He is one God in three persons--a Trinity.

What are some of the other things the Bible teaches us about God?

## Attributes Of God

### God is Spirit

#### Read John 4:24.

God cannot be confined to one place or be imagined with a physical body of any kind. That is one reason making images to represent Him or worship were forbidden. He cannot be seen by human eyes nor discovered by human research. The only perfect picture we have of God is in Jesus Christ.

#### Read John 1:18, John 14:9b.

When you wonder what God is like, look at Jesus. What Jesus did the Father was doing. What Jesus said, the Father was saying. What Jesus felt--His compassion, His sympathy, His anger at the cold-hearted and the hypocrites, His love for children, His love for His disciples--these are the feelings God has. If you have had a poor human model of fatherhood and envision your heavenly Father to be the same, you can correct your faulty concepts by looking at Jesus and seeing God.

### God is Light

#### Read 1 John 1:5.

Light refers to what is good, holy, pure and true. Darkness represents evil. The absolute purity of God is not shadowed in any way by evil and sin. That's why Jesus could say, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Light reveals. It makes it possible for us to see what is right. Since God is light, He also exposes our sin so we can deal with it and be forgiven. Light purifies. Light also gives warmth and power. It makes things grow. It's only as we read God's Word, believe it and obey it that we will walk in the light and grow more and more like Jesus. His light guides us and makes us grow to maturity.

### God is Love

#### Read 1 John 4:8.

Love is God's intrinsic character. He doesn't have to drum it up like we sometimes do. The Greek word for love is *agape*, that unconditional love that we will find nowhere else. This love wants only what's best for the one who is loved. Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). When we believe and rest in His love we will feel safe no matter what He permits in our lives. Our sense of worth will not be dependent on what people think of us. Rejection by a friend, husband, or child will not devastate us. We are loved by God. We are precious to Him. Nothing we can do will diminish that love. His love gives us significance.

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## God is Holy

### Read Isaiah 6:3.

This is probably the most important attribute of God. Holiness means the total absence of evil. But it's more than that. It includes a positive righteousness. Let me give you an analogy. What does it mean to be healthy? It means much more than just not being sick. It means being in a vigorous, robust, physical, mental and spiritual condition. God is holy and can do nothing that is inconsistent with his holy nature. Peter said to Jesus, "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:69).

This Holy One, who died for us and rose from the dead, lives within us to make us holy. "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do" (1Peter 1:15). The Greek word for *holy* is the word that is often translated *saint*. To be holy or a saint is to be set apart for God's exclusive use. God calls us saints when we trust the Lord Jesus, then the rest of our lives here on earth should be spent becoming more and more holy. Can you even begin to suppose that God who has not even a spot of evil in Him would have any plan for our lives which was not for our ultimate good? His holiness gives us confidence.

## God is Omniscient (All-Knowing)

### Read Psalm 147:4-5.

God knows everything--past, present and future. This includes not only knowing the things that will happen, but also the things that might happen. (Mention Jesus' omniscience.) Think of what that implies for us who trust Him. If God knows all, then obviously nothing can come to light *after* our salvation which He did not know when He saved us. Nothing can shock or make him change his mind about saving us. No tragedy can enter our lives that He did not know would happen. And He has the wisdom and the power to keep our sorrows from being wasted. Because we have Jesus, we have all the wisdom we need to deal with whatever happens in this life. "It is because of [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God ...." (1 Corinthians 1:30). God's omniscience gives us certainty and truth.

## God is Omnipotent (All-Powerful)

### Read Jeremiah 32:27.

### Read Matthew 19:26.

The Bible declares 56 times that God is the almighty One. He has the infinite power to accomplish all that He wills to do. What wonderful implications that has for us. Romans 1:16--power to save us, John 10:28--power to keep us; 1 Peter 1:5--power to protect us and guarantee our inheritance. Our salvation is secure because of God's great power. He is able to keep us safe in His hands. God's omnipotence safeguards our salvation.

## God is Omnipresent

### Read Psalm 139:7-10.

God is everywhere present. This is not pantheism. Pantheism says that God is IN everything--the sky, the tree, the rock, the mountain. Omnipresence means that God is

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present everywhere simultaneously, yet separate and distinct from the world and everything in it. We cannot escape from His notice. We can't hide from His presence. What comfort that is for us who are His children. There is nowhere that we can be that He is not there with us. Just as he was in the fiery furnace with Daniel's three friends, He's with us in our trials and our joys.

**Read Hebrews 13:5-6.**

His constant presence is our help and protection.

**God is Infinite and Eternal**

**Read Psalm 145:3.**

**Read Psalm 90:2.**

It's impossible for our finite minds to understand infinity. What it means is that God is not bound by the limitations of being finite, nor is he bound by the succession of events which is a necessary part of time. His eternity extends backward from our viewpoint in time as well as forward forever. He had no beginning and has no ending. When Isaiah prophesied about the Savior, he said: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

For us, this means that we have an eternal home, a refuge, a hiding place, a fortress and a defense--God Himself. He won't leave, or die. His term of office never ends. His infinity gives us security.

**God is Immutable**

**Read James 1:17.**

God never changes. When the Psalmist compared God with His creation he said, "[The earth and the heavens] will perish, but you remain .... You remain the same and your years will never end" (Psalm 102: 25-27). Everything on earth is subject to change: our bodies, our relationships, our careers, our homes, and our society. But God never changes in His inherent character. We can rely on Him with absolute certainty. He is absolutely faithful and dependable.

**Read Hebrews 13:8.**

Do you see what this implies about our salvation? God will never change his mind about saving us. He'll never give up on us. He'll never take back one of his promises. He doesn't have to go back to square one and rework his plans because He's made a mistake about us. He is immutable. His unchangeability also gives us security that lasts as long as God does.

**God is Sovereign**

**Read Isaiah 46:9-10.**

The word *sovereign* means that God is the Supreme Being in the universe. His authority is total and absolute. Now frankly, that would scare me if I didn't know something else about God that Scripture repeats over and over.

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**God is Good**

**Read Psalm 100:5.**

**Read Psalm 119:68.**

God is also good, loving and faithful. I can trust His sovereignty because I know that His thoughts and plans for me will be only for my ultimate good. The speaker at our retreat stressed the fact that if we make up our minds ahead of time that God is good, then no matter what happens in our circumstances, we will be able to trust Him with our faith remaining strong.

**Read Jude 4b.**

His sovereignty and his goodness give us hope and comfort.

These are awesome characteristics. We are unable to grasp them with our finite minds. That's why we must simply believe what the Scripture tells us about God without demanding that we fully understand. If we really could understand God He would be too small. Now I want us to see some other characteristics that are easier for us to grasp.

It's interesting to note that when God revealed His glory to Moses He spoke of attributes that could surprise us.

**Read Exodus 34:6-7.**

We don't expect to hear that from a transcendent God, the One who is lifted high above the heavens. Heathens never conceive of their idols' being this way: loving, compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, forgiving. But that's our God--a God of unlimited grace. However, He is also a just Judge, who will punish the guilty who do not repent and accept His forgiveness. We must be balanced in our concept of God. What response should we have to a God like this? Psalm 103 tells us what to do. Let's read it together.

**Read Psalm 103.**

## Study Questions

**Read Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 102:25-27; 1 Timothy 6:15-16**

1. What do these verses tell us about God?

**Read John 6:27; 1 Peter 1:2; John 20:28; Acts 5:3-4**

2. What further light does this give us about God? Are the three persons of the Godhead equally God?

**Read Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:16-17**

3. What further evidence do we have of the Trinity of God?

**Read Ephesians 1:3-6; John 5:37; Hebrews 12:9**

4. What specific things has the Father done for us who believe on His Son? What does He still do?

**Read John 4:24; 1 John 4:8; 1 John 1:5**

5a. What do these basic characteristics of God reveal and imply? Write down implications and applications that you see from these three characteristics alone.

5b. List the attributes of God you see from the following verses: Acts 14:18; 1 Peter 1:15; Psalm 19:9; 1 John 4:8; Romans 3:4; Isaiah 40:13-14; Revelation 19:6; Ps 90:2; James 1:17; Psalm 139; Daniel 4:17, 35

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Read Exodus 34:17; Psalm 103

6. What other characteristics are revealed here? What do you see that encourages or comforts you?
7. What is your concept of God? Have these passages changed your mind or attitude? If you truly believed that God is all he claims to be, what impact would that make on your conduct? On your prayer life? On your witnessing? On your reaction to troubles?

## Creation and Fall

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**“Creation and Fall: We believe all things in heaven and earth were created by God and exist by His power (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16-17).**

**“We believe that man was created innocent and in the image and likeness of God but that he sinned bringing both physical and spiritual death to himself and his posterity. We believe that man has inherited a sinful nature, is alienated from God, and is in need of salvation (Genesis 1:27; 2:17; 3:19; Ephesians 2:1-3).”**

What is humanity? Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? These are the questions that have challenged the minds of philosophers and theologians for thousands of years. However, they are also questions that are of vital concern to each of us. It doesn't matter much to me personally that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. But my origin, my destiny and my purpose for living are very important to me and to everyone else. Did we just evolve from matter that sprang into existence all by itself, or were we created by a living, powerful God? You may think, “What difference does it make?”

It makes a great deal of difference.

Charles Ryrie: “If man is the product of evolution, then the extent of the effects of sin and the need of a Saviour are played down, if not eliminated. If, on the other hand, man was created by God, then this concept carries with it the companion idea of the responsibility of man. If God created man, then there is Someone outside of man to whom he becomes responsible.... A doctrine of creation implies creatures who are responsible to that Creator. The evolutionary origin of man relieves man of responsibility to a personal Creator outside of himself.”

That is why it's essential to learn what God's revelation in the Scriptures tells us about the origin of the universe and of the human race. Genesis 1 and 2 are elegant in their simplicity and clarity.

**God created the universe**

**Read Genesis 1:1.**

**Read John 1:1-3.**

The triune God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--is the Creator of everything that exists, visible and invisible, on the earth, in the earth, in the heavens and in outer space. His power and majesty are revealed in the simple words, *God said*. This is repeated 10 times in Genesis 1. God spoke the word and it was done. When He had created a beautiful home for them, God created the first people. **Genesis 1:26-28, 31:**

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Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

God saw all that he had made and it was very good.

This is what gives men and women their value, their significance, their status as the highest species of living creatures.

## God created man and woman in His image!

The full image of God is the male and female together.

1. Man and woman were created equal.
  - A. In nature—persons with intellect, emotions, volition and spirit.
  - B. In responsibility and accountability
    1. Blessing--be fruitful, increase in number
    2. Dominion--co-rulers of the earth
  - C. In value--very good.
2. Man and woman were created different.

Genesis 2 gives us the details of how God created the man and the woman.

## Read Genesis 2:7.

*Formed* is the word used to describe a potter shaping the clay. Notice the personal care of the Creator. Now it was not enough to just say the word. He shaped and formed and breathed life into this first man. He gave him work to do and freedom to enjoy the beautiful garden He had made for his home. But that freedom had one restriction.

## Genesis 2:16-17.

Adam, you can have a banquet every day just tasting all the wonderful fruits I’ve made for you. Just don’t eat of that one tree. Why the prohibition? Why did God put the tree there in the first place? Because He wanted creatures who would choose to worship him with their own free will. And worship results in obedience. He could have made us robots. He took a great risk by allowing us the ability to choose. But He did.

Then we read of the only thing that was **not good** in creation.

## Read Genesis 2:18-25.

The man’s aloneness was not good. He needed another person to love, to talk to, to work with, and to rule with. He needed a **helper corresponding to him**.

*Helper* means one who brings another to fulfillment. Without the woman, Adam could not reach his full potential. That is, he couldn’t fulfill the command to be fruitful. The word for *helper* in Hebrew is *ezer*. *Ezer* is used 19 times in the Old Testament, with four times

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being about people helping people. Fifteen times, *ezer* refers to God as our helper: the superior helping the inferior. It is never used of inferior helping a superior.

But before God gave him the woman he needed, he had Adam name all the animals. As they came before him, what do you think he noticed? They came in pairs, male and female. And when he came to the end of the line, he found no one like himself.

## Woman formed from man to be his helper

Now that he saw his need and his helplessness, God provided that person who corresponded to him and yet was different from him. She could be his helper because she was a person like him, a special creation from the hand of God, but different from him so she could complete him.

Notice the personal attention God gave to building a woman from part of the man. (The Hebrew word for *rib* is translated *side* in other places in the Old Testament). When God brought her to Adam in that first wedding ceremony, he joyfully welcomed her as one like himself and from his own body. They were one flesh. Each supplied what the other lacked. They were naked with no shame. Do you have any idea what this meant? There was openness, vulnerability, honesty, love, communication flowing freely between this first couple. There were no walls, no fears, no prejudices, no disparagement of the other's worth or work. Their sexuality was freely enjoyed without any taint of shame or sin. They lived in a state of **untested innocence**. From the very first, God made it clear that marriage is the relationship that takes priority over even the closest of human relationships and that marriage is to be permanent. This was Eden.

One can't help but wonder what the world would be like today if when their innocence was tested they passed the test.

## The Temptation

### Read Genesis 3:1-5.

Why did Satan approach the woman with his temptation? I don't think it was because she was morally weaker or more prone to sin. Adam was the one who had received from the mouth of God the command forbidding them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve had it secondhand from Adam. Satan knew how influential she was and how much Adam needed her, so Satan spoke to her through the mouth of the serpent. He used a strategy he still uses today and he gets us to fall for it just as he did the woman.

### Satan's strategy

#### **God is not good, because He is not letting you have something you need.**

If God were good he would not withhold anything from you. But since he won't let you eat of this tree, He cannot be good. You should have no restrictions. Restrictions limit you, frustrate you. How can a good God put restrictions on you?

#### **God's word will not come true. God is a liar.**

You won't surely die. Don't believe it. God doesn't want you to be like Him. He's keeping you from reaching your potential. Go ahead and eat of the tree. See how beautiful it is.

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Don't you find that most of the spiritual problems we have today are caused by these two lies about God?

**God is not really good.**

**God's Word is not true.**

When tragedy strikes--when the unexplainable happens--doesn't it ever cross your mind to think, "How can a good God permit this?" Or maybe, "Well, God may be good to other people, but he's not good to me. If He were good to me, He'd give me a husband. Or He'd give us a child. Or He'd make my marriage happy. Or He'd heal me or my husband or child. Or He'd give me a job I could really enjoy. I really don't believe that God is good."

What about His Word? Do you believe it's true? Do you believe that God keeps his promises? If you believe His Word, then it follows that you'll obey it. That was really all these first people had to do: just believe God's Word and obey Him--but another voice planted the seeds of doubt and they disobeyed God.

## The Fall

**Read Genesis 3:6-7.**

### **Rationalization**

Notice how the woman rationalized. It is good for food. It is beautiful to look at. And it will make us wise. What could be the harm in it?

### **Disobedience**

So she ate and gave to her husband who apparently did nothing to stop the conversation.

### **The consequences**

#### *To their relationship with each other*

Something happened immediately. That openness and free flowing love between them was now tainted with guilt and shame. They covered themselves with fig leaves, hiding from each other. The first tangible consequence was the effect on their marriage. But there were worse consequences to come.

#### *To their relationship with God-spiritual death*

**Read Genesis 3:8-13.**

They hid from God. They were afraid of their loving Creator, the One with whom they had walked in fellowship till this awful day. That loss of relationship with God is spiritual death. God said, "When you eat of the tree, you will surely die." Spiritual death, separation from God, happened immediately.

But did you notice that God came looking for them? He initiated the search. When he questioned them, Adam blamed his wife and God. Eve said the serpent deceived her and she was right. First Timothy 2:14 says that she was thoroughly deceived. By obeying Satan, these first people had placed themselves under his dominion. Now the far-reaching



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consequences of their disobedience were pronounced. God told them how the world would be from now on and how the relationship between men and women would change.

**Read Genesis 3:14-15.**

## *To the serpent and Satan*

The serpent was cursed and by implication, Satan, who used his body, was cursed. The serpent would now crawl on his belly.

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## **Savior Promised**

It's significant that it was to Satan that God gave the first promise of a Redeemer, one who would defeat Satan.

This Savior would be the offspring of the woman, predicting the virgin birth of Christ. **Satan used the woman to introduce sin into the race. God would use the woman to bring salvation.** There would be hostility between Satan and the woman which would culminate in Satan striking her offspring's heel. That was Christ's death on the cross, but His resurrection conquered death. And by His death and resurrection Christ crushed the serpent's head. This predicted the final victory over Satan which we read about in Revelation.

## *To the woman: pain in childbearing and domination*

**Read Genesis 3:16.**

Now God told them the way life would be in a fallen world. For the woman, child-bearing would be with great pain. But I think the worst thing was that the wonderful relationship with her husband was changed. Instead of being one of the rulers, she would now be one of those ruled over. The word used here implies harsh domination. We know how true this is. Women have been and are chattel, property, toys, servants and slaves all over the world where Jesus Christ is not known. And even where He is known, the struggle goes on. There are many misconceptions about women that come more from bias than from Scripture.

## *To the man: painful toil and physical death*

**Read Genesis 3:17-20.**

Notice that only the serpent and the ground were cursed. Now instead of fertile soil bursting with fruit, Adam would have to extract their food with painful toil from a hostile earth. And in the end they would die. Those wonderful bodies created to live forever would die. It took those first generations hundreds of years to do so. Adam lived 930 years!

God let them know from the moment they disobeyed His prohibition they had changed and their world had changed. Their destiny had changed.

Adam named his wife Eve. It was an act of faith believing that the race would survive.

But God didn't leave them without hope. He had promised that one day a Savior would defeat their enemy. Now he gave them a picture of what the Savior would do.

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## Savior Pictured

### Read Genesis 3:21.

The fig leaves weren't adequate. God made them clothes of skins. How did He get them? God killed animals to clothe his fallen children. He taught them several things by doing so.

He taught them how awful sin was in the sight of God. Without the shedding of blood there was no forgiveness.

He demonstrated that a substitute could die in their place. The animals were the sin-bearers who died instead of Adam and Eve. What a picture for us from our vantage point. That's what Jesus did on the cross for Adam and Eve and all the generations born after them. We can be certain that God gave them some instruction about the way to worship Him because of Genesis 4: Abel offered the animals and was accepted, but Cain offered the fruits of his labors and was rejected.

We should notice that sin didn't just start as a little germ that slowly permeated the race. It came into full development when the first child born to Adam and Eve killed his brother. When Adam and Eve became sinners, they passed on their sin nature to all their descendants.

## Expulsion from Eden

### Read Genesis 3:22-24.

This is the simple record of what took place at the beginning of human history. The significance of these events is explained more clearly in the NT.

### Read Romans 5:12-14.

Adam became a sinner by nature and all of his descendants inherited that sinful nature. What is sin anyway? The Bible describes it in many ways: lawlessness, rebellion, trespassing, iniquity, and evil. There are eight different words used in the Old Testament for *sin*, and twelve different words in the New Testament.

**Definition of sin:** sin is anything that does not conform to the glory of God, what God intended us to be. Romans 3:23 shows us that Jesus Christ is the standard by which we are measured and we all fall short.

Sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death came as the penalty. And the proof that all men are sinners by nature is the fact that all people died during the thousands of years before the Law was given to Israel, and they didn't have a code to tell them what was right and wrong. When the Law was given, those with the Law disobeyed it and those without the law also sinned. The fact that they died proved it.

Now Paul tells us about the one man through whom the gift of forgiveness, justification and eternal life are freely given.

### Read Romans 5:15-21.

In this section, the contrast between sin and the grace of God is revealed. As great as sin is, the grace of God is much greater! How much more did God's grace overflow through Jesus Christ!

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## Contrast between Adam and Christ.

1. One man's trespass---many died  
*One Man's gift of grace overflows to many.*
2. One trespass---judgment and condemnation  
*Many trespasses---gift---justification*
3. Through one man's trespass---death reigned  
*Through one Man's obedience---believers reign in life.*
4. One trespass---condemnation for all men  
*One act of righteousness---justification offered to all men*
5. Disobedience of one---many made sinners  
*Obedience of One ---many made righteous*
6. Sin increased.  
*Grace increased all the more.*
7. Sin reigned in death  
*Grace reigns to bring eternal life.*

The contrast is overwhelming. There is no one who does not have a sin nature at birth. There is no one who has not sinned in thought, word or deed in their lifetime. No matter how good and moral a person may try to be, he or she cannot reach the standard God has set for righteousness. On the other hand, there is no sin, no multiplication of iniquity, which the grace of God (demonstrated in His provision of Jesus Christ) cannot forgive. There is no one so evil that he cannot be made righteous through Jesus Christ. But again, it's a matter of exercising our will. Did you notice in verse 17 the words, "those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness"?

God has given the gift--His own Son, Jesus Christ. He shed His blood as our substitute. He rose from the dead and proved that all our sins were paid for and that God accepted His sacrifice. But a gift is not yours until you take it. Have you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? God cannot and will not do anything more to give you eternal life. God will not accept any effort on your part to save yourself or earn merit in His eyes. His abundant grace has overflowed. Just be sure that you have received it.

## Study Questions

**Read Job 38:1-18; Psalm 8; Isaiah 40:26-28**

1. What do you learn about the Creator and His creation from these passages?

**Read Genesis 1-2; Psalm 33:6-9; Hebrews 11:3**

2. How did God create the universe? What was different about the way He created the man and woman (Gen 2:7, 21-22)? What significance do you see in that?

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3. In what ways did God provide for these first people? What was the only prohibition He gave them?

## Read Genesis 3

4. Why do you think the serpent (Satan) approached the woman? What did he say about God and His Word? Why did the woman eat of the fruit? Where was her husband? Why do you think he ate?

5. What was the immediate effect upon them? What significance did that have? Who came seeking them? How do we know their relationship with God had changed?

6. How did the consequences for their disobedience change their lives and those of their descendants? Did it change their nature?

7. What promise did God make to the serpent? To whom was He referring? How was the “seed’s” heel struck? The serpent’s head crushed?

8. What is implied by Gen 3:21? How did God get the skins? What lesson did they learn about sin?

## Read Romans 5:12-21

9. Through whom did sin enter the world? Who were affected? What is the penalty? Through whom did righteousness become available? Who are the beneficiaries? What is the gift?

11. List the contrasts between Adam and Jesus.

12. Do you have a problem recognizing that everyone is born with a sin nature, even good, moral people? Does what it cost God to make us righteous give you some insight into His view of sin?

13. In verses 15-21, the words “gift” and “grace” are each mentioned 4 times. Have you taken God’s gift of His Son?

## Jesus Christ the Lord

Jesus was a human being, a Jew in Galilee with a name and a family, a person who was in a way just like everyone else. Yet in another way he was something different than anyone who had ever lived on earth before. It took the church five centuries of active debate to agree on some sort of balance between 'just like everyone else' and something 'different.' For those of us raised in the church, even raised in a nominally Christian culture, the balance inevitably tilts toward 'something different.' As Pascal said, “The church has had as much difficulty in showing that Jesus Christ was man, against those who denied it, as in showing that he was God.” -- Philip Yancey

Who is Jesus? He is a unique person because he is the God-man.

Yet this is not a dogma imposed on us simply to receive without question; it is a conclusion which grows out of the evidence in the Bible. Many facts point to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is God; many others lead to the

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conclusion that he is truly human. In him is the union of undiminished deity and perfect humanity. –Charles Ryrie

If you were having a discussion with someone about Him, would you be able to prove your convictions from Scripture? There are different opinions out there dating back to the early church. Some people have denied His deity; some have denied the reality of His humanity. Some assign to him a lesser status as a god, e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses. Some say that he was merely a man, a good man, even a great man. One who had the courage to die for his convictions. As such he was an example to us. (Unitarians)

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## Is Jesus Fully God?

The Scripture is our only source of information and we have learned that it is inerrant in the original manuscripts, because it is God-breathed. So what the Bible says about Jesus must be true and cannot be edited to suit our particular notions.

Let's ask the Bible some determinative questions.

## Did Christ Exist Before He Was Born At Bethlehem?

**Read Micah 5:2 and Colossians 1:16-17.**

**John 8:58:** “Before Abraham was, I AM.”

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament state clearly that the Son of God existed before He came to earth and shared our humanity. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

## Did Jesus Ever Claim To Be God?

There are some who say that Jesus never claimed to be God, but that His disciples concocted the myth after He died. But that assertion is overwhelmingly contradicted by the evidence of Scripture. The Jews of his day understood perfectly what He was saying.

**Read John 5:18.**

What did He say that so enraged them?

“I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).

“If you knew Me, you would know MY Father also” (John 8:19).

“When a man looks at me, he sees the one who sent me” (John 12:45).

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

“He who hates me hates my Father as well” (John 15:23).

“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” (John 5:23).

In unmistakable language, Jesus claimed equality with the Father. Even when He was on trial for His life and was questioned under oath He didn't recant or water down His identity.

**Read Matthew 26:63-65.**

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## Did His Disciples Believe That He Was God?

Peter's confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

When He revealed himself to Thomas after His resurrection, Thomas called him, "My Lord and my God."

Jude, his half-brother who didn't believe in Him before his resurrection calls Him, "Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord," and "the only God our Savior."

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## Did He Demonstrate The Unique Characteristics Of God?

In Mark 2:1-12, He demonstrated his OMNISCIENCE and his authority to FORGIVE sins.

In John 5:25ff, He promised to RAISE THE DEAD, claimed to be the SOURCE OF LIFE as the Father is, and to have authority to JUDGE the world.

In John 15:26, He promised to SEND the Holy Spirit to be with believers after He RETURNED to heaven.

In Matthew 28:20, He promised to be EVER-PRESENT with us.

Throughout the Gospels He demonstrated his OMNIPOTENCE by the miracles He did. He healed every kind of disease and disability. He calmed the raging sea. He multiplied the bread and fish. He raised the dead. He did the works that only God can do.

## Did Others Substantiate His Claims To Deity?

**Read Matthew 14:33.** He was worshiped as Son of God. In Jewish usage, this did not imply subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature.

**Read Colossians 2:9.** In Him, the fullness of Deity lives in bodily form.

**Read Hebrews 1:2-3.** He was the exact likeness of God's substance.

**Read Revelation 19:16.** "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

These are just a few of the places which state without equivocation that Jesus Christ is fully God. We can trust our life on earth and our eternal future in His hands because He is the truth, He is the way to God, and He is the source of eternal life. If He is not God, our faith is built on a foundation of sand. We have no hope, we will die in our sins, and we are of all people most miserable.

The other question we must answer is:

## Is Jesus Fully Human?

The Bible gives abundant evidence that Jesus was fully human.

### His Birth Was Unique

Incarnation means *in flesh*. When God invaded the human race, his conception and birth as a human baby was unique. An angel told a young virgin named Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and she would conceive and bear a son, who would be holy, the Son of the Most High. And angels announced his birth to the world.

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## His Nature Was Unique

Jesus had a human nature, but he didn't have a sin nature. He was without sin and no other human being can make that claim.

### Read Hebrews 4:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Why is this so important? Because if he were just another sinner like us, he couldn't die as our substitute. He could only die for his own sins. We needed a sinless Savior and only God could meet that qualification. What were the reasons for His coming?

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## Proofs Of His Humanity

He matured like all human beings do (Luke 2:40, 52).

He had a human body: seen, heard, and touched (1 John 1:1).

He had a human soul and spirit (Matthew 26:38, Luke 23:46).

He possessed human names, Son of Man, Son of David, Jesus.

He was hungry (Matthew 4:2).

He was thirsty (John 19:28).

He grew tired (John 4:6).

He wept (John 11:35).

He showed feelings (Mark 6:34; Luke 7:13, compassion; 10:14, indignation; Mark 14:34, sorrow; John 11:5 love).

He was tested (Hebrews 4:15).

He prayed (Luke 5:16).

He died (John 19:30, 33).

## Purposes For His Coming As A Man

To reveal God to men (John 1:18).

To provide an example for living (1 Peter 2:21).

To die as a sacrifice for humanity's sins (Hebrews 10:1-10).

To enable Him to be a merciful High Priest (Hebrews 4:15-16).

To destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8).

To free us from bondage to fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).

To be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

There's one more passage we should look at that will help explain how this could be.

### Read Philippians 2:5-11.

He made himself nothing, or He made himself of no reputation.

The Amplified Version says, "He emptied himself."

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Did Christ empty Himself of some or all aspects of deity when he came to earth?

If emptying means that Christ gave up or lost some of His divine attributes during His earthly life, the other Scriptures we have already looked at contradict that notion. This passage says that *He humbled himself* by taking on a human body and nature and by dying on the cross the death of a criminal. This means that there is no subtraction to His deity, but just the addition of humanity with its consequent limitations.

The concept involves the veiling of Christ's preincarnate glory (John 17:5), the condescension of taking on Himself the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3) and the voluntary nonuse of some of His attributes of deity during His earthly life (Matthew 24:36). His humanity was not a glorified humanity and was thus subject to temptation, weakness, pain and sorrow. Choosing not to use his divine attributes is quite different from saying that He gave them up. Nonuse does not mean subtraction. —Ryrie p. 58, 59

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Jesus was and is genuinely God and genuinely man, undiminished deity and perfect humanity in one Person forever.

C. S. Lewis put it well.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

Why is it so important to understand what the Scriptures say about our Lord Jesus Christ? Because who He is validates what He did. If He is not uniquely the God-Man, then he was just another human martyr who suffered unjustly. There are many others who did that. But because He is the God-man, He suffered and died and rose again victoriously from the dead for our sins, in our place and for our benefit. Then He went back to heaven. We can trust Him without a shadow of a doubt. We can believe all of His promises. We can look at life in a fallen world from the perspective of eternity. That's what will give us hope, courage, and perseverance in adversity, joy in the midst of sorrow, peace in the midst of struggles, faith in God's plan for our lives, love for others, the ability to forgive, and the absolute certainty that death for us is only the doorway that opens to a glorious eternity in the presence of our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Study Questions

**Read Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 8:58; Colossians 1:16**



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1. What do these verses tell us about the Son of God? What is He called and what has He done? When did His life begin?

**Read John 1:1-18**

2. Who is the Word (v. 1, 14)? Who is He declared to be? What is He the source of? From this passage how would you describe Him?

**Read John 5:18; 8:19; 10:30; 14:7, 9; 12:44; Matthew 26:63-65**

3. Who did Jesus claim to be? What did He say about his relationship to God the Father?

**Read Mark 2:1-12; John 5:27; John 15:26; John 5:25; Matthew 28:18; 28:20**

4. What characteristics and prerogatives of God did Jesus claim for himself? If His claims were not true what impact would that have on our faith? On our salvation?

**Read John 1:18; 1 Peter 2:21; Hebrews 2:14-15; 5:1-2; 10:1-10; 1 John 3:8**

5. List some of the purposes for which the Son of God became a man?

**Read Matthew 4:2; Luke 2:40, 52; John 4:6; 11:35; 19:28, 30, 33**

6. What evidence do these verses give of Jesus' humanity? Why is it essential to believe in the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ?

**Read John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5**

7. How was Christ different from every other person ever born? Why was this essential?

**Read Philippians 2:6-11**

8. What did Jesus deliberately do so that people could be saved? What is His position now? What will all people eventually do? Have you submitted to Him as Lord of every area of your life?

## Sin and Salvation

**“We believe that salvation is a gift of God and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin. We believe that man is justified by grace through faith apart from works (Acts 13:38-39, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-10). We believe that all true believers, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever (Romans 8:1, 38-39; John 10:27-30).”**

*Salvation* is a simple word that encompasses many profound concepts--concepts that cannot be fully understood by the finite mind. Is salvation just a fire escape from hell? Is it a life insurance policy? Is it something God had to think up when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him? No, the Scripture teaches us that God planned our salvation before the foundation of the world, because in His omniscience, He knew that mankind would desperately need it.

### Man's Need

We learned when we studied “Creation and Fall” (Lesson 3) that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and obeyed Satan, they became sinners by nature and the consequences affected the whole human race.

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1. *Spiritual* death-separation from God (They hid and were afraid.)
2. *Physical* death
3. *Sinful nature* inherited by all their descendants

Man's nature is corrupt or depraved:

*Intellect:* 2 Corinthians 4:4, Romans 1:28

*Will:* Romans 1:28

*Conscience:* 1 Timothy 4:2

*Heart:* Ephesians 4:18

*Total being:* Romans 1:18-3:20

“Total depravity means that the corruption of sin extends to all men and to all parts of all men so that there is nothing within the natural man that can give him merit in God’s sight.” –Charles Ryrie

## God’s Provision

### Promises and Pictures

For all the centuries encompassed by the Old Testament, God gave promises and pictures of a Savior who would one day provide for our salvation. The first promise was of the Seed of the woman, whom Satan would wound, but who would fatally crush Satan (Genesis 3:15).

Then He gave them a picture of what the Savior would do. Genesis 3:21: every animal offered as a sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus Christ. Every altar pointed to the cross.

### Fulfillment in Christ

Jesus Christ, the God-Man, was God clothed in human flesh, so that He could live a sinless life, shed His blood for the sins of all men, and rise from the dead and go back to heaven to be our Intercessor.

## The Accomplishments Of Christ’s Death

### Substitution

Substitution is the central meaning of Christ’s death.

*Anti* means “in the place of” (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45).

*Huper* means “for the benefit of” or “in the place of” (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18). Jesus was the Substitute that died instead of us. He was our representative as He hung on the cross.

God loves the world with a love that can only be measured by His own infinite capacity to love. God loves His creatures so much that he wants us to be united to Himself. He created us to live in fellowship with Him. But that fellowship is impossible because of

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man's sin. The penalty is spiritual and physical death. God is the Judge that decreed the penalty. God's holy character can settle for nothing less than absolute justice. Man, under sentence of death, can obviously do nothing for himself to escape the just execution of this penalty. So God came Himself to take the penalty for the men and women He loved. Jesus Christ came voluntarily to die in our place, for our sins, and for our benefit. He took the full penalty, both physical and spiritual death.

Why was He the perfect substitute?

**Man**--could die for a man: same value, but not so with animals.

**Sinless**--could die for sinners, but not his own.

**Infinite God**--could die for an infinite number of sins

What does that mean to you and me? If I owed \$100,000 and had absolutely no resources to pay it, and someone else paid my debt, then I no longer have to pay. It's no longer held against me. Since Jesus paid the penalty for my sins, then I no longer have to pay that penalty--if I accept Him as my Substitute and give up the idea of doing anything to earn my way into God's favor.

## Redemption

*Agorazo*: To buy or pay a price for something.

It is to pay the price which our sin demanded so that we could be redeemed (2 Peter 2:1, false teachers; 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23; Revelation 5:9).

*Exagorazo*: To purchase out of the market.

Galatians 3:13, 4:5: Christ's death not only paid the price for sin but also removed us from the market place of sin in order to give us full assurance that we will never be returned to the bondage and penalties of sin. We will never be put up for sale as a slave to sin again.

*Lutroo*: To loose-set free.

Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 1:18: It is to be released and set free in the fullest sense on receipt of ransom. The doctrine of redemption means that because of the shedding of the blood of Christ, believers have been purchased, removed from bondage, and liberated.

What does this mean to you and me today? You and I have been freed from the past, from bondage to our old master the devil, from our old patterns of sinful behavior. The price paid for us purchased our freedom forever from the slave market and we will never be again what we once were. This freedom is my inheritance in Christ.

## Reconciliation

To reconcile means to change from enmity to friendship. Reconciliation by the death of Christ means that man's state of alienation from God is changed so that he is now able to be saved (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). The basis for our reconciliation is the death of Christ (Romans 5:10-11). We must point out that only man is changed. God never changes.

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What does this mean to us today? God is not our enemy. We mustn't think of Him as waiting skeptically for us to become hostile again. He is our Friend. He wants us to trust that friendship. He will never turn away from us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ.

## Propitiation

This word occurs three times in King James: Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2, 4:10. It also appears in verb form. It is translated in the NIV as "make atonement for."

The footnote is better: *the one who would turn aside (God's) wrath*

It is found in verb form in Hebrews 2:17 and Luke 18:13.

*Hilasterion* is the Greek word used in the Septuagint to translate *mercy seat*. The lid on the Ark of the Covenant was solid gold. Two cherubim faced each other and looked down on it. The Shekinah glory of God rested over the Ark. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest sprinkled blood on the lid for the sins of the people. When God saw the blood, He could extend mercy instead of judgment. His justice was satisfied. *To propitiate* means *to appease or to satisfy God*. Why does God need to be appeased? God is angry with mankind because of their sin (Romans 1:18, Ephesians 5:6). The shed blood of Christ propitiated God (Romans 3:25), turning aside His wrath and enabling Him to receive into His family those who place their faith in the one who satisfied Him. The barrier which sin has built between God and man is broken down. The extent of propitiation is for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). To say that God is propitiated is to say that He is satisfied.

What does that mean to you and me today? We don't have to think of making up for the bad things we have done. Our motive for doing good works or giving money or self-sacrifice will not be to appease God but because our hearts are filled with gratitude. God is completely satisfied with the atonement of Jesus Christ.

## Justification--saved from the penalty of sin

### Justification: a once-for-all act

Romans 3:26, 5:1: This is a judicial verdict of NOT GUILTY. There is no possibility of future condemnation (Romans 8:1). That's just the first half. God then credits us with the righteousness of Christ. He declares us to be righteous. Christ's perfect life and atoning death is the basis for justification by faith alone. When we believe, all that Christ is, God puts to our account; thus we stand acquitted. We are not justified on account of our faith--that would make faith a meritorious work. Faith is an empty hand which receives the Savior.

Why is it so important to understand that we are a justified people? This doesn't mean that we can't sin again. We do sin. And we suffer the consequences for those sins here on earth. But there is NO CONDEMNATION eternally. This should give us confidence in our relationship with God. He cannot lie. When He says, "Not guilty," and "No condemnation," He tells the truth and we can rest on His promise.

I hear the Accuser roar

Of things that I have done.

I know them all and thousands more.

Jehovah findeth none!

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## **Sanctification--saved from power of sin**

### **Sanctification: a continuing process**

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Peter 1:16:

*Positional:* The believer has been set apart by his position in God's family.

*Experiential:* To be increasingly set apart in our daily lives (1 Peter 1:16).

Sin can no longer enslave us if we realize that we are now controlled by the Holy Spirit. He will increasingly free us from old habit patterns. He will give us strength to say "No" to temptation as we yield to His control. Do you see how many layers there are to our salvation? God has provided every resource to make it possible for us to live a life that pleases Him. He's taken care of every contingency. We can continue to grow more and more like Jesus all the days of our lives.

## **Glorification--saved from presence of sin**

### **Glorification: a once-for-all act**

1 John 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:35-56: We'll receive our resurrection bodies, like Christ's. No sin nature. We can't even begin to imagine what that will be like, can we? This is our future. This is why we must look at our life here with all its frustration, pain, and sorrow through a window through we see eternity. 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, or 80 years on earth are infinitesimal in the light of eternity. This is the time God has given us to prepare for eternity. The decisions we make here, the choices, the priorities all affect our life hereafter. We must stop living as though this life were all there is. We who have trusted Christ are God's children, protected, loved, and assured of our heavenly inheritance.

### **Regeneration: Born again, born of God, born of the Spirit.**

John 3:3, 7; 1 Peter 1:3, 23; John 1:13; Titus 3:5: The moment we trust Christ, we are given a new life, eternal life: the life of God in the soul of man. Can never be repeated or nullified. It's becoming alive from the dead to give us a whole new quality of life and purpose for living (2 Corinthians 5:15, 17).

### **Forgiveness of sins**

Ephesians 1:7, John 1:29: Forgiveness means removal, as demonstrated by the scapegoat in Leviticus 16.

God's forgiveness is not like ours. He knew that we would never feel accepted by Him or feel free to serve Him if we carried the guilt and remorse for past sins on our conscience. He knew that our sins had to be taken away, removed. That's what Jesus made possible for us by taking our punishment. This is true not only for the sins we committed before we trusted Christ, but for the sins we'll commit today and tomorrow.

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## Basis for the believer's cleansing

The once-for-all shedding of the blood of Christ is the basis of our constant cleansing from sin (1 John 1:7-9). Our family relationship is kept right by His death; our fellowship is restored by our confession.

What does this mean for us? It means that our past is forgiven and we can keep short accounts with God from now on. *Confess* means *to agree with God*, that we call sin what He calls sin. Don't come with excuses: I was provoked; I just responded to his bad actions; I had a dysfunctional family. Just say: I lied; I stole; I hurt her reputation; I was unkind. Be specific. Then God forgives because He is faithful and just. **Faithful** because He said He would do it. And **just** because the penalty has been paid by His own Son. He would be **unjust** to demand that it be paid again. This is what happens when God forgives our sins.

Out of sight--Isaiah 38:17

Out of mind--Jeremiah 31:34

Out of reach--Psalm 103:12, Micah 7:19

Out of existence--Isaiah 43:25, 44:22

Cleansed conscience--Hebrews 9:14, 10:22

How can you and I experience this? When we confess our sins, we must believe that God does forgive and cleanse us, then **with an act of our will, accept His forgiveness.**

I've seen God bring deliverance from guilt and shame for the past, by this simple act. This is illustrated by the woman who committed adultery once.

## Sin nature judged

Romans 6:1-10, 14: Death does not mean extinction or cessation, but *separation*. The crucifixion of the Christian with Christ means separation from the domination of sin over his life. The sin nature is rendered inoperative or ineffective. But our crucifixion with Christ also means a resurrection with Him to a new life. Romans 6:4: *The historical actions of Christ's death and resurrection become part of our personal history when we believe.* The tyrant of our sin nature is overthrown by the death of Christ and we are now free to live a life pleasing to God.

What does that mean to us today? The belt that connects our engine to the sin nature has been disconnected. Now we can submit to the control of the Holy Spirit and let Him develop new habit patterns in us. The power of that old besetting sin--greed, jealousy, immorality, selfishness, anger, malice, or whatever it is--can be broken as we realize that we have been raised with Christ to live a new quality of life. We are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## Basis for removal of pre-cross sins

What was the basis for forgiveness of Old Testament saints? Animal blood only covered sins. But the Lamb of God takes away (removes) the sin of the world. No final dealing with sin until the cross. The death of Christ is the basis for forgiveness in every age; faith

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is always the means. What we don't know is the exact content of faith that was required in the Old Testament. But since Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20), in God's eyes it was already done, since God is not influenced or limited by time. Even though the Old Testament saints didn't have the full revelation that we do, they responded in faith to what God told them to do. They brought the sacrifices He required and were forgiven because God knew that He would provide the perfect Lamb one day.

## **Holy Spirit indwelling**

He permanently indwells to produce the character of Christ in us. To give us power to overcome temptation. To illuminate God's Word, to guide us in God's will. We are indwelt by the Godhead. (Ephesians 4:6, Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Romans 8:9)

## **Adoption**

Galatians 4:1-5, Romans 8:14-17: Son placing. In that culture, a child, born into the family or not, was given all the privileges and responsibilities that come with an adult relationship in the family.

We are children born into God's family and by adoption are sons and daughters with full privileges. Adoption bestows a new status.

The results of adoption are deliverance from slavery, from guardians, from the flesh.

## **Inheritance**

This includes our being complete in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10), possessing every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3), and the assurance of heaven (1 Peter 1:3-5).

## **End to the law**

Romans 10:4, Colossians 2:14: The law shows man his need for Christ (Galatians 3:21-24), but cannot justify or empower us to be righteous. We live under the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:20), or Law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2). All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament except for the Sabbath.

What does that mean to us? The Ten Commandments were written on tablets of stone. The law of Christ is written on our hearts and we become increasingly sensitive as we study His Word and obey the impulses of His Spirit.

Do this and live, the Law commands

But gives us neither feet nor hands.

A better word the Gospel brings.

It bids us fly and gives us wings.

There are always people out there that want to bring us back under the law. Some of the things may appear harmless. But the minute someone imposes rules that measure our spirituality, such as not eating pork or drinking coffee, we should beware. Some of these ideas come from cults, but some come from sincere Christians who want some way to

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measure how spiritual a person is. Don't let anyone put you back under the Law. Christ fulfilled the Law by obeying it perfectly and then taking the penalty for all who could not obey it.

## Basis for Satan's judgment

Colossians 2:15, John 12:31, Hebrews 2:14: All the judgments against Satan are based on the victory which Christ won over him at the cross. He is a defeated enemy.

What does this mean for us? Before salvation, we belonged to Satan's kingdom. When we put our faith in Christ, God transferred us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13). He came to indwell us by His Holy Spirit. Greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world. Don't become Satan-centered. Just be aware that you have a defeated enemy that is always trying to grab a foothold in your life so that you will be a defeated Christian and ineffective as a witness for Christ. Recognize his strategies without being taken in by them. You don't belong to him anymore (1 Peter 5:8).

## Extent

The death of Christ is unlimited in its value. It was for all men for all time, but it is only effective in those who believe in Him (John 1:29, 3:17; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 Timothy 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2).

## How Is Salvation Obtained?

Two hundred times in the New Testament, salvation is obtained only on the basis of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who died as our substitute for sin (John 3:16, 1:12; Acts 16:31). Salvation is a free gift, and must be received. Be sure a person understands the facts before they pray.

Discuss the dangers of adding to the invitation.

## Eternal Security

### Evidence:

1. The Holy Spirit places us in the Body of Christ—baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13). No suggestion that we can be removed.
2. Holy Spirit seals the believer until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). Sign of ownership and authority. Losing salvation would involve breaking the seal before the day of redemption.
3. Holy Spirit is the down payment or guarantee that we will receive the rest of our salvation (2 Corinthians 5:5, Ephesians 1:14).
4. Jesus' promise (John 10:28-30).
5. Romans 8:28-39 is the most convincing and inclusive.

## Study Questions

**Read Ephesians 1:3-14; Romans 8:28-30**



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1. When was our salvation planned? What is God's purpose for us who have trusted Christ? What will be the result (6, 12, 14)?

**Read Hebrews 9:22, 26-28; 10:11-14**

2. Why were sacrifices instituted? Why were animal sacrifices insufficient? Why was the sacrifice of Christ necessary?

**Read Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 3:18**

3. What is the central meaning of Christ's death? Write briefly in your own words what this means to you personally.

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-19**

4. What is a concise definition of the gospel? Why was Christ's resurrection necessary?

**Ephesians 1:19-23; Hebrews 7:23-27**

5. Where is Jesus now? What is His heavenly ministry for us today?

**Read 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 18-19; Galatians 3:13; Titus 2:14**

6. What did Christ accomplish for us in these verses? What is His purpose for our lives?

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

7. What else was accomplished for us?

**Read Colossians 1:13-14; 1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:14**

8. What else was accomplished for us? How can we be forgiven the sins we commit after salvation? Does God want us to keep on bearing the guilt of forgiven sin? Why or why not?

**Read Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:5,9; John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:5; 1 Peter 1:4**

9. List the other benefits of our salvation found in these passages.

**Read Romans 8:31-39**

10. What can you do to lose your relationship with God? Is there anything that someone else can do to you to undo everything Christ has done? What response do you have to this? Does it make you think it's OK to sin, since it will be forgiven? Or does it motivate you to love the Lord more deeply and serve Him more faithfully?

## The Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit? What has He done in Scripture? What does He do for us? There are different views about Him. Some define Him as simply a force or an influence. In the 16th century, Socinian defined Him as "virtue or energy flowing from God to man." This is the view that most liberal theologians and cults hold today. But this is not what the Scripture teaches about Him. Remember in our study of the Trinity we learned that He is a person, equal in the Godhead with the Father and the Son.

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## Is The Holy Spirit A Person?

When we think of a person we usually think of a body. Must a person have a body? What happens when a human being dies? Only the body dies, but the person continues to exist consciously forever, either in heaven or hell. What are the essential characteristics of a person? Three things: *intelligence, emotions, and will*. If the Holy Spirit were only a force or an influence or a thing, He would not possess these three things. But He does.

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### He has the characteristics of a person

**Intelligence:** He knows the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). The mind of the Spirit (Romans 8:27).

**Emotions:** Grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

**Will:** Spirit gives spiritual gifts “as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11).

### He acts like a person

He teaches (John 14:26).

He intercedes (Romans 8:26).

He performs miracles (Acts 8:39).

He leads (Romans 8:14).

### He is designated as a person

*Pneuma* is neuter, but the pronouns used for it are masculine (John 16:13-14).

## Is The Holy Spirit Completely God?

### He has characteristics possessed only by God.

Things true of the Father and Son are true of the Spirit.

### He is associated on an equal plane with the other persons of the Trinity.

Yahweh said something in the Old Testament; Spirit says it in the New Testament (Isaiah 6:1-13 and Acts 28:25; Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 10:15-17).

Baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19).

## The Spirit's Work In The Old Testament

### His part in creation

Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4

### His part in revelation of the Old Testament

Men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

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## His relation to man

### *Selective indwelling*

**In:** Genesis 41:38, Numbers 27:18, Daniel 4:8

**Upon:** 1 Samuel 10:9-10, Saul; Judges 14:6, Samson

**Going away:** Judges 15:14 with Judges 16:20

### *Enablement for special service*

Exodus 31:3

## The Spirit In The Life Of Christ

### **In the virgin birth**

Luke 1:35, Matthew 1:20

### **In His life-**

Baptism: Luke 4:18

Filled and led: Luke 4:1;

Empowered to do miracles: Matthew 12:28

### **In His death and resurrection**

Offered himself as a sacrifice: Hebrews 9:14

Gave instructions to apostles: Acts 1:2

## Jesus Promises To Send The Spirit

On the night before His death, Jesus and his disciples sat at the Passover table and He told them things He had not taught them before. He specifically told them about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the work He would do.

### **Read John 14:16-18.**

**Counselor:** *parakletos*, “a person summoned to one’s aid.” It may refer to an advisor, a legal advocate, a mediator or intercessor. Refers to Jesus in 1 John 2:1. The Spirit’s function is to represent God to the believer as Jesus did when He was here on earth in a human body. There are two words for *another*. One means *another who is of a different kind*. The word used here is *one of the same kind*. Jesus was going back to heaven, but He and the Father would send another person who would be God dwelling among believers here on earth. The difference would be that the Holy Spirit, who lived *with* them because He was in Jesus, would live *in* them after Jesus returned to heaven. Jesus would be with them always in the person of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. However, this time, God would not be visible to all people as Jesus was. When the Holy Spirit came, His ministry would be primarily to believers. He would not operate on the world’s wavelength.

### **Read John 14:25-26.**

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This is the reason we can believe the record of the New Testament. Jesus promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and remind them of all that Jesus had taught them. The Holy Spirit is the divine author of the New Testament, just as He is of the Old Testament.

**Read John 16:5-15.**

There are three major aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit described here.

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**To the world: conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment.**

*Convict of guilt* means to present or expose facts, to convince of the truth.

## *Conviction of sin*

The Spirit does not merely accuse men of sin; he brings to them an inescapable sense of guilt so that they realize their shame and helplessness before God. The Spirit is the prosecuting attorney who presents God's case against humanity. The ultimate sin for which man is guilty is *unbelief*. This is a total rejection of the gospel and the Savior it presents.

## *Conviction of righteousness*

The Spirit makes it clear that God has a standard of righteousness that defines sin, and that there is an infinite gap between the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. It's a gap man cannot bridge by himself. The connection of righteousness to Jesus' return to heaven refers to the fact that His resurrection and ascension proved that sin was atoned for, and vindicated Him as God's righteous servant.

## *Conviction of judgment*

When the standards of righteousness are violated, there is judgment, condemnation. Jesus' death on the cross the next day would bring condemnation and defeat to the "prince of this world," Satan. The word *condemned* is in a tense which expresses a settled state. Satan is already under a fixed and permanent judgment. It follows that there is no escape from the same fate for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ.

The convicting work of the Spirit is the placing of the truth of the gospel in a clear light before the unsaved person so that he acknowledges it as truth whether or not he receives Christ as personal Saviour. Conviction is making the message clear, not the saving of the soul.

**To the disciples: direction and truth**

Jesus also told his friends that there was much more to tell them but they were not mature enough to receive this further truth. The Holy Spirit would lead them into the full comprehension of all He would give them. He would continue to develop the principles they had already learned. He would teach them about coming events. He would unfold the truth as they grew in spiritual capacity. He would be a guide into the unknown future.

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**To Jesus:**

*To testify of Him*

John 15:26

*To glorify Him*

The chief function of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and glorify Jesus Christ. His purpose is not to make Himself prominent, but to magnify the person of Jesus, just as the lamp stand in the tabernacle was revealed and glorified by the light of the invisible oil. Sometimes we can overemphasize the Holy Spirit and minimize Jesus Christ. That is not the prescription of Scripture. Beware of any religious movement that does this.

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## **The Spirit's Work In Salvation**

### **Regeneration (Titus 3:5)**

This is God's supernatural act of imparting eternal life to the one who believes in Christ: the new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17).

### **Indwelling (1 Corinthians 6:19)**

Spirit indwells every believer, regardless of his spiritual condition. Notice Corinthians- 1 Corinthians 3:3; (worldly, carnal) 5:1; (immoral) 6 (suing in pagan courts).

Absence of Spirit is evidence of being unsaved. Romans 8:9

How can a believer know that the Holy Spirit lives in him?

Believe God's word. John 14:16-17

Christian experience for evidence. Are you growing?

Are you more sensitive to sin? Do you have good impulses that you didn't have before? Is the Word of God clearer to you?

### **Baptizing (1 Corinthians 12:13)**

Places believers into the body of Christ.

It is for all believers

Done only once. No sign for evidence.

### **Sealing (Ephesians 4:30)**

Father has sealed every believer with the Holy Spirit, 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30

Concept includes ideas of ownership, authority and security. We are God's possession, secure until the day of redemption. Only God can break that seal and He has promised to deliver us safely to heaven.

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**Guarantee: (2 Corinthians 5:5, Ephesians 1:13b-14)**

The fact that we have the Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that we will receive everything else He has promised with our salvation. He is the down payment. The rest is certain. What assurance this should give us!

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## **The Spirit's Work In Believers**

**He gives spiritual gifts: a God-given ability for service.**

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

He decides who gets what gift. He is sovereign. Each one gets something that equips them to build up others in the body.

1 Corinthians 12:27-30

No one has all the gifts. There's no one gift that is given to everyone.

**He fills (Ephesians 5:18).**

"Keep on being filled." Keep on being controlled by the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is vital if we are going to experience genuine Christian living (Acts 2:4, 4:31).

How?

1. Dedicate self to God for His use and control (Romans 12:1-2).
2. Don't grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).
3. Depend on the Spirit. Walking is a life of dependence (Galatians 5:16).

***Results of being filled.***

Ephesians 5:18-21: Worship, praise, singing, being thankful, submissiveness, service.

Galatians 5:22-23: Christlike character

**He teaches (John 14:25).**

How does He teach? He illumines the Scriptures. He makes them come alive and applies them to our specific condition. He will use books, sermons, lessons, and the counsel of other people. He will speak to your heart with an inner voice. But He will never contradict the Word. When someone says "God told me to do this," and it is contrary to Scripture, they are either deceived or liars. Check everything out with the Bible.

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## He guides (Romans 8:14).

He guides through Scripture, through circumstances, through others--but mostly through His peace in our hearts (Colossians 3:15).

## He gives assurance (Romans 8:16).

It's the Holy Spirit who assures us that we really are God's children. We can come into His presence and call Him "Abba," "Daddy."

## He prays (Romans 8:26).

It's an incredible comfort to me to know that when I don't know how to pray or what to pray for, the Spirit intercedes and interprets my prayers. He knows my weakness. He does not condemn, scold or abandon me. He intercedes for me according to God's will. And God's will is all that I really want for my life. He is the one who will reveal to me what that will is if my heart is set to please Him and not myself.

## Conclusion

Do you see how much we need the Holy Spirit? If He were not here with us, God would be distant; we would have no assurance of our salvation or security. We would never see anyone come to Christ. We wouldn't understand God's word. We would not be aware of God's presence, nor be assured of his love. We couldn't be sure that we really belonged to Him. We would not become more sensitive to sin. We would not be growing in Christian character. We would not be able to serve the Lord with effectiveness and joy. But we do have Him, and to have the most joyful and fruitful life, we can safely put ourselves into His hands and yield our wills to His control.

## Study Questions

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 8:26; Acts 8:39**

1. What characteristics does the Holy Spirit have that prove He is a Person, not a force or a thing? What actions does He perform that only a person can do. Why is it important to understand this?

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:11-12; Psalm 139:7; John 3:5-6; Luke 1:35; Psalm 104:30**

2. What attributes of God are credited to the Spirit? What actions that only God can do are credited to Him? What is He called in Acts 5:3-4? Why is this important?

**Read Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14**

3. What further proof do these verses give that the Spirit is equally God?

**Read John 14:25-27; 15:26; 16:5-15**

4. Who does Jesus say will send the Spirit? What does Jesus call Him? What did He say the Spirit would do for the disciples? What is always the purpose of the Holy Spirit's work (16:13-15)?

**Read John 16:8; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; Ephesians 4:30**

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5. What is the Holy Spirit's work in our salvation? What does each of these actions mean? What assurance does this give you about your relationship to God?

**Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; Ephesians 5:18; John 16:12-15; Romans 8:14, 16, 26**

6. What does the Spirit do in the life of the believer? How does He equip us for service? What is His part in our understanding of God's Word? How does He give us security? How does He interpret and fortify our prayers?

7. How will your understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit impact your view of the Christian life? Do you see that God does not expect you to live a godly life in your own power? What must you do to allow the Spirit to work in you?

## The Church

What is the church? When did it begin? Why are there so many denominations? Why does this group worship in a Bible church?

The word *church* is a Greek word--*ekklesia*. It means "*that which is called out for a special purpose; an assembly.*"

The first thing to learn is that the Bible speaks of the church in two different ways: the *Universal Church*, which is an organism, and the *Local Church*, which is an organization.

### The Universal Church--an Organism

Definition: The universal church is that organism of professing believers making up the body of Christ through baptism by the Holy Spirit, which was formed first on the day of Pentecost, is distinct from the nation of Israel, and is not limited to local congregational or denominational affiliation.

Everyone, living or dead, who has ever put their faith in Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost till now, is a member of the universal church, Christ's body, of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22).

### What did Jesus say about the church?

**Read Matthew 16:18-19.**

### Christ spoke of the church as future.

When Christ spoke these words the church was still future, so it did not exist when He was here on earth. Who is the foundation upon which the church is built? Who or what is the *rock* that Christ referred to?

Peter himself says that Christ is the Rock (1 Peter 2:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:11, no other foundation; Ephesians 2:20).

Or it may mean that Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God", is the rock, because everyone who becomes a member of the universal church must believe that is the truth about Jesus.

### When was the church born?

**Read Acts 1:5 and 2:1-4.**



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The church was born at Pentecost, about ten days after Jesus ascended back to heaven. The Holy Spirit came down to place every believer into the body of Christ and to indwell every believer personally and permanently. Pentecost was to the Holy Spirit as Christmas was to Jesus. He came to relate to all believers in different ways.

Paul speaks of the church as a *mystery*.

Read Ephesians 3:6.

This mystery is that Jews and Gentiles are joined together to form a new entity through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The only qualification for membership is faith in the risen Savior. The church is a totally new thing made up of believing Jews and Gentiles.

It is clear then, that every believer since Pentecost, living and dead, is a member of the body of Christ, the universal church. Dead believers are alive with the Lord waiting for the day we'll all be together.

## The Local Church--an Organization

Definition: The local church is an assembly of professing believers who observe ordinances, are organized under a certain governmental structure, and who impact their community for Christ through the public worship of God, the edification of the members, and evangelization of the lost.

There is a distinction between members in the universal church and the local church. The universal church consists only of believers, but the local church can have members who say they are believers and really are not. It's possible to be a member of a local church and not be a member of the body of Christ. That can be through ignorance or deception. Some churches require that you go through their rituals but don't explain that faith in Christ is really what saves, nor do they determine that a person has made that decision. Some people may say that they believe, but they are pretenders, hypocrites. In our church, we do our best to ask each person who wishes to join to give their personal testimony about when they trusted Christ as Savior. But we can still be fooled. Only God knows the heart!

## Why so many different Christian denominations?

Most denominations started out agreeing on the basic doctrines of the faith, but they disagreed on other things--mode of baptism, whether salvation can be lost, physical healing, charismatic gifts, church government, styles of worship. I believe that the variety we have meets the needs of different people. Some like ritual and liturgy, some like strong Bible teaching, some like casual services, some like a lot of emotion, some like very little.

## Church Government

There are three basic forms of church government.

**Episcopal** (*Episkopos*): Authority over the church resides in the bishop. (Methodist, simple; Episcopal/Anglican, more complex; and Roman Catholic, hierarchy headed by the Bishop of Rome, Pope.)

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**Presbyterian** (*Presbuteros*): Authority over the church resides in a group of representatives to whom authority has been granted by the congregation, elders. (Presbyterian, Reformed and some Bible churches.)

**Congregational:** This stresses the role of the individual Christian, making the congregation the final authority in matters. Every member has a vote. (Baptist and Evangelical Free, Bible and independent churches.) Our church is a combination of these last two. We are Elder governed and Staff run, and the congregation votes on the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Elders, and the budgets.

## Elders

Spiritual leadership is the responsibility of the elders. Their qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, which restricts this office to men. They are responsible to protect the church from doctrinal error and to serve the church as shepherds (pastors) caring for God's flock (Acts 20:17, 28).

## Deacons

Deacons do the practical work of leadership under the spiritual authority of the elders. They take care of those in the congregation in need. Women can be deacons. (Romans 16; 1 Timothy 3:8-11.)

## Ordinances of the Local Church

*Ordinance:* "An outward rite prescribed by Christ to be performed by the church."

They are called *sacraments* by some.

*Sacrament:* "A sacrament is something presented to the senses, which has the power, by divine institution, not only of *signifying*, but also of efficiently *conveying* grace." RC Council of Trent.

We do not believe that either the Lord's Supper or baptism is a means of conveying grace. We believe that they are done in obedience to Christ's commands to picture externally what has already taken place internally in our hearts. Both of these ordinances commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

## Baptism

**Read Matthew 28:19.**

**Mode:** *Immerse* is the primary meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*.

Immersion best pictures the significance of baptism, which is death to the old life and resurrection to the new. This church practices immersion, but arguing and dividing about mode of baptism is non-productive. Every believer should be baptized as soon as he or she knows that Christ commanded it. It's a public testimony to your identification and union with Christ. If you were baptized before you became a believer, then you shouldn't hesitate to be re-baptized as a believer. Baptism is obedience to your Lord.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

## *The Lord's Supper, Communion, Eucharist*

### **Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.**

There are several purposes for observing the Lord's Supper:

1. It's a remembrance of the life and death of our Lord. The unleavened bread represents the perfect life of our Lord which qualified Him to be an acceptable sacrifice for sin. It represents His body which bore our sin on the cross. The wine represents his blood shed for the remission of our sins.
2. 1 Corinthians 11:26 says that this memorial supper proclaims the basic facts of the gospel. *It proclaims the Lord's death.*
3. It reminds us that Jesus Christ is coming again and we are to observe it till He comes.
4. It should also remind us of our oneness with each other in the body of Christ and of the fellowship which share as fellow members of that body (1 Corinthians 10:17).

### Who can partake?

A non-believer shouldn't because it's a ceremony to identify only those who have professed faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the atonement of their sins.

Can any believer partake regardless of denominational membership? Yes. This is the *Lord's Table* and all members of the universal church are invited. It's not *Baptist* or *Catholic* or *Bible church*. Restrictions based on denominational affiliation go against the call for unity in the universal church. (Communion at Lausanne)

Warning! 1 Corinthians 11:27-32: We are to observe soul-searching and confession of sins before partaking. Otherwise, we may be disciplined--such as by sickness, or even death.

### **The purpose for the Local Church**

1. Worship and show its love for the Lord (Revelation 2:4).
2. Minister to its own members so that they encourage each other to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24).
3. Be the agency for carrying out the Great Commission. The gospel should be preached in the services so that unbelievers can respond.
4. Should care for its own who are in need, e.g., widows, orphans and the poor (James 1:27; 1 Timothy 5:1-16).
5. Do good in the world (Galatians 6:10).
6. To produce mature, stable, holy Christians (Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 6:1; Ephesians 4:14-16). This may mean discipline in the area of morals and maintenance of purity in doctrine (1 Corinthians 5, 2 Timothy 2:16-18).

### **Illustrations of Universal Church**

Christ is the Shepherd and we are the sheep (John 10)--care and security.

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Christ is the vine and we are the branches (John 15)--fruitfulness and strength.

Christ is the cornerstone and we are the stones in the building (Ephesians 2:19-21)--Cornerstone gives direction and is laid only once.

Christ is the High Priest and we are a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2)--we offer ourselves, our substance and our service.

Christ is the Head and we are members of His body (1 Corinthians 12)--as Head, He directs; as members we serve each other through the exercise of the spiritual gifts he has given us.

Christ is the Bridegroom and we are His bride (Ephesians 5:25-33, Revelation 19:7-8)--everlasting love and intimacy.

Christ is the Heir and we are joint-heirs (Hebrews 1:2, Romans 1:17)--we will share all His glories.

Christ is the firstfruits and we are the harvest (1 Corinthians 15:23)--his resurrection guarantees ours.

Christ is the Master and we are His servants (Colossians 4:1, 1 Corinthians 7:22)--the servant does his master's will. The master takes care of the servant.

## How do we apply these facts?

We should each be sure that we are members in the universal church, no matter what church we worship in. Membership in the universal church is secured by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. There is great assurance in knowing that you are a member of the universal church, the body of Christ. This assurance should motivate you to identify with a local church where you can grow and you can serve. A church like ours doesn't require membership for service in most areas. But isn't it a good idea to indicate your support for the church where you receive blessing and spiritual growth by joining it? Joining means that you identify yourself with the people here. They are your family. You give financially. You support and help those in need. You fellowship, you serve. Joining means COMMITMENT! If you have been coming to this church regularly and consider it your church, then don't you think you should become a member? New membership classes are held at least four times a year. They are held on two consecutive Sunday mornings. If you apply to join, you have a personal interview with an elder, so that you can give your testimony of faith in Christ. Then you are presented to the church.

I hope this overview of our doctrinal statement has informed, encouraged, stabilized and given you the resources you need to answer anyone who asks you, "What does your church believe"?

## Study Questions

### Read Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 2:1-4, 41-47

1. In what tense did Jesus speak of the church when He was here on earth? When was the church born? What activities characterized the believers in the church?

### Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-10; Ephesians 19-22

2. Who is the only foundation of the church?

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**Read 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 5:30-32**

3. What is the church called in each of these passages? What is the significance of each symbol? Do you think this refers to the local church or the universal church? Who are the members of the universal church? How might they differ from members of the local church?

**Read 1 Corinthians 12**

4. What does this passage tell you about the way members of the body of Christ should function? How are we alike? Different? What attitude should we have towards each other? Towards ourselves?

**Read Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-31**

5. What ordinance did Jesus command His church to keep until He returns? What does it commemorate? What should we each do before participating? What is the punishment for taking it “in an unworthy manner”?

**Read Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-47; Romans 6:1-5**

6. What other ordinance did Jesus command His church to keep? When was it done in the early church? What does it symbolize? How is it a testimony to others?

**Read John 15:9-10**

7. What is the major reason that believers should be baptized and observe communion? What does our obedience prove? Have you been baptized since you trusted Christ?

8. Why is it necessary for our growth to spiritual maturity to be involved in and committed to a local church? What will we miss that can only be found in a local body of believers? What answer would you give a believer who says, “I don’t need to go to church. I worship God on my own”?<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Vickie Kraft, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, served as Minister to Women at Northwest Bible Church in Dallas for over 13 years. She passed away in September 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bible.org/series/basics-christian-faith>