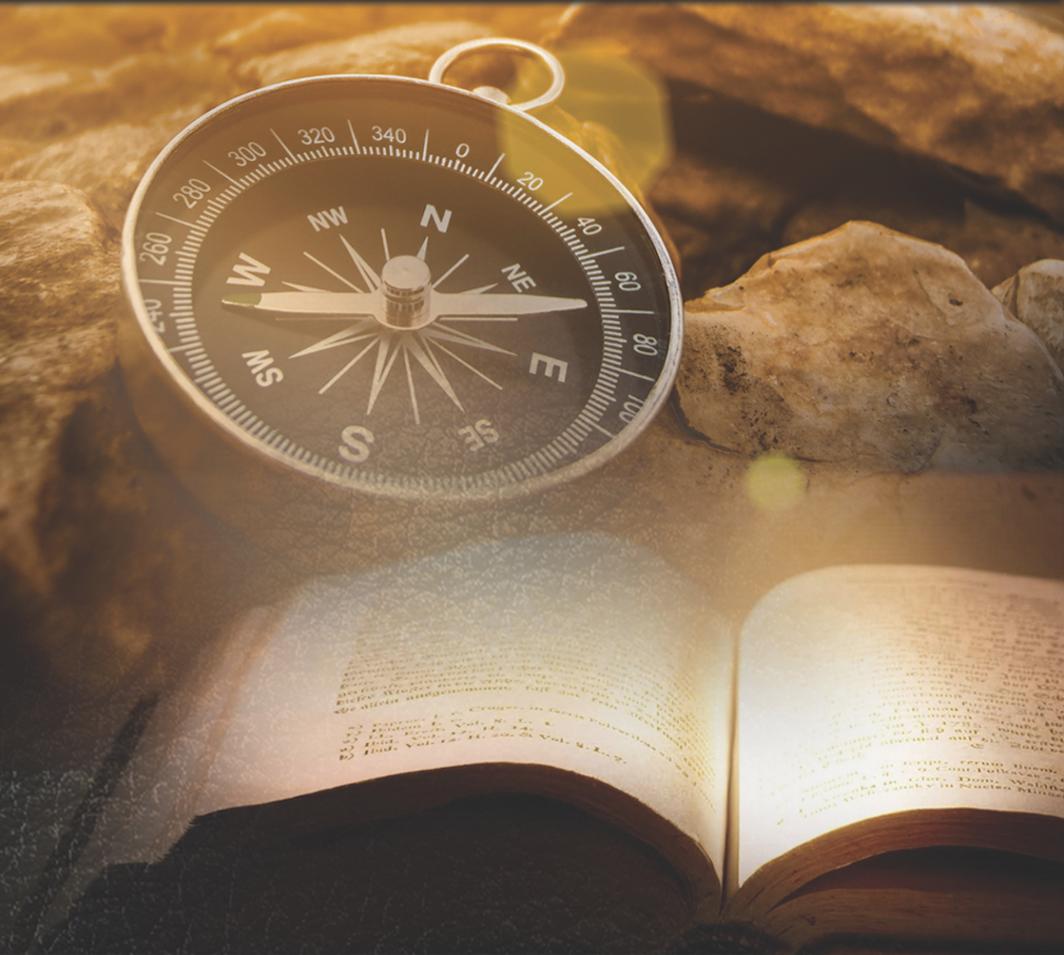




# The Seeker's Bible Study



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# Teacher's Notes

Teacher's notes can be downloaded and printed from the  
"The Seeker's Bible Study" page.

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# Bible Reading Project

The purpose of the *Seeker's Bible Study* is to help non-Christians understand the Bible's teaching about salvation in Jesus Christ.

To understand properly, you must make the effort to read God's Word. God gave the Bible to show salvation to men, but they must read it and believe it. That is each individual's responsibility. The Bible is the most important Book on earth and it has been translated into all major languages, yet most people have never read it.

As you go through this course, set out to read the following portions of the Bible: Genesis-Exodus, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Luke, Acts, and Romans.

This will help you to begin to have a basic understanding of the Bible's message. Write down questions to discuss with the teacher.

# The Goal of This Course

The goal of this course is to bring the seeker to faith in the risen Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The goal is not merely to know *about* Christ; the goal is to come to Christ and to know Him as personal Saviour.

He is alive and He invites all men to come to Him.

“Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Bible Christianity is not a religion or a reformation or a philosophy. It is a personal, intimate, eternal relationship with the living God.

The Bible is the only “religious book” that teaches salvation as a free gift that God Himself has purchased and provided for fallen mankind.

# The Gospel of Christ

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## The Gospel

**Memory Verses:** 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Understanding and receiving the gospel of Christ is the most important thing in life. The Bible says there is no other way of salvation except through the gospel. We will see that apart from the gospel of Christ, there is nothing in a man's future but eternal judgment.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

This statement is from the book of Romans, which is in the New Testament part of the Bible. It was written by the apostle Paul, who was chosen by Christ to be a prophet and to write many books of the Bible. Before Paul was a believer in Christ, he was a very religious Jewish teacher who hated Christians and persecuted them, even unto death. His life story is written in the fifth book of the New Testament, which is called the Acts of the Apostles.

Romans 1:16 says that God saves sinners when they believe the gospel. Without understanding and believing the gospel, it is impossible to be saved. The question is, what is the gospel?

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. **For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for**

**our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.** And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

This statement is from another book in the New Testament which is called 1 Corinthians. It was Paul’s first letter to the church in the city of Corinth.

Here Paul explains what is the gospel.

The word “gospel” means “good news.” It is the good news that God has provided salvation for sinners so that they can be reconciled to God and have eternal life.

Paul says that he received the gospel directly from Christ. He did not invent it. He did not get it from some religion.

**Consider some lessons about the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15:1-8:**

## What Is the Scripture?

The gospel says that Christ died for our sins “according to the Scripture.” We are going to start here in our studies on the gospel, because unless we understand what is the Scripture, we will not be able to understand who Christ is or any other part of the gospel.

The word “Scripture” means “writing.” It refers to the Bible.

The Bible is the most amazing and wonderful book on earth. I have spent my life reading books. I’ve read the classics of English literature, the *Koran*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. I’ve read Buddha’s *Noble Truths*, Greek philosophy, the Chinese *Odes*, and Nostradamus’s prophecies. And there is no book like the Bible, not even close. It has the most wonderful

message. It has the most wonderful language. It has the most wonderful description of God. It has the most wonderful narratives about men's lives. It has the best poetry, the best hymns. It has the best history. It has the most amazing prophecies of the future.

The Bible is the world's most popular book, by far. The whole Bible has been translated into every major language, plus most minor ones. Some portion of the Bible is available in more than 2,450 languages. Translation work is progressing in another 2,000 languages. Compare this with other religious books. The Hindu scriptures have been translated into 46 languages, and the Muslim Quran into about 40.

The Bible is God's revelation to mankind. It contains the answers to all of life's big questions, such as these: Is there a God? Who is God? What is His character? How did the world come to be? What is man? What is his purpose? Is man an evolved animal? What is wrong with man? Why is the world so full of trouble? Why do men die? What happens to man when he dies? Is death the end? Can man be right with God? Can man have eternal life?

Man cannot find the answer to these questions by his own mind or investigation. God has revealed the answers in the Bible because He loves mankind and wants to save men.

The Bible was written by about 40 prophets over a period of about 1,600 years. The first five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) were written by the prophet Moses, about 3,500 years ago.

The Bible is one Book with one theme, but it has 66 individual books. Each of these books is an important part of the overall message. The Bible is divided into two major divisions: *The Old Testament*, which has 39 books (Genesis to Malachi), and *the New Testament*, which has 27 books (Matthew to Revelation). The Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language, and the New Testament was

written in the Greek language. The 66 books of the Bible are further divided into chapters and verses. For example, the first book of the Bible, Genesis, has 50 chapters and each chapter is divided into verses. Genesis chapter 1 has 31 verses. When the Bible books were originally written, they did not have these divisions. They were added later for the purpose of finding things more easily.

The Old Testament prepares the way for the New Testament. It begins by describing man's creation and fall into sin. Then it describes God's plan of salvation through the coming to earth of His Son, Jesus. In the Old Testament, Jesus is called *Christ*. Many prophecies are given in the Old Testament about Christ's coming. We will look at the meaning of "Christ" and some of these prophecies later.

The New Testament contains the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) describe the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The fifth book of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, describes the establishment of the first churches. The rest of the New Testament contains instructions for God's redeemed people in the churches. The last book of the Bible, which is called Revelation, contains prophecies of the return of Christ, the resurrections, the judgments, and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

The Bible describes the history of the nation Israel. God created Israel as His special nation to bring salvation to the whole world. The people of Israel are called the Jews. *Through Israel, God gave the Bible*. It was written by Jewish prophets (such as Moses, David, and Isaiah). *Through Israel, God brought Jesus into the world*. Jesus was born in Israel and is a Jew by birth. God chose the man Abraham as the father of the nation Israel. God gave Abraham the promise that he would be the father of a great nation and that he would be a blessing to the whole world. Abraham had a son named Isaac, who

inherited God's promise to Abraham. Isaac had a son named Jacob, who inherited God's promise. Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" by God and he had 12 sons, who became the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. All of this important history is written down in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. The Bible also describes how that Israel became a slave nation to the Egyptian pharaoh and how that God brought Israel out of Egypt through great miracles and brought them into their own land which He had promised them. This history is found in the second book of the Bible, Exodus. (For the location of Israel on a world map see *Map 01 - Middle East* in the back of this study. Israel is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Egypt.

The Bible contains the law of God. In the book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible, we read about how that God gave His holy laws to Israel at Mt. Sinai near Egypt. The first ten of these laws are called "The Ten Commandments." They are as follows:

1 - Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

2 - Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

3 - Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

4 - Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant,

nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5 - Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

6 - Thou shalt not kill.

7 - Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8 - Thou shalt not steal.

9 - Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10 - Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's (Exodus 20:1-17).

These laws were given to show men what God requires of them and to show that all men are guilty sinners before God. No man or woman lives up to God's holy laws. All men have broken these laws, beginning with the first law, which is to have no other gods before the one true God. We break God's laws from our earliest age. We don't have to go to school to learn how to lie and cheat and steal. God requires that man keep His holy laws from their hearts. To be accepted by God, it is not enough to act right on the outside; one's heart must be pure. And no man has a pure heart. God's law says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife ... not any thing that is thy neighbour's." This is a sin of the heart. Note that God says not to covet thy neighbor's wife. Jesus taught that if a man looks upon a woman to lust after her in his heart, he commits adultery. Therefore, adultery is not only a sin of the body; it is a sin of the heart. God's laws show that man is a sinner both in his actions and in the secrets of his heart.

These are some fundamental lessons about "the Scripture."

(For more about the evidence that the Bible is God’s Word, see *The Bible’s Proof*, which is available as a free eBook from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

### REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE SCRIPTURE

The student should answer these questions before the next lesson.

1. What is the gospel?
2. What book and chapter in the Bible has a short summary of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
3. What is the meaning of the word “gospel?”
4. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
5. What is the meaning of the word “scripture”?
6. The Bible has been translated into about how many languages?
7. The Bible is God’s \_\_\_\_\_ to mankind.
8. What are three of life’s big questions that are answered in the Bible that you are most interested in personally?
9. The Bible was written by about \_\_\_\_ prophets over a period of about \_\_\_\_\_ years.
10. What are the first five books of the Bible?
11. What prophet wrote these books?
12. What are the two major divisions of the Bible?
13. The Bible has how many individual books?
14. The books of the Bible are divided into \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
15. What are the first four books of the New Testament?
16. What is the subject of these books?
17. What is the last book of the Bible and what is its subject?
18. What two things did God give to the world through Israel?
19. What man is the father of Israel?

20. What is the name of that man's son and grandson who inherited the promises of God?

21. The grandson had how many sons who became the heads of tribes of Israel?

22. Israel became a slave nation to what ancient nation?

23. What is the name of the mountain where God gave His laws to Israel?

24. What is God's first commandment?

25. Why did God give His laws to men?

## Who Is Christ?

**Memory Verse:** Luke 19:10

The gospel says that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture..."

Therefore, to understand the gospel, we must know "who is Christ?"

*Christ* means "the Anointed One." Christ is a Greek word that means the same thing as the Hebrew word *Messiah*. It refers to God's chosen man. It refers to the man that God has chosen to be the Saviour of the world and to establish God's eternal kingdom.

Christ refers to Old Testament prophecies about the coming of God's chosen man. This is the main theme of the Old Testament.

After the first man and woman sinned in the Garden of Eden, they were condemned to die and suffer eternal punishment. This is called man's "Fall." We will talk more about this in the lesson on man's sin.

God planned salvation for mankind. He planned to send Christ into the world to take the punishment that sinful man deserves so that he can be saved. When Jesus came, He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10).

God gave prophecies through His holy prophets about the coming of Christ, the Saviour. All of them were fulfilled by Jesus. We can read the fulfillment in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the first four books of the New Testament.

Following are some of the prophecies:

***The prophecies said that Christ would be born in Bethlehem.***

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Micah was a prophet who preached about 700 years before Jesus was born. Bethlehem is a town a few miles south of Israel’s capital city of Jerusalem. It is the birthplace of Jesus, as we read in the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament. (See *Map 02 - Israel* in the back of this study book. Jerusalem and Bethlehem are west of the top of the Dead Sea.)

***The prophecies said that Christ would be born of a virgin.***

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

The prophet Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. The name “Immanuel” means “God with us.” Christ is “God manifest in the flesh.” God’s plan for the salvation of the world is that the eternal Son of God would become a sinless man and die for man’s sin.

Christ was born of a virgin as we read in the beautiful account in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1-2.

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house

of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:26-38).

***The prophecies said that Christ would do healing miracles.***

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:5-6).

Jesus fulfilled this prophecy by healing all manner of sickness and even raising the dead. We read about this in many places in the Gospels. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the

kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23).

The prophecy in Isaiah 35:6 about waters breaking out in the wilderness will be fulfilled when Christ establishes His kingdom on earth and the deserts and waste places will become gardens.

***The prophecies said that Christ would be crucified.***

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:14-16).

This Psalm was written by the prophet David about 1,000 years before Jesus was born. Psalm 22 describes the awful death by crucifixion, but when David wrote it, crucifixion was not yet practiced on this earth! It began to be practiced in the days of the Roman Empire not long before Jesus was born. To punish the most wicked of criminals, such as murderers, the Roman government nailed their hands and feet to a wooden cross and left them there to die. Normally it took days for them to die in slow agony. The victim’s bones were pulled out of joint because of the violence. Because of loss of blood, the victim had a terrible thirst, but he was not given anything to drink. All of this is described in the prophecy in Psalm 22.

The “dogs” mentioned in the Psalm are explained in the same passage. They are the wicked people who crucified Jesus and mocked Him when He was on the cross. They are called “dogs,” referring to wild dogs, because they were acting like wild animals.

Jesus was crucified by the Roman government even though He had committed no crime. The Jewish religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and hated Him and they brought false accusations against Him to the Roman governor, Pilate, who

finally agreed to put Him to death. The account of Jesus' trial and crucifixion is given in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

***The prophecies said that soldiers would gamble for Jesus' robe at the foot of the cross.***

“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Psalm 22:18).

The cruel Roman soldiers did this while Jesus was suffering on the cross. This is recorded in **Matthew 27:35**, “And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”

***The prophecies said that the people would mock Jesus.***

“But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him” (Psalm 22:6-8).

The fulfillment of this prophecy is written in **Matthew 27:39-44**, “And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.”

***The prophecies said that the people would sit and stare at Jesus.***

“... they look *and* stare upon me” (Psalm 22:17).

The fulfillment of this is recorded in **Matthew 27:36**, “And sitting down they watched him there.”

***The prophecies said that Jesus’ bones would not be broken.***

“I may tell all my bones” (Psalm 22:17).

This amazing prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Christ’s crucifixion. The next day was a Jewish religious day, so the rulers wanted to take the victims down from the crosses. Two thieves were crucified with Jesus that day, one on each side of Him. At the end of the day, the thieves were still alive, so the soldiers broke their leg bones to hasten their deaths. But Jesus was already dead, so none of His bones were broken. The fulfillment of this is described in **John 19:31-33**, “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.”

***The prophecies said that Christ would suffer for man’s sins.***

“But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

This is another prophecy by Isaiah. It is one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible. Isaiah prophesied that Christ

would be punished in the place of sinners. He says that all men have gone astray from God, and God has put our sins upon Christ. Jesus fulfilled this when He shed His blood and suffered on the cross. I can be saved because Jesus was punished in my place.

This is like a judge taking a criminal's punishment so the criminal can go free. This is what God did for sinners. Jesus paid the sinner's debt. Every sin must be punished, and that means that every sinner owes God a big debt that he cannot pay for himself. No amount of good works will pay for all of the sins I have committed against God. The sin debt must be paid, and it will be paid in the lake of fire by eternal suffering. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus paid the sinner's debt in full, and the sinner can be freed from eternal punishment if he receives Jesus as his Saviour.

***The prophecies said that Christ would be the Lamb of God.***

The Old Testament prophesies that Christ will be God's sacrifice for sin. He will be the substitute for the sinner. This was prophesied in many ways. One of these prophecies was the Passover Lamb which is described in Exodus 12. When God brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt, the king of Egypt, the pharaoh, refused to let them go. So God killed the firstborn son of the pharaoh and of all of the Egyptian families. God said that He would pass over the land during the night and kill the firstborn as a judgment for Egypt's sin against Him. Israel was saved from this judgment by the Passover Lamb. The families of Israel were instructed to kill a lamb, shed its blood, and put the blood on the doors of their houses. God said, "and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13).

This happened, and Israel came out of Egypt that night, 3,500 years ago. All of the firstborn of Egypt died, but not one soul of the Israelites died, because they were protected by the

blood of the Passover lamb. The Passover was also a prophecy of the coming of Jesus. He is the Lamb of God who died and shed His blood for man's salvation. Every sinner that puts his faith in Jesus as Saviour will not be judged with the rest of the world, just as the families of Israel were not judged with the people of Egypt. The Lamb was their salvation. When Jesus came, His forerunner, who was named John the Baptist, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

***The prophecies said that Christ would be buried in the tomb of a rich man.***

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death..." (Isaiah 53:9).

This is another prophecy by Isaiah. It was fulfilled when Jesus died and was taken down from the cross by His disciples and His body was placed in the tomb of a rich disciple named Joseph of Arimathaea. We read about this in the Gospel of John 19:38-42.

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

***The prophecies said that Christ would rise from the dead.***

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10).

This prophecy was given by the prophet David. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy when He rose from the dead after three days in the grave. He was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses. After 40 days, Jesus ascended back to heaven from whence He came.

***The prophecies said that Christ will return to earth the second time to establish God’s kingdom.***

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

This prophecy of Christ’s second coming to establish God’s kingdom on earth will be fulfilled in the future. Jesus promised that He would come again. David was the king of Israel. His life and kingdom is described in the Bible in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. God promised David that Christ would be born of his family and Christ would re-establish David’s kingdom.

So when the gospel says that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture,” it is referring to these prophecies that were given before Jesus’ birth. There were also other prophecies. Jesus is the only man in history who fulfilled them.

No other man's life was pre-recorded in a book before he was born. The Bible's prophecies prove that it is the Word of God, because only God knows the future.

We know for sure that the Bible existed before Jesus was born, because we have copies of the prophets that date to 150 and 200 years before Jesus. These are the Dead Sea Scrolls that were preserved in caves in the dry desert climate near the Dead Sea in southern Israel. They were books written on leather scrolls that rolled out. One of these scrolls is the complete prophecy of Isaiah, which we have quoted in this study. It is called "the Great Isaiah Scroll," and this great treasure is kept in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Now we know something about who the Christ of Scripture is.

Believing the gospel requires that I believe that Jesus is the Christ that was promised in the Old Testament prophecies.

Believing the gospel also means that I must reject false christs. Jesus warned that false christs will come into the world and deceive men. "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5). The way to know what is a false christ, is to examine his teaching and compare it with the Bible. The description of the true Christ is found in the Bible. He is the eternal Son of God, virgin born, sinless. He died and shed His blood to pay man's sin debt. He rose from the dead bodily. He ascended back to heaven where He awaits His return. One false christ is the christ described in *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. I read this before I was a Christian. This book says that Christ went to Egypt and India when He was young and there He learned the wisdom of the gurus. This is a false christ. The true Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is the source of all wisdom and didn't need to learn wisdom from any teacher in this world. Another false christ is the Jesus of Islam. The Koran, Islam's holy book, talks about Jesus (*Isa*), but it is not the Jesus of the

Bible. The Jesus of the Koran is not the Son of God and did not die on the cross for man's sins.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON CHRIST**

The student should answer these questions before the next lesson.

1. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. The Bible was written by about \_\_\_\_ prophets over a period of about \_\_\_\_\_ years.
3. What prophet wrote the first five books of the Bible?
4. What are the two major divisions of the Bible?
5. The Bible has how many individual books?
6. What are the first four books of the New Testament?
7. What is the subject of these books?
8. What man is the father of Israel?
9. What is the name of that man's son and grandson who inherited the promises of God?
10. What does the title "Christ" mean?
11. What is the Hebrew word that means the same thing?
12. Christ refers to the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of God's chosen man to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.
13. What is man's Fall?
14. Christ came into the world for what purpose?
15. According to Bible's prophecy, where would Christ be born?
16. What prophet said that Christ would be born of a virgin?
17. About how many years before Jesus' birth was this prophecy about the virgin birth given?
18. What is the meaning of the name "Immanuel"?
19. What is the name of the angel who came to Mary to announce Jesus' birth?

20. How many types of sicknesses did Jesus heal?
21. What great prophecy describes the details of Jesus' crucifixion?
22. What was crucifixion?
23. About how long before Jesus' birth was this prophecy written?
24. Why were the people who crucified Jesus called "dogs"?
25. What did the soldiers do while Jesus was suffering on the cross?
26. What did the people do when Jesus was suffering on the cross?
27. Why did the soldiers not break Jesus' bones?
28. What did Jesus do for sinners when He died on the cross?
29. Why does the sinner owe God a debt?
30. How can the sinner pay this debt for himself?
31. How can the debt be paid?
32. What was the Passover?
33. What does it mean that Christ is the Lamb of God?
34. Who was the rich man who provided his own tomb for Jesus' burial?
35. Who was David and what promise did God give him?
36. What was found in the Dead Sea caves that prove that the Bible's prophecies were written before Jesus was born?
37. Jesus warned that \_\_\_\_\_ will come into the world.

## **What Is Sin?**

**Memory Verses:** Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23

The gospel says, "Christ died for our sin."

Therefore, to be saved I have to understand what sin is and I have to acknowledge that I am a sinner.

Sin is to break God's law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

The Bible says that all men are sinners. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The Bible says that all men are sinners. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 6:23).

What does the Bible mean when it says that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God? It means that all men have broken God's holy laws. It means that no man comes up to God's righteous standards. This is the meaning of coming short of God's glory. It is like a measuring stick of one yard or one meter. The measuring stick symbolizes God's perfect righteous standard for man. It signifies the righteousness that God demands of man. But because of sin, no man or woman stands that tall. No man is that righteous. We come far short.

The Bible describes man's sin as follows:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:10-18).

This is man's natural condition from birth. In God's eyes, no man is righteous or good. All have gone away from God.

Observe that the Bible especially focuses on man's speech to prove that he is a sinner. Throughout the whole earth, in every language, man's speech is filled with evil speaking, hateful speaking, deceit, cursing, and bitterness. God gave

man the ability to speak by giving him the marvelous equipment of the human tongue, mouth, throat, and mind, which no other creature has, but man has used this wonderful gift for evil. Instead of blessing God, he curses and blasphemes. Instead of speaking truth and love to his fellow man, he speaks wrath, slander, mocking, envy, and bitterness. Every evil word, every lie, every curse word, every bitter word, is a great sin against the Creator.

We see that it is man's sin that has taken peace from the earth. "The way of peace have they not known." There are peace movements in our day, but man cannot even maintain peace with his own neighbors, friends, and loved ones. This is because he is naturally sinful and selfish. It doesn't matter how educated he is or how wealthy he is, he is a sinner, and sinners do not have peace.

We see that sin is the lack of the fear of God. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." This means that men do not revere God as the Creator. They do not obey God. They do not honor God as the God of their lives and do not live according to His laws.

**How did man get into this terrible condition?** The Bible tells us that man's sin began in the Garden of Eden, as described in Genesis 1-3. God made the world and created the first man and woman to occupy and rule the world. Their names were Adam and Eve. When God made man, he was righteous and had no sin. Men became sinners when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. After God made Adam and put him in the beautiful garden, God commanded him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was one of the trees in the garden. God told Adam that if he disobeyed this law and ate of the tree, he would die. This is exactly what happened. Satan, in the form of a beautiful serpent, tempted Eve and she and Adam ate of the fruit of that tree. They died spiritually that day, meaning they became separated from God in their spirits, and later they died

physically. And all of their children have died. Following is this account in the Bible:

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:15-17).

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the

woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:1-24).

**The serpent is the devil or Satan.** He is a fallen angel who rebelled against God. He took the form of a beautiful serpent for the purpose of tempting Eve, and she was blinded by his beauty and deceived by his lies. She wanted to experience the fruit of the tree. Satan promised that she would be like God. He promised her liberty, but she got bondage. He promised her life, but she got death.

God judged the man and woman and sent them out of the Garden. The Cherubims are angelic creatures that did not follow Satan in his rebellion.

Before God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden, **He clothed them in coats of skins**. This was the first animal sacrifice. The clothing is the first Messianic type or picture in the Old Testament. Following are some of the lessons. *First, the coats were needed.* Adam and Eve tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaf aprons of their own devising, but God didn't accept this. All men are sinners who need God's salvation, and there is nothing we can do for ourselves that will save us. Our good works and religions can do nothing to bring us into right relationship with God. *Second, the coats were made by shedding the blood of an innocent sacrifice.* This pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Innocent animals had to die so that the man and woman could be clothed. This is a picture of Christ's atoning death and the clothing of the believer in His righteousness. See 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." *Third, the coats were entirely of God's design and making,* signifying the fact that salvation is 100% of God. It was conceived of God and wrought by God. Compare Hebrews 1:3, which says that Christ "by himself purged our sins." He did everything for us. *Fourth the coats were sufficient.* They covered them properly and sufficiently so that they were acceptable in God's sight. This signifies how that through Jesus' righteousness the sinner is justified or declared righteous before God because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. There was nothing that Adam and Eve could add to that which God provided. *Fifth, the coats were God's gift* to needy sinners; they were provided freely. Adam and Eve neither merited the divine covering nor earned it. *Sixth, the coats were received by repentance and faith.* Adam and Eve submitted to God's salvation. By receiving God's robes, they acknowledged that their self-made clothing of fig leaves was

not sufficient. They acknowledged that before God they were naked and sinful. They rejected their own works and self-righteousness.

Ever since Adam and Eve's fall, men have been born with sinful hearts. No one has to teach children how to do wrong. Lying, stealing, disobedience to parents, selfishness, covetousness, envy--all of these things come naturally to every person.

To show man that he is a sinner and that he needs salvation, **God gave His holy laws to Israel at Mount Sinai** and they are recorded in the book of Exodus. They begin with the Ten Commandments, as follows:

1 - Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

2 - Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

3 - Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

4 - Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5 - Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

6 - Thou shalt not kill.

7 - Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8 - Thou shalt not steal.

9 - Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10 - Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's (Exodus 20:1-17).

No man keeps these holy laws. No man has put God first in his life. No man has honored his father and mother 100%. Every man has disobeyed his parents, talked back to his parents, dishonored his parents. No man has avoided the sin of adultery. Jesus said that for a man to lust upon a woman is to commit adultery (Matthew 5:28). Men have taken God's high and holy name in vain, meaning they have used His name as a curse word or used His name lightly and flippantly, such as "Oh, my God." No man has avoided the sin of murder, for Jesus said that for a man to be angry with his fellow man without a cause and to call his fellow man a fool is to commit murder in the heart (Matthew 5:21-22). Hate and murder is the same sin before God. And no man has avoided the sin of covetousness.

God gave the law to show men that they are *not* righteous and to show them that they are guilty before God.

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-20).

**The Bible says that the root of sin is in man's heart.** Man's sinful actions come from his sinful heart.

“And he [Jesus] said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:20-23).

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

The prophet Jeremiah said that man's heart is not a *little* wicked, it is *desperately* wicked; it is not a *little* deceitful, it is *deceitful above all things*. This is what God says about man's condition. Men usually think of themselves as pretty good. They know that they are not perfect, but they don't think of themselves as *desperately wicked*. But that is what God says, and that is what I must admit in order to be saved.

Even if a person could clean up his life externally and live very religiously and give alms to the poor and be kind to his neighbors and do many good things, he would still be a sinner before God because his heart is corrupt. God looks on man's heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

**The Bible says that every infraction of God's law requires punishment.** There is punishment for every lie, every idolatry, every disobedience to parents, every theft, every envy, every covetousness, every adultery, every hateful thought.

**The punishment for sin is eternal death in a lake of fire.** This is described in the last book of the Bible, which is called Revelation.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were

opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15).

This describes the final judgment when God will judge every man and woman who has ever lived. They will be judged from the books that God keeps of every individual's life. The Judge is God who knows all things. Nothing will be hidden. No one will be able to lie about what he has done. There will be no clever lawyers, no bribes, no appeal.

**Every secret thought and secret deed will be judged.**

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Men think that many things in their lives are hidden. This begins in childhood. The child thinks that he can hide things from his parents. Thieves and adulterers operate in the dark, because they think no one sees them. But God made creatures that see in the dark and man had made devices that see in the dark; how much more does God Himself see everything! Man thinks that his thoughts are secret, but nothing is secret from God.

Jesus said that even every idle word will be judged.

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36).

Men are so careless about what they say. They talk and talk and talk, every day, all their lives, and they don't think it

matters what they say. "It's just talk." But every word will be judged by God.

**Those who have broken God's holy laws will be cast into the lake of fire to be punished forever.** The Bible says there is no way of escape from that place. There is no possibility of salvation there. There is no second chance. God wants to save all men, but they must come to Christ in this present life.

The Great White Throne judgment shows that it is impossible for any person to be saved apart from Christ. Every individual has committed sins without number, both public and secret, both in deed and in heart.

**The only escape from this terrible judgment is by receiving God's Son, Jesus, as my Saviour.** When I do that, my name is written in the book of life. This means that my sins are all forgiven before God; I am given the gift of eternal life through Jesus; I am adopted as a child of God. It means that I have passed from death unto life, spiritually. I have new life in Christ. This is the meaning of being "born again."

To be saved, I must see myself as the sinner that God says I am. I must see myself as a sinner who deserves eternal condemnation because I have broken God's holy laws. I have no excuse. I must understand and acknowledge that I am not good. "There is none righteous, no, not one ... there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). I must admit that I am not righteous and I am not good. God says that my very righteousnesses are "as filthy rags" before Him, because He is so holy (Isa. 64:6).

If I think that I am partly good and that my good works can be acceptable to God for salvation, I cannot be saved in that condition.

God only saves sinners.

"And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32).

**REVIEW QUESTIONS ON SIN**

The student should answer these questions before continuing on to the next lesson.

1. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. What does the title “Christ” mean?
3. What is the Hebrew word that means the same thing as “Christ”?
5. Christ came into the world for what purpose?
6. What great prophecy describes the details of Jesus’ crucifixion?
7. What did Jesus do for sinners when He died on the cross?
8. What does it mean that Christ is the Lamb of God?
9. What is the definition of sin in the Bible?
10. How is “come short of the glory of God” like a measuring stick?
11. According to the Bible, how many men are righteous? How many are good?
12. How does God describe man’s speech?
13. What is the fear of God?
14. What tree was Adam forbidden to eat?
15. What did God say would happen if Adam ate of this tree?
16. What did the serpent promise Eve?
17. What are six ways that the coats that God made for Adam and Eve pictured salvation in Jesus Christ?
18. Why did God give the Ten Commandments?
19. How many of these commandments have you personally broken?
20. How did Jesus define adultery?
21. How did Jesus define murder?
22. According to Jesus’ teaching, where do man’s sinful actions come from?

23. The prophet Jeremiah described the human heart in what way?

24. If a man could live a good life in his outward actions, he would still be a sinner before God. Why?

25. What is God's final punishment for sin?

26. In what book of the Bible is this punishment described?

27. How many things have you been able to keep secret from God?

28. What did Jesus say about your idle words?

29. To be saved, I must admit that I am what kind of sinner?

30. Jesus said, "They that are \_\_\_\_\_ need not a physician, but they that are \_\_\_\_\_."

31. Jesus said, "I came not to call the \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ to repentance."

## Christ Died for My Sins

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 2:8-9

The gospel says that "Christ died for my sins."

The bad news is that I am a sinner and that all of my sin will be punished. The good news is that Christ died for my sins. All of my sins.

We have seen that all men are sinners and every sinner is headed to eternal judgment.

The good news of the gospel is that by God's love and grace, that terrible judgment fell upon Christ. All of my punishment fell upon Christ when He died on the cross and shed His blood as the Lamb of God.

Christ died for the sin of the whole world.

This is called "substitutionary atonement." Atonement is the satisfaction of a debt. It refers to the price that Christ paid to reconcile sinners to God.

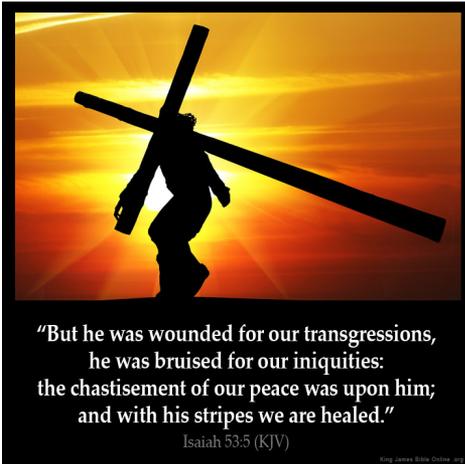
### Jesus is the sinner's substitute.

We saw this before in the studies of the prophecies about Christ. Consider again this great prophecy of Isaiah:

“But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Consider some lessons from this prophecy:

In Isaiah 53, we see man's sin. There are three descriptions of sin here. First, sin is “transgression.” This means to break the law. Second, sin is “iniquity.” This refers to every part of my sin, both the sin of my heart and the sin of my actions. Third, sin is to turn to one's own way. This is the fundamental aspect of sin. God made man to obey and serve and love Him, but man has gone his own way to live his own life as he pleases, without regard to God.



In Isaiah 53, we see Christ's terrible death on the cross. It is described in three words. He was *wounded*. He was *bruised*. He was *beaten* (“stripes”).

In Isaiah 53, we see how that Christ suffered in the sinner's place. This is repeated five times in this one prophecy. The Bible

emphasizes that Christ's death was vicarious (substitutionary). He did not die for Himself, for He had no sin. He died for others.

In Isaiah 53, we see that Christ died for all sinners. Every sinner can make this prophecy his own, because it says “all” two times. We have all gone astray, and Christ died for all. So if I acknowledge that I have gone astray, I can say, Christ was wounded for *my* transgressions; He was bruised for *my* iniquities; He was chastised so that *I* can have peace with God; He was beaten so that *I* can be healed; *my* iniquity, all my sin of thought and deed, was laid upon Him.

### **Other Bible verses that teach that Jesus died for man’s sin**

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Ro. 5:6).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Co. 5:21).

“Who gave himself for our sins” (Ga. 1:4).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Ga. 3:13).

“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2)

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14).

“... now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pe. 2:24-25).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pe. 3:18).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jo. 4:10). (“Propitiation” refers to the price that Christ paid to take away man’s sin.)

### **Salvation is God’s free gift to sinners.**

Consider the following verses from the New Testament:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

This is the wonderful teaching about salvation according to the Bible. Grace means that salvation is a free gift. It is not by my works.

Salvation according to the Bible is different from that of any religion of the world. According to the religions, salvation is by man’s works. If man will do this and that, if he will try to be good, if he will do good works, if he will do some religious rituals, if he will learn a religious philosophy, he will be saved. That is salvation according to religion. It is something that man does for God. It is something that man does to try to make his own way to God.

But salvation according to the Bible is completely different. It is by grace without works. It is God’s gift. It is not man doing something for God, it is God doing everything for man. A gift is something that is purchased by someone else and given to me for free. If it is not free, it is not a gift. Jesus paid the full price for the great gift of eternal salvation. The sinner receives that gift “by faith.” This means to believe that I am the sinner that God says I am, to believe that I deserve God’s punishment, and to believe that Jesus died to take my punishment. It means to believe that Jesus is the only Saviour.

Salvation according to the Bible is also different from the gospel that is taught by many churches. For example, the

Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox teach that salvation is by believing in Jesus PLUS being baptized and doing good works and following the church sacraments. This is a false gospel. There is no salvation in a gospel of grace plus works. Consider the following verse from the book of Romans in the New Testament:

“And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:6).

Believing the gospel means that I do not trust in *anything* other than Christ for salvation. If I am still trusting in any way in a religion, or in my good works, or in baptism, or in sacraments, or in a priest, or in Mary and the saints, or in a church, then I am not believing the gospel of grace and am not saved. If I am trusting 95% in God’s grace and 5% in works, that is a false gospel. I cannot be saved that way.

We think of a man who heard the gospel from some Christians who knocked on his door one day in southern California. They told him that he is a sinner and that he is under God’s punishment and that Christ died for his sins. They asked him if he was willing to receive Christ as his Saviour, and he said that he was. But then one of the Christians asked him if he thought he is a good person, and he said, yes, not perfect but also not too bad. The Christian asked him if he is a religious man, and he said that he is. The Christian then asked him if he thought his good works and religion can save him, and he said yes. This man did not believe the gospel. To receive Christ as Saviour, I must acknowledge that I am the great sinner that the Bible says I am and that my works and religion *cannot* save me.

We think of John and Charles Wesley in the 18th century, who were so zealous for Christianity that they formed a “holy club” at Oxford University. They were zealous in their habits of prayer and fasting and Bible reading. They were ordained

as Anglican priests and hazarded the dangerous voyage from England across the Atlantic Ocean to America in order to preach to the natives. But the Wesleys were trusting in their good works rather than the grace found in the gospel of Christ. They knew *about* Christ, but they didn't know Him personally. When a preacher asked John Wesley if he had a hope to be saved, he replied, "I do." But when the preacher asked him the reason of his hope, he said, "Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God." He was trusting in his own works rather than in Christ.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON JESUS DYING FOR MY SINS**

The student should answer these questions before the next lesson.

1. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. What tree was Adam forbidden to eat?
3. Why did God give the Ten Commandments
4. According to Jesus' teaching, where do man's sinful actions come from?
5. Jesus said, "I came not to call the \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ to repentance."
6. What is the bad news and the good news of the Bible?
7. Jesus is the sinner's \_\_\_\_\_.
8. What is the meaning of "transgression"?
9. What is the meaning of "iniquity"?
10. What is the meaning of turning to one's own way?
11. What is the meaning of salvation by grace?
12. How much do I have to pay for something before it ceases to be a gift?
13. Believing the gospel means that I do not trust in \_\_\_\_\_ other than Christ for salvation.
14. If a person thinks he is a pretty good person, can he receive Christ and be saved in that condition?

15. If a person is trusting 1% in his religion for salvation, can he receive Christ and be saved in that condition?

## **Christ Was Buried**

The gospel says, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, and that he was buried...”

Christ’s burial proved that He really died. He did not merely faint or merely appear to die as some have claimed. The reason the Roman soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs is because He was already dead, as we have seen (John 19:31-34). The Roman soldiers were experts in death. They knew that Jesus was dead.

Christ’s burial fulfilled prophecy. The Bible prophesied that Jesus would be buried in the tomb of a rich man, as we saw in the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9. This prophecy, written about 710 years before Jesus was born, was fulfilled when Jesus was taken down off the cross by a wealthy disciple named Joseph and buried in that disciple’s own tomb.

“When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed” (Matthew 27:57-60).

## **Christ Rose from the Dead**

“... and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he

was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1 Corinthians 15:4-8).

The bodily resurrection of Christ is an essential part of the gospel. To be saved, I must believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He is ready to receive me when I call upon Him.

Christ’s resurrection was “according to the Scripture” in that it was prophesied in Psalm 16:10, as we have seen. This was written about 1,000 years before Jesus came.

Christ rose from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week. The following is the account from the Gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament:

“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel,

they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:1-15).

Christ's resurrection proved that He is the Son of God. Paul said that Christ was "declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). Jesus prophesied many times that He would rise again the third day. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21). If Christ did not rise from the dead, it would prove that He was a deluded man or a false prophet and not the Son of God that He claimed to be.

**The evidence of the resurrection is the eyewitnesses.** After He rose from the dead, Christ remained with His disciples 40 days. Christ appeared to all of His disciples. One time He appeared to more than 500 at once. He had them touch Him and He ate food to prove that He was not a spirit (Luke 24:36-43). He taught them and prepared them for His return to heaven. He commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20).

And it is not only the Gospels and the New Testament Epistles that give eyewitness testimony of Christ's resurrection.

Clement of Rome (d. 99) knew some of the apostles personally, and we have his letter to the church at Corinth. This is a direct link to Christ's resurrection.

Polycarp (69-159), too, personally knew the apostle John and other believers who were eyewitnesses of Jesus'

resurrection, and we have his letter to the church at Philippi dating to about AD 115.

**The evidence of the resurrection is also the changed lives.** Consider the testimony of Paul. He did not believe that Jesus is the Christ. He was an enemy of the Christians. What converted Paul from being a bitter enemy of Christ to being a zealous follower? From an earthly perspective, Paul had absolutely nothing to gain and everything to lose by following Christ. He admitted that he had “profited in the Jews’ religion above many” (Galatians 1:14). He had a high position among the Jews. He had money and power and prestige. Paul said that it was the resurrected Christ who convinced him (Acts 22:3-21). As a zealous Jewish Pharisee and leader of Christ’s enemies, Paul was in a position to know the story about the disciples stealing the body. Had he thought that Jesus’ body actually lay hidden somewhere, he would never have believed in the resurrection. It is obvious that he did not give any credence to this story.

Since the days of Paul, multitudes of people have believed on Jesus, and their lives have been changed. Every Christian conversion is evidence that Jesus is alive.

I experienced this for myself. At age 23, I was a drug-using “hippy,” a hitchhiker, a member of a Hindu meditation society, a rebel against my dad, a selfish person who cared for no one. I met Jesus one evening in Daytona Beach, Florida, and my life was changed. I went home the next day and made things right with my dad. I got a job and settled down. I stopped drinking and drugging. I started caring for others and not just for myself. I personally know thousands of Bible-believing Christians who have experienced this type of conversion by receiving the resurrected Jesus Christ.

That Jesus rose from the dead means that He is alive. He is ready to receive any sinner that will come to Him in repentance and faith and receive Him as Lord and Saviour. He is still inviting sinners to come to Him.

“Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

(For more evidences of Christ’s bodily resurrection, see *The Bible’s Proof*, which is available as a free eBook at [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON JESUS BURIAL AND RESURRECTION**

The student should answer these questions before the next lesson.

1. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. What is the bad news and the good news of the Bible?
3. What is the meaning of salvation by grace?
4. How do we know that Jesus was actually dead when He was put in the grave?
5. How was the entrance to Jesus’ tomb closed?
6. What does the Bible mean when it says that Christ died “according to the Scripture”?
7. On what day of the week did Christ rise from the dead?
8. How many other men than Jesus have risen from the dead?
9. What are two evidences of Jesus’ resurrection?
10. What did Paul have to gain by believing that Jesus rose from the dead?
11. How do the writings of Clement and Polycarp provide evidence for Christ’s resurrection?

# Repentance

**Memory Verse:** Acts 17:30

In the previous studies, we examined the gospel. “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

That is what God has done for sinners. That is the way of salvation.

The question is, how does the sinner receive this salvation? The Bible’s answer is that it is received by repentance and faith.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

In this verse, the apostle Paul described what he preached to all men. He preached repentance and faith. “The Jews” are the people of Israel, and “the Greeks” refer to all other people of Paul’s day. The Greek culture and language were the prevailing culture and language of the Roman Empire. So Paul is saying that repentance and faith is what he preached to all men, Jews and non-Jews.

Since Paul puts repentance first, we will begin with repentance. Then in the next lesson we will look at faith.

**We will answer four questions about repentance:**

## **Is repentance necessary for salvation?**

Many churches don’t preach repentance. They say that only faith is necessary for salvation. But repentance is commanded by God. It is mentioned 60 times in the New Testament.

***Repentance was preached by John the Baptist.***

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ... Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance ... And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 3:1, 8, 10).

John the Baptist was the man that God sent to announce the coming of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was 30 years old, John the Baptist announced Him to the nation Israel. John the Baptist commanded the people to repent and receive Jesus as the Christ or Messiah. He warned them that if they did not repent, they would suffer eternal judgment. He told them that true repentance would change their lives. It will bring forth good fruit.

***Repentance was preached by Christ.***

“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-5).

Christ warned the people that they must repent or be judged. He taught that all men must repent. The people that Jesus was preaching to thought that only some men are sinners worthy of judgment. They thought they were more righteous than other men. They thought that they were better than the people in Galilee who had been killed by Pilate, the Roman governor. Galilee was a region in the north of Israel

around the Sea of Galilee. (See *Map 02 - Israel* in the back of this study book.) They thought they were better than the people upon whom the tower of Siloam fell in Jerusalem. Many people believe like this. They think that only some men are sinners. They think that they are more righteous than others. But Jesus preached that all men are sinners before God and all men must repent or perish. He repeated this twice by way of emphasis.

***Repentance was preached by Peter.***

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Peter was one of the 12 men that Jesus chose to be His apostles. He was a fisherman before Christ called him. Peter was a prophet who wrote two books of the New Testament. Peter said that the reason Jesus is waiting to return and judge the world is because He loves all men and wants to save them. Peter said that repentance is necessary for salvation. To be saved, the sinner must “come to repentance.”

***Repentance was preached by Paul.***

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the

Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:** Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:24-31).

Paul was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle and prophet. He wrote many of the books of the New Testament. He traveled to many parts of Europe preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and starting churches. We read about his life in the book of Acts, the fifth book of the New Testament.

In Acts 17, Paul was preaching to the men of Athens in ancient Greece. Athens was the chief city. It was the city of the famous philosophers Aristotle, Plato, Demosthenes, Socrates, Zeno, and Epicurus. It was a major seat of learning and art in Paul's day. It was named after the goddess Athena. Athens was totally given over to idolatry. (See *Map 03 - Roman Empire* in the back of this study book.)



Athen's Acropolis

In Acts 17, Paul was preaching on Mars Hill near the famous Acropolis of Athens where the great temples were located. On the Acropolis was the Parthenon, which was dedicated to Athena. A 70-foot statue of Athena could be seen by ships in the city's harbor six miles away.

Paul preached that there is one Creator God who made all men and all nations. He preached against idols. He preached that men are made in God's image, and they are made to seek God. He said that in this present time God is giving men an opportunity to be saved, but they must repent. God commands all men to repent. Those who do not repent and turn to the true God and receive His salvation will suffer eternal judgment. Christ came the first time to be man's Saviour, but He will come the second time as man's Judge.

As we have seen, the apostle Paul preached *both repentance and faith*; therefore, it is obvious that both are required for salvation (Acts 20:21).

## **What is repentance?**

***Repentance is admitting that I have sinned against God and being sorry for that.***

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Repentance is “toward God” because it is God that I have offended by my sin. God made man for Himself, and He made man to obey His laws, but every man has turned his back on God and broken His laws. God requires that I repent of this. Repentance is to admit that I am not righteous and I am not good, just as the Bible says. “There is none righteous, no, not one. ... There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:20, 12).

***Repentance means to turn around, to change directions.***

“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:20).

Paul defined true repentance in his preaching before Agrippa. In Paul’s day, the Roman Empire ruled over Israel, and Agrippa was the Roman governor. Paul said that repentance is to turn to God. Repentance means the sinner stops running from God, stops fighting God, stops rebelling against God, stops living his own life as he pleases. He turns to God in humble surrender. Repentance is something that happens in the heart and mind. It is ‘a change of mind that results in a change of life.’ When there is true repentance, it shows itself in a change of life. Paul preached that men must repent and turn to God “and do works meet [fitting, proper] for repentance.” The new works are not repentance; the new works are *because of* repentance. If you have truly repented toward God, you will want to live according to God’s will.

***Repentance means to surrender to the true and living God.***

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That **unto me every knee shall bow**, every tongue shall swear” (Isaiah 45:22-23).

We considered Isaiah the prophet in the studies on the gospel and the prophecies about the coming of Christ. Isaiah was a prophet of God who lived about 700 years before Jesus was born.

In Isaiah 45, the true and living God calls upon all men in the whole earth to look to Him and to receive Him. He commands every man to bow the knee to Him, which means to surrender to His authority. This is repentance. It means to reject false gods and false religion and to submit oneself to the true God.

Let's look at another call from God by the prophet Isaiah.

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: **Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord,** and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For **my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,** saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:6-9).

The word “repentance” is not used in this passage, but we find the definition of repentance. God calls upon all men to come to Him. But in order to come to the holy, living God, the sinner must forsake his own way and his own thoughts. God says, “return unto the Lord.” This means to turn your back on your old thinking and your old life and surrender to God's thinking and Gods' ways. Stop living as you please. God says that if the sinner will repent, He will be “abundantly pardoned.” That is eternal salvation in Jesus Christ.

***Repentance is to receive Christ as Lord.***

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that

call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:9-13).

We see that salvation requires confessing Jesus as Lord and calling upon Him as Lord. Christ is called “Lord” three times in this passage which teaches how to be saved.

To believe on Christ is to receive Him as my *only Saviour*, and to repent is to receive Christ as my *only Lord*. The Bible says the sinner is at war with God because of his rebellion to God’s rule (“the carnal mind is enmity against God,” Romans 8:7). “Enmity” means “to be an enemy.” To repent means that I reject this attitude of enmity toward God and I surrender to God’s rule over my life. We see this throughout the New Testament in the lives of those who were saved. Those who received Jesus in a saving manner called upon Him as Lord. One of the thieves who died on a cross next to Jesus repented of his sin against God and said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). The repenting thief called Jesus “Lord.”

Many people want to receive Jesus as Saviour, but they don’t want Him to be the Lord of their lives. They want Him to save them from their sins so they won’t go to hell when they die, but they want to continue to live as they please in this present life. This is impossible. If Christ is not Lord, He is not Saviour. He did not die to save sinners *in* their sin; He died to save them *from* their sin.

***Repentance is an assassin laying down his knife.***

Evangelist James Stewart in his book *Evangelism* illustrated repentance by an assassin who committed murder with a knife. He is offered a certificate of forgiveness and pardon as a gift. With one hand he reaches out and accepts the pardon, but with the other hand he drops the knife and determines never again to be a murderer. The hand that receives the pardon is the hand of faith, while the hand that drops the knife is the hand of repentance. If an assassin said, “I will

receive the pardon, but I will not drop my knife,” that is faith without repentance, and it is not saving faith.

***Repentance is a thief returning stolen property.***

Lester Roloff said: “I believe we ought to make right what we can make right. What if I was staying with a group of preachers and one of them stole my wallet while I was sleeping? The next day he comes up to me and tells me he is terribly sorry and asks me to forgive him. I would be glad to hear that he is sorry for stealing my wallet, but I would certainly want and expect more than that from a repentant thief. I would want my wallet back with all of its contents intact! I don’t believe he has really repented unless he brings my billfold back. I DON’T BELIEVE YOU HAVE REPENTED UNTIL YOU GET RIGHT AND SAY, ‘LORD, I’M GOING TO LIVE DIFFERENT FROM NOW ON,’ and by the grace of God you will live different” (Roloff, *Repent or Perish*).

## **What are some Bible examples of repentance?**

The best way to understand repentance is to look at examples of it in the Bible.

### ***The Prodigal Son***

“And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came

to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:11-24).

Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son to illustrate repentance. This young man demanded his inheritance from his father and went out and squandered it on wicked living. Eventually he was left with nothing and was feeding hogs to earn bread. In that condition, he came to true repentance. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke 15:18-19).

Note that the young man was not merely remorseful of how he had lived and of the consequences he had suffered. He came to the place where he acknowledged first of all that he had "sinned against heaven" (Luke 15:18). That means that he acknowledged that he had sinned against God by his actions. Further, he changed his attitude toward his father. No longer was he the proud, foolish, uncaring son who selfishly demanded things of his father. He was now a humble young man who was willing to be a mere servant in his father's house. This is a repentant mindset.

The evidence of the young man's repentance is that he returned home and made things right with his father; he humbled himself and was willing to be a mere servant. This is true repentance. It is turning from one's pride and self-righteousness and self-willed way of living. It is to humble oneself before God and man. It is to surrender to God's authority over my life.

### **Zacchaeus**

“And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see *Jesus* who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that *way*. And when *Jesus* came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold. And *Jesus* said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:1-10).

Zacchaeus was a publican, which was a tax collector in Israel for the Roman government. The tax collectors were hated by the people because they collected taxes for a foreign government and also because they often used their position to steal from the people.

Zacchaeus heard that *Jesus* was coming through his hometown of Jericho, which was northeast of Jerusalem near the Jordan River. (See *Map 02 - Israel* in the back of this study

book.) Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem one week before He was crucified. Zacchaeus climbed up into a tree to see over the crowd. Jesus called to him and told him to come down and take Him to his home. There, Zacchaeus repented and believed in Jesus as the Christ.

Jesus said that salvation had come to Zacchaeus. The people thought that Roman government tax collectors were greater sinners than others, but Jesus showed that Zacchaeus could be saved like any other sinner.

Zacchaeus's repentance is seen in his change of life. He became an honest man who paid back those he had cheated. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

What a great change Christ makes! He is still saving thieves and drunkards and adulterers and murderers and every other type of sinner.

### ***The Thessalonians***

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

Thessalonica was a wealthy city in the Roman Empire. It was located on the Aegean Sea in northern Greece. The members of the church in Thessalonica were formerly idolaters. In their former lives, they lived as they pleased. They loved the filthy idolatrous festivals. They loved drinking and fornication. They cared nothing about the true God or His holy laws. But when Paul came to their city and they heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, they repented and believed and were saved. (See *Map 03 - Roman Empire* in the back of this study book.)

Repentance is clearly defined by what happened in their lives. They “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Notice that they didn’t turn from idols to God; they turned to God from idols. They turned to the living and true God. He is living in contrast to dead gods. He is true in contrast to false gods. If a man turns to the living and true God, he will have his back to his old gods and his old religion and his old life. This is “repentance toward God” (Acts 20:21).

Unless a person rejects and renounces his false gods and false religion and surrenders to Christ as Lord, he cannot be saved, because he has not repented.

The evidence of their repentance was that they served God and they were waiting in expectation of Christ’s return. Their entire way of life was changed. Their entire worldview was changed. This is the fruit of true repentance and faith. This is what we always see in the Bible’s examples of people who repented.

Repentance was the thing that was missing in my life as I grew up in church. I don’t recall a time when I did not “believe in Jesus.” I had no doubt that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for my sin. I had no doubt that the Bible is God’s Word. At about age 12, I made a public profession of faith in Christ at church and was baptized, but I had not repented of anything. I was already in love with rock & roll and I had no plan to surrender to God and serve Him. I did not repent until age 23. At that time, I again professed faith in Christ, but this time was totally different. I was tired of sin and I was ready to surrender my life to God. I wanted Him to take control. I wanted Christ to be my Saviour and I also wanted Him to be my Lord. That is when my life changed.

In 1979, a wealthy-middle-aged Hindu wanted me to teach him about Jesus, so we had some Bible studies at our house. He had a concubine with whom he spent most of his time,

though he was married and had grown children. After I explained the gospel, he told me that he “believed that Jesus died for his sins” and was interested in being saved, but he wanted to know what he would have to do about two specific things in his life: his crooked business practices and his relationship with the concubine. He is the one who brought these things to my attention. He said that if he were to be honest, he would not be able to make so much money. I explained that he had to repent of those sins. He had to surrender to God’s authority over his life. I told him that if he would turn to Christ in repentance and faith, God would change his life and he would have different desires, but he didn’t want that. He wanted salvation from judgment, but he wanted to continue to live as he pleased. The power to change one’s life is from God, but the sinner must surrender to God. After I told him this, he never returned for another Bible study. He wasn’t ready to repent, so he wasn’t ready to be saved.

God is commanding you to repent today. Are you ready to repent toward Him?

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON REPENTANCE**

The student should answer these questions before the next lesson.

1. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. What are two evidences of Jesus’ resurrection?
3. Who was John the Baptist?
4. What was the wrong thinking of the people that Jesus commanded to repent?
5. What did Jesus say will happen to those who do not repent?
6. According to Peter, why has Jesus not returned yet?
7. Athens was located in what direction from Israel?
8. Athens is located on what big sea?

9. In his sermon to the people of Athens, Paul said that God commands all men to do what?

10. Paul warned about what event that will come upon all men?

11. Why do I have to repent toward God?

12. What does it mean to turn to God?

13. What does it mean to “do works meet for repentance”?

14. What does Isaiah the prophet mean when he says to look to God and be saved?

15. In Romans 10, Paul said that salvation is to “confess with thy mouth the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus” and to “call upon the name of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

16. Is it possible for someone to receive Christ as Saviour but to reject Christ as Lord? Will God accept that?

17. What is the evidence that a thief has truly repented?

18. What is the evidence that the Prodigal Son repented?

19. What was the first thing that the Prodigal Son repented of?

20. Why was Zacchaeus so hated by the Jewish people?

21. What was the Zacchaeus repented?

22. Where was Thessalonica located in reference to Athens?

23. When they heard Paul preach the gospel of Christ, the idolaters at Thessalonica did what?

24. What was the evidence of their repentance and faith?

# Saving Faith

**Memory Verse:** John 3:16

In the previous lesson we saw that the Bible says that repentance and faith are necessary for salvation. Repentance and faith are the means whereby the sinner receives God's free salvation.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

In this verse, the apostle Paul described what he preached to all men. He preached repentance and faith. The sinner must repent toward God, because it is God that he has offended by his sin and self-willed life. And the sinner must put his faith in Jesus, because He died for our sins and He is the only Saviour.

Since Paul puts repentance first, that is where we began in the previous lesson.

In this lesson we will look at “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Consider three important questions about saving faith:

## What is saving faith?

**Saving faith is not just believing a fact.**

It is important to understand that saving faith is not simply believing some historical fact. For example, we believe that George Washington was the first president of the United States and that Adolph Hitler ruled Germany in World War II and that Mahatma Gandhi lived in India. But such mental beliefs do not change the lives of those who believe them. Likewise, many people believe that Jesus Christ lived long ago and that He did many wonderful things and even that He

died for man's sins and rose from the dead, but this belief does not change their lives. Saving faith is different from this.

***Saving faith is an undivided faith.***

The Bible says that Jesus is the *only* Lord and Saviour. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). To be saved I must believe that Jesus Christ ALONE is Lord and Saviour, just as the Bible says. Some people try to add Jesus to their other gods. They want to believe in Jesus while still believing in other lords as well. No one can be saved this way.

One Chinese man said that he believed in Jesus and he wanted to be baptized. The preacher asked him what he thought about Buddha. He said, "I still believe in Buddha's teaching." That is not saving faith.

***Saving faith is a trusting faith.***

The word "believe" in the Bible means to trust, to depend upon, to commit oneself to. To be saved, a person must fully trust his soul and eternal destiny to the Lord Jesus. He must rely upon Jesus and Jesus alone to forgive his sin and make

him right with God and carry him to heaven.

Trusting Jesus is like trusting a boat to carry me across a lake. It is not enough to look at the boat and to admire it. You must actually get into the boat and



trust it to carry you safely to the other side. Some people say they believe in Jesus as Saviour, but they continue to go through their old religious rituals. This proves they are not truly believing in Jesus. When we trust Jesus, we know that we do not need any vain religious rituals for salvation. We stop trusting in empty religion.

Trusting Jesus is like trusting a master doctor to heal me of a deadly disease. Jesus Himself likened salvation to going to a physician. “When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are



whole have no need of the physicians, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17). The Bible says the sinner needs heart surgery, but only one doctor can perform it successfully, and that is Dr. Jesus. Consider some ways that salvation is like going to a heart specialist. First, the patient recognizes his need. He understands that he is sick unto death and that he could die at any time. He realizes that it is imperative that he find healing as soon as possible. No one submits to heart surgery if he is not convinced of a desperate need. Likewise, no one will turn to Jesus for salvation until he is convinced that he is a sinner on his way to eternal judgment. Second, the patient understands that there is no other means of healing. He becomes convinced that he can’t heal himself and there is no other doctor who can help. Likewise, the sinner will not put his trust in Jesus until he is convinced that he cannot be saved by his own good character or good works or by some religion or philosophy. Third, the patient hears of the

doctor's ability and reputation. He hears that there is a certain heart specialist who has a 100% success rate. Likewise, the sinner must hear that Jesus is the risen Son of God who is able to save every sinner who comes to Him. This comes by hearing the gospel of Christ. Fourth, the patient is convinced that this doctor can heal. He is convinced that of all of the doctors in the world, this very one can heal his disease. Likewise, the sinner must be convinced that other than Jesus, "there is none other name under heaven whereby men must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Fifth, the patient must go to the doctor. It is not enough to learn about a master heart specialist, I have to personally go to Him and seek His help. Likewise, it is not enough for a sinner to learn the gospel and to stand afar off and admire Doctor Jesus. He must go to Christ personally for salvation. Jesus said, "... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). The patient puts himself into the doctor's care without reserve and trusts Him implicitly. This is an example of saving faith. (\*\*Doctor)

***Saving faith is a fully convinced faith.***

To be saved I must be fully convinced that Jesus is Lord and Saviour and that He will fulfill His promises to me. True salvation is a sure, know-so salvation.

This is the kind of faith that Jesus' early disciples had. Consider Peter's testimony in John 6:66-69. "From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." That day, the crowds had turned away from Jesus because they were offended at some of His teaching. But Peter and the other true disciples did not turn away, because they had true saving faith. They were sure.

We can be sure of salvation because of God's promises to those who receive Christ as Saviour. Consider the promise of

1 John 5:11-13. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

We see that God wants sinners to be saved and to know that they have eternal life. This is God's will. Salvation is His plan. "... the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14). When a sinner receives Jesus as Saviour, God wants him to know that he has forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He doesn't want believers to doubt.

In contrast to the sure faith is the "faith" of those who say they "hope" they will be saved, meaning they aren't sure. I once met a Nepali who said he had 99% faith in Jesus. That isn't enough! You must be like Peter who was "sure."

***Saving faith is an unmixed faith.***

Faith in Christ cannot be mixed with faith in human works. Consider the following Bible verses that teach that salvation is not by works.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4-5).

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

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:4-6).

A person must receive Christ’s salvation as a free gift, not as a reward for good works. A gift is something that someone



else purchases and then gives to me freely. If I try to pay *anything whatsoever*, it is no longer a gift. Likewise, if I try to add my works to God’s grace, then that is not true salvation. “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is

no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:6).

If someone buys a valuable gift for me and offers it to me, and I say, “That is very expensive; I will pay part of the cost of that to help you out,” is it any longer a gift?

The Bible is the only religious book that teaches that salvation is a free gift of God’s grace. All other religions teach that salvation is by human works.

Jesus is the one who purchased our salvation at great cost with His death and blood. He paid the price 100%.

Have you received God’s free gift of salvation, or are you still trying to do something to earn salvation?

***Saving faith is a receiving faith.***

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name” (John 1:11-12).

In this passage, *believing on* Jesus is also described as *receiving* Jesus. Saving faith receives Jesus as the living Saviour. Saving faith doesn't merely “believe” in Jesus as an historical person; it believes that Christ is risen from the dead and it calls out to Him.

Consider Christ's invitation:

“Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus and He says, “***Come unto me.***” He is alive. He is a Person. Salvation is not a religion; it is a personal relationship with the resurrected Son of God. Christ says, “Come.” He is ready to receive those who come to Him. He is ready to be your Lord, your Saviour, your Shepherd, your Friend, your High Priest.

Jesus invites “***all.***” He is ready to save all sinners who come to Him in saving faith. There is no sinner who cannot be saved. There is no sin too great to be forgiven by Christ's blood.

Jesus invites those “***that labour and are heavy laden.***” This means those who know that they are sinners and know they can't save themselves. This refers to those who live under the guilt of sin and want to be free. It refers to those who fear dying because they know that they will face judgment. It refers to those who have labored in vain to find salvation in religion and in self-righteousness and in philosophy, etc.

Jesus says, **“I will give you rest.”** Jesus promises to receive those who come to Him and to give them eternal rest. That is rest from one’s own self-righteous works that cannot save and from empty religion that cannot save. It is the rest of knowing that my sins are 100% forgiven and that I have eternal life. Note that Christ said, “I will give you.” The eternal rest of salvation is Christ’s gift of grace.

Jesus says, **“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.”** When the sinner comes to Christ and receives Him as Saviour, then he takes Christ’s yoke on him. This is the yoke of service. It is the yoke of learning and obeying. It means to be Christ’s disciple. It means to study God’s Word and learn God’s will and do God’s will. It means joining a New Testament Bible-believing church. This is what we see in the book of Acts. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:41-42).

Jesus says, **“and ye shall find rest unto your souls. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”** The true Christian life is not my life; it is Christ’s life in me. It is not self-effort. It is not “trying to be good.” It is a restful life. There are hardships and persecutions in the Christian life, but even in the midst of the hardships there is rest and peace and joy and blessing.

If someone says that they know Christ, but they find the Christian life hard, something is wrong. I think of a woman who claims to be a Christian who told my wife, “The Christian life is too hard; I can’t do it.” She grew up in a Christian home and was baptized and claims to be a Christian when it is convenient for her to do so, but she has no joy in Christ because she doesn’t know Him in salvation. She hasn’t surrendered to God in repentance. She hasn’t come to Christ as a guilty, needy sinner. She hasn’t taken Christ’s yoke upon her. That is not true salvation.

## What is the place of works in the Christian life?

Does believing in Christ mean that I don't have to do any works in the Christian life? What is the place of works? We have dealt with this in the previous studies, but we want to go over it again.

Let us look again at Ephesians 2:8-10. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

God wants people to live obedient, holy lives, but this comes *after* salvation. Good works are *the fruit of* salvation, not *the way of* salvation. We are not saved *by* good works; we are saved *unto* good works. The good works are produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

In the epistle of Ephesians, which Paul wrote to a church in the Roman city of Ephesus, there are about 90 commandments that the believer is to obey. These include being humble (Eph. 4:1), being longsuffering (Eph. 4:1), putting away lying (Eph. 4:25), putting away anger (Eph. 4:26), not stealing (Eph. 4:28), not speaking any corrupt thing (Eph. 4:29), being kind (Eph. 4:32), forgiving (Eph. 4:32), putting away fornication and uncleanness (Eph. 5:3), having no fellowship with the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16), understanding God's will (Eph. 5:17), not being drunk (Eph. 5:18), being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), wives submitting to their husbands (Eph. 5:22), husbands loving their wives (Eph. 5:25), children obeying their parents (Eph. 6:1-3), fathers training their children and not provoking them to wrath (Eph. 6:4), servants being obedient to their masters (Eph. 6:5), and masters treating their servants justly (Eph. 6:9).

These are some of the works that God wants the believer to keep, but we cannot do these things until first we are saved. I must be reconciled to God through Jesus. I must be forgiven of my sins. I must be born again. Only then can I serve God acceptably and do those good works that please Him.

First I must be cleansed of my sin and reconciled with God, then I can serve God.

## **Conclusion - Repentance and Faith in Action**

One of the clearest examples in the Bible of repentance and faith in action is 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. We have looked at this already in the study on repentance, but we want to return to it once more in conclusion.

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

These idolatrous people “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” The turning from idols is repentance. The turning to God is faith. This is the sinner’s part in a nutshell.

When I turn to the true God from idols, my back is to the old life, the false religions, the false gospels, the self-willed godless life. I am renouncing the old life, the old gods, the old ways, the old thinking. When I turn to the true God, I am turning to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. I am believing in Him. I am receiving Him. I am bowing before Him. I am coming to Him.

Are you ready to do this? The Bible says, “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, not is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

## REVIEW QUESTIONS ON FAITH

1. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. What did Jesus say will happen to those who do not repent?
3. Paul warned about what event that will come upon all men?
4. In Romans 10, Paul said that salvation is to “confess with thy mouth the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus” and to “call upon the name of the \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. What is the evidence that the Prodigal Son repented?
6. What was the evidence that the idolators in Thessalonica repented?
7. What are the six characteristics of saving faith that we give in this lesson?
8. Jesus said, “I am the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
9. What verse in the Bible says, “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”?
10. The word “believe” in the Bible means to \_\_\_\_\_.
11. How is believing on Jesus for salvation like getting into a boat to cross a lake?
12. Peter said, “We believe and are \_\_\_\_\_ that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”
13. How can I be sure of salvation? Where does the certainty come from?
14. John wrote to those who believe on Jesus as the Son of God “that ye may \_\_\_\_\_ that ye have eternal life.”
15. If I am trusting 5% in my good works and/or religion to save me and 95% in Jesus, is that saving faith?
16. The Bible says of Christ, “But as many as \_\_\_\_\_ him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that \_\_\_\_\_ on his name.”

17. When Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,” who is He talking about?

18. What did Jesus promise to those who come like this?

19. According to Ephesians 2:8-10, what part do good works have in salvation?

# When Is Jesus Coming?

As we have seen, the Bible says that Jesus is coming again. Consider some of the Bible's statements about this:

“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:7-11).

This is what happened 40 days after Jesus' resurrection from the dead. He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel. He promised that the Holy Spirit would help them in this task. Then He ascended up to heaven in a cloud. Two angels told the disciples that Jesus would return to earth.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29-31).

This is a description of Christ's return in power and glory to establish His kingdom on earth. The people on earth will mourn because of the judgment that will come upon them.

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

When Christ returns, He will judge those who have rejected the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed throughout the earth for 2,000 years. Today it can be found on the Internet. The Bible is available in every major language. There are Bible-believing churches in most countries. God has offered salvation to all men through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is willing to save any of them and all of them. But most people have ignored the gospel. They have refused to repent. They have rejected Christ as Lord and Saviour. The day is coming when God will no longer give sinners an opportunity to be saved.

“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:44).

The Bible says that Christ will return unexpectedly. No one knows the time of His coming. Christ's followers are told to be ready at all times.

This is the answer to the question, “When will Christ return?” The answer is He will come any time. His coming is imminent.

After He comes, there will be no further opportunity to be saved. This is why the people on earth will mourn when they

see Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. They will know that it is too late to be saved.

Are you ready?

If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, the next step is baptism and membership in a strong, Bible-believing church. As a starting point in finding a church, we recommend the Church Directory at [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).

For additional help and information see the following eBooks available from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

*The Ape Men*

*Bible Critics Were Wrong*

*The Bible's Amazing Story*

*The Bible's Proof*

*One Year Discipleship Course*

*Questions Answered about the Bible and Christianity*

*Prophetic Signs of the Times*

*Scientists Who Believe the Bible*

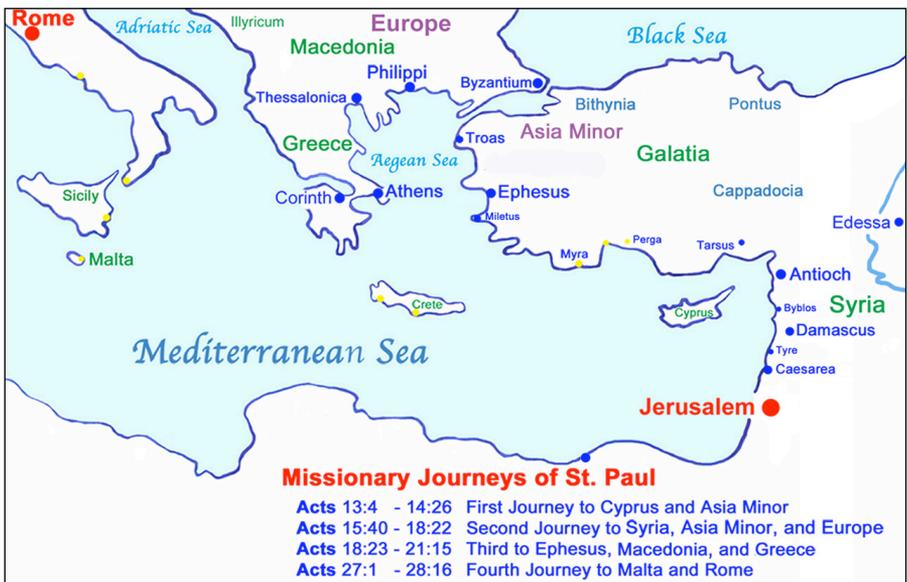
*Treasures in the Israel Museum*



Map 01 - Middle East



Map 02 - Israel



Map 03 - Roman Empire