



**This new TRY JESUS Course takes you on a very contemporary journey through the ancient Biblical writings.**

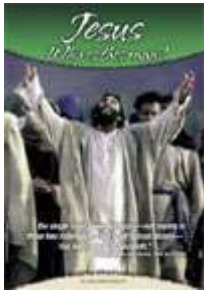
**Discover the heart of The Man whose life made such a huge impact on history!**

**Investigate His Messianic claims and teachings in this 20 topic series.**

**Modern culture and current musical themes are woven together in this innovative introduction to the Man of History.**



## LESSON 1 - Who is this Man?



What is the Riddle of Life? Did Jesus Christ really claim to be God? If so, was he a Liar, the Lord, or a Lunatic? Discover intimate details about his character and predictions. Where does the Empty Tomb fit into this picture? Encounter the life of this amazing Person!

## Jesus. Who is This Man?

Welcome to the online version of our popular ***Try Jesus*** course. This version of the course is fully interactive, and allows students to work at their own pace. You may also chat or leave messages for your instructors and co-students. The easy-to-use navigation allows you to access the topics you want to study. There are 24 topics in total to complete this course. **Each topic builds on the one before so we suggest that you start at the beginning and work your way through the content.** On completion you can apply to receive a smart E-Certificate of recognition.

"... the single most powerful figure—not merely in these two millennia but in all human history—has been Jesus of Nazareth." *R Price, Jesus at 2000 (Cover), Time, 6 Dec 1999*



## Solving the Riddle of Life

Is there a short cut to solving the riddle of life?

**Andrew Denton** is considered one of the most outstanding media personalities in Australia, host of ABC's Enough Rope, and director of the documentary God on my Side, which reveals some unusual aspects of Christian fundamentalism in the U.S. He's quite serious when he says: *"I'm overwhelmed by the pointlessness of existence."*

U.S. novelist **Ernest Hemingway**, in *Death in the Afternoon*, said, *"There is no remedy for anything in life. . . Death is the sovereign remedy for all misfortunes."* Needless to say he shot himself.

Oxford University biologist, **Richard Dawkins** maintains, *"The universe we observe has ... at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference."* Is there some sure way of testing such pessimistic assertions about the meaninglessness of life?

The Bible says the opposite—that there is meaning to life. Is there a shortcut to testing whether or not Christianity is true?

Yes, there is! It is the answer to the question: What is the real nature of the man **Jesus**, who appeared two thousand years ago in Palestine claiming to be the Solution for the problems of the world?

**Is Jesus out of date?** This is no small issue. Millions of people believe that He is God.

The Bible says that **following Jesus is a life and death matter**. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (**Romans 6:23 NIV**). You can see this in a pop-up Online Bible, with a single mouse-click on the "Romans 6:23 NIV" hyperlink.

Therefore, **what is the real nature of Jesus Christ**, the Founder of Christianity?

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY STANDS OR FALLS ON THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. Jesus is either a LIAR, a LUNATIC, or **THE LORD!**

### Who is this Man?

The pop group **Powderfinger**, in their song "JC" ('Double Allergic' album) sing: *"Oh Jesus Christ, what name do you go by now. For time is passing, with the wind blows new decrees. Canned for life, your use by date is faded. And followers of you now watch TV..."*



## The Tremendous Claims of Jesus

Jesus' Claims to Be God - Was he a Liar, a Lunatic or the Lord?



### Thomas Schultz writes:

Not one recognised religious leader, not Moses, Paul, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc., have ever claimed to be God; that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only religious leader who has ever claimed to be deity [God] and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God. (The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, p 209)

The claims that Jesus made are quite staggering. If someone came along today and said the sort of things he said, he would be laughed out of town. He wouldn't even get a hearing. We'd tell him, "You've gone round the bend, mate!" Yet there has never been anyone who has made such far-out claims as Jesus did and been counted sane by a large portion of the world. In fact most would acknowledge Jesus as a great moral teacher, yet He claimed to be much more. So let's look at some of Jesus' claims ...

### 1. What did Jesus claim had been given to Him? [Matthew 28:18, 20](#)

All  in heaven and on earth has been given to me... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

### 2. What did Jesus claim He could do? [Matthew 9:1-8](#)

Take heart, son

### 3. While Jesus said we needed forgiveness for sin (who hasn't made a mistake?), what did He say about Himself? [John 8:46](#)

Can any of you prove me  of sin?



## **The Character of Jesus**

The deeds of Christ matched His words. If a single flaw could be found in the record of His life, we would have the right to reject Him and His claims. But no such flaw exists. Those who live closest to us know us the best, and those who lived closest to Jesus found no fault in Him. His closest followers could say, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8), yet notice their claims about Jesus.

Pop singer PETER GARRETT of Midnight Oil fame says the message of Jesus “gives us a purpose, a hope, the ability to go on.”

“The historian . . . writes the name of Jesus of Nazareth at the top of the world’s greatest characters.” (H G Wells)

“... the single most powerful figure—not merely in these two millenniums but in all human history—has been Jesus of Nazareth.” *R. Price, Jesus at 2000 (Cover), Time, Dec 6, 1999.*

## **The Testimony of His Friends**

**How did Peter, one of Jesus’ closest followers, describe Jesus? 1 Peter 1:19**

... a lamb without blemish or

**How much sin did John, another of Jesus’ closest followers, say was in Jesus? 1 John 3:5**

And in him is

**In temptation, how did He differ from us? Hebrews 4:15**

[Jesus was] tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was  sin.

## **The Testimony of His Enemies**

**What judgment did Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, make about Jesus? Luke 23:4, 13-16**

I find

**What did Judas, the follower who betrayed Jesus, say that he had done? Matthew 27:4**

I have betrayed  blood.



## The Predictions of Jesus

Is there some way to test Jesus' claims? Yes there is!

His predictions about the future are a simple test of the truthfulness of His claims to be God.

**What influence did Jesus claim He had? [John 8:12](#)**

I am the  of the world.

Just as the sun is the source of all life and energy in the physical world, so Jesus claims to be the inspiration of all life spiritually. The life and teachings of Jesus have inspired that which the world considers the very best in every area of life.

**THE ARTS:** In the arts, **Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel**, in Rome, is considered one of the greatest masterpieces.

**MUSIC:** **Handel's Messiah** is recognised as the height of musical genius.

**LITERATURE:** **Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress** and **Milton's Paradise Lost** the best in literature.

**SCIENCE:** Modern science was born out of the Christian world view. Scientists such as Sir Isaac Newton; German astronomer Johannes Keppler; Michael Faraday, the discoverer of electromagnetic induction, etc. were all motivated by their devotion to Jesus.

**WELFARE:** Our hospitals and welfare institutions were begun by people who were motivated by love for Jesus. Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, was a devoted follower of Jesus. Likewise, Dr Barnardo, with children's orphanages.

**CHANGED LIVES:** Millions in lands around the world have had their lives changed for the better by the religion of this Man.

**What did Jesus say would pass away before His words would? [Matthew 24:35](#)**

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will

## Survival of the Bible

Written on the stones of buildings, printed in millions of books, inscribed on the hearts of men and women, are the timeless words of Jesus. At births, marriages and deaths, in times of joy and in times of grief, His words flow, as inspiration and comfort. Only one who was God could speak as Christ spoke, only one divine—the one who fashions the future—could foretell the unfading influence of His words. About 640 million Bibles and Bible portions are published each year. The Bible is still the world's bestseller!



## World Circulation of Scriptures by Bible Societies 2002

Bibles	24,968,093
Testaments	22,596,848
Portions (eg Gospel)	20,729,023
New Reader Portions*	12,872,976
New Reader Selections*	40,364,596
Selections	456,583,984

\*New Reader Portions, Selections, and other portions less than a chapter

## The Gospel of Jesus

The word “gospel” means “good news.”

The “good news” Jesus taught was that **He would set up a new world order without evil, suffering or death.**

He predicted this message would “be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and **then** the end will come.” ([Matthew 24:14](#))

**What did Jesus predict about His death and resurrection? [Matthew 17:22, 23](#). See [Luke 24:6, 7](#)**

They will kill him, and on the third day he will be  to life.

The great Oxford and Cambridge scholar C S Lewis said:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.

“You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (**Mere Christianity**, pages 52, 53)

## The Empty Tomb

Many people die for false causes that they believe to be true, but no-one would be prepared to die for something they knew was a lie. Yet most of Jesus’ disciples died for their belief in Him.

If the resurrection of Jesus were a hoax, the disciples would have known about it. It was the resurrection of Jesus that changed them from frightened followers to courageous Christians.



How did a penniless Jew who lived nearly two thousand years ago, who never wrote a book, or travel out of Palestine, who preached for three years and then was executed as a criminal by the Romans, have such an influence?

The only natural explanation is the supernatural one, that **He is God**. Only one who was God could make predictions with such accuracy and detail. Jesus stands justified by His predictions. Likewise, both Old and New Testaments of the Bible are guaranteed as truth by His divine endorsement.

## Solving the Riddle of Life

Here then, is the shortcut to solving the riddle of life. Jesus, and the Bible He inspired, is the **“way and the truth and the life.”** Jesus said, **“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”** **“Whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”** ([John 14:6;6:35, 37](#))

Cliff Richard

During the 1960s **Cliff Richard** made it to the top of the entertainment profession.

“But there was something missing,” he said. “I began to look at Buddhism and other ‘isms’ and then I began to read the Bible. I found that I could not fault Jesus. I continued to read and ask questions over the next three years. Then one night I lay on my bed and said, ‘Well Lord, if you say that you are standing at the door knocking, then come in!’” (Good News! Bible Society NSW, Australia)

**We can do that too! How would you like to respond to what you have learned about Jesus?**

**How do the claims, character and predictions of Jesus affect you?**



## LESSON 2 - The Bible - Can You Trust It?



How were the ancient Biblical writings preserved? Are they historically accurate? Is this collection of 2 Testaments - Old and New - a coherent message from God? How can these ancient Messages be best understood and what is their real purpose? What does the Bible have to do with my life and plans today? Get to grips with the suppressed truth about these Scriptures. Discover the truth about its real power and purpose. (Note: If this topic really interests you, why not enrol to do the *Digging Up the Past* course and read about the exciting discovery of the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls).

### The Power of the Bible

Many years ago an army officer found himself on a cannibal island in the South Seas. One day he came upon an old chief seated before his hut reading the **Bible** in his own language. The officer asked the old man what he was reading. Holding up his Bible, the chief said, “**God’s Book.**”

“Out of date, aren’t you?” the officer asked. “Back in my country we don’t believe in that Book anymore. We have found out that it is just a book of myths.”

The old chief paused thoughtfully and then replied: “Maybe you no believe Book your place. This Book make me good man. Before Book come my island I eat you. Now Book he **change me.** No cannibal anymore. **Book change head-hunter to good man.** Book **change my heart.** You want me throw Book away and eat you?”

The army officer went pale at the thought, waved his hand at the old chief, and muttered, “Keep your Book,” as he walked sheepishly on his way.

The Bible possesses a **power that can actually transform people’s lives.** Whenever people study the Bible and take it seriously, lives **are dramatically changed for the better.**



## The Unity of the Bible

The Bible actually is a library of 66 books. These are divided into two sections—39 books of the **Old Testament** and 27 books of the **New Testament**. These books are divided into **chapters and verses** for easy reference. The Old Testament (OT) books were written **before Jesus** came, between about 1500 BC (before Christ) and 400 BC and they are largely the history of God's dealings with the children of Israel who became known as the Jews. Moses wrote the first five books. The first book of the Bible is Genesis—which means “Beginnings”. It's about the beginning of things—the creation of this world, the origin of evil, God's plan for dealing with the problem of evil, the call of Abraham and the rise of the Jewish nation.

The recurring theme of the OT is the promised coming of the **Messiah**, which the New Testament shows was fulfilled in the coming of **Jesus Christ**. (The word Messiah is Hebrew for “**The Anointed One**”. “Christ” is the Greek translation).

The books of the New Testament (NT) were written **after Jesus' time** between 50 AD and 95 AD (Anno Domini is Latin for “in the year of our Lord”). The first four books, commonly called the four **Gospels**, are about the life and teachings of Jesus, written from four different perspectives by **Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**. Much of the NT is composed of letters written to new Christian churches and to individuals. **Paul**, who as a travelling preacher had established many Christian churches in Asia Minor and Europe, wrote 12 of these. Paul was a Jew who became a follower of Jesus after His death and resurrection. **John**, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, wrote the last book—**Revelation**.

## Some Important Facts About the Bible

- Written over approximately 1600 years (1500 BC to 100 AD).
- Written over 60 generations.
- Written by 40 authors from every walk of life, including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, shepherds, physicians, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.
- Written on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.
- Written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.
- Yet there is one theme: God's planned rescue of human beings through Jesus from the problem of evil.

Consider a car with various parts manufactured in different parts of the world. The engine is made in Germany, the body in USA, the running gear in Japan, the interior in France, the electrical circuitry in Taiwan, the gearbox in Korea. All these parts are assembled in Australia. What would be the only logical conclusion if all the parts fitted perfectly? The simplest explanation would be that there was one common **design**. They were all following the same set of plans.

So it is with the Bible—as a whole it communicates one message, **one grand theme**. This revolves around **Jesus coming to rescue us from the mess that we're in**.



“The ‘Paradise Lost’ of Genesis becomes the ‘Paradise Regained’ of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forever more in Revelation.”

(Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Moody Press)

## **We Can Trust the Bible!**

The Preservation of the Bible Is Remarkable

All of the early manuscripts of the Bible were copied by hand—long before there were printing presses. Scribes made copies of the original manuscripts and distributed them. Thousands of copies of such manuscripts or portions of them still survive.

Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament that go back 150 to 200 years before Christ, were found near the Dead Sea in 1947. It’s amazing that these 2000-year-old scrolls contain exactly the same truths we find in the Old Testament of Bibles printed today. This is powerful evidence of how reliably God’s Word has been transmitted to us!

*(Webmaster’s Note: Our [DIGGING UP THE PAST Course](#) has a whole study topic on the Dead Sea Scrolls).*

The apostles first wrote much of the New Testament as letters sent to Christian churches established after the death and resurrection of Jesus ([Colossians 4:16](#)).

More than 4500 manuscripts of all or a part of the New Testament are on display in the great museums and libraries of Europe and USA. Some of them date back to the second century. One portion of Mark’s Gospel has been dated 68 AD and a portion of Luke’s Gospel between 63 AD and 67 AD, which is close to the time when they wrote the originals. As well as this, we have at least 8000 early Latin Vulgate versions along with 1000 other early versions.

## **Biblical Record Essentially Unchanged**

By comparing these early manuscripts with today’s Bible, we can readily see that the New Testament has also **remained essentially unchanged** since it was first written.

Remarkably enough, we are much more certain about the original text of the Bible than we are about the original text of Shakespeare’s plays.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, once the director of the British Museum, in his book *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* assures us that ...



The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.  
(New York: Harper & Brothers, page 23)

Today the Bible or portions of it have been translated into more than 2200 languages and dialects. God's Word remains the world's best-seller; about 600 million Bibles and Bible portions are published each year.

### **Historical Accuracy of the Bible Record Is Remarkable**

Today many archaeological discoveries have dramatically confirmed the accuracy of the Bible record. Historians have discovered clay tablets and stone monuments that have brought to light names, places and events previously known only from the Bible. Historians now go to the Bible with confidence in its accuracy.

For example, according to [Genesis 11:31](#), Abraham and his family "set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan." Because only the Bible spoke of Ur, certain scholars stated that no such city had ever existed. Then archaeologists uncovered a temple tower in southern Iraq with a cylinder at the base written in cuneiform that contained the name Ur.

Later finds revealed Ur as the thriving metropolis of a highly developed civilisation. That city's identity had been forgotten and lost to later historians. Only the Bible preserved its name—until the spade of the archaeologist confirmed its authenticity.

Ur is but one of many examples of archaeological information that now confirms the accuracy of Bible history. You can obtain fascinating books on biblical archaeology from your local public library. Such books give hundreds of other examples of how history proves the reliability of the Bible.

(Adapted from Discover: We Can Believe the Bible, Voice of Prophecy, 1995)

William F Albright, a world-famous archaeologist, states:

There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition. (Archaeology and the Religions of Israel, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, page 176)

There is more evidence for the historical reliability of the Bible than for any other ancient book. It has had more influence on the world than any other book. It is truly unique—and rightly so, because it claims to be the Word of God, the Word of life.



## The Accurate Fulfilment of Bible Predictions Proves That You Can Trust the Bible.

Our confidence in the Word of God can also be strengthened by a look at Bible prophecies. The Bible contains many remarkable predictions of future events that are now being fulfilled before our very eyes. You will examine one of these exciting prophecies in a later study guide.

You will discover that God revealed the entire future course of history in advance from 605 BC right down the centuries to our day. This prophecy also looks into the future and tells us what is coming in our world today.

## The Bible is a Message from God

How does God communicate His messages to us? [Amos 3:7](#)

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the

A prophet is a person that God has called upon to speak and write for Him. God has not left us in the dark concerning life and its meaning. Through His prophets He has revealed His answers to life's great questions.

Who wrote the Bible? [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men  as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

## How to Understand the Bible

What did Jesus say about how a person could understand the teachings of the Bible? [John 7:17](#)

If anyone  do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

The Bible needs to be read with an **eagerness** to learn and a **willingness** to follow God's will.

How should we study the Bible? [2 Timothy 2:14, 15](#)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who  the word of truth [which is the Bible].

The Bible needs to be studied **carefully**.

Passages should be read in their historical and cultural context, as well as their literary context.

Someone has said with tongue in cheek:

"Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him" ([Genesis 4:8](#)).



Jesus said, "Go and do likewise" ([Luke 10:37](#)).

And "What you are about to do, do quickly" ([John 13:27-28](#)).

All three statements are in the Bible, **but** they are **not related** to each other at all.

**What prayer did David, a shepherd who became the king of Israel, pray, that could help us in understanding the Bible? [Psalm 119:18](#)**

Open  that I may see wonderful things in your law.

The Bible should be read **prayerfully**. Prayer is talking to God as you would to a friend.

**How did the people of Berea, a city in southern Macedonia, receive Paul's message about Jesus? In what way did they check on what he said? [Acts 17:10-12](#)**

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and  to see if what Paul said was true.

## The Purpose of the Bible

**Who is the focal point of the entire Bible? [Luke 24:13-32, 44-48](#)**

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures

The whole Bible is about Jesus and **God's plan to rescue human beings** from sin and evil. The terms the "Law of Moses", the "Prophets" and the "Psalms" (or "Writings") were the three divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament.

**For what purpose did Jesus come to this world? [John 3:16](#)**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son [Jesus], that whoever believes in him shall  but have eternal life.

**What does Jesus promise to give those of us who are burdened? [Matthew 11:28](#)**

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and

## The Bible Can Change Your Life

Some time ago the American Bible Society conducted an experiment in Chicago. They chose a five-block area in the district with **the highest crime rate in Chicago**, and flooded the area with 7000 copies of John's Gospel, enclosing an invitation for anyone who wanted more reading material to send for a free copy of Luke, or for 25 cents, the whole New Testament in modern English. They received 200 requests for New Testaments in response to the mailing. More significant to them was the fact that the police captain in the district reported that **the crime rate had dropped drastically** within one month of the



experiment. The same experiment was conducted in another area with a high crime rate, with similar results. (from the Sower magazine)

These [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31

There's power in the Bible. It changes lives. It can change your life. The Bible says, "**Taste and see that the Lord is good**" (Psalm 34:8). Just as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so as we take the Bible and read it, we will find hope and meaning in life.

The Bible. God Talks To Us. We can talk to God, too. Try it and see!

God has given us a way to talk to Him. He is never too busy, and His door is always open. From the next topic onwards, each title page will have a 'prayer for today' picture with a short prayer for that topic, which you might like to say. May God enrich your experience in this course as you talk to Him and He replies!

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, thank You for making a way so I can talk with you. Please talk to me from Your Word and help me talk to You too. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***Prayer is discussed in detail in topic 9, You Can Talk To God!***



## LESSON 3 - Where Did I Come From?



Has the so called *Search for Meaning* - been successful? What about Evolution and the New Physics? What are the Big Questions that we need to consider today? Does the Biblical book of Origins (Genesis) have any answers? What is the image of God and how were humans created? How does this message impact empty, lonely people? Discover some significant answers to some of the big questions in life. Join us as we check out the *origins* of our humanity.

### Where Did I Come From?

The topics that will be covered in this guide are:

1. The Search for Meaning
2. Answers to the Big Questions
3. Made in the Image of God
4. The Purpose of Creation
5. Creation by a Personal God
6. Empty, Lonely People

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, thank you for promising to answer sincere prayer. Please reveal from the Bible the truth of our origins. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.



## The Search For Meaning

The UK Pop group “**Supertramp**” asks the question in their “**Logical Song**”:

“I know it sounds absurd. Please tell me who I am?”

This is the question that still plagues us in the 21st century. We’ve lost our identity, because we don’t know where we came from. One 16-year-old boy said:

“Why am I here - life isn’t worth living - I feel like nothing - it’s not my fault for what I am - so I just don’t understand life and why I was put here on earth - if I can’t accomplish anything or do anything for other people or myself - maybe all should just die - then I wouldn’t have any problems.”

A cartoon of a monkey in a cage has the keeper standing outside. The caption reads, “Am I my keeper’s brother?” Are we just glorified monkeys—mere biological machines, chance happenings—or is there more to life?

According to philosopher Francis Schaeffer, there are only **three possible answers** as to where life came from:

1. The first is everything that exists came from **absolutely nothing**.
2. The second, all life had an impersonal beginning—life came from **matter or energy**.
3. The third possibility is life had a personal beginning by intelligent **design**.

The first answer we can dismiss very quickly, because out of nothing you get nothing. That leaves only two views—**evolution or creation**.

## The Search For Meaning

### The Theory of Evolution

In both East and West the prevailing view is that **life had an impersonal beginning**. In the East it’s called pantheism; in the West it’s called evolution. Pantheism is the belief that *everything* is god—an impersonal blind force or energy. Evolution suggests that all life came from impersonal matter, or energy. That is: *Time + Chance + Matter = Life*. There’s nothing else - this is the prevailing world view, taught by most universities, colleges and high schools, printed in most books, and presented by the mass media.

**Life, according to biologist Jacques Monod**, is the product of blind, irrational chance. He says: “*Chance alone is the source of every innovation, of all creation in the biosphere ... Our number came up in the Monte Carlo game.*” On a popular level, Talking Heads, on their album *Naked*, illustrated with a picture of a monkey on the sleeve, sing about the “*Facts of Life.*” “*Some day we’ll walk on Venus/ Some day men will live on Mars/ But we will still be monkeys/ Down deep inside.*”

This is the predicament of today’s society. **If we came from mud** and are going to end up as food for worms, then what we do in between is of no significance at all. The worms won’t complain if we are immoral or kill each other. **Yet somehow we find that hard to live with.**



For example, **consider Nobel prize-winner Francis Crick's thoughts in Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature.** While he definitely believes that life happened by chance, he can't live with the consequences of that view. He personifies nature with a capital "N". He uses expressions such as: *"Nature has solved this difficulty with a neat trick", "Nature invented"*. To personify something, which by definition is impersonal, is to try to find meaning in persuasive language. People such as Crick can't live with their own system. *"This kind of semantic mysticism,"* points out Francis Schaeffer, *"gives relief to people caught in the web of the impersonal."*

Francis Crick admits that as he has studied the origin of life on earth, it seems impossible for it to have happened here. "An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, **the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle**, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going."

What he then does is postulate that **life must have evolved somewhere else in the universe.** And that life became intelligent enough to make a rocket ship to transport bacteria here. He labels it "Directed Panspermia." That **doesn't solve the problem. It only pushes it further away.**

## The Search For Meaning

### The New Physics

Today more scientists are willing to refute the idea that life is the product of blind chance. They support the idea of an **intelligent designer** behind the universe. World-renowned physicist **Paul Davies**, of Adelaide University, says: *"A once-popular argument with theologians was to point out how **astonishingly well ordered** the universe is, how harmoniously its components dovetail together. All this, it was reasoned, must be **the result of design**, and therefore **evidence of a Great Designer**. Yesterday's theologians would have been delighted with today's discovery of just how delicately balanced that cosmic order turns out to be."* ("The Great Conundrum in the Sky," The Guardian)

**More recently Davies** wrote that *"the universe is seen to be a product of law rather than chance ... Ordinary men and women continue to search for meaning behind existence. The new physics and the new cosmology reveal that **our ordered universe is far more than a gigantic accident.**"* (Superforce: The Search for a Grand Unified Theory of Nature).

He goes on to say that while science may explain the world, we still have to explain the laws that enabled the universe to come into being. These laws, he says, *"seem themselves to be the product of exceedingly ingenious design. If physics is the product of design, the universe must have a purpose, and the evidence of modern physics suggests strongly to me that the purpose includes us."*

**Astronomer Fred Hoyle** has calculated that the **chance of life happening by accident is 1 in 10<sup>e40,000</sup>**. That is a "1" with 40,000 noughts after it, a figure so enormous that it amounts to a total



**impossibility.** (*The Universe: Past and Present Reflections*). Hoyle states: “A commonsense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.” His colleague, Chandra Wickramasinghe, concurs:

“The chances that life just occurred on earth are about as unlikely as a typhoon blowing through a junkyard and constructing a Boeing 747.” (New Scientist)

**Professor Jack Ambrose** of London University indicates that the tide has turned. In *The Nature and Origin of the Biological World* he wrote:

“The creative view of life and species no longer needs to be defended against evolutionary arguments. **It is the reductionist evolutionist who is now in retreat.**”

**Paul Davies, in *The Mind of God*, says, “I belong to the group of scientists who do not subscribe to conventional religion but nevertheless deny that the universe is a purposeless accident. **Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact. There must, it seems to me, be a deeper level of explanation. Whether one wishes to call that deeper level ‘God’ is a matter of taste and definition. Furthermore, I have come to the point of view that mind—that is, conscious awareness of the world—is not a meaningless and incidental quirk of nature, but an absolutely fundamental facet of reality.**”**

These are honest men, who are not, in the words of one scientist, “*encased in scientific dogmatism.*” They are willing to be honest with the facts, and recognise the limitations of science.

This Bible study Topic looks at the story of **Creation in Genesis 1 and 2**. The first chapters of the Bible answer some of the most important questions that can be asked:

“Where did I come from?”

“Why am I here?”

“What’s the purpose of life?”

## Answers to the Big Questions

Fill in the blank:

What important fact does the first verse of the Bible tell us? [Genesis 1:1](#)

In the beginning  the heavens and the earth.



The Bible writers don't try to prove God's existence. They accept it as a self-evident fact. Just as we can't prove that the sun will rise tomorrow or that a sunset is beautiful, or that love is real, or even that we exist, belief in God is the only thing that can give life meaning and purpose.

If there were no God, then life would truly be as Shakespeare said, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

During Creation week God created this world and its inhabitants. On the first three days He made a perfect environment—night and day, sea and sky, dry land and vegetation. During the next three days—sun and moon, sea animals and birds, land animals and humans—to occupy this perfect environment ([Genesis 1:1-27](#)).

**Fill in the blank:**

**What part did Jesus play in the creation of this world? [John 1:1-3, 14](#)**

Through him [Jesus] ; without him nothing was made that has been made.

## **Made in the Image of God**

**Human beings, are the crowning act of creation and we are made in the image of God.**

What do you think this means?

How does this make us different from the rest of creation?

Read [Genesis 1:26-27](#) and [Genesis 2:7](#) and tick the words you think indicate this.

It's important to note that both men and women are created in the image of God.

**Fill in the blank:**

**What instructions were given to the first man and woman? [Genesis 1:28-30; 2:15](#)**

Be fruitful and  in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

**God created us as sexual creatures, male and female**, with the ability to have children. Our sexuality is not something sinful as some people have considered. The idea that the body and its desires are evil is not taught by the Bible. Sexuality, as with all of God's gifts, can be abused, and often is. God designed that our sexuality should find expression within a committed marriage relationship.

Human beings were also given **management of the environment**, to look after it and care for it. We haven't done very well at that either.



## The Purpose of Creation

**Fill in the blank:**

**What was the whole purpose or reason for God creating people? [Revelation 14:7](#)**

who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

We were created to have fellowship with God and to worship Him. The word “**worship**” comes from an Old English word meaning “**worth-ship**”. God, as our Creator, is worthy of our adoration and allegiance. **This gives meaning and value to human beings**, in contrast with evolutionary theory that says our existence is just an accident, and has no significance.

As we find fulfilment from our relationships with valued friends, so God created us to have a similar fulfilment in relationship with Him. The Creation story reminds us that it’s only in such a relationship with God that we can find real satisfaction in life. Someone has said that **there’s a GOD-SHAPED HOLE in every one of us—and only God can fill it.**

**Fill in the blank:**

**God created Eve and celebrated the first marriage. With what words did God express the deep physical and spiritual unity that is meant to exist in marriage? [Genesis 2:18-25](#)**

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become

The Bible is very clear that the marriage relationship between a man and a woman is God’s design. Men and women complement each other. Jesus referred to this passage when He was stressing the importance of marriage between a man and a woman ([Matthew 19:4-6](#)). Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.

**Fill in the blank:**

**What choice did God give our first parents that shows they weren’t robots? [Genesis 2:15-17](#)**

You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but  the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

**Being able to choose is what makes us moral creatures.** This tree provided a test of human loyalty and obedience to the will of God who made us. Because **God is a God of love, He can’t force us** to obey Him. He wants us to obey Him because we love Him and because of His love for us. Death is a consequence of going against God, not a punishment,—just as death is a consequence of jumping out of an aeroplane without a parachute.



## **Creation by a Personal God**

This brings us to the only viable alternative that can give meaning to life—that a personal God created the universe.

Picture a young couple in search of their dream home. It has spacious rooms, large windows, an efficient and practical kitchen area, creatively decorated with a beautifully landscaped garden.

You couldn't blame them for thinking that the architect must have had them in mind when the house was designed. Imagine them sitting in the lounge room contemplating what the architect was like—intelligent, creative, similar tastes to themselves, a lover of beauty. But what was the architect like as a person? Whatever they could learn about the architect by studying the house, there are some things about the architect that could never be known unless revealed from some other source. So it is with the Designer and Maker of the Universe and us.

Just as scientists in their study of nature can see evidence for incredible design and intelligence behind the cosmos, so the Bible, as a revelation from God, tells us what He is like as a person. Theologian and **philosopher Carl Henry writes:**

“Ever since Western man accepted the evolutionistic contention that man has no father save a biological process, or accepted the contention of existentialism that man's only father is a nothingness which quite without any ascertainable reason, hurled him into existence, the mood of Western man was changed. He has become a stranger to himself. ... He has lost God as Father, the universe as something friendly, life as meaningful. “Indeed the doctrine of creation is so basic as to be the indispensable foundation for any tolerable, viable human existence.”

## **Empty, Lonely People**

**Barry McGuire** was a leading actor in the Broadway production of the 1960s musical “Hair”. Barry thought that he was a god and that liberation was the answer to life. One day he was smoking marijuana at a friend's place where he noticed a book entitled Good News for Modern Man. “I'm a modern man,” he thought, “I'll take it home and read it.”

At 35 years of age he read the Bible for the first time and was convinced that the direction in which his life was headed was all wrong. He said:

“I saw everything for what it really was, just empty, lonely people clutching at each other for a moment of pleasure to forget the emptiness within themselves.”

That night **Barry prayed to God for the first time in his life and confessed his sins.** Barry promised God:



“If You want me after this, rotten piece of meat that I am, I will give myself to You.”

**God came into his life and gave him power to walk** away from promiscuous sex and drugs, and habits that he had been following for years and years. (*The Sower*)

For the first time the emptiness in **his life was filled**. That’s what God wants to do for us too. Jesus wants us as His friends.

**How does it make you feel to know that life is more than a gigantic accident—that it has a purpose and we're not alone in the universe?**



## LESSON 4 - What Is Wrong With the World?



If God is so in control of the universe - why can't He take care of this little planet for us? Why are we subjected to this *Bitter Sweet Symphony* called Life? How did Evil get started and why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? Has God done anything about this or doesn't He care? This topic offers a logical Biblical explanation regarding why the world has gone wrong and shares the option of a viable solution to the distressing situation that we often find ourselves in.

The topics covered in this guide are:

1. Why?
2. The Entrance of Sin
3. The Promise of a Saviour
4. The Lamb of God
5. Jesus Paid Our Debt

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, thank you for giving us a free will, not making us like robots. Thank you for dealing with the problem of Sin. Please help us trust in You. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.



## Why?

Grammy Award–winning singer Tracy Chapman in her song, “Why?” asks the question:  
Why do the babies starve,  
When there’s enough food to feed the world?  
Why when there’s so many of us,  
Are there people still alone?  
Why are the missiles called peacekeepers  
When they’re aimed to kill?

She sings about the contradictions of life today, “Love is hate. War is peace. No is yes. And we’re all free.”

Why terrorism? September 11 has changed the world forever. The threat of terrorism has reduced our freedom, increased our insecurities and made us more suspicious of our neighbours. Retaliation against terrorism has led to war in Afghanistan, against Al Qaeda. Fear of terrorism is responsible for war in Iraq.

**A special report by Time magazine** (September 12, 2001) by Nancy Gibbs highlights the horror and heroism of the day, “as the U.S. dealt with the bloodiest day on its soil since the Civil War.” President Bush said, “Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward.”

The first plane hit the World Trade Center’s north tower at 8:45, ripping through the building’s skin and setting its upper floors ablaze. The second plane impaled the south tower at 9:06. The south tower collapsed at 10. The north tower came down 29 minutes later, crushing itself like a piston.

“I know that the rescue people who were helping us didn’t get out of the building,” said security official Bill Heitman, who worked on the 80th floor. “I know they didn’t make it.” And he broke down and sobbed. All that was left of the New York skyline was a chalk cloud. The towers themselves were reduced to jagged stumps; the atrium lobby arches looked like a bombed out cathedral.”

“Jim Gartenberg, 35, a commercial real estate broker with an office on the 86th floor ... kept calling his wife Jill to let her know he was okay but trapped. ‘He let us know he was stuck,’ says Jill, who is pregnant with their second child. ‘He called several times until 10. Then nothing. He sounded calm, except for when he told me how much he loved me. He said, ‘I don’t know if I’ll make it.’ He sounded like he knew it would be one of the last times he would say he loved me.’ That was right before the building turned to powder.”

**Gibbs reports it is a wonder it hadn’t happened earlier**, when “the Microsoft flight simulator and Fly! II—the two most popular simulators for personal computers—allow you to pretend to fly between the World Trade Center towers, and into them. Anyone looking to practise can buy the software off the shelf.”



**Then there is the massacre in Bali, Indonesia on October 12, 2002.**

Two car bombs exploded, killing 202 people of several nationalities, including 88 Australians, and injuring more than 300. Australian Prime Minister, John Howard called it “the world’s biggest outrage since the September 11 attacks.” It resulted in the greatest single loss of Australian lives overseas during peacetime.

What’s wrong with the world? On a smaller scale, but no less traumatic, are the increasing number of random shootings. There’s the horror of the Columbine High School massacre, for example.

On April 20, 1999, what started out as a normal school day ended in a bloodbath, with 15 people dead, as Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold went on a shooting spree before killing themselves. They were reported by Time magazine (May 3, 1999) as laughing excitedly. “Who’s next?” they said. “Who’s ready to die?” As the two moved through the library, they called out “All the jocks stand up. We’re going to kill every one of you.” “The killers went round the room, asking people why they should let them live. Students heard one girl pleading for her life, then a shot, and quiet. They told wounded kids to quit crying; it will all be over soon, you’ll all be dead. They approached another girl, cowering under a table, yelled ‘Peekaboo!’ and shot her in the neck. Anyone who cried or moaned was shot again.” “Survivors said they treated it like a video game.”

Cassie Bernall was in the library reading her Bible that day. She was asked by the gunman if she believed in God. Knowing full well the safe answer, she quietly replied, “There is a God, and you need to follow along God’s path.” The shooter looked down at her. “There is no God,” he said, and he shot her in the head.

The district attorney, Dave Thomas, said that “there were SWAT team people ... crying and weeping over what they saw.”

A diary found at Harris’s house, presumably written by Harris, is reported by the Washington Post (April 29, 1999) as “detailing the year-long plans for the killings, which the teenagers hoped would result in 500 people dead and end with them hijacking a plane and crashing into New York City.”

What turned two boys, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, into callous murderers, utterly devoid of pity?

The UK group **The Verve** in “Bitter Sweet Symphony”, on their Urban Hymns album, gives us a clue:

Cause it’s a bittersweet symphony that’s life ...  
Try to make ends meet,  
You’re a slave to the money then you die.  
Well I’ve never prayed, but tonight I’m on my knees, yeah.  
I need to hear some sounds that recognise the pain in me, yeah.



### One DJ who played the song said:

"I like the sentiments of this song. 'Life's a drag—and then we die!' You can't get more bleak and nihilistic than that. But that's what you crazy kids seem to like so much these days?"

Our modern songs are full of this cry of despair and confusion. If life is meaningless and there is no hope, then what we do doesn't matter.

### Possibly the most-asked question today is "Why?"

Why pain?

Why evil?

Why death?

Why such hatred and cruelty?

Why is there a lack of meaning?

### If there's a God, why is there such suffering in the world?

**Genesis chapter 3** is the key that can unlock this mystery for us. It explains what otherwise would be a series of unexplainable riddles. It tells us why a good world has gone bad, and it explains why we need Jesus. God made a perfect world with perfect people, but He didn't make them as robots. He made them with **free will** so they could **choose** to love and worship Him, or not (**Genesis 2:16, 17**).

### In Eden, Satan, masquerading as a serpent, spoke to Eve. How did he misrepresent what God had said? **Genesis 3:1-3**

, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?

Jesus' disciple John identified the serpent as Satan or the devil in disguise (**Revelation 12:9**). The name "devil" is from the Greek "diabolos", which means "slanderer". That's what he was doing, misrepresenting God. "Satan" means "adversary" or "opponent".

### What did God actually say to Adam and Eve, which shows they were not robots? **Genesis 2:16-17**

to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

### What is the first lie that the serpent told Eve?

You will not ,” the serpent said to the woman. **Genesis 3:2-5** (two words)



**In [John 8:44](#) Jesus calls Satan the father of lies.**

These two lies—"you will not die" and "you will be like God"—are at the basis of most non-Christian religions. The two main teachings of the New Age movement are that we are "gods" and that we have past lives through the cycle of reincarnation.

### **The Entrance of Sin**

The three areas in which Eve was tempted were the physical, mental and spiritual.

These are the categories of all temptation. The temptations presented to Jesus ([Luke 4:1-13](#)) were in the same areas. He went through a similar experience to Adam and Eve, but He succeeded where they failed. That's why He can save us from the problem of evil. We will say more about this in further Bible study Topics.

**What were the three temptations presented to Eve? [Genesis 3:6](#)**

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for , she took some and ate it.

Sin didn't cause God to turn away from Adam and Eve, rather it caused them to run away in fear from God.

**God was the One who came looking for them.**

**Fill in the blank:**

Whom did Eve blame for her disobedience? [Genesis 3:11-13](#)

The woman [Eve] said, "The  deceived me, and I ate."

God, of course, knew what Adam and Eve had done, but He wanted them to own up to it.

Just as a mother would ask a child who has jam on his or her face, "Have you been into the jam jar that I told you not to touch?" Instead, Adam blamed his wife and Eve blamed the serpent.

Indirectly they both blamed God.

God had put Eve with Adam, and had made the serpent. When God first brought Eve to Adam he was enraptured. Now she is "the woman You put here with me."



## The Promise of a Saviour

In speaking to the serpent (the Devil), what promise did God make? [Genesis 3:14-15](#)

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will , and you will strike his heel.

This is the first promise about Jesus who would come and deal with the devil and the problem of **Evil**. Sin, which is going against God, results in serious consequences ([Genesis 3:16-19](#)). One of the greatest lessons about life we can ever learn is that **Life is Run by Choices, not by Luck**.

From the atom to the galaxy and from an amoeba to a human there is order and design. We live in a universe not a "multiverse". Because of this, what we sow we reap.

Just as a car manufacturer gives a manual on how to get the best out of your car, so God, who made us, knows what's best for us.

What was the result of sin in Adam and Eve's family? [1 John 3:12](#)

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one [Devil] and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were  and his brother's were righteous.

Cain had the **wrong attitude of trusting in his own works**, while **Abel had an attitude of faith in God**. Cain's evil actions were, to offer his own sinful actions as a way of being saved. The righteous actions of Cain's brother Abel, were, to make offerings that symbolised the sacrifice and **substitution of Jesus in place of the sinner**.

## The Lamb of God

After they sinned, the nakedness of Adam and Eve symbolised their guilt and lost innocence.

They tried to cover themselves with fig leaf garments. With what did God cover them instead?

[Genesis 3:7, 21-24](#)

The Lord God made  for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Genesis chapter 3 tells us what's wrong with the world. It tells us that our first parents misused their free will and chose to distrust and disobey God. They fell from a relationship with God. The results of this fall are seen in four broken relationships.



1. First, with God—the purpose of our existence was to have fellowship with God: that's been broken.
2. Second, within ourselves—we now have fear and psychological disharmony.
3. Third, with each other—evidenced in social breakdown. Adam blamed Eve for his sin, Cain killed his brother Abel, and so on.
4. Lastly, with nature—we have polluted our environment instead of caring for it. (See *F. A. Schaeffer, Genesis in Space and Time, pages 102-5.*)

Jesus came to restore those relationships, so that there will be no more emptiness and conflict within.

**What did John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, say about Jesus? [John 1:29](#)**

Look the  of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

**What did Jesus say to those who, sensing their brokenness, come to Him for help? [John 6:37](#)**

Whoever comes to me  drive away.

## Jesus Paid Our Debt

In the Old Testament **the sacrifice of a lamb was symbolic of Jesus**, who took our place and died to pay for our sins. The skins were a constant reminder of Adam and Eve's lost innocence, of death as the wages of sin, and of **the promised Lamb of God (Jesus)**, who would by His own death pay the penalty for the sins of the world—thus, wiping out our debt of sin.

Our efforts at covering our sins (that is, paying for them ourselves) can't help us.

**Only Jesus, who lived a perfect life, can save us.**

Imagine that you are in debt for a hundred million dollars and that there is no way you could pay it in a hundred years, so you are going to be thrown in jail for the rest of your life. But your rich uncle comes along and pays it for you, freely. Now you're no longer in debt, and no judge can sentence you to jail—you are free. That's what Jesus has done for all of us. **What He wants from us is our freely given love and gratitude.**



## LESSON 5 - Where Did Evil Come From



We live in a *Mad, Mad World* of thrill-killing and ritualistic abuse that had its origins outside of our planet. Was there ever a Rebellion in Heaven? Why for Heaven's sake did not God kill the rebels and start again? Are we trapped in some sort of STAR WARS ... a cosmic conflict that spiralled out of control and landed down here amongst us? What is the real origin of Evil? Is explaining evil an attempt to excuse it? This topic shares how to really make a difference and resist evil by fighting back. The Good News is that we have not been left alone in this Cosmic Battle!

### Where Did Evil Come From

The topics covered in this guide are:

1. "Thrill Killing" in Queensland
2. Three Groups Involved in Satanism
3. Ritual Abuse
4. Rebellion in Heaven
5. Why Didn't God Destroy Satan?
6. Cosmic Conflict
7. A Defeated Foe
8. Resist the Devil

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Your are love. Thank you for being in control that through your love for us you have already defeated Satan and sin. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.



## "Thrill Killing" in Queensland

Two teenage girls selected and stalked a New Zealand tourist in Noosa's National Park, Queensland, Australia, to carry out a carefully-planned "thrill killing". They bashed and stabbed a 59-year-old grandmother as she walked the park's tracks. One of the girls had a long-held desire to kill someone and was surprised and disappointed that she hadn't succeeded. When she was told by the police that she had stabbed the lady more than 22 times, she replied, "Cool". The girl said she thought it was "cool" watching blood spurt from the victim. It's alleged that they were involved in some sort of satanic cult. This is just one of many similar bizarre stories that have been appearing in our news media of recent years.

## Three Groups Involved in Satanism

Dr Edward Ogden, a police forensic doctor, said he sees **three broad groups involved in Satanism**, with some overlapping.

1. **Firstly**, those who are playing satanic rituals as a part of their extended play fantasies. "They read some books about medieval sorcery and witchcraft and have ceremonies with black candles, not as a result of deep conviction. This is kid's play - pseudo cults."

Others warn that many of those who do dabble in this type of behaviour find more than they anticipated. Queensland teenager John Birdo was one such person. He borrowed some books from the library, set up a witches' cult and almost sacrificed his mate in a witchcraft initiation ceremony. "I would've only done it in one action," he said. "I would've knifed him... without even thinking about it." What started as a "bit of fun" with ouija boards and seances, ended with witches, satanic cult rituals and eventually a horrific sacrifice of sheep and a suicide. It doesn't always stay as kid's play.

2. The **second** group are people who are inherently evil or criminal, such as paedophiles whose primary interest is paedophilia, not the worship of Satan. They use some magical satanic-type ceremonies, which are borrowed from a book or film.

Sergeant Ray Carrol, who investigates child exploitation cases, said there was "extreme danger" in teenagers being drawn into the occult and devil worship as they became easier prey for "manipulators." He said paedophiles were "expert" in manipulating teenagers.

3. The **third** group is composed of those who are "committed Satanists philosophically, as a lifestyle. These people actually worship Satan as the antithesis of good." It is this group, Dr Ogden said, that "is of real concern... What I don't know is the dimensions of the problem."



## Ritual Abuse

The great concern is ritual abuse and where it overlaps with child pornography. More than 90 per cent of kids who are ritualistically abused, were also filmed for child pornography. It's a "six billion dollar industry, and so one of the motives is a great deal of money as well as their obsession with the power." Reports indicate that there "is a network of thousands of paedophiles nationwide, swapping information."

Dr Ogden says United States evidence shows that perpetrators are respectable people—doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, businessmen, and priests.

The "cults don't want drop-outs or criminal types who are going to increase the chance of their exposure."

A psychiatrist, who treats abused children, says that most are not psychotic, but they have no conscience about hurting others, particularly children. Forty per cent of ritual abusers are women (as opposed to mostly men in "ordinary" sexual abuse), two-thirds of whom are married, and two-thirds of whom abuse their own children. The victims are two-thirds female and one-third male. Both Dr Ogden and the psychiatrist said they became concerned because of their contact with victims of ritual abuse.

"These are some of the most hurt and devastated people I've ever seen," said Dr Ogden.

He said that criminal cults are providing an environment for "evil" people to carry out disgusting, bizarre and unacceptable acts for which they will probably never be prosecuted. "One of the obstacles in pursuing the leaders of these cults in court was that **the offences were often so bizarre, people had difficulty believing them,**" he said.

If God made only good beings, where did evil come from? If God is who He is, why does He allow such things to happen? Someone has said: "God is either all powerful and uncaring or He is caring but not all powerful."

While in this life we'll never fully comprehend the problem of evil, God has told us sufficient concerning it to show that it wasn't because He didn't care, or because He wasn't powerful enough to do anything about it.

When God created this world it was "very good" ([Genesis 1:31](#)). But the serpent, the devil ([Revelation 12:7-9](#); [Genesis 3:1-6](#)), tempted Eve and caused all the evil in this world. The question is, from where did the devil come? This Bible study Topic is about the origin of evil and what God has done and is doing about it.



## Rebellion in Heaven

1. What picture do we get from the book of Revelation, about a revolt in heaven? Who rebelled and was thrown out of heaven? [Revelation 12:1-9](#)

That ancient serpent called the , or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

2. The title "Morning Star" [translated "Lucifer" in Latin Vulgate] was the name of the Devil before he rebelled in heaven. What position did the prophet Isaiah (about 750 BC) say he wanted? [Isaiah 14:12-15](#)

"I will make myself like the  - (God)."

3. Ezekiel, a prophet of God (about 600 BC), used the king of Tyre to symbolise Lucifer. What position did Lucifer have in heaven? [Ezekiel 28:11-14](#)

You were anointed as a .

Moses, after the Exodus out of Egypt, was told by God to make a sanctuary (like a tent) so God could dwell among the Israelites. It had two rooms—the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Inside the Most Holy Place was a wooden box covered with gold, named the "ark". On top of it there were two images of angels called cherubim (the 'im' ending is plural in Hebrew). The glory of God's presence above the ark lit up the sanctuary. The ark went missing at the time Babylon conquered Jerusalem in 605 BC. The movie The Raiders of the Lost Ark was a fictitious account of the search for this ark. The Most Holy Place represented the throne room of God in heaven. Lucifer, as an anointed cherub, had a place next to God before he rebelled.

4. What was the SIN of Lucifer? [Ezekiel 28:15-17](#)

Your heart became  on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour.

In Ezekiel the anointed cherub is pictured as becoming **proud** of his beauty. Lucifer, given **free will**, **chose** to turn his affections inward upon himself rather than outward upon the Creator. The gift of free will would have been meaningless if it were impossible for any of the millions of angels to abuse this gift.

What do the names of "Satan" and "devil" mean?

"**Satan**" means "**adversary**" or "**enemy**", and "**Devil**" means "**slanderer**". Instead of making God first in his affections, Lucifer centred them on himself. **Pride** led him to want **God's position**, and thus Lucifer, "the Morning Star," became Satan, "the adversary."



The only way he could attempt to win the throne of God was by misrepresenting God. This was his strategy in Eden and also in his temptations of Jesus in the desert ([Genesis 2](#); [Matthew 4](#)). This gives us insight into what must have been his method in heaven. He implied that God was unjust and was keeping good things from the angels.

## Why Didn't God Destroy Satan?

**How do you feel about the fact that God didn't destroy Satan straight away? How does the following text help us understand why He did not? [1 John 4:7-12](#)**

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is .

## A God of Love

**Imagine** a good king whose general is jealous of him. He spreads vicious rumours around, that the king is really a tyrant who wants to enslave all his subjects.

The king finds out about this. What do you think the king's subjects would think, if the king immediately executed the general? Wouldn't they be tempted to think, "Maybe the general was right" and to serve the king from fear?

**God wants us to serve Him** because of **love**, not because of fear.

## Cosmic Conflict

**1. Christians during the first century suffered a lot of persecution. In what way does the Bible suggest that this is a cosmic or universal conflict? [1 Corinthians 4:9](#)**

For it seems to me that God has put us apostles [messengers] on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to  as well as to men.

Prisoners were led out to die in the arena of a Roman amphitheatre. Men had to fight against wild beasts, or to cut one another to pieces, as spectator sport for the people.

The apostle Paul pictures all the world and even angels looking on while the apostles, a feeble band, are brought in last to fight to the death for God.

Our world is a **lesson book for the universe** of the **great controversy**, a **cosmic conflict** between **good and evil** - between **Christ and Satan**. We are in the midst of this **war to end all wars**.



**2. How does the death of Jesus on the cross reveal to us the character of God in contrast to Satan? [John 3:14-16](#)**

For God so loved the world that  his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Satan wanted God's position - his motivation is to "GET".

God's motivation is to "GIVE" - that we might receive eternal life.

**3. In warning about false messengers who pretend to be followers of Christ, what does Paul say about Satan's deceptions? [2 Corinthians 11:13-14](#)**

...for  masquerades as an angel of light.

## A Defeated Foe

**1. What was accomplished by Jesus' death? [Hebrews 2:14-15](#)**

...by his [Jesus] death he might  who holds the power of death— that is, the devil.

When Jesus died on the cross, Satan appeared to have triumphed. But Jesus was the innocent dying for the guilty, therefore He conquered death, rising from the dead, tasting "death for everyone" (verse 9), defeating the devil at his own game and winning the victory for us.

**2. The Bible pictures the Devil like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour ([1 Peter 5:8-9](#)). What does it say the Devil will do when we resist him? [James 4:7](#)**

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will  from you.

**3. Satan is really a defeated foe. It is just a matter of time before he is destroyed. How do the followers of Jesus gain the victory over Satan? [Revelation 12:10-11](#)**

They overcame him by the  and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

While **Satan is a defeated foe**, many don't know or believe this, so **he still has influence in this world**. We will finally be **delivered** from Satan and evil **when Jesus comes soon**, the second time, to take us to heaven. ([Titus 2:13-14](#); [Revelation 21:1-5](#))

## Resist the Devil

Two men worked in a lion park in Africa. Inside the fence the lions were tame. They could walk among them, pat them and feed them by hand without fear. Outside the fence the lions were wild and dangerous.



One day one of the men was outside the compound. While sitting on a log a lioness came out of the jungle and grabbed him by the shoulder and began to drag him off. His friend, hearing his screams, came running out of the compound, only to see his friend being dragged into the jungle. What could he do? All he had was a stick.

Without hesitation he ran towards the lioness, waving his stick and shouting at the top of his voice.

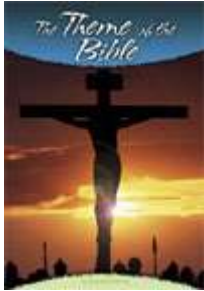
What would happen? Would he become the second victim? When the lioness heard him and saw him running towards her she dropped his friend and ran off into the jungle.

### **Victory of Satan**

When we resist the devil in Jesus' name and strength he has no power over us. He is a defeated foe—defeated by Jesus on the cross. Jesus' victory over Satan is our victory when we accept Jesus as our Saviour.



## LESSON 6 - The Theme of the Bible



We may not need much convincing that life is not fair! The evil in the world is a daily reality for us. But God designed a fail-safe system to rescue people from the despair and loneliness of suffering, sickness and death. You need to know how one special person was chosen to save the world. This rescue operation was planned thousands of years ago. It reached its pinnacle of operation, during a Roman crucifixion of a Jewish rabbi around AD 31. Learn what this event can mean for your life and how God's cosmic rescue plan can set you free from the pain of living a meaningless life.

### The topics covered in this guide are:

1. Life Is Often Not Fair
2. The Promise of a Saviour
3. Our Substitute
4. Our Representative
5. Our Credit—God's Gift
6. The Victory Is Already Won

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you for paying our debt through Jesus. Please show us from the Bible that Salvation in Jesus is what you freely give us. Thank you in Jesus's name, Amen



## **Life Is Often Not Fair**

A wealthy elderly lady was waiting in a shopping complex car park in her Mercedes-Benz for a shopper who was about to move out of a parking space. While she was waiting, a young man in a bright red sports car darted into the space in front of her. She was furious. "It's not fair. I was waiting for that spot before you!" she shouted! The young man, without stopping as he dashed off to the shops, said, "That's the way it is, when you're young and quick".

As he moved away he heard a loud crash. He turned around and to his horror he saw the back end of his beautiful new sports car crumpling under the impact of the Mercedes as the elderly lady rammed the back of it. With an anguished look on his face he demanded, "What did you do that for?" She replied, with relish, "That's the way it is, when you're old and rich!"

A 'humorous' story, but it illustrates that life is often not fair!

**A Melbourne primary-school-aged girl** contracted HIV from a blood transfusion, while having surgery at the Royal Children's Hospital. More than a million to one chance—the only case in 14 years. Now a little girl is HIV positive. It's not fair! (Herald Sun)

**Jess Griffith** thinks life's not fair. She lost her job as a child-birth educator, the same time as her husband lost his job. Dual unemployment wrecked their marriage and her three-year-old son now lives with his father.

She said unemployment "takes away your soul. It takes away your dignity, your heart, everything, until you just become nothing." (The Age)

## **Shark Attack**

John James Ford, 31, and his wife of 15 days, Deborah, 29, were honeymooning in Australia, at the northern New South Wales resort of Byron Bay. They joined a party of scuba divers at a place called Julian Rocks. The Sydney couple, both experienced divers, were about 3 metres below the surface. Mrs Ford later told police she saw a shape about 5 metres long approaching from below. Her husband pushed her aside as the shark lunged. Deborah Ford reached the boat and was pulled aboard. John did not surface. That afternoon local fishermen netted a 5 metre white pointer. Before biting through the net and escaping, it disgorged Ford's torso. (Time)

Life was not fair for 10 men in the Nazi prison camp of Auschwitz—a microcosm of what happened under the Nazis.

The time was a hot summer's afternoon in July 1941. The occasion—a prisoner had escaped while on a work detail outside the camp. The commandant was furious. If the escapee was not found within 24 hours, 10 men would be selected at random to die as a reprisal.



That night no-one slept much. They were all familiar with death, but the thought of this bizarre lottery haunted them. Koscielniak, a commercial artist, said, "The lucky ones were the dead ones." Gajowniczek hoped to be reunited with his wife and two boys after this nightmare was over.

The next morning the prisoners were marched onto the quadrangle and left to stand all day in the hot sun. Those who fainted were beaten until they got up or were carried away dead. At the end of the day the escaped prisoner was not found.

For what seemed like an eternity for those men, the commandant marched up and down the rows of prisoners. Every now and then the crunch of boots on the gravel would stop and the silence would be broken by the single word, "You!" The unlucky ones would be taken immediately to a cell where they would receive no food or water until they died. The 10th man was Gajowniczek. As the guards pushed him forward he wept, "My wife and children."

There was a stirring in the ranks of prisoners as an 11th man came forward. A thin apparition of a man. The guards were startled. "You there! What do you want?"

**"I want to talk to the commandant."**

Kolbe stopped a few paces from the commandant and looked the officer in the eye. "Herr Kommandant, I wish to make a request, please." (That no-one shot him was a miracle.) "I want to die in the place of the prisoner," he said, pointing to the sobbing Gajowniczek. "I have no wife, no family, no children. Besides. I am old and not good for anything. He's in better condition." (Kolbe knew well the Nazi mentality.)

"Who are you?" The officer asked.

"I am a Catholic priest."

The block was stunned. The commandant was uncharacteristically speechless. Some thought he would take them both. After a moment he granted the request. And Father Kolbe was taken off to the death bunker to die in place of Gajowniczek.

In the harshness of that human slaughterhouse, Kolbe had practised the compassion of Jesus, sharing his food, giving up his bunk, praying for his captors. They called him "the saint of Auschwitz." Kolbe outlived the other nine. He died only after being given a lethal injection. It was August 14, 1941. (Reader's Digest) Life is often unfair!



## God's Plan for Our Planet

When God created the world He saw that all that He had made was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Because Adam and Eve were not made as robots—they had free will (Genesis 2:17)—the possibility was there for them to choose to not follow God. Sadly, they chose to follow Satan and brought sin and death into our world. We could say that it's not fair that we should suffer as a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin. We weren't to blame for their sin.

While that's true, God also had a plan to rescue us without us having anything to do with it. This plan centres in Jesus as our Substitute and Representative. As our Substitute, Jesus took our place and suffered the consequences for sin by dying on the cross, so that God could freely offer us forgiveness. As our Representative all that He did is provisionally counted as having happened to the whole human race. All that He is—His perfect life of obedience to God's law—is credited to all who accept Him by faith. Jesus took the blame for our sins and their consequences, and He credits us with the benefits of His perfect life. So God can accept us just as if we had never sinned. The whole Bible is about this rescue plan. It is often called "the plan of salvation" or "plan of redemption".

## The Promise of a Saviour

### 1. What did God promise that a descendant of Eve (Jesus) would do to the serpent? [Genesis 3:15](#)

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will  his heel."

The plan of salvation was no afterthought. God was not caught unaware. As soon as there was sin there was a Saviour. Jesus is called the Lamb of God slain **from the foundation of the world** ([Revelation 13:8](#)). Because God created angels and human beings with free will, the possibility was always there that someone would abuse this gift. **God had this plan in place from the beginning.** The apostle Paul, in discussing God's plan to save sinners, says:

### 2. Abraham, whose name means "father of a multitude", was the father of the Jewish nation. Before he had children he was called Abram ("exalted father").

#### What command and promise was given to Abram? [Genesis 12:1-3](#)

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." "I will make you into a great nation and I will  you... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

"This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Timothy 1:8-10](#)). (See also [Ephesians 1:4](#); [Titus 1:1-3](#).)

God promised that through Abraham, and his descendants, all the world would benefit.



**3. Who is the descendant of Abraham who would bring blessing to the entire world? [Galatians 3:16](#)**

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is .

Jesus is the promised descendant of Abraham, who brings benefit to all the world.

The most well known text in the Bible is [John 3:16](#):

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

This is Jesus showing that He is the fulfilment of God's promise to send His Son to save us from the problem of evil.

## **Our Substitute**

**1. For whom did Jesus Christ die? [Romans 5:6-8](#)**

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the . Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

At the appointed time Jesus took the blame for our mistakes and died instead of us. He did this so that we could be forgiven and treated as if we were innocent. As one Christian writer has put it:

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed."

(The Desire of Ages, page 25)

"This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Timothy 1:8-10](#)). (See also [Ephesians 1:4](#); [Titus 1:1-3](#).)

**2. What is the wages of sin and what is the gift of God? [Romans 6:23](#)**

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is  in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Wages** are what we **earn**, or what we deserve. A **gift** is **undeserved**. If you have to do anything in order to receive a gift, it ceases to be a gift! **Eternal life is a gift from God** that we receive when we accept by faith what Jesus has done for us.



## Our Representative

**1. There are two representatives, or heads, of the human race. One brought in death and the other life. Who are they? [1 Corinthians 15:22](#)**

For as in Adam all die, so in  all will be made alive.

**2. Because Jesus died for us, how many does He represent in His death? [2 Corinthians 5:14](#)**

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one [Jesus] died for all, and therefore  died.

In taking Adam's place Jesus became the head of the human race, and died on the cross as its **representative**. Thus, in a sense, when He died for us as our **substitute** the entire race died with Him. As He **represented** all people, so His death stood for the death of all. This means that **forgiveness is now available** to all who accept this free gift.

**3. What is Jesus now doing in heaven for us? [1 John 2:1](#)**

... If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our , Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Just as a defence lawyer speaks in defence of his or her client, so **Jesus speaks on our behalf in the judgment**.

## Our Credit—God's Gift

**1. What was credited to Abraham and on what basis? [Romans 4:1-6](#)**

Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as .

Paul goes on to say:

"The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" ([Romans 4:23-24](#)).

**2. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour of what place do we become citizens? [Philippians 3:20](#)**

But our citizenship is in . And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you're a citizen of a country you have all the rights and protections of a citizen, even when living in another country.

The great English preacher Charles Spurgeon told of a man who had been sentenced to death by a Spanish court. Because he was an American citizen and also of English birth, the consuls of both



countries decided to intervene. They declared that Spain had no right to take his life, but their protests went unheeded. Finally, they deliberately wrapped the prisoner in their flags—the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack.

Defying the executioner, they issued this warning: “Fire if you dare! But if you do, you will bring the powers of two great nations upon you!” There stood the condemned. But the rifleman would not shoot. Protected by those flags and the governments they represented, the man was invulnerable.

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and commit our lives to Him, we receive the gift of eternal life and immediately become citizens of heaven, with all the rights of a citizen of heaven.

## The Victory Is Already Won

### 1. What ultimate effect will the death of Jesus have on Satan? [Hebrews 2:14-15](#)

...By his death he might  him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Satan has misrepresented the character of God. Just as you can't have a peaceful plane trip if you don't trust the pilot, so there can never be a sense of peace in the universe while there's a question mark against the name of God. The plan of redemption has a deeper purpose than our rescue alone. It is also to vindicate the character of God before the universe. The act of Christ dying for the salvation of human beings not only makes heaven accessible to us, but it shows to the universe that God is fair in His dealings with the rebellion of Satan.

"Is the Priest to Die for Nothing?"

Back in the prison camp while Father Kolbe the priest was dying, Gajowniczek was at first bewildered by what had happened. He wept and refused to eat and was dying. Koscielniak brought him to his senses. "Take hold of yourself! Is the priest to die for nothing?"

**In that moment Gajowniczek made up his mind that he must live. He would not waste Father Kolbe's gift.**

Father Kolbe revealed the true spirit of Christ in dying for Gajowniczek.

Two thousand years ago Jesus said, "Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)).

As our great high priest Jesus took our place and laid down His life for us, so that we could receive forgiveness and eternal life. He won the victory over the devil, sin and death.

How about you? Will you waste Jesus' gift? Is Jesus our Priest to die for nothing? Will you claim His victory for you?



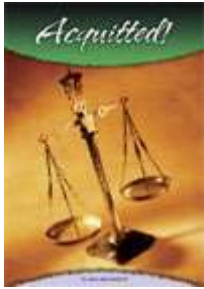
### **"I'm in Command Here"**

General Wainright tells of his great suffering in the Manchurian concentration camp after the fall of Bataan. Japanese prison keepers made him an object of their mockery day by day. He knew nothing of what was happening in the outside world. He became a skeleton, as it were—a broken, crushed, hopeless, starving man. One day an aeroplane landed in the camp, and a colonel of the Allied forces marched up to General Wainright telling him that Japan had been defeated. Imagine the effect of such news upon the spirit of this dying man. The colonel, having delivered his message, took to the skies once more.

The Japanese prison keepers, not knowing what had happened, returned to mock and beat the general as formerly. (I'm not sure how they didn't know about the Allied plane, but they didn't.) The General said, "**No, I am in command here. These are my orders ...**" The prison keepers, shocked beyond words, understood that the general had been informed of the Allied victory. From that moment General Wainright was king. (F. J. Huegel, *Forever Triumphant*, page 52.) The **theme of the Bible is Jesus and His plan of redemption**. It's about **Jesus' victory over sin and Satan on our behalf**.



## LESSON 7 - Acquitted!



Guilt, is a really bad feeling of regret over what we have done to hurt ourselves or someone else. It is a huge problem today. Guilt is also a real *spiritual* condition that is often mistaken for suffering from low self-esteem. So how does God handle the 'sins' of sinners? What happens in Our Day In Court - in God's Judgment? Discover the amazingly Good News of how God can relieve us of this Sin & Guilt problem. There is a way out. You can be set free! Isn't it time to find the solution out for yourself?

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. Guilt
2. Your Day in Court
3. Now the Good News
4. God Requires Perfect Obedience
5. Bought to Set Free

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you that you have bought us back, and that you and Jesus were willing to pay the price. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## **Guilt**

Billy Corgan of US band Smashing Pumpkins fame, on their Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness album, expresses the pain that is common to many people today. In "Jellybelly" he sings:

Welcome to nowhere fast/ Nothing here ever lasts  
Nothing but memories/ Of what never was  
Living makes me sick/ so sick I wish I'd die.

That's a rather despairing view of life, but that's the way it is for many! Life seems to have no purpose and the pain is too great to go on. In "Bullet with Butterfly Wings", he sings:

Despite all my rage I am still just a rat in a cage  
Then, someone will say what is lost can never be saved...  
Jesus was an only son for you  
And I still believe that I cannot be saved.

David Fricke, in his Rolling Stone magazine interview with Billy Corgan, says: "Much to their chagrin, the Pumpkins have seen their commercial success nearly eclipsed by their reputation as the poster band for dysfunctional America."

Billy Corgan talks about his insecurities from the divorce of his parents and being shuffled around between relatives. "My parents," he says, "were nowhere to be found. If you're a desperate person, an insecure person, and go to such great lengths as to have a rock band to satiate those insecurities, something is not right..."

How sad he feels so insecure that he believes that he cannot be saved! We live in a fragmented society where loneliness, pain and guilt can be so destructive. Neil Finn sings, "I'd crawl over broken glass, if we could start again."

A new product called "Disposable Guilt Bags" appeared in the marketplace in the USA. It consisted of a set of 10 ordinary brown bags on which were printed the following instructions: "Place the bag securely over your mouth, take a deep breath and blow all your guilt out, then dispose of the bag immediately." The wonder of this is that the Associated Press reported that 2500 kits had been quickly sold at \$2.50 per kit. It would be good if we could dispose of our guilt and pain so easily.

## **Your Day in Court**

As we learned in Topic 4, we live in a fallen world that has lost connection with God. **The Bible says we're all guilty** - that is, **we all** fall short of **God's standard**, and that we'll all have to give an account of ourselves one day.



Paul says:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

How do you think you'll go? On what basis can sinners stand before God and be acquitted? It's a sobering question. This Bible study Topic is about how Billy Corgan (and you) can be right with God and be saved from his pain and despair - that's the good news!

**1. James, the brother of Jesus, discusses the law of God as the standard of judgment. How many times do we need to break the law to become a lawbreaker? [James 2:8-13](#)**

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just  point is guilty of breaking all of it.

**God's standard** is 100, not 99 per cent or anything less. And **none of us** measure up to 100 per cent. Imagine that you're dangling by a chain over a crocodile-infested lake in “**Who Dares Wins!**” How many links of the chain would need to break for you to fall in? That's right, only one! It's the same with God's law.

So far this isn't good news but bad news - and it gets worse! But it will get better, I can assure you. So how can we be put right with God? **How can we be acquitted in the judgment?** Before we answer that question we need to understand what it means to be “acquitted” or “justified.”

**2. How does Moses, in discussing a court case, say the judges should decide the case? [Deuteronomy 25:1](#)**

When men have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting the innocent and .

In this verse Moses is describing a court case to settle a civil dispute. Acquittal, or justification, is a legal verdict. In a court case that is conducted fairly and with sufficient evidence there are two possible verdicts - **guilty** or **innocent**. In this passage the judge acquits the innocent and condemns the guilty. In giving these verdicts the judge does not make people either innocent or guilty. He **declares** them to be so.

God, in acquitting the guilty, doesn't make them innocent but **declares** them to be so. The question is: **"On what basis can God declare guilty people innocent?"** This is the crucial question! **On what basis does God pardon sinners, accept them and adopt them as His children and take them to heaven?**

**3. Can God acquit people because they are innocent? How many have sinned? [Romans 3:10, 23](#)**

There is no one righteous, not even one. For  have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.



Again, more bad news. God's standard of judgment is higher than we imagine. It is nothing less than perfection (100 per cent obedience to His law), and our true condition in His eyes is worse than we had dared to hope.

Let's imagine again: you and your mate are being chased by a wild bull. The only way to safety is to jump across a chasm that is six metres wide and 100 metres deep. You're a better jumper than your mate is. Your mate can only jump three metres. Too bad for him. You jump five metres. Are you any better off? Does it matter whether you can jump further than your mate if you can't get to the other side?

In much the same way, we may make a favourable impression when compared with other people, but **none of us can stand up against God's standard.**

**4. Can we be justified or declared righteous by our own obedience to the law? What does the law do? [Romans 3:20](#)**

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become  of sin.

**5. In writing to the Galatian Church Paul uses strong language. Can we be acquitted partly by a gift of grace and partly by our obedience? [Galatians 5:4](#)**

You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have  from grace.

## **Now the Good News**

**1. How are sinners justified in God's judgment? [Romans 3:24](#); [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)**

[Sinners] are justified freely  through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines grace as "privilege or concession that cannot be claimed as [a] right." Grace means "the abundant saving love of God toward sinners". Jesus revealed this grace in dying for us.

The word redemption means to "buy back, to recover by expenditure of effort or by stipulated payment".

**2. What two things are contrasted? How much does eternal life cost us? [Romans 6:23](#)**

For the wages of sin is death, but the  of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



**One characteristic** that distinguishes Christianity from all other religions of the world, is **the teaching of salvation freely available by grace, through faith, apart from human works**. It is a **gift** from God! When we accept Jesus, and what He has done for us, we receive God's gift of eternal life.

### 3. On what basis does God freely acquit us and declare us innocent or righteous in His sight? 1

#### John 4:10

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent  as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Crucifixion (being nailed to a cross) was the common form of execution of criminals in Roman times. This is the way Jesus died.

ATONEMENT = AT-ONE-MENT

The word **atonement** comes from two words, **at** and **one**. Jesus' death paid for the broken law (which is what **sin** is) that separates us from God. Now, through Jesus, we can be "**at one**" with God. We were made for friendship with God, and only in that relationship can we find our true meaning and happiness.

### 4. What does God do with our sins? Ephesians 1:7, 8

In him we have redemption through his blood, the  of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

God will cast our sins into the "depths of the sea", separate them "as far as the east is from the west" and "remember" our sins "no more" ([Micah 7:19](#); [Psalm 103:12](#); [Isaiah 43:25](#)).

## God Requires Perfect Obedience

### 1. By whose obedience are we acquitted and declared righteous? Romans 5:18, 19

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the  [Jesus] the many will be made righteous.

God requires 100 per cent obedience to the law, but we can't do it. The only way we can be righteous is through faith. **By faith** we can claim the goodness of Jesus, and God places this to **our** account. **Jesus' obedience** (righteousness, goodness) is accepted in place of our mistakes and **God accepts and pardons us** because of what Jesus has done, as if we had never sinned.



## Three Possibilities

When faced with the problem of sin, God had three possible options:

1. To uphold the law and allow sinners to suffer the consequence—a broken relationship that results in death. **God's mercy** wouldn't allow Him this option because He loved us too much. Think of how a parent feels about a wayward child.
2. To forgive sinners and disregard His law. **God's justice** wouldn't allow this option, as it would result in chaos in the universe. On a smaller scale, imagine what would happen if people were allowed to disregard road laws when driving, or the rules of the game when playing basketball.
3. The third option is the only one that satisfies both **God's justice and God's mercy. He would pay the penalty for our disobedience**, thus **upholding** the law and at the same time **forgiving** us.

### 2. How does this gift of righteousness and eternal life become mine? [John 3:16](#)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that  in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

God offers us the gift of eternal life. When by faith we accept Jesus, and what He has done, we receive this gift. (We'll say more about what faith is in the next Bible study topic).

Jesus not only bridges the chasm that separates us from God, He also carries us across. He lived on earth and faced trials and temptations just as we do, yet He didn't make any mistakes. He took the blame for our sins and died for us so that we could be forgiven. He now offers to give us His righteous life in place of our sinful life.

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, then, no matter what wrongs we've done, for His sake we're accounted righteous or perfect. Jesus' life stands in place of our life and we're accepted before God just as if we hadn't done anything wrong.

## Report Cards

Let's illustrate. Consider two Year 12 high school students—one gets straight As, the other all Fs. It's obvious which one will pass and which one will fail. Supposing the teacher somehow swapped the names on the report cards. Based on those cards the A student would fail and the F student would pass. Well, that's what Jesus has done for us. He has swapped His record for ours. He died so that we could go to heaven, if we choose to accept Jesus and what He's done for us. That's a pretty good deal in anyone's terms.



## **Bought to Set Free**

The story is told of a big African slave in America who was up for sale. How inhuman can people get, that they can sell a fellow human being as one would sell an animal. Well, this slave still had some dignity left. He had decided he had had enough—he wouldn't work again. As he was being displayed before the buyers and they made their bids, he shouted as he raised his chained hands, "I won't work. **I won't work!**" One man persisted in bidding as others, realising they would have difficulty with this man, dropped out. The auctioneer called, "Sold to the highest bidder."

As the big black man was led to his new owner he shouted at him, "I tell you I won't work! I won't work!" The new owner said: "That's all right. **I bought you to set you free.**"

His voice died as the words sunk into his mind. Was this a trick? He'd been a slave for so long. He couldn't believe his ears, until the man unlocked his chains and said: "**You're free!**" Free? It was too good to be true! He turned to the man and, falling at his feet, said, "**I'll work for you for the rest of my life!**"

What made the difference? As a **slave** he was **forced** to work, but being set **free** he was **willing** to work out of gratitude. That's the way it is in the Christian life. **Jesus has set us free from condemnation and death.**



## LESSON 8 - "Get in the Wheelbarrow!"



What is the *undying hunger* we naturally feel inside ourselves? How do we get connected to the cosmic power that is God? What do we have to DO? Is faith the key to bridging the gap between our humanity and inherent spirituality? What lost information do we need to access? Did God give us a Gift that we do not know about and have not accepted? Learn how to respond to this Gift. Discover what it means to *Get into the Wheelbarrow* and how taking this action can save us from disaster.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. "The Hunger Inside"
2. Getting Connected
3. What We Ought to Know
4. Our Response to the Gift
5. "Get in the Wheelbarrow!"

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you that your wheelbarrow will not fail, that we can trust you when we get in. Please show us this in your Word. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.



## **The Hunger Inside**

### **Neil Finn**

New Zealander Neil Finn in his song "Sinner" from his Try Whistling This album sings:

***Sinner, I have never learned  
Beginner, I cannot return  
Forever, I must walk this earth  
Like some forgotten soldier ...  
Today I am still disconnected  
From the face that I saw in the clouds***

Reviewer Caitlin Moran, commenting on the album, says: "Try Whistling This is serene and swanlike, until you realise that unbearable longing and a terror of mortality are paddling the whole thing along, just under the surface." (The Times)

In "King Tide" Finn sings:

***It's a dark and empty room  
The songs beating hard on your door  
Feel emotion roar within you  
You're flesh and blood like anyone ...  
And the hunger inside  
Won't go away it's starting to rise***

Bruce Headey and Alex Wearing in their book Understanding Happiness found:

"A sense of meaning and purpose is the single attitude most strongly associated with life satisfaction."

We live in a society that has lost its sense of meaning and purpose, because we've lost our connection with God. The "modern" dream that grew out of evolution and rationalism has ended! This was the dream that human beings, without God, could "create a perfect social order through the rational instruments of science, technology and bureaucracy." We now live in what's called a "post-modern" society. In discussing this, sociologist Richard Eckersley says:

"It is a world characterised by relativism, pluralism, ambivalence, ambiguity, transience, fragmentation and contingency [uncertain events].

Its danger is an 'anything goes' morality, a belief that values are just a matter of personal opinion, and that one set of values is not better or worse than another. Values cease to require any external validation, or to have any authority or reference beyond the individual and the moment." (Redefining Progress: Shaping the future to human needs, Family Matters)

It's no wonder we're feeling disconnected and lonely, because we are! **Mother Teresa** has said:



“In the West there is loneliness, which I call the leprosy of the West. In many ways it is worse than our poor in Calcutta.” (Time)

We live in a broken world - of broken relationships - with God, within ourselves, with each other and with nature. There is a God-shaped hole in every one of us—and only God can fill it. We are disconnected until we make the connection with Him. The unbearable longing in our hearts, “the hunger inside”, is a longing for God.

We learned in the previous Bible study Topic that we're all sinners. We've all broken God's absolute standard—His law. The consequence of this is a broken relationship that results in death. Yet God can forgive us and accept us without any contribution on our part. He does this freely on the basis of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus died in our place to pay for our sins. He also lived a perfect life that He credits to our account. In this way God can treat us just as if we had not sinned. This is a free gift for whoever wants it. The question is: **How do we receive th is gift and what are the consequences of receiving it?**

This Bible study Topic is about how sinners, in this post-modern society that has lost its values, can make the **connection** with the “face ... in the clouds”, that is, with God, and find meaning.

## Getting Connected

**1. How does Paul, writing to the Romans, say the free gift of eternal life becomes ours? [Romans 3:27-28](#)**

For we maintain that a man is justified  apart from observing the law.

Faith is, as it were, **the hand that reaches out to receive** the gift. It's not doing, but receiving. When we accept Jesus by faith, we are accepting that **everything He has done** is credited to our account.

## Why by Faith?

**2. While we are justified by faith, what does Paul say is the virtue, or value, of faith? [Galatians 2:15-16](#)**

We ... know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in . So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

**The virtue or value of faith is its object-Jesus.** Let's illustrate what this means. If you lived in an underground cavern where there were no lights whatsoever, having eyes would be of no value at all. Eyes are only useful if there's something to see—so with faith. Having faith, or the amount of faith, is not the issue. Everyone has faith. We wouldn't travel on a plane if we didn't have faith in the pilot, or in the



mechanical reliability of the plane. If we didn't have faith we wouldn't eat a meal without chemically analysing it first to see it were safe. We wouldn't do anything if we didn't have some faith.

The virtue of faith that saves is not in having it, or in how much we have. **The value of faith**, as with sight, **is in its object**. The object of saving faith is **Jesus**, particularly in what He has done in providing for our salvation. To ask ourselves the question:

"Do I have enough faith?" is the wrong question. The question we need to ask is: "**Is Jesus great enough and gracious enough for me to rely on?**" In other words, "Can I trust Him?" The answer is always "Yes!"

### **3. If we could be rescued from the problem of evil by anything we do, what does Paul say would be the significance of Jesus' death? [Galatians 2:21](#)**

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for !

Paul's point is we are saved by faith alone, in Jesus alone. What we "**do**" is never the basis of our acceptance with God, but **our response** to **His acceptance of us**. Many people don't understand this. They think they have to earn God's favour by reaching some level of holiness before God will accept them.

A Christian writer has said: "If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. ... We must come to Christ just as we are." (Steps to Christ, page 31)

## **What We Ought to Know**

### **1. What does John say we receive when we accept Jesus as Saviour? [1 John 5:11-13](#)**

And this is the testimony: God has given us , and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Eternal life is a present possession for those who have accepted Jesus and trust in Him. It has to do with a quality of life in relationship with Jesus our Friend. John is saying that we ought to have the assurance of eternal life now.

Let's illustrate. A woman came up to a preacher after hearing his sermon and said she could not understand salvation. The evangelist asked, "Mrs Franklin, how long have you been Mrs Franklin?" "Why, ever since I was married," she replied. "And how did you become Mrs Franklin?" he asked. "When the minister said 'Will you take this man as your husband?' I just said, 'Yes.'""Didn't you say, 'I hope so,' or 'I'll try to?'" asked the evangelist. "No," she replied, "I said, 'I will.'""Then pointing her to the Bible, he said, "God is asking you if you will receive Jesus and what He has done for you. What will you say to that?" Her face lighted up and she said, "Why, how simple that is! Isn't it strange that I didn't say 'Yes' long ago?" It's



that simple! When you say "Yes" to Jesus and accept what He has done for you, you become part of God's family and a citizen of heaven.

## 2. What did Paul want more than anything else? [Philippians 3:7-9](#)

...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through

— the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Remember the illustration of the two high school students' report cards? (in our study Topic 7). One received all A's the other all F's. The teacher somehow swapped the names on the cards. Based on those report cards the "F Student" passes and the "A Student" fails. That's what Jesus has done for us. He puts His perfect record (His righteousness) on our report card in heaven, and He accepts our failure as His. We accept this by faith.

## 3. How much condemnation exists for those who accept what Jesus has done for them? [Romans 8:1](#)

Therefore, there is now  for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The term "in Christ" occurs about 150 times in the New Testament. It means to be in a right relationship with Jesus. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. If there's no condemnation for those who trust in Jesus, then there must be complete justification, or acceptance and forgiveness. Jesus said He didn't come here to condemn us but to save us ([John 3:17](#)).

## Our Response to the Gift

### 1. How strong are Paul's words to those who think that they can be justified by works of the law? [Galatians 5:4](#)

You who are trying to be justified by law have been ; you have fallen away from grace.

### 2. While salvation is a free gift, what does Paul say is the evidence that we have accepted the gift of justification? [Ephesians 2:8-10](#)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do

, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### 3. What does James say about those who claim to have faith that is not accompanied by good works? [James 2:14-17](#)

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you



well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is .

"It has been said that separating faith and works is like separating the heat and light from a candle. You know both are produced by the candle. You know they are not the same thing. You also know you cannot separate them." (Robert C Shannon, 1000 Windows, 1997)

While we're saved by faith alone in Jesus, true faith is never alone—it always results in good works.

James says,

"Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do" ([James 2:18](#)).

**4. When Jesus comes again the second time [which we will study in Lesson Topic 12], on what basis did He say people would be rewarded or judged? [Matthew 16:27](#)**

For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to .

This is not a contradiction to what has been said so far. While we are saved by faith in Jesus alone, we are judged by the things we do. This is because what we do - **our lifestyle - reveals what we really believe**. If we're trusting in Jesus, our lives will show it. We may not practise what we profess, but we always practise what we believe.

**5. What did Jesus say we would do if we love Him? [John 14:15](#)**

If you love me, you will  what I command.

Our **Obedience** is always **our response of faith** in Jesus. Can you imagine a sick person going to a doctor and saying, "Doctor, I have faith in you, but don't expect me to follow your instructions. Just get me well."

**"Get in the Wheelbarrow!"**

Charles Blondin was the pseudonym of Jean Francois Gravelet (1824-97), French acrobat and tightrope walker. His career as an acrobat began when he was about six years old, and he quickly won acclaim for his daring performances, becoming known as the Little Wonder. Outstanding among his hazardous feats were his exhibitions, in 1859 and 1860, on a 335.3 m (1100 ft) long tightrope stretched 48.8 m (160 ft) above Niagara Falls. Blondin varied his act, crossing the falls blindfolded, while pushing a wheelbarrow, with a man on his back, and even while balancing on stilts. (Microsoft® Encarta. Funk & Wagnall).

The story is told of him turning to the crowd before one of his Niagara Falls crossings, and asking: "Who believes I can walk



across blindfolded, wheeling a wheelbarrow?" One man stepped forward, "I believe that you can do it, Blondin!" "All right," said Blondin, "then get in the wheelbarrow!" I don't think the man did. But that's the real test of faith!

The poet has said:

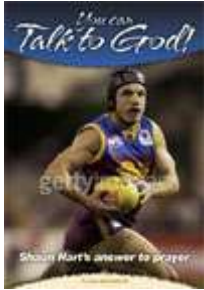
I would not work my soul to save  
For that the Lord has done  
But I would work like any slave  
For love of God's dear Son.

While salvation is a free gift received by faith alone in Christ alone, saving faith is always accompanied by good works. The response of one who accepts Jesus as Saviour is to obey Him as Lord.

**Good works, or obedience, is the evidence of faith.** True faith always leads to action—to getting in the wheelbarrow!



## LESSON 9 - You can Talk to God!



Imagine your sports trainer is lying down dying on the football ground. After the medics pronounce him dead - *What exactly would you do?* Read the thrilling story of a man who put in a Cosmic call requesting some miraculous help for his mate. This topic sensitively explores the subject of how to start talking to God. What 3 things are you promised by God, if you Pray? Are there any tips for how and when to access Divine intervention? Encounter 6 Secrets to Answered Prayer and discover how to get instantly FREE access to God - on your own wavelength.

### You can talk to God!

The topics covered in this guide are:

1. Shaun Hart's Answer to Prayer
2. Prayer Is Talking to God As to a Friend
3. How and When to Pray
4. Secrets of Answered Prayer!
5. Closer Than a Phone Call

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you that your line is never busy, and that you want to talk to us too! Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## Shaun Hart's Answer to Prayer

Perhaps the greatest surprise of the Australian Football League (AFL) season was the rise of the Brisbane Lions. Not given much of a chance by pundits earlier in the season, they had some huge wins and finished on top of the ladder.

Although their success was the result of team effort, one player stood out—Shaun Hart. He possesses all those qualities that make a great player that culminated in his representing Victoria in the State of Origin series. But **Hart possesses a power that surpasses** that of his peer team-mates and opponents alike. **He prays a lot.**

"On the way to a ground, my wife, **Linda, and I pray,**" he says. "I don't ever pray to win the match, but I do ask God to make my kicks go straight and for prevention from injury—not just for me, but for all the players." And occasionally he talks to God while he's playing, "although when you get focused, you sometimes concentrate on the game and shut everything else out."

Hart, who is into his 10th season at the top in Aussie Rules, hasn't always spoken to God. Indeed, he came to know God exists and to believe in Him only in 1992 when **he had a remarkable conversion.** At a function he met this wonderful woman who was working with the Endeavour Foundation. She was vibrant and pleasant to be near. They hit it off immediately and she agreed to go out with Shaun. Later she asked him to attend a church worship service with her.

Case Crago, a visitor from Europe, was speaking. He was a lion-tamer, of all things, and he likened that life to one of a football player. "His testimony was so compelling and convincing", said Shaun, "that there and then I started to believe that this whole thing is actually real. **It became the greatest day of my life so far.**" (Yes, the woman was Linda, and he did marry her.)

Whenever he's invited to, Shaun's prepared to openly acknowledge God and is outspoken about the culture in Australia that's apathetic about teaching kids the facts of Christianity. "For most people, their belief system is based on the fact they have to get as much satisfaction [as they can] into their lives right now, because there isn't a long life ahead of them. Sadly, our culture lends itself to the earthly ways rather than the heavenly ones."

**Living your faith without compromise** is very high on the priority list for Shaun. For example, at the opening game of the hugely popular AFL season in Australia in 1999, the Brisbane Lions was host to the St Kilda Saints and was thumping the visitors in front of a massive home crowd.

Nearing full-time, though, the Lions' head trainer, in his role of constantly running onto the ground to assist injured players, collapsed—the victim of major heart attack. Shaun, one of the first there, knelt beside his trainer, grabbed his hand and started praying. He cared little that tens of thousands of spectators looked on.



The medics pronounced the trainer dead. But Shaun kept praying, openly asking for the man's life to be returned. He didn't stop his praying until he came round. The trainer, who was dead for about six minutes, later reported he'd had no "after-death experiences" and had seen no white lights. He couldn't remember a thing, he said. But Shaun could. He was emotionally torn up by the magnitude of the situation that day, as was team chaplain Dean Davis. "It was the most touching period of time and expression of **God at work** I've ever seen. And Shaun is an awesome ambassador for the kingdom."

The head trainer later underwent a triple bypass and is recovering well. He has a letter, which he treasures, from the doctor of the Saints. The doctor testified how amazed and deeply moved he was by the fact the trainer came back to life. Again, **Shaun isn't at all amazed. He knows, and steadfastly believes in, the power of the One whom he has chosen to follow.** Adapted from Ric Chapman, "Shaun Hart: More Than Football," Signs of the Times, and International Gods of Sport, by Ric Chapman and Ross Clifford.

### **Shaun Hart's Answer to Prayer**

Perhaps the greatest surprise of the Australian Football League (AFL) season was the rise of the Brisbane Lions. Not given much of a chance by pundits earlier in the season, they had some huge wins and finished on top of the ladder.

Although their success was the result of team effort, one player stood out—Shaun Hart. He possesses all those qualities that make a great player that culminated in his representing Victoria in the State of Origin series. But **Hart possesses a power that surpasses** that of his peer team-mates and opponents alike. **He prays a lot.**

"On the way to a ground, my wife, **Linda, and I pray,**" he says. "I don't ever pray to win the match, but I do ask God to make my kicks go straight and for prevention from injury—not just for me, but for all the players." And occasionally he talks to God while he's playing, "although when you get focused, you sometimes concentrate on the game and shut everything else out."

Hart, who is into his 10th season at the top in Aussie Rules, hasn't always spoken to God. Indeed, he came to know God exists and to believe in Him only in 1992 when **he had a remarkable conversion.** At a function he met this wonderful woman who was working with the Endeavour Foundation. She was vibrant and pleasant to be near. They hit it off immediately and she agreed to go out with Shaun. Later she asked him to attend a church worship service with her.

Case Crage, a visitor from Europe, was speaking. He was a lion-tamer, of all things, and he likened that life to one of a football player. "His testimony was so compelling and convincing", said Shaun, "that there and then I started to believe that this whole thing is actually real. **It became the greatest day of my life so far.**" (Yes, the woman was Linda, and he did marry her.)



Whenever he's invited to, Shaun's prepared to openly acknowledge God and is outspoken about the culture in Australia that's apathetic about teaching kids the facts of Christianity. "For most people, their belief system is based on the fact they have to get as much satisfaction [as they can] into their lives right now, because there isn't a long life ahead of them. Sadly, our culture lends itself to the earthly ways rather than the heavenly ones."

**Living your faith without compromise** is very high on the priority list for Shaun. For example, at the opening game of the hugely popular AFL season in Australia in 1999, the Brisbane Lions was host to the St Kilda Saints and was thumping the visitors in front of a massive home crowd.

Nearing full-time, though, the Lions' head trainer, in his role of constantly running onto the ground to assist injured players, collapsed—the victim of major heart attack. Shaun, one of the first there, knelt beside his trainer, grabbed his hand and started praying. He cared little that tens of thousands of spectators looked on.

The medics pronounced the trainer dead. But Shaun kept praying, openly asking for the man's life to be returned. He didn't stop his praying until he came round. The trainer, who was dead for about six minutes, later reported he'd had no "after-death experiences" and had seen no white lights. He couldn't remember a thing, he said. But Shaun could. He was emotionally torn up by the magnitude of the situation that day, as was team chaplain Dean Davis. "It was the most touching period of time and expression of **God at work** I've ever seen. And Shaun is an awesome ambassador for the kingdom."

The head trainer later underwent a triple bypass and is recovering well. He has a letter, which he treasures, from the doctor of the Saints. The doctor testified how amazed and deeply moved he was by the fact the trainer came back to life. Again, **Shaun isn't at all amazed. He knows, and steadfastly believes in, the power of the One whom he has chosen to follow.** Adapted from Ric Chapman, "Shaun Hart: More Than Football," Signs of the Times, and International Gods of Sport, by Ric Chapman and Ross Clifford.

## Prayer Is Talking to God As to a Friend

### 1. How do we know that God will listen to our prayers? [Jeremiah 29:11-13](#)

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will  to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Notice what Jesus says about how willing God is to hear and answer our prayers.

ASK and it will be given to you; SEEK and you will find; KNOCK and the door will be opened to you.... If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO THOSE WHO ASK HIM! Matthew 7:7-11



The story is told of a man who asked Alexander the Great (King of Greece, 336-323 BC) for a huge sum of money in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage. The ruler consented and told him to request of his treasurer whatever he wanted. When he asked for an enormous amount the keeper to the funds was startled and said he couldn't give him that much without a direct order.

Going to Alexander, the treasurer argued that even a small fraction of the money requested would more than serve the purpose. "No," replied Alexander, "let him have it all. I like that fellow. He does me honour. He treats me like a king and proves by what he asks that he believes me to be both rich and generous."

In the same way, we should talk with confidence to God in prayer and present requests that express high views of God's love and generosity!

## 2. How often should we pray and for what should we be thankful? [1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#)

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in , for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

This doesn't mean we should be on our knees in church praying all the time. It means we can talk to God at any time and in any place. No time or place is inappropriate. One Christian writer has said:

### Divine Guidance

"In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance.... We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul." (E. G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 99)

## Promises Concerning Prayer

### 3. What is the best evidence that the Apostle Paul gives for God's willingness to hear and answer our prayers? [Romans 8:32](#)

He who did not spare , but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

### 4. What promise did Jesus give concerning prayer? [Mark 11:24](#)

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and .

### 5. What did James say we should ask God for? [James 1:5-8](#)

If any of you lacks , he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.



## How and When to Pray

How should we talk to God? Jesus gave us a model prayer that is commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer.” He said, “This, then, is how you should pray”:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed [holy] be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” Matthew 6:9-13

It’s meant as a guide as to how to address God and what to include in our prayers. It is not intended to be something repeated mindlessly.

### 1. What kind of prayers should be avoided? [Matthew. 6:5, 7](#)

And when you pray, do not keep on  like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

### 2. In whose name should we pray? [John 14:14](#)

You may ask me for anything in , and I will do it.

To pray in the name of Jesus means more than to merely mention that name at the beginning and end of a prayer. It means to pray in harmony with His will. “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” (1 [John 5:14](#))

### 3. In addition to being able to talk to God at any time, what did Jesus say about having a special place for private prayer? [Matthew 6:6](#)

But when you pray, , close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

### 4. Is there also a place for public prayer? [Matthew 18:20](#)

For where  come together in my name, there am I with them.

### 5. What should we pray about and what should our attitude be? [Philippians 4:6](#)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with , present your requests to God.

### 6. What example of submissive prayer did Jesus give us? [Matthew 26:36-46](#)

My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet , but as you will.



## **Secrets of Answered Prayer!**

### **1. Feel Our Need Of God**

What does David say God will do when we feel our need and call to Him in our troubles? [Psalm 107:19](#)

Then they CRIED to the Lord in their TROUBLE, and he SAVED them from their distress.

On the TV program Kids Say, Bill Cosby asked a little boy what he wanted to be when he grew up. "A pilot", answered the boy. "What would you do if the engine stopped?" Immediately the boy began to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven..."

It's often said that during the war many an atheist learned to pray in foxholes.

After the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, where tragically six people died, one of the competitors who fell overboard and survived said that while he wasn't a religious person, he did a lot of "talking" when he was in the water.

"Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him.... Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice.

"There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest." (Steps to Christ, page 100)

### **2. Have Faith in God**

What must we have to please God and what must we believe when we pray? [Hebrews 11:6](#)

And without FAITH it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must BELIEVE that he EXISTS and that he REWARDS those who earnestly seek him.

### **3. Obey God**

What must we do if we expect God to answer our prayers? [1 John 3:21-23](#)

We have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we OBEY his commands and do what PLEASES him.



#### **4. Don't Knowingly Cherish Sin**

What reason does David (the writer of most of Psalms) give for God not hearing our prayers? [Psalm 66:18](#)

If I had CHERISHED SIN in my heart, the Lord would not have LISTENED.

What is the reason why some prayers are not answered? [James 4:3](#)

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with WRONG MOTIVES, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

The comedian Woody Allen well illustrates the way some people pray. He says, "If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank."  
(Without Feathers)

#### **5. Spirit of Love and Forgiveness**

What should we do if we have anything against anyone? [Mark 11:25](#)

If you hold anything against anyone, FORGIVE HIM, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

A child wrote a letter to God: Dear God, I bet it is very hard for you to love everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family and I can never do it.—Nan

It's not always easy to have a forgiving spirit toward some people. But the debt we owe God is far greater than what anyone owes us—and He has forgiven us.

#### **6. Never Give up Praying**

How does Paul indicate that we should persevere in prayer? [Colossians 4:2](#)

DEVOTE yourselves to prayer, being WATCHFUL and THANKFUL.

The Bible Society's Contemporary English Version translates this verse: "Never give up praying. And when you pray, keep alert and be thankful."



## **Closer Than a Phone Call**

A woman telephoned the manager of a large opera house and told him she had lost a valuable diamond pin the night before at the concert. The man asked her to hold the line. A search was made and the brooch was found; but when he got back to the phone, the woman had hung up.

He waited for her to call again, and even put a notice in the paper, but he heard nothing further. What a strange and foolish person, we say, but isn't this the way some of us pray? We tell God all about our needs, but then fail to "hold the line." As a result, we miss the joy of answered prayer and the thrill and reward of a persistent faith. God always answers sincere prayer: sometimes He says "Yes"; sometimes He says "No"; sometimes He says "Wait a while."

A study at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Centre found that one of the best predictors of survival among 232 heart-surgery patients was the degree to which the patients said they drew comfort and strength from religious faith. Those who did not have a religious faith had more than three times the death rate of those who did.

### **A phone call away**

A woman was talking on the telephone to a friend, who asked for prayer. Her five-year-old daughter, Amy, came bouncing into the room, stood still for a moment to listen, and heard her mother praying.

"Is that God on the phone?" Amy asked excitedly. "I need to talk to Him, too!" (Christian Herald)



## LESSON 10 - I will Never Leave You



Is it true that we are never alone? We may feel alone and abandoned on a tiny planet within the universe, but what do the ancient Biblical writings reveal about our true condition? Is there really *Someone to Watch over Me*? Who or what is this Holy Spirit of God? What does He do and how can we plug into this Source of Cosmic power? Learn the 7 Secrets of how this Spirit from God can help you, personally, each day. You too can have simple access His power and truth in your Life, starting today - so what are you waiting for?

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. Someone to Guide Me
2. Who Is the Holy Spirit?
3. Primary Work of the Holy Spirit
4. The Holy Spirit and the Word
5. How the Holy Spirit Helps Us
6. Cashing Our Cheques

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thanks for sending us the Holy Spirit. Please tell us from the Bible more of who He is. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## Someone to Guide Me

Leading Australian social researcher Hugh Mackay in his book *Generations* (on page 177) expresses sentiments that would be true of most Western countries:

"Australians of all generations share the view that 'you wouldn't want to live anywhere else'. Yet beneath that superficial optimism lurks a number of anxieties that are debilitating, and sometimes disabling. If diversity has become one obvious characteristic of Australian society, then insecurity is certainly another."

"At such a time, a society becomes vulnerable," Mackay says, to the voices of popular leaders "who may expose our uncertainties and insecurities."

"This world can get crazy, these are troubled times," sings Tina Arena, in her song "'Heaven Help My Heart'" on her *Don't Ask* album. On her *Strong as Steel* album in "The Machine's Breaking Down" she sings:

Despair and hope go hand in hand  
Charting the inevitable course of man  
Bloody images bounce off the wall  
As the satellite pictures tell it all  
While common goals and  
common ground  
Disappear as the world breaks down.

Where can we find someone who can give us certainty and security in a world that seems to be breaking down—**One** who **can** guide us through the maze of confusion? **Jesus** promised such a **One**. He said that He would send us the **Holy Spirit** to guide us—**One** alongside to help us.

### 1. What was one of the last promises Jesus made to His followers? [Matthew 28:20](#)

And surely , to the very end of the age.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that **God has said**, "'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" He also tells us that Jesus never changes ([Hebrews 13:5-8](#)).

### 2. How is this promise fulfilled when Jesus is in heaven? [John 14:15-18, 26](#)

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another

to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.... I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.



The Greek word for **Counsellor** (Parakletos) means "one alongside to help." The **Holy Spirit** works **IN** us what **Christ** has worked **FOR** us. His work is to make real the personal, abiding presence of Jesus. He convicts us of our need for forgiveness, enables us to follow Jesus and helps us to do the right thing.

## Who Is the Holy Spirit?

### 1. In whose NAME did Jesus instruct His disciples to baptise people? [Matthew 28:19](#)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the .

The word *name* is in the singular, not plural, indicating that the three together make up the one Godhead, and that the Holy Spirit is a Person as are the Father and Jesus. The term **Trinity** has been used by Bible students to describe the Godhead of three persons in unity.

Although not itself a biblical term, the **Trinity** has been found a convenient term for the **one God** who has revealed Himself in the Bible as **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**. It signifies that within the **one basic nature** of the **Godhead** we have to distinguish **three "persons"** who are neither three gods on the one side, nor three parts or modes of God on the other, but co-equally and co-eternally God. (See Baker's Dictionary of Theology).

### 2. How did the early disciples understand who was the Holy Spirit? [Acts 5:3-4](#)

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?... What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to .

The Holy Spirit is a person who has a mind ([Romans 8:27](#)), can teach ([Luke 12:12](#)), feels grief when we sin ([Ephesians 4:30](#)) and directs church affairs ([Acts 13:2](#); [Acts 16:6-10](#)).

### 3. How was the Holy Spirit involved in the creation of this world? [Genesis 1:1-2](#)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the  was hovering over the waters.

Then [Genesis 1](#) shows that as the Spirit moved, God spoke the world into existence. Formlessness gave way to form, emptiness to fullness, and disorder to order.



## Primary Work of the Holy Spirit

### 1. What did Jesus say is the PRIMARY work of the Holy Spirit? [John 15:26](#); [16:14-15](#)

(a) When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will **testify about me**.

(b) He will  to me [Jesus] by taking from what is mine and making it known to you ... The Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

### 2. In pointing us to Jesus, of what does the work of the Holy Spirit consist? [John 16:5-10](#)

(c) When he comes, he will  - [or **convince**] **the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment**.

The Bible says that the “wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus” ([Romans 6:23](#)). Wages are something that people earn—something they deserve. The Holy Spirit is the One who helps us to see that we all have sinned and thus, as a consequence, are going to die.

He also points us to Jesus, who came to save sinners by dying for them and then offering them His perfect record. When we accept Jesus we can face God's judgment with confidence. Jesus' life stands in place of our life and we're accepted before God just as if we hadn't done anything wrong. (referring to our earlier Topic 7, Acquitted!). The devil, whom Jesus calls “the prince of this world”, was defeated when Jesus died on the cross (see [Hebrews 2:14 - 15](#)).

## The Holy Spirit at Work

It's as if we're all sinking in quicksand and if someone doesn't help us, we're going to go under. The Holy Spirit points us to Jesus who is reaching down with His hand to pull us out. The devil tries to deceive people into thinking that God is against us, and thus not to accept Jesus' help. It's the work of the Holy Spirit to convince us to accept it. At that point we can choose to accept Jesus' help or to reject it.

## The Holy Spirit and the Word

### 1. Of whose words will the Holy Spirit remind us? [John 14:22-26](#)

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of  I have said to you.

The Bible is called the Word of God and so is Jesus.

([1 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [John 1:1, 2, 14](#))

The Holy Spirit usually works **through the words of the Bible**, as people read and believe them. As the Spoken Word of God and the Holy Spirit worked together in the creation of the world, so do



they work together in the recreation of people who trust in Jesus ([See Genesis 1:2, 3; John 1:1; 3:5](#)).

Remember the man who visited his doctor with some terrible complaint? He said to the doctor: "Doctor, I'm feeling very sick. Please help me! But don't expect me to follow your instructions." What a fool!

What would the doctor be likely to say? "Unless you follow my instructions implicitly, I cannot help you." And so it is in the Christian life: we must obey God's Word if we want the Holy Spirit to help and guide us.

## **2. What is the response of those who love Jesus? How does this relate to receiving help from the Holy Spirit? [John 14:15-17](#)**

If you love me, you will  what I command.

### **How We Receive the Holy Spirit**

## **3. How do we receive the promised Holy Spirit? [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)**

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Jesus said: "'Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive" ([John 7:38-39](#)).

## **4. Through what means do we receive the Holy Spirit? [Galatians 3:14](#)**

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that  we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

When we accept **Jesus as our Saviour** and receive the **gift of forgiveness and eternal life**, we at the same moment **receive the Holy Spirit** into our lives.

### **How the Holy Spirit Helps Us**

## **1. GUIDES US IN LIFE**

### **In what way does the Holy Spirit guide us? [John 16:13](#)**

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and HE WILL TELL YOU WHAT IS YET TO COME.

### **THE DOVE MAN**

It is said that a certain guide who lived in the deserts of Arabia never lost his way. He carried with him a homing pigeon with a very fine cord attached to one of its legs. When in doubt as to



which path to take, he threw the bird into the air. The pigeon quickly strained at the cord to fly in the direction of home, and thus led the guide accurately to his goal. Because of this unique practice he was known as “the dove man.”

So too, the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Dove, is willing and able to guide us to find fulfillment and meaning in life if we're willing to follow Him. He won't let us down!

## **2. GIVES A NEW BEGINNING AND DIRECTION IN LIFE**

**When talking to Nicodemus, a leading teacher in Israel, Jesus likened the change in the human heart when we accept Him to being “born again”. How did He say this “new birth” takes place?**

**John 3:5-7**

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God UNLESS HE IS BORN OF WATER and the SPIRIT.”

## **3. SPEAKS TO GOD FOR US**

**How does the Holy Spirit help us with our prayers and inner longings? Romans 8:26**

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but THE SPIRIT HIMSELF INTERCEDES [speaks] FOR US with groans [deep feelings] that words cannot express.

## **4. GIVES SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**The Bible says that when we accept Jesus we receive spiritual gifts. Who determines which gifts each believer in Jesus receives? 1 Corinthians 12:1-11**

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, JUST AS HE DETERMINES.

The purpose of spiritual gifts is for the building up of the members of the church. Everyone, when they accept Jesus' gift of eternal life, receives at least one spiritual gift. The apostle Paul says that when Jesus went to heaven He gave gifts to those who trust in Him. Paul said: “It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#))



## 5. HELPS US SHARE JESUS

**How does God help us to be witnesses for Him?** [Acts 1:8](#)

But you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES ... to the ends of the earth.

**It is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that makes Christianity a dynamic, supernatural, saving religion.** To deprive our lives of the Holy Spirit would be as disastrous as to deprive the earth of its atmosphere! The Spirit of God is mentioned 350 times in the Bible (88 times in the Old Testament and 262 times in the New Testament).

## 6. HELPS US DEVELOP CHRISTLIKE QUALITIES

**What is the fruit of the Spirit?** [Galatians 5:22-24](#)

But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

## 7. GIVES SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

**While describing the Spirit-directed life, what prayer does Paul offer for followers of Jesus?**

[Ephesians 3:16-17](#)

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may STRENGTHEN YOU WITH POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

## Cashing Our Cheques

Tina Arena sings:

“Wondering when this all will end and I find the love I need.  
I know it's out there somewhere,  
Somehow I still believe I'm asking please,  
Heaven help my heart.”

Heaven does help our hearts! **The Holy Spirit is the One who can guide us through** these uncertain times. He is the member of the Godhead that applies to our lives what Jesus has achieved for us. Someone has said: “The Lord Jesus draws a cheque for my use. The Holy Spirit cashes the cheque and puts the money into my hands” (S D Gordon, Quiet Talks on Power, page 64).

**Are we claiming our heritage?** An officer making a tour of inspection on a great liner in mid-ocean, found a man sitting behind one of the funnels eating cheese and crackers.



In answer to the officer's inquiry as to why he was eating there, he reported that he had brought his lunch along to save expenses. Day by day he had been eating in this secluded spot.

"But man," said the officer, "your meals were all paid for when you bought your ticket. You should be eating in the dining salon with the other passengers."

Jesus said that when we accept Him as our Saviour we receive the promised Holy Spirit to help us live as His followers. God has blessed us "with every spiritual blessing in Christ" ([Ephesians 1:3](#)).

How often people accept Jesus as their Saviour and then go around as homeless, or live as beggars, when they are the children of the King of the universe. Are you claiming your heritage?



## LESSON 11 - God's Window into the Future



Encounter the reason why some small school children were so scared about their own future? Why are people today generally fearful in this shaky and uncertain world? Discover a dramatic prophecy from ancient times which builds up a startling road map that predicted the future of the ancient and modern world with astounding accuracy. Be amazed at how this prophecy stopped Adolf Hitler from achieving a Third Reich across Europe. This topic explores how God does have a divine plan and shows that this world is still under His control. Learn what dire warnings God gave an ancient Biblical prophet to leave for future generations to both understand and act upon.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. A Primary School's Vision of the Future
2. An Amazing Prophecy
3. The Prophecy Interpreted
4. Our Day in Bible Prophecy
5. A Dream About the Future
6. You Can Be a Part of This Kingdom

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thanks for your sure Word about the future. Please help us trust in you. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## **A Primary School's Vision of the Future**

Students at Macquarie Primary School in Canberra, Australia, were asked to close their eyes and imagine the year 2020. They were to write down what they imagined. Their poems and ideas could be as weird and wonderful as they wanted them to be. What they wrote was published in a collection of student poetry and other works called *The Spinning Tree*,

The title poem reads:

We are based upon one tree,  
All my friends and me.  
The wind is blowing strong,  
I'm not lasting long, the dying tree is red,  
It's spinning in my head.  
Time is going fast.  
I know I'll never last.

Another poem is called ZED St:

On the side of Z street, grey mould buildings on fire,  
Children left on the bitumen cold,  
The trees are naked as a flower stripped of its beauty.  
Everyone is dying, everything is dying.  
On Z street, there's a crystal ball in a fortune teller's hold.

Teacher Craig Dent says that what he found disturbing about the exercise was that the children wrote and worked on their own but a lot of their imagery was the same:

"What they're writing about is very apocalyptic. They're not sure about where they are going.... I think a lot of them are really afraid of what's going to happen to the earth."

Remember, these are primary students!

Richard Eckersley, a social analyst, comments, "Not every vision is black; some are frivolous, light-hearted, bright. And some of the more serious still express hope. Nevertheless, fear of what the future holds for them is a common theme in the children's work."

A survey of 500 Sydney teenagers, conducted by Loud Advertising, found the average adolescent thought the world was "going down the gurgler".



Eckersley says, “My concern is that The Spinning Tree poems and the survey results reveal a fundamental failing of modern Western culture: the absence of a shared ideal or vision of our society and its future, a vision that nurtures and nourishes the individual and helps to hold a society together.” (Youth Studies Australia)

**Without hope human beings can't survive.**

Rolling Stone magazine quotes Fiona Horne, former singer with Sydney band DefFX: “I don't believe there are any divine plans, I believe you make your own ... the way I choose to experience my life is a personal choice that isn't under anyone[']s] or any God's jurisdiction.”

This discovery guide demonstrates very clearly that God does have a divine plan and that this world is still under His jurisdiction.

## **An Amazing Prophecy**

Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, God gave the world a **startling glimpse into the future** through the prophet Daniel. He presented an outline of world history, from Daniel's time to our own day—and beyond. Whole libraries, filled with great books of history, have discussed these centuries, but only in the Bible is the story told, accurately and significantly.

This prophecy appears in the second chapter of Daniel. It actually originated in a dream **God** gave **Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon**, over 2600 years ago. The dream deeply troubled this monarch and he wanted to know what it meant.

After all of **Babylon's wise men** failed to tell the king what he dreamed or what the dream meant, a young Hebrew slave named **Daniel claimed** that the God of heaven could **reveal all mysteries**. Daniel had been taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in **605 BC**.

### **1. What did Daniel say the king saw in his dream? [Daniel 2:31-35](#)**

You looked, O king, and there before you stood a , an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.

### **2. Do we have to guess at the interpretation of this dream? [Daniel 2:36](#)**

This was the dream, and now we will tell it to the king.



## The Prophecy Interpreted

### The Head of Gold

1. What world power did Daniel tell the king the head of gold symbolised? [Daniel 2:37, 38](#) gold.

You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; ...  are that head of gold.

Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon ([Daniel 1:1](#)). We could imagine him looking rather proud at this part of the interpretation. Babylon, referred to by historians as "the golden kingdom", dominated the world until **539 BC**.

### Chest and Arms of Silver

2. What does the prophecy say would happen next? [Daniel 2:39](#)

After you,  will rise, inferior to yours.

In fulfilment of God's prediction, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom fell when Cyrus, the Persian general, in coalition with the Medes, overthrew the Babylonian empire in **539 BC**.

The bronze symbolises the kingdom of Greece, which overthrew the Persians at the Battle of Arbela in **331 BC** (see [Daniel 8:20, 21](#)). Alexander the Great was the first ruler of the kingdom of Greece, which lasted to **168 BC**.

### The Legs of Iron

4. What did Daniel say would follow Greece? [Daniel 2:40](#)

Finally, there will be a , strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.

5. What was the name of this kingdom? [Luke 2:1](#)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire .

After the death of Alexander, his empire weakened and split into rival factions until finally in **168 BC**, at the battle of Pydna, the "Iron Empire" of Rome defeated Greece. Caesar Augustus ruled the Roman Empire when Jesus was born about 2000 years ago ([Luke 2:1](#)).

**Jesus and His apostles** lived during the period represented by the legs of iron.

Gibbon, the 18th century historian, no doubt had Daniel's prophecy in mind when he wrote:



“The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.” (The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. 3, page 634)

## The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay

### 6. What would happen next? Would a fifth world power follow Rome? [Daniel 2:41, 42](#)

Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a

During the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era barbaric invaders from the north attacked the decaying Roman Empire. Finally 10 of the tribes gained most of the territory of Western Rome. Seven of the 10 nations of divided Western Rome remain on the map of Europe today and relate directly back to Daniel's prophecy.

How could Daniel, a Hebrew living in the time of Babylon, know that there would be four world empires within 1000 years? How did he know that the fourth one would be divided? This amazing prophecy is sure evidence that God has **a divine plan for this world** and that there is hope for the future.

### 7. What is the perpetual marvel of European history? [Daniel 2:43](#)

And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will

, any more than iron mixes with clay.

## Our Day in Bible Prophecy

No ruler has ever succeeded in reuniting the fragments of the ancient Roman Empire. While we have a United States of America, a United States of Europe is proving an impossible task. Adolf Hitler was just one among many who tried.

### 1. What is the meaning of the stone that strikes the statue and grinds it to powder? [Daniel 2:44, 45](#)

In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will  be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people.

NOTE: The kingdom of God has two phases - the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The first came with Jesus first advent (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 1:15).



**2. What event brings in God's Kingdom of Glory? [Matthew 25:31-34](#)**

"When the Son of Man  in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another...on his right and...on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall, nations come and nations go, but the kingdom of God will last forever.

Here is a vision for our society and its future, a vision that can nurture and nourish each person and give us hope for the future.

**Jesus is the Stone of God's Kingdom!**


We can either accept him and be saved or reject him and be lost (Luke 20:17-18).

**3. What promise did Jesus leave His followers? [John 14:1-3](#)**

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you,  and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

**A Dream About the Future**

After studying the previous sections, match the body part to the kingdom it represents.



605BC-539BC

539BC-331BC

331BC-168BC

168BC-AD476

168BC-AD476

God's Everlasting



## **You Can Be a Part of This Kingdom**

The greatest passion of Roger Climpson, well known in Australia for hosting "Australia's Most Wanted", is reading the Bible aloud. He says

The Bible "is inspirational, both in its content and in the way it is written. There is no other book that comes near to it in my opinion—even William Shakespeare's works pale into insignificance beside it."

While the Bible has meant a great deal to Roger for most of his life, his passion for it deepened a few years ago when he had a personal crisis. He says, "The crisis was quite severe and I lost all my confidence because of what had happened. I became very listless and lost all objectivity. And then one day I heard a voice in my head say, 'Read the Bible. Read the Bible.' "

"So I began to read the Bible, and the amazing thing was that over a very short period of time I began to see that there was still something worthwhile in life. The passages I read seemed to fit exactly with what my problem was ... it's like a mosaic, everything fits into everything else and comes back to the same source of truth, which is God Himself."

"Prior to that particular crisis, I had moved a long way from the Bible. I was completely involved in a highly commercial world which lacks spiritual sensitivity. There are very few Christians in the world of show business, which makes it hard to be a Christian. I'm not saying that because I'm a Christian I'm something special, because I'm not. I have limited abilities in many areas, but the gift God has given me is in being able to read and express His Word publicly, so that is something which I believe I have a responsibility to do. The Bible clearly indicates that people should strive to use their abilities for the Lord, and I enjoy doing that!" (Sower)

Just as the Bible helps Roger Climpson with his life, so it can help you with yours. History proves the accuracy of Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream. So too we can have assurance in the Bible.



## LESSON 12 - The Second Coming of Jesus



Why are there so many false prophets and false predictions? Do the ancient Biblical writings give us any clue about a cosmic rescue plan for Planet Earth? What are the main indicators for any supposed Return of Jesus Christ? Is this event a promise of Scripture and why is this predicted to happen to us? Can you personally know how near this climactic event is? The topic reveals the truth about the events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. False Prophecies
2. The Promise of Jesus' Coming
3. How Will Jesus Come?
4. Why Jesus Is Coming
5. How Near Is Jesus' Coming?
6. Explorer Shackleton

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Jesus is coming again! Thank you for your promise and the detailed descriptions you give us so we may know the truth. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## False Prophecies

In a Texas town, a UFO cult from Taiwan awaits the coming of the Lord—and his TV appearance.

The cult's Chinese name translates roughly as “**God Saves the Earth Flying Saucer Association.**” They were convinced that salvation would arrive first on the streets of this Texas town. The cult's leader, Chen, is a 42-year-old former social sciences professor who claims to communicate with God through a ring on his finger and through floating golden balls only he can see. According to Chen, God was to appear worldwide on television on March 25, 1998. Chen explained helpfully in his manifesto, “**At 10 am on March 31**, God shall make His appearance in the Holy Land of the Kingdom of God: 3513 Ridgedale Dr., Garland, TX 75041 USA.”

That happens to be Chen's address. Although the Supreme Being was to manifest Himself in the form of the Taiwanese cult leader, Chen explains, he would be distinguished by His various godly powers: to clone himself endlessly, to speak in all tongues (Chen claims to know only Mandarin), to walk through walls. This Chen guarantees “on my life.”

Chen's creed is a mixture of Bible themes, Chinese spiritualism and a fascination with UFOs. He predicted: in February [1999] the People's Republic of China would launch an attack on Taiwan; North Korea would invade the South; Japan would revert to militarism, and the meltdown of three nuclear plants in Taiwan would culminate in Armageddon. In March 1999 a fleet of flying saucers sent by God were to whisk the fortunate few—his cult followers—to outer space and then onward to heaven. (Time, March 30, 1998)

Needless to say, Jesus didn't come on March 31, 1998, nor were Chen and his followers whisked off to heaven in flying saucers.

The well-known French astrologer Nostradamus (1503-1566) is supposed to have predicted that the world would end in the seventh month of 1999 (The Prophecies of Nostradamus, translated by Erika Cheetham, page 468). Many Japanese took this so seriously that Time magazine featured a cover article on this subject (Time, July 12, 1999).

Of course, Nostradamus' writings have been counterfeited numerous times. They also have been used for propaganda purposes since the 17th century, and especially during the Second World War. Therefore, it would be difficult to know now what he actually wrote. As Time also points out: “He kept his prophecies intentionally vague ... that has left them open to a wide range of interpretation.”



The Time article lists a number of people, who, in recent times, have predicted the end of this world.

- **Sun Myung Moon**, leader of the Korean Unification Church, prophesied that the “Kingdom of Heaven would materialise in 1967.”
- **Jim Jones**, predicting doomsday, “persuaded 900-plus followers to down poisoned Kool-Aid in 1978.”
- **Moses David**, Children of God evangelist, “predicted that the Battle of Armageddon would take place in 1986, with Russia defeating the United States and setting up a global communist dictatorship.”
- **David Koresh**, “gun-toting ex-rock singer forecasted that the Battle of Armageddon would begin at his self-styled Ranch Apocalypse in Waco, Texas. It did, in a blaze of gunfire in 1993 between his Branch Davidians and government agents.”
- **Marshall Herff Applewhite**, Heaven's Gate leader, convinced “his techno-religious cult in March 1997 that the end was near and the only way they could survive was by committing suicide and hitching a ride on an alien spaceship.”

How can we avoid such deceptive cults and such destructive teachings? What does the Bible say about Jesus' second coming?

## The Promise of Jesus' Coming

The Old and New Testaments contain well over **1500** specific references to the return of Jesus. The **Second Coming** of Jesus is one of the **most frequently mentioned** topics in the New Testament, with **1 in 13** verses referring to it.

**What promise did Jesus give to His disciples before He went back to heaven?** [John 14:1-3](#)

I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you,  and take you to be with me.

This promise has sustained the followers of Jesus down through the centuries. In writing to Titus, a young minister, Paul calls the second coming of Jesus "**the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ**" ([Titus 2:13](#)).



## How Will Jesus Come?

### It Will Be Visible

**1. Who did John, the writer of the last book of the Bible, say would see Jesus coming the second time? Will only followers of Jesus see Him coming? [Revelation 1:7](#)**

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and  will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.

**2. What did Jesus say all the nations of the earth would see at his second coming? [Matthew 24:30](#)**

All the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the  on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

### It Will Be Audible

**3. According to Jesus what would people hear when he comes again? [Matthew 24:31](#)**

And he will send his angels with a  call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Jesus said the time would come when all who were in the graves would hear His voice and rise from the dead ([John 5:28, 29](#)). Paul said there would be a "loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God."

### It Will Be Public

**4. How did Jesus explain that his second coming would not be in secret? [Matthew 24:25-27](#)**

See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as  that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

You might ask, "**How can everyone see Jesus coming on a round world? Surely they can't see Him all at once?**" That's true, but everyone sees the sun each day. So, if His coming takes 24 hours, everyone will see the event in one day, as Jesus circles the earth.

### It Will Be Glorious

**5. How did Jesus describe his coming? [Matthew 25:31](#)**

When the Son of Man [Jesus] comes in his , and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

The Greek term often used for "coming" is parousia. It means "presence" and is used in ancient writings for the literal coming of an emperor or king.



## It Will be Personal

After Jesus rose from the dead He spent 40 days with His disciples, during which time He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. At the end of this time, while they were watching, He went back to heaven. This is usually called His Ascension. After He ascended, two angels appeared and spoke to the disciples.

### 6. What did the two angels say about Jesus Second Coming? How personal will it be? [Acts 1:9-11](#)

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the  you have seen him go into heaven."

It will be the same Jesus who went up into heaven who will come back—not some apparition or spiritual concept. The same Jesus who walked the dusty roads of Palestine, who had such compassion for the people. The same Jesus who died on the cross for our sins and who brought hope and healing to many. It will be the same Jesus the world upholds as a great moral teacher and a great model to follow. In commenting on Paul's words to the Thessalonian church, **Leon Morris**, former principal of Ridley College and Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, says:

"It is difficult to see how he [Paul] could more plainly describe something that is open and public."

## Why Jesus Is Coming

### To Take His Followers to Heaven

#### 1. When Jesus comes, who will be raised from the dead? What happens to the living Christians who trust in Jesus? [1 Thessalonians 4:14-18](#)

... and the  will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

"Those who have fallen asleep in Him" are people who have died believing in Jesus. They will come to life at Jesus' second coming, and together with all those who trust Him and who are alive at this time, will be taken to heaven.

#### 2. What change does Paul say will take place in the true followers of Jesus when He comes again? [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#)

We will not all sleep [die] but we will all be ... For the perishable must clothe itself with imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.



“Mortal” means “subject to death”; “immortality” means “not subject to death”, “living for ever”. Leon Morris says the New Testament “understands eternal life not as the immortality of the soul, but in terms of the resurrection of the body.” In other words, those who trust in Jesus **receive immortality at the Second Coming of Jesus**. (More will be said about this in Topic 15.)

## To Deliver Us From Evil and Suffering

**3. In his last talk with his followers what did Jesus say would happen to those who have not accepted his gift of salvation at his coming? [Luke 17:26-30](#)**

Just as it was in the days of Noah .... the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot .... the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and  them all.

While we are judged by our works we are not saved by them. Salvation is a free gift. Our works will show whether or not we are trusting in Jesus.

## How Near Is Jesus' Coming?

**1. In view of the fact that Jesus' coming will be unexpected what should we do? [Matthew 24:42-44](#)**

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.... So you also must be , because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

The truth is that the coming of Jesus is, for each of us, as close as our lifetime. I need to be ready today; I may not be alive tomorrow! The **real issue** is not when will Jesus come, but, **am I right with God today?** If so, then I'm ready for Jesus to come today!

**2. How can we be ready for his coming? 1 [John 5:11-13](#)**

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

When people truly accept what Jesus has done for them in paying for their sins and crediting them with His perfect life, then they are ready for heaven. We become citizens of heaven the moment we accept what Jesus has done for us. And if we are citizens, then we have all the rights of citizens. This includes the right to go to heaven when He comes.

## ...And I feel fine

The pop group **R.E.M.** have a song that has been released on at least three of their albums, "It's the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine."

I'm not sure what they meant by this song, but for those who trust in Jesus the second coming is the end of the world as we know it, and they will feel fine! They will be with Jesus.



## **Explorer Shackleton**

When the great explorer Ernest Shackleton was on his quest of the South Pole, he was at one time driven back and compelled to leave some of his men on Elephant Island with few supplies. He promised that he would return for them.

But when he endeavoured to get back he found a sea of ice between him and the island. He tried to reach them, but failed. He tried again and again, but without success.

At that time of the year a favourable change in the weather seemed hopeless. He was told that there was absolutely no hope of getting his little boat, the *Yalcho*, through the great ice barrier to Elephant Island.

But he must reach his men; so at the risk of losing his boat he pushed in nearer to the island. Unexpectedly, there came an opening in the ice. He hurried in, rescued the waiting men, and was out of the ice in an hour. Had they been delayed only a few minutes the frail vessel could have been crushed by the ice as it closed in around it.

When they were safe Shackleton said to one of the rescued men, "Well, you were packed and ready, weren't you?"

"Yes," came back the reply, "we never lost hope. We believed you would come for us, even though circumstances were unfavourable. Each morning we rolled up our sleeping bags and packed all our equipment, that we might be ready." (C L Paddock, *God's Minutes*, page 315)



## LESSON 13 - What Happens after Jesus Comes



Ever been motivated enough to call for some real justice? There is a worldwide call for justice and it is for people to be judged *fairly!* So what about the Final Judgment of God? Discover what events happen right after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ back to this Earth. Can Evil ever have a true ending? Learn all about the 1000 year period and the Resurrection (refer to chart). If there is hope for the future, exactly what is it? Encounter reasons to be optimistic about the recreation of this planet and the final redemption of humanity. However, just what do YOU need to do - to survive it?

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. False Prophecies
2. One Thousand Years and First Resurrection
3. During the 1000 Years
4. Final Judgment and Vindication of God
5. It's Your Choice!

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you for the promise of your justice and mercy. Please tell us how you can do both together from your Word. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## False Prophecies

Alanis Morissette's Jagged Little Pill debut album sold an incredible 16 million plus copies in the USA within three months, and 26 million plus worldwide, making "Jagged Little Pill" the biggest selling debut album of all time. Alanis won four Grammy Awards for the album, including Album of the Year.

In the album Alanis bares her soul as she expresses her pain and longing. The response Alanis received to this album shows that she is expressing the pain and longing of many.

In a Rolling Stone interview entitled "Alanis Morissette, Angry White Female" she said:

"The reaction of the audience has been so amazing and open it's comforting and bittersweet to know that I'm not the only one who's gone through these things. At the same time it's a little disturbing that apparently there's a lot of people out there having gone through such painful things. The reaction has been pretty intense."

Her song "All I Really Want" is a passionate cry for justice and understanding. She sings:

And all I really want is some patience  
A way to calm the angry voice  
And all I really want is deliverance....  
If only I could meet the Maker....  
What I wouldn't give to find a soul-mate

Someone else to catch this drift  
And what I wouldn't give to meet a kindred....  
All I really want is some peace man  
A place to find a common ground ...  
All I really want is some comfort  
A way to get my hands untied  
And all I really want is some justice ...

When will we get "some justice"? When will we find "deliverance", "a soul mate", "a kindred spirit", "peace", "a common ground", and "some comfort"? These are yearnings that are in the hearts of most of us! When will these yearnings be realised? When will evil and suffering end? Where is God in a world of despair and meaninglessness?

As we saw in Topic 5 (Where Did Evil Come From?), the angel Lucifer became proud and focused on himself instead of on God ([Ezekiel 28:12-17](#)). He wanted God's position ([Isaiah 14:12-15](#)) and he used deception and misrepresentation to incite rebellion in heaven ([Revelation 12](#)). In tempting Eve to sin he also misrepresented what God had said ([Genesis 3:1-6](#)). Thus Lucifer the light bearer became Satan the



**adversary (enemy) and brought suffering and death to this world.** In doing so Satan has placed a question mark against the name of God. He implied that God is not fair.

The Bible talks about a 1000-year period ([Revelation 20](#)) that is often referred to as the **millennium** (Latin for a thousand years). This 1000-year period **commences with Jesus' Second Coming**. In this topic we'll consider the question: "What Happens After Jesus Comes?" It's about justice and judgment—when wrongs will be righted, accounts settled, rewards given and the intense longings that are common to most of us will be satisfied. It's about **the vindication of God** and the followers of God. Vindication is about clearing God of Satan's false charges. God will bring sin and suffering to an end. And when He does, every being in the universe will know and testify that **God is just and fair**.

### **One Thousand Years and First Resurrection**

#### **1. In what two resurrections did Christ say the dead would be raised? [John 5:28-29](#)**

... a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done  will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it couldn't reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: "This burial place must never be opened." In time, a seed, covered by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them.

As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were torn from their sockets. A tiny seed had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones.

The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is a faint reflection of the **tremendous power of God's creative word** that some day soon will call to life all who have died.

#### **2. When will those who died believing in Jesus be raised to life? [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)**

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the  will rise first.

#### **3. What happens to the followers of Jesus who are living when He comes? [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#)**

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be  together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.



**4. What indication does John, the writer of Revelation, give that these events occur at the beginning of the millennium? [Revelation 20:4-6](#)**

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a  years.

Obviously, if they reign with Him for a thousand years, this resurrection must be at the beginning of that period.

**5. How does the Bible indicate that the Second Coming of Christ does not disturb the dead who have not accepted the gift of salvation? [Revelation 20:5](#)**

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were .

This sentence is in brackets because John, in the middle of talking about the first resurrection, mentions the "**rest of the dead**" who are not resurrected until the end of the millennium. If all those who have accepted Jesus rise in the first resurrection, the "**rest of the dead**" must be those who have not accepted this gift.

**6. What effect does the coming of Jesus have on those who are alive and have not accepted the gift of salvation? [Luke 17:26-30](#)**

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and  them all.... It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

All those who have not availed themselves of the gift of life in Jesus receive the "wages of sin", which is death ([Romans 6:23](#)), at the beginning of the 1000 years. This group is pictured, in the book of Revelation ([Rev. 6:12-17](#)), as calling to the mountains and rocks to fall on them to hide them from the face of Jesus at the Second Coming.

### **During the 1000 Years —The Chaining of Satan and Judgment**

**1. What happens to Satan during the millenium and what is he unable to do during this time? [Revelation 20:1-3](#)**

He [the angel] seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and  him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

The word **Abyss** is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint, translated between about 280 to 180 BC) to refer to this world in a **desolate state** ([Genesis 1:2](#)). It is also used in reference to the grave ([Romans 10:7](#)).



Satan is bound by a chain of circumstances. He has no-one to tempt or to destroy. Those who have accepted Jesus are with Him in heaven; all those who have rejected Jesus are dead and not raised until the end of the 1000 years. Satan and his rebel angels are alone on this desolate earth during the 1000 years. They have no human beings to tempt or deceive.

**2. Where are God's people and what are they doing during the millennium? [Revelation 20:4-6](#)**

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to .... They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

**These verses describe a judgment scene.** A court case is where all the issues concerning a case are presented. The apostle Paul says that the followers of Jesus "will judge the world" and "angels" ([1 Corinthians 6:2-3](#)). What is the **purpose** of the millennium? It is so that all of God's creatures might see and realise the **perfect justice** of God's actions, before Satan and his followers are destroyed forever.

"[The millennium] expresses the hope of Christ's final triumph over evil and the vindication with him of his people who have suffered under the tyranny of evil in the present age." (Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Vol 1, page 475)

**End of 1000 Years, Second Resurrection and Unchaining of Satan**

**3. What did John see descending to the earth at the close of the 1,000 years? [Revelation 21:2](#)**

I saw the Holy City, the , coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride.

**4. When the resurrection of those who have rejected Jesus' gift of life permits Satan to become active once more, what does he do to show that he has not changed? [Revelation 20:5, 7-9](#)**

(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended). When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to  the nations... to gather them for battle. And surrounded the camp of God's people, the city He loves.

**Final Judgment and Vindication of God**

**1. What judgment takes place at the end of the thousand years when those who rejected Jesus are resurrected to life? [Revelation 20:11-13](#)**

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.... And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life.

The  were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades [grave] gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.



**2. What is the outcome of Satan's attempt to take the City of God? [Revelation 20:9, 14-15](#)**

They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the City He loves. But fire came down from heaven and .

## Three Aspects of Judgement and Vindication of God

1 Before Jesus' second coming the counter play between Christ and Satan is being worked out in the choices people make. These choices determine their destiny. Those who accept Jesus' gift of life have already received the verdict of acquittal in anticipation of the last judgment. They receive their reward at Jesus' second coming ([Matthew 16:27](#)). The Bible pictures the intelligent beings of the universe, like spectators in a Roman amphitheatre, watching this conflict in the arena of this world ([1 Corinthians 4:9](#)). They see God's perfect justice in His dealings with the rebellion of Satan ([Ephesians 3:8-11](#); [Revelation 16:5-7](#)).

2 In the judgment during the millennium, the people of God in heaven are given opportunity to review God's dealings with the rebellion of Satan. They will be able to judge for themselves the fairness of God in allowing some to be saved and some to be lost ([Revelation 20:4, 6](#); [1 Corinthians 6:2, 3](#)). During this time God's people are pictured as standing before the throne of God singing, "**Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty, Just and true are your ways.... All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts [judgments] have been revealed**" ([Revelation 15:2-4](#)).

3 At the end of the millennium, those who have chosen to go against God are required to give an account of their lives. Their lives are reviewed from the records kept ([Revelation 20:11-13](#)). Satan and all his followers will be convinced of their folly in having rejected God's gift of life. Jude says "**See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way**" ([Jude 1:14, 15](#)). They receive the consequences of their actions, which is eternal destruction. They are thrown into the lake of fire that is the second death ([Revelation 20:14, 15](#)).

**3. What shows that everyone, even the devil and those who followed him, acknowledge the justice of God? [Romans 14:10-11](#); and [Philippians 2:6-11](#)**

For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' "

[Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and  that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



## The Earth Cleansed and Made New

### 4. What did John see, that would take place after the final cleansing fire and all sin has been eliminated? [Revelation 21:1-5](#)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more  or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away...

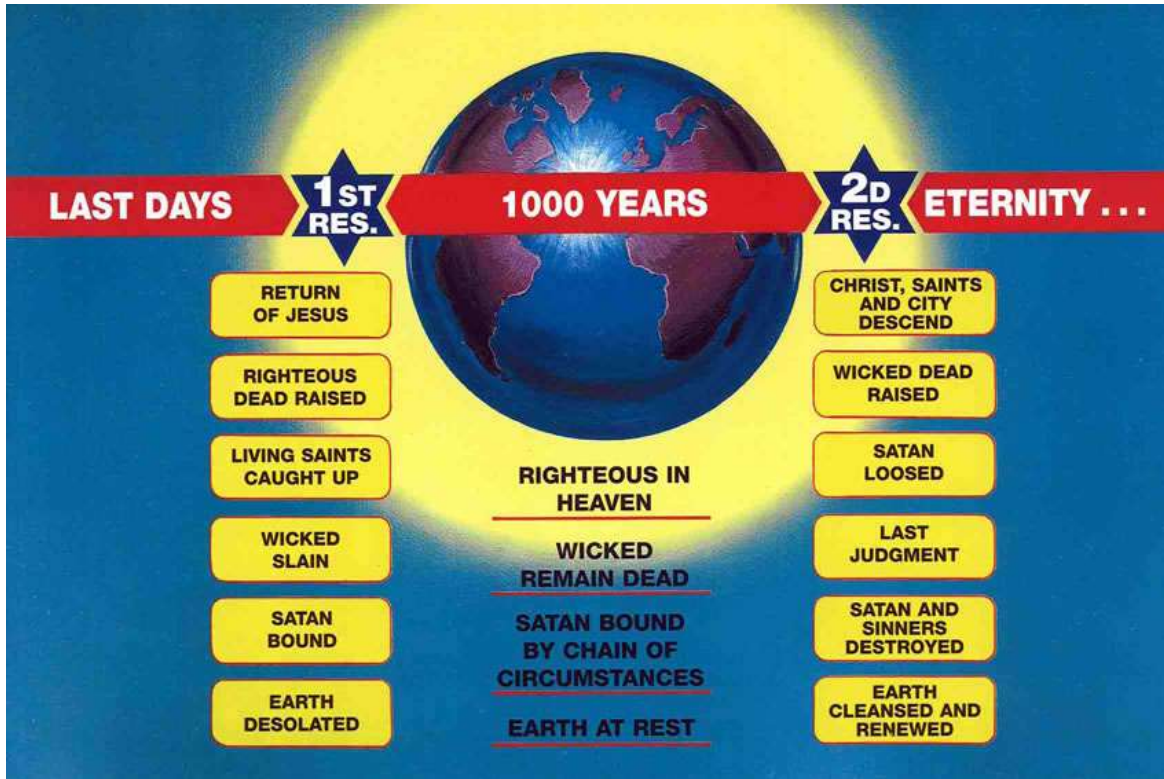
### It's Your Choice!

A little girl was walking with her father in the country. No neon signs, car headlights or street lamps marred the stillness of the crisp evening. As she looked into the deep blue velvet sky, studded with an array of diamonds that put the most dazzling Tiffany jewellery display to shame, she said, "Daddy, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what do you think the right side will be like?"

Some day all believers in Jesus will see the "right side" of heaven.

From our study of the millennium, three challenging facts emerge:

1. Each one of us will spend the millennium in either one of two places: with Satan on this lifeless, silent earth, or with Jesus amid the joys of a sinless heaven.
2. Each one of us will be alive on the earth at the end of the millennium, in either one of two places: with Satan, outside the Holy City, or with Jesus, inside the Holy City.
3. Which place it will be depends upon our individual decision now.





## LESSON 14 - What and Where Is Heaven?



Was John Lennon right when he sang the song about *Imagine* there's no Heaven? The Biblical Scriptures speak repeatedly about the certainty and the reality of a place called Heaven. Learn about whether there will be any humans there and why evil will not rise again to spoil the new creation by God. Discover what Biblical truth Eric Clapton unveiled in his song *Tears In Heaven*. The really Good News about Heaven is that God wants everyone to be there. Understand how the choice of you being there - is really decided by you!

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. "Imagine There's No Heaven"
2. Heaven Will Be a Real Place
3. We Will Be Real People
4. Evil Will Never Rise Again
5. The Best Thing About Heaven
6. No Tears in Heaven

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thanks for the promise of your heaven. Thank you for letting us in on your plans that we might be able to join you face to face. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## "Imagine There's No Heaven"

Does Heaven Exist?

A TIME magazine cover article asks:

"Does Heaven Exist?"

"Once upon a time, the hereafter was well mapped and familiar, the subject of detailed sermons and cautionary tales about doing and being good.

Today, however, the silence on it is so pervasive that heaven may as well not exist."

In his song "Imagine," the late John Lennon sings:

Imagine there's no heaven it's easy if you try,  
no hell below us above us only sky.  
Imagine all the people living for today ...  
Imagine there's no countries it isn't hard to do,  
nothing to kill or die for and no religion too.

This was voted recently as the most popular song in the UK. It's an Eastern concept where ultimate reality is Brahman for the Hindu and Nirvana for the Buddhist.

John and the Beatles were influenced by Eastern gurus, such as Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the Hare Krishna movement.

Ultimate reality is, in the words of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, "nothingness." "When you become absorbed and lost in this cosmic nothingness, you have arrived," said the Rajneesh. "We shouldn't be afraid of nothingness." Sounds a bit bleak!

Some people regard "ultimate reality" or "heaven" as a childish fantasy, a mythical afterlife that the imagination of humans has conjured up to compensate for the disappointments and sorrows of the present life. Others think of it as a hazy, unreal existence, where white-robed "saints" sit on the edges of clouds, dangling little golden harps.

The article in Time reports an American survey where 81 per cent believe in the existence of heaven, where **people live forever with God** after they die.

**What does the Bible say about heaven?**



## Heaven Will Be a Real Place

### 1. What did Christ promise He would prepare for His followers? [John 14:1-4](#)

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a for you. And if I go and prepare a  place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

This **promise** of Jesus has sustained and encouraged His followers down through the centuries.

### 2. Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. He is also called the father of those who believe in Jesus ([Galatians 3:7](#)). Who is the architect and builder of the place for which Abraham looked?

#### [Hebrews 11:8-10](#)

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is .

### 3. What three NEW things does John see? [Revelation 21:1-2](#)

Then I saw a (1)new heaven and a (2)new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the (3)new , coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

The Bible **starts** with a new heaven and new earth, and that's the way it **ends**. The disobedience of Adam and Eve, which **brought in sin** and its consequences, is recorded in the **third** chapter of Genesis (as we saw in our study Topics 3 & 4).

The record of the **eradication of sin** and its effects is recorded in the third **last chapter** in the Bible (study Topic 13). God's original plan for this planet, interrupted by the devil's rebellion, will be **ultimately realised** when **God eradicates the problem of evil and makes this world new again**.

### 5. Who did Jesus say would occupy the new earth? [Matthew 5:5](#)

Blessed are the , for they will inherit the earth.

At the end of the 1000 years, after the cleansing fires have done their work, heaven is actually going to come down to this earth! This familiar planet, restored to its original Edenic beauty, will thus become **God's "tabernacle" or "dwelling-place"**, and **the eternal home of God's people** ([Revelation 21:3-5](#)).

Fiske Planetarium (University of Colorado) needed money, so its director dreamed up a gimmick. He printed brochures offering 1000-acre lots on the planet Mars for only \$20. "This land still features pink skies, unlimited rock gardens, and not one but two moons." And "at one-sixth the gravity of Earth, your golf game will improve immensely." The **gag** was surprisingly successful. People across the country sent in their \$20 for a deed, for space flight insurance, and for a simulated sample of red Martian soil.



If this story catches your imagination, then think about **the ultimate real estate - heaven**. God has promised it, not to make money, but **to express His love for all who trust Jesus** as their **Saviour**. **God will live and dwell with us!**

## **We Will Be Real People**

### **1. Will we have real bodies in heaven? [Philippians 3:20-21](#)**

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, ... will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious .

The apostle Paul, writing to the Roman Christians, says, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for ... the redemption of our bodies."  
([Romans 8:22- 23](#))

### **2. What took place which showed Jesus resurrected body was real? [Luke 24:36-43](#)**

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have , as you see I have.

### **3. Will we recognise each other in Heaven? [1 Corinthians 13:12](#)**

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall , even as I am fully known.

**Mary** at the tomb after the resurrection of Jesus **recognised Jesus' voice** when He spoke to her ([John 20:14-16](#)). While the **two disciples** at Emmaus, at first, were kept from recognising Jesus after He was resurrected, they did **recognise Him by His mannerisms** when "he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them" ([Luke 24:13-34](#)). Likewise Jesus' disciples recognised Him in His resurrected body by His familiar features ([Luke 24:36-43](#)).

## **Evil Will Never Rise Again**

### **1. Speaking about the New Jerusalem, what does the apostle John say will not be there? [Revelation 21:27](#)**

Nothing  will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Heaven is described by **what won't be there**, because our minds can't comprehend what it will really be like. How do you tell an Eskimo from Greenland about a tropical island? How do you describe the sand and the warm sea, the palm trees and flowers, the tropical fruits and colourful birds?



He wouldn't understand fully until he experienced it! Mostly you would tell him what **won't be there** - no cold, no ice, no snow!

**In Heaven and the New Earth** there will be **no more sin, evil, suffering and death**. God promises this through Jesus.

## The Best Thing About Heaven

### 1. Where will God's dwelling place be? [Revelation 21:3](#)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is , and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

### 2. Who will we see face to face? [Revelation 22:3-4](#)

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

The good thing about heaven will be the realisation of our greatest aspirations. While in this life we only ever achieve a fraction of what we aspire to, **in heaven we will continue to achieve eternally**, to the glory of God. The prolific 19th century Christian writer Ellen White has described heaven this way:

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love.... Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realised; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed."

(E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1950, page 677)

## God Wants You to Be There

### 3. Where does the Bible say our citizenship is when we accept Jesus as our saviour? [Philippians 3:20-21](#)

But our citizenship is in . And we eagerly await a saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the words of a song say:

"This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through. If heaven's not my home, then Lord what will I do?"

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and are credited with His righteousness, we become citizens of heaven. Jesus is our passport to heaven. Then the devil and all of his evil angels cannot stop us from



going to heaven. Paul writing to the Ephesians says, "**Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household.**" ([Ephesians 2:19](#))

God is interested in us all being with Him in the world made new. Peter says: "**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**" ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). God wants everyone to accept His great offer now, while there is still time.

#### 4. How do we inherit a place in the new earth? [Galatians 3:29](#)

If you , then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Years ago, Andre Kole, the talented illusionist who travelled all over the world as a representative of a Christian youth organisation, wrote about the death of his wife, Aljeana. She had an incurable brain tumour, and for two years she endured incredible suffering. She gradually lost the use of her arms and legs and couldn't move her head or body. She became totally blind. Day after day she could do nothing but lie helplessly in bed.

Kole wrote, "**While Aljeana was still able to do some speaking, she always shared a poem that ended with these lines: 'We should not long for heaven, if earth held only joy'**".

## No Tears in Heaven

### Eric Clapton

**Eric Clapton** is considered one of the world's greatest modern guitarists. His song "**Tears in Heaven**", on his Unplugged album, became a hit a few years ago. It's about the death of his four-year-old son **Conor** in 1992. He fell to his death from the 53rd floor of the Manhattan apartment building where he was staying with his mother, Italian actress Lori Del Santo. The boy had run through a window left open by the housekeeper. Eric, who was staying in an apartment a few blocks away, got a phone call to come immediately. He arrived to see paramedics gathered on the footpath, around his dead son.

"I just wanted to write sad music," he said. "All this year, that's all I wanted."

In the song, Eric Clapton bares his soul publicly. He shares his grief, in all its rawness and pain, with the whole world. He is to be admired for that. Most men can't show their grief.

Newsweek said: "A year after his son's death he fashions a song out of pure pain."



He sings:

*"Would it be the same, if I saw you in heaven?...  
Would you hold my hand, if I saw you in heaven?  
Would you help me stand, if I saw you in heaven?"*

His pain shows through as he cries:

*"Time can bring you down.  
Time can bend your knees.  
Time can break your heart.  
Have you begging please,  
begging please?"*

He is right when he sings:

*"Beyond the door, there's peace I'm sure.  
And I know there'll be no more tears in heaven."*

This is a reference to [Revelation 21:4](#) where it says about heaven that God will **"wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."**

But the saddest part of the song is that he says he must be strong and carry on, because he knows he doesn't belong in heaven.

The truth is that God wants everybody to be there!

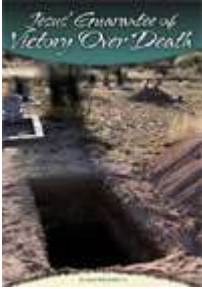
Jesus came to this earth to pay the penalty for our sins and mistakes, and **He freely offers to everybody the opportunity to accept the gift of eternal life**, now while **there is still time**.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." ([John 3:16](#))

Heaven is for everybody who believes in Jesus! Isn't that great?



## LESSON 15 - Jesus' Guarantee of Victory over Death



His wife waited for over 10 years for a message from deceased master escape artist, Harry Houdini - but he never did return from the dead, as he promised! But there is One person who is documented as having been resurrected from the dead in the time of the Roman Empire and that was Jesus Christ! Why not learn from One who came back from the dead? So what happens and where do we go when we die? Is there consciousness in death? Do we have an immortal or undying soul? Does God ever forget those who have died? Just why does the Bible call death "a sleep"? Make sure you take time to discover the Good News about death, for all those who choose to follow Jesus.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. The Great Escape Houdini Couldn't Make
2. Death As a Sleep
3. What Happens When a Person Dies?
4. God Alone Is Immortal
5. Is There Consciousness in Death?
6. Victory!

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you Lord for your Word of guarantee that those that believe in you will not perish, but have eternal life. Please tell us from your Word what happens when we die. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## The Great Escape Houdini Couldn't Make

**Harry Houdini**—escape artist, magician, author of more than 40 books, inventor, star, aviator, showman and psychologist—swept through the world like a hurricane between 1895 and 1926, leaving behind him a trail of vanquished prison cells, vacated handcuffs and gasping audiences. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, accused him of having “supernatural powers.” A reporter in Germany, stunned by the ease with which Houdini was able to free himself from a sealed packing case without disturbing a single nail, declared, “Houdini has the ability to dematerialise his body and pass it through walls.” In Washington, a handcuffed Houdini jauntily escaped from a maximum-security cell in the federal penitentiary. He then playfully moved 18 other locked-up prisoners to different cells before escaping to the outside—all in about 27 minutes.

The year 1913 marked a turning point for Houdini. His mother, who had been a profound force in his life, died. Unable to reconcile himself either to her loss or to his failure to be at her deathbed, he swallowed his scepticism and began to visit mediums and spiritualists in the hope of communicating with her. Each medium he visited proved a charlatan. Ten years later, at the height of his popularity he talked of retirement and was filled with an impending sense of death.

In 1926 in Detroit he collapsed from a ruptured appendix and peritonitis. Bess, his wife of 32 years, who had also been sick, joined her husband in the hospital. On October 29, 1926, a fading Houdini struggled with his final problem.

“Mother never reached me,” he gasped to Bess. “If anything happens you must be prepared. Remember this message: ‘Rosabelle, believe.’ [‘believe’ was coded in nine other words].” He told her that when she heard these words, she would know that it was he who was speaking. Shortly afterwards, Houdini died on October 31—strangely enough, on Halloween.

For the next 10 years Bess also sought the help of spirit mediums. Each year, on the anniversary of his death, she sat in their home before a candle-lit portrait of the master, and waited for his signal. It never came. In 1936, 10 years after his death, she extinguished the light.

But among magicians there are still those who go out each year at Halloween to the place where Houdini is buried. And there they wait, hoping for a sign that the unconquerable Houdini has been able to make his greatest escape. (J S Gordon, “Houdini, The Man No Lock Could Hold,” Reader’s Digest. R Fitzsimons, “Death and the Magician: The Mystery of Houdini,” Reader’s Digest)

Ever since the Beatles produced their Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band album and then followed the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to India in the 1960s, Hindu and Buddhist concepts of reincarnation and the god within have flooded into the West. This album was voted by Rolling Stone magazine as the number one album since the 1960s. The Beatles sang in “Within You Without You”, with Hindu sitar playing in the background: “When you’ve seen beyond yourself—/ then you may find, peace of mind, is waiting there—/



And the time will come when you see/ we're all one, and life flows on within you and without you." The seemingly endless cycles of lifetimes are supposedly for the purpose of working off our bad karma and progressing to a greater degree of perfection. New Age guru and film star Shirley MacLaine has been called the "Pied Piper of today's reincarnation tune." She claims to have lived thousands of lives before. Time magazine calls her the star of the New Age.

A small lad, making his way through a graveyard, stopped to read an inscription on a headstone. He was intrigued by the following epitaph:

"Stop, my friend, as you go by.  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, you soon shall be.  
So prepare yourself to follow me."

The boy stood there for some time thinking. Then, taking a piece of crayon from his pocket, he wrote this message: "To follow you I'm not content, until I know which way you went."

That's rather clever! But what happens when people die? Where do they go? What is death? For atheists, those who don't believe there is a God, death is a black hole—the end. Novelist Ernest Hemmingway, who shot himself in 1961, wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*, "There is no remedy for anything in life ... Death is the sovereign remedy for all misfortunes." Many Christians believe that the dead are not really dead, but are in heaven or hell or some intermediate place. **What happens when someone dies?** Is death the end, or a new beginning?

Escape artist Houdini couldn't escape death, but **Jesus conquered death and the grave!** Jesus said: "I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades [grave]" ([Revelation 1:18](#)).

Jesus who conquered death, now has a message of **hope for us!**

## Death As a Sleep

The term cemetery (Greek = "sleeping place") was first used to refer to burial grounds by the early Christians, reflecting **their belief in resurrection of the dead**. Over 50 times the Bible refers to death as a sleep.

**1. Speaking to Martha, at the graveside of Lazarus, what did Jesus say that He was and what would happen to those who believe in Him? [John 11:21-25](#)**

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the . He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.



Death is an intruder and Jesus feels our pain when we lose a loved one. At the graveside of Lazarus Jesus wept ([verses 33-36](#)). He demonstrated the truth that He was the "**resurrection and the life**" by raising Lazarus from the dead ([verses 38-44](#)).

## 2. What did Jesus accomplish by His death? [Hebrews 2:14-15](#)

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil — and  those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

## What Happens When a Person Dies?

### 1. To understand what death is we need to go back to the beginning and see how God made humans in the first place. What two elements were used by God to make the first man into a living being? [Genesis 2:7](#)

The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the , and man became a living being.

God formed a body out of earth, then breathed life into it.

The combination of the **breath of life** and **body** made Adam a **living being**. The expression "living being" is from the Hebrew word nephesh, and in earlier Bible versions was translated "**living soul**". It literally means "living creature" as in [Genesis chapter one verses 20 & 24](#), in reference to the animals.

### 2. What did God say would happen to Adam and Eve if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? [Genesis 2:15-17](#)

God: "You will surely .

### 3. What did the serpent (Devil) say would happen? [Genesis 3:4-5](#)

The Devil's lie: "You will  surely die."

### 4. What did God say happens to the body at death? [Genesis 3:19](#)

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you , since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.

Comedian Woody Allen expresses the view of many when he says: "It's not that I'm afraid to die - I just don't want to be there when it happens."

On the humorous side a little boy asked his mother, "Is it true, Mummy, that we are made of dust?" "Yes, darling."

"And do we go back to dust again when we die?" "Yes."



“Well, Mummy, when I said my prayers last night and looked under the bed, I found someone who is either coming or going.”

**5. What happens to the “breath of life” or the “spirit,” at death? [Ecclesiastes 12:7](#)**

... the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit [breath]  to God who gave it.

This spark, or principle of life, is called the **spirit** or **breath** of life (Hebrew, ruach, Greek, pneuma). These terms are used interchangeably and indicate **only the element of life, not consciousness or intelligence.** See [Job 27:3](#).

Death is the reverse of what took place at Creation. The body returns back into dust, and the principle of life (breath or spirit) returns to the One who originally breathed life into Adam. **Death is likened to sleep with our identity and personality secure in God's hands until the resurrection.**

## Deaths Defeat

New Testament scholar and former principal of Ridley College, Melbourne, and Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, **Leon Morris** says:

“It seems better to understand death as something that involves the whole man. Man does not die as a body. He dies as a man, in the totality of his being. He dies as a spiritual and physical being. And the Bible does not put a sharp line of demarcation between the two aspects. Physical death, then, is a fit symbol of, and expression of, and unity with, the deeper death that sin inevitably brings.

“It is significant that the NT can speak of believers as ‘sleeping’ rather than as ‘dying’ (eg [1 Thessalonians 4:14](#)). Jesus bore the full horror of death. Therefore for those who are 'in Christ' death has been transformed so that it is no more than sleep.”

“In keeping with this the NT understands eternal life not as the immortality of the soul, but in terms of the resurrection of the body. Nothing could more graphically illustrate the finality and the completeness of death's defeat.” (The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, IVP, Vol 1, pages 374-376)

## God Alone Is Immortal

**1. Does the word “soul” refer to an immortal part of humans that cannot die? [Ezekiel 18:4](#)**

The soul who sins is the one who will .

**2. What did Jesus say about whom we should fear? [Matthew 10:28](#)**

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both  in hell.



The word hell is translated from the Greek Gehenna that referred to the “Valley of Hinnom” south of Jerusalem. Here the Israelites followed the barbaric heathen rite of burning children to the idol Molech (2 [Chronicles 28:3; 33:1, 6](#)).

Because of this wicked practice the prophet Jeremiah (about 626-586 BC) predicted that God would make it a "**valley of slaughter**" ([Jeremiah 7:32-33](#)). This led to it becoming known as a **place of judgment** on the wicked.

The word Gehenna occurs 11 times in the New Testament and is used symbolically for the final destruction of those who have chosen to follow Satan, rather than accept God's free gift of eternal life through Jesus.

It takes place at the end of the millennium (as discussed in study Topic 13)(see [Revelation 20:11-15](#)). Jesus said that Gehenna was “prepared for the devil and his angels” ([Matthew 25:41](#)).

God ... ALONE IS IMMORTAL and ... lives in unapproachable light.  
[1 Timothy 6:15-16](#).

## Is There Consciousness in Death?

**1. Where do all the dead go at the time of death? Ecclesiastes 9:10**

**2. How much do people know when they are dead? Ecclesiastes 9:5-6**

The dead know .

The writer of Psalms says when a person dies, “THEIR PLANS COME TO NOTHING.” [Psalm 146:3-4](#)

**3. What does the Bible say about the possibility of the dead praising the Lord? Psalm 115:17**

It is  who praise the Lord.

If, as is commonly thought, some people go to heaven at death, could you imagine them not praising God! The truth is, they are asleep in death, until Jesus calls them to life again, in the first or second resurrection.



**4. What is God's view of trying to contact the dead? [Deuteronomy 18:9-12](#)**

Let no one be found among you who... practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is  to the LORD.

**5. Some members of the Corinthian church were saying that there's no resurrection. If this were so, what would happen to those who have died while believing in Jesus? [1 Corinthians 15:16-18](#)**

Then those also who have fallen asleep [died] in Christ are .

### God Will Not Forget Our Loved Ones!

**6. What does Paul say will happen at the Second Coming to those who have died believing in Christ? [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#)**

The dead in Christ will .

**7. When do those who have accepted Jesus' gift of eternal life receive immortality? [1 Corinthians 15:51-54](#)**

For , the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Who will enjoy eternal life? [John 3:16](#)

For God so loved the world that he GAVE his one and only Son, that whoever BELIEVES in him [Jesus] shall not PERISH but have ETERNAL life.

### Victory!

It was June 18, 1815, the Battle of Waterloo. The French under the command of **Napoleon** were fighting the Allies (British, Dutch and Germans) under the command of **Wellington**. The people of England depended on a system of signals to find out how the battle was going. One of these signal stations was on the tower of Winchester Cathedral. Late in the day it flashed the signal:

"W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D ... "

Just at that moment one of those sudden English fog-clouds made it impossible to read the message.

The news of defeat quickly spread throughout the city. The whole countryside was sad and gloomy when they heard the news that their country had lost the war. Suddenly the fog lifted, and the remainder of the message could be read. The message had four words, not two. The complete message was: "W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D T-H-E E-N-E-M-Y" It took only a few minutes for the good news to spread.

Sorrow was turned into joy, **defeat was turned into victory!**

This experience illustrates the meaning that the disciples read into Christ's crucifixion. The sun refused to shine on the scene. Darkness covered the earth. Hope had died even in the hearts of Jesus' most loyal



friends. After the frightful crucifixion the fog of disappointment and misunderstanding reduced the message to two words: “J-E-S-U-S D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D ...”

As they laid His lifeless body in a borrowed tomb, the disciples’ hopes were shattered. They said, “We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel” ([Luke 24:21](#)).

But as the light broke on that resurrection morning, their despair changed to amazement and joy. “J-E-S-U-S D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D D-E-A-T-H”. **The message of the New Testament is that Jesus defeated Satan, sin and death.** His resurrection is the **guarantee** of our resurrection “when he comes” the second time ([1 Corinthians 15:23](#)).

*Adapted from G Vandeman, Life After Death, pages 139-41.*



## LESSON 16 - A Framework For Freedom and Happiness



Those who sought ultimate freedom in the past have often found themselves tied to unexpected outcomes that have greatly limited their freedoms. So where can true freedom be found? Evaluate 3 fundamental rules for Happiness. Should we all have a hierarchy of consistent values that we ought to internalize? Discover what message God gave to all peoples for all time. What are the 10 main principles for living a fulfilling life? What values do you find essential to living a contented life in this world? Why not compare them to what God and Jesus said?

The topics covered in this guide are:

1. "I'm Free to Do What I Want, Any Old Time"
2. The Secrets of Happiness
3. A Message From God for All People
4. Love God With All Your Heart
5. More Than Just Deeds
6. Trust and Obey
7. Standing Up for Your Faith

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you Lord that you provide a message for all people, and principles for life freely to us. Please help my understanding today. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## "I'm Free to Do What I Want, Any Old Time"

So goes a line from an old "**Rolling Stone's**" song revived by "**The Soup Dragons**". Our society has tried to live that way, but it hasn't worked! Since the 1960s ours has become an "anything goes, do your own thing" society. But anything doesn't go. Free a tree from the ground and it dies. Pour sand into the sump of your car and you wreck your engine. **Disregard the laws of life and very soon you have no life.**

A comment from Time a few years ago, on the spectre of AIDS is pertinent: "In the 1970s, sex was 'free'. [Now people] are pondering the unexpected bill."

Western society has changed. Speaking about some of these changes, sociologist **Richard Eckersley**, says:

"The 1960s and '70s saw a growing questioning of authority, traditional social conventions and political beliefs: attitudes towards divorce, sex and pornography became more relaxed; the role of women changed and the social importance of religion and the Church declined. While young people may no longer be under the same pressure to conform as they were before, they now face a bewildering array of values and beliefs to choose from." (Casualties of Change: the Predicament of Youth, Commission for the Future, page 18)

On the **essential role of clear moral values**, he declares:

"It may be, then, the greatest wrong we are doing to our children is not the broken families or the scarcity of jobs (damaging though these are), but the creation of a culture that gives them nothing greater than themselves to believe in—no god, no king, no country—and no cause for hope or optimism." (Youth and the Challenge to Change, Commission for the Future, page 15)

Social psychologist **Hugh Mackay** says the process of value-shedding through the 1960s and '70s has left the "me generation" "with a **sense of emptiness**, and a feeling that life lacks some of the meaning and some of the sense of purpose which they observed in their own parents and grandparents." (The Mackay Report)

Where can we find that sense of purpose? Where can we find real freedom and happiness?

The animated movie The Prince of Egypt is based on the story of Moses in the Bible. **Moses, the Prince of Egypt**, rather than becoming the ruler of the most powerful empire on earth, **chose to follow God and become the leader of the children of Israel**. One day God came down and spoke to Moses and gave him Ten Commandments that contain the **secrets of happiness**.



## The Secrets of Happiness

### **The first secret is: Life Is run By Law Not Luck.**

Physicist Paul Davies says:

"The universe is seen to be a product of law rather than chance . . . The new physics and the new cosmology reveal that our ordered universe is far more than a gigantic accident.  
(Superforce)

### **The second secret is: Put God First, not Things First. Things come last in the commandments. God Is First.**

The Ten Commandments begin with the declaration: "**I am the Lord your God ... You shall have no other gods before me.**" They end with: "**You shall not covet . anything that belongs to your neighbour.**" As we saw in Topic 3 (Where did I come from?) there are only two possibilities as to where life came from.

Life is either the product of blind chance or a creation by a personal God.

It is largely because of the theory of evolution that people today have lost the knowledge of God and have become so materialistic.

### **The third secret is: People Are More Important Than Things.**

The Ten Commandments provide a hierarchy of values that are the framework for freedom and happiness. They tell us to put God first, the family second, others next and things last.

Our materialistic society has reversed the order. That's why we've come unstuck. That's why we're so confused! That's why life is sometimes too much for us!

This Bible study Topic will examine some of the benefits that come from following the principles of the Ten Commandments.





## A Message From God for All People

### 1. How does the Bible say that Moses received the Ten Commandments? [Exodus 31:18](#)

When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the .

The Ten Commandments are the only part of the Bible God wrote personally, with His own hand (finger).

### 2. Why does God want us to keep His commandments? [Deuteronomy 6:24](#)

The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear [respect] the Lord our God, so that we might always  and be kept alive.

The **Ten Commandments of God**, provide a **hierarchy of values** that are **the framework for freedom and happiness**, to **protect society**. When the Ten Commandments are disregarded, chaos and destruction result. An example of this can be seen in what happened during the **French Revolution**. In our own society in which many have turned away from God, we can see similar results.

“Which is better”, asks an old adage, “to have an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff or a fence at the top?”

## Pace of Change

An Australian advertising agency, **Clemenger Communications**, in a report, says what would be true of most Western societies:

“Ordinary Australians are deeply concerned about the pace of change in their society. They feel changes are random and uncontrollable. And this perceived lack of control over change produces anxiety and a sense of apprehension. They point to what they see as ample evidence around them that the supportive social structures that nurtured past generations of Australians are crumbling.”

### 3. Were the commandments given only for the Jews, or for all people in every age? [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#)

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the  of man[kind].

Almost all church creeds and catechisms have acknowledged that the Ten Commandments are moral principles that apply to all people at all times.



## Love God With All Your Heart

### 1. How did Jesus summarise the two sections of the Ten Commandments? [Matthew 22:34-40](#)

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ' your neighbour as yourself.'

### 2. Which are the two positive commandments? [Exodus 20:8-12](#)

the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and sea, and all that is in them. Honour your father and mother.

What is the significance of these ten commandments? The **first four** commandments summarise **our duty to God** and constitute the **first table** of the law. Our duty to God hinges on the **fourth** commandment, which **tells us why** we should put God first and worship Him - **because He is our Creator**.

The **last six** summarise **our duty to one another** and constitute the **second table** of the law. Our duty to others hinges on the **fifth** commandment, which emphasises the importance of family relationships where we learn to relate to other people. **Marriage and the family form the basis of society**.

The Ten Commandments describe the way human beings would naturally act towards God and each other if they were not in a state of rebellion.

Notice the logical arrangement of the commandments. The first four commandments tell us about our worship of God: 1. **Whom** to worship - God;

2. **How** to worship - not with idols;

3. Our **approach** to worship - to respect God's name and not to misuse it;

4. **When and why** to worship—on the Sabbath day because God is Creator.

The last six commandments tell us **how to relate to others**: The 5th highlights the authority next to God are our parents - we are to honour them; the 6th safeguards life - it forbids murder because life is sacred; the 7th regulates relations between sexes - we are not to be involved with sexual relations outside marriage; the 8th safeguards property - it forbids stealing; the 9th safeguards reputation - we are not to tell lies about others; and the 10th regulates our thinking - we are not to covet, that is, desire what is not ours, because **wrong thinking is the basis of all wrong doing**.



## More Than Just Deeds

# Principles of Life

What are the principles of the Ten Commandments that, if followed, would make society a better place? [Exodus 20:1-17](#) Match a principle with each of the commandments

### Ten Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet ... anything ...

### Principles

#### 1. LOYALTY.

- purity
- true worship
- respect for authority
- holiness, wholeness
- truthfulness
- contentment
- love
- reverence, respect
- honesty

Think of how much better the world would be if we all followed these principles.

## Trust and Obey

1. While the commandments are for all people, are we saved by them? Which came first for the Israelites: God's requirement of obedience to the Ten Commandments, or deliverance from Egyptian slavery? Salvation comes before obedience. [Exodus 20:1-3](#)

True or false:

God delivered Israel out of Egyptian slavery in order that they could obey Him. **God's order is salvation first - then obedience. Redemption first - then right conduct. Accept Jesus - then obey Him.**

According to the Bible, obedience is not the means of salvation, but the evidence. It is the fruit, not the root. We are **not saved by obedience** - but that we may obey.

To teach any other gospel is to put the cart before the horse!



**2. Were the Ten Commandments given as a means of salvation? In other words, can we be saved by obeying the commandments? [Romans 3:20](#)**

Therefore  will be declared righteous by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

**3. Because we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, does that do away with the law? [Romans 3:31](#)**

Do we, then, nullify [abolish] the law by this faith? ! Rather, we uphold the law.

The fact that Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins is conclusive proof that the law can't be changed or done away with! This is the view of most Christians.

The great Baptist preacher **Charles Spurgeon** has said:

"The law of God was more **vindicated by the death of Christ** than it would have been had all transgressors been sent to Hell." (All of Grace, page 22)

**John Wesley**, founder of the Methodist Church, said that:

"the moral law, contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the Prophets, He [Jesus] did not take away. It was not the design of His coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken, which 'stands fast as the faithful witness in heaven.' ... Every part of this law **must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages.**" (John Wesley, Sermon 25, Works)

The world famous evangelist **Billy Graham** agrees. "Like Wesley, I find that I must preach the **law and judgment** before I can preach **grace and love** ... The Ten Commandments ... are the moral laws of God for the conduct of people. Some think they have been revoked. That is **not** true. Christ taught the law. They are still in effect today. **God has not changed.**" (Billy Graham and the New York Crusade)

**4. What does God promise to give to us when we accept His free gift of salvation? [Hebrews 10:11-17](#)**

I will put  in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.

Leading New Testament commentator **F. F. Bruce** says:

"The new covenant, according to Jeremiah's prophecy, not only involved the implanting of God's laws, together with the **will and power** to carry them out, in the hearts of His people; it also conveyed the assurance that their past sins and iniquities would be **eternally blotted out** from God's record, **never** to be brought up in evidence against them." (Comments on Hebrews)

**5. How did Jesus say people would show that they love Him? [John 14:15](#)**

If you love me, you will  what I command.



**6. How are those who have chosen the side of God and are waiting for Jesus' Second Coming described? [Revelation 14:12](#)**

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain

to Jesus.

**7. While the people of God are pictured as keeping His commandments how are we saved? [John 3:16](#)**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever  in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

### **Standing Up for Your Faith**

We've all heard of **Michael Chang**, world-class tennis player. He became a Christian about a year after he joined the professional tennis circuit. He and fellow tennis player **Andre Agassi** often attend Bible classes together.

He attributes his success to God and the steadying influence of having faith in a divine purpose for his life. This isn't always popular. While accepting his awards at the French Open a few years ago, Michael told the audience that he owed his victories to Jesus Christ, and many people in the crowd booed. Michael took it in his stride, commenting, "You're always going to have people who agree or disagree. It doesn't frustrate me. If you like me, you've got to like that part of me."

"You think about the world," Chang once said. "You think, 'Why is there life on this world?' There's got to be a reason for it. Otherwise you just live and die ... as if your life were nothing."

(Michael Chang Pays the Price, by Judy Strawn, Signs of the Times)

**"Obedience"** to God is another way of saying **"commitment"**. It's standing up for what you believe. It's being true to your convictions. **It is being loyal to God and honouring Him.**



## LESSON 17 - A Day to Remember



Many people today are just travelling too fast. What is the Biblical worldview that challenges our modern everything-must-be-fast society? Do you know what God made to celebrate finishing His Creation? He created a day of rest to combat human restlessness. Where can we find true rest for ourselves and our families in this restless age? Mother Theresa said that *"God ... is the friend of silence."* Want to learn more? Enjoy this topic on learning to *slow down our lives* with the purpose of increasing our spirituality.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. Are You Travelling Too Fast?
2. The Biblical World-View
3. A Memorial of Creation
4. A Memorial of Redemption
5. Promise of Rest for a Restless World
6. Slow Me Down, Lord

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thanks for giving us a time to connect with you. Please let me know more about the day you ask me to remember. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## Are You Travelling Too Fast?

### New Navy Jet Fighter Shot Itself Down Travelling Too Fast

Several years ago, newspapers told how a new Navy jet fighter shot itself down. Flying at supersonic speed, it ran into cannon shells it had fired only a few seconds before. The jet was travelling too fast!

Are you travelling too fast? Apparently many people are! Social researcher Hugh Mackay, in his book *Generations*, quotes a typical father:

You ask yourself, what is the point of all this? Why are we all rushing about? There must be more to life than this. I hear my wife saying to the kids that Daddy is having his midlife crisis, but I don't think she realises that it is true. Sometimes I just feel like walking away from the whole thing.

I'm sure my father didn't have a midlife crisis. His life was much more calm and much more organised. I seem to lurch from crisis to crisis, but this one [retrenchment] is the worst. I can't even rely on job security anymore.

## Where can we find security and peace of mind?

We live in a society where the pace of life is increasing and where God has largely been relegated to a superstitious past. The Bible, however, still has relevance for us today, giving a very practical solution to modern stresses.

### The Biblical World-View

#### 1. What does the very first verse of the bible tell us about God? [Genesis 1:1](#)

In the beginning  the heavens and the earth.

The very first verse of the Bible gives the basis of **the biblical world-view**. It tells us **that God is there and He acts in space-time history**. The **Creation** story of Genesis chapter one is perhaps the most important passage in the whole Bible for us in the 21st century. This story, more than any other, gives human beings **their place in the universe and meaning for their existence**. It forms the basis of the biblical world-view.

Notice again the words of world-renowned theologian and philosopher Carl Henry:

Indeed the doctrine of creation is so basic as to be the indispensable foundation for any tolerable, viable human existence. Continued...

The proof of this is being spelled out in the progressive disintegration of the spirit of life of modern, homeless man. When the truth of this is clearly seen, the Church will speak about God the Father,



Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, with a new relevance to today's growing crowd of lonely men, to its lost and nameless, to its homeless and hopeless men. For the Prodigal Son "came to himself" only when he remembered his father. (An Anchor for a Lonely Crowd)

The Creation story tells us **first**, that **God is sovereign** - He made the universe and all that's in it. He is the **Supreme Creator** of heaven and earth. While He is intimately involved in it, He is not the universe or even part of it. He is a **Person** over it just as the builder of a house is not part of the house, but is the creator of it.

The **second** thing the Genesis account tells us is the **real nature of human beings. We are finite** (that is, we are limited), dependent, with delegated authority, yet unique, godlike, personal, **and of infinite worth**. We have the ability to think, choose and act.

## A Memorial of Creation

### 1. When God had finished creating this world what did He do? [Genesis 2:1-3](#)

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he  from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

The word "**Sabbath**" is the word the Bible uses for the seventh day of the week, or Saturday.

The Hebrew verb "**shabbath**", means "**to rest from labour**".

So the Sabbath is God's original day of rest for humankind.

God actually intended us to take time out each week, from our physical work, to enjoy rest and spiritual refreshment.

## Answers to the big questions about life

The Sabbath tells us the most important things that we need to know; where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. Life did not happen by chance; we were created by a loving Creator. The **purpose** of our creation was so that we could have close **friendship** with God. That friendship, which was broken by sin, was **restored** spiritually through Christ's death on the cross and will be literally restored when Jesus comes a second time.

In 1844 **Charles Darwin** developed his idea of natural selection in an essay that was expanded into the book *On the Origin of Species*. (E. Peter Volpe, *Man, Nature, and Society*)

This book [*Origin of Species*], published in 1859, has done more to undermine popular belief in God, and thus the meaning of life, than any other book.

(Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*)



Western scientific reasoning has concluded that man is a biological accident and thus a biological absurdity. Scientific reasoning has reduced man to a rabbit—or an atom. Of course there were other factors that occurred in philosophy and science that set the stage, as it were, for Darwin's book having such an impact, but it is nonetheless true that Western thought changed under the influence of the evolutionary theory.

Once we deny the existence of God, human beings become nothing. Based on an evolutionary world-view, there are no meaningful answers to the big questions, Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? If the past is hazy and the future blank, then what happens in between does not matter.

**The Sabbath answers these big questions about life.**

### **Where did we come from?**

Life is not a biological accident. God created us as His children. We were made in the image of God, with individuality, personality, and the power to think, choose and act. We are here by design not by chance. The past is not hazy. Life is run by law not by luck. This is why the Sabbath is enshrined in the very heart of the Ten Commandments.

### **Why are we here?**

Not to fulfil a meaningless existence. The Sabbath tells us that we were made for **fellowship** with God. It was ever meant to be a weekly reminder of our creaturely dependence and our need to worship the Creator, to put God first, not the creation that He had made.

Human beings alone, of all creatures, can worship. The reason why the world is in a mess is because our relationship with God has been broken by sin. People put self and things first instead of God. People have thought, since the 18th century enlightenment, that by the use of reason alone, independent of God, they could arrive at truth about life. All this achieved was to reduce humans to matter and life to meaninglessness. The Sabbath tells us that we are **dependent** on God and only when we acknowledge that dependence and are reconciled with Him can life have meaning.

As far as God is concerned, Jesus potentially restored that reconciliation at the cross. All that needed to be done to pay for sin and to provide a basis for our acceptance with God was done on Calvary. This is the objective side of the gospel that needs to be continually stressed in this age of extreme individualism and subjectivism. All who accept by faith Christ's perfect sacrifice—this is the subjective side of the gospel—can be reunited in fellowship with God. Life takes on a new meaning for those who do.



## Where are we going?

The future is not blank. The Sabbath points to a **restored fellowship**, by faith here and now, but in reality when “Eden” is restored. All who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord are children of the King of the universe, and because they are His children, they will live with Him eternally when He comes back a second time.

In the Creation story in [Genesis 1 and 2](#), both the creation of humans and the Sabbath receive greater coverage than all other creation events. They also are given in sequence, indicating both their connection and importance. “Adam’s first full day of life was the seventh day which, one can legitimately assume, he spent not working but celebrating with his Maker the inauguration of the completed and perfect creation” (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1980, page 20).

The whole **purpose** of the Creation story is that Adam and Eve, the crowning act of the Creation week, were made for **fellowship** and **friendship**, represented by the seventh-day Sabbath, with God who is the supreme Creator of the entire universe. This is the major thrust: **relationship** - not geology or astronomy.

**The message found in Revelation 14:6-12 is portrayed as the last one to go to all the world before Jesus comes again. What significant call to worship is given to all people in the last period of earth's history? [Revelation 14:6-7](#)**

Worship Him who  the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

## A Memorial of Redemption

**1. As Jesus hung on the cross He cried, “It is finished” (John 19:30) then died. What day did He rest in the tomb? [Luke 23:50-56](#)**

(v54) It was Preparation Day, and the  was about to begin.

In the beginning **God rested on the Sabbath** after completing His work of **creation**.

Now **Jesus rested** from the work of **redemption**.

Though it seemed like a defeat, it was in reality a great victory. When Jesus said, “It is finished”, the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain and a restored creation and a redeemed race were guaranteed. In this way **Jesus forever linked the Sabbath with the plan of salvation**. It is a memorial of both the **original creation** and **recreation** - that is, **redemption**.

**2. What day of the week was Christ's body placed in the tomb? [Luke 23:50-56](#)**

... (v52) Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. (v53) Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. (v54) It was

, and the Sabbath was about to begin.



**3. What day of the week did the women come to prepare Christ's body with spices? [Luke 24:1-3](#)**

On the  of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

**For Our Benefit**

**4. What was made for the benefit of the human race? [Mark 2:27-28](#)**

Then he said to them, "The  was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man [Jesus] is Lord even of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is presented in the Bible **as the day of which Jesus is Lord, therefore it is the Lord's day**. As such it was designed to be of benefit to us. We need to stop and **take time** "to smell the roses". We need to take time to **spend** with God.

The Hebrew word for "**Sabbath**" means "**rest**". The establishment of the Sabbath was to show human beings that we were made for fellowship with God, and even all the wealth of a perfect creation could not bring ultimate satisfaction. Communion with the Creator and **resting in Him is a necessity for all**. This is the God-shaped hole in every one of us that we've talked about before.

**5. What is it lawful to do on the Sabbath day? [Matthew 12:9-12](#)**

He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do  on the Sabbath.

Christ reveals the ultimate divine purpose of the commandment, namely, **fellowship** with God and human beings. The Sabbath becomes, through Christ, a time not only to commemorate God's past creation, but also to **experience the blessings of salvation** by ministering to the needs of others. The Sabbath is meant to be a day of healing - a day for doing good and helping others in need.

**6. When will we find joy in the Lord? [Isaiah 58:13-14](#)**

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you  and the LORD's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD.

**7. What was Jesus' custom? [Luke 4:16](#)**

He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day , as was His custom. And He stood up to read.



Because there was no meeting place in Philippi, Paul and his companions went out of the city to the riverside **on the Sabbath** “to find a place of prayer.”(Acts 16:13-15)

## Promise of Rest for a Restless World

### 1. In the new earth when will all the redeemed worship God? [Isaiah 66:22-23](#)

“As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one  to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says the LORD.

### 2. What did Jesus promise for those who come to Him? [Matthew 11:28-30](#)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you . Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Mother Teresa has observed, “God rarely is found in the midst of noise and restlessness; instead, He is the friend of silence.”

Religion is said to be good for the soul. It seems to be good for the body, too. A study led by medical sociologist Kenneth F Ferraro of Purdue University shows people who regularly worship say they feel healthier than those who don't. Researchers compiled data from interviews with 1473 people and found:

- Of those who said they don't worship regularly, 9% reported poor health and 26% claimed excellent health.
- Among the regular worshippers, just 4% said they were in poor health, while 36% reported excellent health.

While the study didn't determine a reason for the connection, Ferraro says that “people who are devout in their faith have probably adjusted their lives” in other areas. Congregations offer support with stress or family problems, he says. And many religions promote health by forbidding tobacco or alcohol or urging moderate use. Another plus: “Sabbath rest. Having a day ... to relax probably has beneficial results.”—by Anita Manning, USA Today.



*Slow me down, Lord.*

*Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.*

*Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.*

*Give me, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.*

*Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.*

*Teach me the art of taking minute vacations—of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to smile at a child, to read a few lines from a good book.*

*Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow toward my greater destiny.*

*Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than increasing its speed.*

*Let me look upward to the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.*

**Orin L. Crain**

The Sabbath is a weekly reminder that we need to take time to be with God, to remember where we came from and what Jesus has done for us.



## LESSON 18 - The Last Message of Hope to a Perishing World



A man once said that our society has 'all the marks of a *dying* culture.' What parallels are there between the Titanic and our modern day situation? Multiple warnings were given but no one was listening! Is our world currently preoccupied with speeding towards an economic, environmental and social disaster? Is there a spiritual meaning behind this crisis? What messages of hope did Jesus leave with his followers? Do you understand what is meant for the world by the First, Second and Third Angel's messages? The Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 13 are all very significant themes. Discover their secret meanings for yourself.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. What's Going On?
2. The Last Message of Hope
3. 1st Angel: Creator, Redeemer and Judge
4. 2nd Angel: Babylon, Modern Idolatry
5. 3rd Angel: Settling of Accounts
6. The "Unsinkable" Titanic

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you that for those that trust you life is not a lemon. Please tell us the meaning of your last message to a perishing world. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## What's Going On?

"Threatened by pollution, disease, war, terrorism ... What next?"

That was the notice on the door of a church in Gloucester, England.

A few metres away, under a neighbouring house, police dug up nine corpses, victims of serial killer Frederick West, who ran a boarding house for the down-and-out. One of the victims was his daughter, Heather, last seen in 1987. The tally may go as high as 23 and may include West's first wife, Catherine, and her daughter, Charmaine. It is reported that West ate portions of his victims. West suicided in prison.

What next? How bad can society get? Every day we are bombarded with shocking images of evil and destruction as some aspects of our culture disintegrates. It's no wonder people are asking **what will happen next**. The music of today reflects this sense of disillusionment and despair. Meatloaf, in his album *Bat Out of Hell II*, has a song entitled "Life's a Lemon and I Want My Money Back." For many people life's a failure.

4 Non Blonds, on their *Bigger, Better Faster, More* album, in "What's Up?" sing:

"I pray every single day for a revolution  
As I cry sometimes  
When I'm lyin' in my bed  
To get it all out what's in my head

Then I end up feeling a little peculiar  
As I wake in the morning  
And I step outside  
And I take a deep breath  
And then I get real high  
And I scream from the top of my lungs  
What's goin' on?"

What is going on? Is there any hope for the future? When will evil end?

At a Hell's Angels' three-day rock concert 6000 people drank, did drugs and rocked non-stop around the clock until they dropped. Crushed beer cans and bodies were sprawled across the ground as if a bomb disaster had taken place. People partied on to the non-stop music until they were stoned off their brains. Christian bikie group God Squad were there to share their Christian faith. **John Smith**, founder of God Squad said:

"Our society has all the marks of a dying culture. Rock music is the cry of that culture in its last throes of death."



## The Last Message of Hope

It's interesting that 2000 years ago Jesus had something to say about these things in His last talk to His followers. In [Matthew 24](#), speaking about end-times, He said, "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold" ([verse 12](#)).

### 1. What sign did Jesus say would be the last to be fulfilled before the end of this world and the beginning of the next takes place? [Matthew 24:14](#)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the  as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The "**gospel of the kingdom**" is the good news that the kingdom purchased when Jesus died, will be set up.

The book of Revelation is an enlargement of [Matthew 24](#).

This prophecy is expanded in [Revelation 14:6-12](#), which is a composite of three messages symbolically given by three angels. It is known as the **Three Angels' Messages**

### 2. How do we know that the THREE ANGELS MESSAGES are the last warning from heaven? What event is pictured as taking place immediately after these messages are given? [Revelation 14:14-16](#)

... seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand ... "Take your sickle and reap, ..." So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was .

Jesus told a story about a farmer's enemy sowing weeds in his paddock. The farmer told his workers to leave them until the harvest when the weeds and wheat would be separated.

### 3. What did Jesus say the harvest symbolises? [Matthew 13:36-39](#)

The harvest is the , and the harvesters are angels.

God has promised to give **warnings** concerning important coming events through His prophets ([Amos 3:7](#))



## 1st Angel: Creator, Redeemer and Judge

### 1. What is to be proclaimed to the entire world? [Revelation 14:6](#)

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the  to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.

This is the message that **Jesus said** would be proclaimed to the entire world and then the end of this world would come and His heavenly kingdom would be set up.

### 2. What is announced as having begun? [Revelation 14:7](#)

He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his  has come.”

### 3. Who are people called to worship? [Revelation 14:7](#)

“Worship  who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

This is a call to **worship** the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth. God’s claim for worship is based on the fact that He made us. This is the most basic fact of the Bible. The prevailing world-view in the West, particularly since the 1960s, is that of secular humanism based on evolution. It holds that there is no God and that life happened by chance. Therefore, life is ultimately meaningless and “anything goes.” “There’s no right or wrong - everything is relative”.

The threefold message from the angels of Jesus' Revelation is tailor-made for our age. It presents God as Creator, Redeemer and Judge.

## 2nd Angel: Babylon, Modern Idolatry

### 1. What did the second Angel say? [Revelation 14:8](#)

A second angel followed and said, “Fallen!  the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

### 2. The name Babylon comes from the tower of Babel. What were the people trying to do? [Genesis 11:1-9](#)

Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that , so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

Is this not the great Babylon I have built ... by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” [Daniel 4:30](#)

While the word **Babel** sounds like the Hebrew for “confused”, in the Akkadian language it means “**gateway to the gods**”. In building the tower of Babel the people were trying to save themselves,



presumably from another flood. This is the essence of all false religions—legalism—thinking that salvation depends on something that we do. It means human-centred as opposed to God-centred religion—creature worship versus Creator worship. When **Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon**, came to power (605 BC), he sought to glorify himself. He oppressed the people of God and imposed idol worship on them ([Daniel 1-5](#)). This forms the backdrop to end-time Babylon.

Examples of such religion can be found in history. **The Jewish religion** in the first century AD had become distorted and legalistic. The religious leaders rejected Jesus' gospel and crucified Him and then persecuted His followers ([Matthew 23-28](#)); [Acts 4-8](#)). During the first century AD the **pagan Roman Empire** persecuted the Christians because they refused to worship Caesar and call him lord. And again, during the **Middle Ages**, the church in apostasy used political power to impose a false gospel and religious system upon the then known world. The Christians who would not conform were persecuted.

So the book of Revelation uses the term Babylon to indicate that a similar thing will happen in the final crisis, in the antichrist's opposition to God and His people. It is a worldwide false religious coalition, composed of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet (more on this in the next Bible Guide). This is the culmination of the great controversy between Christ and Satan that has been raging since Satan, in heaven, wanted God's position ([Isaiah 14:12-15](#)) ([Revelation 12](#)). Ever since sin came in, the natural human heart has wanted to take God's place and earn or merit salvation. It is a conflict that we all experience.

The "wine of her adulteries" stands for Babylon's false teachings. It's a term used of idolatry and illicit relationships of the Jews with idol-worshipping nations during Old Testament times ([Jeremiah 3:8-9, 12-13; 4:1-2](#)).

Just as the good news of salvation is to go to all the world, so this Babylonian false gospel will spread around the globe ([Revelation 14:8; 16:12-16; 17:1-18; 18:1-4](#)).

The world will be divided into two groups, according to which gospel they follow.

Babylon will impose its false gospel and worship on the world and threaten with economic sanctions and death, those who refuse to conform ([Revelation 13](#)).

### 3. What does God call us to do? [Revelation 18:1-4](#)

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! .... For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries... , my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.



### 3rd Angel: Settling of Accounts

#### 1. What is the most fearful warning found in the Bible? [Revelation 14:9-10](#)

A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his  on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath.

When people reject God's mercy to the extent that they no longer hear His voice or want His help, they have put themselves outside of God's protection. It reminds us of Jesus, who wept over Jerusalem and said, "How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate**" ([Matthew 23:37-38](#)). The Roman soldiers came in 70 AD and destroyed Jerusalem, killing over one million Jews. In the fate of that chosen city we can see the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled on His law. They will have put themselves outside of God's mercy and He will no longer be able to protect them from Satan.

#### 2. How are God's people described? [Revelation 14:12](#)

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain  to Jesus.

### Summary of the Three Angels' Messages

- The first message presents the true gospel—salvation through faith in Jesus and worship of God, who is Creator, Redeemer and Judge.
- The second, the failure of Babylon's false gospel of salvation by works and false worship of the beast.
- The third presents the results of which gospel people have been choosing to follow. Two groups are pictured—those who worship the beast and those who worship God the Creator and are loyal to Him by keeping His commandments.

The last world crisis is over **true worship versus false worship**—loyalty versus disloyalty, obedience versus disobedience. The entire world will be divided into two groups over **the true versus the false gospel**.

In our previous Bible study Topic (17. A Day to Remember), we learned that the Sabbath is a memorial of Creation and of Redemption. Jesus is both our Creator and Redeemer, and the Sabbath is the weekly memorial of both. Only those who have accepted the free gift of salvation through Jesus, will be serious about following Him and keeping God's Sabbath holy.



## This Last Message of Hope Presents God as Judge

All major world religions have a concept of judgment. For the Hindu and the Buddhist it's karma—the **law** of cause and effect; for the Muslim there is a **day** of judgment when all humanity will be gathered and people will be judged according to their deeds. The Christian concept of judgment is that things aren't going to continue as they are forever. There's going to be a **time** for settling of accounts. Wrongs will be righted and justice will prevail. The gospel presupposes judgment. Someone has said: "It is impossible to preach the gospel without proclaiming judgment. To hear the story of the cross is to stand at the judgment bar of God." (See [John 12:31-33](#)).

What the gospel tells us is that we don't need to fear the judgment. The gospel is a guarantee of a verdict in our favour if we have accepted Jesus as Saviour. Paul says: "Therefore, there is **now** no condemnation for those who **are** in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 8:1](#)). But it also means condemnation for those who reject His free gift of eternal life.

After highlighting the heart of the gospel in [John 3:16](#), Jesus says: "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" ([verses 17-18](#)).

The Bible presents **two groups** on earth just before the second coming of Jesus: those who follow a **false gospel** and **worship the beast** (the creature) and those who follow **the true gospel** and **worship the Creator**. By **our choices each day** we are determining which group we will be in then.

### The "Unsinkable" Titanic

On the night when the "unsinkable" **Titanic** sank, warning after warning had been sent to tell them they were speeding into an icefield. But the messages were ignored. The Titanic was talking to Cape Race about the time chauffeurs were to meet arriving passengers at the dock, and what menus were to be ready.

Preoccupied with trivia, the Titanic responded to the warning: "Shut up! I am talking to Cape Race. You are jamming my signals."

So confident were they of the indestructibility of their craft that when one lady, on boarding, asked a steward, "Can this ship sink?" she was told, "Madame, God Himself couldn't sink this ship!" Such was the spirit of optimism at the turn of the century.



Archibald Brace, one of the survivors, later wrote of that fateful night when the Titanic sank:

“There arose to the sky the most horrible sounds ever heard by mortal man. The agonising cries of death from over a thousand throats, the wails and groans of the suffering, the shrieks of the terror-stricken and the awful gaspings of those in the last throes of drowning, none of us will ever forget to our dying day.”  
(Reader's Digest)

Today, more than ever, our society is preoccupied with trivia while our world speeds to disaster. 4 Non Blonds sing about “hope for a destination”. There is a new world coming ([Revelation 21 and 22](#)). God wants us to be part of it. For those who heed this last message of hope to a perishing world, *life's not a lemon!*



## LESSON 19 - The Coming World Dictator - Who Will It Be?



Today people are fearful of the rights of the majority being trampled by the agenda's of those pushing the New World Order. What last-day warning did Jesus give to believers? How will the majority of people be deceived? What will the ultimate false Christ do? Who are the two Beasts of Revelation 13? Who is the Antichrist that will lead the world into disaster? What is the issue that is at stake in the Great Final Crisis? Understand the last great struggle between truth and error in the longstanding cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan. Understand how the Antichrist is defeated. Learn how to stand up for what is right in God's Word, the Bible.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. A Hunger For Certainty
2. Jesus' Last Message
3. Revelation on the Antichrist
4. The Issue in the Final Crisis
5. Standing for What You Believe

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Thank you for showing us in your word ahead of time who the coming world dictator will be. Please help me stand for what I learn and believe. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.



## A Hunger For Certainty

Cult leader David Koresh (alias Vernon Howell) of the Branch Davidians believed he was Jesus Christ in sinful form. He said he was the Lamb of Revelation who alone could open the seven seals and foresee the end of the world. He would hold his followers in awe as he quoted large passages of the Bible from memory. Such was his power over his followers that they gave him their wives and daughters as concubines.

He told Nicole Gent she could be married to Christ, be queen of the world, and her children (from Psalm 45) would be as kings and queens. One of his wives, Robyn Bunds, 23, said: "He had this amazing ability to recite verse. He just has a good way of interpreting the Scriptures. He is very believable." (The Age)

When the authorities came with a warrant to search their compound in Waco, Texas, Koresh's followers shot and killed four officers and wounded 16 others. Ten days later he sent the FBI two letters. "I AM your God," he wrote, "and you will bow under my feet." He signed them "Yahweh Koresh." After holding authorities at bay for 51 days, Koresh and 73 followers died in the fires as the compound went up in flames.

Time magazine described him as "equipped with both a creamy charm and a cold-blooded willingness to manipulate those drawn to him ... He was the most spectacular example since Jim Jones, who committed suicide in 1978 with more than 900 of his followers." Former cult member Allison Manning said: "The people who died are not fruit cakes; just people who really wanted to serve God, who wanted to go to heaven.

Their sincerity was taken by a person who abused it." Cult researcher David Millikan's comment is pertinent: Some people have **"a hunger for certainty and are prepared to sacrifice personal liberty to a group they believe holds the answers."** They want others to make their decisions and they will follow.

## Why Are We So Insecure?

Rock singer **Bruce Springsteen**, on his album *The River*, sings, "Everybody's got a hungry heart." He is perceptively in tune with the times. In a *Rolling Stone* magazine interview he said:

"People are being dumped into this incredibly unintelligible society, and they are swimming, barely staying afloat, and then trying to catch on to whatever is going to give them a little safe ground."

Why is our society so "incredibly unintelligible" and insecure?



Australian historian **Manning Clark** gives us the answer: “We are in a period of human history when no-one has anything to say and the certainties have melted away ... The difficulty is how to put forward answers when we do not know what we believe.”

Western scientific reasoning has concluded that humans are a biological accident and thus an absurdity. The trouble is something inside us rebels against this concept. People can't live with this position. It's **our loss of God** that's left us insecure, homeless and vulnerable.

## Jesus' Last Message

In His last talk to His disciples, Jesus discussed two events: the **destruction of Jerusalem** by the Romans (70 AD) and events leading up to **His Second Coming** ([Matthew 24](#)).

At His coming He would end this world as we know it and set up His eternal kingdom. What happened to **Jerusalem** illustrates, on a small scale, what would take place **worldwide** in the last days.

### 1. What warning did Jesus give concerning last day deceptions? [Matthew 24:1-5](#)

“ that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

### 2. In what way did Christ say that false prophets and false Christs would deceive many? [Matthew 24:11, 24](#)

For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and  to deceive even the elect— if that were possible.

The elect are the true followers of Jesus who will not be deceived.

### 3. What time of distress, did Jesus say, would come upon the world? [Matthew 24:21-22](#)

For then there will be , unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again... but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

## The Antichrist of the Last Days

### 4. Taking up the theme of Jesus, what did Paul say was to happen before Jesus comes again? [2 Thessalonians 2:1-3](#)

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day [the Second Coming of Jesus] will not come until the - [Greek, 'apostasy' = falling away] occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

This "lawless man" is portrayed as **the ultimate false Christ** who will counterfeit Jesus' Second Coming to deceive the world and set himself up as world dictator—the ultimate guru. The same words used to describe Jesus' coming are used for the counterfeit. A counterfeit has to be very close to the real, otherwise no-one would be deceived. Who would be fooled by a counterfeit \$15 note!



**5. What position will this lawless one claim as his? [2 Thessalonians 2:4](#)**

He will oppose and exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, and even he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be .

God's temple is the church ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#)).

**6. What position did Lucifer [Latin for 'morning star'] want when he rebelled against God in heaven? [Isaiah 14:12-15](#)**

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star [Lucifer], son of the dawn! ... You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; ... I will make myself like the .

The term "antichrist" means not only "against", but also "in place of Christ". While the apostle John says that there are many antichrists through whom Satan has worked ([1 John 2:18](#)), **the ultimate antichrist is Satan himself**. At the beginning of his rebellion in heaven he wanted God's position, and as we approach the end he hasn't changed. Satan knows he has no hope. What he's trying to do is take as many people with him as possible.

**7. In accordance with whose work will be the coming of the lawless one (the Antichrist)? How will he deceive those who perish? [2 Thessalonians 2:9-10](#)**

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of satan displayed in all kinds of  miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing.

**8. Why will some people perish when Jesus comes? [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12](#)**

They perish because they  to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

When we take ourselves outside of God's protection, then we are at the mercy of Satan. By **our choices each day** we're either **opening** our hearts to God's will or **hardening** ourselves against it. It's not enough to know the truth—the devil does that ([James 2:19](#)). Many, sadly, will be lost who know the truth. We need to love the truth, and Jesus said that He is the truth ([John 14:6](#)).

## Revelation on the Antichrist

The book of Revelation that enlarges Matthew 24, expands the concept of a counterfeit Christ in [Revelation 13-18](#). In chapter 13 **two beasts** are portrayed: one from the sea and one from the earth. These are **Satan's henchmen** to help him in his **final attack on God's people**. The three together constitute a **counterfeit trinity**. They are symbolised as Babylon—the final antichrist—a worldwide false religious coalition that will combine with **secular and political powers** to **enforce** its **false gospel** and false religious system on the world.



## The Beast Out of the Sea

**The sea beast** is pictured as having 10 horns with 10 crowns and seven heads each with a blasphemous name. It resembles a leopard, has feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. It receives its authority from the dragon ([Satan, Revelation 12:3, 9](#)). This beast is a composite of the four beasts and horns in [Daniel chapter 7](#) that represent the **kingdoms and powers** Satan has used to oppose God's people down through the ages ([Daniel 7:17-27](#)). For example, **Nebuchadnezzar**, King of Babylon (605 BC), imposed idol worship on God's people ([Daniel 1-3](#)). Satan used the Roman governor **Herod** to try to destroy Jesus at birth ([Revelation 12:3-4; Matthew 2:13-16](#)). During the Middle Ages the church, in apostasy, used **civil power** to enforce its false gospel and religious system.

The sea beast has all the characteristics of these previous powers and culminates in its final stage—the seventh head ([Revelation 17:7-11](#)). Its fatal wound that is healed ([Revelation 13:3](#)) is a **counterfeit** of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## The Beast Out of the Earth

**The land beast** is lamb-like but it speaks like a dragon. It's a wolf in sheep's clothing—counterfeit religion aided by Satan to carry out his devious plans.

### 1. What does the Land Beast do? How does he deceive people? [Revelation 13:11-14](#)

He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And he performed great and miraculous , even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth.

Fire from heaven was used, in the time of Elijah, to show who was the true God ([1 Kings 18:38](#)). At Pentecost it indicated the giving of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' followers ([Acts 2:1-3](#)). Here it is used to deceive people into thinking God is acting. The land beast is a **counterfeit** of the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit points people to Jesus ([John 15:26; 16:14](#)) so the land beast, through miraculous signs, will deceive the world into worshipping the sea beast.

### 2. Jesus said there would be a time of great distress. What will happen to those who refuse to worship the image of the first beast and receive its mark? [Revelation 13:15-17](#)

He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be . He also forced everyone, ... to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The antichrist sets up a religious dictatorship—not like Hitler or Stalin—but through **deception** and **subtlety, forcing** the world to worship the image to the sea beast. Because many people are insecure, they will be prepared to sacrifice freedom for certainty. Part of this subtlety, according to [Revelation 18](#), appears to be **economic** benefit gained by following Babylon. Could a subtle dictatorship happen today?



Note what renowned thinker **Francis Schaeffer** says: “What of tomorrow? In the United States, for example, a manipulating authoritarian government could come from the administrative side or from the legislative side. A public official in the United States serving at the highest level has wisely said, ‘Legislative dictatorship is no better than executive tyranny’ ... ‘When freedom destroys order, the yearning for order will destroy freedom.’” (How Should We Then Live? pages 244-5.)

The terrorist bombing of the New York World Trade Center and the Pentagon (September 11, 2001) has heightened our insecurities. The world will never be the same again!

## The Issue in the Final Crisis

### 1. Whom are we called to worship? [Revelation 14:6-7](#)

Worship , the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

The **last great conflict** between truth and error is but the **final struggle** in the **longstanding controversy** concerning the **law of God**. Will we choose to follow human laws or God's laws? Those who have accepted Jesus' free gift of salvation will honour Him in keeping His commandments and remaining loyal to Him. They will **worship the Creator** rather than the beast, and **worship God's way** rather than human beings' way!

### 2. Which Commandment is referred to here? [Exodus 20:8-11](#)

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the  day and made it holy.

## Deliverance: The Antichrist Defeated

As we have stated, God's claim for worship is based on the fact that **He made us**.

The word worship comes from Old English “worth-ship”. **God, as Creator, is worthy** of our adoration and allegiance.

This gives life **meaning and purpose**.

It gives **value** to human beings, in contrast with evolutionary theory, which says that life is just a gigantic accident, and therefore has no significance.

### 3. Who will overthrow the lawless one? [2 Thessalonians 2:6-8](#)

And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed,

whom the  will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.



#### 4. Who has the promise and assurance of eternal life? 1 John 5:11-13

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

### Standing for What You Believe

[Revelation 13](#) draws its message from the story in [Daniel 3](#). Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image of four metals ([Daniel 2](#), [Topic 11](#)) made a great impression on him. But he didn't like the suggestion that his great empire would end. He made a similar image, but all of gold—to show that **his** kingdom would last forever. The image was 60 cubits high and six cubits wide (27 m x 2.7 m; a cubit is about 0.45 metres). Nebuchadnezzar ordered everyone to bow down to the image **under threat of death** for refusal.

Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were among the princes Nebuchadnezzar took as captives when he conquered Jerusalem in 605 BC. Out of all the thousands of Jews, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were the only ones who refused to bow in worship of the image. (Daniel must have been away on some other business at the time, otherwise he would have joined them.) They could have rationalised and said, "We can't be much use to God if we're dead. We'll just bow down, but we won't really be worshipping this image." But they didn't do that. They stood for all to see them.

Nebuchadnezzar was furious. He couldn't believe that anyone would defy his decree. He gave them a second chance, because he obviously liked them. They, along with Daniel, had shown such promise in their training ([1:18-20](#)).

"If you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good," said the king. "But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace." Defiantly he added, "**Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?**"

Their reply to the king was courageous, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

The king couldn't believe his ears! How dare these captives defy him. He ordered them to be tied up and thrown into the furnace. So hot were the flames that the soldiers were killed by the heat.

Then, to the king's amazement he saw "four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." He shouted to them, "Servants of the Most High God, come out!" When they came out of the fire they were unharmed.

Nebuchadnezzar, quite overwhelmed by the experience, said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and



defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."

Such will be the attitude of those who worship and follow Jesus in the last days. Here is the safe ground Springsteen sees us needing. Faith in God brings certainty and security without surrendering freedom.



## LESSON 20 - Armageddon



Although *Armageddon* was a recent movie, it is also described in the Bible as a last-day conflict between the forces of Good and Evil. Some of the last-day issues for God's people are: Who are the Beast, the Dragon and the False Prophet? What will distinguish True from False Worship? What is the Mark of The Beast? What happens to Babylon's power base? When the controversy ends - which side will you be standing on? This study will help you decide what the true issues are and where you need to stand!

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. Armageddon
2. The Dragon, the Beast and False Prophet
3. True Versus False Worship
4. Insights From Ancient Conflicts
5. Power Base for Babylon
6. The Controversy Ended
7. Loyalty to God

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Please tell me more of your armageddon, and what you already know will be happening so I can understand. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## Armageddon

An asteroid, “about the size of Texas”, hurtling toward Earth. That’s the story of the movie **ARMAGEDDON**. Bruce Willis stars as, apparently, the world’s greatest oil rigger. He’s enlisted to be shot into space, land on the big rock and blow it up with a thermonuclear weapon. The climax of the film rests on the shoulders of its hero, who has to make a choice (while saving the planet) between his life and the life of his future son-in-law.

The term “Armageddon” is usually associated with the end of the world. Some have thought that it’s a political battle centring in Palestine, between Russia and America over Middle East oil. The end of the Cold War has put paid to that idea. Nevertheless, many people still think it will start there, with a rebuilt Temple and the destruction of the Dome of the Rock Mosque. What is Armageddon? When will it be? Why is the term usually associated with the end of the world?

### 1. Where does the term Armageddon come from? [Revelation 16:16](#)

Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in  is called Armageddon.

Armageddon is part of the seven last plagues ([Revelation 15 and 16](#)) and occurs during the sixth plague. The seventh plague symbolises God’s judgment on Babylon (false religion). Armageddon is an allusion to Megiddo in the Old Testament, where some decisive battles were fought.

### 2. To what event does Armageddon refer? [Revelation 16:12-16](#)

Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the  on the great day of God Almighty.

A recurring theme throughout Revelation is the war against God’s people and their deliverance by the coming of Jesus. The term "**Armageddon**" is used to portray the final struggle between good and evil. The worldwide religious coalition (Babylon) will join forces with secular powers to oppress God’s people. Out of the mouths of the unholy trinity come three evil spirits. Just as **God has the three angels' messages**, as a last warning for the world ([Revelation 14:6-12](#)), so **the devil has three evil spirits**, like frogs, with a counterfeit gospel to gather “the kings of the whole world” for this final battle. This is **not a war with tanks and guns**, but rather a **battle for the mind** through deception, economic boycott and persecution. Spiritualism and New Age mystic deceptions could be involved as well.

### 3. Who are Satan and his followers really making war against? [Revelation 17:11-14](#)

They will make war against the  and [his] faithful followers.



The 10 kings, or kingdoms, constitute the last phase of the beast's power—the eighth head that is a resurrected seventh head. They point to a **worldwide coalition** in the last days, united by the spirits of demons' deceptive false gospel, in their opposition to the Lamb (Jesus) and His people.

## The Dragon, the Beast and False Prophet

### 1. What is the dragon pictured as doing to the woman (the church) and her offspring? [Revelation 12:17](#)

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to  against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

“The rest of her offspring” indicate a **faithful remnant** who are loyal to God. **The devil's anger is vented on this faithful remnant. The "testimony of Jesus" is the message that comes from Jesus through His prophets.** It centres around the good news of salvation through faith in what Jesus has done for us. The world becomes divided into two groups—the saved and the lost—by which “gospel” people choose to follow. This choice is reflected in either obedience or disobedience to God.

**Revelation 13** enlarges on Satan's attempt to **make war** with God's faithful remnant. In **verses 1-10** the **sea beast** receives his power from the **dragon**.

It has **seven heads** and **10 horns** like the dragon. These symbolise the nations used by Satan to persecute the people of God—such as **Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, pagan Rome and medieval Rome**. It's portrayed as making **"war against the saints"** and receiving authority over the world. “All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” ([Revelation 13:1-10](#)).

In [verses 11-18](#) we get the clearest portrayal of the issues involved in the final crisis. The **"false prophet"** is apostate religion. Here a lamb that speaks like a dragon—a professedly Christian power—legislates in favour of a subtle form of idolatry, using deception and economic sanctions to cause the world to conform. It finally condemns to death all nonconformists. This is the “great distress” Jesus spoke about in His last sermon ([Matthew 24:21](#)).

## True Versus False Worship

### 1. What are the issues in the final crisis of this world's history? How do we know that the battle of Armageddon is not a political battle? What will the inhabitants of the world be made to do? [Revelation 13:12](#)

He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants  the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

The question is: “What is the mark of the beast?”



## The Mark of the Beast

2. With what other mark in the forehead is the mark of the beast contrasted in Revelation?

[Revelation 7:1-4](#)

Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the  of the living God ...

3. The seal of God is in contrast with the mark of the beast. What is the seal of God? [Revelation 14:1](#)

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his  written on their foreheads.

God, in declaring **His name**, gives a description of **His character**—thus, the **name of God stands for His character**. When people accept Jesus they receive the Holy Spirit as a seal guaranteeing their inheritance ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#)). Those who have the seal of God will ultimately **possess a godlike character**. By accepting the gift of salvation and following Jesus we become like Him. In contrast, the **mark of the beast** is received by those who follow Satan’s false gospel and worship the beast. They become like Satan. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command.” The people of God will show their loyalty by observing God’s commandments, particularly the fourth, or Sabbath, commandment, which God calls His special sign, or banner. See [Exodus 31:13, 17](#), and [Ezekiel 20:12, 20](#).

The Sabbath, of all the commandments, tells us why we should worship and honour God. “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth.”

## Insights From Ancient Conflicts

An ancient contest was performed on **Mount Carmel** (near Megiddo) between the **prophets of Baal** and **Elijah the prophet of God**. The description in [1 Kings 18:16-39](#), gives us an insight into the issues of the last conflict.

**Baal** (Hebrew = lord) was the chief national god of the Canaanites and was **a form of nature worship**. The Canaanites believed that Baal inhabited holy trees, springs, mountaintops, rocks etc. **Asherah** was the female counterpart of Baal. **Ahab, King of Israel**, married **Jezebel** and began to worship Baal. He set up a Baal altar in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. He also made an Asherah pole. Ahab thus led the children of **Israel** away from true worship of the **Creator** into the worship of the things God had made ([1 Kings 16:29-34](#)).

**Revelation 13** alludes to this conflict when it mentions fire coming down from heaven.

In the final conflict it’s **Satan** who brings fire down to deceive the world into **false worship**. The final conflict is over loyalty and obedience to God - **true worship** of the **Creator** versus **false worship** of the **false creature**.



**1. Of what is the symbolism of frogs (in Revelation) an allusion? Exodus 8:1-15**

So Aaron [Moses' brother] stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of .

The symbolism of frogs reminds us of the **plagues of Egypt** at the time of the Exodus, when Moses led the people out of Egypt. There were 10 plagues, the last seven fell only on the Egyptians and not on the Israelites. The Egyptian magicians could **duplicate** the miracles of Moses up to and including the plague of frogs. After that they were **powerless** (Exodus 8:18) . So here, the spirits of demons can go only so far in performing their miraculous signs to deceive people. They will **not deceive** God's people (Matthew 24:24).

### Power Base for Babylon

**1. What does the river Euphrates symbolise in the New Testament? Revelation 17:1, 15**

The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are , multitudes, nations and languages.

When Israel was true to God, she was likened to a pure woman. When she made alliances with other nations and worshipped their idols, she was said to be prostituting herself (Ezekiel 16:15; 23:7). Here the prostitute is spiritual Babylon, the final manifestation of the antichrist. It's religious apostasy. Just as the Pharisees of Jesus' day substituted the traditions of humans for the Word of God (Mark 7:6-9), and the church of the Middle Ages imposed a system of merit for salvation on the world, so in the last conflict Babylon will seek to impose a false gospel and worship on the world in opposition to true Christianity.

**2. What does the drying up of the Euphrates River mean in the New Testament? Revelation 17:1, 15-18**

The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ...

The ancient city of Babylon was built straddling the **River Euphrates**. Isaiah (700 BC) predicted that Cyrus, king of Persia, would come from the east against Babylon and the waters would be dried up (Isaiah 44:24-45:1).

The prediction was fulfilled when the Persians and Medes besieged the city, diverted the River Euphrates and marched their soldiers under the wall while Balshazzar, the last king, was having a drunken feast (Daniel 5).

In the last-day setting, the moment of truth is the moment when millions and millions of people around the world suddenly see through the hypocrisy of their spiritual leaders and loathe these **false religious**



**leaders** whom they've trusted. The immediate result will be the withdrawal, or drying up, of popular support for the end-time false religious system known as "Babylon".

### 3. How do the people of God overcome Satan? [Revelation 12:10-11](#)

They overcame him by the  and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

These are the central verses of the book of Revelation. The good news is that Jesus has conquered the devil, sin and death on the cross, and that the weakest believer is **now** an overcomer. Christ's victory is ours when we accept Him as Saviour. Heaven is guaranteed to all who trust in Jesus.

## The Controversy Ended

### 1. The drying up of the river Euphrates prepares the way for the coming of the kings of the east. What event is this? [Matthew 24:27-31](#)

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the  of the Son of Man.

The "East" is symbolic of God's intervention (see [Ezekiel 43:4](#); [Revelation 7:1-3](#)). The "kings from the East" are in contrast to the "kings of the whole world". This phrase represents Jesus coming with all His holy angels to deliver His people.

Let us summarise what we've discovered so far. Two great gospels will be brought to the attention of the world. Jesus' gospel described in the three angels' messages and a worldwide counterfeit gospel, proclaimed by the demonic trinity. The result is the polarisation of three worldwide confederacies. First, of God's people—loosely organised but clearly understanding the issues. Second, a false Christianity and third, a secular, political confederacy.

As the last two confederacies unite ([Revelation 17](#)), the people of the world are forced to decide which trinity they will follow, until the whole world is found on one side or the other.

As our time on earth draws to a close, the united confederacies seek to destroy God's people. When Jesus' intervention prevents this, they end up turning on each other, destroying the religious confederacy. Soon after, the **Second Coming** of Jesus finishes the destruction of evil and **rescues God's people** from the earth. (Jon Paulien, The End of All Things)

Those who have gained the victory over the beast and his image sing "the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb." They testify:



"Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed" ([Revelation 15:2-4](#)).

## Loyalty to God

After Babylon was conquered by Cyrus, Darius was put in charge. He appointed Daniel as Prime Minister over 120 princes. Unfortunately they were jealous of Daniel. They tried to find some fault in the way he did his job, but couldn't. So they said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God" ([Daniel 6:5](#)).

Knowing that Daniel prayed three times a day, they persuaded King Darius to issue a law that people should pray only to the king for the next 30 days, or be thrown into a den of lions. Daniel continued to pray to God at his window facing Jerusalem, as he always had done. The jealous princes were quick to tell Darius. Now, too late, the king realised what they had led him to do. He was very angry, but couldn't change his decree. So Daniel was thrown into the lions' den.

After a restless night at his palace the king went to the lions' den at dawn. With anguish he called, **"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"**

Daniel answered, **"O king, live for ever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."**

The king was so overjoyed that he sent a special message to everybody in his kingdom, saying...

## Darius' Decree

**May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions. - Daniel 6:25-27**

So Daniel prospered during the reigns of Darius and Cyrus. The book of Revelation uses this story, and others, to illustrate that **the world's last crisis** will be over **loyalty to God** in **worship**. Those who have accepted Jesus as Saviour will be loyal, even if it means death, and God will deliver them at Jesus' Second Coming.



## LESSON 21 - Bringing People to Jesus



When four men carried a paralytic man to meet Jesus, they ended up saving their friend, when Jesus healed the crippled man. Are today's followers of Christ also asked to also bring their friends, family, neighbours and workmates to experience a satisfying life - living for Jesus too? When He went back to Heaven, who did Jesus say would be his true Witnesses? Discover what are the 4 main ways in which we can witness for God? Learn more about how faith-sharing can be one of the greatest things you can do to advance the Kingdom of God.

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. Carry the Corner of the Cot
2. Witnesses for Jesus
3. We Witness by Sharing the Gospel
4. We Witness by Giving for the Gospel
5. The All-Sufficiency of God

**Prayer for Today:** Father In Heaven, Please tell me what it means to bring people to Jesus, and how I can help because I love you. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## Carry the Corner of the Cot

“Five years ago I was a drunkard without any thought of God or religion. I was at that time one of the managers of a large linen company in America. I gradually grew worse. My company was very kind to me, hoping that I would be cured of drinking. But they finally had to notify me that they could no longer use me as manager, but I could go back to being a salesman. That was the **most terrible blow** of my life.

“Then I began to come to my senses. My wife and I concluded **what we needed was God**. So we decided to go to church. After three weeks we both **accepted Jesus as our Saviour** and joined the Baptist Church. While I didn’t get drunk anymore, I still drank occasionally and my lifestyle didn’t change very much. We continued this way, attending church for three years.

“Then one morning in church I made a new resolution. The preacher was telling the **story of the paralytic** who was brought to Jesus ([Mark 2:1-12](#)). They brought him on a stretcher ‘carried by four of them.’ So there must have been a man at each corner. None of them could’ve healed the man. Probably none of them could even teach, or sing, or preach. But each could carry the corner of the cot and take the sufferer to Jesus. They lowered him through the roof because of the crowd.

“As the preacher was speaking that morning, I said, ‘Lord, that’s just me. I can’t preach, pray, sing or talk publicly for You. But, **Jesus, I am willing** to take the corner of a cot and bring somebody to Sunday school and church. Maybe that way I will bring them to Jesus.’

At the close of the sermon I told the preacher of my resolution, with the understanding that if he ever asked me to do any one of those four things—our agreement is cancelled and I’ll leave this church. The preacher agreed. I started by bringing two people to church. The interest increased, and the group kept growing until our church bought a bus. I was inviting everyone who did not attend any church to come to our church. And I found myself relating to them a bit of **my own experience** in finding Jesus.

“I purchased a movie projector, films, and a screen to use to **share my testimony** to my wonderful Jesus. I thought, ‘That machine can talk when I can’t.’ And then, almost before I realised it, I was **sharing my experience in Christ!** And now I hold meetings every opportunity my work will permit. **The numbers kept increasing** until now we have 10 buses operating every Sunday.

“It all began two years ago. That morning when I decided to take the corner of a cot, I said to God, ‘Lord, I can’t invite people to Jesus if I still do things that are inconsistent with my Christian beliefs. I’m laying them all at the foot of the cross.’ And from that day to this I have never indulged in any of those so-called pleasures. **Now Jesus goes with me everywhere.**”



This man, at the time he related this story to Pastor Glen Coon, was bringing about 550 to church and had brought about 2000 to faith in Jesus. (Adapted from Glenn Coon, Path to the Heart.)

All this from a man who would leave the church if he were asked to pray, talk, preach, or sing publicly! What made the difference? Commitment to being a consistent Christian and to **doing what he could for God.**

## Witnesses for Jesus

### 1. As Jesus was about to return to heaven what did He say His followers will be? [Acts 1:8](#)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my , ... to the ends of the earth.

A witness is **one who speaks from personal experience**. Jesus doesn't say, "You are to witness", but "You are my witnesses". In other words, the way we live will **show the power of the gospel** more than what we say.

### 2. What great commission did Jesus give to his followers? [Matthew 28:19-20](#)

Therefore go and  of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

## We Witness by the Way We Love

### 3. How will the world know that we are followers of Jesus? [John 13:34-35](#)

All men will know that you are my disciples, if you .

### 4. What are the two great commandments that summarise the Ten Commandments? [Matthew 22:34-40](#)

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it:  your neighbour as yourself.

A deeply spiritual writer, Ellen G White, has said:

The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favour of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.

(The Ministry of Healing, page 470)

Renowned theologian and thinker Francis Schaeffer has said:



Love—and the unity it attests to—is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father.

(The Mark of a Christian, page 153)

## We Witness by Sharing the Gospel

### 1. How strong was the Apostle Paul's motivation to share the good news about Jesus? 1

#### Corinthians 9:16

Yet, when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am  to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

On the south-eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and His disciples met a man who was demon possessed living among some tombs ([Luke 8:26-39](#)). Jesus healed the man, who then begged to go with Jesus. Instead, Jesus sent him away saying,

“Return home and tell how much God has done for you.”

He hadn't been with Jesus or heard any of His teachings, but he could tell what he knew of the power of the gospel. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. **We can tell people** about our Friend Jesus and **what He has done for us!**

### 2. How did Paul relate to people who were lost? 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible...

I have become  to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

## We Witness by Our Lifestyle

### 3. What kind of lives does Peter urge us to live and why? 1 Peter 2:12

Live such  among the pagans [those who don't follow Jesus] that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

We witness for Jesus by the way we live. The apostle Paul says,

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is” (Romans 12:2).

We live in a secular society that has lost connection with God. The entertainment media bombards us daily with its secular message. While the sex and violence will harm us— it's **not the worst thing** about



the media. The worst thing is that **it presents a world-view where God is absent**. If there's no God, then life is **meaningless**, anything goes and you can do your own thing.

### Boy George

Boy George, when he was popular a few years ago, typifies this attitude. He said: "I've slept with girls and blokes, but I'm not sleeping with anyone at the moment because I can't be bothered to work up the energy to find someone . . . I don't believe anyone is heterosexual . . . I'm not interested in gay rights because to me gay is normal, being free to do what you want to do." (Boy George in His Own Words)

For Boy George the distinction between male and female is virtually destroyed completely. There are no categories of normal male-female relations or categories of right and wrong. Jesus calls us to **stand against such a secular culture**.

#### 4. With what does Paul tell us we should fill our minds? [Philippians 4:4-9](#)

... whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is , think about such things.

### We Witness by Giving for the Gospel

#### 1. What does the Bible say God owns? [Psalm 24:1](#)

The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it, the , and all who live in it.

God's ownership of all things is the most fundamental fact of human existence, and the most fundamental doctrine of the Bible. It's the foundation of all divine claims and promises, and of all human duties. When God created Adam and Eve, He made them stewards over this world. A steward is a person entrusted with management of another's property. He gave them delegated authority over this earth to care for it and for each other ([Genesis 1:28; 2:15](#)).

#### 2. What is God's way of financing the spreading of the gospel? [1 Corinthians 9:13-14](#)

Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should  from the gospel.

God's method of financing the work of spreading the good news about salvation is through tithes and offerings. The priestly tribe of Levi didn't receive any land. They had no crops or animals to provide for their needs. Their work was **to care for the spiritual needs** of the Israelites in the temple. God said through Moses: "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting" ([Numbers 18:21](#)).



Tithe is a tenth of our regular profits ([Genesis 28:22](#)). The word usually applies to that portion of regular profits that God has declared as His for the carrying out of His work on earth ([Leviticus 27:30-32](#)).

**Abraham**, the father of both the Jewish and Arab nations and **spiritual father of those who believe in Jesus**, is recorded as **paying tithe** to Melchizedek, the priest of God ([Genesis 14:18-20](#)).

### 3. While disapproving of the legalism of the Pharisees how did Jesus approve the paying of tithes? [Matthew 23:23](#)

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices— mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law— justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter,  the former.

The Jews were very careful to pay tithe on the smallest of herbs, but neglected to **show mercy and justice**. Jesus condemned them for the latter, but **upheld tithe paying**. In some respects the Old Testament law is superseded in that Jesus gave His all, so now a tenth is only a bare minimum guide to giving. After the Babylonian captivity (605-538 BC), the Jews who returned to rebuild the Temple, **became discouraged and were failing to honour God**.

### 4. What promise has God made to those who place Him first in all things including finances? [Malachi 3:8-10](#)

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much  that you will not have room enough for it.

God doesn’t ask us to pay tithes and offerings because He needs the money, for **"the silver is mine and the gold is mine"** ([Haggai 2:8](#)), He says, and **"the cattle on a thousand hills"** ([Psalm 50:10](#)). He wants us to recognise His ownership and to learn to be unselfish givers.

While tithe paying is not a magic wand to financial wealth and God is not Santa Claus, nevertheless, God has promised to supply our needs. For some, getting wealthy would be a stumbling block. For others, who have honoured God in tithe paying, God has prospered them materially, because they used their wealth unselfishly. John D. Rockefeller began tithing when he was earning only \$3.50 a week. H. J. Heinz of “57 Varieties,” H. P. Crowell of Quaker Oats, J. L. Kraft of Kraft cheese, M. W. Baldwin of Baldwin Locomotive Works, F. W. Woolworth of the well-known chain stores, William Wrigley of chewing gum, M. S. Hershey of Hershey’s chocolate, and William Colgate of toothpaste fame all put God first in their finances and found themselves on the road to prosperity. (Your Bible and You, page 188-9)

### 5. What kind of giver does Christ love? [2 Corinthians 9:6-7](#)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a .



Jesus' commendation of the widow who gave two small coins indicates that God is more interested in our motives and attitudes rather than amounts ([Luke 21:1-4](#)). Someone has said:

"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

### **Mary's Story**

The innocence and dedication of children is beautiful. The greatest surprise of Mary's life was receiving a \$5 note on her fourth birthday. She carried the note about the house and was seen sitting on the stairs admiring it. "What are you going to do with your five dollars?" her mother asked. "Take it to Sunday school," said Mary promptly. "To show your teacher?" Mary shook her head. "No," she said. "I'm going to give it to God. He'll be as surprised as I am to get something besides silver coins."

#### **1. How does Paul state the all-sufficiency of God for every faithful steward? [2 Corinthians 9:8](#)**

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having

, you will abound in every good work.

Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" ([Romans 8:31-32](#))

**Jesus** came to bring salvation within the reach of all. Upon the cross of Calvary He **paid the infinite redemption price for a lost world**. His self-denial and self-sacrifice, His unselfish labour, His humiliation, above all, **the offering up of His life, testifies to the depth of His love for fallen human beings**. It was to seek and to save **the lost** that He came to earth ([see John 3:16; Luke 19:10](#)). What God wants from us is our complete commitment to Him as a response of gratitude and love.

### **A Tract Written by an Atheist**

Following is a tract written by an atheist. An atheist is one who doesn't believe there is a God. What he has written is a challenge to those who do!

Did I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean to me everything. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought, and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labour in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of Eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand, nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon Eternity alone ... I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?



## LESSON 22 - Good News About Health



Many people are truly surprised to find that the ancient Biblical writings have so much to say about our Health. Many who understand the concept of the Creator-God, are not surprised that the Maker had certain specific instructions for how his creatures should eat, drink and live. How do Genesis 1 & 2 outline the ideal environment for a healthy lifestyle? What was mankind's original diet in Eden? How close or far away are we from the ideal that God gave Adam and Eve? Read King Solomon's wise counsel on lifestyle issues. What are the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle? The answer is 8-10 extra years of life! Find out more ...

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. Health in the West
2. The Reason to Care for Our Health
3. The Benefits of Daily Physical Activity
4. A Healthy Diet
5. Avoiding Harmful Things
6. Trust in God
7. God and Health

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, You made us and know how we work and function best. Please show me your plan for our health, yesterday, today and always. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## Health in the West

Health is something that many people don't appreciate until they lose it. The USA is typical of most Western countries. In one year 936,923 people died from heart and blood-vessel diseases and 553,091 from cancer. That's 4,082 people dying every day for that year. These two groups of diseases accounted for 62% of all deaths. To see this in perspective, motor vehicle accidents accounted for 43,354 deaths for the same period, which is 119 a day, or 1.8% of all deaths. Deaths from cancer and heart and blood-vessel diseases are 34 times as frequent as death from traffic accidents, and 86 times as frequent as death from AIDS (17,318 deaths for the year).

Cancer and heart and blood-vessel diseases are the West's biggest killers. Yet they are largely preventable.

"Unhealthy lifestyle is the primary contributor to the six leading causes of death in the USA --- heart disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory diseases, accidents, and diabetes --- which collectively account for over 70% of all deaths." ([www.healthpromotionadvocates.org](http://www.healthpromotionadvocates.org))

Apart from **inherited factors**, other **risk factors** are: smoking, high fat, sugar and salt diet, high blood pressure, obesity, physical inactivity, alcohol, stress, a refined diet lacking in fibre and nutrients.

When it comes to mental health, almost 3 in 10 suffer from a mental disorder, such as anxiety disorder, depression, alcohol and drug abuse and dependence. ([www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html))

Most people wait until they lose their health before they are concerned about it. The **Bible** presents a **holistic view** of human beings. That is, **we're a unit - physical, mental, social and spiritual**. What affects one aspect affects all. Just think about when you've had a toothache or have been worried.

## The Bible and Good Health

### 1. What did Jesus say was one of the reasons He came here? **John 10:10**

I have come that they may have , and have it to the full.

### 2. As well as spiritual wellbeing what does John pray that his readers may enjoy? **3 John 1:2**

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy  and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

### 3. How beneficial does king Solomon say cheerfulness is? **Proverbs 17:22**

A cheerful heart is , but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.



## The Reason to Care for Our Health

### 1. Why does Paul say we should honour God with our bodies? [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)

Do you not know that  of the Holy Spirit? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

2. What should guide us in lifestyle matters? [1 Corinthians 10:31](#) So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of .

### 3. While we all suffer the limiting effects of sin what else limits our possession of health? [Hosea 4:6](#)

My people are destroyed from .

Ignorance, or neglect, of natural laws of health brings unnecessary sickness. Most early deaths in Western society could be prevented if people followed health principles.

**Genesis chapters one and two** outline the ideal environment for a healthy lifestyle. These are the God-given **principles** of health and happiness:

Fresh air; Pure water; Sunshine; A diet of fruit, nuts and grains; Exercise in cultivating plants; Habitual self-control in all habits; Regular rest and Communion with God, as represented by Sabbath fellowship; and Eating from the tree of life!

Wonder drugs, such as penicillin, have saved millions of lives in our recent past. But the main diseases today are not helped by penicillin. They are heart and blood-vessel diseases, high blood pressure, cancer, arthritis, osteoporosis and diabetes. These are lifestyle diseases. Who has a wonder drug that can cure them? Dr Bortz, in the Journal of the American Medical Association, has said:

There is no drug in current or prospective use that holds as much promise for sustained health as a lifetime program of physical exercise.

## The Benefits of Daily Physical Activity

The benefits from daily physical exercise are many. Following is a list from the American Heart Association:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease by improving blood circulation throughout the body.
- Keeps weight under control.
- Improves blood cholesterol levels.
- Prevents and manages high blood pressure.



- Prevents bone density loss (osteoporosis).
- Boosts energy level.
- Helps manage stress.
- Releases tension.
- Improves self-image.
- Improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well.
- Counters anxiety and depression and increases enthusiasm and optimism.
- Increases muscle strength, giving greater capacity for other physical activities.
- Provides a way to share an activity with family and friends.
- Establishes good heart-healthy habits in children.
- Helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with ageing, and maintains quality of life and independence longer.

## Types of Exercise

There are **four basic types** of exercise: incidental, endurance, stretching, and strength exercises.

### INCIDENTAL ACTIVITY

Latest research indicates that sedentary persons can gain measurable health benefits by just being more active in their normal daily schedule. Go for walks during work breaks. Get into gardening. Take stairs instead of escalators and elevators. Park further from the supermarket and walk through the car park. Walk instead of drive where possible.

### ENDURANCE EXERCISE

Endurance is an essential part of fitness. It is often described as aerobic fitness or heart-lung conditioning. Aerobic means with oxygen, and aerobic exercise is any sustained activity, over a period of time, that requires the heart and lungs to work a little harder.

#### The FIT Formula

**F** = frequency: 3-6 times a week

**I** = intensity: moderate, vigorous activity to increase heart rate

**T** = time: sustained for 30 minutes

Choose aerobic activities you enjoy

Walking or hiking, jogging, cycling, swimming, rowing, walking on a treadmill, stair climbing, gym aerobics.



## STRETCHING AND FLEXIBILITY

Stretching prevents muscle soreness and decreases the risk of injury. By maintaining flexibility you improve posture and reduce the risk of joint problems. Stretch only to a position where mild tension is felt. Hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds. Don't bounce. After a short rest, repeat the stretch again. Always do stretching before and after vigorous exercise.

## STRENGTH EXERCISE

Weight-bearing and resistance exercises, two to three times weekly, keep your muscles ready for action. They build muscle strength and improve body shape. They reduce the loss of muscle tone. Weight-bearing exercises increase calcium in bones, preventing osteoporosis and some kinds of arthritis.

"... increasing participation in regular moderate physical activity among the more than 88 million inactive Americans over the age of 15 might reduce annual national medical costs by as much as ... \$76.6 billion." (Pratt M; Macera CA; Guijing W; Physician and Sports Medicine)

### A Healthy Diet

#### 1. What was the original diet given by God to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? [Genesis 1:29-30](#)

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing  on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit seed in it. They will be yours for food."

After the Flood, God allowed the use of certain flesh foods. But this was never God's original plan, nor is it the best for health. (See [Genesis 7:2-3, 8](#); [Leviticus 11:1-23](#); [Deuteronomy 14:3-30](#))

Karen Collins, registered dietitian with the American Institute for Cancer Research, says research shows that a plant-based diet is the key to warding off cancer.

One dietitian said that we eat too much and exercise too little. In the U.S. the per capita consumption of SUGARS is 59 kg (130 pounds). This is an average of 35 teaspoons per day for every person. That's 647 calories (2717 kilojoules) per day from "empty calories". "Empty calories" are foods that provide energy while providing few or no nutrients. Over three-quarters of sugar consumption comes from manufactured foods.

A can of soft drink, for example, can contain up to 9 teaspoons of sugar (405 calories, or 1701 kilojoules). During the same year the consumption of OILS and FATS was 29.5 kg (65 pounds) per capita. This is an average of 16 teaspoons (80 grams) of fat per day for every person (728 calories or 3056 kilojoules).

The **Healthy Diet Pyramid** helps to convert dietary advice into practical language and has been in use for some time. The pyramid is divided into three segments:



**Eat Most** - Cereals, Vegetables, Fruits

**Eat Moderately** - Protein foods, Dairy products, Nuts, Eggs

**Eat Least** - Oil, Fats, Sweets.

## Benefits of Water

6-8 Glasses a Day

The body is composed of about 70% water. It uses about 20 glasses of water per day. Some of this comes from our food, some from metabolism, but this does not quite meet the needs of our body. **For good health** we need six to eight glasses of water a day. (More if the weather is hot and/or we're exercising vigorously.)

## Avoiding Harmful Things

### 1. What does Paul say we should avoid? [2 Corinthians 7:1](#)

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that  body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

### 2. What does Solomon say concerning those who use alcoholic drinks? [Proverbs 20:1](#)

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them .

The Australian Federal Minister for Aged, Family and Health said years ago what is true in most Western countries. Australians "have not dealt with their alcohol problem at all.... We have as a nation ignored the incredible costs in human life and to the taxpayer of the two major killers—**tobacco and alcohol, which are responsible for 98 per cent of drug-related deaths.**" (Sonya Voumard, "Nation's drinking causes problems," The Age, 10/7/90)

The misuse of all drugs delivers enormous social, economic and health costs to societies. In the USA, 435,000 die from tobacco-related causes, 85,000 from alcohol-related causes and 17,000 from illicit drugs.

Drug abuse costs the USA \$485 billion a year. \$185 billion for alcohol, \$138 billion for tobacco, and \$161 billion for illicit drugs. (Mokdad, A.H., et al. "Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000," Journal of the American Medical Association, March 10, 2004)

"Excluded from the costs are the intangible social consequences of drug misuse, such as family breakdown or the pain and suffering caused by misusers to themselves and others." (The National Drug Strategy: mapping the future)



Popular illicit drugs such as marijuana are taking their toll. New strains of highly potent cannabis are as dangerous as heroin and cocaine, and the drug can no longer be dismissed as "soft and relatively harmless", the United Nations has reported. (London Telegraph. June 28, 2006)

### 3. What commandment stresses the importance of physical life? [Exodus 20:13](#)

You shall not .

Shortening of our lives by disregarding the laws of health, whether by drugs or any other means, is a violation of the sixth commandment. God wants us to enjoy good health.

### Trust in God

#### 1. What example did Daniel and his three friends give of their trust in God regarding diet? [Daniel 1:5, 8-16](#)

The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service ... But Daniel resolved not to

with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you." Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

Some of the food from the king's table would have been offered to idols. Also unclean animals were used. Daniel demonstrated the courage of his convictions.

#### 2. What does God promise for those who trust Him? [Psalm 103:2-4](#)

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.

It's been said there's a God-shaped hole in every one of us and only God can fill it. We were made for fellowship with God and only in that relationship can we be at peace. While God promises to heal us, for many that healing won't take place until Jesus comes again.



It's been said there's a God-shaped hole in every one of us and only God can fill it. We were made for fellowship with God and only in that relationship can we be at peace. While God promises to heal us, for many that healing won't take place until Jesus comes again.

## **God and Health**

A Time magazine report by Claudia Wallis on the relationship between faith and health reports the following: "Anywhere from 60% to 90% of visits to doctors are in the mind-body, stress-related realm," asserts Dr Herbert Benson, president of the Mind/Body Medical Institute of Boston's Deaconess Hospital and Harvard Medical School. A study at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Centre found that one of the best predictors of survival among 232 heart-surgery patients was the degree to which the patients said they drew comfort and strength from religious faith. Those who did not, had more than three times the death rate of those who did.

A survey of 30 years of research on blood pressure showed that churchgoers have lower blood pressure than non-churchgoers— even when adjusted to account for smoking and other risk factors, according to Dr David Larson, researcher formerly at the US National Institute of Health.

Other studies have shown that men and women who attend church regularly have half the risk of dying from coronary-artery disease as those who rarely go to church. Again, smoking and socioeconomic factors were taken into account. A National Institute on Aging study of 4000 elderly living at home in North Carolina found that those who attend religious services are less depressed and physically healthier than those who don't attend or who worship at home. Numerous studies have found lower rates of depression and anxiety-related illness among the religiously committed. Non-churchgoers have been found to have a suicide rate four times higher than church regulars.

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Faith in God is beneficial to our health. It's not just so that we can live longer, but that we might more effectively share the good news about Jesus.



## LESSON 23 - Entering into a Relationship with Jesus



Kerri's story, *My Search for Peace*, was all about rejecting God and running away from Him. Many of us can readily identify with that story. Then Kerri shared about how she finally stopped running and chose to have a right relationship with Jesus Christ. So the question is - *How do you publicly show everyone that you want to become a follower of Jesus?* In New Testament times, new believers were baptised by immersion. Why was Jesus' baptism so important? And what is the meaning of baptism for us today? Plus how do I permanently join with other believers in worshipping God?

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. My Search For Peace – Kerri Stephensen
2. The Baptism of Jesus
3. The Meaning of Baptism
4. The Great Commission
5. The Body of Christ – The Church

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Please tell me how to connect with Jesus, and how his example is clear from the Bible to show how to connect with others too. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## **My Search For Peace – Kerri Stephensen**

**I'd have scoffed** if anyone had said to me as I witnessed Mum and Dad's baptism that I, too, would one day be baptised. They were baptised in 1989. I was baptised on March 6, 1999. Almost a year after their baptism my parents rejoiced with me at the birth of David Andrew—my son, their first grandson. Three weeks later, tragedy. My brother, their only son, Brendan, was killed. Brendan was my closest confidant.

While Mum and Dad had to cope with the loss of their son, they had to also contend with a wayward, guilty daughter. I began to have **no concept of right or wrong**. I became self-absorbed in my own guilt and mourning, and I couldn't see the pain I caused my parents, friends and relatives. I turned to drugs and alcohol to help make me feel good. Then it got worse. **I used to be a devil worshipper**. I felt he understood me. At times I tried to leave him, but he kept pulling me back.

Pastor Ed Totenhofer, a former pastor of the Lilydale, Victoria, Australia, Seventh-day Adventist Church tried to help, but I eventually told him not to worry—I was a lost cause. There was so much **confusion in my life**.

I used to speak with the devil, and he told me that if I ever tried to leave him something precious would be taken away from me. I "knew" Brendan had died because of me. I was the bad one and, when I sought help, my brother died.

I understand now what was happening, but back then I was too scared to seek help. If Satan could take away my brother, he could take my little baby just as easily. I thought I was saving everyone by not continuing my studies with Pastor Ed.

That's what Satan wanted me to think. He wanted me to believe that's just the way life goes for some people. He wanted me to believe that it wasn't worth living anymore, that there was no future and, worse, that Jesus would never forgive me.

When my father died in 1994, after a short illness, I thought I'd do the right thing by Mum and accompany her to church. It would be just until I felt she was OK to go by herself. I had no intention of going for myself, or the Lord, or, I'm ashamed to say, for the salvation of my son.

One Sabbath something happened. Listening to the hymns, I felt something stirring inside. I tried desperately to hide the tears falling freely. I tried to dismiss what was happening and tried to think of the last time I felt the same stirring—when I held my son for the first time. Then I remembered: three weeks later my brother died. I couldn't risk losing my baby to Satan, so I fought the feelings tooth and nail.

I lost. I had to find out more about Jesus. If Satan had so much power over me, and **Jesus was the stronger, then why not pray?** That is so obvious now, but back then I felt Jesus had left me to fend for myself. After what I'd put everyone through, He wouldn't, couldn't, love me. Could He?



Eventually, I started lessons with Neil and Joseph [current pastor and his assistant]. I was confused. They kept telling me **Jesus doesn't keep records** [See [Psalm 103:10-13](#); [Micah 7:18-19](#); [Isaiah 43:25](#)].

Did I **want** to repent? Yes. Did I love Jesus? Yes. But I still couldn't comprehend forgiveness. **How could anyone forgive me?**

Mum was nice to me, but why? Because I went to church with her? Because the grandson I gave her looked so much like her own son? Surely it couldn't be because **she loved me**, not after the living hell I'd put her and Dad through?

Slowly the realisation hit me. Mum loves me for me, not for anything I did or didn't do. Because of her love she could forgive me. If Mum loves me and can forgive me, why couldn't I believe Jesus can do the same? It took soul searching and prayer, but now I know.

I know Jesus loves me. I know Jesus died for me. I know He forgives me. I know every day, when I wake up, He's there. When I'm in trouble, tempted or confused, I know He's only a prayer away. I know Jesus' love will never leave me. If I stumble and fall, He's waiting to help me up. Knowing this, I turned my back on my old way of life. I can't believe I'm the same person. I am, yet I'm not. It's still me, but my mind is at peace and my soul is no longer tortured.

My only regret is that my Dad died before he could see the daughter he always wanted. Will he get a surprise when Jesus returns! I'm probably the last person he expected to see in **God's great kingdom**. (Adapted from Record, March 13, 1999)

**Kerri found peace** through a right relationship with Jesus. All the **knowledge** of Bible teachings concerning latter-day events, such as the antichrist, Armageddon, the mark of the beast, etc, are of no avail if we don't have this **relationship with Jesus**. That's the purpose of this Bible study Topic.

**Baptism is the Bible way we show our acceptance of what Jesus has done for us.** It is a **public expression** of our decision to follow Him

## The Baptism of Jesus

### 1. Who is first mentioned in the New Testament as practising baptism? [Matthew 3:1-6](#)

In those days  came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."...People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the Jordan River.

### 2. Why did Jesus say that it was necessary for Him to be baptised? [Matthew 3:13-15](#)

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to  all righteousness.



## There were several reasons for Jesus' baptism:

1. All God's righteous requirements for the Messiah were fully met in Jesus.
2. At Jesus' baptism John publicly announced the **arrival of the Messiah** and the **inception of His ministry** ([John 1:31-34](#)).
3. By His baptism Jesus completely identified Himself with our sin and failure (though He Himself needed no repentance or cleansing from sin), **becoming our substitute** ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).
4. His baptism was an **example** to His followers. (NIV Study Bible notes) As one with us He must bear the burden of our guilt and woe. The Sinless One must feel the shame of sin.

### 3. How was Jesus baptised by John? [Mark 1:9-10](#)

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the  he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word “baptise”— that those who were baptised were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water. (A. P. Stanley, Christian Institutions, page 19)

The Greek word used by the New Testament writer in this text is **baptizo**, which means **to immerse**, to dip under a fluid in the same fashion as a piece of cloth is completely immersed in a vat of dye. The oldest Christian churches in the world, some of which have been standing in Italy, Greece and North Africa for 1500 years, have large, sunken baptismal fonts, suitable for the **complete immersion of adults!**

## The Meaning of Baptism

### 1. On what three great acts of Jesus does salvation centre? [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#)

... I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you ... By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you ... what I received I passed on to you as of first , that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ...

This is the heart of the gospel.

Some people want to deny what happened to Jesus or try to explain it away.



Here is a letter written to the magazine Christianity Today along with the response:

**Dear Eutyclus:**

Our preacher said, on Easter, that Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed Him back to health. What do you think? Sincerely, Bewildered

**Dear Bewildered:**

Your preacher would know what happened if he was beaten with a cat-o-nine-tails, with 39 heavy strokes, nailed to a cross; hung in the sun for 6 hours; Had a spear run through his heart; embalmed; and put in an airless tomb for 36 hours! Sincerely, Eutyclus

## 2. In what way does baptism by immersion symbolise and commemorate these three events?

**Romans 6:3-6**

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live .

The **resurrection of Jesus** is the **cornerstone of the Christian faith**. Christianity would never have got off the ground without it. Without it those who trust in Jesus would have no hope for this life or for the life to come. The apostle Paul wrote, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile" ([1 Corinthians 15:17](#)). If the resurrection was a hoax, the disciples would have known about it.

The **focal point** of the New Testament is the **death, burial and resurrection of Jesus**. He went through this experience as our **Substitute** and **Representative**. As our **Substitute** He took our place and died for our sins, as our **Representative** all that is His—His perfect life, His victory over sin and Satan, and His righteous character—is counted as mine. What He has done for us is **credited to us** when we accept Him by faith. In the New Testament, baptism is the **ceremony** by which we, by faith, **symbolically identify ourselves with what Jesus has accomplished for us**.

## The Great Commission

### 1. What great commission did Christ give His church? [Matthew 28:19-20](#)

Therefore go and  of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

### 2. What did Jesus say it means to be His disciple? [Luke 9:23-26](#)

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must  and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self.

Discipleship involves personal allegiance to Jesus, expressed in following Him and giving Him an exclusive loyalty ([Mark 8:34-38](#); [Luke 14:26-33](#)). In at least some cases it meant literal abandonment of



home, business ties and possessions ([Mark 10:21, 28](#)), but in every case readiness to put the claims of Jesus first, whatever the cost, was demanded.

## The Spreading Flame

### 3. How did Peter tell the people on the Day of Pentecost that they should demonstrate their repentance? [Acts 2:38](#)

Peter replied, “Repent and , every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### 4. In the story of the Ethiopian treasurer, how did Philip baptise him? [Acts 8:26-39](#)

...Then both Philip and the eunuch went down  and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water...

The apostle Philip baptised the Ethiopian treasurer.

This was a significant demonstration of the Biblical style of baptism, by full immersion.

It symbolizes the believer's death to sin and resurrection to a new life in Jesus Christ!

### 5. What great experience is commemorated, for us, when we are baptised? [Galatians 3:26-29](#)

You are all sons [children] of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have  yourselves with Christ.

## The Body of Christ – The Church

### 1. What do we become a part of, when we are baptised? [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#)

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into .

FIRST of all, baptism takes us back to **what Jesus has accomplished for us** on the cross.

It symbolises **our identification with** what He did for us in His death, **burial** and resurrection. Paul in Colossians says:

“Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” ([2:12](#)).

When Jesus died we died; when He was buried we were buried; when He rose we rose.



SECOND, baptism symbolises the **change** that takes place in the lives of those who have accepted what Christ has done for them. It commemorates **the beginning of a new life in Christ**. This is likened to a **new birth** ([John 3:1-8](#)).

THIRD, baptism represents the entrance into **membership of the body of Christ-the church** ([Ephesians 1:22-23](#))

**2. What was Paul told to do when he understood the plan of salvation? [Acts 22:16](#)**

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be  and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

This challenge comes home to the heart of everyone who learns the truth about baptism. It symbolises our identification with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. It's **the public seal of our discipleship** and God is honoured by our obedience. And it's the formal entrance of membership into the body of Christ, the church.

It would have been wrong for Kerri to have been baptised with her parents in 1989, when she hadn't accepted Jesus and committed her life to Him. But once she understood and accepted what Jesus had done for her, it would've been inconsistent for her not to be baptised. In fact, it would've been difficult for her not to be baptised. **Jesus freed her from her guilt and changed her life.**



## LESSON 24 - Stand Up and Be Counted



In Bob Dylan's album titled, "Slow Train Coming," he sings a song that questions who we are following in life. *"Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord, But you're gonna have to serve somebody."* Many people today follow political leaders, or have heroes who are so-called rock, sports or movie stars. At the end of the day, many people are influenced by someone else and end up following that person and copying their lifestyle. Today God is calling people to step forward and dedicate their lives to Him and thereby make a difference. By accepting His free gift of Salvation you can live a life full of meaning and be a blessing directly from God to other people. Want to know how? Read on ...

**The topics covered in this guide are:**

1. They Made a Difference
2. The Gift of Salvation
3. Fellowship and Worship
4. Working for God
5. Called to Make a Difference

**Prayer for Today:** Father in Heaven, Please tell me what social responsibility means to you, and how I can make a difference for you in this dying world. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen



## They Made a Difference

Popular singer John Cougar Mellencamp on his Scarecrow album sings:

You've got to stand for something, Or you're gonna fall for anything.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (1929-68)**, was someone who stood for something. A third-generation American Baptist clergyman and **Nobel laureate**, he was one of the world's best advocates of nonviolent social change. He emerged as a leader of the American civil rights movement against racial oppression after organising the famous 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. An eloquent speaker, he pressed for equal treatment and improved circumstances for blacks and for the eradication of institutionalised racial inequalities.

On October 16, 1962, King met with President Kennedy at the White House. In 1963 he led a peaceful march between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, where he delivered his most famous speech, "**I Have a Dream.**"

"I have a dream that my four little children will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character, I have a dream ..."

Time magazine named King "Man of the Year" (January 3, 1964). On July 2 he witnessed the signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by President Lyndon Johnson. It guaranteed blacks the right to vote, access to public accommodations and authorised desegregation of public facilities and schools. Awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** on December 10, 1964, King was the 12th American, third black, and at the age of 35, the youngest person to win the coveted prize.

Martin Luther King stood up for what he believed in, but at great personal cost. In 1956 his home was bombed. He was stabbed in the chest in 1958. Twelve times he was arrested for his non-violent protest and spent time in solitary confinement. In 1966, he was assaulted with stones as he led marchers in Chicago.

Finally, while involved in a peaceful protest in Memphis, Martin Luther King, Jr, was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Some 100,000 attended his funeral and millions watched it on television. April 7, 1968, was declared a national day of mourning for King. In 1983 the third Monday in January was designated a federal holiday in honour of his birthday, and his Atlanta birthplace and gravesite were made a national historic site. He stood up to be counted and made a difference. (Flip Schulke, King Remembered; Clayborne Carson, King's Biography)

**NELSON MANDELA (1918- )** is another who stood up to be counted. In his fight against apartheid he was imprisoned for 27 years, from 1962 to 1990.



Born the son of a Tembu tribal chief, he became a lawyer and in 1944 joined the African National Congress (ANC), a civil rights group. In 1956 Mandela went on trial for treason, but was acquitted in 1961.

In the early 1960s Mandela led the ANC's paramilitary wing, "Spear of the Nation" (Umkhonto we Sizwe). Arrested again in August 1962 and while in prison he was convicted of sabotage and treason. In June 1964 he was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island.

Mandela's statements in court during these trials are classics in the history of the **resistance to apartheid** and they have been an inspiration to all who have opposed it. He ends with these words:

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

During this period Mandela became a worldwide symbol of resistance to white domination in South Africa. He rejected offers made for remission of sentence in exchange for abandoning his political agenda against apartheid.

Mandela was released by President F. W. de Klerk on February 11, 1990. He assumed leadership of the ANC. He led negotiations with the government for a new constitution granting political power to the country's black majority. In 1991 the government repealed the last of the apartheid laws. Mandela and de Klerk shared the 1993 **Nobel Peace Prize** for their efforts. In May 1994, after the country's first national elections in which blacks could vote, Mandela became president of South Africa. (Microsoft Encarta, 1994; Time, Jan 6, 1986; Paul Briens (ed), Reading About the World)

To be a follower of Jesus is to **stand up and be counted** - and make a difference! Sadly, too many professed Christians aren't doing that! Market researcher George Barna, in his book Generation Next, reports on a survey of 13- to 18-year-old teenagers in the USA, including both Christians and non-Christians. His findings are disturbing. He says:

"During this survey, seeing how teenage believers deal with life was consistently startling. It did not take much of an imagination to wonder sometimes if the Christian faith of these young people really makes any difference at all in how they think about, perceive and handle life...."

He found that the lifestyles, attitudes and beliefs were "virtually identical among Christian and non-Christian teenagers." In case we think, "Well, they're teens, what do you expect?" Barna found a very close parallel between what Christian teenagers believe and what their parents believe. Christian adults are conforming to society standards, not the Bible, and their children are following.



What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? Today, in Western society, **we live in a culture that has lost direction**. The prevailing world-view is that life is the product of matter plus time plus chance, therefore it is meaningless. In the area of morals and values everything is relative. The individual has become his or her own authority. What is needed is a radical Christianity that will **stand against the spirit of our age**.

The Bible presents **only two groups** in the world before Jesus comes again—those who've accepted the **true gospel** and are followers of Jesus and those who've conformed to Babylon's **false gospel and worship**. This study Topic is a challenge to **follow Jesus all the way - out of gratitude** for what He's done for us.

## The Gift of Salvation

### 1. How much does salvation cost us to obtain? [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the  of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

### 2. How much did providing salvation cost Jesus? [Philippians 2:5-8](#)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God ... being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death even  on a cross!

### 3. How does the gift of salvation become ours? [Acts 16:30-31](#)

in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.

We are saved by faith alone in Jesus, that leads to a commitment to Him as Lord. There are **two extremes** people can fall into: liberalism on the one hand, and legalism on the other. **Liberalism** is the view that all we have to do is believe and then we can do as we please. **Legalism** is the opposite view, that somehow our obedience or good works contribute to our salvation.

## Our Response to God's Gift

### 4. What is the response of those who really accept this gift? [Psalm 40:8](#)

I  to do your will, O my God: your law is within my heart.

### 5. How far must we be willing to go for Jesus? [Luke 9:23](#)

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must  and take up his cross daily and follow me.



6. What prayer did Jesus pray in the garden of Gethsemane that should be the attitude of every Christian? [Matthew 26:36-46](#)

My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet , but as you will.

The **cup** is symbolic for **deep suffering and sorrow**. Here it refers to Jesus, who knew no sin, accepting the consequences of our sin - **separation from God**. Jesus could've abandoned us and let us suffer the penalty for our sin - **eternal death**. His humanity shrank from the task, but He chose to do the will of His Father and save us. The cross that we are asked to bear is not a wooden or metal cross, but the cross of **self-denial**. When our will **conflicts** with God's will, we **choose God's will** no matter how difficult that may appear for us. In the long run, **God's will is always the best way for us**.

## Fellowship and Worship

1. What counsel does the writer of Hebrews give to Christians as they see the day of Jesus' Second Coming approaching? [Hebrews 10:23-25](#)

Let us not give up , as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching [Jesus' Coming].

Just as burning logs on a fire will die out **when separated**, so Christians are **in danger of losing their faith** when they **neglect fellowship** with other Christians.

2. How is the One whom we are called to worship described? [Revelation 14:7](#)

Worship  the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

3. Which commandment is referred to in Revelation 14:7? [Exodus 20:8-11](#)

Remember the  day by keeping it holy.... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blesses the Sabbath day and made it holy.

**The Sabbath is one of the greatest gifts of God** that reminds us of our need for fellowship and worship. It's for our benefit. It tells us that we're not alone in the universe - God is our Father. In all the busy-ness of life, we need to take time to be with God.

Because it has to do with time that is invisible, rather than with tangible things, it's well suited to be a gauge of our heavenly-mindedness. It's the only commandment of the 10 that people can flagrantly break, and yet be accepted in respectable society. It's the only one people couldn't have thought out by themselves.

As such **it is specifically the commandment that shows our loyalty to God**. When Israel came **out of Egypt** and God gave them manna to eat, the Sabbath was used as a **test** of their willingness to follow God ([Exodus 16:4-5, 23-28](#)).



Their failure to honour the Sabbath was the reason for the Babylonian captivity ([Jeremiah 17:19-27](#)). After the **Babylonian captivity** Nehemiah challenged the Israelites to honour God by faithful Sabbath-keeping ([Nehemiah 13:15-22](#)).

It's only **God's expressed choice** of the seventh day and **His own example** regarding it, that distinguishes it from the other days of the week. Only the person who wishes to **do exactly as God says** will be concerned with obedience in this matter.

#### 4. Into which two groups is the entire world divided in the last days? [Revelation 14:9-12](#)

If anyone  the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand ... the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

As we have said before, it is the gospel that divides the world into two groups. They are those who have accepted the gift of salvation and those who, sadly, **have rejected the gift**. They are called the **sheep** and the **goats** and the **wheat** and the **weeds** ([Matthew 25:31-46](#); [13:24-30](#), [36-43](#)). The issue in the last days is **true worship versus false worship - loyalty versus disloyalty**.

### Working for God

#### 1. While we're saved by God's grace through faith and not by our works, how does James, the brother of Jesus, say we show our faith? [James 2:14-19](#)

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

.... In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by , is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

James is addressing people who do not have genuine faith. They only claim to have faith. **Good works will always accompany true faith**. Remember the story of tightrope-walker Blondin and the Niagara Falls (study Topic 8, Getting in the Wheelbarrow)? True faith always leads to action - getting in the wheelbarrow.

#### 2. What did Jesus say about our influence as Christians? [Matthew 5:13-16](#)

You are the salt of the earth.... You are the  of the world.

Salt is used for flavouring and preserving food. To be of value it has to be mixed with food. Light is of no value if it is hidden. So **it is through personal contact and association that people are reached** by the saving power of the gospel. The strongest argument in favour of Christianity are Christians who **care about the needs of others**.



**3. In the parable of the sheep and the goats what behaviour reveals the difference between the two groups? [Matthew 25:31-46](#)**

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth,  for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

### **Called to Make a Difference**

Both Martin Luther King Jr, and Nelson Mandela stood for causes they believed in. Both were prepared to make great sacrifices for the benefit of others. In doing so they did make a difference. **No-one has made a greater difference than Jesus.** To be **His** follower means to **stand up and be counted** - and make a difference. Jesus is calling us to be radical Christians, to stand against a secular culture that is dying. Theologian and thinker Francis Schaeffer has said:

"One of the greatest injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative. Christianity today is not conservative, but revolutionary ... Today we are an absolute minority. If we want to be fair, we must teach the young to be revolutionaries, revolutionaries against the status quo."

(F. A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, pages 81, 82)

The counter-culture of the 1960s has become the culture of today. Christianity should now be the counter-culture. To be committed Christians is to be salt and light to this dying culture. The greatest need today is for consistent Christian living in **sharing the good news about Jesus.** The way we **live** and the way we **act** says more about Christianity than all the preaching by the greatest evangelists.

**Congratulations! You have completed the Try Jesus online course.**

Thank-you. God bless you in your daily walk with Him.