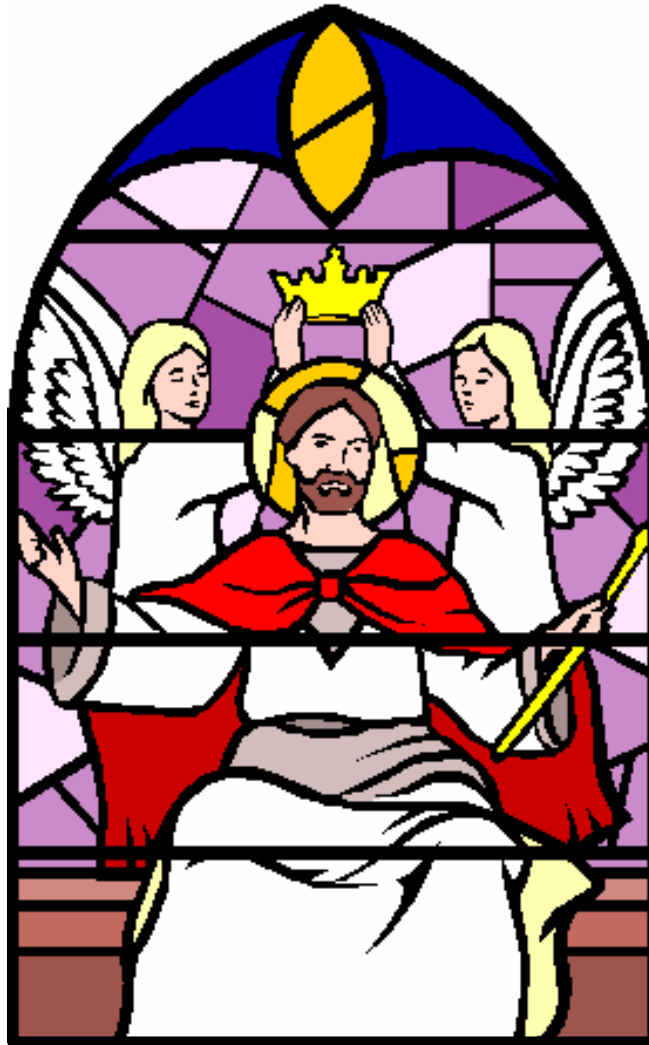


An Introduction to Christianity



“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

John 20:31

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Introduction:

Australia is a very cosmopolitan society, one that draws people to its shores from all nations and walks of life. As a result, we are home to many different religions and philosophies of life. I have found that many people whom I meet are not familiar with Biblical Christianity, and many have never even visited a Christian church. Some people I talk to have come from countries that have closed their doors to Christianity, and so these people are curious about Jesus Christ and the Bible. Therefore, I regularly come in contact with individuals who know very little about God, the Bible, and Christianity, but who are interested in learning more.

Unfortunately, such people struggle when they come to church, because most of our teaching and preaching is geared toward those who either are already Christians, or those who know about Christ and are yet to choose Him as their Saviour and God. It is hard to witness to people with no Bible knowledge or church background, as they do not comprehend who God is or why we need a Saviour. Sadly, there is a definite vacuum of study materials available that would be suitable for presenting Biblical Christianity to a sizeable group of uninformed but interested non-Christians. It is this need that has prompted me to put together a comprehensive yet concise Bible study course that explains, from the ground up, what real Christianity is all about, with the goal of leading people to the Saviour.

I have tried to lay out these studies in a simple and practical way that breaks each section up into logical areas of thought. Although the studies may be read on their own, it is heartily recommended that a mature Christian teach the studies to the non-Christian/s, carefully explaining the concepts and answering any questions that may arise. The studies are suitable either for a one-on-one environment, or for a group setting.

If you are reading this as someone who does not yet know God, may I encourage you to seek Him with all your heart, and pray to God that He might open your eyes to the wonderful truths of His Word:

“But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” (**Deuteronomy 4:29**)

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I. What is the Bible?

Christianity is based completely and absolutely upon the teachings of the Book that Christians call the Bible. But, what is the Bible? Is it different from the religious writings upon which are based Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, and other religions? How do I know that the Bible really comes from God? As we seek to understand Christianity, let us first consider this amazing book, the Bible.

1) **The Bible is God's communication to mankind.**

The Bible is essentially a collection of books which combine to form God's written communication to man. Without the Bible, it is impossible for us to know God and to have a personal relationship with Him.

Let me explain by way of illustration. While my wife and I were courting, I moved from college in the USA back to Australia for 3 months. It was a difficult time of separation for us. International phone calls were very expensive, so we kept our relationship going through our frequent love letters. We could not see each other face to face, but we got to know each other through our love letters. Similarly, you cannot see God face to face until you get to heaven, but God wants you to know Him personally. So, He has written some letters that will enable you to get to know Him. The Bible, then, is essentially a collection of love letters from God to you. It is God's communication and revelation to the people that he created for Himself.

2) **The Bible was written by man, but inspired by God.**

Many people say that the Bible is just another religious book written by man. Certainly the words of the Bible were written down by man, and have been copied and passed down through the centuries. However, it is vital to understand that the Bible is verbally inspired by God:

2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

What does it mean that the Bible was written by man but inspired by God? God put His words into the hearts of His messengers, and those men wrote down God's words as they were directed and guided by God's Spirit. The inspiration of Scripture may be likened to the way in which a boss dictates a letter to his secretary, and then the secretary types out the letter word-for-word as it was given to her.

2 Peter 1:21 "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

3) **The Bible is a historically accurate document.**

Most religious books contain interesting statements concerning morality, theology, and philosophy, but they are rather inaccurate when it comes to recording historical facts. This is not true concerning the Bible, because the Bible has been shown to be a very accurate historical document. We know this is true as we compare the Bible's historical record with those presented by archaeological evidence and other historical documents.

Sir William Ramsey, who made the most extensive studies anyone has ever undertaken on the authenticity of the events recorded in the book of Acts, finally said (even though he began his studies as a sceptic),

"Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense....In short this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians."

It is significant that the names of over 40 different kings of various countries, mentioned in the Old Testament, have also been found in contemporary documents and inscriptions outside of the Old

Testament, always consistently with the times and places associated with them in the Bible. Compare this fact with the gross errors found in other ancient histories. Nothing at all exists in ancient literature which has been even remotely as well-confirmed in accuracy as has the Bible.

Dr. Nelson Glueck, president of the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Institute of Religion, systematically explored the land of Israel for archaeological records, and found the Bible to be amazingly reliable at all points. This was despite the fact that he was not a believer in Biblical inerrancy. His experience led him to the following conclusion:

"As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries."

4) Science and the Bible.

There are two widespread and very harmful misconceptions about the relation of the Bible and science which are prevalent today. One is that the Bible is an antiquated religious book, filled with scientific fallacies and mistakes reflecting the naive cosmology of the primitive tribes of the Far East. The other misconception is that the Bible is a book of true religion dealing solely with spiritual subjects, and that if it does touch on matters of science and history, it must be interpreted "spiritually" or allegorically. However, it is logical that the Bible is wholly reliable on every subject, or it is not the Word of God. The Bible is a true and factual book on every subject, including science.

The Bible abounds with references to nature and natural processes, and thus frequently touches on the various sciences. It contains much accurate scientific knowledge which was completely unavailable anywhere else at that time. A brief list follows:

Evaporation	Psalms 135:7
Condensation	Job 26:8
Hydrologic balance	Job 28:24-26
Uniqueness of snow flakes	Job 38:22
Shape of earth	Isaiah 40:22, Psalm 103:12
Rotation of earth	Job 38:12, 14
Gravitation	Job 26:7
Glacial period	Job 38:29, 30
Precision of star orbits	Jeremiah 31:35-36
Circulation of atmosphere	Ecclesiastes 1:6
Blood circulation	Leviticus 17:11
Mass-energy equivalence	Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17
Atomic disintegration	2 Peter 3:10
Radio waves	Job 38:35

5) The Bible is not just another religious work.

- It is the only book of antiquity that gives an account of creation out of nothing.
- It is the only book that gives a continuous historical record from the first man to the present.
- It is the only book of ancient history that reveals a purpose in history.
- It is by far the purest religious literature, with the highest moral standards of all the religious books of the ancient world.
- It is the only religious book containing clear, detailed, accurate prophecies of events to come.
- It is the only ancient book that has the power to convict men of sin and lead them to the only One who can free them from sin.
- It is the only religious book that can give the complete assurance that one's sins are forgiven and that one is going to heaven.

6) 66 books written by 40 authors over 1,500 years.

Imagine getting 40 different Christian teachers from different countries, cultural backgrounds, and time periods. Put those men in a room and ask them to discuss the intricate details of the Christian faith. What is the probability that those 40 teachers would agree with each other on every subject that they discussed? None!

The Bible contains 66 books that were written by about 40 men from different walks of life and different nations. It was written over a period of about 1,500 years. Yet, all the writings of these men agree completely with one another, even to the most minute detail. How could this happen? It is only possible if the Bible is a divine book, inspired by God Himself.

7) The Old and the New.

The Bible is divided into two sections: the Old Testament, and the New Testament. Simply put, the Old Testament concerns the history of Israel and the world before the time of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament concerns the life of Christ and the establishment of Christianity.

8) The language of the King James Version.

The version of the Bible that we use is called the King James Version, and it was translated in 1611. Some of the words are now out of use, or are understood differently to how they were used in the 1600's. The reason that we use the King James Version (KJV) is because the more modern versions have been changed and corrupted, with thousands of words removed from the text. It is advisable to get a hold of a booklet that explains the archaic words, for example, "The King James Bible Companion" by David W. Daniels.

Review Questions:

1. The Bible is God's _____ to _____.

2. What does it mean that God inspired the Bible? _____

3. Is the Bible a book of myths and legends, or is it a historically accurate document?

4. How is the Bible unique? _____

5. What is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament? _____

II. Who is God?

** REVIEW WEEK 1 – What is the Bible?

1) God is eternal.

1 Timothy 1:17 “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

“Eternal” means without beginning or end. To say that God is eternal is to say that He has no time of birth or creation – He always was, and He always will be. God existed before time even began, although we cannot, with our finite minds, comprehend such a thing. God is eternal, timeless, ageless, and unchanging. He is not bound by the laws of time and space.

Psalm 90:2 “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

2) There is only one God.

There are many different religions in the world today, and many thousands of “gods” are worshipped across the globe. Some religions, such as Hinduism, have thousands of gods just within their own religious system. However, the Bible clearly teaches that there is only one true God, the Creator of the universe:

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Psalm 86:10 “For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.”

Isaiah 45:5 “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me...”

1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

There is only one Supreme Being who rules the universe. He does not share His power and authority with anyone. The Mormons, and others, teach that one day we can become Gods, even as God Himself, but that is not true. God has not evolved or changed, and we cannot evolve into supreme beings.

Malachi 3:6 “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

3) God is a Spirit.

John 4:24 “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

When we say that God is a Spirit, we mean that God is without a body; that he is not material or composed of parts; that he is invisible. Almost all nations have had some idea of God as being a physical or material being of some kind, but the Bible declares that God is a pure Spirit. As He is such a Spirit, he dwells not in temples made with hands:

Acts 7:48 “Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?”

We live as physical beings in a physical world. We live according to our physical senses, and we are bound by the laws of physics. We are not spirits, but human beings made of blood, bone and flesh. But, God is not so. God is a spirit being, unseen by the human eye, and untouched by the human hand.

1 Timothy 1:17 “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

4) God is holy.

Isaiah 6:3 “And one [angel] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

To say that God is holy means that He is perfect, flawless, pure, spotless, righteous, and set apart from sin. God is infinitely superior to man in His morality, His thoughts, and His ways:

Isaiah 55:8, 9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

The fact that God is holy implies that he cannot excuse or ignore sin and disobedience. God hates and detests all forms of sin, and He will not let even one sin into His presence.

5) God is in control.

Psalms 97:1 “The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.”

The fact that God is in complete control of the Universe is sometimes referred to as the sovereignty of God. God is in charge! We may not like all that God does, nor agree with all of His actions, but God is God – He does what He knows is right and just. Rulers and parliaments of nations are only in power because God has given them the privilege of doing so – it is God that rules the affairs of men.

Daniel 4:17 “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

6) God knows everything.

Psalms 147:5 “Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.”

There is nothing hid from the eyes of God. God is never surprised, neither is He confused. God knows and understands all that there is to know and understand. His mind is not limited like that of sinful man.

7) God is a Trinity of three Persons.

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

If ever there was a Bible doctrine that we know to be certainly true, yet we fail to fully understand, it is the doctrine of the trinity – God is a trinity of three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is not three gods, but One – yet He is three persons in One. Here are two illustrations that may help explain this difficult concept;

- a) The 3 dimensions. A book has height, length and width; these are not the same, but they cannot be separated.
- b) A triangle is one object with three sides that are distinct yet inseparable.

John 10:30 “I [Jesus] and my Father are one.”

Acts 5:3, 4 “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

8) God is personal.

Many religions worship gods who are lofty, impersonal, uncaring and unknowable. However, the Christian God of the Bible is a Supreme Being who is a loving and caring Person who desires a relationship with His people.

John 17:3 “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

1 Peter 5:6, 7 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

How is God a Person?

- He has feelings and emotions such as love, hatred, anger and compassion.
- He interacts with His creation.
- He calls Himself a heavenly Father.
- He desires love and affection.
- He refers to Himself as a Groom and a Husband.
- He communicates with His people in a personal way.
- He loved sinful man enough to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

- 1) God is eternal.
- 2) There is only one God.
- 3) God is a Spirit.
- 4) God is holy.
- 5) God is in control.
- 6) God knows everything.
- 7) God is a Trinity of three Persons.
- 8) God is personal.

Review Questions:

1. What does it mean that God is eternal?

2. What does the word "holy" mean?

3. Does God have a physical body? _____

4. What is God's attitude toward sin?

5. God is a trinity of three Persons: _____, _____
and _____.

6. How is God a Person?

- He _____
- He _____
- He _____
- He _____

III. The Creation of the Universe.

** REVIEW WEEK 2 – Who is God?

1) Everything from nothing.

Certainly the most controversial teaching of the Bible is the doctrine of creation. The Bible tells us very simply and clearly that God created this world, all life, and everything in the universe from absolutely nothing. He spoke everything into existence in just 6 days!

Genesis 1:1-8 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.”

Man was created in a different and very special way from the animals, because God breathed life into man and gave him what the animals do not have: a spirit.

Genesis 2:7 “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Other Scriptures throughout the Bible also teach this same foundational truth of creation from nothing in six days:

Nehemiah 9:6 “Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.”

Hebrews 11:3 “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

When did God create the universe? Somewhere between 4,000 and 10,000 B.C.

1) **The First Day** – God created the heaven and the earth. God did not *make* everything – He *created* everything. Also, God spoke, and brought light into the world.

2) **The Second Day** – God separated the waters.

3) **The Third Day** – God created plant life.

4) **The Fourth Day** – God created the sun, moon and stars.

5) **The Fifth Day** – God created the fish and the fowl.

6) **The Sixth Day** – God created land creatures and man.

7) **The Seventh Day** – God rested, setting the precedent for the Sabbath.

Consider the creation of man:

Genesis 1:26-28 “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

- i) He was made in the image of God.
- ii) He was given dominion over the earth.
- iii) He was encouraged to enjoy the Tree of Life and all other trees except one.
- iv) He was expressly forbidden to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- v) He was to name all the animals.
- vi) He was given a wife.
- vii) He was to procreate and fill the earth.
- viii) He was made to work.
- ix) He was made completely perfect, without sin or disease.

2) Creation or evolution?

Essentially, evolutionists believe that the universe is the result of billions of years of random genetic mutation. Specifically, they propose that modern man, is a descendant of his ancient ancestor, the primate. Evolution teaches that we are no more than animals, complex organisms with no Designer and certainly no eternal soul.

But, the Bible clearly teaches that the Lord God created the universe and all forms of life, from nothing, in six literal, 24-hour days, just as described in the account given in the first two chapters of Genesis.

Scientists may speculate and hypothesise about the past or future, but they can only observe the present. Therefore, the theory of evolution is not a science but is rather a belief, a religious philosophy of origins, masquerading as scientifically proven fact.

Many good books have been written to provide scientific evidence for creation and against evolution. Let us consider some main arguments that they present:

- a) **The testimony of present relationships.** You would expect the mechanisms that caused evolution to still be present and active in our world today, but this is definitely not the case. The basic kinds of organisms are quite stable, if left to interbreed in a natural environment. Artificial selection may increase the number of varieties considerably, as in the case of the dog and cat, but it cannot produce a new kind, a new species. The present evidence bears testimony to the accuracy of the Bible when it states in Genesis that God made the animals and plants to reproduce only after their own kind.

Genesis 1:24, 25 “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth **after his kind**: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth **after his kind**, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”

- b) **The testimony of present processes.** The only mechanism that could produce the type of radical variation required for the process of evolution is the mechanism of beneficial mutations. Not only are most mutations harmful, or even fatal, but they are also very rare. Fransisco J. Ayala, one of today's top geneticists, stated on one hand that "Mutation provides the raw materials of evolution.", yet he also admits, "Mutations are random changes of the hereditary material.... Most mutations are in fact harmful to the organism." Present processes do not support evolution, but rather support special creation.
- c) **The origin of life.** Evolutionists believe that the first living organisms were developed naturally by innate processes, from non-living chemicals. However, "spontaneous generation" is certainly not occurring in the present world, and even evolutionists agree on this. Life does not come from non-life. Leslie Orgel, one of the world's leading authorities on origin-of-life studies, is forced to admit, "...one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means."
- d) **The fossil record.** You would expect that if evolution were true, that the fossil record would show an abundance of transitional forms of organisms, and a lack of large gaps between the kinds of organisms. However, such is not the case at all. The fossil record is,

in fact, marked by an absence of any truly transitional forms between the basic kinds, contrary to the predictions of evolutionary theory. Also, you would expect that primitive life forms found in the bottom, "older" rocks of the geologic column would have disappeared, making way for newer and better creatures. However, this is definitely not so.

The evolutionist would expect a gradual development in the geologic column, with evolution of higher organisms from simpler kinds. What do the facts say? Evolutionist Tom Kemp, curator of the Oxford University Museum in England, painfully admits, "As is now well known, most fossil species appear instantaneously in the record, persist for millions of years virtually unchanged, only to disappear abruptly." This supports the teaching of the Bible that organisms reproduce after their own kind.

e) The evidence for a young earth. What are some evidences of a young earth?

- (1) Population growth statistics imply a history going back to around 3,500 B.C.
- (2) The amount of Helium-4 in the atmosphere suggests that our atmosphere is less than 15,000 years old.
- (3) The absence of meteorite dust. 15,000,000 tons of nickel meteorite dust settle to earth every year. It would now be 200 feet thick if the earth were 5 billion years old!
- (4) The decay of the earth's magnetic field implies an age of less than 7,000 years.
- (5) The imbalance of carbon-14 and carbon-12 give us an age of less than 30,000 years.
- (6) The Niagara Falls has been shown to be around 5,000 years old.
- (7) The moon has only 1/8 inch of moon dust, not the 54 feet predicted by an age of 5 billion years.
- (8) No trees are older than 5,000 years.
- (9) Man's recorded history only goes back to around 3,500 B.C.
- (10) The inaccuracy of radiocarbon dating. The shells of living molluscs have been measured to be 2,300 years old, and recent igneous rocks have been tested to be tens of thousands of years old.

3) The literal account of Genesis.

The detailed description of creation given in Genesis (and referred to throughout Scripture) is not to be taken figuratively or allegorically. God says what He means, and means what He says. The sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, all plant life, all animal life, and man himself are not the result of millions of years of evolution; they were specially created by an omnipotent, omniscient Creator.

4) The importance of the doctrine of creation.

If you eat away at the foundations of a building, that building will soon crumble and fall, no matter how strong and durable the rest of the structure is. The foundation is the most crucial part of the building. When you destroy the foundation, you destroy the building. The foundation of Christianity has been under a fierce attack for the last two centuries. Without this foundation, Christianity is a farce, a lie, and a fraud. That foundation is the doctrine of creation.

If the doctrine of creation is wrong, and evolution is right, then we may conclude the following:

- The Bible is a book of legends and myths.
- Jesus Christ was a liar, and certainly not the Son of God.
- There is no Creator, no God.
- There is no more to life than this world. There is no heaven and no hell.
- We are no better than animals.
- Christianity is just another religion, with no basis in fact.
- Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!

Without the foundation of the doctrine of creation, the Bible is just another religious book. The theory of evolution and the Bible are the antithesis of each other; they are mutually exclusive. Either you are an evolutionist, or you believe the Bible.

Review Questions:

1. The Bible tells us very simply and clearly that God created this world, all life, and everything in the universe from absolutely nothing. How long did it take? _____

2. What does man have that animals do not have? _____

3. What is the basic teaching of the theory of evolution?

4. What are five scientific arguments that disprove evolution?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

5. God says what He _____, and means what He _____.

6. The foundation of Christianity has been under a fierce attack for the last two centuries. That foundation is the doctrine of _____.

7. Without the foundation of the doctrine of creation, the Bible is just another _____
_____.

IV. Man Rebels Against God.

** REVIEW WEEK 3 – The Creation of the universe

Read Genesis 3:1-7

1) Perfection in the garden.

Genesis 1:31 “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was **very good**. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

The Scene:

What was it like in the perfect home of Eden? There was:

- i) No disease.
- ii) No pain.
- iii) No death.
- iv) No sorrow.
- v) No rain.
- vi) No sin.
- vii) No crime.
- viii) Peace.
- ix) Harmony with the animal kingdom.
- x) Perfect love.
- xi) Fellowship with God.
- xii) Work.
- xiii) Learning.

The Characters:

- i) **God:** He walked with Adam and Eve in the perfect Garden of Eden.
- ii) **Adam:** The first man, whose name literally means “red.”
- iii) **Eve:** The first woman, and the first wife, whose name means “life giver.”
- iv) **The serpent.** This is the Devil incarnate, a beautiful and intelligent creature which did not yet crawl upon the ground. The word “subtle” here means “cunning and crafty.” How do we know that this serpent was indeed Satan?
Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

2) The first commandment.

God tests man’s love for Him by seeing if man will obey or disobey God’s commands. So, God gave Adam an opportunity to prove His love for God by giving Adam a commandment: of all the many trees in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of just one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16, 17 “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

3) Man’s rebellion.

The Events:

- i) **Satan questions the Word of God.** Genesis 3:1.
- ii) **Eve adds to the Word of God.** Genesis 3:2, 3.
- iii) **Satan denies the Word of God.** Genesis 3:4, 5.

- iv) **Eve listens to Satan and is deceived.**
1 Timothy 2:13, 14 “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”
- v) **Eve succumbs to her flesh and eats of the forbidden fruit.** Genesis 3:6.
- vi) **Adam chooses to sin and eats the fruit.** Genesis 3:6.

4) The effects of Adam’s sin.

The Results:

- i) **The eyes of Adam and Eve were opened.** Genesis 3:7. They realised their guilt and shame.
- ii) **They tried unsuccessfully to cover their sin and guilt.** This pictures religion without Christ.
- iii) **Fellowship with God was broken for the very first time.** Genesis 3:8. Sin always breaks fellowship with a holy God.
- iv) **Adam and Eve were no longer comfortable with God, but were afraid of Him.** Genesis 5:10.
- v) **Sin and death entered the world.**
Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Judgment:

- i) **Upon man:** wearisome toil; death; driven from the garden; refused the Tree of Life.
- ii) **Upon woman:** suffering in childbirth; subordination to man.
- iii) **Upon creation:** thorns and thistles; disease; corruption, decay and death. Thus, the Second Law of Thermodynamics.
- iv) **Upon the serpent:** to crawl on its belly; humiliation.
- v) **Upon Satan:** a fatal head wound. Genesis 3:15. The first promise of Christ.

5) God’s grace.

- i) **He didn’t kill Adam and Eve on the spot.**
- ii) **He promised mankind a Saviour.**
- iii) **He sought Adam out.**
- iv) **He clothed Adam.** This was the first blood sacrifice, and pictured Christ. Adam and Eve’s aprons were not enough to cover them, so God made them coats of skins.

6) The sin nature.

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he brought sin and rebellion into a perfect world. Every human being since Adam and Eve has been a sinner.

Romans 5:12 “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

Mankind today cannot live without sin. We are selfish, sinful creatures, no matter how much we try to change by religion, reformation, etc.

Romans 3:10 “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

As you look at the history of man, you see murder, war, greed, theft, adultery, and a multitude of sins. Even as man has supposedly become more “evolved” and more civilised, we see today the fruit of our sin nature. The problem is not with our environment, or with our education system: the problem is with our corrupt heart. Man can never please God because man’s heart is corrupt and selfish.

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

The problem with religion is that it tries to change man from the outside in; man tries to make himself pleasing and acceptable to God through good works, giving, meditation, religious rituals, prayer, study etc. But, religion does not address the true problem: the heart. Religion **cannot** change the heart – but God **can**.

Ezekiel 36:26, 27 “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

How does God give us a new heart, a new nature? We shall see in weeks to come.

Review Questions:

1. What was it like in the Garden of Eden?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. What was the first commandment?

3. What were the results of Adam's sin?

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____
- iv) _____
- v) _____

4. How did God show His grace to Adam?

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____
- iv) _____

5. The problem is not with our environment, or with our education system: the problem is with our corrupt _____. Man can never please God because man's heart is _____ and _____.

6. Religion cannot change the heart – but _____ can.

V. Noah's Ark and the Worldwide Flood.

** REVIEW WEEK 4 – Man Rebels Against God

1) The corrupt state of man.

Man in his sinful state obeyed the command of God and began to multiply and fill the earth. However, these men and women were not God-fearing people, and their wickedness was great before God. Therefore, God decided to judge the world and destroy all life with a cataclysmic flood.

Read Genesis 6:7-13

What was it like before the Flood? Why did God destroy all life on earth?

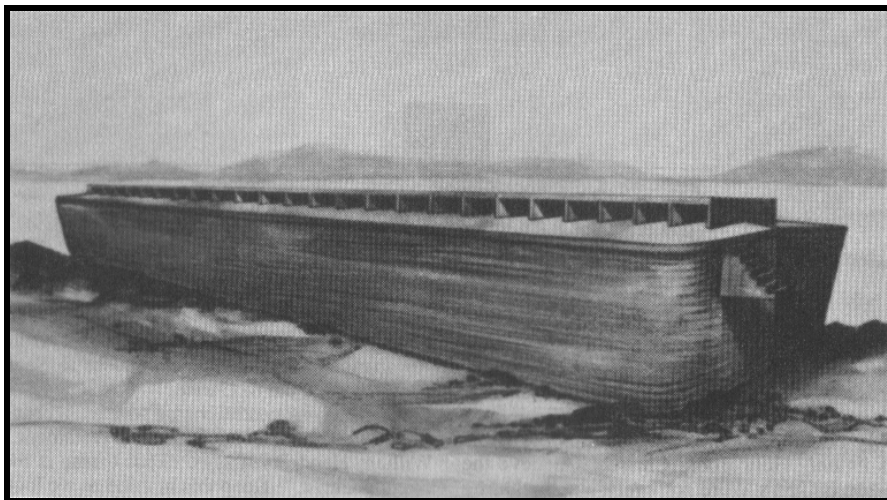
- a) Preoccupation with physical appetites. (Luke 17:27)
- b) Rapid advances in technology. (Genesis 4:22)
- c) Grossly materialistic attitudes and interests. (Luke 17:28)
- d) Sinful devotion to pleasure and comfort. (Genesis 4:21)
- e) No concern for God in either belief or conduct. (2 Peter 2:5)
- f) Disregard for the sacred marriage relationship. (Matthew 24:38)
- g) Widespread violence. (Genesis 6:11, 13)
- h) Corruption throughout all society. (Genesis 6:12)
- i) Preoccupation with sex. (Luke 17:27)
- j) Constant evil thoughts. (Genesis 6:5)

The story of Noah's Flood reminds us that God must always punish sin, and that punishment is death:

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

2) The ark – a picture of salvation.

Read Genesis 6:8



This is an artist's impression of how the ark looked just after it was built. The sketch is based upon information from George Hagopian, who claimed he saw the ark on Mount Ararat in 1908.

- a) **God tells Noah, who found grace in God's eyes, to built a floating barge 136m long x 23m wide x 14m high.** This is the first appearance of the word "grace" in the Bible; it means here "kindness or favour." God's grace is the favour and kindness that He shows to undeserving sinners.
- b) **After 371 days in the Ark, Noah and his 7 family members came out onto dry**

- ground.** The Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.
- c) **How does the ark of Noah picture salvation?**
- (1) The entire world was sinful and corrupt.
 - (2) All men and women were under the judgment of God – that judgment was **death**.
 - (3) No person or religion could save mankind.
 - (4) God made only one way for man to escape death.
 - (5) It was not man's way of salvation, but God's way of salvation, because sinful man cannot save himself.
 - (6) Man was warned of judgment and informed of salvation by preaching.
 - (7) All those who refused God's way of salvation died.
 - (8) God kept those on the ark safe from judgment.
 - (9) The ark is a picture of Jesus, because Jesus protects us from the judgment of God.
- d) **God established His Rainbow Covenant with Noah and his descendants.** See Genesis 9:11-13. What did this covenant involve?
- (1) God would never again destroy the earth with a flood.
 - (2) God instituted capital punishment. (Genesis 9:6)
 - (3) The order and seasons of nature are confirmed.
 - (4) The fear of animals for man is prophesied.
 - (5) The flesh of animals for man's diet is permitted.
 - (6) Human government is established by God in Genesis chapter 9.
- e) **The "Table of Nations" in Genesis chapter 10 is a remarkably accurate historical document, even by the admission of Bible critics.** There is no other comparable catalogue of ancient nations found anywhere in the world.
- f) **Modern science, which has long scoffed at the idea of Noah's Flood, is now confirming this Bible account with increasing evidence of a cataclysmic worldwide flood.**

3) The Tower of Babel.

Read Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9.

- a) **All the earth was, at this time (possibly about 2,200 BC), of one language (vocabulary) and of one speech (phonology).**
- b) **A rebel named Nimrod instituted a religious building program, including an astrological tower and a city.** The name Nimrod means "let us rebel." He was a man of great ability, authority and ambition. This city was named Babylon, and the central building was the Tower of Babel.
- c) **The Lord realises the tremendous potential for evil inherent in the unity of mankind at this point.**
- d) **Here begins the philosophy of globalism** – the idea of a one-world government and one-world religion. Notice how popular this movement is today, as the world moves toward the reign of the Antichrist, in fulfilment of Bible prophecy.
- e) **God punishes man for his arrogance by confusing their languages and scattering them around the earth.** In recent years, archaeological evidence has confirmed that civilisation appeared more or less at the same time in all parts of the world only a few millennia ago.
- f) **As each family and tribal unit, separated by their new and incompatible languages, migrated away from Babel, they each began to develop a distinctive culture, and also developed distinctive physical characteristics.** These small inbreeding populations would have resulted in great genetic changes in only a few generations, explaining the way in which all modern races came from Noah and his family.
- g) **Note that the false religions of Babylon have been shown to be the root for all forms of paganism in the world.** The essential identity of the various gods of Rome, Greece, India, Egypt, and other nations with the original gods of Babylon is well established. Nimrod himself was later deified as the chief god, Marduk.
- h) **Also, Babylonian religion has infiltrated Christendom to an alarming extent** – C.f. The catholic and orthodox religions.

Review Questions:

1. Why did God destroy all life on earth (except for those on the ark) with a worldwide ark?

2. This story reminds us that God must always punish _____, and that punishment is _____.

3. The ark is a picture of Jesus because _____

4. Modern science has long rejected the story of Noah's Flood. How has this changed?

5. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. What does the word "grace" mean?

6. Who built the city of Babylon, and what does his name mean?

7. Where did the philosophy of globalism begin?

8. How did God punish man for his arrogance?

VI. Abraham and Israel; Moses and the Law; Prophecies of Christ.

** REVIEW WEEK 5 – Noah’s Ark and the worldwide flood.

1) Abraham and Israel.

The Old Testament mainly concerns God’s dealings with the nation of **Israel**:

a) God’s covenant with Abraham.

Abraham is mentioned 308 times in the Bible. He was born and raised in the city of Ur of the Chaldees, a seaport on the Persian Gulf. Scholars date his birth to around 2,100 BC.

God called Abraham to leave his home and his family and go into a strange land. **SEE Genesis 12:1-3**. The land of Canaan, or modern Palestine. Notice that when God called Abraham, He also made some promises; these 7 promises formed God’s covenant with Abraham.

- i) I will make of thee a great nation.
- ii) I will bless thee.
- iii) I will make thy name great.
- iv) Thou shalt be a blessing.
- v) I will bless them that bless thee.
- vi) I will curse him that curseth thee.
- vii) In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Abraham’s son, Isaac, was the father of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. From Israel came 12 sons who fathered the 12 tribes of Israel.

b) The chosen people, Israel, and the promised Seed, Jesus Christ.

The nation of Israel was chosen by God to be His own people, and to give birth to the coming King, or *Messiah*, Jesus Christ.

Genesis 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Isaac also offered up His Son, Isaac, to God as a sacrifice, just as God would one day offer His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for us. This was a test of Abraham’s faith, for God stopped Abraham at the last minute from killing Isaac.

2) Moses and the Law.

a) Israel delivered from Egypt.

Israel was in slavery in the land of Egypt for 400 years before God called a man called Moses to deliver them. Moses went to Pharaoh and demanded that the King let the Jews go into the wilderness. Pharaoh refuses to release the Israelites, and his heart becomes hard (Exodus 7:13, 14; 8:15). The Lord then sends ten famous plagues, or judgments, upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians to convince them to obey Him. The final plague was the death of the eldest son, prevented only by the sacrifice of a lamb and the application of its blood. This gave rise to the Passover Feast, picturing Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

1 Corinthians 5:7 “...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:”

b) The purpose of God’s Law.

God used Moses to be the messenger whereby God gave His Law to the people of Israel, beginning with the famous **Ten Commandments**:

- (1) Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- (2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. (This is deleted by the catholics)
- (3) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
- (4) Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
- (5) Honour thy father and thy mother.
- (6) Thou shalt not kill.
- (7) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- (8) Thou shalt not steal.
- (9) Thou shalt not bear false witness.
- (10) Thou shalt not covet.

The Law was given so that the people might know how to please God, and to keep peace and harmony among men. However, mankind failed to keep the law. Today, the Law is designed to show us our sin and bring us to Jesus Christ as Saviour:

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

c) The payment for sin.

Under the Law, the payment for sin is **death**.

Ezekiel 18:4 “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

d) The purpose of animal sacrifices.

An innocent animal could die in place of the guilty and shed its blood as payment for sin.

Leviticus 17:11 “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

e) The symbolism of animal sacrifices.

The sacrifice of innocent animals over the centuries pictured the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, would one day make in dying for the sins of the whole world. **SEE Hebrews 10:11-14**. When John the Baptist introduced Christ to the Jews, he referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God:

John 1:29 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God,”

3) Prophecies of Christ.

There are many different religious teachers and leaders who have been influential in human society over the last several thousand years. Some claimed to have an exclusive ownership of the truth; others simply claimed to be amongst those who shared the truth. Examples include Buddha (Buddhism), Mohamed (Islam), Mary Baker-Eddie (Christian Science), Joseph Smith (Mormonism) and Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah’s Witnesses). All of these teachers claimed to have the truth, and claimed to be messengers from God. However, **none** of these teachers lived or died in fulfilment of clear, detailed prophecies, or predictions, written before they arrived on the scene.

The 39 books of the Old Testament are literally filled with prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ. No other religious leader in history can claim to have hundreds of predictions fulfilled by his birth, life, and death. If Jesus Christ really did fulfil these ancient prophecies, then the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. This is the ultimate proof of the claims of Christ, and of the Bible.

Here are just a few of the prophecies that Christ fulfilled:

Old Testament Reference	Prediction	New Testament Fulfilment
Micah 5:2 "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."	Christ's place of birth.	Matthew 2:1 "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,"
Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.	Christ would offer Himself as Prince to Jerusalem exactly 173,880 days after Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem. (69 x 7 years x 360 days = 173,880 days = 483 years in the Jewish calendar. From March 5, 444 BC, to March 30, 33 AD, is exactly 483 Jewish years)	Luke 19:37, 38 "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."
Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."	Christ would be born of a virgin.	Matthew 1:18 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."
Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."	Christ would enter Jerusalem triumphantly on the back of a young donkey.	John 12:13, 14 "Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,"
Zechariah 11:12 "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver."	Christ would be sold for 30 pieces of silver.	Matthew 26:15 "And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."
Isaiah 50:6 "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."	Christ would be smitten and spat upon.	Mark 14:65 "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands."
Isaiah 53:4, 5 "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."	Christ would suffer in the place of His people.	Matthew 8:16, 17 "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."
Psalm 22:16 "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."	Christ's hands and feet would be pierced.	John 20:27 "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

<p>Zechariah 12:10 “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”</p>	<p>Christ’s side would be pierced.</p>	<p>John 19:34 “But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”</p>
<p>Psalm 22:18 “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”</p>	<p>Soldiers would cast lots for Christ’s clothes.</p>	<p>Mark 15:24 “And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.”</p>
<p>Psalm 16:10 “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”</p>	<p>Christ would resurrect from the dead.</p>	<p>Matthew 28:5-7 “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.”</p>

Review Questions:

1. Why was Abraham so important? Who are his descendants?

2. Who is the Messiah? What nationality is He?

3. Name 5 of the Ten Commandments given to Israel:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

4. Under the Law, the payment for sin is _____.

5. When John the Baptist introduced Christ to the Jews, he referred to Jesus as the _____ of God.

6. What are four prophecies that Christ fulfilled?

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____

- 4) _____

VII. Jesus Christ – Who He is, and Why He Came.

** REVIEW WEEK 6 – Abraham and Israel; Moses and the Law; Prophecies of Christ.

The most famous historical Person in all of history is Jesus Christ. Perhaps there is more misunderstanding and confusion about Jesus than any other historical figure! In this study we shall find out the truth about who Jesus is and why he came to earth.

1) **Jesus was born of a virgin.**

It was necessary that Jesus be born of a virgin, because He could not inherit a sinful nature from an earthly father if He were to be the sinless, perfect sacrifice for our sins.

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

Luke 1:34, 35 “Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

2) **Jesus was, and is, the Divine Son of God.**

Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

John 20:31 “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Jesus was no ordinary man, for no ordinary man could die for the sins of the whole world. He was, and is, the divine Son of God. He is God become man, the second Person of the Trinity.

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

3) **Jesus lived a perfect life.**

The Lord Jesus came to die in our place. How could He die for our sins if He had sins of His own to pay for? He could not, so it was necessary that He live a perfect, sinless life.

John 19:4-6 “Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.”

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

4) **Jesus was introduced as the Lamb of God.**

Remember how the Jews sacrificed spotless lambs for their sins, to prevent the judgment of God? Jesus came to be the lasting, final sacrifice for our sins, to put away with the endless sacrifices of lambs and other animals. Thus He was introduced by John the Baptist as the **Lamb of God**.

John 1:29, 36 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world...And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!”

5) Jesus is our Substitute and Saviour.

We previously learned that the punishment for sin is death, and that sin has separated us from God. We also learned that God allows the innocent to die in place of the guilty, resulting in blood sacrifices being made for the guilty to cover their sin and protect them from death. These innocent sacrifices pictured the perfect and final sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. When He died upon the cross at age 33, He died in our place, taking our punishment upon Himself. Jesus' blood was shed for our sins so that we might be forgiven and saved from eternal judgment.

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

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

Revelation 1:5 "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

6) Jesus was not just another great teacher.

Jesus Christ did not claim merely to know the way, to teach the truth and to promise life – He claimed to be those things Himself. He came with absolute authority and power, as no other teacher has ever done. He came as God in the flesh, offering eternal life to all who would put their trust and confidence in Him. Jesus also rose from the dead to prove that He was ordinary man.

John 11:25 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:"

Mark 1:22 "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."

7) Is Jesus the only way to God?

Jesus is not a way to God – He is the one and only way. People may claim that "All roads lead to Rome" but this is certainly not true concerning eternal life.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

8) Did Jesus literally rise from the dead?

Certainly Jesus rose from the dead, as attested to by many witnesses.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

9) Why is the resurrection so important?

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then He was a fake and a phoney, and Christianity is untrue.

1 Corinthians 15:14-20 “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

10) What about reincarnation?

Hebrews 9:27 “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”

11) Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

There are many different opinions on the person of Jesus Christ. For example, some say that:

- He was a prophet.
- He was a good example.
- He was a moral teacher.
- He was one of many historical messengers from God.

However, in assessing the claims of a person who said that He was the divine Son of God, there are only three logical alternatives:

- 1) He was a LIAR.**
- 2) He was a LUNATIC.**
- 3) He is LORD.**

Was He a Liar?

If Jesus knew that His claims were false, then He deliberately lied about those claims.

- (a) If He lied, then He was a hypocrite because He told others to be honest.
- (b) If He lied, then He was evil, because He told others to trust Him for their eternal destiny.
- (c) If He lied, He was a great fool because that lie ultimately led to His crucifixion.

The evidence shows that Jesus could not have been a liar.

Was He a Lunatic?

In other words, was He sincerely deluded into thinking that He was the Son of God. He was, perhaps mentally unstable, and obviously mistaken about His own identity.

- (a) If this were true, then how do we understand His great intelligence and moral character?
- (b) Could a lunatic say the profound things that Jesus of Nazareth said?
- (c) Did his life match up with that of a deluded madman?

The evidence shows that Jesus could not have been a lunatic.

Was He Lord?

If He is not a Liar and He is not a madman, then who else could He be, seeing He laid claim to be the Son of God? There can be no other logical conclusion than that Jesus must be the Son of the Living God, the Saviour of the world. If His claims were true, then He is Lord and God and we must believe, follow and obey Him.

People cannot logically say, ‘He is a great moral teacher.’ If he is moral, then why does he lie about who He is? Why do his followers write lies concerning Him? This is not an option.

Review Questions:

1. Jesus was born of a _____.
2. Jesus was, and is, the Son of _____.
3. Jesus lived a _____ life.
4. Jesus was introduced as the _____ of God.
5. Jesus is our _____ and Saviour.
6. Jesus was not just another great _____.
7. Is Jesus the only way to God? _____.
8. Did Jesus rise literally from the dead? _____.
9. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then He is a fake and a _____.
10. It is appointed unto man _____ to die.
11. Was Jesus a liar, a lunatic, or LORD? _____.
12. If Jesus is LORD, then we must:
 - a) _____ in Him.
 - b) _____ Him.
 - c) _____ Him.
13. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Divine Son of God who died for your sins, rose from the dead, and offers you eternal life? _____

VIII. What Does it Mean to Be a Christian?

** REVIEW WEEK 7 – Jesus Christ: Who He is, and why He came.

How can I know that I am saved? How can I know that I am a Christian? Do I look to my feelings? Do I wait for a religious experience? Am I supposed to be perfect? **How can I know?**

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

There are very few things in the universe that never change. Time changes. Money changes. People change. Churches change. Feelings change. But, **God's Word never changes**. So, the only way to have full assurance of your home in heaven is to base your confidence upon the never-changing Words of God. **Let us have a look at what God says:**

1) **We are all sinners.**

Romans 3:10-12 “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

Sin is breaking the laws of God. Examples include: lying, cheating, hatred, unbelief, pride, adultery, etc. The Bible says that all men stand guilty before God, condemned by His law. God created man sinless and perfect, but the whole human race was damned when Adam ate the forbidden fruit. Since that day, man has been a sinner by nature and by choice.

Romans 5:12 “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

2) **God must punish sin.**

God is the holy, righteous judge of the world. He must punish sin. The punishment for sin, the price on sin, is **death**.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Death in the Bible does not just refer to the death of our physical body. The final punishment for sin is the second death, eternal separation from God in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:14, 15 “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Illustration: If a judge lets a murderer go free, is he a righteous judge? If God were to let sinners into a perfect and holy heaven, it would no longer be perfect and holy! It would end up just like this world. God must be separate from sin - and from sinners.

3) **We cannot save ourselves.**

Religion cannot save you. Good works cannot save you. Baptism cannot save you. Confirmation cannot save you. The mass cannot save you. Church membership cannot save you. Living the Christian life cannot save you. Why? You cannot take away your sins! **Only God can forgive sin.**

Titus 3:5 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”

If you could save yourself by good works or religion, then Jesus Christ did not have to come to earth and die in your place. But, Jesus **did** die for you because He knew that He is your only hope.

4) **Jesus Christ died in our place.**

Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, died on the cross for you, paying the price of death that you owe. He rose from the grave and sits at the right hand of God today. Why? So that you would not have to pay for your sins in hell. **He died for YOU.**

Romans 5:8 “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

5) **We must receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour.**

The free gift of God is eternal life:

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

How do we receive such a wonderful and priceless gift?

- By joining a church? **No.**
- By being sprinkled or baptised? **No.**
- By taking the communion? **No.**
- By obeying the Ten Commandments? **No.**
- By living a good life? **No.**

We receive eternal life by trusting Christ alone to save us and calling on Him to be our personal Saviour. We are saved by faith alone.

John 3:18 “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The **ONLY** way of salvation from sin and the lake of fire is simple, childlike **FAITH** in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour (the one who saves us from sin).

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

Illustration: The religious leader, Nicodemus, in John chapter 3. If anyone had earned his way to heaven through religion and good works, it was Nicodemus. What did Jesus immediately tell him?

John 3:3, 7 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.**”

How are you born again? How are you born spiritually into the family of God?

John 1:12 “But as many as **received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”

You must receive Jesus as your personal Saviour. How? By **faith**. You must **believe** and **receive**.

Romans 10:9, 10 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

How do we verbalize our faith? We must call upon the name of Jesus to save us.

Romans 10:13 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

In Summary:

If you will know you are saved and that you are a Christian, you must:

- a) Realize you are a guilty sinner, condemned to hell.
- b) Admit there is nothing you can do to save yourself.
- c) Believe that Jesus Christ is the perfect and divine Son of God.
- d) Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, and is alive today.
- e) Put your faith in Jesus alone for salvation, and call upon Him.
- f) Rest upon God's Word, not your feelings.

Have you trusted Christ and called upon Him? Take God at His Word. If you don't believe he saved you, then you are calling God a liar. Remember: Our salvation depends upon God's **promises**, not upon our **performance**.

Are you yet to be saved? Don't delay! Trust Him **today**. Tomorrow may be eternally too late.

If you will simply receive God's gift of eternal life by trusting the Lord Jesus to save you and calling upon His name, you can know for sure that you are going to Heaven. Do you want Jesus to take you to Heaven one day? Do you believe that He will save you if you will ask Him? If you do, then bow your head and pray this simple prayer:

Dear Jesus, I know I am a guilty sinner, and I know I deserve to go to Hell for my sins. I realise that nothing that I do can save me from judgment, including my religion or good deeds, and I know that you are my only hope for Salvation. I trust you now as my personal Saviour, and call upon you to save me from Hell and take me to Heaven. Please give to me your free gift of eternal life. Amen.

6) When God saves us, He keeps us saved.

John 10:27-29 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

John 5:24 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

When God gives you eternal life, He gives it to you forever - otherwise He would not have called it eternal life! You are His child, and are sealed by His Holy Spirit until the day you die.

Review Questions:

1. Do you agree that you are a guilty sinner? _____
2. Do you understand that the punishment you deserve for your sins is Hell? _____
3. Do you agree that there is nothing that you can do that will rescue you from Hell? _____
4. Do you agree that no religion can save you? _____
5. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son? _____
6. Do you believe that Jesus died for you and rose again? _____
7. What is the free gift of God? _____ .
8. How do we receive that gift? _____
9. How can you be born again? _____

10. You must believe and _____.
11. Do you want Jesus to take you just the way you are, forgive your sins, give you a home in Heaven, and make you His child? _____
12. Do you believe if you would call on Jesus Christ and trust Him to save you that He would save you and take you to Heaven? _____
13. Have you called on Jesus Christ to be your Saviour? _____
14. If not, what is stopping you from doing so? _____

IX. How Do I Grow as a Christian?

**** REVIEW WEEK 8 – What does it mean to be a Christian?**

Once you have received Jesus Christ as your Saviour by faith, God wants you to grow in your faith, and draw closer to Him. How can you grow as a Christian?

1) Be baptised.

What is baptism? Baptism is the immersion of a new believer in order that he might make a public profession of his faith and please the Lord. It is the first act of obedience for a new Christian.

- Baptism does **NOT** save us, help to save us, or keep us saved.
- Baptism does **NOT** wash away our sins.
- Baptism does **NOT** make us a child of God.

Matthew 28:19, 20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Acts 8:36-38 "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

What is the condition that God makes for a person to be baptised? They must believe the Gospel. They must already be saved.

2) Join a good church and attend faithfully.

I have heard many Christians make this statement, "I can worship God at home by myself. Why do I need to go to church?" The sad truth is that there are many Christians who are not an active member of a local, Bible-believing church.

- Why should you take time out of your busy schedule, and even reorganize your schedule, to attend church?
- Is it that important?
- Is it a sin to not attend church?

Let us see what God has to say on the subject of the church:

a) What is a church?

A church is an independent body of baptised believers whose purpose is to preach the Gospel to the lost world and strengthen the people of God for His service.

b) What church does God want me to go to?

Many religious people will advise you to "Attend the church of your choice." However, you would be wise to attend the church of God's choice! Any church which does not meet God's requirements is not the church He wants you to be part of.

What are the characteristics of a true New Testament church?

- Gospel-preaching. Mark 16:15
- Bible-believing. II Tim. 3:16,17
- Independent and self-governing. Col. 1:18
- Two ordinances: baptism, Lord's supper. Matthew 28:19; I Cor. 11:23-26

- Two offices: pastor and deacons. I Tim. 3:1-13
- Biblical authority. 2 Pet. 1:20,21
- Separation of church & state. Acts 5:29
- Saved and baptised church membership. Acts 2:47

Sadly, many churches today do not meet these important criteria, so it is important to be sure that you church you join does line up with God's Word.

c) What if I don't go to church?

You may be saying to yourself, "Well, I am just too busy to go to church." If you don't plan on being a part of a strong church, ask yourself the following questions:

- Where will I fellowship with other Christians?
- Where will I hear good preaching and teaching of the Bible?
- Where will I learn how to have a strong marriage and family?
- Where will my children learn the Word of God?
- Where will I grow spiritually?
- Where will I receive godly counsel and advice?
- Where will I learn to teach and give to others?
- Where will I give my tithes and offerings?
- Where will I learn to witness to my lost loved ones?

Hebrews 10:23-25 "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Remember: God intends for His work and His house to be our **number one priority**:

Matthew 6:31-33 "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

3) Read and study the Bible daily.

The Bible is God's love letter to mankind. We cannot expect to know God and grow as a Christian if we do not daily read the Bible, because the Bible is our spiritual food.

1 Peter 2:2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"

- Why do many Christians never grow spiritually?
- Why do many Christians have marriage problems?
- Why are so many Christians out of church?
- Why do so many Christians fail to witness for Christ?
- Why do many Christians collapse under pressure?
- Why are many Christians in financial trouble?
- Why do many Christians get bitter at God and at others?
- Why are so many Christians worldly and unfruitful?
- Why are so many Christians unhappy and defeated?

Answer: They don't read the Bible!

4) Pray every day.

Ephesians 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Philippians 4:6, 7 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Prayer is simply the Christian talking to God as his heavenly Father. Why should you pray?

1. God commands us to pray.
2. We have needs that will not be met if we do not pray.
3. Others need our prayers.
4. You will never grow close to the Lord if you do not pray.
5. You will have no spiritual power if you do not pray.
6. Prayer will give you victory over worry and anxiety.

How should I pray? We do not have to pray a fancy prayer. Keep it simple.

This is a simple four-point formula for your prayer time which may help you:

A doration	- Praising and worshipping God
C onfession	- Confessing your sins to God
T hanksgiving	- Thanking God for His many blessings
S upplication	- Asking God for the needs of yourself and others

5) Witness to others about your new faith.

Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19). As we follow Jesus and become His disciples, we will naturally want to share the Gospel of salvation by grace.

Why should I try to win souls to Christ?

1. The soul winner is wise.
2. God will reward the soul winner in Heaven.
3. Jesus commands us to give the Gospel to every creature.
4. Jesus commands us to send the Gospel across our nation and around the world.
5. It is a shame for a Christian not to witness for Christ.
6. We are ambassadors for Christ, charged with the commission of winning the lost.

Mark 16:15 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Review Questions:

1. What is baptism? _____

2. What is the condition for a person to be baptised? _____

3. What is a church? _____

4. Why should you go to church? _____

5. What does God intend to be our number one priority? _____

6. The Bible is our _____.
7. Why are so many Christians unhappy, defeated, and stunted in their spiritual growth?

8. Three reasons you should pray are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
9. Jesus said that if we follow Him, He will make us _____.
10. The five simple steps to spiritual growth are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

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