



# Chapter 1: Who Is God, Anyway?

---

## Does God Exist?

### The Natural Knowledge of God

The belief in God is actually a very logical one. From the beginning of time people have examined the intricacy and beauty of nature and have arrived at an extremely clear conclusion. Just as a bridge or a skyscraper is obviously planned, so the far more complex natural world declares the work of its architect.

**Hebrews 3:4** – For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

**Psalms 19:1** – The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

**Romans 1:20** – For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

But nature isn't the only witness to this "natural knowledge." Our consciences also tell us that a god must exist to whom we are accountable. The news that our consciences gives us, though, is not good news. Instead it tells us that we have a broken relationship with this God.

**Romans 2:14** – Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

**1 John 1:8** – If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**Romans 3:23** – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This "natural knowledge" is written both in the starry skies and in our guilty hearts. But it does not tell the whole story, and so it is not sufficient for salvation. It does not reveal the True God, only that there is a god. People have since grasped to try either to seek him or invent their own version of him.

**Psalms 96:5** – For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

**Isaiah 44:16-17** – Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. ... From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships it.

**Acts 17:22-23** – Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you."

So the two outcomes: some try to live lives of good works and sacrifice, as though they might please the God they know they have wronged. Others refuse to admit that a problem exists by denying that there is any God at all. After all, that which does not exist cannot hurt them. Both ways end in futility. Only the Bible provides the knowledge necessary for the salvation of humankind.

## Revealed Knowledge of God

God has not left himself a complete mystery to be sought by the feelings and emotions of people. While certainly many aspects of God remain a mystery, he says plenty about who he is and what characterizes him. He reveals these things in his Scriptures, the Bible. Although God used human scribes, he himself is its author. We call this the “divine inspiration” of Scriptures.

**Revelation 1:11** - Write on a scroll what you [John] see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

**2 Peter 1:21** – For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Timothy 3:16** – All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

**1 Corinthians 2:13** – This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

Unlike human beings, when God speaks, he does not do so with a forked tongue. He is not two-faced, that he would lie. His Word is His Word, and it does not change to suit any whims or ideas that people might have.

**Isaiah 45:19** – I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.

**Numbers 23:19** – God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.

**John 10:34** – The Scriptures cannot be broken.

When God reveals himself through his Word, it does not have to make perfect, rational sense in our minds. God is God, and I am not. Would I really want him to be?

**Isaiah 40:13** – Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

## What Does the Bible Say About God?

### The Attributes of God

Through God's own Word, he reveals to mankind many attributes or characteristics of his being and his actions.

God is spirit.

**John 4:24** – God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

God is eternal, with no beginning and no end.

**Psalm 90:1-2** – Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

God does not change. He is “immutable.”

**James 1:17** – Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God is almighty. He is “omnipotent.”

**Genesis 17:1** – When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.”

**Jeremiah 32:17** - Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched your arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

God knows and understands all things. He is “omniscient.”

**Psalm 139:4** – Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

**Psalm 147:5** – Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

God is everywhere. He is “omnipresent.”

**Jeremiah 23:24** - “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.

God is holy.

**Isaiah 6:3** – And [the angels] were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

God is faithful.

**2 Timothy 2:13** – If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

God is good.

**Psalm 145:9** – The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

God is compassionate and gracious. God is also just.

**Exodus 34:6-7** – And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

God is love.

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

Certainly this is not an exhaustive list of everything that God reveals about himself. Nor can we truly fathom the depths of what it means to understand these attributes fully. Yet through them God does paint a beautiful and powerful picture for mankind of who and what he is.

## God Is a “Triune” God

The word “triune” or its noun “Trinity” are never used in the Bible. It comes from the Latin words “tres” (“three”) and “unus” (“one”). And so this man-made word “Trinity” accurately describes what the Bible says about him—that he is a “three-in-one” God.

We believe in one God.

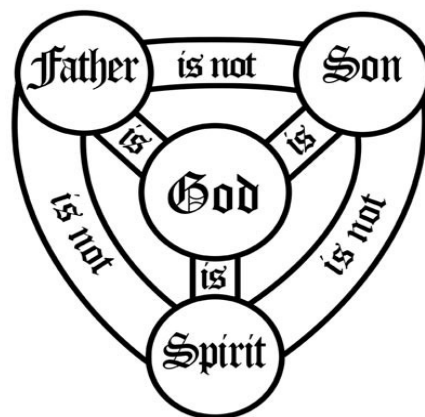
**Deuteronomy 6:4** – Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

We believe in three persons.

**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 Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 13:14** – May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

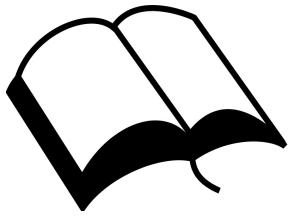
**Matthew 3:16-17** – As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”



True or False?

1. There are three distinct persons in the Trinity. \_\_\_\_\_
2. There are three separate Gods. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The Father existed before the Son and Spirit. \_\_\_\_\_

We accept the biblical teaching of the Trinity not because we comprehend it. God doesn't have to fit into the box of my human brain. Rather we must accept this by faith on the basis of what God's Word clearly teaches, even if reason never grasps it. With childlike faith I believe that what God says to me is true! (See Appendix C for the statement of faith in our Triune God called “The Apostles' Creed.”)



# Chapter 2: What Is the Bible?

---

## Why Do We Need It?

### The Natural and Revealed Knowledge of God

This is some review from the first lesson. Remember that all people have a natural knowledge of God. That means that everybody, regardless of whether or not they would deny it, sees the evidence of God in the order and beauty of Creation.

***Psalm 19:1*** – The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

***Psalm 14:1*** – The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

***Romans 1:20*** – For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

We also know God on the basis of our consciences. We know that we are held accountable for the sins we commit, because we feel guilt.

***Romans 1:32*** – They know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death.

Our consciences, though, can only reveal the terror of God for our failures. They can never show us what God has done to save us. This is why we need the Bible! It is a light that reveals to mankind what God has done to save us from the guilt and punishment of our sins. This is the gospel (good news) message of Jesus Christ.

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

***2 Corinthians 4:6*** – God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Whereas Creation and our natural knowledge of God printed on our consciences can only reveal some of God's attributes, it is in his Word, the Bible, where he has revealed himself to humanity. In this revelation we find not the terror of our consciences, but the plan of God to redeem mankind according to his eternal love!

# What Is the Bible?

## The Word of God

To give a very concise answer to this question, the Bible is the Word of God. This is the book in which he has revealed himself over the course of many centuries to humankind. And because this is not simply a book, but is a book written by God, we know also that it is powerful in what it says and that it is a living and enduring revelation which he has given us.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** – When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God.

**1 Peter 1:23** – You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

**Hebrews 4:12** – The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

## Divine/Verbal Inspiration

When we say that the Bible was divinely inspired, we mean to say that God taught the human writers not only the general thoughts to write down, but the very words themselves. We call this scriptural idea of God's writing every word "verbal inspiration."

**2 Peter 1:21** – For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Samuel 23:2** – The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

**1 Corinthians 2:13** – This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

## Inerrant

Because the Bible is the Word of God himself, this assures us that the Bible has no errors. It is true in everything it says, because God is a God of truth who does not lie.

**John 10:35** – The Scriptures cannot be broken.

**John 17:17** – Your word is truth.

The fact that the Bible is the Word of God himself, without error, assures us that we can trust all the promises of the Bible. God keeps all of his promises, unlike sinful people.

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

**1 Corinthians 2:4-5** – My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

# Is the Bible Enough?

## Sufficient for Salvation

The Bible is not meant to be a compendium or encyclopedia of all human knowledge. That has never been its purpose. The Bible's purpose is clear—to lead people to salvation in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are sufficient—all that we need—for that salvation.

**2 Timothy 3:15-16** – From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

**Psalms 19:7** – The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

This does not mean to say that studies in the sciences, of nature, of psychology, etc., are not to be pursued by the Christian. God has given people a brain and wisdom to discern and to make judgments. We learn from what we observe. Sometimes through observation we are even able to draw conclusions about God's nature based on observations outside of the Scriptures.

**Proverbs 6:6** – Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise.

**Proverbs 24:32** – I applied to my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw.

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

All of what we observe, however, is ruled, held captive, and subjugated to what God has revealed in the Bible. Whatever I may think or feel or experience is never to be held in contradiction to what God states in the Scriptures, even when I do not understand it fully.

**Job 38:2,4** – Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.

**Isaiah 40:13-14** – Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

**1 Corinthians 1:25** – For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

## Changing the Word Forbidden

God is the author of his word—not us. Therefore we are forbidden from adding human words to God's words, as though they were equal to God's authority. We are forbidden to subtract from God's words, as though some were unimportant. We are forbidden from twisting or distorting God's words from their clear meaning to one which suits our fancy better. God's Word belongs to him. What he has written we dare not change or disregard!

**Deuteronomy 4:2** – Do not add to what I command you.

**Revelation 22:18-19** – I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. If anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life.

**2 Timothy 4:3** – The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

**Jude 4** – They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

**2 Peter 3:16** – [Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

In summary, we understand clearly from Scriptures that the Bible itself is sufficient to reveal God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and all that this means for our lives. We do not superimpose any of our own thoughts and ideas as above or equal to God's Word. Rather, in humility, we realize that all of those thoughts and ideas are ruled entirely by God's revelation in the Scriptures.

## What Does The Bible Teach?

The teachings of the Bible can be summarized under two main headings: law and gospel.

**John 1:17** – The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

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

### The Law of God

In the law, God teaches us what he wants us to do and not to do. This also teaches us that we are all sinners who have broken the law and deserve punishment. (See the Summary of God's moral law called the Ten Commandments in Appendix A.)

**James 2:8** – If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

**Romans 7:7** – I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

**Romans 3:20** – Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

**Romans 6:23** – The wages of sin is death.



## **The Gospel of Jesus**

In the gospel news of Jesus Christ, we see God's love in sending his Son to take away the sins of all people, and that everyone who believes in him has eternal life and salvation.

***John 3:16*** – 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.

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

## **The Chief Purpose of the Bible**

The purpose of the Bible is unmistakable in the Scriptures. God uses his Word to lead people to know and believe in Jesus as their only hope of salvation from sin.

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

***John 5:39*** – You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.

In the next lesson, we will study the relationship between Law and Gospel much more in-depth. For now, we can rejoice in the understanding that God has saved us from our sins through Jesus, and that he has given us the Scriptures which testify to this!



# Chapter 3:

## What About Sin and Grace?

---

### How Did Sin Begin?

#### Creation of Angels

As strange as it might sound, the story of humanity's fall into sin actually begins with the angels. We know by this point that God made all things in the six days of Creation. He also created the angels. When they were created, they were made perfect beings, just as Adam and Eve were at the beginning!

**Genesis 1:31** – God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

God did not create the angels to have flesh and blood like humans. He instead created them as spirits beings.

**Hebrews 1:14** – Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

God created the angels also to be powerful and innumerable creatures, so that they would be able to serve both God and his people.

**Psalms 103:20-21** – Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

**Revelation 5:11** – Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

**Psalms 91:11** – For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

#### The Devil's Fall

The Bible says few things concerning the origins of Satan. We want to make sure that we do not go beyond what the Scriptures say in this capacity. What we *do* know is that the devil was originally an angel, but that near the beginning of the world he and many other angels rebelled against God and fell away.

**2 Peter 2:4** – For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment ...

**John 8:44** – You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

**1 Peter 5:8-9** – Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

## **Mankind's Fall**

Sometime in the days following the Creation, then, the devil tempted Adam and Eve to sin by breaking God's Law. This was how sin entered the world, because all are descended from Adam and Eve, the first humans and the first sinners.

**Genesis 3:4-6** – “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

**1 John 3:4** – Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

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

## **What Are the Consequences?**

### **Immediate Consequences**

The consequences of sin were immediate. Genesis 3, which tells of the fall of mankind, also shows us the punishment incurred.

1. Women will have pain in childbirth.
2. People will sow and reap by the sweat of the brow.
3. Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden.
4. People must die.
5. Adam and Eve lost the image of God.

### **Future Consequences**

Aside from this, mankind also now faces many future consequences because of the Fall. The first of those is that when mankind reproduces, their offspring are no longer in the image of God, but in the image of sinful man.

**Genesis 5:3** – When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Now all people are born in sin. We call this either “original” or “inherited sin.”

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

**John 3:6** – Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Although humanity was now lost in sin, God came to us with a promise—not because we deserved it, but because he loves us.

**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 strike his heel.

**Romans 5:8** – But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

## The Verdict of the Law

Somebody here might get the idea that somehow they are not under this curse of sin, that they live a “pretty good” life, or that because they are better than most others, God will surely not hold the bad things they have done against them. But we also read that this is a verdict that falls upon *all* people.

**Romans 3:9-20** – What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Sin is not just the problem of *some* people. Sin is the problem of *all* people. Look in the mirror at yourself. Insert your name into these verses if you don't believe it. Even if I have never murdered anybody, never cheated on my wife, never swindled somebody out of their property, I still receive the same verdict as all others. GUILTY!

## The Purpose of the Law

You might be asking yourself, then, what purpose at all the Law of God serves. If I can't earn heaven by following God's commands as best as possible, then why even have it? The answer is really a threefold one. First, the Law shows us our sins.

**Romans 3:20** – Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

**James 2:10** – For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

The Law shows us that God is serious about sin.

**Romans 1:18** – The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Through this, the Law shows us just how desperately we need a Savior to deliver us from the curse of that Law.

**Romans 7:24-25** – What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

## How Am I Saved?

### The Verdict of the Gospel

We do not make ourselves right with God on our own. I am not able to bring anything to the table, because I am already a law-breaker. I am guilty. God demanded perfection, and I am far from perfect. Fortunately for the entire world, another verdict has been announced to us!

**Romans 3:21-26** – But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

On the basis of the above passage, let's answer a few questions about this new verdict:

Where can we find righteousness?

How does God bring that righteousness to me?

What is the definition of “justification”?

In what way does the cross show both God's justice and God's love?

Our first father Adam brought sin and condemnation for the whole world. Now in Christ, the second Adam, we have our justification.

**Romans 5:18** – 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 the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Notice that not just some were declared righteous. On the cross Christ died for all sins of all people of the whole world. All. This truth is called universal justification.

### The Purpose of the Gospel

The gospel message of Christ can be looked at as having many purposes. It's main purpose for humankind, though, is this: to show us God's love by showing us our Savior.

**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.

**1 John 4:9** – This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

**Isaiah 53:4-5** – Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

## Where Does Faith Fit into All This?

### The Definition of Faith

Many people define “faith” in different ways. Some see faith as a feeling. Others view it as a quality of oneself which warily believes in a good future. The Bible speaks of faith in a much different—and much more concrete—way. Biblical faith does not simply rely upon a feeling. It relies upon an object, one who is real, powerful, and cannot fail in keeping his promise. For a beautiful illustration of this sort of faith, the Apostle Paul writes of Abraham:

**Romans 4:18-25** – Against all hope, Abraham in hope believe and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were not written 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. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

As Abraham placed all of his trust in the promise of an all-powerful God, so we too put our confidence in him. When God speaks, we believe.

**Hebrews 11:1** – Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

One quick question: Does our belief or refusal to believe, then, change what God is?

### The Blessings of Faith

As we read the following passages, pick out which gifts of faith each one describes.

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

**Romans 5:11** – Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

**Romans 3:22** – This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

**Galatians 3:26** – You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:8** – For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

**Ephesians 3:12** – In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

**Romans 6:14** – For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

**Romans 8:32** – 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?

These are the yields of faith, the gifts that God gives to us all through believing in his Son. The Bible also clearly states that there is no other way to receive these gifts that he gives. Through faith and only through faith do they become ours.

**Hebrews 11:6** – And without faith it is impossible to please God.

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

## Can You Identify...?

Identify the following passages as Law (shows our sin) or Gospel (shows our Savior).

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

\_\_\_\_\_ **Matthew 5:8** – Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

\_\_\_\_\_ **1 Timothy 5:2** – [treat] older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

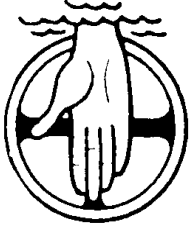
\_\_\_\_\_ **Habakkuk 2:4** – But the righteous will live by his faith.

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

\_\_\_\_\_ **Isaiah 57:8** – Behind your doors and your doorposts you have put your pagan symbols. Forsaking me, you uncovered your bed, you climbed into it and opened it wide; you made a pact with those whose beds you love, and you looked on their nakedness.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mark 16:16** – Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

\_\_\_\_\_ **James 4:11** – Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.



# Chapter 4: Who is God the Father?

---

## Why Do We Call Him “God the Father”?

### He Is True God

The Father is called “God” in the Old Testament by the prophets.

**Isaiah 64:8** – Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

The Father is called “God” in the New Testament by both Jesus and the Apostles whom he sent.

**Matthew 23:9** – And do not call anyone on earth “father,” for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.

**Ephesians 1:3** – Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

### He Is Father

The plain answer would be to say that this is simply what the Scriptures calls him. There are, however, two distinct reasons why this title is ascribed to him. He is called “Father” firstly because he created us as his own dear children.

**Malachi 2:10** – Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?

He is also called “Father” because he is the Father of Jesus, and so also our Father as we are made Jesus' brothers through faith.

**John 20:17** – I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

**Matthew 26:42** – He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

**Galatians 3:26** – You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

## What Does God the Father Do?

### Creation

The world we live in is one which is inclined toward blind faith—that is, faith in the Theory of Evolution. Christians who listen to God's Word in the Bible also take a leap of faith. Neither Evolution nor Creation has any empirical evidence. Our faith, however, is placed not in the shifting ways of the world of modern science. Our faith is placed in the words of the eternal God and Father of all things who does not change like shadows. What does God have to say about the origins of the world?



God says that he created everything.

**Genesis 1:1** – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

**John 1:3** – Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

God says that he created everything out of nothing.

**Hebrews 11:3** – By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

God says that he created everything out of nothing using only his Word.

**Psalms 33:6,9** – By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth ... For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

God says that he created everything out of nothing using only his Word in six normal days.

**Genesis 1:31-2:1** – God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

**Exodus 20:9-11** – Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 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 Sabbath day and made it holy.

God created Man as the crown of his Creation—the only creature with a soul.

**Genesis 1:26-27** – Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

**Ecclesiastes 12:7** – The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

God created Woman as the perfect companion and helper for Man.

**Genesis 2:18-25** – The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her

to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

## Preservation

God created all things in six days. But he didn't just wind up the clock and let it tick away on its own! God continues in his activity on behalf of mankind by preserving his creation and by providing for our needs.

**Genesis 8:22** – As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

**Psalms 145:15-16** – The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

**1 Peter 5:7** – Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**Matthew 10:29-30** – Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

As an added blessing and responsibility, God also lets the crown of his creation, mankind, take part and cooperate in this work.

**Genesis 1:28** – God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves along the ground."

Most importantly, God the Father provides for our spiritual distress. He sent his one and only Son Jesus to take away our sin.

**2 Timothy 1:9-10** – This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

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

## Our Response

The natural response we have for a God who has done so much for us is to thank him endlessly! We do this by praising, serving, and obeying him—not as though we earn favor by doing so, but because we love the Father who has first loved us.

**Psalms 118:1** – Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** – Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

**1 John 4:19** – We love because he first loved us.



# Chapter 5: Who Is Jesus?

---

## What's So Special About Jesus?

### Jesus Is the Christ

The entirety of the Scriptures really revolves around this central teaching, that Jesus is the Christ. That term "Christ" is the Greek word for the Old Testament Hebrew word "Messiah." Both mean "the anointed one." What does it mean to "anoint" someone? This is how people were marked for specific offices by God in the times of the Old Testament. Olive oil was poured over the head of a person, and by this he was designated to fulfill a certain position—prophet, priest, or king. Jesus, the Christ, was all three.

Like those Israelite men in Old Testament times, Jesus was installed—or anointed—by God to fulfill the work of salvation for mankind.

**Acts 10:38** – (You know what has happened...) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Jesus also revealed himself to people as the Messiah.

**John 4:25-26** – The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

**Luke 24:44** – He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Anyone though can *claim* to be the Messiah. In fact, others before Jesus had done exactly this. Jesus is the one who actually *fulfilled* what was prophesied. By this he authenticated his claim.

**Matthew 1:21** – She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

**Acts 3:18** – But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

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

### Jesus Is True God

The Christ was not just any normal person. In order to fulfill the prophets and save mankind, the Christ also was foretold to be both God and man. Jesus is indeed true God, equal to both the Father and the Holy Spirit in majesty and power. Scripture does not paint a poorly-defined picture of Jesus'

deity, as many religions claim. He was not just a simple prophet or good teacher. He was, is, and always will be true God from eternity to eternity. The Bible shows this clearly in many ways!

Jesus is revealed to be true God through his divine names.

**1 John 5:20** – We are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

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

**1 Corinthians 2:8** – None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Jesus is revealed to be true God through his divine attributes.

**Hebrews 13:8** – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

**Matthew 28:20** – And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

**John 21:17** – The third time [Jesus] said to [Peter], “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

**Matthew 28:18** – Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Jesus is revealed to be true God through his divine deeds.

**John 1:3** – Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

**Hebrews 1:3** – The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

**Matthew 8:26-27** – [Jesus] replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

**Mark 2:1** – When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

## Jesus Is True Man

Just as Jesus was truly God, Jesus is also truly a human being. Not only does the Bible call him a man, but Jesus also has a body and soul, both of which are shown in his normal actions of a human being.

**1 Timothy 2:5** – For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

**Luke 24:39** – Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

**Matthew 26:38** – Then [Jesus] said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

**Hebrew 4:15** – For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

**Mark 11:12** – The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.

We see then that Jesus was both true God and true man.

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

## Why Was Jesus Both God and Man?

### Jesus Had To Be True Man

God's divine plan for the redemption of mankind required that the Savior become just like us, because he had to become our substitute. He did this by living a perfect life, then dying to pay for our sins.

**Galatians 4:5** – But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

**Hebrews 2:14** – 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.

### Jesus Had to Be True God

While Jesus had to be man so that he could live and die for us, he also needed to be true God. This was necessary so that his fulfillment of the law would be sufficient for all people—not just himself. By his life and death he would pay the ransom for sin on behalf of all mankind. Finally, as God he could conquer death and the devil for the sake of us all.

**Mark 10:45** – For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

**1 Corinthians 15:55-57** – Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**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 strike his heel.

As both God and man, Christ Jesus fulfilled God's role of salvation for mankind. If he were only a man, he would have been at best a good teacher. If only God, he wouldn't have been able to die under the law. How beautiful for us, then, that God became flesh to redeem me from my sin!

# What Did Jesus Do for Me?

## The Humiliation of Our Savior

The Bible shows us in the life of Jesus a time when God became flesh and set aside the full use of his divine powers. We call this his “humiliation,” when he humbled himself to become man. The period of Jesus' humiliation lasts from his conception until his death—nearly all of his time living on earth.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a woman named Mary.

**Matthew 1:20-21** – But after [Joseph] had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Jesus grew up like any other person.

**Luke 2:49** - “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”

**Luke 2:52** – And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Jesus was baptized.

**Mark 1:9-11** – At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Jesus underwent a three-year public ministry in Israel.

**Mark 1:14-15** – After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

**Luke 9:11** – But the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

Jesus suffered.

**Mark 10:33-34** - “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Jesus died on a cross.

**Luke 23:33** – When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

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

Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to his heavenly Father. For thirty-three years he led a sinless life. How does the perfect life of Christ benefit us?

**Romans 5:19** – For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

## The Exaltation of Our Savior

Following Christ's humiliation comes the time of our Savior's exaltation. When we speak of this “exaltation” we are referring to the time when he resumed *full use* of his divine powers, beginning with his descent into hell and continuing for all time.

Christ descended into hell. This was not in order to suffer—he had finished that upon the cross.

**Matthew 27:46** – About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” --which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

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

Rather, he went to proclaim the victory that he had won.

**1 Peter 3:18-19** – For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Following Christ's descent into hell, he rose again from the dead on Easter morning, just as he had promised! We celebrate this day on Easter. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the high-point of the entire Bible.

**Matthew 28:5-6** – The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”

This resurrection from the dead was vitally important to everything following Christ's death on the cross. It really proves all upon which our Christian faith rests. It first guarantees that Jesus is the almighty Son of God, as he himself had claimed.

**Romans 1:4** – ... and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus' resurrection guarantees that God accepted the sacrifice for sin.

**Romans 4:25** – He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

**1 Corinthians 15:14** – And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

His resurrection also guarantees that we will rise physically from death.

**John 14:19** – Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

**John 11:25-26** – Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Following Jesus' resurrection from the dead we have the “happy ending” to the story. For forty days Jesus showed that he was alive to many of his disciples. During this time he prepared his disciples for their mission to spread the Gospel news to the whole world.

**Matthew 28:18-20** – Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing 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.”

After his resurrection, Jesus also promised to send the Holy Spirit to strengthen them to carry out that task.

**Acts 1:3-5,8** – After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Finally, when all of his work on earth had come to its end, Jesus ascended into heaven, where he sits at God's right hand to rule heaven and earth.

**Acts 1:9-11** – After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 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 same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Now our exalted Lord is not inactive as he awaits the Last Day in heaven. While Jesus sits at the right hand of his Father, he is quite active on behalf of his people, the Church. Although he is not present with us in body, he still lives as the head of the Church.

**Ephesians 1:22-23** – And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Jesus also gives people to work for his Church.



**Ephesians 4:11-12** – It was he 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.

Jesus, by the blood that he poured out on the cross, continues to plead our case before the Father.

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

**Romans 8:34** – Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Finally, Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven with him.

**John 14:2** – In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would not have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

## What's the Value of Jesus for Me?

### Payment for Sin

The world floundered in what seemed like a hopeless situation, lost in sin's curse and its punishment. But Jesus came to undo the work of sin, to destroy death and the grave, and to crush the devil's head. The death of Christ provided that full payment for our sins.

**1 John 3:8** – He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

**Galatians 3:13** – Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by become a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

**2 Corinthians 5:21** – God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Isaiah 53:5** – But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.



Did Christ die for all sins? Or did he only die for the sins of believers? While many may suppose that he only paid for the sins of those who believe, the Bible shows that Christ died to pay for the sins of every single person of all time.

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

**2 Corinthians 5:19** – ... that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

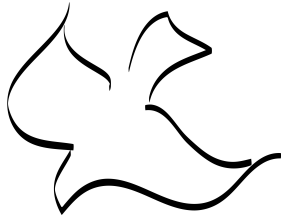
**1 John 2:2** – He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

This does not, however, mean that all will go to heaven. Some reject the payment that Christ made for them. The consequence is spiritual death.

**Mark 16:16** – Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Christ's payment becomes ours through the faith which God works in our hearts.

**Acts 16:30-31** – [The jailer] then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."



# Chapter 6: Who Is the Holy Spirit?

---

## Is the Holy Spirit True God Also?

### The Holy Spirit Is True God

Often called the “shy” member of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is anything but! While his work may appear more “behind the scenes” to us, the Spirit is no less important and active in his work for our salvation than the Father or the Son. The Holy Spirit's status as true God is stated clearly in the Bible.

**2 Corinthians 13:14** – May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Psalms 51:11** – Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

**Titus 3:5** – He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by 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? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”

## What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

### The Spirit Sees Our Condition

As the Holy Spirit is thus shown to be true God in the Bible, we also know that the Holy Spirit works for God's people. In fact, the time-period following Jesus' ascension into heaven is sometimes known as the “Holy Spirit Era.” But if Jesus paid for all of our sins by dying on the cross and rising again on Easter morning, what is left for the Holy Spirit to accomplish?

First, the Holy Spirit sees the condition we are all in by nature. Many believe that their relationship with God is, by nature, in pretty fair standing. The Bible says otherwise. It says that I am by nature *dead* in sin.

**Ephesians 2:1** – As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

The Bible tells me that I am actually *hostile* to God.

**Romans 8:7** – The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

The Bible tells me that when God wants to speak to me, my natural self thinks his Word is foolish!

**1 Corinthians 2:14** – The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

By my nature at birth, I am inclined only toward evil.

**Genesis 6:5** – The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

## The Holy Spirit Calls to Faith

Although I am dead in my transgressions, God does not leave me there. Through his Word the Holy Spirit calls to life that which was dead! This is not done by my own thinking or choosing. This—even this—is the work of God in my heart! The example of Saul's conversion shows that 180-degree turnaround.

**Acts 26:9-18** – "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. On one of those journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard to you to kick against the goads.' Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'"

Let's answer a couple questions:

What was Paul's attitude toward Christianity prior to his conversion?

How did God appear to Paul?

Which statement is more accurate?

- a) Paul willingly chose and decided to become a Christian.
- b) Although Paul was *not* willing, God brought Paul to faith.

As God called Paul out of death and into the life found in the gospel of Jesus, God also takes us from death to life.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** – But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Faith is a gift that is given to us by God. It is not a good work that I bring to the table so that God will love me and accept me.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** – 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.

This faith does not come to us magically without a source. Faith comes through the powerful Word that we find in the Bible.

**Romans 10:17** – Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

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

When we hear the Word of God, the Holy Spirit uses this to work faith in the hearts of people.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** – Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

## The Holy Spirit Sanctifies Me

When the Holy Spirit creates faith in a person's heart, he or she is sanctified, or “set apart.” Really the word “sanctification” comes from the Latin word which means “to make holy.” Through faith we are cut off from sin and “set apart” for a life of serving God.

We are set apart—sanctified—for a life of godly living through the Gospel.

**John 17:17** – Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

**John 15:5** – I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

We are sanctified for a life of producing good works done in faith.

**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.

We are sanctified for a life of producing good works done according to God's will.

**Matthew 15:9** – They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.

**Ephesians 2:10** – For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We are sanctified for a life of producing good works done to God's glory.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** – So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

**Matthew 25:40** – The king will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

We are sanctified for a life of fighting our sinful flesh.

**Hebrews 3:12** – See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

**Hebrews 10:26** – If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.

## Questions for Discussion

Can faith be lost?

**Acts 1:15-17** – In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—he was one of our number and shared in this ministry.”

**Romans 8:39** – Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Hebrews 3:12** – See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Is church attendance important for my faith?

**Hebrews 10:25** – Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Do I have to feel saved to be saved?

**1 John 3:20** – For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

**Galatians 5:22** – 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.

**Romans 15:13** – May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Why do some believe and not others?

**1 Timothy 2:4** – [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

**Ezekiel 33:11** – Say to them, “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?”

**Matthew 23:37** – O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.



# Chapter 7: What Is the Christian Church?

---

## What Is the Holy Christian Church?

### The Body of All Believers

When the Holy Spirit calls a person to faith—that is, when they believe in what Jesus has done to save them from their sins—he or she becomes a member of the Holy Christian Church. This is the body of all believers. This body is called “holy” because Christ has made its members his pure and holy brothers and sisters.

**Colossians 1:22** – But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

This same body of all believers is called “Christian” because of the foundation. It is built upon Christ, its cornerstone.

**1 Corinthians 1:23** – But we preach Christ crucified.

This body of all believers is called the “Church” because its members have been called out of the darkness of unbelief. The original Greek word for “church” actually translates to “called out.”

**1 Peter 2:1-12** – Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

God urges his people in these verse to crave his Word like a newborn child craves milk! We need his Word to continue growing spiritually, and so he has given us the church to feed us.

# What Is a Christian Congregation?

Obviously the entire makeup of the Holy Christian Church does not gather together in the same location to worship and study the Bible together. That Church is broken up into many different Christian congregations all over the world.

A Christian congregation is devoted to four activities: learning the Word, time spent in mutual encouragement, celebrating the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

**Acts 2:42** – They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

A Christian congregation is a group devoted also to unity.

**1 Corinthians 1:10** – I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

A Christian congregation is a group of believers devoted to the Word. Regular attendance at worship and various Bible studies are important, because they lead us to hold more and more tightly to the truth. These meetings also provide opportunities for encouragement to others and strengthening for ourselves.

**Hebrews 10:23-25** – Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

A Christian congregation is a group of people that may also include hypocrites. We might not be able to determine this ourselves—nor should we try—but God is the one who judges hearts.

**1 Samuel 16:7** – But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

**John 8:31** – To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."

**Matthew 13:24-30** – Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"



# How Should I Choose a Congregation?

## The Truth

God wants us to look for a congregation not based on all sorts of external aspects—whether they have a beautiful building or lots of programs or a similar age-group. God rather wants us to join a congregation that teaches the entire truth.

**John 8:31** – To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.”

**Matthew 28:20** - ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

**Revelation 22:18-19** – I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

## Nothing But the Truth

God warns Christians to be on their guard for those who would deviate from the teachings of Scripture in order to promote their own man-made doctrines. We would call these men and women false prophets or false teachers.

**Matthew 7:15** – Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

**Romans 16:17** – I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

God also provides the reason for separating from groups that don't adhere to the entire Word of God. False teaching, left unchecked, usually grows to infect other areas of doctrine with falsehood.

**Galatians 5:9** – A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.

Let's take a look at a couple of Agree/Disagree questions.

*Agree/Disagree:* In choosing a congregation, a warm feeling of love shows that the Spirit is with them and that they have the truth.

*Agree/Disagree:* One or two discrepancies here or there are tolerable as long as Christ crucified is preached.

## Church Fellowship

Keeping the Scriptures in mind that we have studied in this lesson, let's take a look at a few notes concerning “church fellowship” principles.

- 1) Most church bodies today seek unity on the basis of minimizing differences. We don't just want to look for the lowest common denominator, though. God teaches us to seek unity on the basis of adherence to the *entire* Word of God.
- 2) There is a difference between a Christian church that teaches falsely and a non-Christian church.
- 3) God's Word is clear. The reason that different church bodies come to different conclusions is because the devil is constantly trying to steer people away from the truth, because the world sometimes doesn't like to hear the truth, and because our own sinful flesh is hostile to God.
- 4) In practicing church fellowship, we are *not* judging people's faith. Only God can do that. Instead, we judge teachings, and God *has* instructed us to do that. (***Romans 16:17; 1 John 4:1; Titus 1:9; 2 John 10-11***)
- 5) The doctrine of church fellowship, when properly practiced, is a decisive statement of love; love for God's Word, love for our own souls, and love for the souls of others. It is always to be practiced in humility.
- 6) These truths become more and more appealing as we grow in our understanding of God's love for us and for all, and as we grow in our understanding of his Word. (***Hebrews 5:11-14***)

Here are some other passages to consider:

- ***2 Timothy 2:17-18***
- ***1 Timothy 6:3-4***
- ***Deuteronomy 4:2***
- ***1 Timothy 4:1-3***
- ***Revelation 2:14-16, 20-21***
- ***Matthew 7:15***