

“Meeting the Real Jesus”

**A Series of Discovery Bible Studies on
The Life and Work of Jesus Christ**

Prepared by David Broughton

Edition 1, June 2018

INTRODUCTION

In Mark 8 and Matthew 16 Jesus asked his disciples to tell him who he was. Peter gave an answer that Jesus commended him for, recognising that God had guided him to speak. However after that Jesus strongly forbade the disciples to tell others what they had been discussing! Why?

As I mused over his response I believe Jesus was acknowledging that Peter had got the title “Messiah” right. He was expecting Jesus to liberate the Jews from Roman control and domination. He was expecting a liberating king – common thinking among the Jewish leaders at that time. Jesus however came as a suffering servant and spoke of this to the disciples. Peter had got the title right but had the wrong content concerning who the Messiah was.

Similarly today, unless a person has an accurate understanding of who Jesus is they will not respond to Him as they should. This is the reason these foundational studies focus on acquainting the student with the real Jesus as portrayed in the Bible.

The studies are purposely based on examining what the Bible has to say about Jesus Christ. God has promised to bless His Word – not our study format or great discussion!

These studies were developed in 2016-2017 for International Students at Canterbury University. Those attending would range in number from 6-20, mostly Chinese and consist of searching pre-christian, young believers and some older Christians.

The purpose was to lay a foundation so that all attending would be grounded in their understanding of who Jesus Christ really is. As time went on some of the later studies became more involved, longer than one page and needed to be spread over two or more nights! They also included more information for teaching. It is intended that they be used as a resource and selectively used as is appropriate.

These studies are not intended to be exhaustive or complete as the subject matter is far greater than anything we could cover. They are presented so that others may glean and select from them as desired to suit their study attendees. They are also available in electronic form to make it easier for them to be modified or adapted as handouts. They are not copyrighted so can be used freely.

The purpose of the author as these studies were prepared was: *To know Christ and to make Him known and with God’s enabling to help others do the same.*

Meeting the Real Jesus

<u>Index</u>	Page
Introduction	2
Index	3
Leading a Bible Study Group	4
1. How can we know about the Christian God	5
2. Why Study the Bible (Part 1 - Where it came from)	7
3. Why Study the Bible (Part 2 - Authority and Reliability)	9
4. Why Study the Bible (Part 3 – Relevance)	11
5. What is a New Testament Christian?	15
6. The Uniqueness of Jesus	17
7. The Life of Jesus – An Overview	18
8. The Humanity of Jesus	20
9. The Sinlessness of Christ	21
10. The Deity of Jesus Christ	23
11. The Claims, Lifestyle and Teaching of Jesus	25
12. The Character of Jesus Christ	27
13. The Miracles of Jesus	29
14. The Death of Jesus Christ	30
15. Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ	31
16. The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ	33
17. The Burial of “three days and three nights”	35
18. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ	37
19. The Ascension of Jesus Christ	40
20. Jesus the Messiah	43
21. The Return of Jesus Christ	48
Bibliography	52

How to lead a Bible Discussion Group where people contribute readily and enjoy the time

Personal Preparation

- Pray. This is God's Work. Isaiah 55:11 Leading is actually not about you!
- Review the study questions/outline. Observe where the flow of thought is
- Prepare Launching Questions (see below)

Preparing the discussion area

- Form seating arrangement into a circle so all can see and hear each other.
- Ensure all are comfortable.
- Make sure you can see and hear everyone as the leader.

Preliminary planning

- Know and be aware of the time frame for the discussion time.
- Understand the purpose of the study ie where you want to go.
- Have an idea when and how you wish to bring the Application.

Leading is about asking questions not giving information or answers!

- You are not expected to know all the answers. Look into unanswered questions later as able to.
- Your purpose is to facilitate discussion on the subject by asking questions.
- Commend a good answer especially if from a quieter group member.
- Invite members to comment on each others responses to get the group to interact.
- Sometimes you can play "devil's advocate" and disagree with someone who won't be offended to encourage discussion.

Preparing and using questions

- Use different types of questions or statements
 - o Launching questions – broad and general to kick off the discussion
 - o Guiding questions Generally these will be open ended and build on one another
 - o Understanding Questions – to clarify or explore what has been said
 - o Summarising statements
 - o Application question(s) and Concluding statement

How to get a quiet person to contribute

- Ask them a question by name to draw them out
- Make sure the question can be answered easily
- Commend them for their contribution

How to get a talkative person to be quiet

- Ask yes/no questions
- Don't look directly or sit opposite them if you know in advance.
- Cut across them politely to ask someone else what they think about what has been said.

What to do when you are given the role without time to prepare

- Do the best you can in the time available!
- Trust God to give you ideas and make it work. Leave the outcome to Him.

Review Questions and Thoughts

- Was I comfortable with how much I spoke? Did I handle the silences satisfactorily?
- Where might I improve next time? (There will be another time!)
- Relax and pray for the outcome. Thank God for being able to serve Him.
- Don't let your emotions determine how well you did!

Philippians 2:6-8 Jesus is God but humbled himself to become a human.

The Testimony/Witness of People

Acts 4:12-13 The Disciples demonstrated they had been with Jesus by their words and actions

1 John 1:1-3 John was compelled to communicate what he knew about Jesus.

Application: How have you come to your conclusion about what God is like?

.....
.....

What is your God like? How do you know?

.....
.....

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE? (Part 1 – Where it came from)

Background Thoughts about the Bible to read together

- The author of the Bible is the Holy Spirit; the pages of the Bible are an authoritative revelation in written form of God’s nature and purposes. It is the source book of our knowledge of God.
- The word English “Bible” is derived from the Greek word “biblos” meaning “a book”.
- The Bible is a library of 66 books, divided into two main sections; the Old Testament containing 39 books and the New Testament containing 27 books.
- The Bible was written by 36-40 authors over a period of 1500 years and by different types of people in different parts of the world.
- The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, with parts of Daniel and Ezra being written in Aramaic; the New Testament was written in Greek.
- There are no original manuscripts in existence. The oldest manuscripts can be found at the Vatican (Rome), 4th century, Siniatic,(Leningrad), 4th Century , Alexandrian,(London) 5th century. As new scrolls have been found they verify the accuracy of what we have.
- The unique design and preservation of the Bible are proofs of its divine inspiration. For so many different men to write a book without contradictions and have it passed down accurately till today is a miracle that can only be explained by the Master Author’s guiding and protecting hand.
- The central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ who also becomes the key to understanding it. (Luke 24:27)

Suggested Ground Rules for Discussion

1. In these Bible Discussions our purpose is to **learn**: to discover and gain understanding of what the Bible actually teaches. It is not to defend or debate about these matters. That is for another time and place. Each person is to be respected and needs to come to their own conclusion.
2. It is not expected we can understand all that is written. If God is, as presented in the Bible He is beyond our understanding and so are his activities and thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9.
3. There will be some truths and questions we cannot understand and will need to trust God for an answer in the future. There is a need to have humility when approaching what God has written and a “default” attitude of trust rather than a superior attitude of criticism and rejection!

Finding your way around the Bible using References

When finding a passage in the Bible, we use a ‘Bible Reference’ system because page numbers are different from Bible to Bible. A bible reference looks like this:

2 Peter 1: 16-21
book chapter verse

The **book** name is written on the top of each page of the Bible.

The **chapter** number is next to the book name *and* in large print in the text.

The **verse** numbers are found within the text in small print.

HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT GOD?

This is a subject that scholars have studied and written much about. Thousand's of books have been written on the topic. There are some key words and concepts showing that the Bible we have today has been given to us from God in its original form and supernaturally preserved down through the centuries. Many people have given their lives to give us the Bible as we have it today.

General Revelation: Without God taking the initiative to reveal Himself to humanity we would not know of Him at all. (This separates Christianity from other religions where people have created god's of their own making)

The God of the Bible has revealed himself generally to us through:

1. Creation Romans 1:18-20
2. Conscience Romans 2:14-15
3. Universal religious awareness

Special Revelation is where God has chosen to show himself through the writings of the Bible specifically.

- "Inspiration" means "God breathed". It is a word used to describe how God has shown himself through the words of the Bible. We can describe but not understand the exact process because we are dealing with a God – man interface.
- Inspiration is the process whereby each writer had liberty to use their own personality, education, and experience so that their writings (down to the very words in the original) were exactly what God wanted recorded. This is known as Verbal Inspiration. Inspiration applies to the whole Bible
- The Bible claims inspiration for:

1. The writers.	2 Peter 1:21
2. The writings.	2 Timothy 3:16
3. The words.	1 Corinthians 2:13
- The Bible when correctly interpreted is as a whole "infallible" and not misleading in any way. Not every thing recorded (eg immoral conduct etc) is considered to be good but when correctly interpreted in its context the Bible is truthful and worthy of our confidence. There are a number of special rules for such interpreting that we are not looking at in this study.
- The Bible is inerrant as it contains what God wanted there and is free of error in the original documents. It does not mean that the actions and behaviour of those being recorded are right but that what God wanted recorded about them is accurate and without error.
- Over the centuries the Bible has been carefully copied by hand. The Bible may contain a few copyist errors but these are minimal and known. They do not impact any doctrinal teaching significantly. None of the original manuscripts or writings are in existence today. Ancient copies being discovered today (through Archaeology etc) all confirm how accurate the Bible we have today is.
- Canon: This raises the question as to what should be included in the Bible. "Canon" comes from a Greek word meaning "rule" or "standard of measurement". It refers to the authoritative body of writings which the people of God have come to recognise as being from God.

Question: What have we learned that would encourage us to study the Bible?

Why Study the Bible? (Part 2 – The Authority and Reliability of the Bible)

Review Part 1

What impressions were you left with from the last study?

How was your attitude to the Bible challenged last week?

WHERE DID THE BIBLE COME FROM?

The Bible claims to be God’s Word to humanity. Frequently we read “Thus said the Lord” or “the Word of the Lord came to ...” See the following examples:

Exodus 24:1-4, Exodus 32:16, Isaiah 1:1-2, Jeremiah 5:14
Ezekiel 2:6-7, Ezekiel 3:10-11 Zechariah 7:8 2 Peter 1:20-21

- What stood out as you looked at these passages?
- Who is the author of the Bible?
- What do people mean when they say the Bible is “God’s Word”? Does it matter?

Here are some examples of where a direct command from God to write was given. Read each of following passages for understanding and then discuss the questions below.

Moses - Exodus 17:13-14, **Isaiah** – Isaiah 8:1-2 & Isaiah 30:8
Jeremiah – Jeremiah 30:1-5 & Jeremiah 36:1-5 . **Habakkuk** – Habakkuk 2:2-3
John – Revelation 1:19 & Revelation 21:5 .
Paul – 1Corinthians 11:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:15,

- What impresses you from these passages?
- Who is the author of the Bible?
- How should this determine our attitude as we approach the Bible?

The Lord Jesus Christ confirmed the Divine authorship of the Old Testament and promised there would be further revelation through the Holy Spirit after he left and returned to Heaven.

Matthew 4:4 & Matthew 19:4, Luke 24:27 & 45, John 5:46

- What can we learn from Jesus’ attitude to the Old Testament?

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

How did the writers of the Bible show that their words were from God in these passages?
Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 2 Samuel 23:1-3, Jeremiah 1:6-9, 1 Thessalonians 2:13

What did Paul say about the divine authorship of the Bible in 2 Timothy 3:16?

Compare these two translations of Psalm 138:2 below.

“I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.” ESV

.....

"I bow before your holy Temple as I worship. I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honour of your name." NLT

.....

From these two translations of Psalm 138:2

- How does God view His Word?
 - What does it mean that the Bible is authoritative? Why is it?
 - How should this affect our response to the Bible?
- Discuss this statement:
 "The Bible does not have authority in and of itself. Rather it has authority because God has ALL authority and it is His book. Through the Holy Spirit He inspired people to write. Authority comes from God through the Bible, His word to us."
 Dr John Buchanan

THE RELIABILITY AND ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

- What do these passages say about the reliability of the Word of God?
 Joshua 23:14
 Psalm 33:4,11
 Proverbs 30:5-6
- What conclusion about the reliability of the Bible can be drawn from Luke’s introductory statements to his gospel?
 Luke 1:1-4
- In 2 Peter 1:15-21 What clear statement does the Apostle Peter make in verse16?
- What unusual experience had he and other disciples had earlier with Jesus?
 (Compare verses 17-18 with Matthew 17:1-9.)
- What did Peter believe was more reliable than a voice from heaven? *Verse 19*
- What convinced him that the prophecies of Scripture were so reliable? *Verses 20-21*

APPLICATION

1. What conclusion(s) have you drawn about the Authority, Reliability and Accuracy of the Bible from this study?
2. What should be the attitude of a Follower of Christ towards the Bible?
3. If the Bible comes from an Infinite God, uniquely given and preserved over the centuries for us, how should we respond to it this week?

- For further information about how we got our Bible see Dr C Missler on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqEYTE4KhQ0>
- See also <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/what-is-bible/> for an animated story of how we got the Bible

Why Study the Bible (Part 3 – The Relevance of the Bible)

REVIEW: Part 2

What did we learn about the Authorship and Authority of the Bible?

What did we learn about the Reliability and Accuracy of the Bible?

Were there unanswered questions that arose for you?

THE RELEVANCE OF THE BIBLE TODAY

• How do you think the Bible can be helpful to a Follower of Jesus? Consider each of the following:

Psalm 37:31

Psalm 119:130

Acts 20:32

2 Timothy 3:16-17

James 1:21

• The Bible uses various literary forms to communicate its message. Eg poetry, teaching, prophecy, history, symbols, parables. Read the following passages (with comments) and then discuss how these picture/symbols might be experienced for a Follower of Jesus? Have any of these been your experience?

- A Sword; Hebrews 4:12 The Bible is a pointed Word that convicts the hearer.
- A Hammer; Jeremiah 23:29 The Bible is powerful and breaks the resistance of the hearer.
- A Seed; I Peter 1:23 The Bible is a living Word giving new everlasting life to the hearer.
- A Mirror; James 1:23-25 The Bible is a faithful Word, revealing the individual to himself.
- A Fire; Jeremiah 20:9 The Bible is a burning Word, that must be communicated.
- A Lamp; Psalm 119:105 The Bible is an illuminating Word guiding the believer day by day.
- Food; Hebrews 5:12-14; Romans 10:17 The Bible is nourishing food, feeding the soul and strengthening our faith.

Which of these is the most relevant for you in your walk with God?

Comment: *The ultimate reason for the authority of Scripture lies in the authorship of Scripture. It is God’s word, therefore it is authoritative. If you seek a greater faith in the Bible then seek a greater knowledge of God. Your concept of God and of the authority of the Scriptures will stand or fall together.*

JESUS’ VIEW and USE OF SCRIPTURE

Read the account of Jesus’ temptation in Matthew 4:1-11.

- a. What use of Scripture does Jesus make? *Verse 10*
- b. How much consideration did Jesus give Satan’s offer before he made his decision? *Verses 9-10*
- c. How did Jesus apply the verse he quoted – to himself or to Satan?

d. If Jesus placed himself under the authority of Scripture, what meaning does this have for us?

What did Jesus do, say or think about Scripture in each of these situations in the Gospels?

Matthew 5:17-18; Matthew 12:3; Matthew 26:54

Mark 7:6-9; Mark 12:24-27

Luke 10:25-28; Luke 24:27, 44, 46

John 5:45-47; John 17:17; John 19:28-30

After examining these passages discuss how Jesus viewed Scripture.

- What attitude to the Word did the writers of the Gospels observe in Him?
- Why do you think he had such attitudes?
- How did these attitudes affect the way He lived?
- How is His example a challenge for you?

SIX REASONS GOD GAVE US THE BIBLE

1. The Bible was given to reveal Jesus Christ to us. John 20:31 1 John 1:3
2. The Bible was given to tell us God’s Plan of Salvation. 2 Timothy 3:15
3. The Bible was given to help us grow spiritually.
1 Peter 2:2-3 Hebrews 5:12-14 Acts 20:32 Job 23:12
4. The Bible was given to keep us from sin.
John 15:3 Ephesians 5:26 Psalm 119:9-11 James 1:25
5. The Bible was given to guide and direct us.
1 John 5:14-15 Psalm 32:8 Proverbs 3:5-6
6. The Bible was given to help us share our Faith. 1 Peter 3:15

APPLYING THE BIBLE TO YOUR LIFE

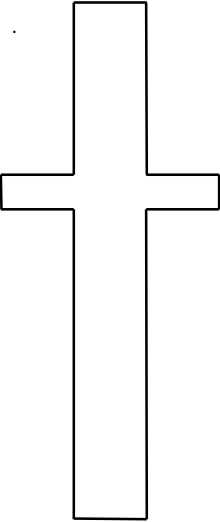
Has any thought or passage been of encouragement or challenge for you through this study?
Please share it with others in the group.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

In summary

- The Bible teaches that it is directly and sovereignly inspired by God and is therefore to be acknowledged as authoritative.
- God used people to write the Bible.
- The original documents contained the exact words God wanted written in them. None of the original documents exist.
- There will be an element of mystery about the way the Bible has been produced. We must exercise Faith, appropriate interpretation principles and good judgement as we study it.

THE BIBLE AT A GLANCE (66 BOOKS)

OLD TESTAMENT (39 books)			NEW TESTAMENT (27 books)			
“The New is in the Old concealed. The Old is in the New revealed”						
HISTORY	POETRY	PROPHECY		HISTORY	TEACHING	PROPHECY
17 books	5 books	17 books	The Old Testament looks forward to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross	5 BOOKS	21 books	1 book
Law	Job	Major Prophets		Gospels	Paul’s Letters	Revelation
Genesis	Psalms	Isaiah		Matthew	Romans	
Exodus	Proverbs	Jeremiah		Mark	1 Corinthians	
Leviticus	Ecclesiastes	Lamentations		Luke	2 Corinthians	
Numbers	Song of Solomon	Ezekiel		John	Galatians	
Deuteronomy		Daniel		The Early Church	Ephesians	
History and Government		Minor Prophets			Philippians	
Joshua		Hosea		Acts	Colossians	
Judges		Joel	The New Testament is based on the finished work of Christ on the cross.		1 Thessalonians	
Ruth		Amos			2 Thessalonians	
1 Samuel		Obadiah			1 Timothy	
2 Samuel		Jonah			2 Timothy	
1 Kings		Micah			Titus	
2 Kings		Nahum			Philemon	
1 Chronicles		Habakkuk	There is about 400 years between testaments		General Letters	
2 Chronicles		Zephaniah			Hebrews	
Ezra		Haggai			James	
Nehemiah		Zechariah			1 Peter	
Esther		Malachi			2 Peter	
					1 John	
					2 John	
					3 John	
					Jude	
God used 40 different men over a period of 1,500 years (about 1400 B.C. to A.D. 90) in writing the Bible.						

A Suggested Bible Reading Plan for a Beginner

For those who haven't read the Bible before here is a plan to gain an overview of its content. (Not all the Books are included) Once you understand the basic framework, you will be better equipped to read the whole Bible.

Overview of the Old Testament

- **Genesis** (the history of Creation, the fall, and God's covenantal dealings with the patriarchs)
- **Exodus** (the history of Israel's liberation and formation as a nation)
- **Joshua** (the history of the military conquest of the Promised Land)
- **Judges** (Israel's transition from a tribal federation to a monarchy)
- **1 Samuel** (Israel's emerging monarchy under Saul and David)
- **2 Samuel** (David's reign)
- **1 Kings** (Solomon and the divided kingdom)
- **2 Kings** (the fall of Israel)
- **Ezra** (the Israelites' return from exile)
- **Nehemiah** (the restoration of Jerusalem)
- **Amos and Hosea** (examples of minor prophets)
- **Jeremiah** (an example of a major prophet)
- **Ecclesiastes** (Wisdom Literature)
- **Psalms and Proverbs** (Hebrew poetry)

Overview of the New Testament

- **The Gospel of Luke** (the life of Jesus)
- **Acts** (the early church)
- **Ephesians** (an introduction to the teaching of Paul)
- **1 Corinthians** (life in the church)
- **1 Peter** (an introduction to Peter)
- **1 Timothy** (an introduction to the Pastoral Epistles)
- **Hebrews** (Christology)
- **Romans** (Paul's theology)

By reading these books, a person can get a basic feel for and understanding of the scope of the Bible without getting bogged down in the more difficult sections. From there, they can fill in the gaps to complete reading the entire Bible.

What is a New Testament Christian?

The word *Christian* occurs only three times in the New Testament. According to Acts 11:26, it originated in Antioch, probably as a derogatory nickname coined by those who observed the followers of Christ. The other two references (Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16) indicate that the name soon became widely used by the believers themselves. In this study, we will examine some other words and phrases used to describe the people called Christians in the New Testament.

A Christian is a Child of God

We can be made right with God, the Judge and Holy Creator and be acquitted and cleansed. This truth however does not communicate the depth of relationship with God that is possible through Christ. The Bible’s description of a Christian as a child of God emphasizes the fact that it is a relationship of affection and intimacy.

1. How does a person become a child of God? Galatians 3:26 John 1:10-13

Comment: In Bible times it was more common to adopt older children than infants.

2. How did God make this possible? Galatians 4:5-7

3. What are some privileges of being an adopted child of God? Romans 8:14-17 1 John 3:1-3

From the Sermon on the Mount Jesus communicated that being a child of God will affect our:			
Behaviour	Matthew 5: 16	Matthew 5:44-45	Matthew 6:1 & 3
Prayer	Matthew 6:6-9	Matthew 7:9&11	
Handling Life	Matthew 6:27, 32 Hebrews 12:9-11		

Summarise: For a Christian to be a Child of God means

A Christian is a Believer

“Believer” is one of the first titles we find in the Book of Acts. E.g. Acts 2:44, 4:32, 10:45, and 16:1.

- a. What does a person need to believe to become a Christian and be made right with God?

Ephesians 1:13-14 Romans 10:9-10 John 5:24 Romans 4:24-25

b. What do the following tell us about being a believer?

Romans 5:1-2

Ephesians 2:8-9

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10

Summarise: For a Christian to be a believer means ...

A Christian is a Disciple

Disciple is the term used most frequently in Acts for followers of Christ. According to Acts 11:26, *“The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.”* The word disciple has the root meaning of “learner.” But the disciple of Christ is more than just a pupil. He or she actively seeks to follow the Master. The invitation to follow is a personal one from the Master.

c. Describe the kind of commitment Jesus expected of His disciples?

Luke 9:23-26

Luke 14:25-33

Matthew 10:37

d. What reassurance does Jesus give in Luke 18:28-30?

Discipleship will be demonstrated through obedient living.

Luke 6:46-49 Luke: 8:19-21 Luke 10:38-42 Luke 11:27-28

Other marks of a Disciple that Jesus spoke of included the following:

Matthew 28:19, 20

Luke 14:27, 33

John 8:32

John 12:24-26

John 13:34, 35

John 15:4 &8.

Summarise: For a Christian to be a disciple of Jesus Christ means ...

Conclusion

How has God strengthened your understanding of what it means to be a Christian?

Share how you became a Christian.

What response is God asking me to make?

Is there a practical action I should take?

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ (a summary overview)

The following statements are accurately recorded about the life of Jesus. (Mostly from the Gospels)

Suggested procedure:

1. Read and think about the passage(s) given below. What is happening and who is involved?
2. Summarise the situation in your own words in the group.
3. What is different, unusual or unique about Jesus in the given passage?

His Origin and Identity	Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:1-4, 14, 18, John 8:58
Prophecies about Him	Micah 5:2 (700BC) – Matthew 2:1, Isaiah 7:14(700BC) – Matthew 1:18
His Birth	Luke 1:26-38
His sinlessness	1 Peter 2:22, 3:18, 1 John 3:5, Matthew 27:24 (eye witnesses)
With Children	Matthew 19:14-15, 21:15
Forgiving	Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:20-21
Teacher	Mark 1:32-34, Matthew 7:28-29
Healer	Luke 5:12-14, 22-26, Matthew 8:14-17
Miracles	Mark 4:35-41, Matthew 8:26-27, Matthew 21:14
Raising the dead	Luke 7:11-17, Mark 5:35-43, John 11:40-44
Prayerfulness	Luke 11:1-5
Claims to be God	John 10:25-33, John 14:1-9
Gives Eternal Life	John 5:24
Heavenly Commentary	Luke 3:22, Luke 9:35-36
Commitment to Die	Mark 10:32-34, Matthew 16:21, Luke 9:21-22
Death	John 19:30-35, Matthew 27:45-55
Resurrection	Matthew 28:5-10, John 20:24-31, Romans 1:4
Commission	Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:8
Ascension	Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11
Return	John 14:2-3, Acts 1:9-11

What is your conclusion?

1. Has your appreciation of Jesus changed through what you have read and discussed?
2. Was Jesus a legend, a liar, insane or God in Human form as he claimed to be? – any other options?

3. What are the implications of your conclusion?

The Life of Jesus – An Overview**Introduction**

- If you were going to write someone’s biography, how would you structure it? Compare how the Gospels tell of Jesus from the Overview Chart. What does this tell us?
- The Four Gospel Accounts of Jesus only cover about 1 month of His 3 public ministry years teaching and activity! (According to Charles Price) What can we conclude about their content if this is true?
- Note the limited Geography and Historicity of Jesus’ earthly life. The Gospels are not works of fiction but eye witness accounts of actual events – some of which can be verified externally. (See Luke 1:1-4 and Luke 2:1-2, Acts1:1-3)
- The purpose of the study is to see how Jesus actually lived, served and taught people.

Developing Years (up to 30years).....4BC-27AD

- Birth Matthew 1:18-25
- Travels Matthew 2:1-6, 12-16
- Twelve years old Luke 2:40-53

Year 1 of Public Ministry.....27AD

- Beginning Luke 3:21-23
- Healings Mark 3:7-10
- Nicodemus John 3:1-4,16-18
- First Miracle John 2:1-11
- Woman at the Well John 4:5-10,39-42
- Judea-Galilee John 4:43-45

Year 2 of Public Ministry.....28-29AD

- Calling the Disciples Luke 5:1-11, 6:12-16
- Sermon on the Mt. Matthew 5:3-12
- The Cost & Storm Matthew 8:18-27
- Teaching & Healing Matthew 9:35-38

Year 3 of Public Ministry.....29-30AD

- Family Unbelief Mark 6:1-6
- Feeding of 5000 Mark 6:35-44
- Brothers John 7:2-5
- Transfiguration Matthew 17:1-8
- Resolute Luke 9:51-53
- Mary & Martha Luke 10: 38-42
- The Lord’s Prayer Luke 11:1-4
- Sanhedrin John 11:45-57

Jerusalem (One Week).....30AD

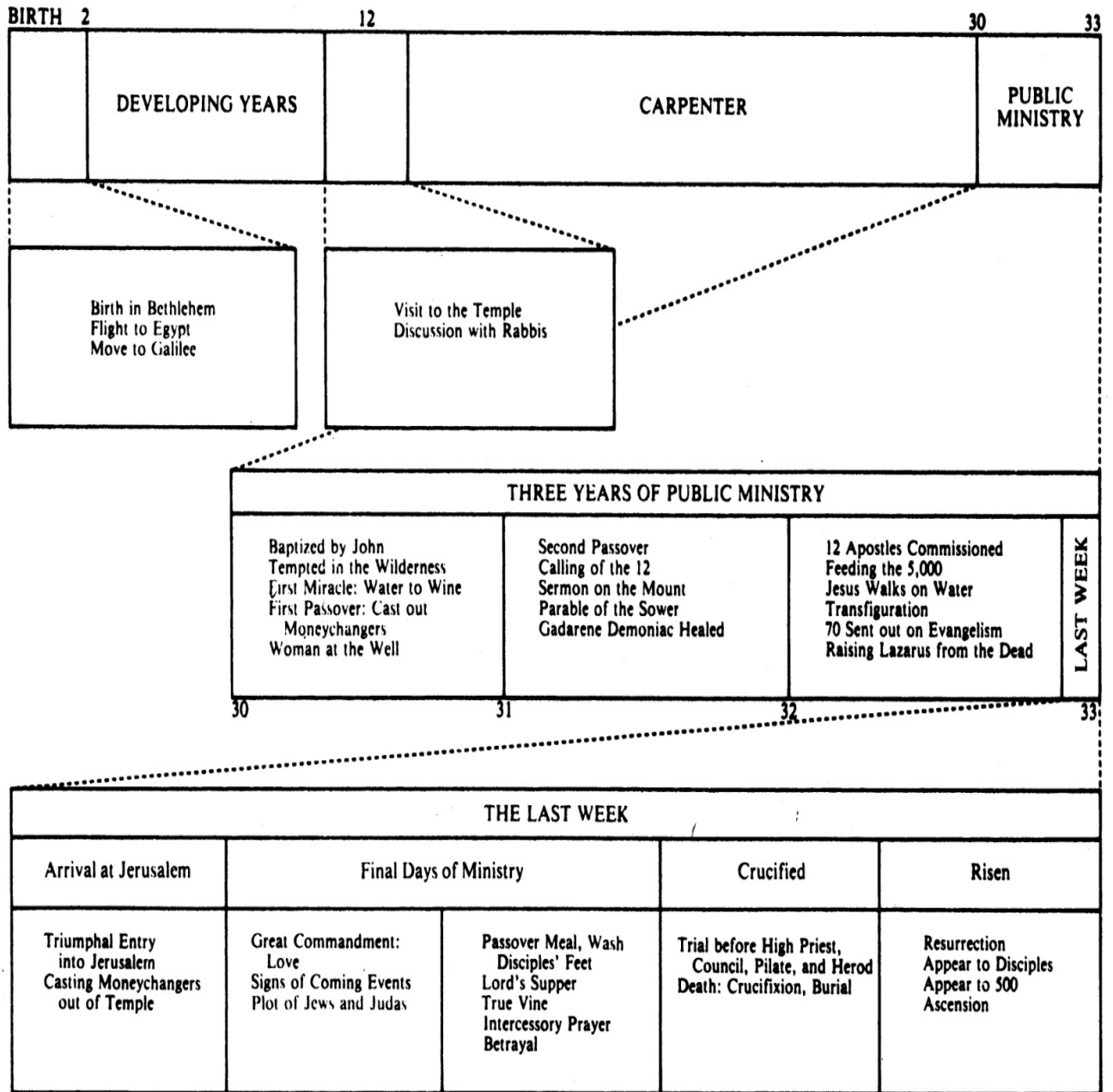
- Triumphal Entry John 12:12-16
- Crucifixion John 19:16-27
- Resurrection Luke 24:1-8

Post Resurrection

- Appearances Acts 1:3
- Great Commission Matthew 28:18-20
- Ascension Acts 1:9-11

If I were to meet Jesus walking around Galilee what would I want to ask or say to him?

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST



The Humanity of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

In order to be the Saviour for mankind, Jesus had to be not only Divine and virgin-born, but He must also be a true man. He was like us in every respect except sinful.

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

There is not a lot describing Christ as he grew up but there is still enough to confirm for us that Jesus was truly human.

1. What do the names of Jesus tell us about his being human? Matthew. 1:20-23
 V20 Jesus was born of a human mother and had a common name, “Jesus”
 V23 He was also Divine and called Immanuel, “God is with us” since his father was the Holy Spirit.
2. How does the genealogy in Matthew 1:1-16 confirm his Humanity to the writer? See Acts 13:23
 Jesus had a human mother and was born as a human baby.
 His step father Joseph could trace his lineage back to Abraham. Jesus was recognised as a descendant of King David.
3. What do these passages tell us about Christ becoming and being a human being?
 Luke 2:7 John 1:14 Hebrews 2:14 Galatians 4:4 Philippians 2:6-8
4. How do these passages confirm his humanity?
 Matthew 4:1-11 Mark 6:3 Luke 2:40 Luke 2:46
 Luke 2:52 Luke 3:23 Hebrews 2:18 Hebrews 5:8
5. How do each of these passages show that Jesus was human just like you?
 Matthew 4:2 (See also Matthew 21:18) Matthew 8:24 Matthew 9:36
 Matthew 14:23 Mark 10:21 John 4:6-7 John 11:33-36
 John 19:28-34
6. What additional information is given in these passages about the Humanity of Jesus?
 Luke 23:52-56 Luke 24:39 John 1:14 Hebrews 2:14
7. From your knowledge of the Gospels, what did Jesus look like? See also Isaiah 53:2,3
 Why do you think this is of significance?
8. What is Jesus like at the moment?
 John 20:27 (Note how V29 applies to us) Acts 7:55-56
9. Why is it important that Jesus was human and like us? Romans 8:3-4; Galatians 4:4-7

REVIEW

Take a moment to recall and then share two of the most significant truths you have learned or been reminded of from this study?

The Sinlessness of Christ

Introductory Comments

- Because Jesus did not have a human father and was born of a virgin He was without original sin and therefore did not have a sin nature.
- In this study we will see that Jesus lived His whole life without committing a single sin. He lived, died and returned to Heaven without any sin.
- Jesus Christ was not a hybrid, half God and half man. He was true man and true God, without being a mixture of the two natures. (Philippians 2:6-11 – “laid aside”)
- The two natures of the Saviour are separate and distinct in every respect.

How would you define “the Sinlessness of Christ” using the ideas from the following verses?

Matthew 15:19 Hebrews 10:7 John 17:4 Hebrews 7:26 1Peter 1:19

Sin is external (lying, stealing, murder) but it is also internal (thoughts, motives, attitudes etc). Jesus was sinless both externally and internally. He completely conformed to that which is good and holy at all times.

What do these passages tell us about the sinlessness of Christ?

- From Birth: In Acts 4:27-30, the expression, “holy servant, Jesus” occurs times? From birth He was holy, pure, and sinless. Compare King David in Psalm 51:5 NLT.
- From Demons: What is significant about the demons shouting in Mark 1:24 and Luke 4:34?
- From the Bible: This is the strongest proof of the sinlessness of Christ. Summarise the key thoughts of these verses. Which verse impresses you most? Why?
 I Peter 2:21, 22 II Corinthians 5:21 Hebrews 4:15 I John 3:3, 5

What did these people have to say about Christ being sinless?

- Jesus himself: John 8:46
 - Think about it!
 - Christ was the only man who could ever make that claim honestly after Adam’s fall.
 - Jesus never admitted a fault or ever asked for forgiveness of sins.
 - No evil, selfish, arrogant or impure thought was ever found in his perfect, holy mind.
- Pontius Pilate: John 18:38 – what was his statement?
- Mrs. Pontius Pilate: Matthew 27:19 – what troubled her?
- The thief on the cross: Luke 23:41 – a hardened criminal.
- Judas Iscariot: Matthew 27:4 – a disciple of Jesus during His earthly ministry.
- The Roman Centurion: Luke 23:47 – a hardened Roman soldier.
- The Jewish High Council: Matthew 26:59 – Jesus was crucified on false charges!

Why is Christ’s sinlessness so important for us 2000 years later?

- Being sinless, He was the perfect revelation of God to mankind.
- Being human and sinless guarantees a perfect mediator. It shows that He came right down to the level of man, of being tempted and yet resisting and overcoming.

- Being human and sinless He became an acceptable sacrifice on Calvary for our sins.
- He set before us a perfect example to follow. I Peter. 2:21, 22.

Conclusion

- What are three best verses you could use to support your understanding of the Sinlessness of Christ?
- Let us thank God that Jesus came without original sin and went back to heaven sinless. He lived a life of absolute moral purity and perfection.
- How does the fact of Jesus being sinless affect you today?

For Further Discussion (If time)

- Name five witnesses to Christ's sinlessness and their brief testimony.
- Is Jesus the only perfect Being that was ever tempted? Who else?
- What are three outcomes of Christ being sinless?
- Would you define sinlessness as "Complete conformity to the Will of God"?

The Deity of Jesus Christ

Introduction

As humans we are incapable of fully understanding God. God is Holy and mankind is sinful. To bridge the gap between God and man God took the form of a man in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is "*the image of the invisible God*". Colossians 1:15, 19.

To be the complete expression of God, Christ had to be God. To be seen and understood by man he had to be human. Jesus has a dual nature- he is the God-man. In this study we look at what the Bible says about the Deity of Jesus Christ.

The Deity of Christ

Some speak of Jesus Christ as a great man. To some he was the founder of a new religion. Others consider him a prophet. But Jesus himself claimed that he was God. If this claim were not true, he could not be called even a good man, but would be an impostor and a liar.

The writer of Hebrews discusses Christ's deity in chapter 1. Read the chapter as background to questions 1-4.

1. How is Jesus' superiority to angels shown in:

Verses 4-5

Verse 6

Verse 13-14

2. Look again at Hebrews 1:8-12. Which verse brings out the truth that

Jesus is the Creator

Jesus is unchangeable

Jesus is eternal

Jesus is righteous

- a. What is one fact about Jesus mentioned in Hebrews 1:3 that enables him to reveal God?
(There is more than one fact given in this verse.)

- b. How does God address Jesus in Hebrews 1:8 and Hebrews 1:10?

- c. What did Jesus claim for himself? *John 10:28-30*

- d. While on earth, Jesus performed many miracles which clearly demonstrated his divine power. From the following verses in Matthew 8, list the ways Jesus showed supernatural power.

Verse 3

Verses 6, 13

Verses 16-17

Verses 23-27

- e. What did Jesus do in John 11:39-44 that revealed his unique power?

- f. After observing Jesus' life, power, and preaching, what did Peter conclude about him?
Matthew 16:13-16

Conclusion:

Review questions 1-8. Give several reasons why you believe Jesus Christ is God.

The Claims, Lifestyle and Teaching of Jesus

Introduction: If someone walked into the room tonight with a poached egg on his left ear and a chop stick up his nose and said, "This egg give me peace and joy and the chop stick helps me feel close to God... What would you think, say or do? Why?"

Tonight we are looking at someone who made equally extravagant statements! His own family came to remove him because they thought he had lost his mind (See Mark 3:21 & 6:2-6)

Introduction: Early Christian preaching in the New Testament (Acts) centred on the Person of Jesus Christ. The main emphasis was not so much on what Jesus taught, but on who He was. Because of who He was the early Christians saw value, meaning and relevance in what He did and said. In previous studies we have seen that Jesus was fully Divine, fully Human and totally Sinless. In this study we will look at what He believed about himself (ie Was he insane?) and see if his life supported his claims (ie Was he a liar?)

The Confidence and Claims of Jesus

1. What do you observe about how Jesus viewed himself in these verses?

John 5:16-18, 19-24

John 6:27-29

2. What claims does Jesus make about Himself in these passages?

John 10:30-33, 37-38

John 14:9-11

3. Look at the response of the Peter in Acts 10:25-26 when people tried to worship him and compare the response of Jesus to being worshipped at the beginning and the end of his public ministry in John 1:49-51 and John 20:28-29. What can we learn from these differing responses?

The Teaching and Lifestyle of Jesus

The enduring quality of Jesus' moral teaching supports His claims of being equal with God. So too, does the way He lived according to His own teaching.

4. How did those who heard Jesus teach respond to him?

Matthew 7:28-29

Mark 6:2

Luke 4:32

John 7:14-16, 31-32, 45-47

5. According to these witnesses how was the behaviour of Jesus consistent with His teaching?

John (John 1:14)

Peter (1 Peter 2:22)

Conclusion

Consider this famous quote and discuss why we can never consider Jesus to be “just a good moral teacher.”

“You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

C.S Lewis = World famous Oxford and Cambridge University Professor

Has there been a special truth about Jesus Christ in this study that has impressed you?

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

This study helps us understand what kind of person Jesus really was. Not only did He demonstrate what God is like but He also showed us what a perfect Human being was like. Often we take this for granted but it is an important study because growing as a Disciple of Jesus means becoming like Him in our own Character.

How do these verses describe the goal of the Christian life?

1 Peter 2:21 2 Corinthians 3:18 Romans 8:28 Colossians 1:28

The Christian life is not difficult to live. It is impossible! Unless the Spirit of Jesus Christ changes and strengthens us. Below are some passages to help us understand the Character of Jesus when he lived on earth approx 2000 years ago.

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Pure and Sinless**

Were the followers of Christ, those closest to Him and who knew him best convinced of Christ's sinlessness and perfection?

Acts 3:13-14 1 Peter 2:22 1 Peter 3:18 Hebrews 4:15

➤ **JESUS CHRIST loved God the Father**

How did Jesus demonstrate his Love for his Father?

John 14:31 John 6:38 John 17:4 and 19:30.

➤ **JESUS CHRIST loved people**

What kinds of people did Jesus show his love to?

Mark 10:13-16 Luke 19:10, 41-42 Romans 5:8 Ephesians 5:25
John 10:16 John 3:16 John 13:1, 34-35 John 15:13

What do these "Lost" stories tell us about the Saviour's heart?

Luke 15:4 Luke 15:8-10 Luke 15:11-24-31

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was a Servant**

How did Jesus display the qualities of a good servant?

Mark 10:45 John 13:12-15 Philippians 2:7 Matthew 20:28

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Truthful**

Why is Jesus' truthfulness so important to us?

John 3:3 John 5:19, 24 John 8:51 John 14:6 1 Peter 2:22

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Self Controlled(Disciplined)**

Where do you see his self discipline here?

Matthew 4:1-4 Matthew 27: 14, Matthew 26:67 Luke 22:4 1 Peter 2:23 Philippians 2:8

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Patient**

In what circumstances did Jesus display patience?

Mark4:13 Mark 10:35-40 Luke 22:32-34 John 2:4

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Joyful**

Joy is not dependant upon circumstances. What brought Jesus Joy?

Luke 10:21

John 15:11

John 17:13

Hebrews 12:2

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Compassionate and Kind**

How does Jesus demonstrate compassion in these situations?

Matthew 9:36-38

John 19:26-27

Luke 5:13

John 11:35

Mark 6:3

John 6:5

John 9:1-38

Matthew 20:32-33

Mark 9:22-25

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Meek**

Meekness has been described as “Strength under control” Meekness shows itself in gentleness and tenderness toward others.

See Matthew 11:29. This is the only description Jesus personally gave of himself. What can we learn from what He said about himself? Reflect on the following:

- Who was speaking?
- To whom?
- To what end?
- How might those listening understand him?
- What impact does it have on your attitude to Jesus?

Explain your understanding of Matthew 12:20, 21 in the light of Christ’s Meekness.

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Humble**

Jesus was both meek and humble according to Matthew 11:29.

How do these passages describe his humility? What do they tell us about Him?

John 13:4, 5

Philippians 2:6-8

I Peter 2:23

Isaiah 53:7

Luke 15:1-2

➤ **JESUS CHRIST Forgave others**

Luke 23:34

Luke 17:4

➤ **JESUS CHRIST was Prayerful**

What can we learn about the prayer life of Jesus in the following?

Luke 6:12

Mark 1:35

Luke 22:39-45

John 6:15.

John 11:41, 42.

Luke 9:28

Luke 3:21

Matthew. 26:42

John 17:9, 20

What does Christ’s prayer life teach us about his dependence upon God the Father?

CONCLUSION

1. Summarise in a sentence or two what you have observed about Jesus from this study. Has your understanding of him changed? How?
2. How is Galatians 5:22-23 an encouragement to your own Character development?
3. As you review these character qualities of Jesus where would you most like Him (by His Spirit) to help you in your character development?

The Miracles of Jesus

Introduction: The New Testament does not encourage us to base our faith just on miraculous signs; however the miracles do add weight to the claims of Jesus about himself. Some people may be unconvinced that miracles can happen but that does not change the eyewitness reports of them being so in the Gospels. Jesus told his disciples to accept his Deity by what they had seen him do in John 14:9-11. The Gospels record Jesus performing 35-40 miracles of differing types. In this study we will be focussing on seven from John's Gospel.

- What is the purpose of a "sign" on a street corner?
- Why do you think Jesus' miracles were called "signs" in John's Gospel? What does John 20:30 tell us about their intended purpose?

John's Gospel records seven selected "signs." These are miracles Jesus performed before His death.

As you read each passage imagine you are present in the situation with Jesus. Share what you are thinking and any questions you might have. Discuss how you think the miracle points to who Jesus claimed to be?

- Turning water into wine (2:1-11)
- Healing the official's son (4:46-54)
- Healing an invalid at the pool (5:1-9)
- Feeding the five thousand (6:1-13) (Also in: Matthew 14:15-21, Mark 6:35-44, Luke 9:12-17)
- Walking on water (6:16-21) (Also in: Matthew 14: 24-33, Mark 6:47-52)
- Healing the blind man (9:1-7)

(Comment: Jesus used spit and dust to heal the blind guy. There is no clear definitive or theological reason.

Two suggestions make sense however: 1. It is documented in Roman literature that saliva was used as a cleansing/healing/curative agent for eyes at that time – much the same as mother's milk can be used for cleaning a babies eyes today. So Jesus was informing all those listening or watching that he was going to heal the man's eyes.

2. In Genesis God made humankind out of dust. This guy probably had no eyeballs (conjecture) as blind from birth. Jesus was using the same creative power and raw product(dust) to create seeing eyes as he had when he created Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:7)

- Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

- What response did these signs (or miracles) of Jesus produce in those who saw them?
 John 2:11 John: 3:2; 9:30-34 John 11:45-48
- What particular sign did Jesus promise to those who did not believe in him? Compare John 2:18-22 with Matthew 12:38-40.
- What can we learn from John 12:37 and Mark 8:11-13?

How has this study challenged or encouraged your faith in Jesus is? Has it raised further questions for you?

The Death of Jesus Christ

Introduction

The Cross of Christ is central to the Gospel. In this study we look at the facts, meaning and results of His death. An account of the death of Jesus is recorded in each of the four gospels.

Read the account of Christ’s trial and crucifixion in Luke 22 & 23

- Are there any words you don’t understand?
- Is there anything in the passage you don’t understand?

Split into pairs and take 5 minutes to tell one another (in your own words) what actually happened. Feel free to use your mother-tongue if from overseas.

(Be sure to include the last supper, betrayal, trials, crucifixion, death and burial.)

1. What evidences are given in the text that Jesus really died? Were the observers convinced of his death?
John 19:28-37
John 20:27
2. From the Bible account, what is the most convincing evidence to you that Jesus Christ died?

Christ and the Cross - *Jesus came into the world to die!*

3. What was the Mission of Jesus in regard to the Cross. Was it just a terrible and surprising accident?
Mark 8:31-33
Mark 9:30-32
Mark 10:32-34
Mark 10:45
 (Comment: The word “ransom” means the price paid for the release of slaves or prisoners of war. It is also the fine paid by someone who had inadvertently caused the death of another, a fine that averted the death penalty.)
4. What was Christ's attitude toward His death? Matthew 16:21 Mark 14:32-36 John 10:17
5. Explain what happened in the three hours of darkness? Mark 15:33-34
6. What is the significance of the curtain being ripped from top to bottom? Mark 15:37-39;
 The temple curtain was approximately 20 metres in height. Hebrews 10:19-22
7. How is it significant that Jesus refused to take drugs to cope with the pain of crucifixion? Mark 15:23
8. What would be the outcome if Jesus had come down from the cross? Mark 15:30 & 32
9. Explain what happened in the three hours of darkness? Mark 15:33-34, 37-39
10. What was the real pain of the cross? Matthew 27:45-46 2 Corinthians 5:21
11. According to 1 Peter 3:18 What was the purpose of Christ’s death?
12. Who initiated the Cross? Why is this important? 2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus did not die just an ordinary death: it was a sin-bearing death. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us." On the cross Jesus experienced a terrible sense of God-forsakenness as he took our sin upon himself.

13. What has been the out-come of Christ’s Death?
1 Timothy 4:10
Romans 5:8-9
1 Peter 1:18-19
1 Peter 2:24
2 Corinthians 5:21

What has impressed you through this study? Tell us about it.....

Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ

The Death of Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which a Christian has Salvation and a Relationship with God. Through this study we wish to deepen our understanding of Biblical thinking and the meaning of the Death of Jesus. There is quite a lot of Reading involved because explanations are necessary on this important subject.

Bible teaching about the Cross of Jesus Christ

1. **Who initiated the Cross?** Romans 5:8 2 Corinthians 5:21
Jesus did not die just an ordinary death: it was a sin-bearing death. On the cross Jesus experienced a terrible sense of God-forsakenness as he took our sin upon himself. What does this tell us about God?
2. **What did these prophecies written more than 600 years BC have to say about the Cross?**
Isaiah 53:8, Daniel 9:26 (Cut off" is a prophecy of death.) Zechariah 13:7
3. **What was God's Plan from before time existed?**
Isaiah 53:6 Isaiah 53:10 Acts 2:23 1 Peter 1:18-20 Revelation 13:8
4. **What was Christ's Attitude and Mission in regard to the Cross?**
Mark 8:31-33 Mark 9:30-32 Mark 10:32-34 Mark 10:45 Mark 14:32-36
(A "ransom" is the price paid for the release of slaves or prisoners of war. It is also the fine paid by someone who had inadvertently caused the death of another, a fine that averted the death penalty.)
5. **What is the significance for us that the death of Jesus Christ was voluntary?** John 10:18
6. **Why do you think Jesus Christ died?**
1 Peter 3:18 1 Peter 2:24 John 3:16 Romans 5:8

All the attributes of God were in harmony to make salvation possible. God's loving nature could not forgive sin until His legal nature was satisfied. At Calvary all the attributes of God found a perfect solution. The result is that Salvation is available to everyone who accepts Him as their substitute.

I Timothy 4:10

Bible Words that help us understand the meaning of the Cross.

- Atonement. Used 77 times in Old Testament and means a covering for sin. It is an Old Testament word that only occurs once in the New Testament. This Old English word means literally, "making at one." (Atonement comes from "at" and "one".) It points to the process of uniting those who are apart. Romans 5:11.
- Propitiation. The word *propitiation* carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. It involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and then being reconciled to them. There is no service, sacrifice, or gift that a person can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice. The only satisfaction, or propitiation, that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile people to Him had to be made by God. For this reason God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in a human body to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or "propitiation for the sins of the people"
Romans 3:24-25, 1 John 4:10, 1 John 2:2, Hebrews 2:17
- Substitution. This is the idea of one person taking the place of another. The innocent takes the Punishment for the guilty. John 10:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Jesus Christ died *in our place* when He was crucified on the cross. We deserved to be the ones placed on that cross to die because we are the ones who live sinful lives. But Christ took the punishment on Himself in our place—He substituted Himself for us and took what we rightly deserved.

- Redemption. There is a purchase price when a sinner in bondage is bought back by God. What does I Peter 1:18-19 tell us the purchase price was?
- Reconciliation. God and man were enemies but have now been made friends. Romans 5:10. Jesus was made sin for our reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:20
- Ransom. The price paid for the release of a prisoner (the one kidnapped by sin). Matthew 20:28, John 19:18.
- Justified. The word “justification” explains the significance of the Cross in legal terms. It answers the question of how a law-breaker can avoid the condemnation of God, the righteous Judge. The glorious truth is that through Christ’s death on the cross, the guilty person can be acquitted and declared righteous. This brings not only freedom from condemnation, but also a new right relationship with God. Acts 13:38-39

Additional questions and answers about the Substitutionary Death of Jesus Christ.

1. Can a person suffer for their own sins? **Yes**, but the full penalty is eternal death and eternity will not be long enough to pay the complete debt!
2. Can a person atone for their own sin? **No**. Eternal suffering is not enough. Hebrews 9:22 Only death can satisfy the demands of God and the soul never succeeds in dying in hell. (Someone has defined hell as dying forever and never being able to die.)
3. Did the teaching of the atonement take Jesus by surprise? **No**. He was well aware of it and spoke about it often to his disciples even though they could not understand it. Matthew 16:21, Mark 9:12, John 12:24 (Jesus was the corn about to die)
4. Could God forgive the sinner without the terrible death on Calvary? **No**. When Sin has been committed against God the law of God must be satisfied. Genesis 2:17 Ezekiel 18:4 Romans 6:23

Repentance does not remove the need for punishment for sin. Sin has been committed and sin must be dealt with according to God's own standards. The justice and honour of God must be upheld and the holiness of God demands the death penalty for sin.

5. Is it possible to transfer guilt from a guilty person to an innocent one? **Yes**. Human courts punish only the guilty one, but they could punish a substitute. If it were desired the substitute would voluntarily assume the guilt of the other. Isaiah 53:4, I Peter 2:24.
6. If each sin requires eternal death, how could Christ suffer innumerable deaths in the few short hours on the Cross of Calvary?
It was not the amount of suffering that counted but the Justice of God that had to be satisfied. It was the holy, sinless, “God-man” suffering that made the difference. I Timothy 2:5

CONCLUSION:

❖ **The death of Jesus Christ is sufficient for every sinner. He died for the sins of the whole world including us.**

❖ **What is your response to all this?**

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Introduction

The Cross of Christ is central to the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). In this study we look at the facts around his death and see what it meant for those present. The death of Jesus is recorded in each of the four gospels. We will focus on Matthew's account with reference to the other Gospels as necessary.

Read the account of Christ's betrayal, trial and crucifixion in Matthew 26:31-27:66

- Are there any words that you don't understand?
- Is there anything you don't understand in the passage?

1. What do the responses of people to the crucifixion tell us?

The soldiers	Matthew 27:27-31	Mark 15:24-25
Centurion	Luke 23:47	Matthew 27:54
The two Criminals	Luke 23:39-43	
Mary	Matthew 27:55,60	
Judas	Matthew 27:1-4	
The women	Mark 15:41	
Pilot	Matthew 27:21-24	John 19:8-16
The Mob	Matthew 27:20-22	
Mrs Pilot	Matthew 27:19	
The disciples	John 20:19-20	
The false witnesses	Matthew 26:59-62	
Peter	Matthew 26:33-35	Matthew 27:69-75
Joseph of Arimathea)		
Nicodemus)John 19:38-40	Matthew 27:57
The religious leaders	Matthew 27:39-43	

2. Because Jesus was sinless he could not be condemned for anything he had done wrong. So, how did he come to be condemned to be killed?

3. What was the real pain of the cross?

Matthew 27:45 2 Corinthians 5:21 1 Peter 3:18

4. What evidences are given that Jesus really did die?

John 19:28-37 John 20:27

5. Who do you think was responsible for the death of Jesus?

Matthew 16:21, Mark 15:24, Acts 2:23, Acts 3:14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 53:4-6,

6. What do these seven statements Jesus spoke from the cross before he died tell us about Jesus?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Luke 23:34: | Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. |
| 2. Luke 23:43: | Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. |
| 3. John 19:26-27: | Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother. |
| 4. Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34 | My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? |
| 5. John 19:28: | I thirst. |
| 6. John 19:30: | It is finished. |
| 7. Luke 23:46: | Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. |

7. What is the most convincing evidence to you that Jesus Christ died?

8. Spend some time as a group thanking Him for dying for you.

A Medical Description of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards then blindfolded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they each passed by; they spat on Him and struck Him in the face.

Condemned to Crucifixion: In the early morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, was taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia. It was there, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Bar-Abbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Flogging first: Preparations for the scourging are carried out. The prisoner is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached to the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back and legs.

At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into subcutaneous tissues, *producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.* The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows.

Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a sceptre. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns is pressed into His scalp.

Again there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas in the body). After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from his back. This had already become adherent to the colts of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, cause excruciating pain - almost as though He were again being whipped, and the wounds again begin to bleed.

The walk to crucifixion: The heavy beam of the cross is then tied across His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution detail, begins its slow journey. The weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

The nails of crucifixion: At Golgotha, the beam is placed on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam is then lifted in place at the top of the posts and the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The pain of crucifixion: The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each. As he pushes Himself upward to avoid the stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones through the feet.

Crucifixion - the medical effects: As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen.

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasps, "I thirst."

Crucifixion - the last gasp: He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. Immediately there came out blood and water. We, therefore, have rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that our Lord died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

- Condensed from "The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ" by C. Truman Davis, M.S. March, 1965

The Timing of Christ's Death, Burial and Resurrection: *The "Three days and three nights"*

In Matthew 12:38, some of the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign to prove He was the Messiah. But Jesus told them that the only sign He would give was that of the prophet Jonah: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). It is not possible to fit "three days and three nights" between a Friday-afternoon crucifixion and a Sunday-morning resurrection? We need to look closer.

Jonah 1:17, to which Christ referred, states specifically that "Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." Jesus would not have meant only two nights and one day, plus parts of two days. If Jesus were in the tomb only from late Friday afternoon to early Sunday morning, then the sign He gave that He was the prophesied Messiah was not fulfilled. Let's carefully examine the details from the Gospels. When we do, we uncover the real story of how Jesus' words were fulfilled precisely.

Two Sabbaths are mentioned: Notice the events outlined in Luke 23. Jesus' moment of death, as well as His hasty burial because of the oncoming Sabbath that began at sundown, is narrated in Luke 23:46-53. Luke 23:54 then states, "That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near."

Many have assumed that it is the weekly Sabbath mentioned here, and that Jesus was therefore crucified on a Friday. But John 19:31 shows that this approaching Sabbath "was a high day"—not the weekly Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) but the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is one of God's annual high, or Sabbath, days (Exodus 12:16-17; Leviticus 23:6-7). These annual Holy Days could—and usually did—fall on days of the week other than the regular weekly Sabbath day.

This high-day Sabbath was Wednesday night and Thursday, since Luke 23:56 shows that the women, after seeing Christ's body being laid in the tomb just before sunset, "returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils" for the final preparation of the body.

Such work would not have been done on a Sabbath day since it would have been considered a violation of the Sabbath. This is verified by Mark's account, which states, "Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices [which they would not have purchased on the high-day Sabbath], that they might come and anoint Him" (Mark 16:1).

The women had to wait until this annual "high day" Sabbath was over before they could buy and prepare the spices to be used for anointing Jesus' body. Then, after purchasing and preparing the spices and oils on Friday, "they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). This second Sabbath mentioned in the Gospel accounts is the regular weekly Sabbath, observed from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

By comparing details in both Gospels—where Mark tells us the women bought spices after the Sabbath and Luke relates that they prepared the spices before resting on the Sabbath—we can clearly see that two different Sabbaths are mentioned. The first, as John 19:31 tells us, was a "high day"—the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—which, in A.D. 31, fell on a Thursday. The second was the weekly seventh-day Sabbath.

After the women rested on the regular weekly Sabbath, they went to Jesus' tomb early on the first day of the week (Sunday), "while it was still dark" (John 20:1), and found that He had already been resurrected (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:2-6; Luke 24:1-3).

When we consider the details in all four Gospel accounts, the picture is clear. Jesus was crucified in the morning and entombed late on Wednesday afternoon, just before a Sabbath began at sunset. However, that was a high-day Sabbath, lasting from Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset that week, rather than the regular weekly Sabbath, lasting from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

He remained in the tomb from Wednesday at sunset until Saturday at sunset, when He rose from the dead. While no one witnessed His resurrection (which took place inside a sealed tomb), it had to have happened near sunset on Saturday, three days and three nights after His body was entombed. It could not have

happened on Sunday morning, because when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb that morning before sunrise, “while it was still dark,” she found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

We can be assured that the length of His entombment that Jesus gave as proof He was the Messiah was exactly as long as He foretold. **Jesus rose precisely three days and three nights after He was placed in the tomb. His Word can be trusted!**

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

- The resurrection is foundational teaching of the New Testament where it is mentioned 104 times.
- The early disciples when preaching focussed on Jesus and the Resurrection. Acts 4:33, Acts 5:30, Acts 17:18.
- Christianity is the only religion with a living founder.
Buddha is dead; Brahma (Hinduism) is dead; Mohammed (Islam) is dead; Marx (Communism) is dead.
- If the resurrection is true, then Jesus is indeed the Son of God. No-one else has ever done this! Romans 1:4
- This is the miracle upon which all other miracles of Jesus stand or fall. If this great miracle is true, then it is easy to believe all the rest.

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE AND EXPECTATION CONCERNING HIS RESURRECTION?

- Teaching to Disciples John 2:2; Matthew 17:22, 20:19, 26:32; Mark 8:31, 10:34, 14:28; Luke 18:33.
- Messianic Prophecies Psalm 16:10; Psalm 22:21-22; Isaiah 53:11; Daniel 7:13-14.
- His Expectation Matthew 16:21; Mark 14:28; 16:7. Jesus fully expected to be raised!
- Importance? At his birth and his life Jesus, came to die and he knew it! Matthew 1:21; Mark 10:45.
The cross was always in the back of his thinking.
John 12:24, 27; Luke 22:42; John 2:4; 7:8.

THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE: Read the account of the resurrection of Jesus in John 19:30-20:31

1. What impresses you from this account about the resurrection of Jesus?
2. What motivated John to write about the Resurrection like he did? John 20:31
3. Review the sequence of events and the responses of those mentioned.

Additional Information for later:

The following evidence supports Christ's Resurrection?

a genuine death	definite burial
a huge stone	Roman seal on stone
military guard in disarray	missing body
undisturbed grave-clothes	reported appearances of Jesus being alive
transformed disciples	unconvincing alternative explanations (See page 2)

The other three Gospels each present the resurrection from a different perspective. You can read them in:

Matthew 27:50-28:20,

Mark 15:37-16:8,

Luke 23:46-24:53.

WHAT OTHER EVIDENCE DO YOU SEE FOR THE RESURRECTION?

Matthew 28:4-6, Luke 24:5-7, 32, Acts 1:3

HOW WAS JESUS DIFFERENT AFTER THE RESURRECTION?

Luke 24:39, Romans 6:9, 1 Corinthians 15:44, 50, 53, John 20:19

How is this significant for us?

HOW WAS JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

Acts 2:23-24 cf Acts 3:15,

John 2:19 and John 10:18,

1 Peter 3:18

RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION.

Do you Agree? Disagree? Please Explain!

1. It proves the existence of God. If there is no God, how could Christ rise from the dead?
He rose because a living, omnipotent God resurrected Him!
2. It proves the Deity of Christ. Romans 1:4
3. Our salvation is an accomplished fact because of the Cross. The Resurrection of Christ confirms this because God was satisfied with the price Jesus had paid.
4. The resurrection guarantees that Christians shall rise too when Christ returns. 1 Corinthians 15:20-22
5. It means we can trust Christ's promise to come again for His people. John 14:1-4, Acts 1:11.
6. Jesus is alive now! Acts 1:3
7. There is a man in Heaven right now with scars on his hands and side who intercedes lovingly for us. Hebrews 4:14-16; Romans 8:31-39.

WITNESS to the RESURRECTED JESUS

Reference	Place	Witnesses Who Saw Jesus After His Death
John 21:14-17	Tomb	Mary of Magdala
Matthew 28:8-9	Leaving tomb	Women
Luke:24:36-43	Jerusalem	Eleven disciples
John 20:24-31	A house	Thomas
Matthew 28:16-17	Galilee (mountain)	Eleven disciples
Luke 24:13-35	Road to Emmaus	Cleopas and friend
John 21:13-35	Sea of Tiberias	Disciples
1 Corinthians 15:5	(around Jerusalem?)	Peter
1 Corinthians 15:6	(around Jerusalem?)	500 brethren
1 Corinthians 15:7	(around Jerusalem?)	James
1 Corinthians 15:8	On the road to Damascus	Saul (renamed Paul)

(Time permitting) look at each Reference in the chart and observe what happened when these people met the risen Jesus.

What observation could you make about the following:

- The Variety of People
- The Variety of Places
- The Variety of Times
- The Variety of Situations

CONCLUSION

- The resurrection is the basis upon which Christianity stands or falls. Do you agree? Please explain.
- The Resurrection demonstrates Christ's victory and power over sin, death and the grave.
1 Corinthians 15:57
- We serve a risen Saviour. He is in the world today and lives by his Spirit in our bodies empowering us to live for him. Romans 8:9-11
- What difference has the Resurrection of Jesus had on me personally?

For Further Reading: Some unlikely explanations that have been put forward for the Resurrection of Jesus

- **The fraud theory-** that the whole story is a hoax. History and the Bible accounts deny such a ridiculous theory.
- **The swoon theory-** that Jesus only fainted and the soldiers did not kill Him. The cool tomb and spices caused Him to revive and come back to life. On the contrary, the spices were poisonous and would have killed Him instead.
- **The hallucination theory-**The disciples wanted to see Jesus and thought that He would rise so in their imaginations they saw Him. The Scriptures tell us that the disciples were steeped in unbelief and would scarcely believe after seeing Him. Thomas wouldn't believe without touching Him. The disciples were incredulously unbelieving, for which Jesus rebuked them. Luke 24:25
- **The ghost theory-**They only saw His ghost and thought that it was Jesus. A ghost does not have flesh and bones or eat and drink. Luke 24:39 - 43
- **The myth theory-** It was a wild story handed down the years without truth. The whole of the Bible shows this theory to be a lie.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

What do you understand by the Ascension of Jesus Christ? In this study we will look at some New Testament passages that give us an understanding of what happened and why it is so significant.

The purpose of the study is to allow the realities of Christ's Ascension as recorded by those who saw it to impact our thinking and lives. Take time to reflect over the passages.

Definition: The "Ascension of Jesus Christ" is the event in which Jesus Christ visibly and bodily returned to God his Father in Heaven.

1. THE FACTS OF THE ASCENSION

- Read these passages and list some significant facts about Christ's ascension?

Luke 24:50-51
Acts 1:9-11

What happened? Where? Who was present? How did it happen? What is its importance?
- What do other passages tell us about this historical event we call the Ascension?

Luke 9:51
John 6:62
John 14:28
John 20:17

(It is likely the disciples didn't understand any more about the Ascension than they had understood the truths of His death, burial and resurrection until after the event had taken place!)
- From Acts 1:3 and other passages why do you think Jesus delayed going back to His Father and remained on earth? Consider the following possibilities as a start:
 - ❖ During the 40 days he confirmed his resurrection by appearing to different followers at different times and different places.
 Matthew 28:9-10, Mark 16:9-14, Luke 24:35-43, John 20:11-29, 1 Corinthians 15:6.
 - ❖ Jesus wanted the Disciples to not only know he had risen from the dead but that He was also alive and present with them and would be in the future. Acts 1:1-3
 - ❖ He waited in order to give the disciples more instructions concerning the Christian faith. In the post-resurrection period Jesus was able to explain much of His past teaching in the light of what had happened - his death, burial and resurrection. Luke 24:44-47, Acts 1:3
 How do you think this would have strengthened the faith of his followers? John 14:29
 - ❖ It was during this time he commissioned his Disciples to be his witnesses and spread the Good News about Him to the World.
 Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, John 20:21, Acts 1:8.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASCENSION

- What do these passages actually tell us about where and how he ascended?
 Luke 24:50-51 Acts 1:9-11.
- Did Jesus ascend from the Mount of Olives or from Bethany? Luke 24:50, Acts 1:12
 (A map of the Jerusalem area shows that Bethany is situated on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Jesus apparently led the disciples over the summit and onto the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Interestingly, the journey was what is defined as a Sabbath's journey; or a little more than 1/2 mile.)
- Imagine you were thereWhat would you think and feel as you saw Jesus defy gravity and go up visibly and bodily into the sky?
- Where is he now?

Matthew 26:64,
Acts 7:31,

Mark 16:19,
Ephesians 1:20,

Luke 22:69,
Philippians 2:9,

Acts 7:55-56,
Colossians 3:1

Comment 1: Some think the expression, "God's right hand," is figurative, meaning a place of "power and authority". In addition it is also a literal geographical location, for Stephen saw Christ there. Acts 7:56.

Comment 2: Jesus' physical body is alive somewhere at this very moment. Because He is God he is spiritually present everywhere (Matthew 28:20) but because he is a man he is physically present right now in heaven.

(1 Peter 3:22)

Comment 3: Notice how frequently and freely Jesus referred to his Ascension. He was fully aware and expecting it to happen. How is this significant?

- What confident expectation does the ascension give us today? Acts 1:11

3. SOME RESULTS OF THE ASCENSION

Examine and discuss the meaning of these statements and passages.

- The Ascended Jesus gave gifts to His people. Ephesians 4:8, 11.
- Because He ascended the Holy Spirit has descended and indwells every believer from Pentecost onwards. John 16:7, Acts 2:33, Romans 8:9
- Positionally we are seated with Him today in the heavenlies. Ephesians 2 :6
(*A place of total forgiveness, acceptance, privilege, intimacy, revelation and blessing.*)
- He ascended that He might fill all things in the Universe. Ephesians 4:10
(*He is supreme over all the powers both of Heaven and earth. cf Colossians 1:16*)
- Now that He has ascended, angels, authorities and powers are subject to Him 1 Peter 3:22
- Christ is supreme over everything, everywhere. 1 Corinthians 15:28
- In the future Christ will return bodily and visibly to the Mount of Olives for his followers. Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

4. WHAT JESUS IS DOING NOW?

Examine and Discuss the following comments and passages together. Afterwards summarise your thinking by answering the question... "What Jesus is doing for us now".

- It was God's plan that Jesus would return and then the Holy Spirit would come to indwell all believers after the ascension of Jesus Christ. John 16:7
(The Ascension preceded Pentecost by 10 days which happened 50 {*Pente=50*} days after the Resurrection. Acts 2:1 and Acts 1:1)
- Jesus ascended to complete the redemptive work that was required for Salvation.
John 20:16, 17 Hebrews 10:12
- Jesus' ascension meant His ministry would be worldwide, not just localized in Palestine as his three years of public ministry had been. Matthew 28:18. John 16:7
- The resurrection and ascension become a strong confirmation and hope for the believer that Jesus is going to return again soon to take them home with Him. John 14:1-4, Acts 1:11, John 16:16
The ascension was visible, not secret. It was seen and witnessed by the apostles. Jesus Christ left personally, visibly and bodily and in a similar way he will return in His Second coming to this earth.
- Jesus ascended to prepare our future heavenly home so we might be with him. John 14:2
- Jesus is our Great High Priest and with understanding can represent us to God. Hebrews 5:15, 9:24

5. HOW THE ASCENSION OF JESUS AFFECTS US TODAY?

(Thoughts taken from "Union with Christ" by Wilbourne)

Heaven was His home and it was logical that when His work on earth was complete Jesus would return home to be with His Father in Heaven. John 14:28, John 16:5.

Heaven is where God is. It is the place where God's will is always done. Matthew 6:10. It is the place where Jesus is seated at this moment at God's right hand.

- **Jesus is seated at God's right hand.** Acts 7:56
His work is finished: Colossians 3:1-3
It is a visual picture of his statement on the cross. John 19:30
The work of atoning for our sin is complete, once for all. Hebrews 10:10, Hebrews 9:26
The record of our debt has been cancelled. Colossians 2:14
We no longer need to fear the future as nothing can separate us from God's love. Romans 8:38-39
We need not fear anything as our life is safely hidden in Christ with God. Colossians 3:3
- **Jesus is enthroned as our King** – He gives peace because he is in control.
By his ascension Jesus is exalted and enthroned at God's right hand. Acts 7:56
God raised Jesus up and exalted him. He made Him both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:33,36
He is enthroned as the ruler of kings on earth. Revelation 1:5
He is worthy of our worship and surrendered lives.
- **Jesus is our High Priest forever** – and gives us security. **Hebrews 6:20**
In the Old Testament the High Priest represented the People before God. Leviticus 16, Exodus 28:29
After ritual cleansing and dressing he would take the blood of a sacrificial animal and enter the most holy place behind the veil, representing the presence of God on earth and there intercede for the people to receive God's mercy and forgiveness.
Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb of God. John 1:29
Jesus sacrificed himself once for all time. Hebrews 9:26
- **Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest** – bringing us comfort.
He understands us Hebrews 2:17, 4:15, 5:8
Jesus is the only man who never yielded to temptation so is the only person to know the full extent of temptation. Hebrews 4:15.
Christ overcame temptation as a man through the Spirit (Matthew 3:16) and the Word (Matthew 4:4,7,10) and not because of his Divine nature. This is a model for us to follow.
- **Jesus is making Intercession for us** - giving us boldness to approach God. Romans 8:34
Jesus lives to intercede for us Hebrews 7:25
Christ intercedes for us. Romans 8:26
We can draw near to God with confidence. Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 10:22, John 16:23-24
- **Jesus is with us and for us along the way – giving us boldness before God.**
Philippians 1:6 Matthew 28:20 Colossians 1:29
Hebrews 12:12 2 Corinthians 13:5
Jesus is physically present in Heaven and spiritually present in all who are "in Him". 1 John 5:20

SUMMARY-CONCLUSION

- The Ascension gives us hope and sets the pattern for Christ's return. When Jesus comes to set up the Kingdom, He will return just as He left: literally, bodily, and visibly in the clouds.
Acts 1:11 Daniel 7:13-14 Matthew 24:30 Revelation 1:7
- Because of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, every knee shall one day bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11
- Let's worship and serve this Christ who defied the laws of gravity and ascended bodily and visibly. Let's be ready to welcome Him when He returns for us.
- Jesus understands and hears our prayer. He speaks to God on our behalf.

THINK ABOUT THIS: Jesus is alive at this moment! He is approachable in Heaven. His Spirit indwells you bodily. How should this encourage us today?

Jesus the Messiah

Introduction to the “Messiah”

A central theme of the Old Testament is the coming of the promised Messiah. It revolves around Him. This study seeks to introduce us to who He is and what He was about.

Meaning: The term "messiah" is the translation of the Hebrew term masiah [jyiv'm], which is derived from the verb masah, meaning to smear or anoint. The word “Messiah” in Hebrew therefore means "Anointed One." It was the name given to the one anointed by God to deliver His people and establish His kingdom. He would come to the people of Israel as their great Saviour and Redeemer, “anointed” as Prophet, Priest, and King by God Himself. The word “Christ” in Greek is the same as “Messiah” in Hebrew.

Background: The prophets expected a future Messiah to usher in God’s Kingdom. (Daniel 9:25-26, Zechariah 9:9-10). All through the Old Testament there are references to the One who would come to deliver and save Israel. Details of his Purpose, name, birth, heritage, betrayal, suffering, death and other aspects were written about Him. (Genesis 3:15, Genesis 12:3, Genesis 17:6, Genesis 49:10, Psalm 22:1-18, Psalm 41:9, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Micah 5:2)

Disciples: In Jesus time the dominant expectation among the Jewish people (including Jesus’ followers) was for a political warrior who would lead Israel to victory over its oppressors and re-establish Israel as a separate kingdom (Acts 1:6). Jesus will come in the future to do this but in New Testament times he came not as a Liberating King but as a Suffering Servant. It is now that we see him as an exalted Saviour. (Luke 2:25-32, Philipians 2:9-11)

The Jews: The Jewish people of Jesus’ day had difficulty accepting his lowly servanthood. (Mark 10:45, John 1:11-12, John 12:37.) Jesus spent considerable time correcting the mistaken expectation that his disciples had about him as the Messiah. (Matthew 16:21-24, Mark 8:31-34.) They had the right terminology but the wrong understanding of what the Mission of the Messiah was.

After the Resurrection: The first founders of Christianity were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was their promised Messiah. The name “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of “Messiah,” so that the name Jesus Christ really means "Jesus the Messiah," or "Jesus the Anointed." After they had experienced the death and resurrection of their Messiah they preached about him with such conviction and power that not only many Jews but later many Gentiles believed on Jesus, both as the Christ and also as the Lord and Saviour of all people. (Acts 2:29-37) The Apostles recognized that what happened to their Messiah had been predetermined by God’s design and foretold by the prophecies of the Old Testament Prophets. (Acts 3:18; 4:28.)

Prophecies concerning Christ’s origin

Examine each of the following references and discuss/consider how the fulfilment and prophecy are connected even though hundreds of years apart.

1. Christ would come out of Israel. Numbers 24:17-19 (approx 1450 BC)
Christ was born a Jew, a descendant of Abraham V1, Isaac, Jacob V2 and David V6. Matthew 1:1; 2:1-6.
2. Christ would be born of David’s family and of the tribe of Judah. Genesis 49:10, 2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 11:1. (700BC) These prophecies were fulfilled by our Saviour Jesus Christ. Luke 1:31-33.

3. Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 (approx 700BC)
Christ was born in Bethlehem. Matthew 2:6; Luke 2:4-7.
4. Christ would be born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14 (approx 700BC)
Christ was born of a virgin. Matthew 1:18, 22, 23.
5. The time of Christ's coming was specified. Daniel 9:24-26 (approx 600BC)
Bible Experts have determined that Messiah would appear as King (riding on a colt) 490 years after the commencement of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. See Missler's "Learn the Bible in 24 hours" P108-112 for a detailed explanation as to the exact timing of Christ appearing as the Messiah.
6. Christ's coming was announced by a forerunner. Isaiah 40:3 (approx 700 BC)
This prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist. Matthew. 3:3.
7. The Messiah would be God. Isaiah 9:6 (approx 700BC)
Jesus was God in human form. John 1:1, 14 & 18

Prophecies concerning Christ's Life

1. He would spend part of His childhood in Egypt. Hosea 11:1 (approx 687BC). Fulfilled in Matthew 2:13-15.
2. He would suffer and make atonement for sin. Isaiah 53:4-6 (approx 700 BC)
The fulfilment is summarised in II Corinthians 5:21
3. He would ride into Jerusalem on a colt. Zechariah 9:9 (approx 520 BC)
The fulfilment of this on Palm Sunday is told in detail in Matthew 21:2-5.
4. He would be given gall and vinegar in His agony on the cross. Psalm 69:21 (Approx 1000 BC)
This was fulfilled at the cross in Matthew 27:34 by the Roman soldiers.
5. Not a bone would be broken, contrary to Roman crucifixion practices. Psalm 34:20 (Approx 1000 BC)
Not a bone was broken of the Passover lamb, either. Exodus 12:46
Ordinarily the legs of the crucified prisoners were broken to speed up death through asphyxia and prevent them from escaping but they broke custom and didn't break Jesus' legs or bones.
John 19:33-36.
6. Men would cast lots for His garments. Psalm 22: (Approx 1000 BC)
This prophecy was fulfilled precisely as spoken by the soldiers in Matthew 27:35.
7. Christ would utter certain words in His dying agony. Psalm 22:1 (Approx 1000 BC)
This prophecy was fulfilled as the fourth saying from the cross Mark 15:34.
8. He would rise again from the dead. Psalm 16:10 (Approx 1000 BC)
Peter affirms that this was literally and actually fulfilled in Acts 2:32-33.
See also Matthew 28:5-6, Mark 16:5-6, Luke 24:6, John 20:14-18, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

Jesus teaching about the Messiah's Suffering, Death and Resurrection.

1. Jesus Christ, the Messiah lived under the authority and statements of the OT writings. The official Greek translation of these was in place in the Septuagint by 2-3 BC. He knew his life was to fulfil what had been written of him 100's of years previously. (The Bible had to have a supernatural origin for this to take place.)
See Matthew 2:23; 26:54 & 56; Luke 18:31; 22:37; John 2:4; John 19:28; 19:36.
2. Jesus believed and taught that he was the Messiah who would suffer, die and be resurrected on the 3rd day.
Matthew 12:40; Luke 24:44, cf 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.
3. Consider the following: Hosea 6:1-3a; Isaiah 53:3-5; Psalm 16:8 & 10; 30:3 as support for Luke 24:44.

Fifty Selected Old Testament Prophecies about Christ

Consider the prophecies in the chart below. Read the Old and New Testament passages and observe how they have been fulfilled so accurately.

	THE LIFE OF CHRIST	OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY	NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT
1	He was born of a human mother	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4; Matthew 1:20f
2	He was born from a virgin woman	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18f; Luke.1:26f
3	He is the Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:17, etc.
4	He is descended from Abraham	Genesis 22:18	Matthew 1:1
5	He is descended from Isaac	Genesis 21:12	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:23
6	He is descended from Jacob	Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:23-34
7	He is descended from Judah	Genesis 49:10; Micah 5:2	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:23-33
8	He is descended from Jesse	Isaiah 11:1,10	Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:23-32
9	He is descended from David	Jeremiah 23:5	Luke 3:23-31, etc.
10	He was born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:5-6; Luke 2:4-7; John 7:42
11	Wise Men give gifts	Psalms 72:10; Isaiah 60:6	Matthew 2:1-11
12	Herod killed children	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16
13	Preceded by a Messenger (John)	Isaiah 40:3; Malachi3:1	Matthew 3:1-3; 11:10f
14	Anointed with the Holy Spirit	Isaiah 11:2; 61:1	Matthew3:16f; Luke 4:16ff
15	Ministry begins in Galilee	Isaiah 9:1	Matthew 4:12-17
16	Ministry of Miracles	Isaiah 35:5-6; 32:3-4	Matthew 4:24; 9:35; John 11:47; Luke 7:21
17	Palm Sunday, rides donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-11
18	He entered Temple	Malachi 3:1	Matthew 21:12
19	He was betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9; 55:12-14	Matthew 26; John 13
20	He was sold for 30 silver coins	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
21	Money thrown into God's House	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:5
22	Price for potter's field	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:7
23	He was forsaken by His disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31,56
24	Accused by false witnesses	Psalms 35:11	Matthew 26:59-60

25	He was silent before accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12
26	He was wounded and bruised	Isaiah 53:5	Matthew 27:26
27	People hit and spit on Him	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
28	He was mocked	Psalms 22:7-8	Matthew 27:31,43
29	His hands and feet were pierced	Psalms 22:16	Luke 24:39f; John 20:25
30	He was crucified with thieves	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:33
31	He prayed for His persecutors	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:34
32	Rejected by His own people	Isaiah 53:3; Psalm 118:22-23	Matthew 21:42-43; John 1:11; 7:5,48
33	People hated Him for no reason	Psalms 69:4	John 15:25, Mark 15:10
34	Friends stood far away	Psalms 38:11	Luke 23:49; Matthew 27:55
35	People shook their heads at Him	Psalms 22:7; 109:25	Matthew 27:39
36	People stared at Him	Psalms 22:17	Luke 23:35
37	Soldiers gamble for His clothes	Psalms 22:18	Matthew 27:35; John 19:23f
38	He suffered thirst	Psalms 22:15; 69:21	John 19:28
39	He was offered vinegar & gall	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34; John 19:28f, Mark 15:36
40	He cried out, forsaken by God	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46
41	He trusted God with His life	Psalms 31:5	Luke 23:46
42	Darkness over the land	Amos 8:9	Matthew 27:45
43	His bones were not broken	Psalms 34:20	John 19:31-36
44	His side was pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34,37
45	Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
46	He rose to life again on third day	Psalms 16:10; 30:3; Jonah 1:17	Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24
47	He ascended to heaven	Psalms 68:18	Acts 1:9
48	Seated at Father's right hand	Psalms 110:1	Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3
49	He sends the Holy Spirit	Joel 2:28	Acts 2:1-4
50	Christ will come again	Daniel 7:13-14	Soon! 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

The Significance of the Messiah for us today

1. Our Faith in Jesus Christ is based on historic and actual events. It is not a legend or made up story because the prophecies concerning the Messiah can be accurately traced by scholars back to their original writers and dates.
2. The Old Testament Messianic prophecies were found to be uniquely fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are more than 300 hundred prophecies about the Messiah in the Bible. The possibility of them all being accidentally fulfilled by one ordinary man is completely ruled out by the laws of probability. No rational conclusion seems possible except that Jesus is all He claims - Messiah, Saviour, Lord and God.
3. When we see that these Messianic prophecy details are fulfilled exactly as prophesied, our faith is strengthened in the inspiration of the Scriptures. They show that the Bible is not an assortment of books by various authors but one Book with one author – God Himself. The Bible has to be of supernatural origin for all of these prophecies to have been made and later fulfilled.
4. When we see how the life of Christ fulfilled the specific details about what had been previously written it encourages our faith in the trustworthiness, faithfulness and Sovereignty of God who had a plan from Eternity past to Eternity future that included us!
5. The fulfilment of these prophecies demonstrate that the Life of Jesus was lived in total obedience and surrender to the Father and His Word.
6. The promise by Christ to return for us can be expected to take place just as He promised. He can be trusted to keep his word!

“For every prophecy of Jesus’ first coming there are eight for His second coming.” (Missler)

Conclusion

- How has this study changed your view of Jesus the Messiah? Why is it important to you?
- How do the numbers of messianic prophecies impress you?
- Has your understanding of the supernatural origin of the Bible been strengthened seeing all these prophecies so accurately fulfilled?
- What has encouraged you from this study?

For an animated overview of the Bible story of the Messiah see:
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-messiah/>

The Return of Jesus Christ

An Introductory Caution

Eschatology is a theological term for the study of “last things”. It is what this study is about. There are differing interpretations and understandings of the events surrounding the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Often these are dependant upon how literally people understand and interpret parts of the Bible. (See Note 1) Additionally where there are alternative views held one is advised to not be dogmatic.

This study is a little more involved and lengthy but as you proceed keep an open mind and maintain the attitude of the Bereans recorded in Acts 17:11. As you begin ask the Lord Jesus of whom it speaks to show you what He wants you know and do from what you learn. Consider the passages given and the statements made and carefully come to your own conclusions.

Suggested Key Passages to read as a background for this study.

1 Corinthians 15:12-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; John 14:1-6.

Explaining Terminology

The “rapture” and the “second coming” of Christ can be confused. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a Bible verse is referring to the rapture or the second coming. It is helpful to differentiate between the two.

Rapture: The Bible indicates that the second coming of Jesus Christ will be in two phases. First, He will come to the sky for believers, both living and dead, in what is known as the “rapture”. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)

Second Coming: The second coming occurs after the rapture when believers will return with the Lord to the earth (Revelation 19:14). The second coming of Christ will occur after certain other end-times events have taken place (Matthew 24:4-30, 40). It will occur after the great and terrible tribulation (Revelation chapters 6–19) and can be seen by the whole world. (1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 1:7)

The Rapture

The word “rapture” is not in the English translation of the Bible. It comes from the Latin Vulgate translation where the Greek word “harpazo” is used. It means to be “caught up” as used in: 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Revelation 12:5, 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. We believe the rapture occurs when Jesus returns into the air to take all Christian believers dead or living at that time from the earth.

List some characteristics about the rapture that you observe in the following passages?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:3,9; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

Check these statements against the passages given:

- The rapture will see the transformation (1 Corinthians 15:52-53) and catching up of all Christians, dead or alive, to meet Christ in the air. At the rapture Jesus does not come to the earth instead believers dead and alive are caught up to meet Him in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)
- The rapture occurs when Jesus Christ returns to remove the church (all believers in Christ) from the earth. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-54)

- We understand the rapture occurs before the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10). The timing of it will be secret and is known only to God the Father. It is logical to think that this removal of multitudes of people will be noticed on earth.
- At the Rapture Jesus will come unexpectedly “like a thief in the night”. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9)
- Life on earth will continue as normal prior to the return of Jesus. (Matthew 25:37-39)
- Believers who have died will be resurrected first and then those who are still living will meet the Lord in the air. This will all occur in nano seconds ie in a twinkling of an eye. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)
- Every believer dead or living will hear the unmistakable commanding shout of Christ, the archangels command and the trumpet of God. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
- Christians will be transformed and given new immortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:53-54)
- Christians will forever be with the Lord after the rapture. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

The Second Coming

After the rapture and removal of all believers (The Church) in whom the Holy Spirit dwells there will be an increase in evil activity on the earth. Matthew 24:12. After a period of seven years of tribulation on earth, Christ will return to the earth with His church, the saints who were raptured.

- List some characteristics and prerequisites for the Second Coming of Christ to happen:
Matthew 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5; 1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 1:7.
- Take some time and record/list what these passages tell about Christ’s Second coming?
Daniel 7:13; Matthew 16:27, 24:15-30, 29-30, 40-41; 25:31; 1 Thessalonians 3:13;
2 Thessalonians 2:41; 1 Timothy 6:14; Revelation 1:7, 19:11-16.
- What are some of the signs that will be present in the world preceding Christ’s Second Coming?
2 Timothy 3:1-7; Matthew 24:5-7, 12-38; Luke 21:20, 24; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:3-4.

Check these statements against the passages given:

- The second coming will be a return of Jesus with his Church and will be seen by all on earth. (Matthew 24:30, 2 Peter 3:10)
- The second coming of Jesus will be unexpected by the people living at that time. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, 2 Peter 3:10)
- The second coming of Christ to earth will occur after certain end-time circumstances take place:
 - The Rapture and removal of the restraining influence of Holy Spirit. (2 Thessalonians 2:7)
 - Wide spread apostasy and deception of those left living. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
 - The Jewish Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem. (Matthew 24:15 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:1)
 - The Good News of the Kingdom will be preached and heard by all nations. (Matthew 24:14)
 - A One-world religious leader emerges and exalts himself over all other religions. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5)
 - This “antichrist” will be raised up and place an idol in the rebuilt temple. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5, Matthew 24:15)
 - There is rampant evil and rebellion against God on earth. (Matthew 24:12)
 - There will be never before seen Persecution and anguish of Believing Jews. (Matthew 24:9-12,21)
 - War, famine and earthquakes will increase in number and intensity. (Matthew 24:8,33)
 - There will be significant cosmic changes with the sun, moon and stars. (Matthew 24:29-30; Luke 21:26-28)

- Christ will be victorious over His enemies and will reign on the earth for 1,000 years (the millennium) with His saints, the church.
- At the second coming, believers return with the Lord to the earth (Revelation 19:14).
- The second coming occurs after the great and terrible tribulation (Revelation chapters 6–19), Matthew 24:4-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 1:7)
- The second coming is when Jesus returns to defeat the Antichrist, destroy evil, and establish His millennial kingdom. It is described in Revelation 19:11-16.
- The second coming is when Christ returns to the earth to bring the Tribulation to an end and to defeat the Antichrist and his evil world empire. King Jesus will land at the Mount of Olives. (Zechariah 14:4). He will rule for a 1000 years from the rebuilt temple in the old City of David. (Revelation 19:11-20:6)

A Comment: While some may differ, it is suggest that in describing the tribulation period, Revelation chapters 4–19 do not mention the church because it has been raptured and is with Christ in Heaven after chapter 4. During the tribulation—also called “the time of trouble for Jacob” (Jeremiah 30:7)—God will again turn His primary attention to Israel. (Romans 11:17-31) See Note 1

Promises concerning Christ’s return

Christ’s first coming to earth as the Messiah was prophesied and those prophecies happened precisely and literally. This gives us great confidence that the promises of his next return will also happen as he promised.

- What promises has Jesus given to his followers? (John 14:1-4; Acts 1:10-11; Revelation 22:20)

The Timing of His Return

- What did Jesus have to say about the timing and the date of His return?
Matthew 24:36, 42, 44: 25:13; Mark 13:32; Luke 12:40
- What did Jesus tell his disciples about becoming preoccupied with the timing of His return?
Acts 1:6-7

A Comment: Jesus instructs us not to be preoccupied with the dates and times of his return. He did want us to be informed of what he taught and be aware and ready for when He returns. It is useful to be informed of world events so we can see prophecy unfolding in our day, especially around the nation of Israel. Be ready to meet Him and share with others who do not know Him yet.

Some Outcomes following Christ’s Return

1. Our Salvation will be complete as He delivers us from the very presence of sin. (Hebrews 9:28)
2. He will be glorified in His saints. (II Thessalonians 1:10)
3. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness. (I Corinthians 4:5)
4. Christ will be Judge of all. (II Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11)
5. Christ will reign forever (Revelation 11:15) and fulfil God’s promise to King David. (2 Samuel 7:16)
6. He will receive His followers to be with Himself. (John 14:13)
7. Death and the devil will finally be conquered and destroyed. (I Corinthians 15:25-26, Revelation 20:10)

8. Christians will be with God forever. (John 14:3; Revelation 21:3)
9. Heaven is a place of wonder, beauty and perfection. (Revelation 21)
10. There will be no sadness, sickness, tears, disappointment and sorrow in heaven. (Revelation 21:3-4)
11. Christians will be transformed to be like Christ and have perfect imperishable bodies.

(1Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 John 3:2-3)

Summary Conclusion

The “Premillennial” view of the rapture and second coming (as discussed in this study) are similar but separate events. Both involve Jesus Christ returning. Both are end-times events. It is important to recognize they are different. The **rapture** is the return of Christ in the clouds to remove (“snatch away”) all believers from the earth before the time of God’s wrath. The **second coming** of Christ will not occur until other end-times events have taken place. It occurs after the rapture and at that time believers will return with the Lord to the earth.

Application

When the New Testament speaks of the imminent return of Jesus Christ’s return it is usually with one of three encouragements: **Hope** - Jesus is soon to return, **Holiness** - Live a righteous life, **Haste** – Get the message out!.

- List some guidelines for how Christ’s followers should live in light of His imminent return? (Matthew 24:44; Mark 13:32-33; Luke 21:34-36; Acts 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:10; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:3-4; 1 John 2:28, 3:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 5:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; Titus 2:13)
- Can you think of anything that must take place before Christ might come to “snatch” you away?
- What is your response to this imminent reality of the Rapture and Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

Notes

“Learn the Bible in 24 Hours” Chapter 21 “Eschatology” gives an overview of the events leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This is also available on line at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgv9-TN9F38> It explains the differing positions and terminology taken regarding the events of this study.

For insight regarding the church being in Heaven after Revelation chapter 4, see p288, “The Consummation of all things” in “Learn the Bible in 24 hours”. Such thinking implies that Church Believers will not go through the great Tribulation.

Sadly, the author of “Learn the Bible in 24 Hours”, Dr Chuck Missler died aged 83 on 1 May 2018 while this Bible Study was being prepared and revised.

A Final Thought

If God has equipped humankind with creative gifts and talents that can produce wonderful art, architecture and creativity. Imagine how beautiful heaven will be when he has created it by himself for us!

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT.

Bibliography

The author takes responsibility for these studies. The material presented is firmly based upon the Bible. A little help came through reference to several authors:

How we got our Bible	Dr C Missler
Learn the Bible in 24 Hours	Dr C Missler
Design for Discipleship	The Navigators
One Hundred Bible Lessons	Alban Douglas
