

Christian Study

Lesson 226

Be Light

Focusing on Church beyond Sunday

How Can I Know and Understand What the Bible Means?

Understanding the Basic Gospel

In our last lesson we saw that the entire Bible is inspired by God Himself and that it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and give instructions for right living. We also found out that the foundation of the Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God to His beloved people and that all others before Him were shadows of the real thing (Jesus Christ) Also any one after Him will be false.

Today, we are going to start looking into "The case for Jesus Christ" and we are going to start from the beginning. God created Adam and Eve and said to them, **Genesis 1:16** "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die. God gave Adam the choice to either remain dependant on Him for life or to become independent from Him which is spiritual death. Wanting to be like God, Adam eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that same day Adam died spiritually. Each of us is born into this world in the likeness of Adam. Sin and death has been passed on to every human being. Our spiritual death brought separation from God and because of that separation, it created a vacuum, an open space in all mankind that needs to be filled. As a result it leads us to ask these questions. "Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?"

Blaise Pascal a French philosopher who became a Christian in his later years had this to say about all humans, "There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man that cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the creator made known through Jesus Christ"

From God's vantage point the problem of man is not just that he is a sinner in need of forgiveness, his greatest problem is that he is dead and in need of life. The apostle Paul writing to the believers in Ephesus in order to make sure they do not think they are self righteous had this to say: Ephesians 2:1-2 *And He has made you alive, who were once dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience;*

He has provided a solution to man's double trouble, (the sin issue and the life issue) through the resurrected life of Jesus Christ. Salvation is being saved from the wages of sin (death) by the gift of God (life) In John 10:10 Jesus said, "The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

There is no more important fact in the Christian experience than this profound truth that Christ lives in you. The good news of the Gospel is not just that Christ came to die for you, but that He came to give His life to you. Jesus Christ did not just come to get people out of hell and into Heaven. He came to get Himself out of Heaven and back into mankind. Misunderstanding this spiritual truth will enslave many Christian to the impossible task of trying to live the Christian life. Such attempts will bring us to the conclusion that Christianity does not work.

As mentioned earlier that Adam died spiritually, it was necessary for life to be put back into mankind in order that they might re-establish the relationship God intended when He created humans. The thief mentioned by Jesus is the devil who deceived man in the garden and has continued whispering lies in the ears of believers and non-believers. The life Jesus talks about here is spiritual and eternal, but for man to receive this eternal life in Jesus, the sin issue had to be taken care of once and for all. If that wasn't so, the life Christ talks about will not be eternal because any time we sin after that we will die. The wages of has always been, is and will always be death, so to receive the gift of God which is life Jesus had to take away the sins of the world once and for all. He did not cover sin, which was what the blood of goats and bulls did during the time of the Levite priesthood when animal sacrifices were made. **Hebrews 10:11-14** And indeed every priest stands daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down *on the right of God*, **13** from then on expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. **14** For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified

Ephesians 2:4-5 "But God's mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, **5**that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved."

Colossians 2:13 "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

John 20:31 "But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name.

However before life could be given, sins have to be forgiven (taken away). Only God can take away sins and if we recall in the book of John when John the Baptist said to his disciples to look at the one who takes away sin referring to Jesus. (John 1:29) This brings us to our first proof the Jesus is God. **Mark 2:7** "Who can forgive sin but God alone". If only God can forgive sin and Jesus did that for us, it is safe to say that He is God. The Pharisees knew this fact that is why they picked up stones to stone Him on two occasions.

God became a man

To become our Savior, Jesus Christ first identified Himself with us in our humanity, "being made in human likeness", (**Philippians 2:7**) Then at the cross, He totally identified Himself with us in our sin. "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us". (2 Corinthians 5:21) and even in our death, "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit My spirit.' When He had said this, He breathed His last" (**Luke 23:46**)

There was a double transaction through the cross, a total exchange. God took our sins and gave them to the sinless Christ, but that is not all. He then took his perfect righteousness and gave it to us who believe in His name. "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5 21) This is a statement you must understand for you to keep growing in the finished work of Jesus Christ. "You will never experience a changed life until you experience the exchanged life" Since Christ identified Himself with us in our humanity, our sin and death; we can be identified with Him in His death, righteousness and resurrected life.

Every Christian should be profoundly grateful for the fact that Jesus Christ has dealt with the sin issue, and for the mercy and grace of God that led Him to the cross. But do not leave Him there! Christianity does not center on a dead savior, but on a living Lord. Salvation is more than forgiveness of sins. Christ's work of reconciliation was not an end in itself; it was a means to an end---- the restoring of spiritual life to lost people. The whole gospel can be summed up in this statement: Jesus Christ laid down His life for you so that He could give His life to you, so that He can live His life through you.

God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. **Philippians 2:5-8** "For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, being in the form of God, thought *it* not robbery to be equal with God, **7** but made Himself of no reputation,

and took *upon Himself* the form of a servant, and was made in *the* likeness of men.
8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of the cross."

There are more than three hundred Old Testament prophecies made several hundreds of years before He was born and history confirms that even the smallest detail came about just as predicted. The prophet Isaiah wrote this in 700 B. C. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign, behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel", (which means GOD WITH US) The fulfillment of this prophesy is recorded 700 years later in Matthew 1:18-23 by the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem The historical event of God becoming a man can be easily understood by the following story.

A very devoted member of the Hindu religious body was confronted with the claims of Christ. To him, all life was sacred---a cow, a cobra an insect. Yet he could not mentally get hold of the Christian concept that God actually visited this planet in the person of Jesus Christ..

One day while walking through this field wrestling in his mind with this concept of God, he observed an ant hill that was in the path of a farmer plowing the field. Grippped with the same kind of concern that you and I would feel for hundreds of people trapped in a burning building, he wanted to warn the ants of the danger that is coming their way, but how? He could shout at them but they would not understand. He could write to them but they could not read. How then could he communicate with them? Then the realization came. Out of sheer love he wished that he could become an ant. If this could have been possible, he could have warned them before it was too late

Now at last, he understood the Christian concept. God called on us, but we wouldn't hear. He wrote to us, but we refused to read. Out of sheer love He became a man in order to clearly communicate His love forgiveness to us.

1Timothy3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among nations, believed on in *the* world, and received up into glory."

Heb 2:17,18 "For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.**18** Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

He died in our place

Romans 5:8 "But God has shown us how much he loves us---it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!"

1 Corinthians 15:3 I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once and for all, a good man on behalf of sinners, in order to lead you to God. He was put to death physically, but made alive spiritually,

1 John 2:2 "And Christ himself is the means by which our sins are forgiven, and not our sins only, but also the sins of everyone

Please visit these chapters on your own time and carefully read the whole chapters and pray the Holy Spirit teach you to understand the truth about what Christ did for us.

He is the final sacrifice for our sins

God who instructed the patriarchs and many prophets to make sacrifices at different times, on different occasions and for different reasons, sent His son Jesus Christ on earth as the final sacrifice for our sins. He told us that because of this final sacrifice, our sins and lawless acts He will remember no more and there will be no longer and more sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 10:17, 18 "and then He adds, "Their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more. 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins."

God's abundant and unconditional love was demonstrated as Jesus Christ did not wait for mankind to start acting right for Him to take it all away and nailed them to the cross. This act was not done because we did anything good. It was while we were still sinners, in the uncircumcision of our sinful heart He died for us. This is pure love and only God can do it. First John gives us a clear picture and understanding of this love. **1 John 4:10** "This is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His son as the one who could turn aside His wrath by taking away our sin" Some other passages in the Bible also shows this unconditional love. **John 3:16. ! John 3:16**

Note

Our mission is to help people find strength and security on the foundation that can never be shaken, cracked or shattered. This foundation is the

remarkable truth of God's unconditional love and His indisputable grace experienced in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The critics of Christianity have launched a full attack to discredit the person and works of Jesus Christ and the reliability of His word. We cannot be silent anymore. Let us as children of light stand firm in the faith, because He who has taken us this far will never leave us nor forsake us. You are called Christians, be careful of that name. Let not our Lord Jesus Christ be blasphemed on your account

Remember this, "Jesus did not come to make bad people good, He came to make dead people live."

Keep It Simple

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

If you have any questions, comments or you know anybody else who will benefit from this study please feel free to give us their email address and they will be added to our mailing list to receive weekly lessons. The email address is santigiemandol@yahoo.com

REMEMBER!! A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle (Ephesians 5:8)

Let's go light another candle