

Course one - The Message

How Did Everything Begin?

Where did everything come from? How do we explain galaxies that are trillions of light years away? When were Heaven, Hell, Angels and Demons created? Were they created before the Genesis creation? We begin to see that the source of everything is a supernatural source that is of supreme power, an intellect, and a source that has a morality with ethics.

It is difficult for our finite mind to comprehend the concept of no beginning and no ending - eternity. But GOD is omnipresent; that is, He has always been, is now, and always will be. History shows all civilizations have worshipped some type of superior being and believed in a life beyond the earthly life. Solomon stated that God put the yearning to worship in man. "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11-12)

The Man Who Was God

According to the apostle John, the "Word" was with God and was God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among man. John, the Baptist, referred to Him as "the Lamb of God" who takes away sins.

What an awesome revelation, the Spirit Being, Deity - the creator of all things will become human, will sacrifice Himself as the atoning sacrifice to cleanse those created in Their likeness and set eternity in their hearts. Those who put their trust in Him and obey His commands are promised eternal life with Him. Only **if** they continue to live in obedient faith as priests, to serve Him.

CHRIST - The Mystery Of God

God created man in His likeness, His image, and His nature, a righteous person without sin. The man listened to Satan's lie, chose to disobey God, thus ceased to be righteous, and breaking the intimate relationship he enjoyed with his Creator. But God had a plan to restore man to the original relationship he had with Him.

Thousands of years later, God revealed His plan to Paul. "... to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:25-27 NIV)

Forgiveness of sins was first offered on the Day of Pentecost. All who accepted Christ's call to repent and seek forgiveness by being buried (baptized) into His death, were resurrected a new creation in the Kingdom of God. This offer of forgiveness is available TODAY to all who hear and accept the Gospel message of Jesus, the Mystery of God.

Myths About God

What is God really like? When Jesus came to this world, He debunked all kinds of myths about religion in general. About 80 different times in the Gospels Jesus said, "I tell you the truth" and twenty different times He said, "You have heard it said, but now I say unto you."

Until Jesus came, God had been viewed as a powerful, but a very distant and aloof entity. He was impersonable and unpleasable.

Course Two -Obedience to The Message

Time before Christ

The last day of creation God said, "Let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness." This creation was different from all His other creations, as man was created a righteous being in His image, but not an exact copy. Man was created flesh and blood while God is spirit. Then "the Lord God commanded the man, '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' ..."

Therefore, man was created with the ability to make decisions. Satan tempted them, they ate and sinned by disobeying God. As a result, **Adam and Eve were separated from God and in need of being reunited with Him. This reconciliation would require a perfect sacrifice for their sin.**

Time Christ Was On Earth

To be reconciled to his God and creator, man needed to have his sin and guilt removed. At just the perfect time and by the action of the Holy Spirit, God became human by allowing Mary to become pregnant without sexual relations. Through action of the Holy Spirit, Mary gave birth to Jesus, God's anointed one. He would be the atoning sacrifice to remove sin and guilt to all who are willing to be obedient servants.

Time After Christ Returned To Heaven

Before Jesus returned to Heaven to be with the Father, "He told them (His apostles), 'This is what is written: The Christ will

suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:46-49)

Time To Decide

Since all decisions have consequences, one needs to evaluate their cost. In one's physical life consideration should be given to how their time and money are spent. But many are not concerned about the spiritual life. Therefore, the question is, are you living for the after-life in Heaven or the after-death in Hell. God's invitation is always open. Decide now before it is too late.

From Life To Death - Mortal Man

God created a righteous physical being living in a perfect relationship with his Creator and communicating with Him. By their pride, wanting to be wise, Adam and Eve decided to put their desires ahead of God's command. They ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and became mortal, their physical body would die and unless redeemed so would their spiritual body. Death the result of sin is Satan's hold on man.

Course Three - Beginning The New Life

Baptism Into Christ

According to Webster Dictionary "In Christianity, *baptism* is the sacrament of admission to the church, symbolized by the

pouring or sprinkling of water on the head or by immersion in water. ... Judaism practiced ritual purification by immersion, and the Gospels report that John the Baptist baptized Jesus.”

Webster’s definition is not consistent with the Greek definition during the time of Christ; as the Greek word for pouring was *rantizo*, the Greek word for sprinkling was *cheo*, and the Greek word for immersion was *baptizo*. Baptism into Christ was by immersion, a calling on God to forgive. It is a burial into Christ’s atoning sacrifice, a resurrection to a spiritual being, after which God puts them in Christ’s church, His Body.

From Death to Life through the Cross

Physical and spiritual sin entered the world after Adam and Eve put self ahead of God by believing, committing to, Satan. Paul states that all men have sinned and the wages of sin is spiritual death. But God does not want any to die spiritually. He desires a change from certain spiritual death to eternal life through the Cross of Christ.

A Kingdom Not Made With Hands

When sinful man commits to Christ as his Lord and Savior, he is buried into Christ’s death, the atoning sacrifice for sin. After being cleansed of his sins God puts him into Christ’s Body, His Church.

Following Jesus’ death by crucifixion and His resurrection, He returned to Heaven. Fifty days later on Pentecost Day He poured out His Spirit on **all** people. Now everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, not just the Jews. Christ’s apostles proclaimed that forgiveness of sin and salvation is now available to all mankind who put their trust and obedience in Christ by

dying to sin and being buried, immersed in water into His blood (baptism). God then raises these obedient forgiven people from their burial and puts them in a kingdom not made by hands, Christ's Church.

Servants in The Kingdom

The apostles and evangelists proclaimed Christ's message of forgiveness and reconciliation. Other Christians especially elders, men skilled in instructing, taught the new Christians how to live sacrificial lives pleasing to God; thereby helping them to serve God while maturing into His likeness. They regularly came together to encourage faithfulness and fellowship.

Messages From the Epistles

The Roman Empire had two predominate religions before Christ atoning sacrifice.

Judaism - The Jews worshiped a living God with commands to be obeyed and acts to be performed. They believed that by performing the acts, not the intent, their future forgiveness and salvation was earned.

Paganism - The Pagan gods were mythological gods or idols. They could not act or give commands. Therefore, their acts of worship focused on satisfying sensual desires.

Not long after Christ's Church was established the Jews, especially Saul, began to search for Christians to put them in prison. Jesus asked Saul, "why are you persecuting me?" Saul was shocked and asked what to do. Jesus told him to go to the city where Ananias would tell you what to do. Upon hearing Ananias, Saul was baptized and immediately began proclaiming Christ. He would soon become the apostle to the Gentiles.

Worship God In Spirit And Truth

There are many statements regarding worship that may be inconsistent with God's expectations, often misleading such as: "Enter to worship, leave to serve;" "welcome to our worship service;" and "go to church to worship" indicates that Christ's church is a place one goes to worship rather than sanctified people who worship continually.

Does worship require certain acts or activities that must be done for worship to God acceptably? Is worship something external that must be done or an internal action from man's heart?

Course Four - Maturing In Christ

Jesus Of Nazareth

There are over sixty (60) Old Testament prophecies about Jesus, all of which were fulfilled. The chances of twenty-five of these occurring exceed one in one thousand trillion.

He was in the beginning with God. In Him was **life**. At just the right time He became flesh to become the atoning sacrifice for

sin. The apostle John, speaking for all the apostles stated, “we have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father.” John, the baptizer said “behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.”

Life Of Christ

It is an historical fact that a man, Jesus of Nazareth, lived over 2,000 years ago. We know where He was born, the names of some in His family, how He died and, yes, that in Him was life and that He himself was LIFE. His coming was a demonstration of life eternal. With Christ, “LIFE” stopped being just an abstract theory of philosophy. LIFE manifested itself as a carpenter’s son, who walked, talked, ate, slept, cried and loved. His resurrection from the dead proved Him to be who He claimed to be. He said of Himself: "I am the way, the truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Christ is life and life is Christ. If you have eternal life, it is because you have Christ. If you don’t have Christ, you don’t have life. Real life, eternal life, which is the life in Christ, is much more than mere existence. Many exist who have never found “life”.

Spiritual Milk

New born spiritual babes, like physical babes, need to be fed to grow and mature. There are five stages in the development of newborn Christians:

1. You Need Spiritual Nutrition
2. Understand Your New Identity
3. Grow Or Else You Will Die
4. Take Your Place In The Family Of God
5. Reproduce Yourself Spiritually

United In Christ

The environment into which Jesus was born was a closed society, a people who considered themselves superior to all others. They took great pride on being “God’s chosen people.”

The Gentiles believed in mythological gods ruling over natural phenomena and in all aspects of life. They believed their gods must be appeased to prevent storms, fires, earthquakes and other acts of nature. Their temples were also a place to satisfy sexual desires.

Into this culture came the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ to establish a spiritual kingdom. Jesus said to Pilate “My kingdom is not of this world.” The Jew and Gentile Christians needed to learn to be united in Christ’s kingdom.

Living Liberated

God is love, righteous (just), truth, mercy and peace. Man was created in His likeness and lived in God’s presence. But Adam and Eve exercised their ability to decide, ceased to be in control and yielded to their desires. That decision resulted in separation from God with pain, suffering and even death.

The Living Liberated lessons depict situations where we have yielded control of our lives to the undesirable things in life and provide the solution for us to regain control.

Body, Soul and Spirit – Where Do They Go When You Die?

In creation God spoke the universe into existence. From earth's elements God formed man, breathed His breath of life into man and made man a living being in His likeness of love, peace, mercy and righteousness. Man's disobedience resulted in physical and spiritual death.

In the physical world man understands his body begins to decay at death. Man understands the earth's physical elements can change between solid, liquid and gas – liquid water becomes ice when cold, steam (vapor) when hot. What is not so easy to understand is where does man's soul go when he dies. Will the body, soul and spirit go to an eternal life in Heaven or to an everlasting death in Hell?

Revelation of Jesus Christ To The Apostle John and An Unorthodox Interpretation

The content of the book of Revelation is a vision that the apostle John was given from the Lord. Through the years the book of Revelation has been the subject of innumerable debates and the source of all kinds of wild speculations. Interpreting God's message in Revelation is limited by the interpreter's knowledge and intellectual ability. All the various opinions and interpretations cannot all be correct. In fact, many are contradictory.

The Revelation was addressed to a specific audience, “the seven churches in Asia,” the immediate audience. They were aware of the circumstances presented in the message. However, much can be gleaned by all Christians today (the distant audience) by studying the Epistles and Revelation.

First Century Evangelizing And Teaching

Evangelizing

- Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41
- On Pentecost Day Peter quoted Joel to those assembled, because of the sound of the rushing wind, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” Acts 2:17
- “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church ... Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ.” Acts 8:1-5
- Philip relayed Gospel message to the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8:26
- Saul preached Jesus in the synagogue. Acts 9:20
- Peter preached the Good News to Cornelius. Acts 10:34
- Men from Cyprus and Cyrene spoke to the Hellenists. Acts 11:20
- Paul stated “we preach Christ crucified.” 1 Corinthians 1:23

Teaching

- They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42
- Priscilla and Aquila “invited him (Apollos) to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. Acts 18:26
- When the Corinthian Christians assembled, they spoke, sang and prayed at the same time without respect for each other. 1 Cor 14
- Teaching pastors, elders, men skilled in communicating were to “to prepare God's people for works of service.” Eph 4:12

Nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of either a “Worship Service” or anyone lecturing (delivering a sermon). In Antioch “for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.” Acts 11:26

Therefore, the purpose for coming together as congregation of God’s servants is to instruct them in His will, help mature them into God’s nature of love, peace, mercy, kindness, faithfulness and righteousness.