

God's Message



Time of Christ

The Bible Way Online

GOD'S MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION

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

You are encouraged to study YOUR Bible to prove the truth presented in these lessons or any other lesson as it is your responsibility to seek to do God's will. Let God speak to you from His Holy Word.

At the end of most lessons is a series of questions to assist you in evaluating your understanding of the lesson. If you have any questions, please contact us.

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Christ - Preparing for His Ministry

Lesson 11

Ever since Adam's sin, which resulted in his fall from a perfect relationship with God, man has needed to be reconciled to God. He needed to have his sins washed away and his guilt removed. At just the perfect time and by action of the Holy Spirit, God became flesh to dwell among men. The Holy Spirit performed a miracle allowing Mary to become pregnant without sexual relations with man. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary and later an angel announced to Joseph about how God would be using them to bring the Messiah, God's anointed one, to earth to save mankind from their sins. Both were willing to become servants of God regardless of how people would treat them or what they would say about them. They only wanted to obey and be used by God.

"Why were you searching for me?" he [Jesus] asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he was saying to them." (Luke 2:49-50)

At thirty years of age "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased'. Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry." (Luke 3:21-23a)

Following His baptism "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil." (Luke 4:1-2) He had overcome the Devil's temptations so he returned to His home in Nazareth. In their synagogue following His reading of Isaiah 61:1-2, he announced that He was the fulfillment of God's promise to send the Messiah (Luke 4:21).

A short time later He began selecting those whom He would teach to be his messengers following his resurrection. And at the appropriate time **Jesus** would actively begin proving to all with whom He came in contact that He **was God who had come to earth to live among men and to become a perfect sacrifice for man's sins**. He did this by His perfect life, the miracles He performed openly before great crowds and statements by John the Baptist and God himself.

Many people benefited from these miracles. Even those full of envy, jealousy and covetousness had to acknowledge that miracles had been performed. The hypocritical religious leaders rejected him because of their desire for power and prestige. In doing so they even violated their own laws and traditions which they outwardly professed to uphold.

His followers had heard His message, His parables and their explanations and witnessed His miracles. They had witnessed those raised from the dead, the blind made to see, the deaf to hear and the denial of such by their religious leaders. But there were many things they needed to know so Jesus said "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he

will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." (John 16:12-14)

As He was preparing for His atoning sacrifice, he prayed; (as recorded in John 17) "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.'" (Vv. 1-5)... "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." (Vv. 6-8) "... I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. {I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (NKJV)} My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified." (Vv.14-19)

His mission to proclaim the message of reconciliation, redemption and forgiveness of sin was nearing completion. At the right time Jesus would give his life as the atoning sacrifice for man's sins, the very thing He left Heaven to come to earth to do.

"He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "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 24:44-49)

As He was ready to return to God, the Father "Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'." (Matthew 28:18-20)

For the first time following the sin of Adam and Eve, man had a way open for him to be reconciled to God.

Questions

1. When did Jesus come to the Earth?

- A ___ December 25, the day we refer to as Christmas.
- B ___ When Israel was powerful, so many people would praise Him.
- C ___ At just the right or fullness of time.
- D ___ We do not know.

2. Following Gabriel's appearing, Mary was pleased and honored to be used by God but Joseph was reluctant, fearing what people would say.

True _____ False _____

3. Different New Testament writers recorded Jesus' lineage showing how God was faithful in keeping His promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David.

True _____ False _____

4. While Jesus was here on Earth, He proved He was God by

- A ___ Testimony of Religious leaders
- B ___ Testimony of John the Baptist
- C ___ His perfect life, sinless
- D ___ The miracles He publicly performed
- E ___ A & B
- F ___ C & D
- G ___ B, C & D
- H ___ All the above

5. What was the message Jesus preached during his ministry on Earth?

- A ___ A message of redemption
- B ___ A message of forgiveness of sins by God
- C ___ A message of reconciliation to God
- D ___ All the above

Christ - Witnesses

Lesson 12

During Jesus' earthly ministry it was important that the people would come to believe that He was the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. There were several witnesses who proved this to be _____ the _____ truth.

John the Baptist

John preached baptism (*baptizo*, a Greek word meaning immersion) for repentance and it was said all Judah came to John to be baptized. "Now some Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, 'Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?' 'I baptize with water,' John replied, 'but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'" (John 1:24-27) ... "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God,

who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.' Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.'" (John 1:29-34)

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John consented." (Matthew 3:13-15)

Holy Spirit

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him." (Matthew 3:16-17a)

God

"And a voice from heaven said, '**This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased**.'" (Matthew 3:17b)

Jesus then fasted forty days prior to publicly beginning His work. It was at the end of the forty days the Devil seized the opportunity to tempt Jesus in his physically weakened condition. Although he failed in this attempt, he continued to look for opportunity. Jesus then began His ministry. One of the first things He did was to select twelve men to train and to be witnesses of all He said and did, which was mostly public. He performed many miracles proving that God was with Him.

Miracles, Signs and Wonders

He received no training in the Law and Prophets but people recognized he spoke with authority; not like the learned men, the rabbis, priests, Pharisees, Scribes and other religious leaders. To these learned men He was very pointed in His remarks calling them hypocrites, and blind guides as their hearts, minds and attitude, were so prideful, arrogant, haughty, jealous and willing to stop at nothing to maintain their place in society. They even attributed His many miracles to the Devil rather than giving glory to God. Matthew records the following about them in chapter 23:vv.

- 3 ... "For they do not practice what they preach."
- 5 "Everything they do is done for men to see."
- 6 "They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues."
- 13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!"
- 16 "Woe to you, blind guides! You say ..."
- 33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"

Luke adds another to the charge in 20:47 ... [You] who devour [eat up, consume, exploit, prey upon] widows' houses [rob widows of their resources].

They tried many things to trap Him into contradictions but failed. They challenged his authority but failed. See Luke 20 and Mark 12.

Crucifixion

Events during His Crucifixion witnessed to the fact He was the Christ, the Son of God. (Refer to Matthew 27:50-52)

- Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit
- The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.
- The earth shook and the rocks split.
- The tombs were opened and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life and they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

Roman Soldiers

"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God'!" (Matthew 27:54)

Those Closest to Him - Apostles

"Therefore, it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts 1:21-22)

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:1-3)

Questions

1. Immediately when Jesus come up out of the water following his baptism a voice from Heaven said that Jesus was God's Son and God was well pleased with Him.
True _____ False _____
2. Jesus spoke as one having authority because He was one of the learned men having been schooled in the rabbinical schools of the Jews.
True _____ False _____
3. Jesus referred to the Pharisees and Scribes as
A ___ blind guide. .

- B ___ hypocrites.
- C ___ thieves.
- D ___ only A and B
- E ___ only B and C.
- F ___ only A and C.
- G ___ A, B and C.

4. Jesus' closest friends testified as eye witnesses of His miracles, death, burial and especially His resurrection.

True _____ False _____

5. Why was Jesus baptized in water by John the Baptist?

- A _____ To comply with the Law of Moses
- B _____ To be forgiven of His sins
- C _____ To be obedient and to fulfill all righteousness
- D _____ None of the above

Ready to Begin

Lesson 13

It is stated in John 1:1-4 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Therefore, God, the Son, chose to leave the riches and glories of Heaven with God, the Father, and God, the Holy Spirit, so that He could become the atoning sacrifice for man's sins. A perfect sacrifice was needed to reconcile man to God. He was born in Bethlehem, fled to Egypt and grew in favor with God and man. The citizens of Nazareth referred to Him as the son of Joseph, the carpenter.

At the age of twelve He chose to linger in Jerusalem at the temple to listen to the teachers and to ask and answer questions. It is uncertain if any of these teachers, twenty-one years later, were among the leaders who sought His death. When Joseph and Mary questioned Jesus about His decision to stay in Jerusalem, He replied "... 'How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'" as recorded in Luke 2:49. Upon returning to Nazareth He "... was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:51-52)

About age 30 He left home to begin to accomplish His purpose for leaving Heaven and coming to Earth as the Word, in the person of Jesus. When John the Baptist was baptizing unto repentance Jesus came to him desiring to be baptized. John was reluctant "But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented.

And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:15-17) confirming what John had said prior to Jesus' baptism. Jesus was led to a deserted place where he fasted forty days. During this time he was confronted by the Devil, tempting Him in all things like we are tempted as follows:

- Desire for food - lust of the flesh
- Desire for power - pride of life
- Desire for things - lust of the eye

In each temptation he chose to be obedient and did not sin. Time and time again we find Jesus stating his decision to be about His Father's business and to do the will of His Father. **We need to base our choices and decisions on the will of the Father.** Therefore it is imperative for us to be diligent in our study of His words and the words of the apostles who were guided by the Holy Spirit. These words referred to as the New Testament allow us to know what to do to have our sins forgiven through Christ our atoning sacrifice so we can be reconciled to God.

Jesus faced each challenge and temptation by simply doing the will of the one who sent Him to earth. Since we were created in God's image **we have the same choice.** Simply trust and obey.

Questions

1. According to John, who was in the beginning with God, the Father?

- A ___ The Word
- B ___ Holy Spirit
- C ___ Both A and B

2. God, the Son, came to earth to be the sinless sacrifice killed by man, who was created in His image, in order to provide the means of reconciliation.

True _____ False _____

3. Jesus chose to be baptized by John the Baptist to be obedient and fulfill all righteousness.

True _____ False _____

4. Jesus did not yield to the Devil's temptations because He was not really human; i.e., not flesh and blood but spirit.

True _____ False _____

5. We need to study the Bible so our decisions can be based upon faith through knowledge of will of God.

True _____ False _____

Christ - Doing His Father's Will

Lesson 14

John the Baptist told his followers that Jesus was the Lamb of God. God announced at His baptism that Jesus was his Son and He was well pleased with Him. Christ began telling the Jews about the Kingdom of God, proving His words by very powerful miracles that no one could deny, not even His enemies. On two occasions they were performed before thousands of people when He fed them from only a few pieces of fish and bread. He even stopped a funeral procession to bring back to life an only child of a widow. He healed people who had been blind or crippled all their lives, which everyone in the town knew. Lastly, he went to a cemetery, opened the grave and brought back to life a body that was already decaying. All these statements and miracles proved to the honest and sincere people that Jesus was the Son of God. They believed. But the religious leaders did not believe. They wanted "proof."

Jesus often used parables during His short ministry. The twelve He had selected to be His witnesses asked many questions desiring to understand their meaning. On many occasions, He took them aside and explained the parables. All the while, He continued to tell everyone His Kingdom was not of this world, but they had difficulty understanding. He constantly mentioned familiar prophecies and how they were being fulfilled right before their eyes. More and more believed - but not the religious leaders. They began looking for ways to entrap and discredit Him even discussing ways to kill Him.

Very late in His ministry Jesus began to explain to His disciples, especially the twelve, that He was going to be betrayed and be crucified. From the beginning of time on earth, everything had been planned for this upcoming event. The head of that serpent of old, the Devil, would be crushed by *the descendant* of Eve by:

- His complete obedience
- His death, the perfect sacrifice to atone for sin
- His burial, from which He would burst forth
- His resurrection, the triumph over death and the grave, opening the way for reconciliation to God.

God demands our obedience whether we understand His entire purpose behind the command or not. For instance, why was Abel's animal sacrifice more pleasing than Cain's offering from the fruit of the ground? Or, how could a large boat taking years to build be so important? Or, how could putting blood over a door prevent the death of a first-born son? Or, how could looking upon a brass snake raised upon a pole cure the bite of a poisonous snake? We may or may not fully understand God's purpose but we understand we must obey God's commands. We must respond with complete trust in God and obedience to His commands regardless of how illogical it may seem to man's finite mind.

So we see Jesus in complete obedience setting out to Jerusalem to die, offering his life as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. We see the leaders of the Jews filled with envy, hate, jealousy and pride, hiring someone to betray Jesus into their hands so they could kill Him. We see a Roman official finding Him innocent and undeserving of death but willing to kill Him to please the Jews.

Jesus willingly gave his life as the perfect sacrifice to atone for man's sin so man could be reconciled to God through obedient faith in Him.

Questions

1. Obedience to God is doing what He desires because we have faith in His faithfulness even when we do not fully understand.

True _____ False _____

2. Knowing He would die when He returned to Jerusalem, Jesus still went there to do The Father's will to become the atoning sacrifice for sin. That was why He came to Earth.

True _____ False _____

3. What proof was given that Jesus was the Christ, Son of God?

A _____ Miracles

B _____ Acknowledgment by John the Baptist

C _____ Statement by God Himself

D _____ All the above

4. Jesus went to Jerusalem near the end of His ministry because

A _____ His disciples wanted to go there for the Passover.

B _____ The Roman government required everyone to go here to be counted and pay their taxes.

C _____ He wanted to offer proof to the Pharisees and Scribes that He was the Son of God.

D _____ It was time to complete His mission for coming to Earth by freely giving His life as an atoning sacrifice of mankind's sins.

5. Pilate, a Roman official, found Him innocent.

True _____ False _____

The Good News

Lesson 15

God created man in His nature of love, mercy, peace, faithfulness and truth. He instructed him to tend the garden and not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Apparently man only knew about good, God's nature and not of evil. By giving man instructions it is clear that man was also created with the ability to reason and make decisions. This must be true as he decided to believe a lie and chose to act upon it. By this act of rebellion man separated himself from God and allowed Satan to control him through death. Man now needed a redeemer to remove his sins and the power over him. But what would that take? Not sacrifices of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:14).

A Savior Prophesied

- Abraham was told that through him all nations of the earth would be blessed.

- God said that through David, a descendant of Isaac, Abraham’s son of promise, “He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:13).
- Isaiah prophesied “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [meaning God with us]” (Isaiah 7:14).
- Hundreds of years later the angel Gabriel told the virgin Mary she would have a son and “shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

Testimony about the Savior

- The Messiah’s birth was announced by the angel to shepherds
- John, the Baptist, testified "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)
- At his immersion in the Jordan River by John “a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).
- In the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor “ and " He then said "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:18a-21).

To confirm these statements Jesus publically healed many sick, blind, deaf and raised up some who had died, one whose body was decaying.

The Atoning Sacrifice

A sinless blood sacrifice was needed to remove sin from man.

Therefore, Christ offered to God His earthly body as that sacrifice allowing the Romans and Jews to crucify Him. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. God accepted His offering by resurrecting Him which removed all doubt that Jesus was God who came to earth in the flesh of man, His creation. This was necessary as men need to know they could put their trust in Christ and in His power and authority to forgive sins.

The masses had heard His teachings but did not understand. They were so different than their traditions. His was a message of Love. As shown in the following scriptures.

- Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”
- Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
- 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

- Acts 4:11-12 "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- Ephesians 1:6-9 "In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us."

The Good News - Gospel

Therefore since redemption is found in Christ, then Christ must be the Good News, the Gospel, which is summed up as follows:

- In the beginning was the Word, Jesus, Christ, Anointed One, Messiah.
- The Word became flesh and lived among men.
- Christ had no sin.
- Jesus was obedient to the Father's will even His death on the cross.
- God resurrected Him from the grave thereby conquering death, freeing man from Satan's grip - the direct result of sin.
- Christ ascended back from where He descended, Heaven.
- He taught that those who were cleansed of sin following their death to sin and burial by immersion in water into his death and who continued to walk faithfully in his Word would live eternally with Him.

It is in Him, Christ, that we are reconciled for "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'." (John 14:6) And "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3)

Questions

1. Jesus was God who came to earth in human form to become the atoning sacrifice for man's sins?
True _____ False _____
2. There is no proof or witnesses that Jesus had the authority and power of God.
True _____ False _____
3. Where is salvation found
 - A. _____ Hindu deities
 - B. _____ Jesus, the Christ
 - C. _____ Muhammad
 - D. _____ Moses
 - E. _____ Pope
4. The Good News is Christ, His life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension that provided man the opportunity to be forgiven of their sins and be reconciled to God?
True _____ False _____

5. There are many ways to come and be reconciled to the Father?

True _____ False _____

Christ's Church

Lesson 16

The writer of Hebrews stated "For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he [Jesus, the Son of God] cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body didst thou prepare for me; -- then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. -- but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; -- For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:4-5, 9-10, 12, 14). This is the atoning sacrifice to destroy the sting of death caused by sin and to cleanse man of his sins.

During His ministry, Jesus asked His disciples " 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. -- 'And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church [His called out people], and the powers of death shall not prevail against it'" (Matthew 16:15-16-18). Therefore the foundation of "my church" is the person Jesus, the Son of God.

Before "my church" could become reality death needed to be conquered and the sacrifice for sin had to be made. Following the mockery of a trial with its perverted justice, the Romans crucified the innocent Son of God. The judicial charge against Him, JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS, was fastened to the cross.

The hypocritical Jewish religious leaders mocked Him and looked upon his crucifixion with great pleasure, but that was soon interrupted as darkness fell over Jerusalem for three hours just before His death. John tells us in John 19:30 that just, before He died, Jesus said, "It is finished". He had completed His mission for the redemption of mankind by His atoning sacrifice. The way was open for man to be reconciled to God.

Jews

On Pentecost Day 10 days after Christ ascended back to heaven His Spirit was poured out to all men. Then Peter and the other apostles proclaimed to those gathered that forgiveness of sins was now available as the atoning sacrifice had been made when Christ was crucified, resurrected by God and returned to be with the Father having conquered death, Satan's hold over man. Some 3,000 heard this message, repented asking "what shall we do," and were immersed into Christ death (Acts 2:14-38). Then God added them to Christ's church also referred to as Body of Christ (Acts 2:41).

Gentiles

"I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in

accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-5). “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized **into** [union with (ISV)] Christ Jesus were baptized [immersed] **into** his death? **We were buried** ¹ **therefore with him by baptism into death [immersed]**, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if **we have been united with him in a death** like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Romans 6:3-5). {¹ Greek *sunthapto*, *sun* with, *thapto* entomb, - to bury with, or together (Vine's Expository Dictionary) - so one is buried and united with Christ in His death.}

Summary

“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29-30)!

- Christ’s mission was to remove sin from man
- Jesus lived among men without sin
- God made Jesus to be sin
- Christ died with the man’s sins placed upon Him
- Christ removes sins through trust and obedience when man
 - Dies to sin
 - Is buried with their sins into Christ’s death
 - Is raised a new creation by God free of past sins
 - Is put by God into Christ’s spiritual body, His Church

Now the church is not some building or organization as some think. It is those called out of sin into God’s righteousness. These individuals put into Christ Body are to be living sacrifices constantly worshipping in songs, prayers and the doing of good works, thus glorifying God daily. They assemble together to encourage each other unto faithfulness by singing, praying, remembering Christ death [Lord’s Supper], disciplining, giving and evangelizing.

Questions

1. Christ offered His sinless body to God to atone for man’s sins
True _____ False _____
2. These saved people are those put into Christ’s body, are a living organism, doing the will of God, not an organization.
True _____ False _____
3. The church is people called out of sin into God righteousness
True _____ False _____
4. The foundation of Christ’s church is
 - A. _____ The apostles
 - B. _____ Temples and church sanctuaries
 - C. _____ Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God

5. People are added to Christ's Body, His church, by
- A. ____ Inheritance
 - B. ____ Vote of members
 - C. ____ God

Choices of Bible Characters

Lesson 17

Every day we make many decisions, most of which are routine such as what we eat or wear and where we go. Occasionally man's choices result in unexpected joy and happiness while others bring disappointment and heartache. Often we are called upon to make major choices that affect entire family relationships which could involve religion, jobs with possible relocation or life and death matters. Probably all of us have known individuals who have made some bad decisions and others who have made some good decisions. Regardless of whether good or bad our choices have some type of consequence.

The following are some examples in the Bible of:

<u>Decisions</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
° Adam & Eve eat of forbidden fruit	Death, banned from Eden and pain
° Cain offered unacceptable sacrifice	Reprimanded by God
° Cain killed his brother	Became a marked wanderer
° Noah built the ark	Considered righteous & saved man
° Abraham sacrificed his son	Received promises
° Moses chose God	Became the leader of great nation
° Mary desired to be used by God	Birth of Jesus who became our sacrifice
° Judas betrayed Jesus for money	Committed suicide
° Paul repented, obeyed and immersed (baptized)	Became the Apostle to the Gentiles

Each day we face choices involving our growth in the knowledge of God and in our understanding of how we can obey his commands so we can please Him. Consider the following:

- ° Will we be honest in our business, family and spiritual life?
- ° Will we be faithful to our self, spouse and children?
- ° Will we control our mind, eyes and tongue?
- ° Will we give thanks to God in all things?
- ° Will we humble ourselves and obey God's commands so we can be reconciled to Him?

Questions

1. Every decision in life is a major decision.

True _____ False _____

2. Often our decisions have major consequences on our lives.

True _____ False _____

2. Bible examples of choices reveal that choices of disobedience bring pain and sadness while choice of obedience brings joy and happiness.

True _____ False _____

4. Since one does not have total control over what he sees and hears, he is forced to linger on them.

True _____ False _____

5. People have a choice in who they accept and obey.

True _____ False _____

Choice - Belief in Jesus as God

Lesson 18

The same Jesus who preached repentance also preached:

- "... whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:26)
- "... The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news"! (Mark 1:15)

" ... Then Jesus cried out, 'When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say!'" (John 12:44-50)

"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me." (John 14:23-24)

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

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'." (Matthew 28:18-20)

We were created in the likeness of God, given the ability to make choices, and told to work. We have also seen prophecies and their fulfillment. We have seen how God provided a way, a method, and a plan for man to be reconciled unto Him. Jesus preached repentance, a turning away from sin and all ungodliness. He taught us love, goodness and righteousness. He also preached belief that He was the Messiah, the Christ, who came to Earth as the perfect sacrifice for our sins and that obedience to His commands proves our faith in Him.

His teachings were with authority, in fact, all authority was given unto Him following His resurrection. His teachings were different from anything seen or taught, requiring a change in attitude toward fellowman and God. **His message was of love of God rather than self, a change in lifestyle.**

"This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love." (2 John 1:6) "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34)

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us." (1 John 1:1-2)

Questions

1. Jesus has all authority.

True _____ False _____

2. A person can believe Jesus but does not have to do what Jesus requires; i.e., obey.

True _____ False _____

3. Jesus preached

A ___ only believe on me.

B ___ believe and change lifestyle, repent.

C ___ make disciples and baptize them.

D ___ all the above.

E ___ both A & B.

F ___ both B & C.

4. Jesus requires a change in attitude toward

A ___ self.

B ___ neighbor.

C ___ God.

D ___ all the above.

5. As a witness of Jesus what did the apostle John say?

A ___ I saw Him

B ___ I Heard Him

C ___ I touched Him

D ___ He is Eternal Life

E ___ All the above

F ___ None of the above

Obedience - The Proof of Love

Lesson 19

"This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) Love involves the desire to please the object of that love - our God. "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love." (2 John 1:6)

Jesus preached a message of love, belief in Him as God, change in lifestyle away from the world and its sinful ways, and obedience to His commands so man could be reconciled to God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Now obedience because of love is not doing something because you are in agreement with it or even thinking it is the best alternative. Obedience cannot be forced upon you by threat of force or economic sanctions. It is performing something desired, requested or commanded even when it appears unreasonable, illogical or unnecessary. Obedient love is a voluntary action taken just because the one you love wants it done and because you desire to please Him.

Several examples of this type of obedience have been seen in previous lessons.

- Noah spent years building an ark to exact specifications.
- Following the flood and his return to dry land Noah built an altar and offered a sacrifice to God, an act of worship because of love.
- Abraham circumcised all males within his household - something that by human standards and reason was totally unreasonable but he did so since God wanted it done.
- Abraham took his only son of promise to a mountain and built an altar to offer him as a sacrifice to God. By man's standards this is murder and no normal man would do such thing but Abraham did because of his complete trust in God.

The terrified Israelites reached the Red Sea with Pharaoh and his army in pursuit close behind. By what logic could anyone expect the sea to part allowing the Israelites to cross? But Moses, putting his faith, belief and trust in the God he loved, obeyed and the sea opened for them to cross.

Finally, Jesus, having spent three years teaching and establishing that He was the Son of God by

his miracles, set His face toward Jerusalem. He was determined to go there even though He knew the Jews, with the help of Roman officials, were going to kill him. But He willingly went giving His life because that was why He left Heaven. His prayer to God shows his complete obedience with death on the cross at hand " ... He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done'." (Matthew 26:42)

Therefore, when it comes to obedience to God's requirements for reconciliation, **we must obey because we love him, regardless of how unreasonable we think it is. Like Jesus, our desire must be "thy will be done."**

Questions

1. Love for someone is doing something they desired because
 - A _____ we think is it is the right thing to do.
 - B _____ it appears to be the better of all other alternatives.
 - C _____ we think it will please the one we love.
2. Love can be obtained by family pressures, economic or political sanctions, threats or even gifts.
True _____ False _____
3. Jesus' desire to go to Jerusalem was to observe the Passover even if it resulted in His arrest.
True _____ False _____
4. Our response to Jesus' teaching on salvation should be whatever You, Jesus, want.
True _____ False _____
5. Everyone will be reconciled to God even those who do not obey His commands because Jesus died for all mankind.
True _____ False _____

