

HOPE
TO
SHARE
—  —



New Life Study

“In Jesus’ name the nations will put their hope!”

Matthew 12:21

Exploring the most commonly asked questions on origin, identity,
and significance from a biblical perspective—discovering the
purpose and destiny you were created for!

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Hope To Share

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INTRODUCTION

New Life Study groups are open to everyone, regardless of religious background, whether Atheism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or any other belief system. These studies offer insight for individuals interested in understanding the core principles of Christianity. It's essential to note that the purpose of these studies is not to engage in debates or comparisons between different religions.

The New Life Study offers an introduction to the Christian God and explains how he interacts with people. Throughout this exploration, participants will find answers to common questions about life such as: our origin, purpose, and destination. These questions are important because everyone wants to believe that their lives have meaning.

Christians believe the most dependable answers to the fundamental questions of life and purpose are found in the holy Scriptures, also known as the Bible. The Bible is a compilation of 66 smaller books written by 40



different people inspired by God. These books include history, law, prophecy, wisdom, and poetry. The first of these books was written about 3,500 years ago, and the last one was completed almost 2,000 years ago.

In the New Life Studies, we use short sections from the Bible along with commentary to help illustrate the main themes of each chapter. The parts labeled “Scripture...” present the words of God, from the Bible, which Christians believe to be entirely true and accurate.

You might wonder, “Don't other religions also have sacred texts they consider divinely inspired?” Yes, however there are numerous ways Christianity and the Bible are unique. For one thing, in the thousands of years the Bible has existed, no one has been able to prove anything written in it to be wrong. For another, God is alive and active; he will confirm the truth of Scripture through supernatural and miraculous means.

STUDY TIPS

Before you begin, please note that New Life Studies are designed to be completed with a small group. While you can do this study alone, there are many incredible benefits in completing it with others.

In small groups, you get the chance to:

- **learn** from diverse perspectives,
- be **encouraged** by like-minded people,
- be **strengthened** by others who share insightful thoughts,
- have **fun** interacting with fellow learners,
- experience **healthy** engagement with people of different faiths and,
- **encounter** God in new ways through community.

A New Life Study group can be as small as two people or as large as you want. We've figured out that having around 5-10 people works best. So, grab your friends and family, pick a regular time and place for your meetings and begin your New Life Study. Or, if you prefer, let us know and we can help you find a group either online or in person.

It's essential to go through each study in order since they build on what you've learned before. Skipping any section means missing vital information



needed to truly grasp and engage with the following studies. Be sure to finish each part before moving on to the next study.

We suggest completing one study at a time without interruptions. Most groups meet weekly, finishing one study together. Regardless of how often your group meets, we recommend taking breaks between studies so everyone has time to think about what's been discussed.

Every study follows a consistent format, ensuring a smooth flow through each topic. Study #1 includes extra notes to guide you on how to interact with this workbook and your group. While each study introduces a new topic, the approach stays the same.

This study presents spiritual truths that are challenging to grasp without God's help. Thankfully, **God wants everyone to know him and understand enough to trust him** in areas that may seem confusing. God assures that if we ask, he will give us wisdom. We can trust in God's commitment to fulfilling this promise, teaching us what we need to understand to grow in grace and knowledge of him.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Every group needs a leader; not a teacher, but a facilitator to keep things organized, moving, and on point. We recommend this role rotate between participants so that every meeting is led by someone else. Everything you need to facilitate a New Life Study is included in this workbook.

It is important for the facilitator to make sure everyone feels respected and valued regardless of what their belief system is. No one in the group, including the facilitator, needs to be a Christian or believe the content of the study. It's understood the New Life Study presents Christian beliefs. So, by participating, the group members are simply learning and demonstrating an understanding of what Christians believe.

The amount of time needed for an effective study group will depend on the number of participants. An average meeting should take around 90 minutes, give or take a bit. There will be a total of 12 meetings:

Meeting 1—Introduction, Study Tips, and Facilitation overview

Meeting 2—Study #1 (Creation)

Meeting 3—Study #2 (Corruption)

Meeting 4—Study #3 (Covenant)

Meeting 5—Study #4 (Conception)

Meeting 6—Study #5 (Christ)

Meeting 7—Study #6 (Cross)

Meeting 8—Study #7 (Confirmation)

Meeting 9—Study #8 (Confession)

Meeting 10—Study #9 (Consummation)

Meeting 11—Next Steps (Prayer and Bible)

Meeting 12—Next Steps (Testimony and Church)

We encourage you to start each meeting by taking a moment to relax, breathe deeply, and begin a conversation with God by saying something like this:

God, I'm here to learn. Please teach me what you want me to know. I'm setting aside my own thoughts and experience right now. I'm letting go of what others have said or what I think they might say. I'm putting aside what I've always considered common sense. I'm trusting that you will silence the voice of every evil thing that wants to keep me from truth. I invite you to speak to me. Please help me understand what you want me to know and do. Thank you God.

Starting in meeting 2, begin by asking each person how they did with the action steps from the previous meeting. Encourage each other toward love and good deeds. And, invite members to share answers to questions they had in previous meetings.

Before starting each study, review page 10, THE GOSPEL. It is the framework for each study and gives an overview of the Christian story on one page.

Carefully read through the extra notes as you go through Study #1. Following studies have the same format. Just repeat the process:

- Read the study's gospel theme statement.
- Alternate reading the Scripture section.
- Answer the questions about Scripture section together as a group.
- Alternate reading the study section.
- Answer the questions about study section, together as a group.
- Fill-in-the-blank in study summary section, individually.
- Read the study summary together, sharing any unique answers.
- Answer application questions, individually.
- Review application questions, together as a group.
- Dismiss the group.
 1. Thank everyone for coming and participating.
 2. Confirm the day, time, and location of next study.
 3. Identify the next facilitator and anyone bringing something to the next study. (Hint for groups gathering in person: food and drinks make better meetings)
 4. Encourage everyone to share something that they've learned from the study with someone else as soon as possible.

Final important notes to facilitators:

- Discussion of Scripture and what God is showing people is healthy. However, long discussion leading to theories or unrelated topics is not always beneficial. It can be distracting or pointless.
- The facilitator will need to interrupt or some people may take over the whole discussion. If needed, use a timer to let them know when to move to the next person.
- Others will never speak up unless asked directly. Try asking questions to bring them into the discussion.
- It can be very helpful to ask follow-up questions like, "That's interesting. Can you tell us a bit more about what you mean?" This will draw people into deeper discussion. Try to start with a positive remark before asking probing questions.
- Affirmation does not mean agreeing with every opinion. A good facilitator can avoid conflict with affirmation, such as, "I hear what you are saying," "that's a perspective you might want to research more," or "Let's pray and ask God."
- You do not need to have answers to participant's questions. You may have questions of your own that you can't answer. That's perfectly ok. Pray for God to answer these, he is faithful to give us the understanding we need at just the right time.
- Asking God questions with a pure heart is always a good thing. God always rewards those who seek him and promises to give wisdom to everyone who asks him for it. (Matthew 5:3-9; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:5)
- The Hope To Share team is happy to help and encourage you in your journey to encounter God in a meaningful way. You are welcome to reach out to us any time at hopetoshare.com.



THE GOSPEL

The term "gospel" means "Good News," and the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most fantastic news ever. The New Life Study serves as an introduction to the incredible news that God wants us to understand and share with everyone. This workbook contains the nine study themes listed on this page. When combined, they provide a "short story" of the world's history, God's connection with people, and a glimpse into what we can anticipate for the future.

*A GOOD GOD CREATED EVERYTHING AND
EVERYTHING HE CREATED WAS GOOD.*

*PEOPLE REBELLED AGAINST GOD WHICH
BROUGHT THE CURSE OF SIN AND DEATH TO
ALL OF CREATION.*

*GOD PROMISED HE WOULD SAVE HUMANITY AND
ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH.*

*GOD BECAME HUMAN, BORN AS A BABY
NAMED JESUS.*



*JESUS LIVED A PERFECT LIFE, DEMONSTRATING
HIS LOVE FOR HUMANITY WITH DIVINE
AUTHORITY AND POWER.*

*JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED TO SAVE HUMANITY
FROM DESTRUCTION.*

*JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND WILL LIVE
FOREVER AS THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF
ALL CREATION.*

*JESUS GIVES NEW LIFE TO EVERYONE WHO
BELIEVES IN HIM.*

*JESUS IS GOING TO RETURN IN GLORY TO GATHER
HIS PEOPLE AND CREATE A NEW HEAVEN AND
NEW EARTH.*



FIRST STUDY }

1

CREATION

A good God created everything and everything he created was good

THE GOSPEL THEME STATEMENT IS THE MAIN IDEA FOR THIS STUDY. THE FACILITATOR WILL READ THIS ALOUD.

YOU CAN UNDERLINE, CIRCLE, AND WRITE ANYWHERE IN THIS WORKBOOK. SO, WRITE DOWN ANY THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AS YOU GO THROUGH THE STUDY. ASKING QUESTIONS IS ESSENTIAL TO LEARNING. MANY OF YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED LATER IN THIS WORKBOOK. AND REMEMBER, YOU CAN ALWAYS SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS, AND WE WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU FIND GOOD ANSWERS.

SCRIPTURE SECTIONS CONTAIN VERSES FROM THE HOLY BIBLE. THESE PASSAGES SUPPORT AND HIGHLIGHT THE MAIN THEME OF THE GOSPEL STATEMENT. MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WILL TAKE TURNS READING ALOUD, SWITCHING AT PARAGRAPH BREAKS FOR A SMOOTHER FLOW.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Genesis 1:1,24-31 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... **24** Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. **25** God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and

small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. **26** Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

27 So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. **28** Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.” **29** Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing

plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. **30** And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened. **31** Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS ARE IN THE SCRIPTURE SECTION YOU JUST READ. WORK TOGETHER WITH YOUR GROUP TO DISCOVER THE ANSWERS. MOST ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD. BUT, IN SOME INSTANCES, THERE CAN BE MORE THAN ONE CORRECT ANSWER. HAVE FUN AND ENJOY THE PROCESS!

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1** Who created the heavens and the earth? (vs.1)
- 2** In whose image were human beings created? (vs. 26-27)
- 3** What was the first thing God said to the man and woman he created? (vs. 28)
- 4** What did God think about all that he made? (vs. 31)

STUDY SECTION 1

Everything we perceive—what we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch—was created at what the Bible calls “the beginning” of time, space, and matter. However, God existed before the beginning. Before establishing time, space, and matter in the physical realm, God existed in the spiritual realm. God is eternal, supremely powerful, self-sustaining, and lacks nothing. His

STUDY SECTIONS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND NECESSARY DETAILS OF SCRIPTURE SECTIONS AND REVEAL ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STUDY TOPIC. [MEMBERS TAKE TURNS READING THIS SECTION ALOUD.]

knowledge includes everything, everywhere, spanning past, present, and future. God spoke and, through the power of his word, the entire universe and everything in it was formed, according to his perfect design.

Humans are uniquely crafted by God, different from all other creatures in the universe. He gave us the ability to feel deeply, understand ourselves, and make decisions beyond basic instincts. God gave us the capacity to create and exchange ideas, invent new technology, and explore the complexities of creation. These uniquely human characteristics were given for a purpose. They are part of what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. We were crafted for meaningful relationship with God and one another.

God gave the entire world to the first humans, like a wedding present, and entrusted them to take care of it under his guidance and authority. During this period, everything was exactly as it was designed to be. There was no pain, sorrow, sickness, or death. There was no fear, hunger, or insecurity. All of creation was good, healthy, and productive. And when God looked over everything he had created, he saw that it was very good!

*We were crafted for meaningful
relationship with God and one another.*

THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS ARE WITHIN THE STUDY SECTION JUST READ. AGAIN, THERE MIGHT BE A SINGLE CLEAR ANSWER OR MULTIPLE WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE QUESTION. WORK TOGETHER AND LEARN HOW EACH MEMBER EXPRESSES THEIR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 What was created in “the beginning”?
- 2 Who existed before the beginning?
- 3 Why did God design people the way he did?
- 4 To whom did God give authority to govern the whole world?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Psalm 33:1-18 Let the godly sing for joy to the LORD; it is fitting for the pure to praise him. **2** Praise the LORD with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten-stringed harp. **3** Sing a new song of praise to him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy. **4** For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does. **5** He loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the LORD fills the earth. **6** The LORD merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born. **7** He assigned the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs. **8** Let the whole world fear the LORD, and let everyone stand in awe of him. **9** For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command.

the nations and thwarts all their schemes. **11** But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken. **12** What joy for the nation whose God is the LORD, whose people he has chosen as his inheritance. **13** The LORD looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race. **14** From his throne he observes all who live on the earth. **15** He made their hearts, so he understands everything they do. **16** The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior. **17** Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory—for all its strength, it cannot save you. **18** But the LORD watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love.

10 The LORD frustrates the plans of

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1** What does verse 4 say about the word of the LORD?
- 2** What does verse 5 say the earth is filled with?
- 3** How were the heavens and the stars created? (vs. 6)
- 4** What does the LORD observe from heaven? (vs. 13-14)

STUDY SECTION 2

The capitalized term "LORD" is a translation of God's specific name "YHWH" spelled without vowels because it is so sacred it should not be spoken as if common. The LORD is God, the Creator and sustainer of everything. He is unique. There is none like him. He is good, and everything associated with him reflects that goodness. His actions, words, and nature are all characterized by goodness, and he takes pleasure in justice and goodness.

The LORD is not a distant observer; he actively participates in everything happening on the earth. He is aware of everything, and he understands everything perfectly. Nothing can be hidden from him, and no one can fool him. His knowledge reaches to every corner of existence and encompasses everything, including the secret dreams and desires hidden in our hearts.

The LORD is holy and worthy of our utmost respect. As the Creator of the entire physical universe and the supreme ruler of the spiritual realm, the LORD rightfully holds authority over us. He establishes earthly kingdoms under his rule, inviting both the great and the small to acknowledge him as the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Those who place their trust in the LORD have great joy and confidence, knowing that he watches over those who honor and rely on his unwavering love.

*The LORD merely spoke, and
the heavens were created.*

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does the term "LORD" represent?
- 2 What are some of the characteristics of God?
- 3 Who can keep a secret from God?
- 4 What do those who put their trust in the LORD have?

STUDY SUMMARY

The LORD is _____. Everything he does is good.
_____ about him is good.

God _____ everything in the universe for us to enjoy,
and he created us for him to enjoy. We were designed to have a
_____ relationship with God.

God gave the whole world to _____ to reign and
rule over. There was no pain, sorrow, sickness, or
_____. There was no fear, hunger, or insecurity.

Everything was _____. The next study will reveal
how everything was broken and why the world is now full of so
many things that are not good.

*SOME EXAMPLE ANSWERS TO THE STUDY
SUMMARY. IT'S OKAY IF YOUR ANSWERS ARE
DIFFERENT.*

Study Summary Answers: good ; Everything ; created ; meaningful ; humankind ; death ; perfect

THIS IS A FILL-IN-THE-BLANK EXERCISE. THE ANSWERS COULD BE FOUND ANYWHERE IN THIS STUDY OR A PREVIOUS STUDY. THERE CAN BE NUMEROUS GOOD ANSWERS. TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION PRIVATELY. [FACILITATOR READ, OR ASK SOMEONE ELSE TO READ, THE SUMMARY SECTION ALOUD, INCLUDING THEIR WRITE-INS. THEN INVITE EVERYONE TO SHARE ANY DIFFERENT ANSWERS WRITTEN.]

THESE ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES COMPLEMENT THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STUDY. CONSIDERING TIME CONSTRAINTS, IT IS RECOMMENDED TO EXPLORE THEM ON YOUR OWN BETWEEN GROUP SESSIONS. IF THESE SCRIPTURES RAISE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS, DON'T WORRY, MANY WILL BE ANSWERED IN FUTURE STUDIES. IF READING INTO THESE EXTRA SCRIPTURES CAUSES CONFUSION, SKIP TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS, AND COMPLETE ALL THE STUDIES FIRST. THEN, REVISIT THE ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES IN EACH SECTION, AND SEE HOW THEY TIE IN ONCE THE OVERALL THEME HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY EXPLAINED.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Genesis 1:1-31

Nehemiah 9:6

Psalm 33:1-22

Psalms 104

Isaiah 45:18-23

Jeremiah 32:17

1 Corinthians 8:5-6

Colossians 1:15-17

Revelation 4:11

WHEN ANSWERING THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS, BEGIN BY ASKING GOD TO GUIDE YOUR UNDERSTANDING. ANSWER EACH QUESTION IN YOUR OWN WORDS INSTEAD OF COPYING THE ANSWER FROM THE STUDY. THIS SECTION WILL HELP YOU REFLECT ON WHAT YOU LEARNED.

TAKE PLENTY OF TIME AND SPACE FOR THIS SECTION AS IT OFTEN BECOMES A GREAT CONNECTION POINT WITH GOD AND OTHERS.

IF YOU'RE DOING THE STUDY ON YOUR OWN, DON'T SKIP THESE QUESTIONS. THIS IS WHERE YOU WILL GAIN THE MOST UNDERSTANDING. GOD MAY COMMUNICATE THROUGH NEW THOUGHTS AND BRING A SENSE OF PEACE AND CONFIDENCE TO YOUR HEART. SEIZE THE CHANCE TO CONNECT DIRECTLY WITH GOD.

ONCE EVERYONE HAS ANSWERED ALL FIVE QUESTIONS, SHARE YOUR RESPONSES ONE AT A TIME WITH THE GROUP—READ A QUESTION AND HAVE EVERY PERSON ANSWER THE SAME QUESTION UNTIL ALL ANSWERS HAVE BEEN SHARED. THEN READ THE NEXT QUESTION AND REPEAT THE CYCLE UNTIL EVERYONE HAS SHARED ALL THEIR ANSWERS. TAKING TURNS IS A SAFE WAY TO HELP EVERYONE SHARE.

KEEP IN MIND, IT'S OK (AND EVEN EXPECTED) TO HAVE SOME OF THE SAME ANSWERS AS OTHERS. IT'S REASSURING WHEN OTHERS SHARE SIMILAR THOUGHTS. IT IS ALSO GOOD TO HEAR DIFFERENT OPINIONS. EVERYONE BENEFITS THIS WAY. TRY TO AVOID GENERAL RESPONSES LIKE "ME TOO" OR "YEAH, WHAT THEY SAID" AND GIVE FULL ANSWERS EVEN IF SIMILAR TO WHAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS ALREADY SAID.

IT'S OKAY NOT TO HAVE ANY QUESTIONS RIGHT NOW. BUT, IF YOU DO, WRITE THEM DOWN TO DISCUSS LATER. SOME QUESTIONS MIGHT GET ANSWERED IN FUTURE STUDIES OR GROUP DISCUSSION. SOME QUESTIONS MAY REQUIRE GUIDANCE FROM SOMEONE MORE EXPERIENCED. REGARDLESS, IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS YOU HAD AT THE BEGINNING AND HOW MANY YOU'VE FOUND ANSWERS TO LATER. FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO US WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU STILL HAVE AT THE END.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 1 What have I learned about God during this study?
- 2 What have I learned about people during this study?
- 3 What have I learned about me during this study?
- 4 What will I do now that I know these things?
- 5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



2

CORRUPTION

People rebelled against God which brought the curse of sin and death to all of creation

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Genesis 3:1-19 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" **2** "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. **3** "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

4 "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. **5** "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." **6** The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.

7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. **8** When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. **9** Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" **10** He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked." **11** "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

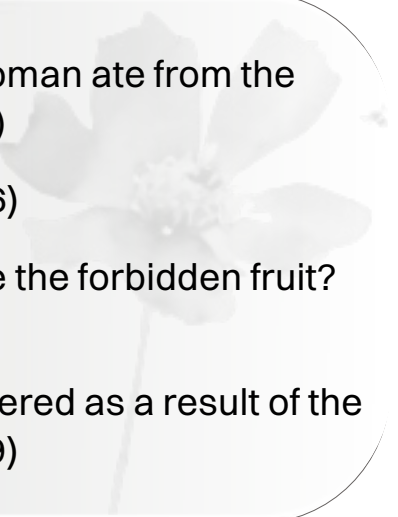
12 The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it." **13** Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it." **14** Then the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you

are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. **15** And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

16 Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control

your husband, but he will rule over you.” **17** And to the man he said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. **18** It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. **19** By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 
- 1** What did God say would happen if the man or woman ate from the forbidden tree in the middle of the garden? (vs. 3)
 - 2** Why did the woman eat the forbidden fruit? (vs. 6)
 - 3** What did the man and woman feel when they ate the forbidden fruit? (vs. 7)
 - 4** What are some consequences that creation suffered as a result of the first man and woman disobeying God? (vs. 16-19)

STUDY SECTION 1

You may have several questions to write down after reading that Scripture carefully. Here are some common ones:

- How could a serpent speak?
- Why did the serpent want to deceive the man and woman?
- If everything God made was good, where did the bad serpent come from?
- Why did they believe the serpent instead of God?
- Why didn't they die like God said they would?
- Why were the consequences for eating a piece of fruit so severe?

Remember, you can write your questions down in the margins as you think of them or on the last page of each study under application question #5.

God warned the man and woman that eating the forbidden fruit would bring death. The serpent claimed God was lying and promised eating the fruit would give them wisdom and god-like status. Choosing to trust the serpent and follow his suggestion, the man and woman set in motion a chain of events that caused sin and death to invade all of creation. Temptation lured them away from God's Kingdom of light and life into the evil kingdom of darkness and death. When they ate the fruit, they surrendered their authority as 'gods' of this world to the serpent.

That's why the world is so broken today. All the heartache and wickedness began when our ancestors dishonored God and chose to serve themselves. They learned the hard way that we become a slave to what we decide to obey. They obeyed the evil serpent and became a slave to the kingdom of darkness. The entire world and all its children are now born into darkness and death.

So, how is it that they, and all their children, seem to be alive even though God said they would die if they ate the forbidden fruit? The answer to this is found in understanding that people are made of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. We are in essence a spirit, with a soul (where our will, mind, and emotions exist), that is living in a body. We are designed to live through intimate and unbroken connection with God because he is the source of true life.

Without God, there is only a shadow of life. The 'life' people experience without God isn't true life, it's an empty shell of what life is supposed to be. When the first man and woman chose to believe the serpent, they were cut off from God and their spirit became 'dead' to him. Their soul was corrupted and became a slave to the kingdom of darkness. And their bodies began to die like a flower that has been cut off from its roots. Though it appears to live for a while, it's actually dead and will soon wilt, dry up, and return to the dirt from which it grew.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is there so much brokenness in the world?
- 2 What are the three parts of a person?
- 3 In which part of a person are their will, mind, and emotions?
- 4 Who is the source of true life?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Isaiah 24:4-6 The earth mourns and dries up, and the land wastes away and withers. Even the greatest people on earth waste away. **5** The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have

twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore, a curse consumes the earth. Its people must pay the price for their sin.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 
- 1 What does God say is wasting away? (vs. 4)
 - 2 Why is the earth suffering? (vs. 5)
 - 3 Why does a curse consume the earth? (vs. 5-6)
 - 4 Who must pay the price for sin? (vs. 6)

STUDY SECTION 2

"Sin" is any action or attitude that goes against God's purposes. The first sin we learned about was the act of disobedience. But, before sin becomes an action, it begins as a wrong thought or belief. The woman, in this case, thought the tree was appealing and was tempted by its fruit (that's lust). She wanted more than what she had (that's discontentment). She believed that being "like God" was better than prospering under God's reign and rule (that's pride and rebellion).

Though we can't fully understand her thoughts, it's clear she was misguided. The serpent's lie led her to question God's goodness and entertain the idea that God was withholding something more from her. Her husband watched silently as she was deceived. Even though they were already created in the image of God and had authority over the entire world, they listened to the serpent and threw away everything that mattered to go after a lie; who they were and what they had wasn't enough.

That is the nature of deception. It starts with a false idea that stirs up selfish desires that entice us into sinful actions. Before long, we lose sight of reason and responsibility. As we make excuses for our behavior, our minds become

dull and confused, unable to see that we are being carried away into deeper darkness. Every misstep brings a greater curse that consumes us and the world around us.

Every twisting of God's instructions, violation of his laws, and breaking of his covenant are steps toward the destruction of ourselves, others, and the earth. The whole world is guilty. Not only were the man and woman cursed, but their offspring also inherited the effect of sin. We are all born with selfish desires that lead to disobedience. This is the curse of violating the order and boundaries God put in place to protect and provide for everyone.

The earth suffers for the sins of its people.

Order and boundaries were put in place to protect us, not limit us. Everything God tells us to do is for our own good. When people trusted and obeyed God, they were citizens in his spiritual Kingdom and enjoyed all the rights and privileges that came with that. But, when they sinned against God, they left his Kingdom, entered the kingdom of darkness, and became enemies of God. Nothing they could do would reverse the effects of sin or restore their citizenship in God's Kingdom.

Ever since then, people in every generation have become even more wicked and self-centered, separating themselves further from God. If the first people deserved death for eating forbidden fruit, everyone who has ever lived deserves to die for all their selfish motives, wicked thoughts, words, and actions that go against God's purposes.

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What is sin?
- 2 What does sin cause?
- 3 Why did God put order and boundaries in place?
- 4 What does every person who has ever lived deserve?

STUDY SUMMARY

People are a _____ with a _____ living in a _____. The world and everything in it, including humankind, was originally created perfect. But we _____ against God which resulted in the _____ of all creation. Our _____ died immediately, our soul was _____ and our bodies began to _____.

The first man and woman, and all their children up till now, were corrupted by dishonoring God and selfishly pursuing things believed to be withheld from them. They were dissatisfied in simply trusting and obeying God. This is where the deceit started, and it's the same source of temptation that still affects people to this day.

There is no way for us to restore the world back to the way it was before we sinned. No number of good deeds can undo the sins we've committed. As citizens of the kingdom of darkness, our future ends in death and destruction unless God does something amazing; something we could never dream of or do for ourselves. Our next study will begin to explore God's plan and promises to restore the meaningful relationship he wants to have with us.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Genesis 2:15-17

Isaiah 59:2

Romans 3:10-18

Genesis 3:1-19

John 8:34

Romans 5:12-14

Isaiah 24:4-6

Romans 1:18-32

Romans 8:19-22

Study Summary Answers: spirit ; soul ; body ; sinned ; death ; spirit ; corrupted ; die

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1 What have I learned about God during this study?

2 What have I learned about people during this study?

3 What have I learned about me during this study?

4 What will I do now that I know these things?

5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



3

COVENANT

*God promised he would save
humanity and establish his Kingdom
on earth*

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Jeremiah 23:3-6 But I will gather together the remnant of my flock from the countries where I have driven them. I will bring them back to their own sheepfold, and they will be fruitful and increase in number. **4** Then I will appoint responsible shepherds who will care for them, and they will never be afraid again.

Not a single one will be lost or missing. I, the LORD, have spoken! **5** “For the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David’s line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. **6** And this will be his name: ‘The LORD Is Our Righteousness.’

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1** What will the remnant do when they are gathered together? (vs. 3)
- 2** Who says his people will never be afraid again and that not even one will be lost or missing? (vs. 4)
- 3** Who will come from King David’s lineage? (vs. 5)
- 4** What name will this great King be called? (vs. 6)

STUDY SECTION 1

'The LORD Is Our Righteousness' is a translation of one of the specific names God uses when relating to his people. It would make more sense if the name meant 'The LORD Is Righteous.' We easily accept that as true because he is perfect and just in every thought, feeling, and action. God is blameless, without any fault or failure. He is pure, good, and there is no darkness in him. Thus, the LORD is righteous.

But this term translates 'The LORD Is Our Righteousness'. What does that mean? We are not righteous. We are exactly the opposite of righteous. We are full of sin and there is no way for us to become righteous by ourselves. But, to have meaningful relationship with God, we must become righteous. Why? Why can't God just overlook our sin and failure, forgive us, and forget about all the wicked things we've done?

Well, first, God's justice demands a penalty for the harm our decisions cause. A world without consequences would be barbaric, survival of the strongest, with everyone doing whatever they please regardless of who suffers. Sound familiar? This describes the world today, a kingdom of darkness and death we can't escape.

*“Because God values us and wants us to
walk in light and truth, he promises to do
for us what we could never do for ourselves.”*

There are still glimpses of God's goodness in the world, but we are helpless and hopelessly lost in spiritual darkness, disconnected from God, with no source of light. But, because God values us and wants us to walk in light and truth, he promises to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. He promises to reveal his glory and extend his goodness, kindness, patience, and love to us even when we don't deserve it. He promises to become our righteousness.

The only way for the LORD to become our righteousness is for him to take our place, to represent us, and credit us with what he deserves instead of

judging us based on what we deserve. Think of it like being declared guilty for a terrible crime. As the judge decides the penalty for your crime, God comes to take your place and you go free. The judge sees God in your seat and says, "paid in full." To be our righteousness, the LORD would have to become human and live a perfect life; like the one we were designed to live. We'll talk more about that later. For now, just know that he has to pay the full penalty for sin in order to take back the authority humans relinquished to the serpent.

You may wonder why an all-powerful God would go to such trouble and not just squish a lowly serpent. Well, as explained, God is righteous and just to uphold the order established and the authority he delegated. We made a bad deal, but God was obligated by his own honor to allow the consequences of our actions to unfold. Sin must be paid for in full. The price for sin is death, but God will do whatever it takes to keep his promise of saving his people.

Another point worthy of mention is that the serpent wasn't just a snake. He was an angel created by God to serve him and minister to people. Instead, the serpent chose to become the deceiver, and is now known by such names as "Satan" (which means adversary) or "Devil" (which means accuser). He is the deceiver who rules the kingdom of darkness and became the 'god' of this world when humanity relinquished their authority to him. He is the one the LORD must defeat on our behalf to restore us to our rightful place in his Kingdom.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does the term 'righteous' mean?
- 2 What would a world without consequences be like?
- 3 Why did the LORD have to become human?
- 4 What are some names the serpent is known by?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Genesis 17:7 "I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you."

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does God promise to confirm?
- 2 Who did God include in his covenant?
- 3 How long will this covenant last?
- 4 What is this covenant?

STUDY SECTION 2

God knows the heart of people and how easily they forget, become deceived, and are led astray. So, he established a covenant with his people and had them write down his promises and prophecies. This way every passing generation would have a record of his commitment to them. As Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our sons forever..."

Across generations, God revealed secrets and guided his people by speaking through prophets. Every proclamation made by a prophet in the name of the LORD had to be true



because God never lies. If a prophet's statement was proven false, they would be killed for misrepresenting the LORD. It is crucial to remember, the Scriptures only include prophecies from those who consistently proved to be accurate throughout their entire lives.

Over a span of more than 1,000 years, these prophets wrote down hundreds of details concerning God's plan to save his people. In the next Scripture section, we're going to explore just eight of the prophecies that relate to a promised Savior. These were written by various prophets who lived in separate generations, over 700 years before any of these predictions came true.

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does God know about the heart of people?
- 2 How has God revealed secrets and guided his people?
- 3 What happened if a prophet was wrong about something they said the LORD had told them?
- 4 How many details did God give his prophets about his plan to save his people?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3

Some prophecies of the savior to come:

(1) He will be a descendant of King David.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. 13 He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

(2) He will be born of a virgin.

Isaiah 7:14 ...the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

(3) He will be born in the city of Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

(4) He will be betrayed, rejected, and ridiculed by those he came to save.

Psalms 22:6-8 I am scorned and despised by all! 7 Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, 8 "Is this the one who relies on the LORD? Then let the LORD save him! If the LORD loves him so much, let the LORD rescue him!"

(5) He will be killed by crucifixion for our sins.

Isaiah 53:3-6 He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. 4 Yet it was our

weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! 5 But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. 6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.

Psalm 22:16 My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

(6) He will be killed with criminals.

Isaiah 53:12 I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

(7) His executioners will gamble for his clothing.

Psalm 22:18 They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing.

(8) He will be resurrected from the dead.

Psalm 16:10 For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 How long will his royal throne endure? (2 Samuel 7:13)
- 2 What was the sign the LORD said he would give? (Isaiah 7:14)
- 3 Why would the Savior be beaten and killed? (Isaiah 53:5-6)
- 4 Who did the LORD say will not rot in the grave? (Psalm 16:10)

STUDY SECTION 3

The eight prophecies we've examined are a small fraction of the numerous predictions that the Savior had to fulfill. Yet, these eight alone are enough to demonstrate God's remarkable plan and ability to accomplish what would be impossible for anyone else. Only a God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and omnipresent could foresee and fulfill these prophecies.

Some may think that since everyone knew about these prophecies, someone could plan or just pretend to fulfill them. That's impossible because these are predicting things that are completely out of any person's ability to control. And there are too many witnesses of these events for anyone to believe they were faked.

No one could arrange their (1) birth into a specific family, let alone (2) being born to a virgin. It's impossible for someone to select their (3) birthplace, especially if it's a city where their parents don't live. One cannot organize being (4) betrayed, rejected, ridiculed, and sentenced to (5) personal death, specifically through crucifixion, (6) alongside two others, while ensuring (7) their executioners gamble for their clothing. And, most remarkably (8) escaping from the grave and appearing alive to hundreds of people who witnessed their death!

*“I will always be your God and the
God of your descendants after you.”*

In the following studies, we'll examine how each of these prophecies were fulfilled in the birth, life, death, and resurrection—where the promised Savior was supernaturally raised from the dead, offering undeniable proof of the LORD's faithfulness to honor his word and the great lengths he will go to save his people.

STUDY SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does the fulfillment of these prophecies demonstrate?
- 2 What makes these prophecies impossible for a person to plan?
- 3 What makes the fulfillment of these prophecies impossible to pretend?
- 4 What does the fulfillment of these prophecies prove?

STUDY SUMMARY

A _____ God created everything and _____ he created was good. The entire creation suffered the curse of sin and _____ because people dishonored God. Because of his unfailing _____, God ordained a plan to _____ his people from the slavery of _____ and death and establish his _____ on earth.

God revealed this plan progressively, a little piece at a time, over many generations so that people could be confident in his character, nature, faithfulness, and ability to fulfill everything he promised.

In our next study, we will explore the arrival of the promised Savior and the fulfillment of the first three prophecies we've examined in this study.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Genesis 17:7

2 Samuel 7:12-13

Psalms 22

Exodus 34:6-7

Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah 53:3-12

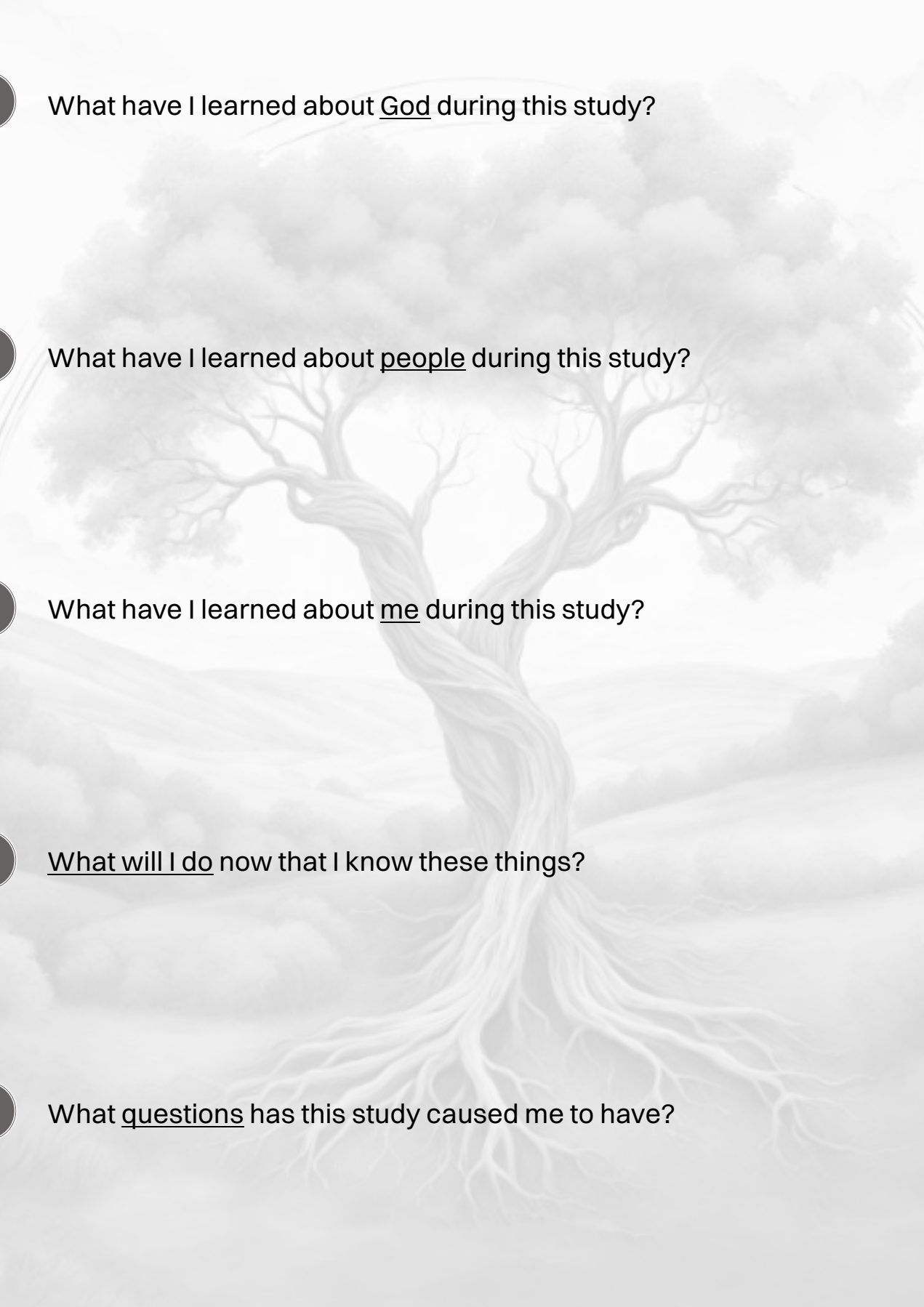
Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Micah 5:2

Psalms 16:10

Study Summary Answers: good ; everything ; death ; love ; rescue/save ; sin ; Kingdom

APPLICATION QUESTIONS



1 What have I learned about God during this study?

2 What have I learned about people during this study?

3 What have I learned about me during this study?

4 What will I do now that I know these things?

5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



4

CONCEPTION

*God became human, born as a baby
named Jesus*

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Luke 1:26-35 God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, **27** to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. **28** Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" **29** Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. **30** "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!

31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. **33** And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" **34** Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin." **35** The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1** Why was Mary told she should not be afraid? (vs. 30)
- 2** What was Mary told to name her son? (vs. 31)
- 3** Who did God's messenger say Mary's baby would become? (vs. 32-33)
- 4** How was it possible for a virgin to become pregnant? (vs. 35)

STUDY SECTION 1

We see two prophecies spoken of in the last study fulfilled in this Scripture.

(1) The Savior would be a descendant of King David. This prophecy was documented in 2 Samuel 7:12-13 during King David's reign from 1,010-970 BC (Before Christ).

(2) The Savior would be born of a virgin. This prophecy was documented in Isaiah 7:14 about 700 years before its fulfillment.

Imagine how Mary must have felt to learn she'd been chosen by God to give birth to the Savior. This was something her people anticipated for thousands of years. How exhilarating to receive an angel's visit and the news that the time had come! This meant that people would finally be set free from the curse of sin and death, and she was the one blessed to bring this miraculous child into the world!

He will be called the Son of the Most High.

But the Scriptures tell us Mary felt both confused and disturbed. Being a virgin, she was confused how she would become pregnant without a man. When she asked the angel how this was possible, the angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."

This answer may have caused more confusion than clarity. First, Mary had probably never heard of the Holy Spirit. She was familiar with the term "Spirit of the LORD" because it was often used in Scriptures to describe the presence of the LORD when he interacted with people. But, in this case, the angel used the uncommon term "Holy Spirit" and made a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High.

Mary was probably also confused by the whole idea of having the Son of God as her baby. While Mary and her people had been looking forward to the Savior for thousands of years, they hadn't realized up until this time that the Savior would be the Son of God.

Mary was also disturbed considering the culture of that time allowed punishment or even death for those engaging in sexual relations before marriage. What would happen when her fiancé, Joseph, found out she was pregnant? Would he believe that God supernaturally made her pregnant? Would he believe that she was still a virgin? And even if Joseph did believe her, what would their families and community think?

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 How many years in advance were these two prophecies made?
- 2 What kind of emotions did Mary experience?
- 3 What were some of the things Mary was confused about?
- 4 What could happen if Mary was found guilty of having sex before marriage?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Matthew 1:18-25 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. **19** Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

20 As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the

Holy Spirit. **21** And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: **23** "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" **24** When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. **25** But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 What kind of man does the Scripture say Joseph was? (vs. 19)
- 2 How did the angel (God's messenger) appear to Joseph? (vs. 20)
- 3 What did the angel say Jesus would do for his people? (vs. 21)
- 4 What do Jesus and Immanuel mean? (v. 23)

*The baby to be born will be holy, and he will be
called the Son of God.*

STUDY SECTION 2

Consider how Joseph felt when he discovered that Mary was telling the truth about her pregnancy. His relief and excitement must have been enormous. But, like Mary, Joseph probably had a mix of emotions. Imagine the awe and fear of learning that his humble family would have a crucial role in the most significant event in human history—the long-awaited arrival of Jesus, the Messiah.

The term 'Messiah' held great significance for Joseph and Mary. In their language, it means 'the anointed one,' 'Christ,' and 'Savior of the world.' Salvation, anticipated for thousands of years, was now becoming a reality. It would have been amazing for the Savior to arrive during their lifetime, but more remarkable, he came into their family and their modest home!

And, even more astonishing, they were introduced to the idea that God himself would walk among us as a human. Prior to the angel's announcement, Mary and Joseph hadn't understood the three-in-one nature of God. While there are many indirect references to God's three-in-one nature in Scripture, the angel drew the first direct connection in history.

This brought a new understanding to the prophecy made in Isaiah 7:14, “...the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).”

The LORD had his prophet write this down 700 years before revealing what it meant. Now the pieces of this mystery were beginning to take form. They now realized God includes the Father (Most High), Jesus (Son of God), and the Holy Spirit. They are three distinct persons, all equally God, existing in complete unity. Together, they represent one God, the LORD God. This is a hard truth to grasp so, for now, let’s just make it clear that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate gods. They are one God with three distinct representations and roles.

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child!”

Now Joseph and Mary have learned the Messiah is not only the Son of God, but he is also God the Son. While that is a tough concept, God becoming a baby is even more mind boggling. Imagine the Creator of the universe born as a tiny, vulnerable infant. He went from the heights of supreme authority down to the depths of total dependency. How humble a state for the Creator of all things to put himself in—all because he cares so much for us.

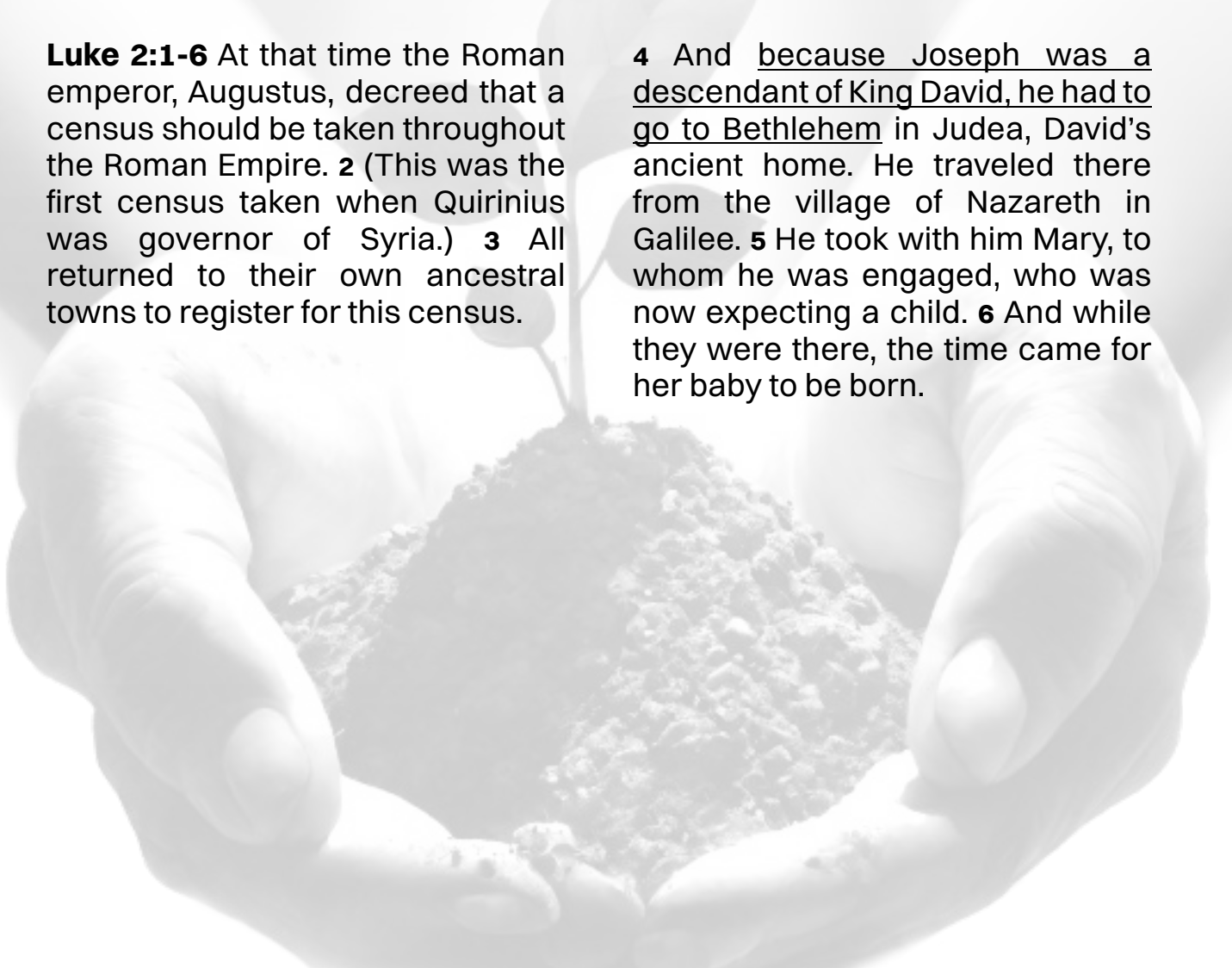
STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the most important event in human history?
- 2 What does ‘Messiah’ mean?
- 3 What is the three-in-one nature of God?
- 4 Why did God humble himself to be born a human child?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3

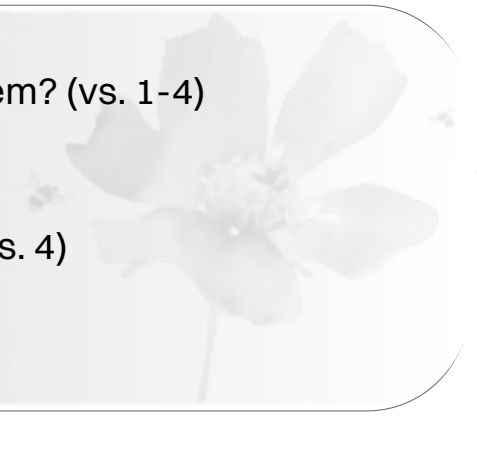
Luke 2:1-6 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. **2** (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) **3** All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. **5** He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.



“God himself would walk among us as human.”

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 
- 1** Why did Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem? (vs. 1-4)
 - 2** Who ordered the census be taken? (vs. 1-2)
 - 3** What village did Joseph and Mary live in? (vs. 4)
 - 4** Where was their baby born? (vs. 4-6)

STUDY SECTION 3

In this Scripture, we see the third prophecy spoken of in New Life Study #3 fulfilled.

(1) The Savior would be born in the city of Bethlehem. This prophecy was documented in Micah 5:2 about 750 years before its fulfillment.

Matthew and Luke each give a different family tree for Jesus. One traces Joseph's family back to King David, while the other follows Mary's lineage to the same ancestor. It wasn't by chance these two descendants of King David got married—it was the careful and insightful plan of God. He chose them because they would honor him, accept the miracle of Jesus' birth, and raise him with love and devotion.

Their shared family history from King David is really important because of how sin passes through the man's bloodline. Jesus needed to be born in a special way, through a virgin, to avoid inheriting a sinful nature from an earthly father. So, by being born to Mary, Jesus was connected to the bloodline of King David without inheriting sin like everyone born through natural conception. In this respect, Jesus was like Adam, the first man God created without sin and in perfect relationship with God.

When Joseph adopted Jesus, it established him as an official descendant of King David. This was crucial because the king's throne was always passed to a son. Without Joseph's link to King David, Jesus' royal ancestry would not have been recognized, despite his mother's bloodline. God brought Joseph and Mary together to ensure all the spiritual and legal requirements were met. To complete another prophecy, God influenced the emperor to order a census, leading Joseph and Mary to the city where the Savior was foretold to be born.

STUDY SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 How many years in advance was Jesus' birthplace predicted?
- 2 What common ancestor do Joseph and Mary have?
- 3 From whom is the sin nature inherited?
- 4 Who inspired the emperor to order a census?

STUDY SUMMARY

The birth of _____ was a miraculous fulfillment of ancient prophecies. Joseph and Mary, both descendants of King _____, have important roles. Mary, a virgin, conceives through the _____, ensuring Jesus is born without inheriting a _____. Joseph legally _____ Jesus, solidifying his royal lineage. The prophecy of Jesus' birth in _____ is fulfilled through a _____ ordered by the Roman emperor.

Little is known about Jesus' life as a child. Scripture tells us, "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people." (Luke 2:52) It wasn't until 30 years of age that he began teaching publicly and performing miraculous deeds. These are what we will explore in our next study.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Isaiah 9:2-7

Luke 1:26-35

Matthew 1:18-25

Luke 2:1-38

Matthew 2:1-23

John 3:16-18

Galatians 4:4-5

Philippians 2:5-11

Colossians 2:9

Study Summary Answers: Jesus ; David ; Holy Spirit ; sinful nature ; adopts ; Bethlehem ; census

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1 What have I learned about God during this study?

2 What have I learned about people during this study?

3 What have I learned about me during this study?

4 What will I do now that I know these things?

5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



5

CHRIST

*Jesus lived a perfect life,
demonstrating his love for humanity
with divine authority and power*

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

John 1:1-5,14,18 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He existed in the beginning with God. **3** God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. **4** The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it...

14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son... **18** No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1** Who existed before the beginning? (vs. 1)
- 2** Who created and gave life to everything? (vs. 3-4)
- 3** Who became human in verse 14?
- 4** Who has revealed God to us? (vs. 18)

STUDY SECTION 1

This Scripture is one of the clearest assertions of Jesus being God. Verses 14 and 18 make it clear that 'the Word,' is referring to Jesus. Let's take another look at these passages with Jesus' name being put in place of 'the Word'... In the beginning Jesus already existed. Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. **2** He existed in the beginning with God. **3** God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. **4** Jesus gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it... **14** So Jesus became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son... **18** No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

Jesus existed before the physical universe came into being. He's called 'the Word' because he's the one who spoke the words that brought everything we see, hear, taste, smell, and touch into existence.

Jesus is the visible representation of God. As the Son of God on earth, he lived as a man in complete submission to God the Father, drawing power from the Holy Spirit. Together, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit provide a blueprint for how we're meant to live—in complete unity with God.

We were originally designed to reflect God's image and likeness, but we completely messed things up by disrespecting our Creator. We couldn't fix things on our own, and God didn't want our relationship with him to stay broken. So, Jesus, the Creator of everything, came to restore things to the way they were meant to be.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1** Why is Jesus called the 'Word'?
- 2** Who is Jesus the visible representation of?
- 3** How are people meant to live?
- 4** Why did Jesus come?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Luke 7:20-22 John's two disciples found Jesus and said to him, "John the Baptist sent us to ask, 'Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?'" **21** At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to

many who were blind. **22** Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor."

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What did John the Baptist send his disciples to ask Jesus? (vs. 20)
- 2 What was Jesus doing when they asked him this question? (vs. 21)
- 3 What testimony did they bring back to John the Baptist? (vs. 22)
- 4 Who was the Good News preached to? (vs. 22)

STUDY SECTION 2

While Jesus lived on earth, he faced the same temptations we do. Unlike us, he always chose to honor his Father. Jesus lived a flawless life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. He dedicated his time to teaching people about God and his Kingdom, demonstrating how to love and serve others without fear or prejudice. He warmly welcomed anyone with a humble heart and shared profound wisdom with everyone willing to learn.

Jesus did amazing things no one had ever seen before. If interested in reading about his incredible miracles, you can find Scripture references at the end of this study. Some examples include:

- delivering people from evil spirits,
- healing all manner of diseases like leprosy, continuous bleeding, and all sorts of sicknesses,

- feeding around 5,000 men, plus women and children, with only five loaves of bread and two fish,
- walking on water and calming storms,
- bringing numerous people back to life after they died,
- giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and a voice to those who couldn't speak,
- healing those who were paralyzed, had crippled legs, and deformed hands and,
- forgiving sins and freeing people from shame and condemnation.

Jesus healed everyone who came to him. In one powerful story (Luke 5:12-13), a leper approached Jesus and said, "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean." Jesus chose to touch the contagious man and said, "I am willing. Be healed!" and the leprosy vanished instantly. This event was more than physical healing; it was also about restoring the man's soul.

This man was deemed "untouchable" because of his incurable skin disease. He was banished to live outside the community so others wouldn't be infected. Whenever he approached anyone in the community, he was required to shout "unclean!" as a warning for them to keep their distance. Imagine being isolated while covered in painful, smelly sores, and labeled "unclean!"

“Jesus is the visible representation of God.”

That was his identity, and there was no natural way to change it. Having witnessed Jesus perform supernatural acts, the leper decided the risk of approaching was worth it. He thought, "I know I'm repulsive and unworthy of help, but I believe Jesus can heal me if he's willing." Jesus responded with more love and compassion than the man had dared hope. Jesus drew close enough to look him in the eyes. Shocking everyone, he touched the leper and declared, "I am willing. Be healed!" In that moment, more than the man's skin was healed; Jesus saw him, loved him, touched him, and restored both his body and soul.

This event clearly shows the truth of this Scripture: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the

devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you.” (James 4:6-8) No matter how unclean or unworthy a person may feel, when they humble themselves and draw near to God, God responds with love and compassion. Why? Because God wants everyone to experience healing and restoration—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. That’s why he took on human form—to demonstrate his boundless love and show us how to receive eternal life.

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What did Jesus choose to do every time he was tempted?
- 2 What are some of the characteristics that marked Jesus’ life?
- 3 What are some of the miracles Jesus did?
- 4 What does Jesus want everyone to experience?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3

John 10:24-38 The people surrounded him and asked, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” **25** Jesus replied, “I have already told you, and you don’t believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father’s name. **26** But you don’t believe me because you are not my sheep.

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, **29** for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand. **30** The Father and I are one.”

31 Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. **32** Jesus said, “At my Father’s direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?” **33** They replied, “We’re stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God.”

34 Jesus replied, “...why do you call it blasphemy when I say, ‘I am the Son of God’? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. **37** Don’t believe me unless I carry out my Father’s work. **38** But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don’t believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.”

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 What did the people want to know? (vs. 24)
- 2 What did Jesus say proved who he was? (vs. 25 & 38)
- 3 What did Jesus say his relationship with the Father is? (vs. 30)
- 4 Why did the people want to kill Jesus? (vs. 33)

“The blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.”

STUDY SECTION 3

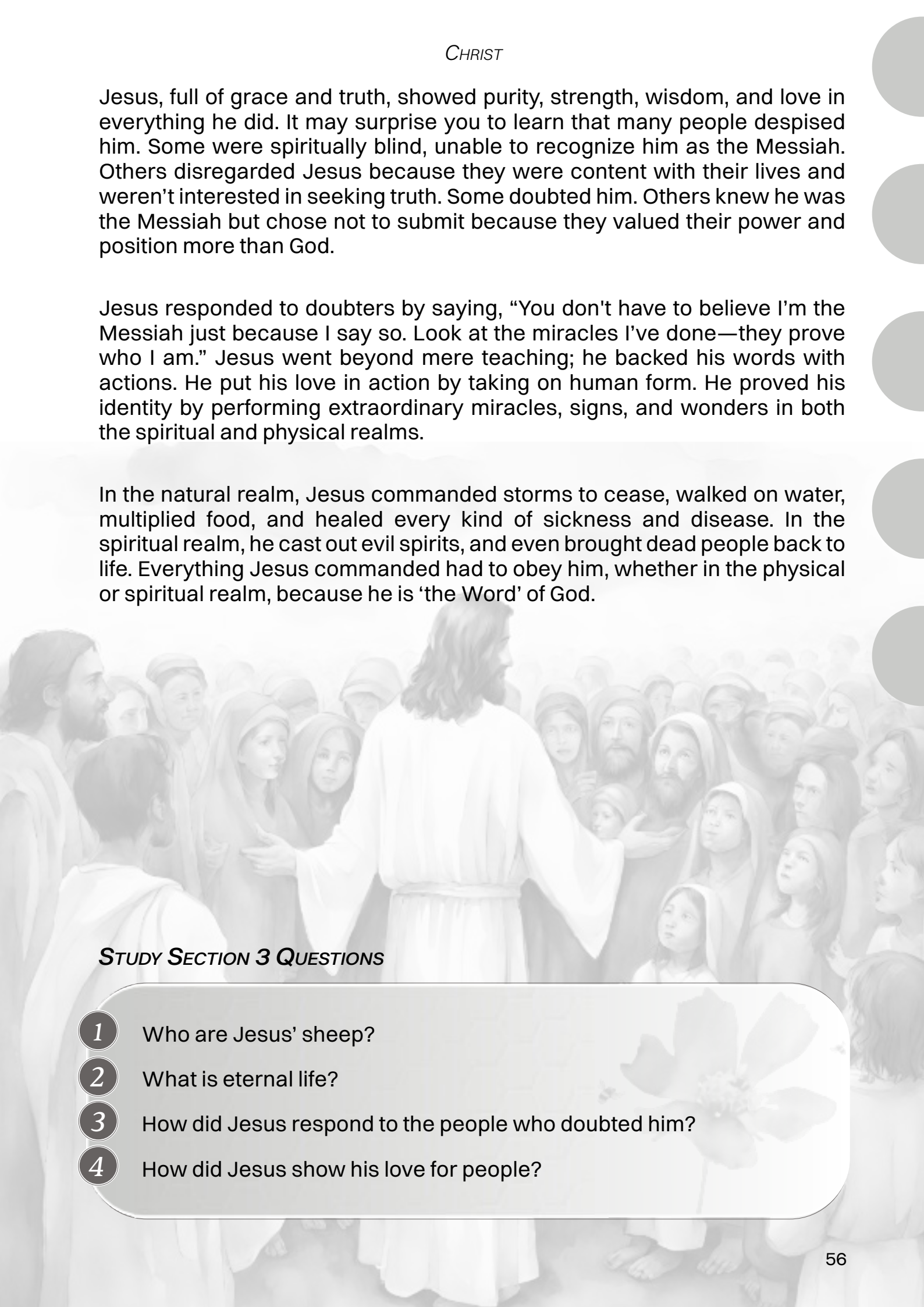
In this Scripture, Jesus says his followers recognize his voice as sheep recognize their shepherd's voice. This illustration was clearly understood by the people he was talking to. There were lots of sheep and shepherds in those days. Often, many shepherds would gather their flocks in one holding area for protection from predators. When one shepherd wanted to lead his flock to pasture, he would open the gate and call to them. Only the sheep familiar with his voice would trust him and respond. Walking ahead of them, the shepherd would guide them, and they would follow.

Jesus is calling humble and sincere people to follow him. His followers hear and obey his voice, trusting him as the Good Shepherd who keeps them safe and gives them eternal life—a life of endless fulfillment in perfect relationship with God. Eternal life is what God made people for: to know him and live forever with him.

Jesus, full of grace and truth, showed purity, strength, wisdom, and love in everything he did. It may surprise you to learn that many people despised him. Some were spiritually blind, unable to recognize him as the Messiah. Others disregarded Jesus because they were content with their lives and weren't interested in seeking truth. Some doubted him. Others knew he was the Messiah but chose not to submit because they valued their power and position more than God.

Jesus responded to doubters by saying, "You don't have to believe I'm the Messiah just because I say so. Look at the miracles I've done—they prove who I am." Jesus went beyond mere teaching; he backed his words with actions. He put his love in action by taking on human form. He proved his identity by performing extraordinary miracles, signs, and wonders in both the spiritual and physical realms.

In the natural realm, Jesus commanded storms to cease, walked on water, multiplied food, and healed every kind of sickness and disease. In the spiritual realm, he cast out evil spirits, and even brought dead people back to life. Everything Jesus commanded had to obey him, whether in the physical or spiritual realm, because he is 'the Word' of God.



STUDY SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1** Who are Jesus' sheep?
- 2** What is eternal life?
- 3** How did Jesus respond to the people who doubted him?
- 4** How did Jesus show his love for people?

STUDY SUMMARY

Jesus showed that he was more than just a remarkable teacher. He taught with more authority and demonstrated a power greater than anyone in history. Jesus had power over natural and spiritual things. Jesus healed _____ who came to him, acting on his love for humanity by restoring people to health and wholeness—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Even the dead _____ in response to his voice, which makes perfect sense since Jesus is the _____ of life. Jesus lived a _____ life characterized by _____, joy, _____, patience, _____, goodness, _____, gentleness, and self-control.

In our next study, we will witness the fulfillment of several more prophecies as God's plan continues to unfold. Remarkably, it involves allowing his only son to suffer and die at the hands of evil men.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

John 1:1-18

Matthew 14:13-36

Luke 7:11-50

Matthew 8:5-17

Mark 5:1-43

Luke 10:21-24

Matthew 12:15-21

Luke 5:12-26

John 10:1-38

Study Summary Answers: everyone ; rose/came back to life ; Creator/Source ; perfect/flawless ; love ;

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 1 What have I learned about God during this study?
- 2 What have I learned about people during this study?
- 3 What have I learned about me during this study?
- 4 What will I do now that I know these things?
- 5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



6

CROSS

*Jesus was crucified to save
humanity from destruction*

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Genesis 3:20-24 Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. **21** And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife. **22** Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!”

23 So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. **24** After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 What were the names of the first man and woman? (vs. 20)
- 2 What were Adam and Eve's clothes made from? (vs. 21)
- 3 What were Adam and Eve banished from? (vs. 23)
- 4 What guarded the way to the tree of life? (vs. 24)

STUDY SECTION 1

God didn't want the first man and woman, named Adam and Eve, to stay in their sinful state forever. If they ate from the tree of life, they would be stuck without the possibility of dying, and that would mean no chance for new life through resurrection. So, God kicked them out of the Garden of Eden and made sure they couldn't reach the tree. This way, God could carry out his plan to save them from being stuck with the curse forever.

Remember that Adam and Eve's sin brought death and corruption to all creation. They felt shame in their nakedness, so God made them clothes from animal skins. This was the first-time blood was ever spilled. God did this to not only cover Adam and Eve, but for a more significant reason as well. Sacrificing these animals established a "blood covenant", or unbreakable agreement, between himself and humanity. The price of sin is death, so blood must be shed to forgive sin. Innocent animals bore the penalty for Adam's guilt and provided a foreshadow of what was to come.

The price of sin is death

Like the temporary covering of their bodies with clothing, the shedding of animal blood offered only a temporary covering of sin. Innocent human blood would need to be shed to permanently remove sin and its destructive consequences. From the beginning, Jesus had a plan to come and be the perfect and sinless sacrifice, removing sin and providing a way for people to reconnect with God.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did God banish Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden?
- 2 How did God establish a "blood covenant"?
- 3 What is required for sin to be permanently removed?
- 4 What was Jesus' plan from the beginning?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Luke 23:32-46 Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. **33** When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. **34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

35 The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” **36** The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. **37** They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” **38** A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”

39 One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” **40** But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?” **41** We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” **42** Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” **43** And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

44 By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. **45** The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. **46** Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” And with those words he breathed his last.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What did Jesus pray after they nailed him to the cross? (vs. 34)
- 2 What did the sign placed above Jesus say? (vs. 38)
- 3 What did Jesus say to the criminal who believed in him? (vs. 43)
- 4 What happened to the curtain that covered the entrance to the temple’s most holy place when Jesus died? (vs. 45)

STUDY SECTION 2

Jesus was arrested, put on trial, and convicted of claiming to be the Son of God. Despite having done nothing wrong, the religious leaders charged him with blasphemy, a crime punishable by death. Even though Jesus could have saved himself at any time, he willingly endured the suffering and shame as a substitute for us. This was the purpose of his birth, as he alone could be a fitting sacrifice and an all-sufficient Savior.

The torn curtain in the Temple is very significant. This thick curtain was designed to keep everyone out of the holiest part of the temple. Only the high priest could enter once a year to offer fresh animal blood for his sins and the people's sins. God tore the curtain in the sanctuary, exposing the holiest part of the temple to public view, indicating there is no longer a barrier between God and people. Because Jesus offered his perfect blood for all humankind, everyone now has direct access to God through what he did as High Priest.

*“We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man
hasn’t done anything wrong.”*

In New Life Study #3, we explored eight prophecies about the birth, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. The fulfillment of the first three prophecies about his birth was witnessed in Study #4. We’ve now identified Jesus as the Messiah, both the Son of God and God the Son. Now, we are witnessing the fulfillment of the following four prophecies related to his death:

- (4) The Savior would be betrayed, rejected, and ridiculed by those he came to save.** This prophecy was documented by King David in Psalm 22:6-8 during his reign from 1,010-970 BC.
- (5) The Savior would be killed by crucifixion for our sins.** King David prophesied this in Psalm 22:16 and the prophet Isaiah also predicted this in Isaiah 53:5 about 700 years before its fulfillment.
- (6) The Savior would be killed with criminals.** The prophet Isaiah predicted this in Isaiah 53:12.
- (7) The Savior’s executioners would gamble for his clothing.** This prophecy was documented by King David in Psalm 22:18.

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What crime was Jesus convicted of?
- 2 How often did the high priest go into the holiest part of the temple?
- 3 What did the high priest do when he went into the holiest place?
- 4 What did it mean when the curtain was torn?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3

Romans 5:6-12,15-18 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7** Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **8** But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from

God's condemnation. **10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. **15**

But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. **16** And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins.

17 For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. **18** Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1** Who did Jesus Christ die for? (vs. 6)
- 2** How are people made right in the sight of God? (vs. 8-9)
- 3** How did sin enter the world? (vs. 12)
- 4** What did Jesus Christ bring people? (vs. 18)

STUDY SECTION 3

Humanity was bound by sin and its curse, hopelessly imprisoned in the kingdom of darkness, and on a path leading to destruction. Yet, God demonstrated his immense love by sending Jesus Christ to die on our behalf so we could experience true life. Jesus willingly embraced the death we deserved and provided us the opportunity for a transformed life in meaningful relationship with God.

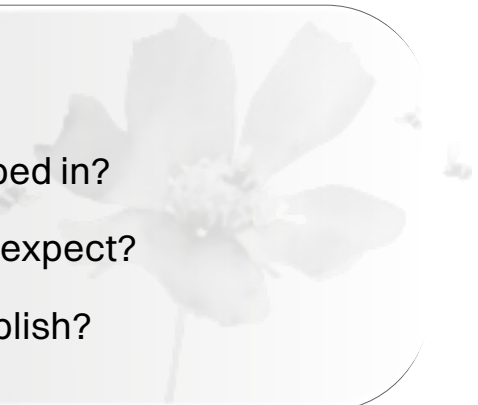
Jesus never sinned, yet he willingly took our sin upon himself so we could be reconciled with God through him. His perfect blood and selfless act of submission was the perfect sacrifice that fully paid the debt every person rightfully owed. The shedding of Jesus' blood holds the key to humanity's forgiveness and freedom from the shackles of sin and death.

Jesus' blood effectively removed sin as the obstacle standing between God and humanity since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. His blood not only appeased God's anger toward sin but also marked the completion of the old covenant and established a new covenant with the power to bring about humanity's transformation.



*When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at
just the right time and died for us sinners.*

STUDY SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 
- 1 Without Jesus, what are people bound by?
 - 2 Without Jesus, what kingdom are people trapped in?
 - 3 Without Jesus, what is the destiny people can expect?
 - 4 What did the blood and death of Jesus accomplish?

STUDY SUMMARY

Through the _____ of Jesus on the _____,
 the _____ covenant was fulfilled, and the debt for sin
 fully _____. _____ and its curse was
 forever _____ and now people can be
 _____ to their original design of intimate community
 with God and one another.

This was the joy that motivated Jesus to humbly obey God the Father. He considered reconciling with you so important that he willingly endured rejection, shame, torture, and even a brutal death on the cross. In our next study we will discover death could not hold Jesus. After three days, he rose from the dead, offering the ultimate proof that he is truly the Son of God, King of kings, and Lord over all.

*“God showed his great love for us by sending
 Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”*

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Genesis 3:20-24

Romans 5:6-18

Colossians 2:13-15

Luke 23:1-56

2 Corinthians 5:21

1 Timothy 2:3-6

John 19:1-42

Colossians 1:19-22

Hebrews 2:14-18

Study Summary Answers: death ; cross ; blood/old ; paid ; Sin ; removed/cancelled ; restored

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1 What have I learned about God during this study?

2 What have I learned about people during this study?

3 What have I learned about me during this study?

4 What will I do now that I know these things?

5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



7

CONFIRMATION

*Jesus rose from the dead and will
live forever as the King of kings and
Lord of all creation*

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Luke 9:22 “The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

“On the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 Who must suffer many terrible things?
- 2 Who will reject him?
- 3 What will those who reject him do?
- 4 What will happen to the Son of Man three days after he is killed?

STUDY SECTION 1

Jesus often called himself the "Son of Man" to emphasize his dual nature as both 100% man and 100% God. The term emphasizes a connection with humanity while also revealing his divinity by referring to the exalted figure foretold of approximately 580 years earlier in Daniel 7:13-14:

"As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a **son of man** coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed."

Even though Jesus warned his disciples three times about his upcoming arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection, they didn't get it. Their expectations of what the Savior would do prevented a full understanding of what he was trying to teach them. The disciples expected Jesus to liberate them from the oppressive government and establish a new kingdom right away. His death didn't line up with their idea of liberation and the establishment of God's Kingdom.

However, they would soon realize that certain events had to occur for God's Kingdom to include people from every corner of the world. Jesus came to set the entire world free, not just Israel. The Israelites were his covenant, or chosen, people to be a witness to every nation, tribe, and tongue. When the disciples finally realize this, they will embrace the plan God intended for them. What comes next compels them to risk their lives to share that Jesus is the Lord and King over all humanity.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does the title "son of man" refer to?
- 2 How many times did Jesus tell his disciples that he would be killed and then rise from the dead?
- 3 When did the disciples think Jesus would establish his Kingdom?
- 4 Why did God choose Israel as his covenant people?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Luke 24:1-47 But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. **2** They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. **3** So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

5 The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? **6** He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, **7** that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."

8 Then they remembered that he had said this. **9** So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. **10** It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. **11** But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it.

12 However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had

happened. **13** That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened.

15 As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. **16** But God kept them from recognizing him. **17** He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?" They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. **18** Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days." **19** "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. **20** But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. **21** We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

22 "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report.

23 They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! **24** Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.” **25** Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. **26** Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?”

27 Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. **28** By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, **29** but they begged him, “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So he went home with them. **30** As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. **31** Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

32 They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” **33** And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, **34** who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.” **35** Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were

walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. **36** And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he said.

37 But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! **38** “Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? **39** Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” **40** As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. **41** Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he ate it as they watched.

44 Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. **46** And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day.

47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 Who went to the tomb early on Sunday morning and found it empty? (vs. 10)
- 2 What had been prophesied about the Messiah? (vs. 26-27 and 44-46)
- 3 What is the first thing Jesus said when he appeared suddenly in the group of his followers? (vs. 36)
- 4 What is the message that Jesus wants shared with the world? (vs. 47)

“He is risen from the dead!”

STUDY SECTION 2

We’ve explored eight prophecies about the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the first seven, involving his birth and death, were covered in Study #4 and #6. Now we are witnessing the fulfillment of the final prophecy about his resurrection:

(8) The Savior would be resurrected from the dead. This prophecy was documented by King David in Psalm 16:10 during his reign from 1,010-970 BC.

Eight predictions, written 700-1,000 years prior, have all been fulfilled. They stated: the Messiah would be (1) born in a particular family, (2) to a virgin, (3) in a certain city, (4) betrayed, rejected, mocked, and (5) killed by crucifixion, (6) alongside two others while (7) his executioners gamble for his clothing. And most significant of all, after three days in the grave, God would (8) raise him back to life!

And there are over 300 more prophecies about Jesus that came true. Each are real life accounts, written in the Bible and supported by many other reliable historical records. Most notably, more than 500 witnesses observed his crucifixion and later encountered Jesus alive after his resurrection.

When we honestly consider the overwhelming evidence, it becomes crystal clear: Jesus is not just a figure from history but the Son of God, Son of Man, God the Son, Lord of lords, King of kings, and Savior of the world. He has continuously occupied these roles, always alive and actively involved. Across centuries, countless individuals attest to encountering the resurrected Jesus. His desire for people to know him remains unchanged, as he continues to reveal himself alive to people even today.

*“It was written long ago that the Messiah
would suffer and die and rise from the dead
on the third day.”*

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 How do we know the predictions about Jesus aren't made-up stories?
- 2 How many predictions about Jesus have come true?
- 3 What does the fulfillment of these prophecies prove?
- 4 Why does Jesus continue to reveal himself to people today?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3

Acts 1:3 During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 Who did Jesus appear to after being resurrected?
- 2 How many days did Jesus appear to them after his resurrection?
- 3 What did he prove to them?
- 4 What did Jesus talk to his disciples about?

STUDY SECTION 3

After being risen back to life, Jesus spent 40 days teaching his followers, making sure they really understood the Good News. Even though prophets had been talking about this Good News for thousands of years, the complete message remained a mystery. Many details had been given in pieces, resembling the challenge of putting together a puzzle without a picture on the box to tell you what it's supposed to look like.

Jesus revealed the full picture and devoted 40 days to explaining how all the pieces go together. He talked about the importance of his death on the cross, the Kingdom of God, what God is truly like, how God sees people, and our role in connecting with God and his Kingdom. Jesus made sure his followers received the knowledge, authority, and power to share the Good News with everyone, everywhere in the world.

STUDY SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 How was the Good News like a puzzle?
- 2 How long had God been revealing pieces of the Good News?
- 3 When was the full picture of the Good News revealed?
- 4 Who does God want to know the Good News?

STUDY SUMMARY

Jesus suffered and _____, was _____ for three days, then _____ from the dead. His fulfillment of _____ proves beyond any reasonable doubt that he is the one and only LORD God who became the long-awaited _____ of the world. Jesus is the Son of _____, Son of _____, Messiah, Savior, Lord, and Ruler of God's Kingdom.

Jesus removed sin and everything else that separated people from a meaningful and personal relationship with God. In our next study we'll discover how a person can receive new life and experience the forgiveness, freedom, joy, and peace that Jesus offers everyone.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Matthew 12:40

Mark 16:1-14

Luke 24:1-47

Matthew 28:1-10

John 20:1-31

Acts 1:1-9

Mark 8:31

Luke 9:22

1 Corinthians 15:1-22

Study Summary Answers: died ; buried ; rose ; prophecy ; Savior ; God ; Man

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1 What have I learned about God during this study?

2 What have I learned about people during this study?

3 What have I learned about me during this study?

4 What will I do now that I know these things?

5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



8

CONFESSION

Jesus gives new life to everyone who believes in him

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

Mark 16:15-16 And then he (*Jesus*) told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. **16** Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.”

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 Where did Jesus say the Good News should be preached? (vs. 15)
- 2 Who did Jesus say to preach the Good News to? (vs. 15)
- 3 What is the first thing someone who believes should do? (vs. 16)
- 4 What does Jesus say will happen to those who refuse to believe? (vs. 16)

STUDY SECTION 1

Truly believing in Jesus means more than just agreeing he exists; it means giving your whole heart, mind, will, and emotions to him as the only way to be saved. Salvation, or God's plan to save us, involves two parts: first, he sent Jesus as our Savior, and second, we need to choose to follow him. This plan covers our spirit, soul, and body. When we fully commit to Jesus in our thoughts, feelings, and actions, we experience a new spiritual life, a purified soul, and even healing in our bodies.

Scripture teaches us about true belief by contrasting it with false belief or useless faith. In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus emphasizes that genuine belief involves a personal relationship with God and obedience to his commands. James 2:19-26 adds that faith, without accompanying good deeds, is deemed useless. Finally, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 underscores the importance of love, asserting that even extraordinary actions and great sacrifices hold no value without genuine love for others.

True belief is deeply rooted in a relationship with Jesus, demonstrated through love, obedience, and good deeds that impact every aspect of our being—spirit, soul, and body; thoughts, feelings, and actions. "Believing" in Jesus brings about a profound inward and outward transformation, encompassing every part of our lives. Surrendering to Jesus as Lord and embracing him as the way, the truth, and the life grants us citizenship in God's Kingdom through his grace. This belief not only saves us but also grants us the incredible privilege of becoming children of God.

“Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved.”

The Scripture says, “Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Someone is baptized when they acknowledge their belief in Jesus Christ by being immersed in water. They go under the water to symbolize their old person dying and being buried with Jesus when he died. All their sins, along with their old nature that was enslaved to sin, are buried. When the person comes up out of the water, it shows they have been raised from the dead into a new life in Jesus Christ. This new life is free from sin and death, alive with God, full of resurrection power, and restored to proper relationship with God as his child and citizen of his Kingdom.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 Who is the source of salvation?
- 2 What is true belief rooted in?
- 3 What are some of the ways we can recognize true belief?
- 4 What is baptism?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

Acts 2:38-39 "...Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God."

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does verse 38 say someone does when believing in Jesus?
- 2 What gift is promised when someone does these things? (v. 38)
- 3 Who is this promise for? (v. 39)
- 4 Who has the Lord our God called? (v. 39)

STUDY SECTION 2

This Scripture brings out another important sign of true belief—the willingness to repent. The term “repent” means to change the mind. It involves admitting unbelief and sin and turning from them toward God. Belief and repentance are like two sides of a coin. When someone truly believes, they repent. When someone truly repents, it’s because they really believe.

It is God’s loving kindness that leads people to repentance. Holy Spirit softens people’s hearts through the Good News and invites them to confess their sin and turn from pursuing sin in order to receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the key for every sinner to be released from shame, guilt, and condemnation and receive God’s perfect love that takes away all fear of being judged.

*“Then you will receive the gift of
the Holy Spirit.”*

The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who believes in Jesus, affirming in their hearts that they have been saved. Dwelling within every believer, the Holy Spirit serves as a constant companion, affirming, comforting, instructing, directing, and empowering all God’s people. His divine presence helps God’s children live obedient, peaceful, and joyful lives as effective witnesses to the life-changing power of the gospel.

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does someone do when they truly believe?
- 2 What does the term “repent” mean?
- 3 Who affirms when someone has been saved?
- 4 What are some of the things Holy Spirit does for a believer?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3

Romans 10:8-13 In fact, it (*Scripture*) says, “The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.” And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: **9** If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. **11** As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” **12** Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. **13** For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”

SCRIPTURE SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 What is close at hand? (vs. 8)
- 2 How can someone be saved? (vs. 9)
- 3 What does Scripture say about anyone who trusts in Jesus? (vs. 11)
- 4 Who may call upon the name of the LORD and be saved? (vs. 13)

STUDY SECTION 3

The gospel message, or Good News, Jesus taught is that God's power saves everyone who believes—no matter who they are, where they are from, what they've done, or what has been done to them. No one is disqualified. No one is beyond the help and power of the gospel. And no one is exempt from needing the gospel. Without it, everyone is lost. With it, anyone can be saved. God is so gracious; he offers everyone the opportunity to be saved.

To receive God's promise of salvation, one simply needs to openly declare their submission to Jesus as Lord, believing in their heart that Jesus died on the cross to settle the debt for their sins and that God raised Jesus from the dead. This is what it means to "call upon the name of the LORD". Everyone and anyone who puts their trust in Jesus and calls upon him as LORD will be saved.

When someone is saved, their **spirit** is "born-again" as a child of God. They are set free from the power of sin and the kingdom of darkness. All their sin (past, present, and future) is forgiven and erased forever. Their brand-new spirit is in perfect unity and fellowship with God as his child. This is a finished work that lasts forever.



“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

When someone is saved, their **soul** is reunited with God's life-giving presence, freeing their will, mind, and emotions from enslavement to sin and death. God speaks life, love, and peace into their lives, and as one listens and obeys God's correction and direction, they experience increasing freedom. Cooperation with God leads to deliverance from shame, guilt, and condemnation, allowing believers to embrace the fullness of their inheritance as God's children. God heals the wounds of their heart and liberates them from tormenting spirits and addictions. With salvation comes insight and wisdom to correct their thinking and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, an ongoing process that begins at salvation and continues throughout their earthly life.

When someone is saved, their **body** becomes a temple of God because the Holy Spirit now lives inside them. This Spirit, who brought Jesus back to life, also gives strength to their body. Even though their body still ages and eventually wears out, God wants them to stay healthy and strong until they finish their work on earth. Jesus showed this by healing everyone who came to him. When their body dies, God promises to give their soul and spirit a new, glorious body. We'll learn more about this in our next study.

STUDY SECTION 3 QUESTIONS

- 1 How does someone receive God's promise to save them?
- 2 What happens to a person's spirit when they are saved?
- 3 What happens to a person's soul when they are saved?
- 4 What happens to a person's body when they are saved?

STUDY SUMMARY

Jesus told his followers to tell everyone the _____.
 _____. Whoever _____ the testimony of
 Jesus, _____ their faith in him out loud and are
 _____ in his name will be _____. God's
 _____ of salvation is for _____ no
 matter who they are, where they are from, what they have done,
 or what has been done to them. All who call upon the name of
 the LORD will be saved.

True belief in Jesus is marked by a growing relationship with God characterized by love, obedience, and good deeds that influence every aspect of one's being. Accepting Jesus as Lord grants people citizenship in God's Kingdom through grace, saving them and establishing them as children of God.

Repentance, a crucial aspect of belief, involves a genuine change of heart and turning towards God. The Holy Spirit, given to believers, guides and empowers them to live joyful, obedient lives as witnesses of the gospel's power. Salvation brings freedom from sin's power, forgiveness, and unity with God.

As believers cooperate with God, they experience healing, deliverance, and growth in wisdom. Their body, now a temple of the Holy Spirit, receives strength and healing, reflecting God's desire for their well-being. When their body dies, God promises to give their soul and spirit a new, glorious body. We'll learn more about this in our next study.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Mark 16:15-20

Romans 1:16-17

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Acts 2:1-39

Romans 3:21-31

Ephesians 2:1-14

Acts 10:1-48

Romans 10:8-17

Titus 3:4-7

Study Summary Answers:

Good News ; believes ; confesses/declares ; baptized ; saved ; promise/gift ; everyone

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1 What have I learned about God during this study?

2 What have I learned about people during this study?

3 What have I learned about me during this study?

4 What will I do now that I know these things?

5 What questions has this study caused me to have?



9

CONSUMMATION

Jesus is going to return in glory to gather his people and create a new heaven and new earth

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1

1 Peter 1:3-6 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, **4** and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

5 And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. **6** So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1** What is waiting in heaven for people who are born-again? (vs. 4)
- 2** What is protecting born-again people until they receive their reward? (vs. 5)
- 3** When will this salvation be fully revealed? (vs. 5)
- 4** What must born-again people endure until Jesus returns in glory? (vs. 6)

STUDY SECTION 1

Salvation covers every part of who a person is—spirit, soul, and body—across the past, present, and future. They are saved, are being saved, and will be saved:

1. The moment someone believes in Jesus for salvation, their spirit gets saved. They are “born again” by the Holy Spirit. Through this spiritual rebirth, they become God's child in perfect connection with him. This is how they've been saved. (Past tense).
2. Their soul; that is their mind, will, and emotions, get renewed as they build a closer relationship with God. That's an ongoing process, like they are being saved. (Present tense).
3. And even though their bodies age and wear out, they can look forward to God's promise of a brand new, everlasting body that will be part of his Kingdom forever. So, in the end, they will be saved. (Future tense).

The inheritance that is being kept in heaven for God's children is amazing! They will know God face to face and live in perfect harmony with him and all those who inherit eternal life with them. They are promised healthy and strong new bodies that will never wear out or break down. There will be no more tears, pain, sorrow, or death—just awesome life full of love, peace, and joy. This expectation of heavenly reward is what keeps hope alive in the middle of really tough times.



“We have a priceless inheritance.”

During this study we've talked a lot about the Good News—God has done everything needed for us to be restored to complete wholeness and meaningful relationship with him. That doesn't mean everything in this life is going to be easy for those who believe in Jesus. In fact, Jesus prepared his followers by telling them they should expect suffering and persecution. Many things become more difficult for those who follow Jesus. This is one of the reasons why Holy Spirit is given to everyone who is born again. Holy Spirit walks with those who love Jesus through tough times and works everything out for the best; even when we don't see or understand it.

The people who walked with Jesus during his life, death, and resurrection went through some serious trials. They didn't back down even when other people, including big-shot religious and government leaders, tried to shut them up. Instead of just staying quiet, many of them, even whole families, chose death over giving up on Jesus and the Good News they were commissioned to share. Peter, the man who wrote this Scripture, was one of them. He, and everyone who stays true till the end, will get eternal rewards in heaven for all they went through for Jesus in this world.

STUDY SECTION 1 QUESTIONS

- 1 What does being saved in the past, present, and future mean?
- 2 What do God's children look forward to when they die?
- 3 What is one of the reasons Holy Spirit is given to followers of Jesus?
- 4 What happens to many faithful followers of Jesus?

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2

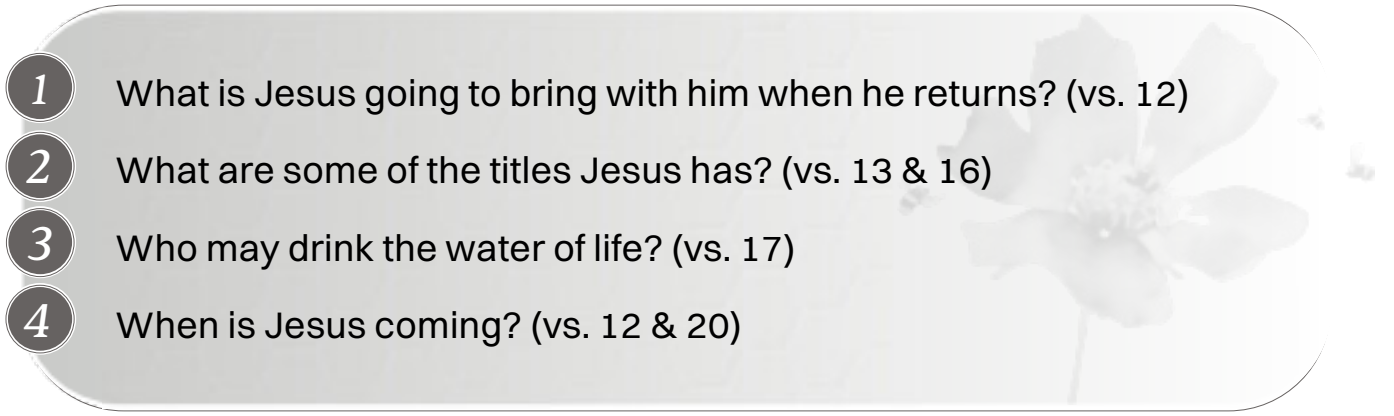
Revelation 22:12-17, 20-21 “Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. **13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” **14** Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.

15 Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live

a lie. **16** “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star.”

17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life. **20** He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! **21** May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.

SCRIPTURE SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 
- 1 What is Jesus going to bring with him when he returns? (vs. 12)
 - 2 What are some of the titles Jesus has? (vs. 13 & 16)
 - 3 Who may drink the water of life? (vs. 17)
 - 4 When is Jesus coming? (vs. 12 & 20)

STUDY SECTION 2

These are the last words written in the Bible. In these final words, Jesus tells his followers that he will come back soon. Now, it might seem like Jesus is taking a long time to keep his promise since it's been almost 2,000 years since he said this. But we have to remember, the LORD created everything, including time. To God, a single day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a single day. Time doesn't control or limit God; he has authority over time just as he does over everything else he made.

The LORD isn't taking too long to fulfill his promise; he's being patient, so more people have the chance to find salvation. He doesn't want anyone to be destroyed. God wants everyone to repent and receive the gift of eternal life by trusting in Jesus.

In this Scripture, Jesus says only those whose robes have been washed can enter the Kingdom of God and eat from the tree of life. Only the blood of Jesus can wash away the sin that stains every person. The blood of Jesus was shed for the forgiveness of all people. But, like soap, the blood of Jesus must be applied to cleanse us. Jesus freely offers his blood to cleanse everyone who will receive him as Lord and Savior.

Just like our bodies need natural food and water to live, our spirits and souls need the food and water that only Jesus can offer. Jesus invites all his people to eat from the tree of life and drink freely from the water of life. He's offering living water to all who are thirsty. The thirst Jesus is talking about is the feeling in a person's heart that yearns for identity and purpose. These can only be found through relationship with God. He is the one who gives us true identity and purpose for our lives because he made us, for himself.

STUDY SECTION 2 QUESTIONS

- 
- 
- 1 Who has authority over time?
 - 2 Why hasn't Jesus come back already?
 - 3 How is the blood of Jesus like soap?
 - 4 Who gives a person true identity and purpose?

*“There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you
must endure many trials for a little while.”*

STUDY SUMMARY

All these common questions about life have been answered in the New Life Study:

Who am I?

You are a spirit, that has a soul, living in a body.

Where did I come from?

You were created by a good God that loves you.

Why am I here?

To have a meaningful and personal relationship with God.

Where do I fit in?

You are designed to live in community with God and his people.

Does my life matter?

YES. You are precious to God. He has wonderful plans for you.

Am I missing something?

Everything you don't have can be found in personal relationship with God.

Is life supposed to be more than I am experiencing?

Life is supposed to be an adventure with God—full of goodness, righteousness, peace, and joy in a growing relationship with God.

God has done everything needed to restore you to a meaningful relationship with him. All you need to do is truly believe. He wants all your pain, all your sorrow, all your mistakes. He wants every wound in your heart and every wound you've caused others. He wants all your successes and talents. He wants everything good and bad about you. He wants you!

That's the most beautiful thing about the gospel of Jesus Christ—you don't have to fix anything, change anything, clean anything up, learn more, or even do anything except surrender yourself to his care. When you trust in him, he will give you a brand-new life in exchange. The gospel isn't about adding Jesus as part of your life. He's inviting *you* to be part of his.

Can my life have more meaning and purpose?

YES. God is infinitely amazing. There is always more meaning and purpose for us to discover through true knowledge of him.

Is it realistic for me to hope for a better future?

YES. Nothing is impossible for God, and no matter what your situation is, God is not only able but also willing to bless you with a brighter and better future.

Who can help me?

Jesus can and will help you if you believe in him.

Is it too late for me?

If you are still breathing, it's not too late... today can be your day of salvation.

What happens when I die?

That's up to you. The Bible says everyone will face judgment when they die. At judgment, each person will either (1) remain condemned because they did not put their trust in Jesus or (2) enter the Kingdom of God as one of his children who are born-again by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The gospel invites us to exchange our petty pursuits for his life full of grace and truth, flowing with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. He gives us a true identity, unlike what the world has labeled us, but as he created us to be.

It's only by God's fantastic grace you can be saved through faith in Jesus. Nothing you do could earn this salvation. And nothing you have done disqualifies you from receiving this salvation because it is a free gift from God, not a reward for the good things you have done. **Jesus has taken all the punishment you deserve and earned all the merit you will ever need.**

Jesus invites you to come as you are, surrender, and entrust your life and future to him. Today. Tomorrow may not come. Jesus may return at any time and then it will be too late. If Jesus' patience continues, it still doesn't guarantee you'll have tomorrow because death can come unexpectedly, whether you are young or old. Death doesn't discriminate. It comes for everyone.

If someone dies before they are born again, their soul and spirit will be condemned forever. There are no second chances or do-overs. The Good News is those who are born again won't ever experience death. Even though their body dies, their last breath on earth is like taking their first breath in the presence of the LORD in heaven. So, please decide today. **Will you believe the Good News, confess that you need Jesus, and surrender to him?**

If your answer is "YES", take time **right now** to thank the LORD for all he has done to save you. Thank him for the gift of Holy Spirit and ask him to give you assurance of your salvation. Share all your thoughts and feelings with him. Don't hold anything back. Share your heart completely with him. He accepts you right now. There is nothing to hide or pretend. He loves you; the real you.

*“Jesus has taken all the punishment you deserve
and earned all the merit you will ever need.”*

Write today's date here: _____,
and let us know you made this decision so we can rejoice with you. We would also like to send you the Kingdom Life Study which will help you understand your new identity in Jesus and discover how to live a supernatural lifestyle in constant communication and cooperation with God.

Meanwhile, the next chapter in this study will get you going and **growing in your new relationship with God.**

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES ON THIS STUDY TOPIC

Daniel 12:1-4

1 Corinthians 15:50-55

1 Peter 1:3-12

Matthew 24:3-51

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:2-18

Luke 17:20-35

2 Thessalonians 2:1-14

Revelation 22:12-21

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1

What have I learned about God during this study?

2

What have I learned about people during this study?

3

What have I learned about me during this study?

4

What will I do now that I know these things?

5

What questions has this study caused me to have?



NEXT STEPS



FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS...

Choosing to follow Jesus was the most important decision of your life! When you opened your heart to Jesus and accepted his gift of salvation, you were transformed from darkness to light, from death to life. You went from being subject to God's wrath, to being adopted into his family, securing citizenship in his Kingdom forever!

This transformation often comes with immediate changes—physical healing, freedom from addictions, a sense of forgiveness that removes the weight of sin, or an overwhelming sense of God's presence through the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, these things happen all at once, while others unfold as you grow closer to God in your new relationship.

Regardless of what you do or don't feel in this moment, a whole new world of discovery is now open for you to explore. As God's children, we joyfully seek the treasures our Heavenly Father has stored up for us. It's our privilege to uncover new, exciting aspects about God, ourselves, fellow believers, and how the Kingdom of God operates as we seek him in grace and truth.

Matthew 7:13-14 says, "You can enter God's Kingdom only through

the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."

This narrow gateway to life is Jesus himself. That's why it's narrow. Of all the different paths someone can take, there is only one that leads to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. That way is through Jesus. By grace through faith in Jesus, you walked through the narrow gate into a land full of wonders. Now you're God's favored child, with the freedom to explore his Kingdom in a personal relationship with the King.

You might be wondering, "How do I do that?" It's like being in a new country without knowing the language or where to go. It's awkward, but you have an unexplainable peace inside - that's the Holy Spirit. He's your guide, and the Bible is your map. God's first desire is for you to know him better and discover your true identity. So, don't just stand in the gateway; jump into the Kingdom and start your adventure of discovery! In the following sections, we'll explore four crucial things to help you get started: Prayer, the Bible, Testimony, and the Church.

PRAYER



Some people think prayer is about asking God for stuff. They think if they ask enough times, or in just the right way they'll get whatever they ask for. But here's the thing: He already knows what's going on in our lives, even in our hearts. He already knows what we need before we tell him. Sometimes, we don't know what we need, but he does. So, rather than asking God for the things we think we need, it's better to ask him to tell us what we need and trust whatever he gives will prove to be best for us in the long run.

Others may see prayer as a form of punishment. They think God is mad at them for doing something wrong, so they try and soothe God with fancy words and promises to earn his forgiveness. Now, don't get me wrong, admitting when we mess up and asking for forgiveness is necessary in our relationship with God. But it's not about saying certain words like a magic spell. It's about being honest with God and allowing him to change us. When we're real with him, he gives us the insight and strength to overcome the things that stand in the way of experiencing the best God wants for us.

See, praying isn't about trying to twist God's arm to do what we want. Nor is prayer about trying to win back his favor when we've done something wrong. Prayer is a means of growing in personal relationship with God through a two-way conversation. It's about opening up to him and listening for his response. We share what's on our mind, and he shares what's on his. God communicates truth in love to guide, inspire, and help us live in a way that pleases him and aligns with the true purpose for our lives.

Jesus taught his followers a great model prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13**:

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.

10 May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth,

as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today the food we need, 12 and forgive

us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. 13 And

don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

This prayer is like a blueprint for talking with God. Let's break it down step by step.

1. ***"Our Father in heaven..."***: This is saying, "Hey Dad!" to God. We're not just shouting to some faraway king; we're talking to our Father who loves us. We already have his attention and affection.
2. ***"...may your name be kept holy..."***: We want God's reputation to be respected because we love and honor him. We also represent him, like ambassadors, and need his help to do that well.
3. ***"May your Kingdom come soon..."***: This is about looking forward to God's Kingdom being fully established. We're excited for the day when Jesus returns, but we also understand there's important work to be done before that happens. Jesus is waiting for the Good News to be shared with everyone in the world before he comes back.
4. ***"May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven..."***: This is about hoping that God's perfect way of doing things will happen on earth, just like it does in heaven. We're basically saying, "God, we want to do what you want us to do."
5. ***"Give us today the food we need..."***: This is asking God to provide for us—not just food, but everything we need for today. We aren't worried about tomorrow because we trust him to take care of us each day.
6. ***"and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us..."***: This is about repenting when we mess up, and the willingness to forgive others when they mess up.
7. ***"And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one..."***: This is asking God to help us not give in to the wrong things, and to keep us safe from evil. This is about more than just actions. Remember, sin starts as a wrong thought we believe.

For example, if we believe a lie that says God isn't good, we fall prey to all sorts of evil. We must hold tight to the truth that God is good, and Satan, the evil one, is bad. If something isn't good, there are two things we can be sure of, (1) God didn't cause it, and (2) God isn't done yet because he promises to work everything out for the good of those who love him. It's ironic that the devil consistently tries to persuade people that God is responsible for the evil actions carried out by him and others. But if we really know God, we won't fall for those lies.

Our connection with God is supposed to be like a constant chat. The model prayer we talked about helps us have the right attitude when talking to God. He's the Big Boss we submit to and obey, but he's also our closest and most trusted friend. Prayer is like a heart-to-heart chat with him.

We can pray anytime, anywhere, and in any way we want. Like in relationships with people, we must spend time to really get to know each other. Prayer is spending time talking and listening to God. The more time we spend with him, the better we get to know him.

Remember, we're all growing and learning in our relationship with God. It's not just about reaching a destination; it's the journey of getting to know God better in order to become the best version of ourselves with his help. And if we mess up, God won't condemn us. He's there to lift us up and help us grow in faith and character. So, never believe any "voice" that tries to make you feel like a failure.

God communicates in lots of different ways, like through words, thoughts, images, feelings, and sometimes even an audible voice. The more we pray and listen to God, the easier it gets to recognize his voice.

Our thoughts and imaginations can come from four sources or "voices". The one we really want to hear is God's voice. But to tune into his voice, we've got to quiet down all the other competing voices.

First, there's our own voice, which includes our feelings, experiences, knowledge, and ambitions.

Then, there's the voice of the world, which is often called "common sense," that includes expectations and advice from our family, friends, and community.

Thirdly, there's the voice of the devil, who tries to deceive us with lies that lead us away from the goodness and grace of God.

And finally, there's God's voice. His voice is always truthful and loving, leading us towards something better through our relationship with him.

Now, sometimes it's hard to figure out which voice we are hearing as they all sound like they're coming from inside us. But with practice, we can get better at telling them apart. The more we know God and ourselves, the easier it becomes to discern the source of every voice.

GROUP LISTENING PRAYER EXERCISE

Remember, prayer is a back-and-forth dialogue with God. So, after asking a question, we wait and listen for God's response. When he speaks, we can follow up with more questions to clarify what he wants us to do with the insight he gives us. It's a good idea to have a pen and paper handy to write down what he says so we can remember clearly and reflect on it later.

Begin your conversation with God by declaring the model prayer, pausing between each phrase to reflect on the meaning of what you are saying, "Our Father in heaven — may your name be kept holy — May your Kingdom come soon — May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven — Give us today the food we need — and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us — And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

Declare this aloud: "For now, I'm setting aside my own thoughts and ignoring the noise of the world. In Jesus' name, I'm telling the devil to be quiet because I'm listening to you, God, and only your voice matters. I'm ready to hear what you want to tell me."

Now, we can ask God questions and wait for his answers. When we approach him like this, with trust and sincerity, we can be confident that he will answer, and his responses will be consistent with his character.

Ask, "**God, what lies have I believed about who you are?**"

Pause and tune into what God is communicating. It could come as a word, an image, or a feeling. How each person perceives God varies, but the first impression you have is usually God speaking. All other voices have been silenced so his is the only one left with authority and power. Write down whatever you sense.

Ask, "**God, who do you say you are?**"

Write down everything you sense God saying.

When everyone is finished writing, take turns sharing what you sensed God communicated with you. It's okay if you want to keep what you sensed private. It's also okay if you didn't sense anything. We celebrate your attempt and encourage you to keep practicing and seeking God. He will reward you for diligently seeking him.

INDIVIDUAL LISTENING PRAYER EXERCISE
(TO BE DONE PRIVATELY, NOT PART OF GROUP SESSION)

Set aside 10-15 undistracted minutes each day to be with Jesus and discover what he wants you to know. You can ask God about anything. Here are some questions to help you start the conversation:

- What do you want to say to me?
- Where have I been listening to the wrong voices in my life?
- What lies have I believed about who I am?
- Who do you say I am?
- What do you want me to know about my identity?
- What do you want me to do?
- What else do you want me to know?



The timeframes listed below are just a guideline.

- 3 minutes:
 - Sit in a comfortable and relaxing environment.
 - Drink a glass of water and breathe deeply.
 - Stretch and relax your muscles.
 - Silence all but God's voice.
- 5 minutes:
 - Close your eyes and picture yourself in the safest place you can imagine.
 - Look around with your imagination. Sense the details of your environment, what it smells like, how the air and temperature feel.
 - Invite Jesus to be with you.
 - Focus on where he is in relation to you, such as in front of you or beside you. Allow yourself to feel his presence.
 - Ask Jesus, "what do you want me to know today?"
 - Listen for his response.
 - Ask any additional questions that come to mind.
- 5 minutes:
 - Write down everything you sense Jesus is communicating to you.
- Close the time with a prayer of gratitude.

THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says,

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

The Bible is not just information; it's a divine encounter. God's written words are alive, filled with his breath, expressing his heart and ways. Through the Scriptures, he draws us into his presence, revealing his character. All Scripture is useful for teaching, correcting, restoring, and training us in a life pleasing to him.

During the study, we looked at small sections of Scripture to explain the basics of the Good News to help you decide whether or not to follow Jesus. There are plenty more Scriptures to explore and learn from. It's crucial to spend time daily reading the Scriptures and asking God to guide you through them. This is where he teaches, renews the mind, and helps you become familiar with his character and voice.

When facing the challenge of choosing right from wrong, having the right guide is vital for making good decisions. This is particularly important when confused or hurting. We can prevent inner turmoil by trusting God is for us and is faithful.

Faith is all about believing and trusting in God, regardless of our experiences or what others say. God promises to reward those who diligently seek him. So, we focus our faith on Jesus and grow in grace and knowledge of him through studying and applying what we learn.

Here is a brief overview of the Bible:

1. The Bible is like a library with 66 books, divided into two parts: the Old Testament (books written before the life of Jesus) and the New Testament (books written during and after the life of Jesus). It was written by 40 different people over almost 1,600 years. The remarkable consistency in characters and ideas woven throughout the Bible stands as compelling evidence of its divine inspiration.

Imagine how much culture and language has changed just in your lifetime. Consider how grandparents and their grandchildren talk in different ways. Now imagine how much language and culture changed in the span of 1,600 years while the Bible was being written and the 2,000 years since it was finished.

Across thousands of years, God has safeguarded the text, ensuring its preservation for generations to come. In other words, it remains relevant to every person, on every continent, in every generation, further substantiating that God is the author.

2. The **Old Testament** consists of the first 39 books, written over a span of about 1,100 years. The oldest book dates back roughly 3,500 years, and the newest was written about 2,400 years ago. All these books were originally written in ancient Hebrew.
 - a. The **Law** consists of the first five books, written by Moses around 1,400 BC.
 - b. The **Prophets** include 17 books written between 850 and 400 BC.
 - c. The **Writings** consist of 12 historical books from Joshua through 2 Chronicles, and five wisdom and poetry books from Job through Song of Solomon. These were written by various people over the centuries. Job was the first book written, and Psalms continued to be written until around 400 BC when the Old Testament was considered complete.
3. The **New Testament** has 27 books written within the first generation after Jesus' resurrection. These books were originally written in Aramaic and Greek.
 - a. The **Gospels**: These books, from Matthew to Acts, record the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - b. The **Epistles**: These are letters from leaders God appointed to people who follow Jesus Christ, found in books from Romans to Jude.
 - c. Final **Prophecy**: The last book, Revelation, was written about 62 years after Jesus' resurrection.

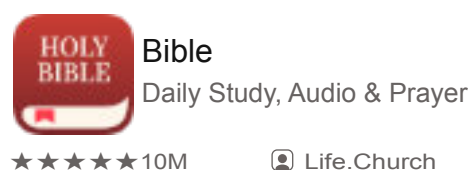
As governments rise and fall, and cultures and languages evolve, the meaning of the Scriptures stays the same. However, languages change how they are communicated. God wants everyone to understand the Scriptures, so he inspires people to translate the Bible into many languages for the whole world to know him.

It's important to know that each Bible translation has its unique benefits and limitations. Some translations are very literal, giving a 'word-for-word' approach. Others are more about capturing 'thought-for-thought.' Both methods are valuable.

No matter the language or translation, understanding comes from the Holy Spirit. The natural mind can't grasp spiritual things unless revealed by the Holy Spirit. So, try different translations, choose one that's easy for you to read, and pray for the Holy Spirit to teach as you dive into the Scriptures.

The easiest way to explore different Bible translations is through the free app called **YouVersion**. If you have a smartphone, take some time now to install that.

- Open Google Play or Apple App Store.
- Type youversion in search field.
- Look for the “Bible” app by Life.Church
- Install the app.
- Open the app.



If you can't install that now, please follow along with the group.

GROUP BIBLE EXERCISE

Look up Mark 16:15

- Android and iOS apps appear slightly different, but each has the same functions even though buttons may appear in different places.
- Find where it shows what book and chapter you are currently viewing. For example, [John 3].
- Click on that and a list of Bible books pops up.
- The default view is “Traditional” which shows the books in the same order as in a printed Bible. You may select “Alphabetical” to sort the book names in alphabetical order.
- Click on Mark, then 16.
- This opens to the beginning of chapter 16.
- Scroll down to verse 15.
- Click on verse 15 and a dotted line will appear beneath the text of that verse.
- Numerous options appear at the bottom of the screen.
- Clicking on the verse again will hide these options.



Change the version you are currently viewing.

- Click on the current version. For example [NIV]
- A list of additional versions will pop up.
- Download several versions. English language default version is NIV—New International Version. This is a good translation, but we also suggest downloading at least the following:
 - AMP—Amplified Bible
 - ESV—English Standard Version
 - NLT—New Living Translation: This version is used throughout our New Life Study because of its excellent 'thought-for-thought' translation style.

Practice looking up several other verses we've studied and reading them in one of the other versions you downloaded.

YouVersion is more than just a tool to explore different Bible versions; it's an incredible program with many features that can benefit you for a lifetime. We strongly encourage you to explore and use this application regularly.

Once you've found an easy to read, enjoyable translation, we recommend getting a printed Bible. There's something special about the ability to highlight, underline, circle, and write notes in the margins as God speaks to you. It's a practice you'll come to cherish more and more over time.

Studying Scripture requires consistent undistracted time and space. Devote as much time as your life allows, preferably twice a day, first thing in the morning and last thing before going to sleep. Be consistent and intentional, as dedicating more time will result in higher-quality moments.

Have tools to write down what God says during prayer and reading. Use a pen and paper, a journal, or an application for speech-to-text. Note these insights for later review and meditation.

Start reading the New Testament first, then explore the whole Bible. We live in the New Covenant established by Jesus' death and resurrection. Understanding the New Covenant is essential when navigating the Old Testament. So, we recommend starting with the book of John and reading through Revelation. Then start from Genesis and read the whole Bible. YouVersion has numerous reading plans that can help direct and organize your reading.

For Bible study, consider a simple and flexible method:

- **Pray:** Follow Jesus' model prayer to properly align your heart to approach God. You may also consider this simple method:
 - Praise God for who he is and all he's done.
 - Repent of any sin or failure you're aware of in your life.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to instruct you.
 - Yield to God; being willing to accept what you read in the Bible and do everything that God tells you.
- **Choose** a portion of Scripture to read.
- **Read** the passage as if you were reading a novel. This gives you an overview of the context. Then go back and read it again slowly, paying attention to details.
- Consider how to **apply** what you've read to your life.
- **Note** what stands out; share your thoughts with the LORD and ask him questions about anything you want to understand more.
- **Pray** about what you've learned and ask God if there is any action he wants you to take.

Adjust this technique to suit your preferences and how the LORD speaks to you on your journey of developing Bible study discipline.

Don't stress about things you find confusing. Ask God if he wants to explain them. You can also ask someone who has more experience with the Kingdom of God and Scriptures but, in any case, your responsibility isn't to figure everything out; God just wants you to obey what he shows you, and he'll help you understand when the time is right.

When you ask Jesus if there is anything he wants you to do, you might receive a thought that feels like your own. This is normal because Jesus lives inside you. Remember what we studied in the "PRAYER" section, recognizing his voice comes with practice and obedience.

It's very important to remember that God will never tell you to do something that contradicts Scripture. If what you believe he is telling you aligns with Scripture, obey. If you aren't sure, seek advice from a more experienced follower of Jesus. Obedience leads to blessings and strengthens your faith for greater obedience and blessings.

TESTIMONY



In New Life Study #8, we explored Romans 10:8-13, which ends with the powerful statement, “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” That Scripture then asks some critical questions: “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?”

There are many people who haven't heard the Good News yet. They're lost in darkness, just like you were before you heard and believed the Good News. The LORD wants you to be brave and share with others what he's been teaching you.

You don't have to wait until you have all the answers. Sharing the Good News isn't about convincing people to convert to Christianity. It's about inviting them to start a journey of knowing God. God has all the answers and wants to personally interact with the people you introduce him to. The best way to introduce God to others is by sharing the evidence of what he has done for you. This is called your testimony.

There are four main components of an effective testimony.

1. What your life was like before meeting Jesus.
 - a. A brief summary or one specific problem you struggled with in the past is best. This part of your testimony is primarily to establish a relevant problem others can identify with.
2. How you encountered Jesus.
 - a. This is the turning point in your heart where you became convinced Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
3. How Jesus changed your life.
 - a. Share how Jesus resolved the problem you had before encountering him. Share the goodness of God and how he has transformed your life since you began following him.
4. Inviting others to learn more about Jesus.
 - a. Ask if there is anything you can pray with them about, a problem in their life that only God could address.
 - b. Pray with them; God is so merciful and kind, he often answers these prayers to open people's hearts to seek him.
 - c. Invite them to meet with you again to talk more about Jesus and celebrate him answering their prayer.

To illustrate, below is an example testimony I may share. It takes about two minutes to share verbally, which is a good target for you to aim for, give or take a minute:

“Before I met Jesus, I felt hopeless and lonely, no matter how many people I was around. I never felt like I really belonged anywhere, with anybody. I tried all sorts of things to connect with other people to find some sort of value and purpose. No matter what I tried, I just felt more lonely and more depressed until I didn’t want to live anymore.

The night I decided to end my life, I reached out to God and asked him if he was real, and if he cared about me. I didn’t hear or feel anything, but I decided, ‘I’ll kill myself tomorrow.’ The next day, I talked to God more and still didn’t hear anything but, every day, I decided to ‘kill myself tomorrow’ and kept seeking God. This went on for about six weeks until one day I was talking to somebody about something I had been reading in the Bible. They asked me, “how do you even know any of this is real?” and God touched my heart. All of a sudden, I knew that he was real and the gospel was true. I went away by myself and told the LORD, “I don’t understand why you would want a guy like me, but if you want me, you can have me” and he said, “I want you, I want all of you!”

I gave my life to the LORD that day, and everything changed. My heart changed. The way I saw the world changed. Ever since then, I haven’t had even a moment of depression. He filled me with hope and joy. He walks with me every day, still teaching me and transforming my heart. He’s blessed me in ways I never could’ve imagined. Sometimes I still feel lonely and misunderstood. I still have problems. I still suffer grief. But it’s different now because I’m never alone or hopeless because God is always with me, working things out for my good and his glory. Every day is an adventure and every challenge an opportunity for me to grow. I’m so grateful for this new life with Jesus, I have to share it with you so you can experience knowing God too.

God knows everything about you and wants you to know him like he knows you. Is there anything in your life I could pray with you about? Is there something God could do for you to show you he cares about you and wants you to know him?”

After sharing my testimony, I listen to the person’s response. Then, we would pray appropriately and follow through with an invitation to meet again to talk more about Jesus and how he answered their prayer.

TESTIMONY EXERCISE

Take ten minutes or so to get alone with God. Ask him what you should include in your testimony. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. What was your life like before meeting Jesus?
2. How did you encounter Jesus?
3. How has Jesus changed your life?
4. How can I invite others to learn more about Jesus?



Next, pair up in groups of two. If there is an odd number of people in your study group, one group can have three people.

Take turns practicing your testimony. Refer to the four questions you answered and do your best to include each response. Be careful not to spend much time on the first component, that is, your life or problems before meeting Jesus. That should be the smallest part of your testimony. The greatest part of your testimony should be meeting Jesus and how knowing him has changed your life.

PAUSE HERE TO COMPLETE THE TESTIMONY EXERCISE

Your testimony is important because it's like a bridge that connects others with the life-changing message of the gospel. God wants to do the same thing for others as he has done for you. Your testimony is an invitation for others to be blessed in the same way you have, through a personal relationship with their Creator.

They need to hear and obey the gospel to make that happen. So, it's critically important that you share the gospel with them. Whether shared before, after, or interwoven within your testimony, it's the gospel itself that has the divine power to save all who believe. It's not about how much you know or how fancy you talk. The power is in the gospel message you're sharing.

You don't have to tell them everything you know about the gospel or all the personal details of your life, just be sincere and share as much as you can in the time you have with them. The bullet point GOSPEL listed in the front of this workbook is a great way to share an overview of the Good News. Then, you can invite them to learn more in a New Life Study.

GROUP ACTION STEP

- Together, determine who is willing to host another New Life Study.
- Determine a day of the week, time, and starting date for the study.
- Each person, make a list of people they can invite. Include family, friends, co-workers, and everyone within reasonable distance to where the New Life Study will be hosted.
- Together, pray for those inviting as well as those being invited.

NOTES





THE CHURCH

Being part of a healthy Christian community is crucial. If you completed the New Life Study with a small group, you're probably already in a good community. We highly recommend you continue to invest in these relationships after the New Life Study group finishes. Doing so will benefit you as well as the church.

Before we continue, let's clarify the term "church" as it is used here. "Church" (with a capital "C") refers to the global Church, including all believers in Jesus. Jesus is the head, and each believer is a unique member of his body. The following Scriptures explain this.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13,27 says, "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit... 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

Colossians 1:18 says, "Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything."

The term "church" (with a lowercase "c") refers to a congregation of believers

gathering to grow in their relationship with Jesus and one another. People often say they're "going to church," referring to a specific building. It's fine to use the word this way, but it's essential to understand the term church refers to a gathering of God's people, not the building they meet in.

The global Church is like one big family, but each local church is like a unique branch of that family tree. Each church is different because the people who go there are different. This is on purpose! It shows how awesome and diverse God's love is. Just like how everyone has their own story and personality, each church has its own atmosphere and way of doing things.

In the global Church of Jesus, each congregation may have different traditions, customs, and priorities. But the same Spirit unites all believers worldwide. Jesus Christ is the head of the global Church as well as the local church congregations.

Keep in mind that different churches might have different styles and customs, depending on what the people in the congregation like. But it's important to remember that Christians don't always agree on everything, even beyond just those surface-level preferences.

Sometimes we have different ideas about what certain parts of the Bible mean or how we should live out our faith. What matters most is showing love and kindness to other followers of Jesus, even if they see things differently than we do. So, as you make this decision, stay open-minded and understanding towards others who might have different perspectives.

Nonetheless, there are essential beliefs we must hold in common if we are to agree and support one another. Determining what beliefs are essential has been a challenge since Jesus commissioned his followers to share the Good News with the world. The early church faced this challenge and wrote these "core beliefs" in the "Apostle's Creed," also called the "Twelve Articles of Faith." These express the most crucial Bible-based beliefs the church has held for almost 2,000 years of church history:

*I believe in God, the Father
almighty, creator of heaven and
earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only
Son, our Lord, who was conceived
by the Holy Spirit and born of the
virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under
Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell¹.*

*The third day he rose again from
the dead. He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of
God the Father almighty. From there
he will come to judge the living and
the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy
catholic² church, the communion³
of saints⁴, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and
the life everlasting. Amen.*

¹ Many modern churches have changed this statement to read, "he descended to the dead". This should not cause concern. The intent of this change is to remove any potential misunderstanding. Though Jesus descended to hell (to the dead), he was not punished in hell. His death by crucifixion completed his punishment and finished the work he came to do.

² "Catholic" is not referring to the Roman Catholic church. The word catholic means universal. This is referring to the true Christian Church of all times and all places which is made up of all genuine believers in Jesus Christ.

³ "Communion" in this case is referring to the gathering of the Church where believers use their gifts and resources to advance the Kingdom of God in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

⁴ "Saints" refers to all those who have been born-again by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. A believer in Jesus is no longer a sinner, they are a saint by virtue of Jesus' merit extended to them by grace.

As you continue reading your Bible and connecting with other followers of Jesus, you'll come across many other important Christian teachings. Unfortunately you need to be aware that numerous groups spread false teachings. Many dangerous cults pretend to be Christian churches. To keep from being deceived, you must know the Scripture and be led by the Spirit. The Scripture and Spirit always agree.

CHURCH SECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does “Church” with a big C refer to?
2. What does “church” with a little c refer to?
3. Who is the head of the Church and the church?
4. What are the core beliefs of the early church called?

GROUP ACTION

Spend 10 minutes or so alone memorizing the Apostle’s Creed. Then break into groups of 2 or 3 and try to recite to one another. Finally, as a group, see who can recall the most without looking at their paper. Celebrate everyone’s efforts.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION STEP

Determine to connect with one of the church leaders this week. Share the new commitments you’ve made to follow Jesus and ask how you may become more involved with the local church.

If you need assistance in your journey with Jesus, feel free to contact our team. We’d be honored to pray with you and offer support in any way we can.

We also recommend you complete the Kingdom Life Study. It is available through our website hopetoshare.com/kingdomlifestudy. It is designed help you discover who you are, not just what to do now that you are a follower of Jesus. Knowing who you are

empowers you to act out of your true identity.

When we know who God created us to be and operate out of that identity, we act in confidence, peace, and power. This brings us the sense of fulfillment we were designed for. We understand ourselves, connect better with others, and lead a productive life full of significance that pleases God.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the New Life Study. We hope it was a life changing experience and pray every step of your journey in relationship with Jesus is blessed.