



FUEL

**APOLOGETICS
102**

FRAMING YOUR DEFENSE



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LIVE: Apologetics

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Getting Started

Foundational truths and a deeper understanding of who God is, is essential for Christians to explain and defend their faith in Christ. While much of this series focuses on the overall attributes and character of God, we pay special attention to Jesus—God the Son—to provide a clear understanding of his nature and work to share with people of other faiths and worldviews. These topics are crucial because they will assist believers in understanding what sets Christianity apart from every other religion.

SERIES OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Christianity presents clear truths about God that are not found in any other religion or worldview.
2. WHY: As disciples of Christ, we must become more familiar with foundational truths about God—particularly about Jesus, God the Son—to gain confidence in talking with people of other religions and worldviews.
3. HOW: Examine a wide range of Scripture passages about who God is and how God interacts with humanity.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The field of apologetics is so broad and deep we cannot cover all the nuances of each topic in these lessons. Here are some additional resources that can help you prepare for your conversations with others—and can help you answer specific questions you might have after your group meets.

Books:

Our Triune God: A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity (Peter Toon)

The Message of the Trinity (Brian Edgar)

Forgotten God (Francis Chan)

The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship (Robert Letham)

The Holy Spirit: Key to Supernatural Living (Bill Bright)

Jesus Among Other Gods (Ravi Zacharias)

Discover the Real Jesus (Bill Bright)

A Man Without Equal (Bill Bright)

The Meaning of Jesus (Marcus J. Borg and N.T. Wright)

The Case for the Resurrection (Lee Strobel)

The Case for Easter (Lee Strobel)

Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment? (Debate between William Lane Craig and Gerd Ludemann)

The Cross of Christ (John Stott)

Jesus and the Victory of God (N.T. Wright)

Online:

bethinking.org

reasonablefaith.org

carm.org

apologetics315.com

josh.org

leestrobel.com

WEEK

1

Persons of the Trinity

JOHN

14:6-26

THREE-IN-ONE

TRINITY – REPRESENTS THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE THAT ONE GOD EXISTS AS A UNITY OF THREE DISTINCT PERSONS: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

- 1) There is only _____ God.
 - The Trinity is not belief in three gods.
- 2) This one God exists as three _____ (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).
 - God is not one person who took three consecutive roles. The Father did not become the Son and then the Holy Spirit. Instead, there have always been and always will be three distinct persons in the Godhead.
- 3) Each _____ is _____.
 - The three Persons are not each part of God, but are each fully God and equally God.
 - The distinctions within the Godhead are not distinctions of His essence and neither are they something added on to His essence, but they are the unfolding of God's one, undivided being into three interpersonal relationships such that there are three real Persons.

It is extremely important to know the character of each person within the Trinity and his work. Each person of the Trinity has a will, loves, and says "I" and "You" when speaking. The Father is not the same person as the Son, who is not the same person as the Holy Spirit, who is not the same person as the Father. A better understanding of the Trinity leads to a deeper faith and more meaningful prayer life.

THE FATHER IS GOD

The Christian view of God as Father and the Jewish view of God as father are very different. Judaism uses the term "father" as a metaphor for what God has done for his children, how he gives life, how he grants laws to abide by, and how he judges the actions of his children. This title speaks of what God is like, rather than him actually being our Father. Through the words of Jesus, Christianity, like Judaism, teaches that God is our provider, creator, lawgiver, and judge. However, Christianity raises the bar by declaring that God is the Father of all creation, not simply one who acts like a father. And taking it one step further, Christianity views God the Father as a person, specifically the first person of the Triune Godhead.

What is the difference between viewing God "like" a father and viewing him "as" your Father?

Read Malachi 2:10, Matthew 23:9, Luke 10:21-22, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 1:3, and Ephesians 4:6.

What are three specific aspects of God the Father discussed in these passages that confirm Him to be God?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

THE SON IS GOD

Why is Jesus such a polarizing figure, even so many centuries after he walked on the earth?

Look back at the passage from John 14:6-26. Which statement is the most polarizing or divisive, and why?

John 1 tells us that Jesus, the Word, has existed since the beginning of time and that the Word became human when Jesus came down in the flesh. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah reveals that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Throughout his ministry, Jesus cast out demons and cured the sick and did miracles in his own name. This drove the religious leaders crazy. In their mind, only the great I AM was able to do such things. Jesus knew what they thought about Him and how His words and actions would offend people. However, to deny His deity was a greater offense.

Read Exodus 3:14 and John 8:50-58.

Based on the words from Exodus, what statement was Jesus making when he said, "I AM WHO I AM"?

Read John 10:30, John 12:45, and Romans 8:9.

What do these three verses reveal to you about Jesus?

Jesus revealed that He is God in a number of ways. Four important aspects of God are revealed through Jesus, which points us toward His deity.

	<u>Jesus</u>	<u>God</u>
Creator:	John 1:3	Job 33:4
First and the Last:	Revelation 1:17	Isaiah 41:4
I AM:	John 8:58	Exodus 3:14
Judge:	2 Timothy 4:1	Joel 3:12

Ultimately, Jesus is the good shepherd that Isaiah (Isaiah 40:11) and David (Psalm 23:1) refer to in the Old Testament.

God the Son gave his life for his creation and sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven waiting for the moment of his return to redeem his people.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

Scripture reveals that the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son. Jesus himself said over and over in the Gospel of John that an “Advocate” would come when He went back to the Father. This Advocate would guide, teach, and lead the disciples in the ways God wanted them to go. It would be impossible for Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be the same person when Jesus referred to the Advocate as a different person that would come.

Read the following Scriptures. Write the attributes of the Holy Spirit revealed within the passage next to the reference.

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Attribute(s)</u>
Acts 16:6-7	
Romans 8:26	
1 Corinthians 2:10	
1 Corinthians 12:4-11	
2 Corinthians 13:14	
Ephesians 4:30	

Which attribute do you find most appealing or intriguing, and why?

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

Describe when you have seen the fruit of the Spirit in your life—or in the life of another person?

Do you find it easy or difficult to allow God the Spirit to work in your life? Why?

The Holy Spirit is the Advocate sent by the Father to take up personal residence inside of His people. We can have a joy-filled life with the presence of the Holy Spirit, no matter what our circumstances might be. God the Spirit loves us, and He desires to encourage and empower us as we receive the gifts He gives us and display the Fruit of the Spirit in this world.

Why is it essential to know that the Holy Spirit is God?

Why is it so important to know the Holy Spirit is a person and not a thing or an “it”?

NOW WHAT?

How does today's conversation help you talk with people who have questions specifically about the Trinity?

What new insights have you gained about God today?

How do these insights help you as you follow, honor, and worship God?

GOING DEEPER

The triune nature of God is one of the most important doctrines of Christianity. This teaching separates Christians from all other religions, including Christian-like cults. Christianity holds to the truth that while there is only one God, God reveals himself in three persons, each distinct from the other.

A proper understanding of the persons of the Trinity has the potential to impact your prayer life. Spend some time praying using the persons of the Trinity as a prayer guide.

1) Thank God the Father for His sovereignty.

2) Thank God the Son for dying on the cross.

3) Ask God the Spirit to continue to empower you to live a life that is devoted to pleasing to God.

SUMMARY

Our God exists as three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. When correctly understood this great mystery has the potential to change the way we view God and relate to Him.

We discussed various truths and Scriptures that show God's true nature. Many religions and cults deny the existence of a triune God,. Our study offers us a solid foundation on which to stand when comparing Christianity to these worldviews.

One practical way you can reinforce what we have discussed is to pray through the persons of the Trinity with this week.

Consider praying by:

- 1) Thanking God the Father for His sovereignty.
- 2) Thanking God the Son for dying on the cross.
- 3) Asking God the Spirit to continue to empower you to live a life that is devoted to pleasing to God.

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer any questions. Have a great week.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Ephesians 4:4-7

REAP

DAY

1

JOHN 8:58

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it important for Jesus to declare that he is "I AM"?

What is Jesus implying when he said, "before Abraham was born, I AM"?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

JOHN 10:25-30

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is Jesus saying about the relationship between himself and the Father?

Explain how Jesus has the power to give eternal life like the Father?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

LUKE 1:34-37

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What has God done in your life that helps you believe he can do the impossible?

How does knowing God does the impossible help you to understand the Trinity?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

JOHN 1:1-2, 14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Since Jesus is the Word, how long has he existed?

What did Jesus allow us to do by becoming human?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

HEBREWS 2:14-18

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does the death and resurrection of Christ allow him to do?

Why can Christ help you when you are tempted?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does this passage reveal that God is relational?

How can you respond with humility this week like Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is the Spirit able to teach believers the will of God?

What keeps someone from understanding things from the Holy Spirit?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

2

Relationship of the Trinity

JOHN

14:6-26

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

MONOTHEISM – THE DOCTRINE OR BELIEF THAT THERE IS ONE GOD.

Read the following verses then describe what the passage reveals about the character, actions and nature of God.

Scripture Nature of God

Exodus 15:11
Deuteronomy 4:35
Deuteronomy 6:4
Deuteronomy 32:39
1 Samuel 2:2
1 Kings 8:60
Psalm 90:1-2
Isaiah 44:6-8
Isaiah 45:18

Why is it important for God to remind his people so many times that he was one God?

The essential qualities of God are shared amongst all three persons of the Trinity. Christianity's teaching of one Triune God is significantly different from what other religions teach. Each distinct person of the Trinity understands his role. Each person of the Trinity not only fulfills his role, but also perfectly submits to the other persons of the Trinity.

THE TRINITY IS ABOUT PERFECT RELATIONSHIP

Think about the best, most perfect friendship you've ever experienced—or what you'd expect to experience in that kind of friendship.

Why do we love and value the friendships that reach this level?

Look through the passage from John 14. Next to the following Scripture references describe how the interaction between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is revealed?

v. 6-7

v. 10-11

v. 13

v. 16

v. 20

v. 23

v. 26

The Son's Relationship With the Father

Read John 3:16 and 17:5.

How is the relationship between Jesus and the Father described?

How long have the Father and the Son been related?

The Holy Spirit's Relationship with the Father and Son

Read John 14:26 and 15:26.

Who is sending the Spirit?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit with the Father and Son?

Structure of the Trinity

Read John 3:16, 14:26, 14:28, and 15:26.

Describe the authority structure within the Trinity.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have always existed in a structure of relationships. The Father is the Head, then the Son, then the Holy Spirit. These three timeless and equal Persons have positions of authority based on their relationships with each other. All three have equal value, yet distinct roles. The difference in roles does not negate equality of value and nature.

God the Father sent the Son (John 3:16) and the Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to continue the work of the Father (John 14:26, 15:26).

WE REFLECT GOD'S PERSONAL AND RELATIONAL NATURE

The authority structure of the Trinity is reflected in the family and in the church. Like the Trinity, all the members of the family and in the church have equal value, but not all have the same role. God commands husbands to lead their wives and fathers to lead their families. This does not make them more important than others in the home or the church. As in the Trinity, difference in roles does not negate equality of value and nature.

As Christians, we derive our concept of a person from the relationships within the Trinity. From our understanding of the Trinity (a social being), we recognize that a person is a relational being.

God made us in His image as persons who have the capacity to relate to one another and to God.

We Need Each Other

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:18-25.

How does Adam not finding a suitable helper point to our need for relationships?

We don't necessarily need to get married like Adam did, but we do need to have fellowship with others. God made us to relate to others, as He relates to Himself in His three persons.

Relating Reflects the Image of God

Scripture expresses a wonderful comparison between the nature of God and the nature of the Church. Within both God and the Church, there is both diversity and unity. According to 1 Corinthians 12, the body of Christ is a unit composed of many parts, functioning together for a purpose.

How do you see the body of Christ reflect the image of God?

Read Ephesians 4:15-16.

What was Paul's prayer and expectation of the Church?

The members of the Trinity have lived in self-giving love for each other for eternity. Therefore we should live in loving relationships with others as well. All of us are to use our gifts and abilities to help others grow spiritually. Spiritual growth occurs in transformational community with other believers. This mirrors the social nature of God.

How can God's people reflect self-giving community?

NOW WHAT?

Briefly describe in your own words how you would explain that there is only one God to a friend.

How can you reflect self-giving in your family?

What part are you playing to help the body of Christ function to reflect the image of God?

GOING DEEPER

There is one compelling argument for the triune nature of God that no one can deny. "Love" is the most widely accepted attribute of God. If God truly loves, then He must be able to fully understand, participate in, and express relationship and love. God did not become love at some point but has always been a God of love. For love and relationship to exist, multiple people must be present to give and receive love.

How does God being triune explain whom and how God loved before creation?

If a religion does not believe in a triune God, can that religion's deity be fully loving toward humanity? Why or why not?

TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY IS NOT A THEORY; IT IS AN ACCOUNT OF GOD'S BEING WHICH IS TIED TO HIS ACTION, AND THAT ACTION CENTERS ON A GOSPEL ROOTED IN THE LIFE, SUFFERING AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

—COLIN GUNTON

How has each Person of the Trinity showed self-giving love to the other persons of the Trinity?

SUMMARY

Scripture is quite clear that there is only one God. He reveals himself in persons and each person has the exact same nature and qualities. Yet, each member of the Trinity has distinct roles, and they reside in perfect unity and relationship with one another.

God was in perfect union and relationship before the creation of humanity. He understands our longings for significant relationships in our lives.

Here are some questions to bring up in your conversations with family and friends this week:

Why do you think that people long for great relationships?

What separates a great relationship from a good one?

How do you handle relationships that have authority over you?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer any questions. Have a great week.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Mark 1:10-11

REAP

DAY

1

JOHN 15:26

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Who is involved in the sending of the Holy Spirit?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit according to this passage?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

JOHN 17:1-5

DAY

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Jesus do to glorify the Father while he was here on earth?

What does verse 5 say about the eternal glory of Jesus?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

JOHN 15:12-17

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How has God showcased his love to us through the Trinity?

What condition is placed on the promise?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

LUKE 4:1-15

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is Jesus full of that sustains him through these temptations?

The power Jesus received is promised to the believer in Acts 1:8. How does that strengthen you?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

LUKE 11:8-12

DAY

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What role does the Son play with the Father on behalf of believers?

What role does the Holy Spirit play when a believer must defend their faith?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 1:26-27

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is the significance of the word “us” in this passage?

How does this passage point to our need to have relationships?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you’ve spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

MATTHEW 28:19-20

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What must all believers do according to this scripture?

What is the significance of baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

3

Biblical Creation

GENESIS

1-2

IN THE BEGINNING

The creation story is found Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Before God created, the only thing that existed was God. The significance of God creating a beginning versus God coming after the beginning means that there is no such thing as a “pre-historic” time. The beginning of history can be understood by the creation account in Genesis.

Read Genesis 1:1.

How does the first verse of the Bible identify some characteristics of God?

- 1) God is _____-_____ and therefore not dependent upon anything else for his own existence.
- 2) God is _____ in his existence.
- 3) God is the _____ of all that exists.

Even though God has always existed and always will, the earth had a real beginning set in motion by God. The opening words of the Bible establish that God, in his inscrutable wisdom, sovereign power, and majesty, is the Creator of all things that exist.

SIX DAYS

There was a beginning and an end to the biblical account of creation. It was not spread out over thousands or millions of years. Scripture tells us that it was six literal days.

Read Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 and 2:1-3.

What references are included in these verses that indicate that creation took place in six literal days?

Everywhere else in the Old Testament, when the Hebrew word for “day” (“yom”) appears with “evening” or “morning” or is modified by a number (“sixth day” or “five days”), it always means a 24-hour day.

The Bible tells us that Adam was created on the sixth day. Therefore, Adam would have lived through day 6 and day 7 of the account of creation. According to Genesis 5:5 Adam lived to be 930 years old. If each day of creation were thousands or millions of years then Adam would have been much older than 930.

Why is this so difficult for some to believe?

The supernatural and miraculous power of God is difficult to comprehend. If the miraculous is rejected for early Genesis, then on what basis can it be accepted for the resurrection of Jesus?

If you think about it, an infinite Creator God could have created everything in no time. Why, then, did He take as long as six days? The answer is given in Exodus 20:11. Here we find that God tells us that He deliberately took six days and rested for one as a pattern for man—this is where the seven-day week comes from. The seven-day week has no basis for existence, other than from Scripture. If one believes that the days of creation are long periods of time, then the week becomes meaningless.

YOUNG EARTH

The Bible does not specifically say how old the earth is. That is actually a good thing, because if it did, it would be out of date the next year. However, by reading the creation account and historical genealogy, a realistic age of the earth can be estimated.

When you include the five days before Adam was created, the genealogy listed from Adam to Abraham in Genesis 5-11 (2000 years), and the Biblical and secular historical records from Abraham our modern era (4000+ years), you can calculate the time span from creation until today.

$$5 \text{ DAYS} + 2000 \text{ YEARS} + 4000+ \text{ YEARS} = 6000+ \text{ YEARS}$$

The view of a young earth for a believer is extremely important. One of the biggest issues in believing that the earth and fossils are older than 6000 years is that means death took place before the fall of man. According to the Bible death is the result of sin.

EX NIHILO

God did not create all that there is out of a cosmic chaos, nor did he form that matter out of himself. He spoke the universe into existence and it came to be. This answers the ultimate question of origin, "Where did everything come from?" God created ex nihilo, out of nothing.

EX NIHILO – OUT OF NOTHING

Read Genesis 1:1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, and 26.

How do these Scriptures affirm "ex nihilo"?

IMPORTANT TRUTHS ABOUT EX NIHILO

- 1) He did not make the world out of part of Himself.
- 2) He did not make the world out of a substance called "nothing."
- 3) God created everything from nothing is not natural to us because it is not. It's supernatural.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

Read Genesis 1:26-31.

What does it mean for man to be created in the image of God?

Read Genesis 1:31-2:3.

Having previously affirmed on six occasions that particular aspects of creation are “good” (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), God now states, after the creation of the man and the woman, that everything he has made is very good. While many things about the present-day world do not appear to be good, this was not so at the beginning.

Read Genesis 2:4-25.

What were the responsibilities God gave to man?

What standards for marriage did God demonstrate in the creation process?

Read Mark 10:2-9.

How did Jesus uphold these standards?

CREATION CONCLUSIONS

- 1) God created all things. He is _____ all things and _____ all things. Therefore, the entire universe is under His _____.
- 2) God is able to _____ for His creation through the means of His creation.
- 3) God’s role as Creator gives Him the _____ to set the guidelines for life and the penalty for breaking His standards.
- 4) Creation is _____ for the gospel.
- 5) Beliefs regarding creation are _____ to the inerrancy, trustworthiness, and authority of Scripture.
- 6) Man is _____ upon God.

NOW WHAT?

Why does your view of creation matter?

If a question about creation stumps you, what is the best response?

How can you have a conversation at school about creation?

What does it require to have a conversation in science class about creation?

GOING DEEPER

Describe some practical ways to have a conversation with an unbeliever about creation.

Can someone embrace Christianity and Evolution?

Some people say that we should not take Genesis literally. If God were to say one thing and mean another, what basis do we have for any moral values?

Read Colossians 1:15-17.

What is the significance of all things being created through Christ?

SUMMARY

Today we continued our study of foundational truths by discussing creation. When forming a biblical worldview it is vital that our interpretations of science are viewed through the lens of Scripture.

Our belief about how everything began must begin with what the Bible teaches. If we fail to take Genesis literally, we have no basis for knowing how we are to interpret the rest of the Bible.

You can keep the conversation going at home and with your friends by asking questions like these:

Where do you think everything came from?

What separates humans from the rest of creation?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources. Have a great week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Acts 17:24

REAP

DAY

PSALM 100

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

From creation until now how has God shown faithfulness to every generation?

Write out a prayer of praise to God about being created.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

ACTS 17:25

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it significant that the writer of Acts upholds what Genesis teaches?

What does this passage say that God gives to man and the rest of creation?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage reveal about the presence of Jesus during the 7 days of creation?

How does this passage reveal Jesus' power to give eternal life?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

HEBREWS 11:1-3

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is required to believe the supernatural creation?

How does your trust in God creating everything impact your trust about Jesus' resurrection?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

PSALM 19

DAY

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe how creation exclaims the glory of God?

How can you, as God's creation, communicate the glory of God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

PSALM 33:9

DAY

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How has God showed you that he can be trusted to be in control?

What do you need to let go of and let God to be in control?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

JAMES 3: 9

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it important that we speak kindly of others?

Who do you need to apologize to for speaking as though they were something less than you?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

4

The Problem of Sin

LUKE

18:18-19

WHAT IS SIN?

Write out your personal definition of sin and on what you base your definition.

Humanity was created to have fellowship with God, but sin broke that relationship. Put plainly, sin is missing the mark that God intended for us. Sin is more than cheating, lying, or being sexually immoral. These and other actions are results of an attitude of sin. Sin is doing what we want instead of what God wants.

Any study of sin must cover a wide range of Scripture passages, going all the way back to Genesis where we see Adam and Eve in unique fellowship with God. This relationship continued uninterrupted until the fall of man and the entrance of sin into the world. This fateful event in human history separated us from God.

Read Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-24.

What do these passages of Scripture reveal about how sin entered the story of humanity?

What did God ask Adam and Eve not to do?

Asking Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of a specific tree was not just about the fruit, but rather, what it symbolized. "Knowledge of good and evil" refers to the ability to choose what is right or wrong for oneself. Choosing to eat the fruit symbolized the rejection that God is the all wise, caring Father that knows what is best for us.

THEREFORE, WHAT GOD FORBADE MAN TO DO WAS TO EXCHANGE ROLES WITH HIM.

HE SIMPLY SAID: DON'T TRY TO DETHRONE ME. DON'T TRY TO TAKE MY PLACE.

TRUST ME TO FILL YOUR LIFE WITH MAXIMUM JOY AND MEANING.

—JOHN PIPER

HOW HAS SIN IMPACTED US?

Think about a time you experienced a broken friendship. Without sharing all the details what was that experience like?

As a result of Adam and Eve's sin we all are born with a sinful nature. This is original sin and it shows itself in our actions, words, and thoughts that violate God's commands. The guilt placed on Adam and Eve is placed on us as well. We are also considered guilty.

In the space below write out the specifics of the punishment that Adam and Eve received.

Adam -

Eve -

Both -

How does their punishment impact us today?

How has their punishment specifically impacted your life?

1) Relation to God

Read Genesis 3:8.

Instead of running to God to ask for help Adam and Eve immediately hid themselves when they heard him walking in the garden. People have been running away from God with their guilty conscience ever since.

How do you respond when you do something your parents told you directly not to do?

2) Relation to ourselves.

Read Genesis 3:7.

Their rebellion was so contrary to God that they immediately felt the need to cover themselves with clothing to disguise their shame and imperfection.

How do you try to cover your imperfections, guilt, or shame?

3) Relation to each other.

Read Genesis 3:12.

Adam tried to justify his behavior by pointing blame. When do you see self-justification the most?

Humanity was created without sin, morally inclined to do good, and in perfect, right standing with God. However, due to this act of disobedience by Adam and Eve, sin entered into the human experience. The Bible teaches that because God established Adam as the head and beginning of the entire human race, his sin affected all future generations. Every one of Adam's descendants is marked with this sentence, and our disobedient actions that lead to death come out of our sinful nature.

Read Ecclesiastes 7:20 and Romans 3:23.

With the exception of Jesus, is there anyone who is without sin?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know

Read Romans 6:23 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.

What is the result of sin?

Read Ephesians 2:1-3.

Who do we live to please without Christ in our lives?

How is physical death similar to spiritual death? How are they different?

Compare a broken friendship to our broken relationship with God?

Similarities –

Differences -

Is God's response to our sin fair or just? Why or why not?

The Bible tells us that because of our sin, we have earned the punishment of spiritual death. Just as physical death is separation from physical life, spiritual death is separation from life with God. The law that God instituted in the Old Testament book of Leviticus required that a price be paid for our sin, and that payment involved the spilling of blood. Under the Old Covenant, animals were sacrificed, and when their blood was spilled God's wrath was satisfied. The next time people sinned, they were right back where they started—separated from God, and another sacrifice was required. Something had to be done to deal with our sin once and for all. Ultimately the love of God and his justice is revealed through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to pardon believers from their sin.

NOW WHAT?

When do you try to dethrone God in your life?

What are the common things that cause you to sin?

How can an accountability partner help keep you from sinning?

What are the relationships in your life that are in need of repair because of your sin?

GOING DEEPER

Why is it important for to recognize that we are sinners in need of grace?

What is required of an individual to leave a sinful lifestyle?

We naturally tend to picture evil as a thing. However, evil exists not as a thing but as a choice.

Since sin how can believers

What is required for an individual to receive maximum joy and meaning in life from Christ?

SUMMARY

In today's conversation, we had a difficult discussion about sin. Sin has caused separation between mankind and God. This topic is important as we prepare to learn about other worldviews and religions because we cannot do any good on our own.

It is important for believers in Jesus to recognize who they were and where they were headed before Christ. That perspective creates the urgency to share the good news of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Despite all that we have done there is hope founded in Christ alone. Next week we will see how Jesus supplied the bridge so that our relationship with the Father could be restored.

Here are some questions you might want to ask to keep the conversation going this week with your friends and family:

What are some similarities and differences between a broken friendship and our broken relationship with God?

What is sin?

Why is sin a problem?

If you have any questions about our lesson please contact your leader or a pastor. They look forward to answering any questions! Have an amazing week!

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK

Romans 3:23

REAP

DAY

1

ISAIAH 59:1-2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What separates you from God?

How is it possible for God to save you?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

ROMANS 6:23

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

If an individual does not repent of their sin before they die what will happen to them?

How does this verse encourage you to share the gospel with others?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

ROMANS 7:15, 19-20

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What sin do you find yourself doing over and over again?

Who can you share your temptations with that can hold you accountable?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

ROMANS 7:18

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What value is there in knowing that no one can do "good" on their own?

What does it require in order to do "good"?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

ROMANS 8:13-14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is the result of living for the gratification of your sinful desires?

How can you choose to be led by the Spirit of God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

EPHESIANS 2:1-5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage reveal about a life saved by Christ?

What did it require of God to do something about the problem of sin?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

ROMANS 7:21-25

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How do you see the war of good and evil choices in your life?

What hope do we have to leave a life of sin?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

5

Sin and Salvation

1 JOHN

1:5-2:2

HOW DID JESUS DEAL WITH SIN?

God's plan for our redemption includes dealing with the reality of sin. Jesus is the only one who could deal with our sin and bring us back into relationship with God. Atonement is the way God restores a right relationship between himself and humanity.

In the Old Testament God understood that his chosen people, the nation of Israel, were helpless to pay the penalty for the grievous sins they committed against him. He gave them a means of reconciliation through Old Testament covenant law. This system was based upon animal sacrifices where the death or blood of an animal was accepted by God as a substitute for the death the sinner deserved. Year after year the people of God would worship in this fashion, but this sacrifice was not sufficient to cleanse the people of their sin forever. Only a divine sacrifice provided by God could accomplish this. Jesus came to fulfill the requirement of a perfect sacrifice.

Read John 3:16-17, Hebrews 9:11-14 and 1 John 2:1-2.

What did the death of Jesus on the cross allow him to accomplish?

What is the difference between the sacrifice of Jesus' blood and that of an animal?

Read Hebrews 10:1-18.

What are some of the insufficiencies in the old law—the old way of dealing with sin—was insufficient?

What are some reasons the New Covenant is more desirable, according to these verses?

Read Romans 5:6-11.

According to this passage what did Jesus do and what are the results of his actions?

What's the most loving sacrifice you've ever made for another person, and how is that a reflection of how God displayed his love for us?

What do the following verses say about what happened at the cross and how Jesus' sacrifice frees us from the condemnation we deserve?

Isaiah 53:6 -

2 Corinthians 5:21 -

Galatians 3:13 -

1 Peter 3:18 -

The death of Jesus is at the core of the Gospel message and communicates God's incredible redemptive work. Christ took on sins that were not his own so that we could be free from sin. He died the death that we should have died.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:56-57 and Hebrews 9:27-28.

For those who believe, this means that the death that we now face is the entrance to eternal salvation instead of condemnation. The wrath that we once faced before Christ has been nailed to the cross.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and Hebrews 10:14.

Describe the role grace plays in salvation.

What assurance does this passage provide for the believer in Christ?

Jesus came to fulfill the work of salvation on the cross, and to give his life for each of us. God laid on him all of our sins, yet Jesus—because of his great love for us—gave himself up for us. His sacrifice means that anyone who believes in him can receive redemption and can be saved from God's condemnation. Everyone's relationship with God can be restored. Developing an understanding of salvation—the work that Jesus did for us—is essential in developing your biblical worldview. Understanding this truth will help you when you talk with people of other religions or worldviews.

OUR RESPONSE TO SIN

Read Romans 10:9-10.

The recognition of Christ as Lord requires us to compare his holiness to how sinful we are and that he died to cleanse us from our sins.

Read 1 John 1:5–2:2.

The Apostle John wrote this letter to people who were followers of Jesus. In this passage, John talks about confession, the act of verbally acknowledging that we have sinned. When we confess our sins to God, we are recognizing that we have wronged God. Confession is agreeing that what we did was “sin” or rebellion toward God.

What is the result of Christians acting like they never sin?

Describe the significance of the two things that happen to us when we confess our sin?

What does confession of sin require?

Why is it important to confess our sins, even if we’re already followers of Jesus?

When we confess our sins we are not telling God anything that he does not already know. We are acknowledging we have sinned against God and are in need of his pardon.

According to Scripture to whom should you confess your sins?

Read 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

As believers in Christ we do not need a mediator (such as a priest) between God and us. We can go directly to God because of Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

REAL LIFE CHANGE

Read John 8:3-11.

When Jesus said, “Go and sin no more,” it was a warning against her sinful lifestyle choices. His words expressed mercy and commanded holiness.

Read 1 John 3:4-9.

True followers of Christ do not recklessly and habitually sin because of the change that comes from being united with Christ and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. The genuine confession of faith in Christ by someone who habitually sins may easily be called into question when judged by the Father.

NOW WHAT?

If you were standing before God and he asked you, “Why should I let you into Heaven?” what would you say? Why?

How is your life different because of what Jesus did on the cross? How would things be different if he hadn’t made that sacrifice?

How can today’s conversation help you as you talk with people of other religions or worldviews?

GOING DEEPER

Read John 1:10-13.

Why does God require that we choose if we will believe in Jesus and follow him? Why not force us to accept the gift of salvation through Jesus?

If the gift of salvation is a gift given to anyone who receives it, why do some people refuse this gift of eternal life?

What about people who try to reach God through living a good, moral life? Are they separated from God? Why or why not?

A “religiously inclusive” person might say, “Christians are so arrogant because they claim to have the only way!” The argument seems to claim that all religions—except Christianity—believe that “all roads lead to Heaven” and that Christians need to “get with the times.” Our topic today is an important piece in understanding why Christianity is different from any other religion and how the way Jesus dealt with our sin sets Christianity apart from every other religion or worldview.

SUMMARY

It is crucial that we understand why Jesus' death is one of the truths that set Christianity apart from every other religion. Jesus' life, death and resurrection provided the means necessary for a relationship with God.

You may have more questions or may just need to process some of the material we talked about. We covered a lot of ground and saw how the ways of dealing with sin in the Old Testament preceded God's ultimate act of sending Jesus Christ to die on our behalf and pay the penalty of sin.

Here are some questions you might want to ask to keep the conversation going this week with your friends and family:

How can you have a relationship with God?

Why is it important to confess our sins, even if we're already followers of Jesus?

How is your life different because of what Jesus did on the cross? How would things be different if he hadn't made that sacrifice?

If you have any questions about our lesson please contact your leader or a pastor. They look forward to answering any questions! Have an amazing week!

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK

1 John 2:1-2

REAP

DAY

ROMANS 8:28

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

When has God caused good to come out of a bad situation?

How can you trust God in bad situations?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

PSALM 139:13-16

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this verse indicate about how well God knows us?

How should this affect our attitude toward God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does the cross of Christ mean for your life?

Whom do you know who sees the cross as foolishness? Pray for them.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PROVERBS 4:1-9

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What are some of the benefits of wisdom?

How can these benefits be applied to your life?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

ECCLESIASTES 3:9-12

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What do you think about when considering eternity?

What does it mean that God "has made everything beautiful in its time"?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

PSALM 26:1-7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What words in this passage describe a life of integrity?

What are the areas in your life that you are not walking with integrity?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

MATTHEW 12:30

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How are do your actions indicate that you are for God or against God?

What does it mean to be a gather and a scatter?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

6

Knowing Who Jesus Is

JOHN

1:1-14

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"Jesus Christ" is actually the combination of a personal name and a title. "Jesus" is the name the angel told Joseph and Mary to name the anointed child, and "Christ" is the title, meaning anointed or Messiah. The significance of this name became clearer and clearer as Jesus began and fulfilled his ministry.

Read Matthew 1:20-21.

Read Matthew 26:63-64.

When Jesus referred to himself, he often used the title "Son of Man." This title refers to the mysterious, human-divine figure of "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus applied this title to himself in several ways.

- 1) He used the title to declare that he had the power to forgive sinners.
- 2) He used the title to emphasize his suffering, atoning death and resurrection will redeem his people.
- 3) He used the title when referring to himself as the only one with full authority from God the Father.
- 4) He used the title as the glorious king and judge who will return to establish God's kingdom on earth.

WAS JESUS A REGULAR MAN?

Read John 1:1-14.

What are some specific ways in which Jesus was a regular person, just like any other person in the history of the world? How was he different?

Why is Word capitalized in John 1:1?

Who is the "Word" that John is referencing in this passage? What evidence do you see for this?

What does the life of Jesus bring to everyone? How have you seen this play out in your life?

What does light do to a dark room? How does Jesus do this in the lives of his followers?

According to this passage, what happens to those who believe Jesus and receive him?

There is no way a regular human being could accomplish the things Jesus has done. Jesus has rescued believers out of the darkness of Satan's kingdom and brought them into his kingdom. When we accept his gift of forgiveness for our sins, we receive the benefit from his sacrifice on the cross. No mere human could accomplish this.

WHO DO PEOPLE SAY JESUS IS?

As we see in John 1, Jesus was with God the Father from the very beginning of time. He is the creator of all things and grants life to all. Many people see Jesus as the greatest teacher in history, but someone who is just a teacher could not claim all of these things.

Write down who you believe Jesus to be and two or three words that describe to how you have come to that conclusion.

If we walked around your school and asked people who they believe Jesus is, what are some answers we might hear?

What are some statements you have heard about Jesus that you know are not true? How do you know those statements are not true?

Read Matthew 16:13-19.

What did Peter's statement reveal about his friendship and interaction with Jesus?

What is the significance of Peter's claim that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of the Living God?

The impact Jesus made goes far beyond that of any teacher. The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are the main sources for the biography of Jesus' life, and the account of his teachings, actions, and healings.

As we read through the Gospels, we gain an understanding of the ways in which Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy concerning the coming Messiah, as recorded in Luke 4:18-19.

The Gospels also give us insight to how Jesus was received by others. Tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, and even people who had died but came back to life were given new life through Jesus. A good man, a teacher, or a prophet could not do the things Jesus Christ did in the lives of people.

JESUS IS EITHER A LUNATIC, LIAR, OR LORD.
—C.S. LEWIS

JESUS FULFILLED PROPHECY

The Old Testament of the Bible contains many passages about the Messiah, all of which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Some Bible scholars identify 325 prophetic statements concerning the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Consider the following statements of Old Testament prophets, about the coming Messiah and the Gospel accounts that fulfill each prophecy.

Ask students to look up and read each passage.

<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
Genesis 12:1-3	Descendant of Abraham	Matthew 1:1 / Luke 3:34
Genesis 49:10	From the tribe of Judah	Luke 3:33
Isaiah 7:14	Born of a virgin	Luke 1:26, 31
Jeremiah 31:15	Slaughter of young when Jesus was born	Matthew 2:16-18
Hosea 11:1	Escape to Egypt	Matthew 2:14-15
Psalms 78:2-4	Messiah would teach using parables	Matthew 13:10-15
Psalms 41:9	Messiah would be betrayed	Luke 22:47-48
Isaiah 53:12	Messiah would be crucified with criminals	Matthew 27:38
Psalms 24:7-10	Messiah would ascend to Heaven	Luke 24:51

In light of these Old Testament prophecies and their subsequent fulfillment in the New Testament, how would you explain to another person why the Old Testament is still important, even though we now have the New Testament?

Jesus' life work was filled with many signs, wonders, and miracles. Many details of his life confirm the ancient prophecies of the Messiah that were written, spoken, and shared for generations before Jesus' birth. During his ministry, Jesus proved his dominance over nature (Mark 4:35-41); over death (Mark 5:35-42 and John 11:30-44); and over sickness (Mark 5:25-34). Prophecy found in Isaiah 35:3-6 that tells of the work of the Messiah. This prophecy was no doubt a catalyst for the disciples as they chose to follow.

We sit on a side of history from which we can see how the Old Testament corresponds to the New Testament through miraculous Messianic prophecies that Jesus himself fulfilled. Every book in the Old Testament tells of a God who will go to the depths of the earth to redeem his people, and because of this we can infer that every one of the books in the Old Testament points us toward the "anointed one"—translated "Christos" in Greek—who came to redeem God's creation from the kingdom of darkness.

NOW WHAT?

What is one of the biggest barriers to following Jesus that you face?

Based on what you have studied about the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, what is the significance of Peter's confession that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God (Matthew 16)?

Who do you say Jesus is—and why?

How do you view Jesus differently after taking a look at who he is, what others said about him, and the prophecies he fulfilled that were written generations before he was on the earth?

GOING DEEPER

Read and discuss the following passages:

Able to Forgive Sins	Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48-50; John 8:24
The Son of Man	Matthew 8:20; 11:19; 26:2; Luke 7:34; 9:58
The Judge of the World	Matthew 7:21-23
The Fulfillment of Scriptures	Luke 24:44
The Bread of Life	John 6:35
The Light of the World	John 8:12
The "I AM"	John 8:54-59; 18:5-6
Divine	Matthew 4:7; 12:6-8; Mark 14:61-64
Able to Save the Lost	Luke 19:10; John 10:9; 11:25
Eternally Sinless	John 8:58; 17:5
Able to Accomplish God's Work	John 17:4

What is significant about the things Jesus said about himself?

What do these verses reveal about Jesus?

How do these passages help us understand the person of Jesus?

SUMMARY

We continued our study on foundational truths that will help you explain and defend your faith in Christ. In this lesson we explored who Jesus is and how the prophecies of the Old Testament affirm Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.

The purpose of this study was to provide a clear picture of who Jesus is and why he is the Messiah and can claim to be the Son of God.

You can keep the conversation going at home and with your friends by asking questions like these:

What are three specific ways Jesus was a regular person, just like any other person in the history of the world?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Describe three ways Jesus was different than any other human.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

What are three statements about Jesus you have heard that you know are not true? Next to each statement explain how you know those statements are not true.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Who do you say Jesus is—and why?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer any questions. Have a great week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

John 1:1

REAP

DAY

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How would you explain the portion of Scripture that says Christ is the head of the church?

How is everything reconciled to God through Jesus?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

MATTHEW 2:1-6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What caused the wise men to look for Jesus?

Why was it important for the wise men to know Scripture?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

JOHN 1:29-34

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What allowed John the Baptist to recognize Jesus?

According to verse 29 for whom did Jesus come to take sins away?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

JOHN 15:9-12

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is Jesus asking us to do?

How can we remain in his love?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

JOHN 10:10

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does Satan steal, kill and destroy your life?

What does Christ offer you if you draw near to him?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

ROMANS 10:9-13

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is required for an individual to be saved?

Why does your income, race or even gender not matter in order to know Jesus as your Savior?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

MARK 8:27-29

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Who do you say Jesus is?

How can you know that you have a correct perception of who Jesus is?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

7

The Reality Reality of the Resurrection

MATTHEW

27:57-28:15

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The message of the early church was always centered on the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection. This was not some theological myth that began circulating decades later among the followers of Jesus Christ. It was a message proclaimed immediately.

Read Acts 1:1-3.

Why is it significant that the apostles immediately began proclaiming the resurrection of Christ?

Without the resurrection of Christ, Luke could never have written that passage. Jesus' ministry would have been sealed in the tomb and covered by the stone. Death would have been the destination.

The phrase "by many proofs" includes the translation of the Greek word *tekmerion*.

TEKMERION (tek-may'-ree-on) – FIXED AND SURE SIGN, EVIDENCE, OR PROOF; THAT FROM WHICH SOMETHING IS SURELY OR PLAINLY KNOWN ON UNQUESTIONABLE EVIDENCE

This word emphasizes that there was undeniable proof and evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

Read Hebrews 11:1.

How does knowing there were many proofs increase your faith?

REASONS WE CAN TRUST LUKE

- 1) Luke was a _____.
- 2) Luke was well practiced in gathering _____.
- 3) He specifically chose this special word for sure historical proof, the _____ type of legal _____.
- 4) Luke also adds the word _____.
- 5) Luke is telling us that he himself has carefully _____ the evidence.

From the beginning, some have rejected Jesus' resurrection as a hoax, a tale, a lie, or fiction. A number of theories have been presented to disprove the resurrection of Christ over time; yet, historical scholars have solidly discredited each theory.

Why do people make claims to refute Jesus' resurrection?

What would you say to someone about their need to examine the evidence for the resurrection of Christ?

Archaeological discoveries continue to support the Bible's historical accuracy. We tend to forget that the Gospels and book of Acts are eyewitness accounts of the life and death of Jesus. A simple search of historical records written by historians Flavius Josephus, Cornelius Tacitus, Lucian of Samosata, and the Jewish Sanhedrin will lead you to further non-biblical evidence for Jesus' life.

RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the 19th century many critics attacked the reliability of the biblical text, but discoveries of ancient texts helped to validate the accuracy of the New Testament manuscripts. William F. Albright had a significant role in the authentication of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948.

WE CAN ALREADY SAY EMPHATICALLY THAT THERE IS NO LONGER ANY SOLID BASIS
FOR DATING ANY BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AFTER ABOUT A.D. 80,
TWO FULL GENERATIONS BEFORE THE DATE BETWEEN 130 AND 150
GIVEN BY THE MORE RADICAL NEW TESTAMENT CRITICS OF TODAY.
—WILLIAM F. ALBRIGHT

With this in mind, we can be convinced that the writings of the New Testament are accurate, because at the time of their writing and subsequent circulation we have no historical record of people refuting the claims of Paul as he spoke openly about the resurrection of Jesus and what it meant for the church.

Why is it important that there is no historical record of people refuting the claims of Paul about the resurrection of Jesus?

JEWISH BURIAL CUSTOMS

Read John 19:39-42.

The body of Jesus, in accordance with Jewish burial custom, was wrapped in a linen cloth. That custom included mixing about 75 pounds of aromatic spices (myrrh and aloes) to form a gummy substance that was then smothered on the lifeless body. After the body was covered in this burial mixture, strips of cloth were wrapped around the body.

Read Matthew 27:59-66.

What steps did the Roman guard take to make sure Jesus stayed in the tomb?

For politically focused burials, a Roman guard of strictly disciplined fighting men was stationed to guard the tomb. If a guard was present to watch over a tomb, a Roman seal was then affixed on the tomb to prevent any attempt at vandalizing the grave. Anyone who would try to remove the stone from the tomb's entrance would break the seal—and would face the wrath of the Roman authorities.

When you combine what you can read in the Gospels and research historical data on Jewish and Roman culture, you can see that countless security precautions were taken regarding Jesus' trial, crucifixion, burial, and sealing of the tomb—precautions that make it very difficult for critics to defend their position that Christ did not rise from the dead.

WE SEE EVIDENCE IN THE EMPTY TOMB

Read Matthew 27:57-28:15.

Imagine sitting on a jury in a criminal trial. Each attorney presents information and evidence in an attempt to persuade you to support either the prosecution or the defense. What kind of evidence would you find most persuasive, and why?

What do you find most remarkable in this passage of Scripture? Why?

Read Matthew 27:63-64. What is the significance of this conversation?

The religious leaders told the Roman guards to invent a story about the disciples coming to steal the body of Jesus. Based on what we read in this passage about the tomb of Jesus, why was it not possible for anyone to steal his body?

Do you think the Romans and religious leaders might have removed Jesus' body from the tomb? Why or why not?

The Romans and the religious leaders wouldn't have stolen the body of Jesus. They wanted to keep the body in the tomb and leave it sealed to demonstrate that Jesus was dead. The disciples couldn't have overcome the Roman guard and rolled away the stone. Plus, once Jesus' followers began preaching that he had been resurrected, the leaders and Romans did not produce Jesus' body to contest their claims. The empty tomb is powerful evidence of the resurrection of Jesus.

NOW WHAT?

Describe three historical proofs of the resurrection of Christ.

How has today's conversation impacted your perspective on Jesus' resurrection?

How can today's discussion help you as you talk with people who reject or are unsure of the reality of Jesus' resurrection?

GOING DEEPER

Next to each of the following Scriptures, write down how the specific passage inspires hope.

Romans 1:1-4

Romans 4:22-5:2

1 Corinthians 15:17-20

Philippians 3:20-21

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

SUMMARY

This week we talked about the historical evidence that validates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the most central event in the Christian faith, and the Bible teaches us that if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then we have no hope in our faith.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-19.

Here are some questions that could help spur conversation this week with your friends and family:

How does the resurrection of Jesus impact the Christian faith?

What evidence for Jesus' resurrection do you find strongest and most persuasive? Why?

There is a wealth of evidence that upholds the historical facts of Jesus' resurrection. Have some fun with your family researching some evidence this week. Have a great week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

John 20:29

REAP

DAY

1

MATTHEW 27:57-61

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Write down what you imagine it would have been like to sit near the tomb in that moment?

When has God comforted you when you felt like it was all over?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

MATTHEW 28:1-10

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it interesting that the women who witnessed Jesus' burial were the first he appeared to?

How does this passage give you hope for victory in Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

JOHN 2:18-22

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Jesus promise to do in this passage of Scripture?

How Jesus' words increase the faith of the disciples after they witnessed the resurrection?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

MATTHEW 12:38-42

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Who is greater than Jonah according to this Scripture?

How is the sign of Jonah a sign to that present generation?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

1 CORINTHIANS 15:21-22

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What are the consequences of Adam's sin?

What are consequences of a sinner saved by faith through Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

MATTHEW 28:11-15

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What would cause the Roman guard to lie?

How do you respond when you don't want to believe that something is true?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why do we know there will be a resurrection?

How does this passage increase your faith about eternity with Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

8

Eyewitnesses of the Resurrection

1 CORINTHIANS

15:1-22

WE SEE EVIDENCE IN THE FIRST EYEWITNESSES

We can trust that the Bible is accurate because of the overwhelming historical and archaeological evidence that supports every manuscript used to make up the 66 books of the Bible. Keep this in mind as we move on in our conversation about the resurrection of Jesus.

Read Luke 24:1-12.

How can bias affect your willingness to believe a person's story?

Why would the women's story have "sounded like nonsense to the men"?

Remember, in that particular culture, the testimony of women was not highly regarded or even allowed in court. Women were treated as second-class citizens. Yet the Bible clearly tells us that women were the first to see the empty tomb, women informed the disciples of the empty tomb, and the risen Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene. The writers of the Gospels—who were men—had no choice but to include this potentially embarrassing fact because that's how it happened.

Based on what you know from the New Testament, what were some ways Jesus challenged the culture's views toward "outcasts" and "social rejects"?

WE SEE EVIDENCE FROM THE APOSTLES AND OTHERS

Read Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-30.

What proofs are described in these passages?

Were Thomas' doubts reasonable or unreasonable? Why?

As someone who hasn't seen Jesus like his disciples did, how have you struggled with doubts about faith or God?

Why are the many other proofs not described in the scripture?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Why was it important that Paul mention Jesus' appearance to hundreds of people—and why did Paul point out that most of them were still alive when he wrote this letter?

Re-read John 20:19-20. What is the impact in our lives that Jesus' first words to the disciples were a message of peace?

Jesus appeared to his followers on several occasions after his resurrection. The sheer number of witnesses is a major piece of evidence to the validity of Jesus' resurrection. And we also find support through the lives of these early Christians who witnessed the risen Jesus. The disciples had seen their master die, they had lost hope, and they were downtrodden, heartbroken, and distraught. The Resurrection changed the disciples, and same men who were fearful and downcast followers boldly spread the message of Jesus.

Share about a time you boldly did something for God. What did you learn from that experience?

WE SEE THE EVIDENCE OF PAUL'S LIFE

Read Acts 7:59-8:3.

At this point in his life, the Apostle Paul was still known by the name Saul. How would you summarize Saul's attitude toward Jesus and his followers in this passage?

Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.

In Acts 9, we read about Paul's conversion, and in 2 Corinthians we learn about the troubles Paul had as he fulfilled his mission of sharing the message of Jesus.

What could make a person willingly accept or endure such intense sufferings without a deep certainty about Jesus?

Why is it significant that Christianity's most violent enemy became Christianity's most devout missionary?

On one of Paul's long, dusty commutes to persecute Christians, he encountered Jesus. Paul was on his way to arrest followers of Jesus in Damascus when the course of his life changed forever. This man was no friend of Jesus; he was the most intense persecutor of the Christians. Yet when he encountered the risen Jesus, the persecutor became the missionary. That's powerful evidence that Jesus truly did come back to life.

WHO WOULD DIE FOR A LIE?

Read Matthew 27:57–28:15.

The church, throughout its early years, suffered intense persecution at the hands of both the Jews and Romans, yet it flourished. Stephen and James are two biblical accounts of men dying for their belief in Jesus Christ.

1) Stephen – Acts 7:54-60

2) James – Acts 12:1-2

Much of the information that we have today about the deaths of the other apostles come from church historians and their written accounts of the men who walked with Jesus. All of the apostles, except John, were killed for their faith. Even John faced death on account of his faith.

Why were these early Christians willing to face death for their belief in Jesus Christ?

These early apostles faced intense persecution and even death for their faith. What does that reveal about their belief in Jesus Christ?

Many of the first missionaries of the Christian faith died a martyr's death because of their belief in Jesus Christ. People will not die claiming what they know is a lie, but people will go to the grave believing they are proclaiming the truth. These followers of Christ were convinced that Jesus' resurrection really happened, and without a doubt, that Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior.

POWER OVER DEATH

Read Revelation 1:17-18.

Read John 10:28-30.

The reason that Christ can give life is that he has conquered death and death has no power over him. He is life; therefore he gives life to those who trust him as Savior. That means that we can live in victory through Christ.

NOW WHAT?

How do the encounters the disciples had with the risen Jesus empower you to be bold today?

How has today's conversation impacted your perspective on Jesus' resurrection?

How can today's discussion help you as you talk with people who reject or are unsure of the reality of Jesus' resurrection?

GOING DEEPER

Next to each of the following Scriptures write down how the specific passage encourages you to press on in your faith.

Romans 5:1-5

Philippians 3:7-11

Philippians 4:4-7

Hebrews 12:1-2

Which evidence for Jesus' resurrection do you find strongest and most persuasive? Why?

SUMMARY

This week we talked about the eyewitness accounts that validate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their accounts of interactions with the risen Christ should increase our faith.

The evidence from the apostles, as well as the Apostle Paul's changed life, is greatly encouraging. If the risen Christ can empower terrified disciples who locked themselves in a room out of fear, to stand up and preach just a few weeks later, then imagine what he can do in our lives.

If Jesus' appearance to the most notorious Christian persecutor propelled him to change into the most passionate church planter this planet has ever seen, then the resurrection of Jesus has great power in our lives.

Here are some questions that could help spur conversation this week with your friends and family:

As someone who hasn't seen Jesus like his disciples did, how have you struggled with doubts about faith in God?

What evidence for Jesus' resurrection do you find strongest and most persuasive? Why?

Have a great week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

John 20:30-31

REAP

DAY

1

ACTS 2:1-41

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What allowed Peter to preach so boldly?

Why is it important that the people Peter was speaking to were eyewitnesses of Jesus' life?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

ACTS 3:1-16

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

To whom did Peter give credit for the healing of the beggar?

Why did Peter use this circumstance to teach about the resurrection?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

ACTS 4:1-22

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How did the people respond to what happened with the beggar in the previous chapter?

How does this passage communicate that all believers can share about the resurrection of Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

ACTS 4:23-31

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe why there was a real threat and why the disciples prayed for boldness?

What is it that you need boldness for?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

MARK 16:14-20

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why would Jesus have rebuked the disciples for not believing that he had risen?

Why are Christians today given the same responsibility as the disciples to share the Gospel?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

MATTHEW 28:1-10

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it important that they grabbed Jesus' feet?

Why did the resurrection of immediately cause them to worship Jesus?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

ACTS 9:1-19

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How was Paul changed after his encounter with the risen Christ?

How does your own experience with Christ prove the resurrection?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

WEEK

9

Heaven and Hell

REVELATION

21:1-8

FACTS ABOUT ETERNITY

1) EVERYONE WILL EXIST ETERNALLY IN HEAVEN OR HELL.

Read Daniel 12:2,3, Matthew 25:46, John 5:28, and Revelation 20:14-15.

2) EVERYONE HAS ONE LIFE IN WHICH TO DETERMINE THEIR FUTURE.

Read Hebrews 9:27.

3) CITIZENSHIP OF HEAVEN OR HELL IS DETERMINED BY WHETHER A PERSON BELIEVES (PUTS THEIR TRUST) IN CHRIST ALONE.

Read John 3:16-18, 36.

THE REALITY OF HEAVEN

The Bible does not present Heaven as a place on the clouds in the sky where people will spend time trying to amuse themselves for all of eternity. Rather, it presents Heaven as the dwelling place of God where Christians will reside for all of eternity, worshipping Him, enjoying the glory and joy of God's presence. There will be no more tears, pain, suffering, or death. Christians will enjoy the illuminated glory of God.

Read Revelation 21:1-7.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEAVEN

Heaven is described as a place of incredible beauty and splendor, incredible magnificence. The images the Bible communicates are only a small taste of how wonderful Heaven will be for Christians. Imagine the most beautiful thing you have ever seen and multiply it times a million, and you still don't have a clue about how awesome Heaven will be.

Death will not exist in Heaven – Isaiah 25:8

Only righteous people will enter Heaven – Matthew 5:17-20

Few people will enter Heaven – Matthew 7:13-14)

Jesus is preparing Heaven for his followers – John 14:1-3

Heaven is a place of reward – 2 Corinthians 5:10

Heaven is much better than earth – Philippians 1:23

Christians should look forward to Heaven – Colossians 3:1-4

Heaven is the home of righteousness – 2 Peter 3:13

God is the focus of attention in Heaven – Revelation 7:17

Men will dwell with God – Revelation 21:3

There will not be any sadness in Heaven – Revelation 21:4

Christians will see God's face – Revelation 22:4

Light of God will shine without any darkness – Revelation 22:5

As Heaven is more magnificent than the description in Scripture, Hell is also so terrible that human language falls short.

THE REALITY OF HELL

What are common expectations of what Hell will be like?

Many people imagine Hell as a rocking party where everyone is having fun. The host is a red man with a tail and horns, running around with a pitchfork. This perception is very prevalent in American culture. It should break our hearts that our culture has popularized this view of Hell and Satan.

The Bible clearly teaches that Hell is a literal place of eternal torment where all non-Christians go after death. This biblical teaching on Hell is not a popular one. Many people, even professing Christians, sometimes try to minimize the reality of Hell. The Bible is very clear about the existence of Hell. Jesus described the plight of the wicked in Matthew 25:46 in this manner: "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

1) HELL WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR SATAN AND HIS DEMONS.

Read Matthew 25:41-42, 2 Peter 2:4-10a, and Revelation 20:10.

2) HELL WILL ALSO PUNISH THE SIN OF THOSE WHO REJECT CHRIST.

Read Matthew 13:41, 50, Revelation 20:11-15 and 21:8.

3) HELL IS CONSCIOUS TORTURE.

Read the following Scriptures. Write the characteristics of Hell as revealed within the passage next to the reference.

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Attribute(s)</u>
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Matthew 3:12

Matthew 8:12

Matthew 13:49-50

Matthew 25:46

Mark 9:47-48

Revelation 14:4-11

Revelation 21:8

4) HELL IS ETERNAL AND IRREVERSIBLE.

Read the following Scriptures. Write the characteristics of Hell as revealed within the passage next to the reference.

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Attribute(s)</u>
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Revelation 14:11

Revelation 20:14-15

This is the biblical teaching on Hell. Those who try to dilute it are only hurting people; Hell is real, and everyone who does not submit to Jesus will go there.

FLAWED VIEWS OF ETERNITY

1) THE SECOND CHANCE VIEW

This viewpoint claims that there is always a second chance. Scripture is clear that men are appointed to die once and be judged once.

Read Hebrews 9:27.

2) UNIVERSALISM

The problem with the belief that all are eternally saved is that it denies the truth of salvation through Christ alone. People will either trust in Jesus or else reject him and go to Hell.

Read John 3:16-18, 36.

3) ANNIHILATIONISM

For an individual to completely cease to exist denies the resurrection of the unsaved and the conscious torment.

Read John 5:28-29.

OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF HELL

1) A LOVING GOD WOULD NOT SEND PEOPLE TO A HORRIBLE HELL.

Response: God is just according to Romans 2:2, 11.

- God has provided the way of salvation to all.
 - Read John 3:16-18, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 Timothy 2:1-6, 4:10, Titus 2:11, and 2 Peter 3:9.
- Even those who haven't heard of Christ are accountable for God's revelation in nature.
 - Read Romans 1:20.
- God will seek those who seek Him.
 - Read Matthew 7:7 and Luke 19:10.
- God doesn't send people to Hell, they choose it.
 - Read Romans 1:18, 21, 25.

2) HELL IS TOO SEVERE A PUNISHMENT FOR MAN'S SIN.

Response: God is holy and perfect according to 1 Peter 1:14-16.

- Sin is willful opposition to God our creator.
 - Read Romans 1:18-32.
- Our sin does merit Hell.
 - Read Romans 1:32, 2:2, 5-6.
- What is fair and amazing is that Christ died for our sin and freely offers salvation to all.
 - Read Romans 2:4, 3:22-24, 4:7-8, 5:8-9.

IS GOD FAIR AND JUST?

The way that we think is completely inferior to how God thinks. God is infinitely more wise and intelligent than we are. We are not capable of understanding the reason for his decisions.

Read Isaiah 55:8-9.

Why do people often make judgments about God's actions based upon what they would do?

If we believe that we can question God's actions, then, in our mind, who do we believe has ultimate authority?

At times it is difficult see how God's decisions are perfect and just. There will be times that you may not be able to figure out God or his actions.

What makes you trust that God's actions are right?

WE NEED TO SURRENDER OUR PERCEIVED RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT IS JUST AND HUMBLY
RECOGNIZE THAT GOD ALONE GETS TO DECIDE HOW HE IS GOING TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE.

—FRANCIS CHAN

NOW WHAT?

How has today's lesson changed your perception of Heaven?

How has today's lesson changed your perception of Hell?

How does the reality of Heaven and Hell change your desire to share your faith?

GOING DEEPER

Why do you think there are disagreements about Heaven and Hell?

How does the media influence what people believe about what happens after death?

How do false concepts of Heaven and Hell impact the way we view God?

What is required to trust the sovereignty of God?

SUMMARY

It is difficult to unpack all that the Bible teaches about eternity in one lesson. We can determine, though, that all people will die and face eternity. A person's destination hinges on their decision to trust Jesus (life, death, burial and resurrection), or reject him. Those who believe will receive eternal joy in Heaven, while those who reject will receive eternal torment in Hell.

Many people prefer to believe that Heaven and Hell do not exist so that they can live any way they want to without fear of consequences. However, there are consequences. Heaven and Hell are real places.

The reality of Heaven and Hell should change us as Christians. It must compel us to shun complacency and give our lives to spread the gospel.

Here are some questions you might want to ask to keep the conversation going this week with your friends and family:

What do you think will happen after death?

Do you think there is a real Heaven and Hell? Why or why not?

Why are there so many opinions about life after death?

If you have any questions about our lesson please contact your leader or a pastor. They look forward to answering any questions! Have an amazing week!

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK

1 Corinthians 2:9

REAP

DAY

1

HEBREWS 9:27 & 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why should a Christian not fear death or judgment?

How does this reality spur us on to share the gospel?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

HEBREWS 10:26-31

DAY

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is the punishment for those who have not received a sacrifice for their sins?

Why should we fear God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

ROMANS 1:28-2:5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is God's judgment against sin and why is it called righteous?

When do you take the riches of God's kindness for granted?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

ROMANS 2:5-11

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What are the clear judgments for those who do good versus evil?

What is the reason mentioned in verse 5 that causes the judgment of the evil?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

LUKE 16:19-31

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what will Hell be like?

Who do you know that needs salvation through Jesus? Pray for them.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

JAMES 1:12 & MATTHEW 5:12

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Although specifics are not mentioned, what is promised to the righteous?

How does future reward in Heaven give a Christian confidence to live well for the gospel?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

ROMANS 14:9-13

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How do you judge others around you?

How does the reality of future judgment change the way you judge others?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

I AM STATEMENTS

Seven I AM statements in the Gospel of John communicate his deity.

- *"I am the bread of life"* (John 6:35,48,51).
- *"I am the light of the world"* (John 8:12).
- *"I am the door of the sheep"*(John 10:7,9).
- *"I am the good shepherd"* (John 10:11,14).
- *"I am the resurrection, and the life"* (John 11:25).
- *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6).
- *"I am the true vine"* (John 15:1,5).

Six I AM statements in Revelation also stress His eternal existence, from eternity to eternity.

- *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending"* (Revelation 1:8).
- *"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last"* (Revelation 1:11).
- *"Fear not; I am the first and the last"* (Revelation 1:17).
- *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end"* (Revelation 21:6).
- *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last"*(Revelation 22:13).
- *"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star"*(Revelation 22:16).

LOOKING BACK

How do you feel now that you have completed this study?

So now you are thinking, okay, now that I've completed this study, I know everything I need to know now, right?

Discipleship isn't about completing a study. It is about a lifestyle of learning and living as you follow Jesus throughout your lifetime. What you have learned throughout this study will become more important to your Christian life in the months, even years, to come. Think about some of the major concepts that you have learned and lived out.

- Knowledge that God exists at three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- Each member of the Trinity has distinct roles, and they reside in perfect unity and relationship with one another.
- God understands our longing for significant relationships in our lives.
- When forming a biblical worldview it is vital that our interpretations of science are viewed through the lens of Scripture.
- Our belief about how everything began is foundational to understanding the gospel.
- Jesus is the promised Messiah from the Old Testament prophecies.
- Jesus is "I AM".
- Examined the historical and biblical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
- Examined the eyewitness accounts of the resurrection of Jesus.
- Sin is the cause of separation between man and God.
- Jesus sacrificed himself to pay the penalty for the sin of an individual with a believing and repentant heart.
- Heaven and Hell are real places.
- An individual's eternal destination is based on whether they trust Jesus' payment for sin or reject him.

Wow! That's a lot! Now it's time to continue to live out what you have learned in this study.



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