

A Simplified Look at a Complicated Belief

Part II

The Life of Jesus

Parts 13-16

Module 2: The Life of Jesus

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Part 13 – The Message of Jesus

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

Jesus taught a great deal about the Kingdom of God. In Matthew's Gospel it is most often referred to as the "Kingdom of Heaven". The two phrases mean exactly the same thing

Jesus declared that the Kingdom of God was present

¹⁷ *From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."* -Matthew 4:17 NLT

Jesus began His public ministry by boldly declaring that the Kingdom of God was near and that people must repent to get ready for it

Jesus revealed what the Kingdom of God is like

The “Sermon on the Mount” Jesus’ longest recorded teaching found in **Matthew Chapters 5-7** is a manifesto for how people are blessed and how they should live in the Kingdom of God:

3 “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

6 God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice for they will be satisfied.

7 God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

9 God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God

10 God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs

-Matthew 5:3-10 NLT

2. To enter the Kingdom we must do what God says, not just act the part

²¹ “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ ²³ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

-Matthew 7:21-23 NLT

-Jesus warns us that even some people who say they are His followers will not enter the Kingdom

-Many people claim to follow Jesus, but they don't take His teachings seriously

-They believe they can choose some of His teachings that suit them and forget others. Jesus says they won't be in the Kingdom

To be part of God's kingdom you must first realize that you need God (without Him your life is not complete) and that you need His forgiveness for your sin

The Kingdom of God is upside down compared to other kingdoms.. the humble people and the small people are the greatest people in God's Kingdom because they are the most available to God

4" So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." **-Matthew 18:4 NLT**

Jesus showed us how we can enter the Kingdom of God

On several occasions Jesus taught important truths about how people can enter God's Kingdom:

1. We cannot be good enough on our own to enter the Kingdom

20 “But I warn you — unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!” **-Matthew 5:20 NLT**

In this verse Jesus says that we must obey God even better than the Pharisees did

2. To enter the Kingdom we must humble ourselves like little children

³ Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

-Matthew 18:3 NLT

–we must realize that before God we are just like little children, and that we are completely dependent on Him

3. Other things, like possessions, can distract us from the Kingdom

²⁴ I’ll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

-Matthew 19:24 NLT

-this warning comes just after a rich young man came to Jesus. We must make it our number one priority

4. Even sinners can enter the Kingdom if they repent

³¹ “Which of the two obeyed his father?” They replied, “The first.” Then Jesus explained his meaning:

“I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. ³² For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn’t believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.

-Matthew 21:31-32 NLT

– in this passage Jesus is speaking to the chief priests, and his words would have been extremely shocking to them. He says that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom before these well-educated religious leaders

The teaching of Jesus – the highest standard of ethics

The teaching of Jesus was unique, and set a higher standard than any other teacher the world has ever seen:

1. Jesus' teaching fulfilled the Old Testament Law of God

17 "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. 19 So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. 20 "But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

-Matthew 5:17-20 NLT

The Old Testament Law showed the people of Israel what was right and wrong in God's eyes and how to live as His special nation. Jesus said that He had come to fulfill it, meaning three things:

- a) That Jesus Himself kept the whole Old Testament Law, since He never sinned

- b) That His teaching restored the Old Testament Law to its original standard and purpose

- c) That His death as the one perfect sacrifice for sin would meet the Law's demands and fulfill its imagery

In **Matthew 5:21-48** we have six examples of Jesus teaching about Old Testament laws.

-Teaching about Anger

21 “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

-Matthew 5:21-22 NLT

-Teaching about Adultery

27 “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

-Matthew 5:27- 28NLT

-Teaching about Divorce

31 “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ 32 But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

-Matthew 5:31-32 NLT

-Teaching about Vows

33 “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’ 34 But I say, do not make any vows!... 37 Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

-Matthew 5:33-34,37 NLT

-Teaching about Revenge

38 “You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. 40 If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. 41 If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. 42 Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

-Matthew 5:38-42 NLT

-Teaching about Love for Enemies

43 “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! 45 In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven.

-Matthew 5:43-45 NLT

a) By focusing on actions and ignoring the heart

– Jesus taught that the attitude of our heart is just as important as our actions. Sin is not just the wrong actions we commit, but the wrong desires of our hearts

b) By limiting its requirements to “religious” activities

– they acted as if God was involved in some parts of life but could be left out of other parts of life. Jesus showed that God knows and cares about every part of our lives

c) By limiting their responsibility just to people who they thought deserved it

– anyone who wasn't good enough (anyone who wasn't Jewish) did not deserve anything good from them, and in fact was an “enemy” who should be hated

-Jesus showed they were wrong when He told a story about a Samaritan man (the Samaritans were the natural enemy of the Jews) who showed love to an injured Jewish man (Luke 10:25-37)

This story shows that our neighbor is not just the person who would naturally be our friend or who can repay us with his friendship

POP QUIZ

Who has acted in this manner??? Who has changed the standard of the Law in three ways

1. The Jewish teachers (Rabbis)
2. The Gentiles
3. Modern Day Christians

ALL OF THE ABOVE!!!

-The result was that the Pharisees believed that they were acceptable before God and missed the amount of sin that was in their own lives

-The people recognized that Jesus taught as if He had authority, unlike the usual teachers of the Law

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,²⁹ for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

-Matthew 7:28-29 NLT

-They merely taught from what had already been written, but Jesus had authority to say exactly what the Law meant

2. Jesus' ethical teaching is summarized in the "Golden Rule"

One of the most famous statements Jesus made was this:

12 "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

-Matthew 7:12 NLT

-there are similar rules in many philosophies from all over the world, including Confucius, who said:

"What you do not want done to you, do not do to others."

-similar rules were recognized in so many places is evidence for the fact that God created mankind and gave us the same sense of right and wrong (**our conscience**).

3. Jesus demanded a response to His teaching

The central claim of Jesus' teaching was that God's Kingdom was being revealed and that people must decide whether to repent and become part of it or not. Jesus used three pictures to describe this choice:

a) Narrow and wide gates

¹³ "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. -Matthew 7:13-14 NLT

b) Good and bad trees

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. ¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. ¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions. -Matthew 7:15-23 NLT

c) Wise and foolish builders

²⁴ “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” **-Matthew 7:24-27 NLT**

4. Parables – everyday stories with spiritual meanings

-Jesus often taught using parables (stories about everyday life that teach spiritual truths)

-Jesus told many parables to help people understand God's Kingdom.

-Many of His parables open with the words, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...

” **Matthew Chapter 13** records seven parables of the Kingdom.

-**Parable of the Sower**

-**Parable of the Wheat and Weeds**

-**Parable of the Mustard Seed**

-**Parable of the Yeast**

-Parable of the Wheat and Weeds

-Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

-Parable of the Fishing Net

*¹⁰ His disciples came and asked him, “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?” ¹¹ He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. ¹² To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. ¹³ That is why I use these parables,
For they look, but they don’t really see.
They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand*

-Matthew 13:10 NLT

A scroll with a textured, aged appearance. The top edge is rolled up. The text is centered on the scroll. The word 'SOWER' is significantly larger and more prominent than the other text.

The Parable of the
SOWER

Mark 4:1-20

³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. ⁴ As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it.

⁵ Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died.

⁷ Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain.

⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

⁹ Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

-Mark 4:3-9 NLT

Parable of the Sower

- **Seed on the path**
 - people who don't understand the message
 - Satan snatches the seed away

- **Seed on the rocky soil**
 - people who initially receive the message but turn away when it becomes difficult

- **Seed on the thorny ground**
 - people who initially receive the message but are distracted by other concerns

- **Seed on the good ground**
 - people who really receive the message and produce real fruit as a result

The Bible tells us the good news that God's Kingdom is here and we can be part of it if we repent (turn from our sins) and trust in Christ to forgive and lead us. People still respond in the same four ways today. For each person the question is:

-What kind of soil are you?

-How will you respond to the message of God?

Key Lesson: Jesus taught us what God's Kingdom is like and how we can be part of it

Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived:

-He showed us what the Kingdom of God is like but also how we can be part of it through repenting and trusting in God

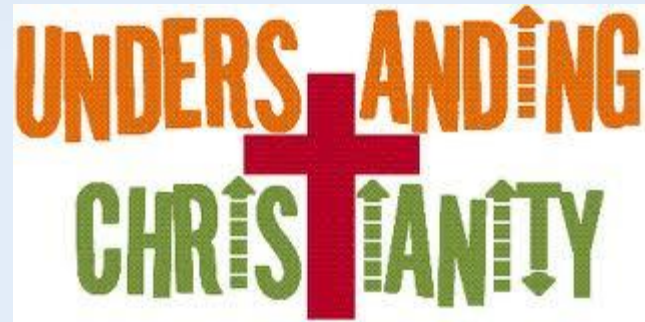
-He demanded a response to His teaching and said that only those who build their lives on His teaching will survive the future judgment

How will you respond to His teaching?

What kind of soil are you?

How will you respond to the message of God?





A Simplified Look at a Complicated Belief

Part II

The Life of Jesus

Parts 13-16

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

Part 14 – Responses to Jesus

Who did Jesus claim that He was?

John records seven sayings of Jesus about who He is that all start with the words “I am ...”:

- 1. I am the bread of life.** No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again. (John 6:35)
- 2. I am the light of the world.** If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life (John 8:12)
- 3. I am the gate for the sheep ...** Those who come in through me will be saved. Wherever they go they will find green pastures... My purpose is to give life in all its fullness. (John 10:7-10)
- 4. I am the good shepherd.** The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11)

5. I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me (John 11:25-26)

6. I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me (John 14:6)

7. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me ... produce much fruit (John 15:5)

In summary, these seven sayings show us that Jesus claimed to:

- **Show us God's truth (the light) and make it possible for us to know God personally**
- **Give eternal life to people who believe in Him and sustain their life**
- **Satisfy the deepest needs of those who trust in Him, save them and keep them safe**

Jesus claimed to be the **ONLY** person who could do these things. In John 8:31-58 Jesus said to some Jewish people:

⁵⁸ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!"
-John 8:58 NLT

These Jews believed that they would be accepted by God because they were descendants of Abraham, but Jesus shocked them by saying:

⁴¹ No, you are imitating your real father." They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father." ⁴² Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! ⁴⁴ For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does.
-John 8:41-44 NLT

The people accused Jesus of being possessed by an evil spirit, but He replied:

⁵¹ I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!"
-John 8:51 NLT

The people asked if He thought that He was greater than Abraham

⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" **-John 8:53 NLT**

The people were so shocked that they wanted to kill Jesus:

⁵⁹ At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple. **-John 8:59 NLT**

Why? What did Jesus' saying mean?

The phrase "I am" was the name that God told Moses to use to describe Him:

¹⁴ God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you." ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations. **-Exodus 3:14-15 NLT**

The Jews recognized that by using these words Jesus was claiming to be God, and that is why they wanted to kill Him!

Jesus claimed to be no less than God, the true King!

The Miracles of Jesus

During His life he also performed many amazing miracles:

These are significant because in the Bible they are called “signs”. In other words, the miracles were not just to help other people, but also to show that Jesus was someone very special. They show that **Jesus had authority over:**

1. The laws of nature – Jesus was able to over-rule the normal laws of science by, for example:

(i) Creating new matter – He fed over 5000 people using five loaves and two fish (John 6:1-15)

(ii) Transforming matter – He changed water into wine (John 2:1-11)

(iii) Controlling the weather – He calmed storms on more than one occasion (Mark 4:35-41)

(iv) Walking on water – He could control the basic forces of physics (Matthew 14:22-36, John 6:16-21)

2. Diseases – Jesus was able to heal people of many diseases, including:

- (i) Infectious diseases – including the skin disease leprosy (Luke 5:12-16) and fevers (Mark 1:29-34)

- (ii) Diseases including muscle wasting – lame people could walk again (Luke 5:17-26, John 5:1-15)

- (iii) Congenital diseases (present from birth) – a man who was born blind could see (John 9:1-41)

3. Evil spirits – Several times we read of Jesus casting evil spirits out of people. These demons recognized Him as the Son of God...

-Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39; the demons called Legion

4. Death – Jesus raised at least three dead people back to life (Luke 7:11-17; widows son...Luke 8:40-56; local synagogue leaders daughter had died...

-John 11:1-44, Lazarus

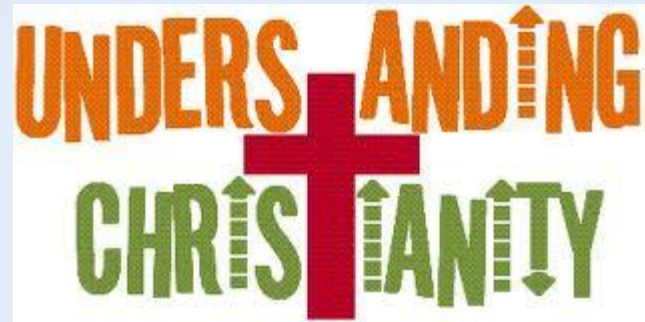
5. Sin – Several times when Jesus healed people’s illnesses He talked about their sin as well, and claimed that He was able to forgive their sins.

One example is a paralyzed man in Luke 5:17-26. Jesus told this man that his sins were forgiven because of faith:

²⁰ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”
-Luke 5:20 NLT

The religious teachers were shocked. They said “Who but God can forgive sins!” Jesus then healed the man to prove that He had the authority to forgive sins.

Who could have authority over nature, illness, evil spirits, life and death, and even authority to forgive sins?



A Simplified Look at a Complicated Belief

Part II

The Life of Jesus

Parts 13-16

Jesus miracles were intended to help people realize exactly who He was:

- the true King over all creation, God Himself!

- what God's Kingdom is like:

 - a place free from sin, disease and death. If we are part of God's Kingdom, we can look forward to the future day when this Kingdom will finally be perfectly revealed

How people responded to Jesus

- During the second year of Jesus' ministry, thousands of people followed Him

-the following year many of these people began to turn away from Him

Why??

-Some thought He would heal them from all their illnesses

-Some thought that He would become King and make them very powerful in His Kingdom

-when they realized that Jesus would not become King of Israel at that time, many of these people rejected Him

-this was just as Jesus had predicted in His parable about the sower

-To understand this we must understand what the Jewish people expected the Messiah to do:

There are two aspects to the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah:

a) The Suffering Servant – who would die as a sacrifice for the sins of the people

³ He was despised and rejected—

a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.

He was despised, and we did not care.

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;

it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

*And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,
a punishment for his own sins!*

⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole.

*He was whipped so we could be healed. **-Isaiah 53:3,4 NLT***

b) The Conquering King – who would defeat the enemies of God and rule on David's throne

14 Watch, for the day of the LORD is coming when your possessions will be plundered right in front of you! ² I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the population will be taken into captivity, and the rest will be left among the ruins of the city.

³ Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south.

-Zechariah 14:1-4 NLT

-Messiah would be a Conquering King

-they believed that the prophecies about the Suffering Servant could not refer to the same person

-so they decided that those Old Testament passages must actually refer to the suffering of the nation of Israel rather than to the Messiah

-at the time when Jesus lived, the Jews were ruled by the Roman Empire

-Jesus refused to allow the people to make Him King

14 When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!"

15 When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself. -John 6:14-15 NLT

-He began to teach that He must die. Jesus predicted His death on a cross

23 Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. -John 12:23 NLT

Only after His death, when people could have their sins forgiven, could God's Kingdom really be restored:

"But despite of all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. **-John 6:37 NLT**

-many people were so fixed in their own ideas of what the Messiah should be and so spiritually blind that they could not recognize Him.

The responses of some specific groups to Jesus are particularly important to understand:

- **Demons** (evil spirits) – On a number of occasions when Jesus cast out evil spirits from people the spirits recognized Him as the Son of God who had power to punish them:

⁷ With a shriek, he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!”

-Mark 5:7 NLT

²⁸ As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down in front of him. Then he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don’t torture me!”

-Luke 8:28 NLT

- **Jesus' brothers** – Jesus had at least four half-brothers, named James, Joseph, Simon and Judas

55 Then they scoffed, “He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. **-Matthew 13:55 NLT**

During His ministry His brothers didn't believe in Him

3 and Jesus' brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! 4 You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!” 5 For even his brothers didn't believe in him. **-John 7:1-9 NLT**

-However, after His death and resurrection, at least two of these brothers (James and Judas) became Christians

- **Jesus' twelve disciples** – The twelve disciples were the closest people to Jesus during His life on earth. They took some time to realize who Jesus really was, largely because they had the same expectations about what the Messiah should be like as most other people.

- **The religious leaders** – The Jewish religious leaders belonged to several groups including the Pharisees and Sadducees. He was unpopular with many of them for several reasons:

- (i) He showed love to people the Pharisees considered “sinners” (for example prostitutes and tax collectors)

- (ii) He told the religious leaders that they were also sinners who needed God’s forgiveness

- (iii) He did not obey certain rules that the Pharisees had added to the Old Testament Law

(iv) He claimed to be God, which the religious leaders saw as blasphemous and punishable by death

(v) He threatened the power and income of the Sadducees as He wanted to purify the Temple

(vi) The Sadducees were afraid that if too many people followed Him the Romans might punish them

How should we respond to Jesus?

-We should be clear about what He claimed about Himself and His mission

-He claimed that He was the unique Son of God who had come to establish God's Kingdom among us, and the only Way to really know the creator God

-He did not offer us the option of following some of His teachings and some teachings of another religion or philosophy

-He did not offer us the option of accepting Him as a good teacher but not God

It is either Jesus **OR** something else, but you can't have Jesus **AND** something else.

According to Christian writer and Oxford professor (author of the Narnia stories), CS Lewis, there are only three possible ways to respond to Jesus' claim to be God:

a) **He was mad** – perhaps He was insane

20 Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?" **-John 10:20 NLT**

-But could a mad man speak and think so clearly?

b) He was bad – others said He was demon possessed.

-But could an evil person do such good things?

c) He was God – if this is true...

-we **must** consider what difference it should and will make to our lives

"But What Does God Want From Me Now?"

-God also wants our obedience and submission to His superior wisdom

-Talk with God continually

-Read His Word, the Bible

-Obey Him

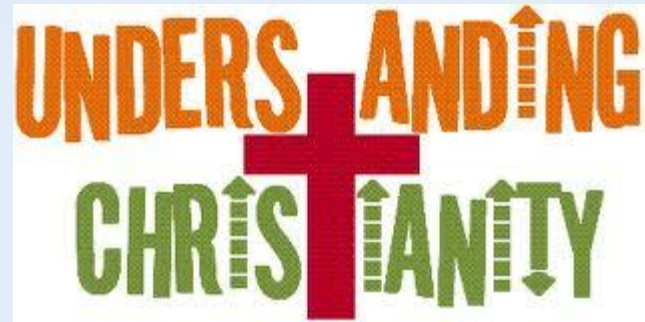
-Find fellowship with other believers

-"Be filled with the Spirit," Ephesians 5:18

Key Lesson: Jesus' miracles support His claim to be God – we must respond to this claim

The miracles of Jesus prove His authority over nature, disease, evil spirits, death and even sin, supporting His claim to be God living as a human being. We must decide if we think He was mad, bad or God.





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The Life of Jesus

Parts 13-16

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

Part 15 – One Week in Jerusalem

The Last Week of Jesus' Life

Most of the religious leaders who were planning to have Jesus executed lived in Jerusalem, making it a dangerous place for Him to be

You might expect, then, that He would stay away from this city where His enemies were based

However, Jesus actually knew that He would die on a cross, and He believed that this was the reason why He had come to earth

27 “Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! -John 12:27 NLT

Sunday – Jesus enters the City of Jerusalem riding on a Donkey
-Now known as: Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19

-When Jesus arrived at Jerusalem He asked His disciples to get Him a donkey to ride into the city

⁹ Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt.

-Zechariah 9:9 NLT

Jesus' followers were very happy as they believed that Jesus would become the king in Jerusalem and restore God's Kingdom on earth. They waved palm branches in the air and shouted praises to God

Monday – Jesus cleanses the Temple

During His first year of ministry when Jesus came to Jerusalem for the Passover, He had visited the Temple and had driven out the money changers and shop-owners who had stalls there..

*¹⁵ Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. ¹⁶ Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, “**Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!**”*

-John 2:15,16 NLT

On this last visit to Jerusalem He did exactly the same thing. Jesus was very angry about these people using the Temple to make money

*¹² Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. ¹³ He said to them, “**The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves!**”*

-Matthew 21:12,13 NLT

Tuesday and Wednesday – Jesus’ teaching and the plans of His enemies
Matthew 21:23-26:5; Mark 11:27-14:2; Luke 20:1-22:6

20 One day as Jesus was teaching the people and preaching the Good News in the Temple, the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders came up to him. ² They demanded, “By what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right?”

³ “Let me ask you a question first,” he replied. ⁴ “Did John’s authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?”

⁵ They talked it over among themselves. “If we say it was from heaven, he will ask why we didn’t believe John. ⁶ But if we say it was merely human, the people will stone us because they are convinced John was a prophet.” ⁷ So they finally replied that they didn’t know.

⁸ And Jesus responded, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I do these things.”

-Luke 20:1-8 NLT

Parable of the Evil Farmers

⁹ Now Jesus turned to the people again and told them this story: *“A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and moved to another country to live for several years. ¹⁰ At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers attacked the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. ¹¹ So the owner sent another servant, but they also insulted him, beat him up, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² A third man was sent, and they wounded him and chased him away. ¹³ “‘What will I do?’ the owner asked himself. ‘I know! I’ll send my cherished son. Surely they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ “But when the tenant farmers saw his son, they said to each other, ‘Here comes the heir to this estate. Let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ ¹⁵ So they dragged him out of the vineyard and murdered him. “What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to them?” Jesus asked. ¹⁶ “I’ll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others.”* “How terrible that such a thing should ever happen,” his listeners protested.

¹⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, *“Then what does this Scripture mean? ‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’ ¹⁸ Everyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.”*

-Luke 20:9-18 NLT

What does this mean????

Thursday – The Passover and the Lord’s Supper – Jesus betrayed and arrested Matthew 26:17-56; Mark 14:12-52; Luke 22:7-51; John 12:1-18:13

Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His twelve disciples.
*⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” ⁷ Jesus replied, “**You don’t understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.**” ⁸ “No,” Peter protested, “you will never ever wash my feet!” Jesus replied, “**Unless I wash you, you won’t belong to me.**”*

-John 13:1-8 NLT

He did this to show His love for them and to teach them that they should also be servants of others.

After the meal He did something new:

¹⁹ He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.”

²⁰ After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

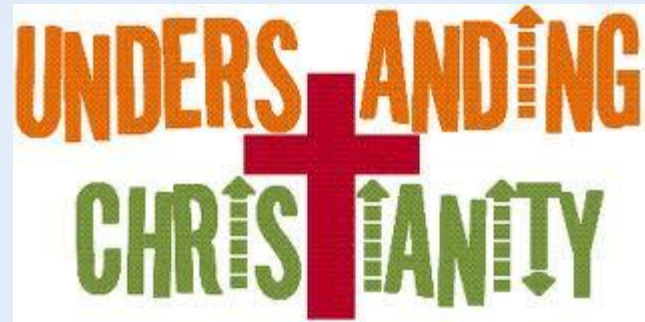
-Luke 22:19-20 NLT

Next, Jesus shared some parting teaching with His disciples,

14 *“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”* ⁵ “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”
⁶ Jesus told him, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*

-John 14:1-6 NLT

He also told them that He would send the Holy Spirit to live with them as their teacher and comforter after He had left them. Lastly He prayed a wonderful prayer for His disciples (John chapter 17)



A Simplified Look at a Complicated Belief

Part II

The Life of Jesus

Parts 13-16

Friday – Trial and Death [Now known as: Good Friday]

Matthew 26:57-27:66; Mark 14:53-15:47; Luke 22:54-23:53; John 18:13-42

41 He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." 43 Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. 44 He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. -Luke 22:41-43 NLT

Then the angel came, and “strengthened him.”

- Strengthening him for what?
- Presumably to do what he had to do.

In other words, the angel was God's response to Jesus's first prayer. The angel bears God's message that there is no other way, but I will help you. Do not turn from your mission now, in spite of the terrifying prospect. I will help you. Here is my angel to strengthen you.

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (1:00am-1:30am) - Confrontation in Garden and Jesus' Arrest

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (1:30am-3:00am) – The six, (or seven) trials of Jesus

Trial 1: Annas, former Jewish High Priest for 16 years - Jesus receives initial physical abuse

Trial 2: Current Jewish High Priest, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin Court – Jesus bloodied by abuse

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (3:00am-5:00am) - Imprisonment at Caiaphas' palace

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (5:00am-6:00am) –

Trial 3: All the Jewish elders, including the High Priest, scribes and whole (4) Sanhedrin. They decide to ask the Roman government to kill Jesus

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (6:00am-7:00am) –

Trial 4: Hearing before Roman governor Pilate, who declares, "I find no guilt in this man."

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (7:00-7:30am) –

Trial 5: Hearing before Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, who had jurisdiction over Galilee. Jesus refused to answer any questions so Herod returned him quickly to Pilate

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (7:30am-8:30am) –

Trial 6: Pilate repeatedly tried to release Jesus but the Jewish leaders continued to object. Pilate physically tortured and beat Jesus beyond recognition seeking to satisfy the Jewish leaders. However the Jews demanded that Jesus be crucified. Pilate resisted but eventually gave the order to execute Jesus

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (8:30am-9:00am) - Pilate's Roman soldiers take Jesus into the court ("Praetorium") and enjoy mockery and continued torture, including driving thorns into his skull

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (9:00am-12:00 noon) - Jesus forced to carry his own cross, then actual crucifixion

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (12:00 noon - 3:00pm) - Momentous final 3 hours on the cross

Friday, April 15, 30 AD (3:00pm) - Death

Friday, April 15, 30 AD - Burial

Why did Jesus have to die?

-Death was the result of sin.

-Jesus was the only person who never sinned, and so He did not deserve to die.

How can God die?

17 “The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. 18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

-John 10:17-18 NLT

He said that he had to die to bring us eternal life,

14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

-John 3:14-15 NLT

So, Jesus believed that He had to die, but that His death would not be a defeat but a victory

How can this be?

Isaiah chapter 53 tells us of the Suffering Servant...it also tells us why the Messiah had to suffer:

¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. ¹² I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

-Isaiah 53:11-12 NLT

So, Jesus died as a sacrifice for sin

10But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands. -Isaiah 53:10 NLT

-He took our sins on Himself and died in our place.

-He took the punishment that we deserved for our sins, and so made it possible for us to be “counted righteous”.

-This means literally, that Jesus died so that we can have eternal life.

-He was punished so that we can be declared “not guilty” by God.

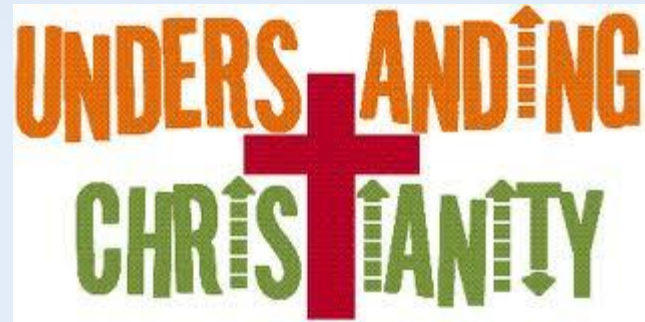
-He took our sin so that when God looks at us He doesn't see any sin, but accepts us as right with Him (righteous).

Although the disciples were confused when Jesus died, later they realized what His death had meant...which is:

- The Old Testament sacrifices were only pictures of the one sacrifice that Jesus would make for the sins of all people.
- The Old Testament sacrifices of animals could never really pay the price for our sins – to do that we would need perfect (sinless) human being to die for us.
- In Jesus we have this perfect sacrifice that can really pay for our sins,
- if we trust in Him we can be completely forgiven.
- This is the amazing message of the Christian “gospel” (good news).

This is the only way God can forgive us for our sins but still remain holy.





A Simplified Look at a Complicated Belief

Part II

The Life of Jesus

Sessions 13-16

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

Part 16 – Resurrection and Ascension

The Burial of Jesus

The normal practice for a crucified person was for their body to be left on the cross to rot, and finally their remains to be buried in a communal grave. However, Joseph from Arimathea, a member of the Jewish leadership who was a secret follower of Jesus, asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body off the cross

⁵⁷ As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who who had become a follower of Jesus, ⁵⁸ went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰ He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

-Matthew 27:57-60 NLT

Joseph, with the help of another secret disciple, Nicodemus, buried the body in his own tomb which was cut out of a rock. This fulfilled a prophecy that the Suffering Servant would be buried with the rich:

*⁹ He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.
But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.*
-Isaiah 53:9 NLT

... When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. ³⁹ With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night.
-John 19:38-42 NLT

The tomb was secured in three ways:

1. A large stone was rolled over the doorway

⁶⁰ He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

-Matthew 27:60 NLT

– this stone would have been in a groove that sloped downwards. It could be rolled into place by one man, but needed several men to roll it open again.

2. A seal was put on the stone

⁶⁶ So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

-Matthew 27:66 NLT

– breaking this seal would have carried a punishment.

3. A guard was placed to prevent the body being stolen

⁶² The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate.⁶³ They told him, “Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: ‘After three days I will rise from the dead.’⁶⁴ So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we’ll be worse off than we were at first.”⁶⁵ Pilate replied, “Take guards and secure it the best you can.”⁶⁶ So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

-Matthew 27:62-66 NLT

Christ is risen!

Before His death Jesus not only predicted His death, but also told His disciples at least five times that He would rise to life again on the third day

21 From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.

-Matthew 16:21 NLT

*9 As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “**Don’t tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.**” -Matthew 17:9 NLT*

The disciples did not understand this at the time, perhaps because they were still expecting Jesus to become king when He reached Jerusalem.

After Jesus died on the Friday, the remaining disciples hid themselves because they were afraid that they too might be arrested and executed

-However, events on the Sunday changed everything, as the disciples claimed that Jesus appeared to them alive in a real body

-To get a full account of events after the resurrection we must reconstruct it from the four Gospel accounts:

1. The women went to the tomb

Luke 24:1-11; Matthew 28:1-15; John 20:1-9; Mark16:1-8

-On the Sunday very early in the morning some of Jesus' female followers went to the tomb intending to put spices on the body

-When the women reached the tomb they found the stone already rolled away, and they went inside where they saw an angel who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead

-They felt a mixture of fear and joy, and ran to tell the disciples what had happened without telling anyone else on the way

-Meanwhile the guards went to the Jewish leaders, who bribed them and told them to false rumor that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body

2. Peter and John ran to the tomb, Jesus appeared to Mary

Luke 24:12; John 20:3-18

-Peter and John ran to the tomb. John reached the tomb first but Peter was first to go inside.

-Peter saw the strips of linen Jesus had been buried in, and went off alone.

3. Jesus appeared to two disciples on the Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12-13

-Two disciples were leaving Jerusalem for the town of Emmaus on the Sunday, when they met a stranger on the road.

-They spoke to him about Jesus' death and he explained how the Old Testament pointed to the fact that the Messiah had to suffer.

-They later realized it was Jesus, and ran back to the city to tell the eleven disciples. By this time Jesus had already appeared to Peter

4. Jesus appeared to the apostles

Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-31

- Jesus appeared to the eleven remaining disciples,
 - Thomas, was not there

- One week later Jesus again appeared to the disciples
 - Thomas was there

²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!” ²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed. ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

-John 20:26-29 NLT

- Jesus appeared to the apostles many times over a forty day period before He ascended to heaven

Evidence for the resurrection

1. Jesus really died

a) Medical evidence (John 19:31-37) – the Roman soldiers were experts in executing people by crucifixion. If they wanted to speed up death they would break the victim's legs, making it impossible for them to breathe. In Jesus' case they didn't have to do this, as He was already dead. However, to be sure of this, the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear. The mixture of blood and clear fluid that flowed out shows that he must have pierced Jesus' heart

b) Pilate's investigation (Mark 15:44-45) – Pilate ensured that Jesus was really dead before releasing the body to Joseph. Roman soldiers would be very careful to be accurate in this case

2. The tomb was empty

If it had not been empty, the enemies of Jesus could easily have proved that He had not risen by showing people the body or the sealed tomb. Instead, they came up with an excuse that the disciples had stolen the body (Matthew 28:11-15).

3. The Christians claimed the resurrection was true from the very beginning

The resurrection was not a late addition to the message of the Christians. It was something they depended on from the very beginning in their preaching about Jesus. You can see this in Peter's first message about Jesus (Acts 2:24), and it is also clear from I Corinthians 15:3-8, where Paul quotes a very early Christian statement that included the resurrection and sightings of Jesus as a central belief of Christians

4. There were many witnesses who saw Jesus alive

In I Corinthians 15:6, Paul says that Jesus appeared to over 500 people at one time, many of them still alive at the time when he was writing.

-This claim could easily have been investigated and disproved if it was not true. These could not have been hallucinations, as it is impossible for over 500 people to have the same hallucination at one time

-Jesus was able to eat a drink and be touched by the disciples, proving that He really did have a physical body.

-These witnesses really did believe that they had seen Jesus alive.

-Another fact from the record helps to prove that these stories were not invented, namely the fact that the first witnesses were women.

-In the culture of that day women could not be witnesses in court, as they were not trusted to give reliable evidence. No one who was making up a story would depend on the witness of women.

5. The transformation of the disciples

- After the death of Jesus the disciples were terrified and went into hiding
- Only a few weeks later they were on the streets of Jerusalem telling everyone that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Within the next 30 years, almost every one of them was arrested and executed for being Christians and telling people about Jesus.
- Even when faced with torture and death they still held firmly to their claim that Jesus was alive. What caused this amazing change in the disciples?
- They had nothing to gain from dying for a false message!

How the 12 Apostles Died

Simon Peter	crucified upside down
Andrew	crucified. Peter's brother.
James	beheaded
Matthew	speared to death
Bartholomew	beaten then crucified. (aka Nathanael)
Philip	crucified
Thomas	speared to death
Simon	crucified, the zealot
James	stoned to death
Thaddaeus	stoned to death. (aka Judas son of James)
Judas Iscariot	suicide by hanging
John	exiled, died of old age (brother of James)

6. The transformation of skeptics

-Not everyone automatically believed the news about Jesus' resurrection.

More amazing, however, was the transformation of a man called Saul (or Paul) who was an enemy of Christians. He became one of the greatest leaders of the Christian church because he claimed to have seen the risen Jesus.

7. The spread of Christianity

The amazing success of the spread of Christianity despite opposition, initially from the Jewish leaders and later from the Roman Empire, is evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. Even today when a life is transformed by the Christian message it is evidence for the resurrection – that Jesus is alive and working today in the lives of people!

Jesus gives His mission to the apostles and ascends to Heaven

Sometime after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the apostles on a mountain in Galilee. Jesus gave a special command to the apostles – to make followers for Him from every nation on earth by baptizing them and teaching them His words. He also made three special claims about Himself:

- ¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **-Matthew 28:16-20 NLT**

- **All authority has been given to Him** (verse 18)
- **He is equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit**, so that people are baptized in all three names (verse 19)
- **He will be with His disciples always** – this refers to the presence of the Holy Spirit (verse 20)

Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come so that they would have power to witness for Him, and then He was lifted up into the sky and disappeared. Angels told the disciples that He would come again one day just as He had left.

The importance of the Resurrection for Christians

The resurrection is central to the Christian faith. In I Corinthians 15:3-19 the Apostle Paul writes about this. The resurrection has implications for past, present and future:

PAST: Everything that Jesus taught was true. He is the Son of God, and we must listen to Him. The resurrection was the ultimate “miraculous sign” proving Jesus’ teaching. The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead defeated. Christian can have the eternal life that Jesus promised because He is alive forever.

PRESENT: Jesus is alive today to be trusted and we can have a personal living relationship with God through Him. Christians do not have a dead leader, but One who is alive forever. No other religion can claim this!

FUTURE: All Christians who die will also be raised to life in the future. We have hope for eternal life because Jesus is the “resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

Key Questions:

- If Jesus was killed by His enemies how did His message survive?
- What gave His followers such confidence?

Key Lesson: Jesus rose from the dead and is alive forever to save people who trust in Him.

The resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact, and the most amazing event in the history of mankind. It proves that His teaching was true and that His death really paid the full price for sin. Because He rose again Jesus is alive today and is able to save those who trust in Him, able to save those who trust in Him, to share His eternal life with us and to bring us into a new relationship with God.

THE MESSAGE

We summarize the message of the Bible so far in five simple points:

1. God created us to know Him and obey Him as our King

-The world God created was perfect – human beings had perfect relationships with God, one another and the earth

2. We have rebelled against God's rule, and so we are in the wrong with God.

-God's creation was spoiled when the man and woman disobeyed Him, rejecting His rule.

-God is holy (perfect and just) and so He must punish sin.

-We deserve to be punished for our own sin because each of us has failed to reach God's perfect standard and has rebelled against His rule over our lives.

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

-Romans 3:23 NLT

3. God still loves us, and wants us to know Him, so He sent Jesus to die for us

-He kept speaking to mankind throughout the centuries, especially through the people of Israel

-God even gave the Jewish people a pattern of sacrifices to represent their sins being forgiven

-He came into the world Himself in Jesus

-Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life which fully displayed God's character (full of grace and truth, love and holiness)

-Died on a cross for our sins

-In the cross the justice and love of God meet – He punishes sin, but forgives the sinner

-The cost was the death of Jesus

4. We must respond to God in repentance and faith (submitting to His rule over us)

-Those who trust in Jesus can be forgiven and can receive a completely new life from God (born again)

-We can be made right with God through the cross

-Instead of having the punishment we deserve for our sin, which is death and separation from God forever, we can receive eternal life as a gift from Him

-To receive this gift we must repent (turn from sin to ask God for forgiveness) and trust in God to save us and lead us

5. God will give us new life by His Holy Spirit and new power to live for Him

-When a person surrenders control of his life to God, he is born again and the Holy Spirit comes to live with him

-God begins to change him from the inside out, giving new power to live the way He wants him to

Key Lesson: Jesus died as the perfect sacrifice for sins

Although the enemies of Jesus thought they were executing Him and would get rid of a problem by doing this, it was actually God's plan that Jesus would die as the only perfect sacrifice for sins – including our sins

