

Welcome to

# Foundations I

We hope you will enjoy this class.

Feel free to ask questions during the class if something is not clear to you.

Every student will be assigned to a tutor. Your tutor will be available to provide individualized help.

Each week, at the beginning of class, you will write out the Scripture verse which was assigned to you on the previous week, and you will be tested on the previous week's lesson.

On the final class (week 5), you will not have any lecture, but you will take a final test covering all the material in lessons 1 through 4.

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This course is available by correspondence. For further information, contact us at the address below.

A Coordinator's Handbook is available to Pastors interested in offering this course to the members of their congregations. The Handbook includes an explanation of the course philosophy, teachers' guides, tutors' guides, and tests. For more information on how to order the Handbook, contact us at the address below:

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# 1

## God, Man, and Eternity

### 1. WHY DID GOD MAKE MAN?

- a. God wanted to reveal the nature of His love. His power and His majesty had been revealed in heaven; but when Jesus gave His own life in order to redeem fallen humanity, God revealed the nature of His mercy, grace, and sacrificial love.

*Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him. (Isaiah 43:7)*

- b. God created man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). He wanted to enlarge His family, having sons and daughters with whom He could share His love, His power, and His glory. God intended that man should live forever in a wonderful love relationship with Him. The primary purpose of man is that he might continually increase in the knowledge of the God who made him.

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Revelation 4:11)*

- c. God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden from where they would rule over the whole earth (Genesis 1:28). He

intended that His sons and daughters would become joint heirs with the Son of His throne and of His kingdom.

*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him (Colossians 1:16)*

## 2. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

When Moses asked God to reveal Himself to him, God let His glory pass by and described for Moses what He is like.

*Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." (Exodus 34:6-7)*

Our concept of God determines how we live. If we believe God is strict, demanding, unapproachable, and aloof, we will tend to be the same toward other people. We will also tend to be anxious and fearful, not having the confidence of God's active involvement in our lives. However, if we believe God is merciful, giving, easily entreated, and involved, we will tend to be that way toward others. We will also be more likely to enjoy the peace and joy that comes from a close relationship with God.

It is God's desire to reveal Himself to us; He wants to develop an intimate love relationship with us (Genesis 3:8-9).

*Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. (Song 8:6-7 NIV)*

God reveals Himself to us in the Bible as both a sovereign, righteous Judge and King— and as a loving Father.

- a. God is holy (Leviticus 19:2; Psalms 145:17; Luke 1:49; Revelation 4:8), just (Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 45:21; Romans 2:6; Revelation 15:3), and avenging of evil (Nahum 1:2-8; Luke 21:22-24; 2 Thessalonians 1:8f.; Romans 1:18; 2:5; 5:9; 12:19; 13:4f.; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; Revelation 6:16f.; 16:9). He is the Creator of all the heavens and the earth and possesses all power and authority over His creation. His absolute and sovereign authority has been the foundation of His kingdom in heaven and on earth.
- b. At the same time, He is loving and life giving (Proverbs 15:9; John 3:16; 14:21; Romans 5:8-9; 1 John 4:8), merciful, forgiving, patient (2 Samuel 14:14; Psalms 136:1; Luke 1:50; 2 Corinthians 1:3; James 5:11), and compassionate (Psalm 78:38; 86:15; 103:8-18; 130:7; 145:8; Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; Luke 15:20).

### **3. IF GOD IS LOVING, WHY IS THERE SO MUCH SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?**

People often ask why God does not do something to stop the suffering in the world; but sin, sickness, and suffering entered the world as a result of man's sin. It was never God's intention that man should have to suffer. One day God will put an end to all injustice and every form of wickedness, punishing all those who do evil. However, God is patient with sinful man and is now giving him time to repent. It is because of God's mercy and compassion that He has not already brought His final judgment to the world.

God's solution to sin and suffering was to send Jesus Christ into the world.

*The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. (John 10:10)*  
*the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)*

#### 4. WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY GOD?

God is perfect and just. He will not allow the proud or rebellious to enter into His eternal kingdom. Those who do not want to obey God's commandments go to a place called hell when they die. This is a place of eternal suffering.

*And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)*

*The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:41-42)*

*And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. (Mark 9:47-48)*

God did not originally create hell for man, but for the Devil and the wicked angels.

*Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; (Matthew 25:41)*

#### 5. WHY DID GOD CREATE THE DEVIL?

God created heaven and all the angels of heaven. The most beautiful of them was Lucifer, meaning *light bearer* (Isaiah 14:4-23; Ezekiel 28:1-19). When God created him, he was good.

But Lucifer became proud and rebelled against God, taking many of the angels with him (Revelation 12:4). Having become evil and corrupt, there was no longer found any place for him in heaven (Ezekiel 28:16). He was cast out of heaven and is now called Satan, meaning *adversary* or *hater* (1 Peter 5:8), or the Devil, meaning *accuser* or *slanderer* (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28:13-19), among other names.

He now works in and through all those who do not serve God (John 8:44).

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.* (Ephesians 2:1-2)

## **6. WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO SERVE GOD?**

Those who serve God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will live with God forever in a new heaven and a new earth.

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."* (Revelation 21:1-4)

*And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.* (Daniel 12:3)

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## **Homework**

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1. Read chapters 1 through 5 of the Gospel of John.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.* (Hebrews 11:6)

3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.



# 2

## Salvation

### 1. WHAT HAPPENED TO ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN?

God is a loving Father. He created Adam and Eve to enter into a wonderful love relationship with Him. He created a beautiful garden for them to enjoy and gave them but one prohibition, that they must not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

But Satan tempted man to sin against God by eating from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Because man was made in the image of God, he possesses a complete personality with the capacity to make moral decisions. Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God, rejecting His sovereign authority and goodness (Romans 5:10; 8:7; 11:28; Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 1:21; James 4:4).

Because of their disobedience, they were expelled from the Garden and separated from fellowship with God. The immediate and ultimate consequence of sin is death. This penalty of death also affected all their offspring. All the earth was cursed. The entrance of sin into the world brought about sickness, suffering, and death.

## 2. WHAT DID GOD PROMISE?

God promised to send a Deliverer. He spoke to the serpent, Satan, after he had tempted Adam and Eve:

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.* (Genesis 3:15)

The promised Deliverer was Jesus. Satan bruised Jesus on the heel by having Him nailed to a cross; but it was only a bruise because Jesus rose again from the dead. Jesus bruised Satan on the head by taking away his power and authority forever.

## 3. WHY DO WE NEED A DELIVERER?

a. Every man born since Adam has also sinned (Genesis 6:5).

*All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.* (Isaiah 53:6)

*For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.* (Isaiah 64:6)

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* (Romans 3:23)

b. When we sin against God, we make ourselves to be His enemy (Romans 5:10).

Because we have rejected God's rightful authority in our lives and in the earth, we commit high treason against His throne. We are therefore separated from Him, outside His protection and grace. We are self-condemned and deserving of death. There is no room in His eternal kingdom for those who reject His supreme authority.

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh,*

*indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Ephesians 2:1-3)*

*...you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, (Colossians 1:21)*

*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)*

*He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. (Matthew 12:30)*

- c. Apart from Christ we are enslaved to sin.

*We are children of Satan (John 8:44), sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:1-3).*

*...though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:17-18)*

#### **4. WHY DOES GOD NOT SIMPLY OVERLOOK MAN'S SIN?**

Because God is righteous, He cannot merely overlook sin. He cannot allow His kingdom to be polluted by rebellion and anarchy. To do so would violate His holiness and justice. It is because of his rebellion that Satan was expelled from heaven.

Man's rebellion is an overt act of criminal treason against an all-powerful and sovereign God. God responds to this rebellion with wrath and holy anger, ultimately the wrath of eternal torment in the lake of fire. The consequence of sin is separation from God and death.

*... the soul who sins will die. (Ezekiel 18:4)*

Every person must understand that he has challenged, resisted and offended a holy King who has the power to save and to destroy.

*Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.*(Romans 11:22)

*And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* (Matthew 10:28)

It is a terrifying thing for an unrepentant rebel to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31). God is a holy King before whom men will tremble. God has indignation and anger toward the rebellious who refuse to make peace with Him.

*God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day. If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts.* (Psalm 7:11-13)

Man must make peace with God (Ephesians 2:13-18). It is much more than just an issue of poor, sinful man falling short of the blessings made available to him by God. God has a just case against each individual person that rebels against His eternal kingdom. This offense must be satisfied in an acceptable manner according to God's divine justice.

## **5. SALVATION IS IN JESUS.**

Because of His great love and mercy the Father extended the means for peace with His enemies. God Himself came into the world in the person of Jesus to suffer and die on a cruel cross in our place. In this way God's justice could be satisfied. Jesus willingly endured the wrath of God upon Himself so that we could be reconciled to the Father.

*Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,* (Romans 5:1)

*For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* (Romans 5:6)

*For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* (Romans 5:10)

## 6. FROM WHAT ARE WE SAVED?

The term *salvation* refers to the whole work of God by which He rescues man from the eternal ruin and doom of sin and bestows on him the riches of His grace, including eternal life and glory in heaven. Jesus is the Savior who came to seek and to save that which was lost and to restore God's creation back to Himself.

- a. We are saved from the guilt and punishment due our sins.

Jesus is our bridge to the Father. Through Him, we have forgiveness of sin (Isaiah 43:25; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 2:13; Hebrews 8:12).

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.* (Psalm 103:12)

- b. We are saved from sin's penalty of death.

We will never die, but have eternal life. We are God's children, having been adopted into His family (Romans 8:15-17).

Our salvation will be fully evident when Jesus comes. Our bodies will be resurrected in a glorified state (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Peter 1:13).

- c. We are saved from the power of sin in our lives.

Having ascended to the right hand of the Father, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to come and live inside of us, giving us the power of a transformed life. Jesus came to deliver us from not only the penalty of sin, but also its power (Romans 6:6-7; 1 John 3:7-10).

## 7. IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?

- a. Besides the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, there was another tree in the garden—the Tree of Life. God said that whoever eats of this tree will live forever. Jesus is the Tree of Life.
- b. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Jesus Christ lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. Because He was without sin, He became the perfect sacrifice, satisfying sin's demand. Death could not hold Him; and God raised Him from the dead.

- c. Jesus is our High Priest. Having triumphed over death, hell, and the grave, Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Having been given a name high and above every other name, Jesus now has been given all authority and power in heaven and on earth.

There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. There is no other name by which men can be saved.

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."(John 14:6)*

## **8. HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT WE ARE SAVED?**

*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)*

We are told to make *certain about His calling and choosing* of us (2 Peter 1:10-11) and to *test* ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Following is a list of internal and external evidences of our salvation.

### a. Inner assurance

*For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:15-16)*

*And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. (1 John 3:24)*

*Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1)*

### b. External evidences

- 1) We love God and keep His commandments (Matthew 7:17-18; Romans 5:18; 6:22; James 1:22; 2:17).

*And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His*

*commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: (1 John 2:3-5)*

*Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:7-8)*

*By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)*

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)*

- 2) We love and identify with the people of God (1 John 2:19).

*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.... We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him, (1 John 3:14, 19)*

- 3) We confess Christ openly before men (Matthew 12:34; Romans 10:9-10; 2 Corinthians 4:13).

*Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:23)*

*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:15)*

*Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny*

*him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33)*

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## **Homework**

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4. Read chapters 6 through 10 of the Gospel of John.
5. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:  
*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*
6. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

# 3

## The Apostolic Gospel

The gospel (good news) is that Jesus Christ has come to deliver us from the power of sin (Romans 6:22; 8:2), reconciling us to the Father (2 Corinthians 5:19) through the sacrifice of His own body on the cross, and making us partakers of His eternal life (John 10:10; Romans 5:10).

Our reception of this eternal life presupposes several things:

- ❖ our enmity against God (dealt with in the previous lesson)
- ❖ repentance
- ❖ faith
- ❖ perseverance

There are many people in our churches today who have learned to be religious. They know how to give the right responses externally, but inwardly there is

- ❖ no real thirst for God (Psalm 42:1; Matthew 5:6)
- ❖ no real peace in their relationship with God (Isaiah 48:22; Romans 5:1; 8:6)
- ❖ no power over sin (Romans 6:17-19; 8:13)

The reason is because they have never truly been born of God. They have an outward form of godliness, but no power to live the Christian life. Jesus spoke of them in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30).

## 1. THE DECEPTION

- a. Many people feel that because they *believe* in God and *believe* in Jesus Christ, then that makes them Christians. But intellectual assent to certain doctrines does not make one a Christian. For, even the Devil *believes* in the existence of God.

*You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. (James 2:19)*

- b. Many people profess to be Christians and actually believe that they are true Christians. Yet, they do not show forth the fruit of a relationship with Christ in their lives.

*Little children, let no one **deceive** you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.... By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: any one who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:7-8, 10)*

- c. They have been misled to believe that they will inherit eternal life regardless of the quality of their present life on earth.

*Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be **deceived**: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were** some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)*

*But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous*

*man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them. (Ephesians 5:3-11)*

*Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)*

*Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)*

- d. Many believe that if they *accept Jesus as their Savior* or *ask Jesus to come into their hearts*, they are assured of eternal life. Becoming a disciple of Jesus and acknowledging Him as Lord of their lives, pledging themselves in obedience to Him (Hebrews 5:9), is viewed as a second and higher level of commitment to Christ — totally unnecessary for receiving the *free gift* of eternal life.

How different this is from the scriptural account in which every believer is called to discipleship (Matthew 28:19). That is, every believer is called to make a radical commitment of his life to Christ (Mark 10:28) in which he becomes a learner and his greatest desire is to become like his Master (Matthew 10:25; Luke 6:40).

The believers of the early church were so committed to this walk of obedience that the unbelievers called them *the Christ-like ones* or *Christians* (Acts 11:26). The modern idea of dividing Christ into Savior and Lord is not biblical.

Believe on the **Lord Jesus Christ** and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31)

...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as **Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. (Romans 10:9)

- e. On judgment day, Jesus will declare to many professing Christians that He never knew them and they will be cast into the fires of hell (2 Thessalonians 1:8; Revelation 20:12-15).

*Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."*(Matthew 7:21-23)

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*What I consider to be the greatest weakness of contemporary evangelical Christianity in America. Did I say weakness? It is more. It is a tragic error. It is the idea— where did it ever come from?—that one can be a Christian without being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reduces the gospel to the mere fact of Christ's having died for sinners, requires of sinners only that they acknowledge this by the barest intellectual assent, and then assures them of their eternal security when they may very well not be born again. This view bends faith beyond recognition— at least for those who know what the Bible says about faith— and promises a false peace to thousands who have given verbal assent to this reductionist Christianity but are not truly in God's family.*

—James Montgomery Boid in his forward to  
The Gospel According to Jesus by John Mac Arthur

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## 2. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL MESSAGE?

- a. Very simply, the gospel consists of two parts:

**Repent and Believe**

*Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** and **believe** in the gospel.* (Mark 1:14-15)

The apostle Paul also was ...*solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance** toward God and **faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 20:21).

b. Repentance

Much of the problem today is the result of promising eternal life based on one's belief of certain facts related to the gospel while ignoring the need for repentance.

To repent literally means *to change one's mind*. It means the unbeliever must change his thinking about how he is going to relate to God and therefore what he will now do with his life. Very simply, to repent is to turn away from sin and to live for God.

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Webster's 1828 Dictionary:

*Sorrow or deep contrition for sin; as an offense and dishonor to God, a violation of His holy law, and the basest ingratitude toward a Being of infinite benevolence... and is accompanied and followed by amendment of life.*

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c. Faith

- 1) Some people understand repentance enough to feel bad about their sin, but they never lay hold of the truth of God's forgiveness. They never feel totally acceptable to God.
- 2) Although Christ paid the price for all men to be saved, only those who, through repentance and faith, receive the gift will become partakers of eternal life (John 1:12).
- 3) Faith is believing the promise of God that if we come to Him in genuine repentance, He will receive us, forgiving us of our sins and giving us eternal life.

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.* (Psalm 103:12)

*"Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)*

*All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. (John 6:37)*

- 4) We must humbly receive this gift, realizing there is nothing we can do to merit eternal life. Our sins have forever closed the door to the possibility that we can justify ourselves before God through our own good works or morality (Romans 10:3-4).

Because God is holy, He cannot tolerate any sin in His presence. There is no amount of good works that we can do to offset the effect of even one sin. That one sin alone has become a problem in our relationship with God, separating us from His presence.

Our only hope of being reconciled to God is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We must believe that the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient payment to purchase our forgiveness.

*being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (Romans 3:24)*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

### 3. PERSEVERANCE

- a. By believing the gospel, we are brought into a relationship with God. This relationship will be tested in this life— and if found to be true, will last forever (Matthew 10:22; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 1:7).

*And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. (Matthew 24:12-13)*

- b. Jesus told a parable in Matthew 13:3-23 to show us why the gospel seems to take effect in some people's lives and not in others.

The seed (representing the word of God) fell on four types of soil:

| <u>Where the seed landed</u> | <u>What happened to the seed</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| beside the road              | devoured by birds                |
| in rocky places              | withered away                    |
| among thorns                 | choked out                       |
| in good soil                 | yielded a crop                   |

- c. We should not presume that simply because we *believe in Jesus* or *accepted Jesus in our heart* that we will be saved. Evidence of true salvation is a walk with God (John 3:36; Jude 20-25).

*And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, (Hebrews 5:9) dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (2 Thessalonians 1:8)*

- d. A great shaking and apostasy (or great falling away) will come. This pressure will test the genuineness of our conversion and labors (Matthew 24:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; Revelation 18).

*But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)*

God is going to shake all things so that all falsehood and insincerity will be purged from His kingdom (Matthew 7:24-27; Hebrew 12:25-29). This will be in preparation for the final separation which takes place at the judgment (Matthew 13:30).

*In that day you will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me; for then I will remove from your midst your proud, exulting ones, and you*

*will never again be haughty on My holy mountain. But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; for they shall feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble. (Zephaniah 3:11-13)*

- e. We can rest in the confidence that God will give us the ability to endure every trial and temptation.

*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)*

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## Homework

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1. Read chapters 11 through 16 of the Gospel of John.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:  
*By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)*
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

# 4

## The Bible

### 1. THE BIBLE IS TRUE.

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Many other people have wondered the same thing. Some have suggested that there is no such thing as objective truth.

But Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life...*" (John 14:6).

But how are we to know the truth? Jesus said to the Father, "...Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Scriptures are God's written revelation of Himself to us (Luke 24:44; Hebrews 1:1-2).

### 2. ITS AUTHOR

*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.* (2 Peter 1:20-21)

*All Scripture is **inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16)

The words translated *inspired by God* literally mean *God-breathed* in the Greek language.

The Holy Spirit was the divine authority (Hebrews 9:8; 1 Peter 1:11), giving revelation to about 40 different human writers over a period of 1,600 years.

- a. Jesus quoted from at least 24 Old Testament books and stated His belief that they were true (i.e. inspired by God) and must be fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-19; 13:14; Luke 21:22; John 13:18; 15:25; 17:12).

*...the Scripture cannot be broken, (John 10:35)*

- b. Jesus also claimed that His own words were inspired:

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. (Mark 13:31)*

*...the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. (John 12:48)*

- c. The apostle Paul declared his message came from God (1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Galatians 1:11-17).
- d. Peter says that Paul wrote *according to the wisdom given him* and equated Paul's writings with the **rest of the Scriptures** (2 Peter 3:15-16).
- e. The apostle John said that judgment would come upon anyone who added to or took away from the revelation given to him by God (Revelation 22:18-19).

### 3. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO STUDY THE BIBLE?

- a. It is alive and works in those who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)*

- b. It is a source of direction and guidance.

*Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)*

- c. It is a source of correction and training.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Timothy 3:16)*

*like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, (1 Peter 2:2)*

- d. It helps keep us from sin.

*Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee. (Psalm 119:11)*

- e. It shapes our future.

The doctrines (from the Latin *doctrina*, teaching or instruction) that we believe determine our **character** (what we are), which then determines our **actions**, which determine our **destiny**. See also Job 11:4; 1 Timothy 4:6, 13, 16; Titus 1:9; 2:7-10.

*Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against. And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, (1 Timothy 6:1-3)*

#### 4. WHY IS THE BIBLE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS?

- a. God's revelation to man is progressive (Mark 4:33; John 16:12; 1 Peter 1:10-12).
- b. The Old Testament was preparatory to the New Testament (Galatians 3:24).
- c. The Old Testament set forth the type and shadow of the New Testament, but the veil is lifted in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14).
- d. The New Testament is a commentary on the Old (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 8:5; 10:1).

- e. The life of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament fulfilled over 300 prophecies from the Old Testament.

## 5. HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

- a. Establish a time and a place.
  - 1) Do not wait until you feel inspired to read your Bible. Jesus was quoting from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 8:3) when He said: *'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD'* (Matthew 4:4). Your inner man needs to be fed every day. The best way to insure that it happens is to establish a regular time that you will set aside for Bible reading and prayer.
  - 2) If we value God's word, we will make it a priority, even if it means sacrificing food or sleep.

*I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. (Job 23:12)*
- b. Since the New Testament gives us a clearer revelation of Jesus Christ, it is best to begin by reading the New Testament and then reading the Old Testament.
- c. As you read slowly, ask God to speak to you from His Word (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:11-14). When you feel something seem to stand out at you, stop and think about it for awhile. This is probably the Holy Spirit trying to speak to you about something. Be honest with yourself. The Bible contains powerful words that can change your life. You may feel that you want to stop and pray before continuing with your reading.
- d. Have your notebook handy so you can write down scripture verses that seem particularly meaningful to you. God is probably speaking to you through these verses and you will benefit by referring back to them later. Also write down other things that God may be showing you. When you are finished,

write down the chapter and verses where you left off so you can begin there next time.

- e. Hudson Taylor, founder of the Chinese Inland Mission, was heard saying to a friend as he closed his Bible, "Well, that completes my 40th time through the Bible. I read the Bible through once a year for the past 40 years."

## 6. WHICH TRANSLATION IS BEST?

There are many good translations of the Bible available. Some of the most popular are listed below:

### a. **King James or Authorized Version (1611)**

Compiled by 47 scholars under the authorization of King James I of England, this version has been by far the most popular English Bible for over three centuries. Some of the words used have become archaic and the style is somewhat difficult for the modern reader.

### b. **New American Standard Bible (1960, 1995)**

This is a good study Bible, following closely to the original Hebrew and Greek languages.

### c. **New International Version (1973)**

The form of this translation is more fluid than the NASB and the language is more contemporary. This makes it a very enjoyable reading Bible, but sometimes less desirable for study.

### d. **New King James (1979)**

This version is growing in popularity.

### e. **Today's English Version or Good News Bible**

This Bible has the simplest vocabulary of any English version available today. Its easy readability and stimulating pictures make it an excellent starter Bible.

It is also available with the Imprimatur, the mark of approval by the Roman Catholic Church.

## 7. STUDY HELPS

- a. Of the many study helps available, probably the most helpful is an exhaustive concordance. An exhaustive concordance lists every word in the Bible and gives every reference (chapter and verse) where that word can be found in your Bible. The concordance you buy should be for the same translation as the Bible you are using.
- b. You will also want to have a good English dictionary available.
- c. There are several free study helps available online:  
[www.bible.cc](http://www.bible.cc) (online access)  
[www.bible-explorer.com](http://www.bible-explorer.com) (downloadable software)  
[www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net) (downloadable software)

## 8. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

*This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8)*

Meditation means to turn the words over in your mind as though chewing a mouthful of food to get all the flavor out of it.

It involves rethinking our daily experiences in the light of God's Word. It requires that we take the time to allow God's Word to speak to us and to cleanse us (Ephesians 5:26; Psalm 1:2-3).

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It has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth I have not lost the benefit of for more than fourteen years. I saw clearly... the first great business of the day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. I saw the most **important** thing I had to do was to pray after dressing in the morning and give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to **meditate** on it. Thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warmed, reprov'd and instructed.

— George Mueller

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## Homework

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4. Read chapters 17 through 21 of the Gospel of John.
5. Be prepared to write out from memory the following Scripture:  
*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Timothy 3:16)*
6. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson **and also lessons 1 - 3.**
7. Record your daily Bible reading in a notebook. Also write down any verses of particular significance to you and anything else you may feel God is saying to you. Bring your notebook to the next class.



# 5

## Final

Congratulations! After taking your final exam for lessons 1 through 4, you will have completed Foundations I. This is the first part in a four part series. You are on your way to becoming well grounded in the faith.

Be sure to enroll now in Foundations II, the next five week course. You will learn about the following areas which are essential to your Christian life:

- ❖ Repentance
- ❖ Faith
- ❖ Baptism in Water
- ❖ Baptism in the Holy Spirit

*like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, (1 Peter 2:2)*

May God bless you in your new walk in Christ.