



# the basics!

Beginning Your Journey with Jesus

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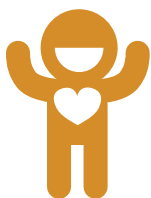


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# What Just Happened?

(Getting clarity on what a Christian is)

You may be reading this booklet because you made a decision to ask Jesus into your heart. You felt a leading or an impression in your life that told you there was an emptiness, which only God could fill. And so, you asked Jesus to come and be the master of your life.

But what really happened? What did you really do? I mean, on one hand nothing has really changed. You still look the same; you still have the same struggles, issues and thoughts. Yet, you may have a feeling that something is different. What you were before doesn't seem to be what you are now. That's called "Salvation". It is what God does when He draws us to Himself and saves us from our sins. It's what we call becoming a Christian. So, what is a Christian?

That's a very interesting question, which will get you many different answers. Some think it's a **Political** stance: "Well, I am a Canadian; therefore I must be a Christian." Others understand it in terms of **Religion**: "Well, I am not a Jew; therefore I must be a Christian." There are those who understand it in light of **History**: "My heritage is deeply rooted in the faith, therefore I am a Christian." Still others define a Christian through a **Social** understanding: "I live in a neighborhood where there is a church on the corner and my neighbor goes there, so I suppose that makes me a Christian." And finally, there are those who make it all about their **Emotions**: "I am a Christian because I had an experience!"

Maybe you have found yourself thinking in one of these ways before. Maybe you have friends or family members who have used these statements. We've all heard people call themselves Christians and yet know in our hearts that they have never made a commitment to Jesus and confessed Him as their Lord and Savior. Throughout the ages, this term or label has been distorted and misunderstood by people of all ages and backgrounds. That is why it is so important to define it accurately, because our definition of a Christian will determine how we live.

The term "Christian" simply means "little Christ." It was a term used originally as a form of abuse towards the early believers. However, it stuck and is now the most widely used name for those who follow Jesus. That is a great definition; a true and authentic Christian is one who is a "little Christ",

not in terms of deity, but in terms of lifestyle, understanding and imitation.



The best place to discover the definition and answer to “What is a Christian?” is to go to the source - the Scriptures. In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul (who wrote this letter to a church in Rome) gives us some solid understanding of what it means to be a Christian. He outlines for us a description of the Christian life that tells us how to function and what we are to be like. Look at what Paul writes in **Romans chapter 5 verses 1 to 9:**

*“We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through faith in Jesus we have received God’s grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God’s glory.*

*3 And that’s not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. 4 The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. 5 And hope will never let us down. God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us.*

*6 At just the right time, Christ died for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own. 7 It is unusual for anyone to die for a godly person. Maybe someone would be willing to die for a good person. 8 But here is how God has shown his love for us: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*9 The blood of Christ has made us right with God. So we are even surer that Jesus will save us from God’s anger. 10 Once we were God’s enemies. But we have been brought back to him because his Son has died for us. Now that God has brought us back, we are even more secure. We know that we will be saved because Christ lives.*

*11 And that is not all. We are full of joy in God because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of him, God has brought us back to himself.*

So, here are some things we can learn from this passage of Scripture that tells us what a Christian is...

**A Christian is...**

**1. One who has ACCEPTANCE with God** (Romans Chapter 5 verse 1)

To be accepted means to feel secure, to have peace with God. It is interesting to note that the active and the passive rebellion that we have with God is expressed in our culture every day. A prime example of this is when someone hits their thumb with a hammer. Often the first name they yell out is God! I've never heard anyone shout out "Oh my Oprah Winfrey!" Or what about natural disasters? When people lose their life in an earthquake or tornado it's labeled an "act of God," but if in that same earthquake or tornado you escape death, then you are "Lucky?" In struggle, people passively call out to and blame God. Why? The reason is because a person who has never trusted God is not at peace with Him, and so they rebel against Him. However, those who have put their trust in God are at peace with Him, because they have received and acknowledged His acceptance.



Romans chapter 5 goes on to say that a person who has not trusted God is:

- **“Without strength” (v:6)**
- **“Ungodly” (v:6)**
- **“A sinner” (v:8)**
- **“Enemies of God” (v:10)**

That may sound kind of harsh, but it's the truth. Until we accept God's peace and grace, we are against Him - there is no middle line. Thus, a Christian is someone who has found acceptance with God.

## 2. One Who Has **ACCESS** to God (Romans 5 verse 2)

A Christian is someone who can come boldly before God with full access. There is a story told of a boy who was sitting outside of Buckingham Palace wanting to see the King. However, he had been turned away by the guards and was told he couldn't see him. Feeling rejected, he sat outside wondering how he could get inside the palace. Soon, he was met by a well dressed man who asked him what was wrong. The little boy told him his dilemma. The man responded by simply taking the boys hand and walking with him.

The little boy was amazed as the guards jumped to attention when he and the man approached the gate. They walked right through, entered the castle door, walked down the elegantly decorated corridors, right into the very throne room and presence of the King. You see, the little boy had come in with the King's son. Because of this, he immediately had access to the King.

What happened to that little boy happened to you when you confessed with your mouth and believed in your heart that Jesus is Lord - You were given instant access to God.

*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Romans 10:9



### 3. One Who **ANTICIPATES** The Future (Romans 5 and the second part of verse 2)

We live in a time where people have a real fear of the future. Psychic hot lines are a multi-million dollar business because everyone wants to know what is going to happen to them. The nation of Canada is plagued by political dissent. We wonder if or when we will separate. We wonder if the future holds a nation that is split in two. Today's generation wonders what tomorrow holds for them. It seems that all an education can get you is a job at McDonalds. We are a people that fear the future.

As a Christian, I don't have to worry about the future. **"...we are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory." (Romans 5:2).** We have an eternal hope in God.

I have been to a lot of funerals that were filled with unrest and fear of the unknown. However, I have also been to many funerals where there was great rejoicing. This rejoicing is in the fact that although we're there to say "good-bye", we know that one day we'll be able to say "hello." Why? Because we have an eternal hope. One day we will stand with that loved one, who had trusted Christ with their life, and be united for eternity with them.

### 4. One Who Has the **ABILITY** to Triumph in the Midst of Trouble (Romans 5 verse 3)

**Romans chapter 5 verse 3** is the bridge between what God has done for us in the future and what He does for us everyday, in the here and now. Have you ever noticed that some "Christians" are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good? They are so caught up with what is in the future that they do not live in the here and now. Christianity is all about the here and now. Paul shows us in verses 4 and 5 that being a Christian not only gives you the hope of heaven, but it makes sense out of what is going on down here. When we face trials and temptations, we can realize that we are not alone; rather, we are given the hope and guidance of God. Being a Christian does not mean that your life becomes perfect and trouble free. It simply means that you now serve a God that brings perspective to that trouble, makes sense out of it, and helps bring you through it.

## 5. One Who Has No **ANXIETY** About Hell (Romans 5 verse 9)



The Bible speaks of hell as a real place. In fact, Jesus, Himself, spoke of hell more than He spoke of heaven. Jesus wants us to understand that it is a place that He wants no one to go to. The truth is, as a Christian you do not have to worry about going there. When you became a Christian, God not only gave you eternity in heaven, but He kept you from eternity in hell. Romans 8 verse 1 says this, **“There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”** I am happy to say that “I am in Christ Jesus!”

### **GROWING STRONGER...**

When you look at your own life, can you say that you are activating these truths in your life as a Christian? Take some time and meditate on the following:

- God’s **ACCEPTANCE**
- Your **ACCESS** to Him
- Your **ANTICIPATION** of the future (Do you really look forward to it?)
- Your **ABILITY** (through Christ) to triumph amidst life’s storms.
- The **ASSURANCE** of God’s Love
- Your freedom from **ANXIETY**.

### **BECOMING WISER...**

**Read** through the Gospel of John in your Bible.

**On a separate piece of paper explain WHY you became a Christian.**

**MEMORIZE:** Romans 5:8





# The Bible

## Is It Really The Word Of God?

*“There is a lot of things in the Bible that I don’t understand, but there is a lot more in the Bible that I can’t mis-understand.” - Mark Twain*

*“Many people put down the Bible before they pick it up!”*

### Before You Begin...

The earliest memory I have about the Bible comes from sitting around the dinner table with my family. After each meal, my Dad would reach over to the shelf and pick up the old family Bible and read from it. I can remember hoping at times that the passage would be short because the world was waiting for me. There were trees to climb, friends to play with and fields to explore - it was at those times that I endured the Bible.

However, there were other times when my Dad would read a story or a passage and it would peak my interest. “How could Jonah be swallowed by a fish?” “Did the Red Sea really spread apart for Moses and the Israelites?” “Now, exactly how did Jesus walk on the water?”

The interesting thing is, the older I got, the more the Bible intrigued me. I began to study, read, check out and listen to what this book has to say. I finally came to the conclusion that this book contains ultimate truth. In fact, I have come to the conclusion that the Bible is the absolute, eternal truth, which is the standard that all other human philosophies and theories should be measured against.

Now, since you have given your life to Jesus, or are considering that decision, I want to make sure you know that you can trust the Bible as God’s book. You may not be fully convinced yet, but as you journey, would you commit to doing a couple of things?

First of all, take the time to actively package up your pre-conceived ideas and opinions. Now don’t throw them out, just package them up for now and put them into storage - if you want, you can unwrap them again later. The second thing I need you to do is to begin “wondering” as you read and study the Bible. Ask yourself; “I wonder what it would have been like to arrive the morning after Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den and to see him walk out

untouched?” “I wonder what it would have been like to be in the crowd when Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead?” “I wonder what the Disciples were thinking when they heard the sound of a rushing wind in that upper room on the Day of Pentecost?” I wonder!



There is just one more thing. As you take the time to study the evidence for the truth of the Bible, could you continually keep the following thoughts in your mind? Here it is, “**IF** this is true, **IF** this really happened, **IF** that person’s life was changed, **IF** that man was really healed, **IF** that woman was really forgiven, **IF** that boy was truly delivered, **IF** Jesus really rose from the dead - **IMAGINE** what He can do in **YOUR** life.”

Just something to think about as you start your adventure.

## **SO - “WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL WITH THE BIBLE?”**

The truth is, there are quite a few “big deals” with the Bible. In fact, no matter where you are in your opinion of this book, you would have to admit that the Bible is a unique book. I will just let the facts speak for themselves. Check this out:

# “It’s a unique book...”

## **1. In Its Composition**

Unlike your average book, the Bible was written over a time span of 1600 years, by 40 different authors with radically different backgrounds. In fact, the **Biblia** (Greek for Bible, which means “books”) is really a library that consists of 66 different books which are divided into two sections. The first section is known as the Old Testament; this tells the story of the Hebrew Nation before the time of Jesus birth. The second part is known as the New Testament; this speaks of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It then goes on to explain the way the Christian faith and church grew, and gives us relevant information as to how we should live right now.

As was mentioned before, the Bible was written over a time span of 1600 years, by 40 different authors. That being the case, most of the writers never met and, in most cases, did not know what the others had written. Yet there is an amazing unity and agreement in this book, with a common theme of God making Himself known to mankind.

Now take a moment and think about that fact. 1600 years, 66 different books, 40 different authors from different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, times, and places coming to the same conclusions with amazing accuracy. Coincidence? You try it. Go ahead. Get out some paper, go to your e-mail,

pick up the phone and ask 40 different people in your community or your college or your job and ask them to write their opinion on God. I guarantee you that they will not all agree. Yet, the Bible does.



## 2. With Regard to Its **Circulation**

Another unique fact about the Bible is that it is, without question, the single most published book in the history of the world. Billions have been printed and purchased over the years, and tens of millions continue to be sold and circulated year after year. Show me another book that has stayed on top of the best seller list for the last two to three hundred years.

## 3. With Regard to Its **Translations**

The Bible is the single most translated book in the world. Even though it has already been translated into over a thousand different languages, an army of full time translators, even as you read this, are at work making it available to still more language groups. No other book comes close to being as widely translated as the Bible.

## 4. With Regard To Its **Durability**

In the words of the Energizer Rabbit, the Bible *“keeps going and going and going...”* The Bible has survived bans and burnings. It has survived ridicule and criticism throughout history. Emperors, kings, princes and rulers have tried to destroy it, but it lives on. People have risked their lives to continue to spread Bibles where they have been banned and made illegal, because of its amazing message. In fact, the Bible has thrived under persecution - it is unique in its durability.

## 5. In Its **Effect In People's Lives**

People read books all the time. Every time I get on a plane, board a bus or ride the ferry, I see dozens and dozens of people reading books. There are arrays of different authors that can be spotted such as John Grisham, Danielle Steele, The Wall Street Journal, Archie and Jughead and the list goes on. Most of the time when people finish reading a book, they simply put it on the shelf, in a closet or in a box. Then they go off and buy another book that will entertain them, help them escape, or to teach them something new.

But it's different when people buy and read the Bible. People who read the Bible never seem to finish the thing. Or, if they finish it, they go back and start over, or read portions of it again. Furthermore, they do not put it on a shelf or pack it in a box, rather, they often end up carrying it around with them. It doesn't stop there. People who read the Bible not only read it again

and again and carry it around, they also give witness to the fact that the information they have learned from the Bible has transformed their lives. The teachings of the Bible have altered their view of the world. It has changed their relating patterns, their values, their ethics, their vocabulary and their view of eternity.



There are very few books that claim to have that kind of effect on people's lives. Churches are an example of this truth. Throughout the week and throughout the world, millions of people sit down with a Bible in their lap and study the Bible. It's kind of an unusual thing when you really think about it.

## “It's an Accurate Book”

I've talked to many people who have strong opinions on this issue of accuracy. They say things like, *“Of course the Bible is not accurate,”* or, *“It is riddled with myths and mistakes and contradictions. It has nothing to do with historical fact!”*

There is a quote that states, **“A lot of people put down the Bible before they ever pick it up!”** The people who make these accusations often (not all the time) fall into that category. They have never taken the time to actually read and study the Bible.

Again, we need to look at the facts, not our opinions. The truth is, the Bible passes the historicity test with flying colors. That is more impressive than you may think, because the Bible makes hundreds of references to historical events, places and people. Thus, there is plenty of room for contradictions with the historical record.

It's amazing how consistent the Biblical record is with the historical record, even in the little details, such as dates, geography and who was ruling when. In fact, in the few cases where there have been “contradictions” between the Biblical account and the historical record, archeological discoveries have proven the biblical account to be the accurate account. At one time, the 39 kings of ancient Israel and Judah who reigned during the divided kingdom were authenticated only from the Bible record, so critics charged fabrication. However, archeologists found records that mentioned many of these kings and once again the Bible record was proven accurate.

In the last 100 years, scores of archeological finds have solved what once seemed to be unexplainable contradictions between the historical account and the Biblical account. In the handful of remaining minor conflicts between history and Scripture, school is still out. However, one can fully expect that

the Bible's track record of accuracy will continue to stand. Remember, with the passing of time, the number of apparent conflicts are shrinking, not getting bigger. That is very important to note.



## Manuscript Evidence

I have found that most critics of the Bible have no idea how much manuscript evidence there is for the Bible's credibility. Here's what I mean: If you study at any secular university, at some point you will most likely be assigned to read those towering philosophical giants - Plato and Aristotle. Their writings have had enormous influence over the years, and no one dares question the content and credibility of their work. No one questions their reliability or their historicity, whether or not they have been passed down to us accurately or if some errors crept into the text along the way. They are basically accepted at face value as being accurate representations of what the authors wrote. However, did you know that there are less than ten existing copies of ancient handwritten manuscripts to study and compare, in order to determine accuracy and transmission quality when it comes to the writings of Plato and Aristotle?

## What Are Manuscripts?

A manuscript is a copy of an original document. The credibility of any historical document is based upon how many manuscripts there are. The more manuscripts, or copies, there are of a document, the more reliable it is. So, the question is "How many manuscripts would the Bible have to have in order to make you feel comfortable? 25? 100? How about 200 manuscripts?" The truth is there are over 14,000 manuscripts available to compare against each other.

Remember, there are two important factors involved in determining the reliability of a historical document:

1. The number of manuscript copies that are still around.
2. The time between when it was first written and the oldest copy still in existence.

## **"What About All Those Miracles in the Bible? They Can Sometimes Be Pretty Hard To Swallow."**

When I read the Bible I have to admit that at times I find it hard to believe what I'm reading. If you think about it, some of the stories would make good tabloid headlines or talk show topics. Can you imagine some of the headlines that could be written from some of the Bible stories?

**“MAN WALKS ON WATER,”**

**“BROTHER GREETES FAMILY AFTER BEING DEAD FOR FOUR DAYS,”**

**“NINETY YEAR OLD WOMEN GIVES BIRTH TO BABY BOY.”**



*When people read about the floods, the ark, the big fish, the healings and the resurrections - that is when many people give up on the Bible. When people have asked me over the years, “How can you believe in a book that is full of crazy stories and weird miracles?” My response is simple, **“when it comes to miracles, we need to make a distinction between God and the Bible.”***

I have no problem, by definition, saying that God is the all powerful, limitless creator of the world. If God is God, then He is capable of doing extraordinary things- capable of causing famines or floods, capable of a healing or a resurrection. Miracles are merely recreational activities for an Almighty God! Now, it just so happened to be that the Biblical writers were assigned to record some of those miracles. Therefore, just because the Bible records them, it does not mean that they were the fantasies or fabrications of the writers themselves.

One other important thing to note here is that the miracles and events that took place in the Bible were witnessed by many people. They were done in the open. Unlike myths and legends and mystery religions, the events recorded in the Bible happened in the presence of many credible witnesses (2 Peter 1:16).

## **The Bible is Accurate In What It Says About Me!**

Just one more point on the issue of the accuracy of the Bible: When I read the Bible with an open heart and mind, I have to admit that the Bible is accurate in what it says about me. It’s painfully and penetratingly accurate in what it says about who I am and what my nature is. I have never read a book that speaks so truthfully to who I really am beneath the masks that I wear. It’s a book that speaks to matters of my character, my morality, my values, my decisions and my thoughts. In fact, sometimes as I read the Bible, I wish that it wasn’t so accurate and relevant in its description of who I am.

### **What about you?**

When you read the Bible, do you notice how God speaks to you and about you, or do you ignore Him? I suspect that there are many people who know just enough about the Bible to steer away from it or to condemn it, because

they know deep in their hearts that if they read the Bible, it is going to call them into account.



I remember when I used to work on the streets of Vancouver with an organization called Teen Challenge. Every day, I would go and walk the streets and talk with kids. Every night, I would see, over and over again, young ladies selling themselves. Along with that scene were the many cars who would slowly circle the block until they discovered the prostitute of their choice. The car would pull up, the window would roll down, the young girl would lean into the window and within a few moments be in the car.

It was at those moments that I would think about running up to the car, jumping in the back seat, pulling out my Bible and saying, *“Now just before you folks leave for your evening activities, I was wondering if you’d mind me reading a few verses from the Bible.”*

How much do you want to bet that they would not be interested in a Bible study at that moment? Why? Because what they had on their agenda would not square with what the Bible teaches about morality and purity.

That may be an extreme illustration, but it makes the point. What areas in your life come to mind in which the Bible calls you into account? Take some time to acknowledge the dark parts in the corner of your heart that hold you back from experiencing the full truth of God’s Word.

## **“Is The Bible Inspired or Expired?”**

Is this book, the Bible, a book that God wrote, or is it simply a collection of religious stories penned by some very creative human authors? You should know that the Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God. Inspired literally means “God-breathed”, and there is no doubt about that from a Biblical perspective.

- 2 Timothy 3:16 says that *“all the scriptures are inspired by God.”*
- 2 Peter 2:21 says, *“No prophecy ever came about by an act of human will, but by men moved by the Holy Spirit.”*
- Over 3000 times in the Bible, the various writers use the Expression, *“Thus says the Lord.”*

The Bible is quite clear on the issue of inspiration, and the evidence for this claim of inspiration is two-fold:





## 2. JESUS CHRIST:

Another evidence comes in the person of Jesus Christ. He emphatically and repeatedly stated that the Scriptures were the Word of God. He argued relentlessly for the inspiration of Scripture. In fact, He said Himself that Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God will never pass away.



In **Matthew 7:24-27**, Jesus had just finished giving the Sermon on the Mount and He finished by saying that there are only two kinds of people listening to the Sermon that day. They are the wise, and the foolish.

## YOUR CHALLENGE – if you should choose to accept it!

Take the next 30 or 40 days and get your Bible out and begin to read it. Start in the New Testament and begin to read and study it with an open mind.

Remember those pre-conceived ideas and opinions that you packaged up earlier? No need to go back and open them up again. When you search with an open mind and an open heart, the Bible establishes itself as the authority and standard for which all other philosophies and opinions must be measured against.

Remember the Bible is our foundation. It does not call us to question what Jesus would do, rather it helps us to determine and do what Jesus DID!

## BECOMING WISER....

### Read 2 Timothy 3:16:

1. What does this passage tell you about Scripture?
2. Do you know that the Bible is God's Word to you? What is your reaction to that truth?

### Read 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6 and 2 Peter 1:19-21

1. What do these passages say about how the Bible is God's Word to us?
2. Think about an issue in your life right now - then take some time and discover what the Bible has to say regarding your issue. I have listed a few examples:
  - **Doubts about God** - John 20:19-31
  - **Depression** - Psalms 40:1-5; Isaiah 35
  - **The Future** - Jeremiah 29:11-13; Matthew 6:34
  - **Rejection** - Psalm 69:8-16, 33; Romans 15:4-7

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Matthew 5; Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12 and Revelation 22:18-19.

**MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 3:16**



# God:

## How Do I Know That He Is Real?

*“I am plagued by doubts...If only God would give me a sign that he exists, like a large deposit in a Swiss bank account in my name...”*

- **Woody Allen**

### **Before You Begin...**

In today's culture, it is popular to be spiritual but not specific when it comes to God. In other words, most people believe in spirituality or a spiritual force that is based upon their own opinions or feelings. Therefore people simply “prove” God with their experience. He is defined through whatever ladder of life you choose to climb.

I don't know about you, but that kind of “proof” leaves me feeling pretty unstable, shallow and disconnected. When I look at how the world proves their spiritual beliefs and experiences, I discover that it never allows them to experience fulfillment and contentment with God. In fact, that kind of reasoning simply leaves a person with a sense of false hope - wondering if what they believe and who they believe is really authentic. The fact is, there is no middle ground when it comes to the existence of God - He either exists or He doesn't.

## I Gave Up My Brains For Jesus... Didn't I?

What we need to understand is that we do not have to disengage the rational capacities of our brain in order to exercise faith in God. Christianity is far from being a “blind faith,” rather it is an intelligent faith based upon rational evidence.

Many people see the existence of God as irrational or simply one's own personal opinion. “What you see is what you get” is their argument. It's interesting to note that in days past, people believed and governed their lives by the supernatural. They used to think that birds flew in the sky because God was holding them there. They believed that apples fell from trees because God picked them. There was simply no other explanation. Today we realize that these events have more to do with the law of gravity than with God. Because we can now scientifically explain these events, many

have outgrown the need for God and, therefore, many don't believe in Him.



Let me be honest with you. Although I believe that there are very strong arguments for the existence of God, I also realize that I cannot prove His existence to you with 100% proof. If I could, there would be no need for faith. However, as mentioned before, if God does exist, then He must make available to us evidence that proves His existence. I believe He did just that. Let's take a look at some of that evidence.

## 1. PURPOSE AND REASON

### (Is It All Just A Coincidence?)

We live in an ordered world. Though it may not seem like it at times, there is order and purpose in everything that happens around us. Many people live by a world view that says "everything that happens is by chance." However, if this were the case, then our world would not be ordered.

Take for instance the tossing of a coin. This is a great illustration of chance processes in operation. When I toss a coin the result of it landing on heads or tails depends on a whole range of factors. Was it heads up to start with? How hard was it thrown? How high was it tossed? How many times did it spin before landing? If we lived in a world without order, governed by chance processes, we could never be sure if the coin would even come back to the ground at all. It is pretty apparent that our world does not function by chance.

Now to carry on this thought, let's take a look at the theory of evolution. The belief in evolution is said to be the product of random chance processes explaining the beginning of all things. In other words, they are saying that "order and purpose" have evolved out of the "random chance" processes. Now stick with me and think this through. To say that "things happen by chance" is a silly statement, because chance is nothing. That is, "chance" is not an entity, it has no being, it is non-existent. Therefore, if chance has no being, it then has no power, no influence and no effect. **To say that something happened by chance is the same as saying, "something happened by nothing!"**

Ask yourself this question, "can 'chance' work to clearly defined purposes?" In other words, if my purpose is to build a house, can I leave it up to chance? The answer, of course, is "NO!" The Christian claim is that only an absolute, personal God can account for such an ordered and purpose driven universe. Another important truth to take note of is that we as humans are purpose driven beings. We all believe that we have some purpose in life, in this world. Purpose appeals to our deepest needs as human beings. The lack

of purpose, the loss of reason, and the absence of control (order) in life usually leads to the death of a person's sense of well being and worth, and eventually, in some cases, to physical death - suicide.



## 2. CAUSE AND EFFECT

### (The Proof Is At The End Of Your Nose)

Every effect has a cause. In other words, if something happens logically, we expect there to be a cause or a reason for that particular thing happening. If you were to walk into your living room and the TV was on and you didn't switch it on, you would come to the conclusion that some stranger had walked into your house and helped himself to a half hour of Wheel Of Fortune on your TV set. Of course this is not what you would think (unless you live on your own). Rather, you would naturally conclude (consciously or unconsciously) that someone had been there before you and switched it on. Even the fact that the TV is there in the first place provides the basis for assuming that someone put it there, and even before that, someone built it. Plus, someone had to design it in order for it to be built, and so on and so on. Reason and experience dictate the necessity to conclude the reality that everything in the world has a cause. Thus, the world itself must even have a cause. If it is true that everything has a cause and therefore a reason, then it must also be true that cause itself has a reason. In fact, cause without reason is a self-contradiction, as is random chance working to a cause.

#### Think About It...

##### a. You exist as a highly complex being

Take your brain, for instance (I know some of you might think this is a bad example, but believe me, it is the same for everyone). Your brain is the most complex mechanism in the world, and the most influential organ of your body. This organ in your head accounts for your ability to think and to love. It helps you to remember and, sometimes, to forget. It gives you the ability to imagine, create, dream and analyze. The average brain weighs about 3 pounds and contains 12 billion cells, each of which is connected to 10,000 other brains cells, totaling 120 brain connections. Without your brain, your heart would not beat and your decisions would never be made. Your brain proves that you are a highly complex being.

##### b. A design implies a designer

There is a story of Sir Isaac Newton. He had a friend who noticed that Sir Isaac had a small model of the Solar System on one of his shelves. His friend was admiring it, and asked Newton who made the model for him. Newton replied, "No one made it!"

The friend smiled and asked him again, “Who made this replica of the Solar System, I would like to get one for myself.” Again Newton replied, “No one made it!”



This went on a few more times until the friend became irritated by Newton’s response. Finally Newton said “You cannot believe that this small replica of the Solar System did not just happen, but yet you are willing to believe that the whole universe simply happened by chance. You are an inconsistent man.”

This story illustrates the fact that a design implies that there is a designer. What about you?

### **C. Who caused you?**

Who designed you? A Big Bang? A coincidence millions of years ago in some solar system where all the right atoms and gases and temperatures and mixes came together, blew up, and started a universe that evolved into what we have today? Is that where you came from? Well, then where did the original solar system come from? Where were those atoms created? Who set the temperature? Who mixed it all together?

I know what you may be thinking: “If we are going to use that reasoning, then what about God? Who made God?”

The answer is simple. We live in a world that needs a cause, or a reason, or a designer in order for it to function and be explained. However, in order for that cause and effect to be in place, we need, and our universe demands, an uncaused cause, a being that exists within itself. That being is God Himself. So here are your choices: Our world came into existence by time and chance and everything has evolved over time. That argument does not make sense. It is like taking my watch apart, sticking all the parts into a jar, closing the lid and shaking it. What are the chances of my watch coming back together? Not likely!

Or, you can believe in a God who personally created this universe, including you.

## **3. MORALITY AND VALUES**

(Can You Really Believe Anything You Want?)

We live in a universe where:

**a. We are haunted by a universal sense of OUGHTNESS (Things that ought to be).**

When you open up a newspaper you are confronted with dozens of news stories where people are demanding justice. Our politicians say they will do one thing and then they do another. So, what do we do? We call for their resignation. We implement a recall campaign. Simply because we want justice because they mislead us. But, if there is no God, then it does not matter what they did; they have done nothing wrong. The fact is, if there is no God, then there is no such thing as right or wrong. However, no matter where you go in this world, there are universal laws that govern us. There is a sense of *oughtness*!



### **b. There are universal ABSOLUTES that judge us....**

I have a challenge for you. I challenge you to find a society or culture anywhere in the world where it is good to be a coward. I challenge you find a country where they uphold treason as a valued attribute. Can you imagine such a place?

“Oh, remember Billy. Billy is our hero. We have a statue of Billy in the middle of our town, in remembrance of how he sold our military strategy to the enemy. We hold him in great reverence for his act of cowardice - in fact we all want to be like Billy!”

This, of course, is ridiculous, simply because our world is governed by absolutes. Yet so many say that you can believe whatever you want. This is a dangerous mindset. If you truly believe that, then murder is OK, rape is acceptable and stealing is normal. If there are no absolutes, then we really should empty out our prisons and close their doors.

If there is no such thing as good or evil, then no one is ever really wrong, they are simply different. Murderers are not evil, they are simply living out their belief system. They shouldn't be punished for being themselves just because their beliefs don't line up with yours. This mindset is like punishing everyone with freckles! If something is truly wrong or evil, then we are appealing to an absolute standard that is above us. Who is behind that standard? No one else but God!

Our moral code is like a math table, it is full of absolutes. Try arguing with your math teacher that two plus two equals five. No matter what you say or what you do, the fact is that two plus two equals four. The truth is, when people say there are no absolutes, they just stated an absolute.

Every person has a set of values, a sense of morals, a set of standards by which they live and judge the speaking, thinking and behavior of those around them. When we trace our values back far enough, we eventually arrive at one supreme or ultimate value that forms the basis for all others.

For example:

**\*For Christians, its God's will found in the Bible**

**\*For some people, it's the "Golden rule"**

**\*For others, the principle to "live and let live"**



Think about it. Everyone appeals to some absolute moral standard, otherwise we would make no moral judgments at all. Furthermore, moral values depend on personal relationships. Therefore, absolute and objective moral standards must be traced back to an absolute person. The only God that claims to be both absolute and personal is the Christian God of the Bible. The gods of other religions are either absolute *impersonalities* or finite personalities, thus freeing us from any obligation to submit to them, and providing no rational basis or model for moral values. For example:

- \*Zeus is a finite being: He is bigger and stronger than normal humans but he is destructible.
- Buddha never claimed to be God; in fact his teachings are really atheistic.
- Mormons are polytheists (one who believes in many gods) and thus do not believe in one absolute personality.

In the end, there is no logical basis to hold or make any moral judgments about anything, apart from the God of the Bible. He is the God (absolute personality) of perfect justice and perfect love.

#### **4. THE EVIDENCE OF CHANGED LIVES**

This last proof is an experiential argument, but nevertheless it should be mentioned. The fact is, for centuries millions of people's lives have been changed by the power of the Christian God. The world right now is full of living evidence of the truth of God's existence, because lives have been changed.

When you think it through, it takes more faith not to believe in God than to believe in Him. To deny God's existence, you must suppress the incredible **COMPLEXITY** of the world around you. To deny God's existence, you must suppress the reality of the existence of **GOOD** and **EVIL**. To deny God's existence, you must suppress the living **EVIDENCE** of untold millions.

**The truth is, you don't have to give up your brains to believe in God!**

## **BECOMING WISER**

**Read John 8:32 - 1 Peter 3:15 - Acts 17:2-4**

**Read Acts 17:16-34**



1. Does Paul ask the Athenians to trade in their intellect for God?
2. List those whom Paul did win over to the faith.
3. Think of a time when you have had to use your intellect to defend the Gospel. If you can't think of a time, then think of an opportunity where you can use your intellect to defend your faith.

**MEMORIZE: 1 Peter 3:15**





# JESUS: Who is He?

Why Did He Come? & What Did He Do?

*Jesus said unto them, "Who do you say that I am?"*

*And they replied, "You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the Kerygma of which we find the ultimate meaning of our interpersonal relationships."*

*And Jesus said, "What?"*

**(Graffiti found on the wall of St. Johns University)**

*"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."*

**(Philippians 2:5-7)**

## **Before You Begin...**

How do you picture Jesus in your mind? No one really knows what He looked like; however, there have been many attempts to define and illustrate Jesus. Have you ever seen pictures of Him? For the most part, I don't like the pictures that I see of Jesus. The artists rarely have him smiling. He is usually serious, solemn and usually has His hands outstretched blessing some person.

Why doesn't someone paint a picture of Jesus laying on His back laughing, or wrestling with one of His disciples, or swimming with a bunch of friends in the Sea of Galilee? Now don't misinterpret me, we must have a sense of respect and fear for the Lord. However, we also need to remember that He came down to earth to relate with us and to be one of us. Why is it then that we have spent so much time creating a Jesus who we cannot relate to? I think a lot of the reason for that is because we are afraid to get to know Him. Who is Jesus? That is a great question. In fact Jesus asked His disciples that same question in Matthew 16, verses 13-20

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"



14 "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

15 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah] the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. 18 Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

20 Then he sternly warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This passage is interesting because Jesus got a number of different responses. In verse 14, it says that the disciples replied by saying that, "some say you are John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." There were a number of different opinions going around about who Jesus was. It's the same today, isn't it? There are many different views about who Jesus is and the interesting thing is, most of them are honorable views and opinions. People, for the most, part think Jesus was a great guy, a dynamic teacher, a powerful prophet.

If you look back at Matthew 16 you will see that Peter gave the right answer when he said in verse 16, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." We need to understand that Jesus is more than just a great guy, or someone we can call on when life gets tough. Jesus is either God in the flesh or He is just like you and me.

Don't take this lightly, because **how you see and understand Jesus will directly effect how you follow and serve Him.** A right understanding of who Jesus is, is of vital importance in your Christian walk. You may believe in Jesus - but now you have got to get to know Him. The truth is, many times our understanding of Jesus says more about us than about Him. Our goal is to get to know Him so that we can represent Him the way He intended. So, let's take some time and discover "God with skin on."

## JESUS - Who Is He?

### The Jesus You Thought You Knew?



Philip Yancey wrote a great book called *“The Jesus I Never Knew.”* In it, he challenges our preconceptions about Jesus and encourages us to look at Jesus with a new perspective. In his book he writes:

*“The more I studied Jesus, the more difficult it became to pigeonhole him. He said little about the Roman occupation, the main topic of conversation among his countrymen, and yet he took up a whip to drive petty profiteers from the Jewish temple. He urged obedience to the Mosaic Law while acquiring a reputation as a lawbreaker. He could be stabbed by sympathy for a stranger, yet turn on his best friend with the flinty rebuke, “Get behind me Satan!” He had uncompromising views on rich men and loose women, yet both types enjoyed his company.*

*One day miracles seemed to flow out of Jesus; the next day his power was blocked by people’s lack of faith. One day he talked in detail about the second coming, another, he knew neither the day nor hour. He fled from arrest at one point and march inexorably toward it at another. He spoke eloquently about peacemaking, then told his disciples to procure swords. His extravagant claims about himself kept him at the center of controversy, but when he did something truly miraculous he tended to hush it up. As Walter Wink has said, if Jesus had never lived, we would not have been able to invent him.”*

The challenge is this: Don’t box God into what **you** think He should be like and how He should act. Our understanding of God so often comes from our own experiences, opinions and background. When we base it upon those understandings, we fail to get to know who Jesus is.

## Jesus - Fully God!

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have grown up with Jesus? That would have been tough. Could you imagine Jesus brothers and what their attitude towards Jesus must have been like? I could just hear Mary, their mother saying to Jesus brothers, *“Why can’t you be more like your brother?”* to which their response could have been, *“I don’t know Mom, I guess it’s the same reason why you can’t!”* Jesus was perfect, and the reason why He was perfect is because He was and is God.

Jesus claimed to be God on many occasions. For example, as you read the

Bible you'll discover that on many occasions Jesus encouraged and **accepted worship**. But Jesus also said that worship was reserved for God alone (Matthew 4:10). Jesus also constantly **forgave sins**. In order to forgive sin you would need to have the power and authority to do that, and no one except God does. In Luke 5, a crippled man is lowered through the roof of a house where Jesus is teaching. Jesus sees him and then says, "*Your sins are forgiven...*" (Luke 5:20), then he goes on and heals the man. It is interesting to note that the Scribes and Pharisees were right when they asserted, "*Who can forgive sins but God alone*" and if you notice, they got no argument from Jesus on that one.



## **Jesus - Fully Human!**

Although Jesus was fully God, we need to understand that He was also fully human. In fact, Jesus accepted all the limitations of humanity, except sin itself. Jesus came from the throne of heaven to a "feeding trough." He entered this world as a helpless human baby, dependent upon the nourishment of a young teenage girl. Just like you, Jesus needed to be fed and changed and taught like any other child.

As Jesus grew, he experienced the same issues that you face. He became tired (John 4:6) he experienced loneliness, he needed food and water just like us (John 19:28; Matthew 4:2). Jesus also had a human mind. In the Bible we read that he had to experience the process of learning, "*And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him...they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions...And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.*" (Luke 2:40, 46, 52).

Jesus also experienced human emotions. Just before His crucifixion Jesus said, "*Now is my soul troubled...*" (John 12:27). In dealing with the death of his good friend Lazarus, we see that Jesus expressed a broad range of emotions. "*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' He asked, 'Come and see, Lord' they replied. Jesus wept.*" (John 11:33-35).

It can be hard to comprehend that Jesus, who possessed divine attributes, still went through normal human development. Jesus had to learn to read and write, He experienced the same emotional ups and downs that you do, and he faced temptation (Luke 4:1-13) just like all of us. He did all this so that we have an example to follow. We are called to resemble Christ in our actions (Philippians 2:5). To have the attitude of Christ is not some unreachable or far out goal. Jesus made it practical and applicable by becoming just like us.

## JESUS - Why Did He Come?

Christians claim that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere at the same time. They speak about God's great love and his never-ending mercy. Well, if that is the case then *"why doesn't He do something about this terrible state the world is in?"*



We live in a world consumed with evil. People are dying everyday of starvation, it seems that you cannot walk alone on your street without the fear of being attacked. The fact is, this world seems to be getting worse by the minute.

These are fair questions, and to deal with them we need to take a walk in the garden. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they forfeited paradise and gave this world to Satan, whom the Bible calls *"the god of this world"* (Ephesians 2:2). When Satan got his hands on this world, he perverted it and filled it with sin. When sin entered the world, God, in His holiness, could no longer fellowship with His creation. God then introduced His plan by sending Jesus to reverse the effects of man's sinful choice and to restore mankind to a relationship with God. Jesus came to bridge the imperfect (you and me) with the perfect (God).

Chuck Swindoll said it this way:

***If our greatest need had been information,  
God would have sent us an educator.  
If our greatest need had been technology,  
God would have sent us a scientist.  
If our greatest need had been money,  
God would have sent us an economist.  
If our greatest need had been pleasure,  
God would have sent us an entertainer.  
But our greatest need was forgiveness,  
So God sent us a Savior!***  
**(Charles R. Swindoll, The Grace Awakening)**

This is the awesome love of God put into practice. It is so easy to become comfortable with the plan of salvation - that is, God rescuing you from your sin and restoring you to a relationship with Himself. Take a few moments and meditate on the love of God. Realize that if you were the only one on earth, He still would have implemented His plan of salvation just for you. Take some time and thank God for His Son Jesus.

## JESUS - What Did He Do?

What is the single most important event in all of human history? Without question, it is the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. At the cross of Christ:



- God and man were reconciled
- God's demands were satisfied
- What was lost by man in the Garden of Eden was regained (fellowship with God)
- Satan and his demons were dealt a crippling and decisive blow
- Our salvation was purchased

Have you ever noticed that the cross is an international symbol? People have them on their walls, they hang them from their ears and wear them around their necks - yet if you would ask them what it means, most of them wouldn't know.

The Cross is the central symbol of the Christian faith and the work that Jesus accomplished on it. It is what allows us to come into a relationship with God the Father. Take some time to understand the power of the cross. We have candy-coated the cross and made this form of death almost pleasant. Most of us have seen the movies and the pictures where Jesus gets put on the cross and we thank Him for it, yet we don't really understand what He did. To die by Roman Crucifixion was a horrible way to die. Even the Romans banned this form of death in 315 A.D. When Jesus died on the cross, it wasn't a quick, painless death. Jesus endured an intense time of torture until His death.

Read Matthew 26 - 27; Mark 14:43- 15:41; Luke 22:47 - 23:56; John 18 - 19. Ask God to bring the truth and power of Christ's death into your life.

The foundation of Christianity lies in the work of the Cross and the miracle of the Resurrection. *"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."* (1 Corinthians 15:14). Let me just say that if the resurrection of Christ did not happen, then we might as well all just give up on God and let's all go and do our own thing. However, if the resurrection is true, then we need to understand that we serve a very BIG God, for whom nothing is impossible.

When you begin to investigate the proof of the resurrection of Jesus, you will find more proof for it than against it. However, be warned, there are some interesting theories going around out there that attempt to discredit this amazing fact. Here are the most common arguments people give as to why the Resurrection did not take place:

## 1. The **“SWOON”** Theory

The Swoon theory teaches that Jesus simply fainted on the cross and later when laying in the tomb, He regained consciousness and walked out. In other word, Jesus really didn't die.



The evidence is clear that Jesus in fact died and did not merely faint. Crucifixion was a terrible physical ordeal. The trial and death of Jesus received tremendous amounts of publicity. Large numbers of people were determined that Jesus not survive and a number of others attended to His body afterwards. Some Biblical proofs that validate the death of Jesus are:

- Mark's testimony (Mark 15:37) "With a loud cry Jesus breathed His last."
- Matthew's testimony (Matthew 27:50)
- Luke's testimony (Luke 23:46) Luke was a doctor, so he would have been especially alert to the issue of Christ's death.
- Jesus' exclamation (Luke 23:46) The strength of the cry indicates that Jesus did not die the ordinary death of those crucified, who suffered long periods of complete agony, exhaustion and then unconsciousness before dying.
- Testimony of the Soldiers (John 19:33) Roman soldiers would customarily break the legs of their victims to quicken the final stages of death. The full weight of the victims body was supported by a block of wood under their feet, to which they were nailed. Breaking the legs would remove this support, thus speeding up death by suffocating them (asphyxiation). Air could be drawn in, but could not be exhaled. The soldiers would have been quite certain Jesus was dead to avoid this common practice.

## 2. The **“WRONG TOMB”** Theory

The support for this theory goes like this. They say that according to the Gospel accounts, the women visited the grave of Jesus early in the morning while it was still dark. Due to their emotional condition and the darkness, they ended up visiting the wrong tomb. Overjoyed to see that it was empty, they rushed back to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. The disciples, in turn, ran into Jerusalem to proclaim the resurrection.

The question to ask is, "Why didn't the authorities squash this lie by going to the real grave and producing Jesus' body?" This is all that they would have to do to disprove the resurrection, yet they could not, because Jesus truly did rise from the dead.

## 3. The **“SOLDIERS FELL ASLEEP”** Theory

Matthew 28:12-13 says, "*When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money telling them, 'You are to say, his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'*"

Jesus body was not stolen in this manner for the following reasons:



- If the soldiers were sleeping, how did they know it was the disciples who stole the body?
- It would be impossible for the disciples to sneak past a highly trained Roman guard and move a two tonne stone up an incline in complete silence.
- The tomb was secured with a Roman seal. Anyone who broke the seal would be punished by death. The state of the disciples make it difficult to believe that they would suddenly become so brave as to face a detachment of soldiers, steal the body, and then lie about the resurrection, knowing they would ultimately face a life of suffering and death for their deed.
- Roman guards do not fall asleep on duty.
- The Gospel of John tells us that the grave clothes were found lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen (John 20:6-7). There would not have been enough time for the disciples to sneak past the guards, roll away the stone, unwrap the body, rewrap it in their wrappings and fold the head piece neatly next to the linen. Think about it!

#### 4. The “**STOLEN BODY**” Theory

The Stolen body theory says that the disciples stole the body and then proclaimed that Jesus had risen. The stolen body theory is morally, psychologically and physically impossible. It is hard to deny that the disciples were at least sincerely devout men who tried to pursue the righteousness that Jesus taught them. The stolen body conspiracy forces us to regard them as cheap frauds and cunning deceivers, quite inconsistent with their own writings. Furthermore, what would they gain from this action? History shows us that they were rewarded with rejection, contempt, torture and ultimately a martyrs death. Check it out:

**Matthew** was thrust through with a sword in distant Ethiopia.

**Mark** died in Alexandria, after being cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.

**Luke** was hung on an olive tree in Greece.

**Peter** was crucified upside down in Rome.

**James the Greater**, was beheaded at Jerusalem.

**James the Less**, was thrown from a high place off of the Temple, then beaten with a club.

**Andrew** was bound to a cross, where he preached to his persecutors until he died.

**Thomas** was run through the body with a lance in the East Indies.

**Jude** was shot to death with arrows.

**John** was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but survived. Afterward, he was banished to the Island of Patmos.



In addition, it is psychologically impossible that one of the disciples could have convinced all the others to follow such a scheme without someone breaking rank and spilling the beans in the next 50 years. Remember, people do not die for a lie when they KNOW it is a lie!



## **CONCLUSION:**

There is no other fact in history supported by such an array of proof than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let's take a look at what I believe to be the most compelling evidence for His resurrection. The evidence is the vast number of people who actually saw the living, breathing body of Jesus after His much publicized death. These people touched Him, they ate with Him, they talked with Him and they traveled with Him. There are so many witnesses, that if you were to cross-examine each one for five minutes in a courtroom, you would need more than a week to interview them all. They include:

- Mary Magdelene (John 20:15-17; Mark 16:9-11)
- Five other women (Matthew 28:9-10)
- The Apostle Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5)
- Cleopas and companion (Luke 24:13-33; Mark 16:12-13)
- Ten disciples in a house (John 20:19-25)
- Eleven disciples including "doubting" Thomas (John 20:26-29; Mark 16:14).
- Seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-2)
- Five hundred Christians (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- James, the half brother of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7; John 7:5; Acts 1:14)
- Eleven disciples on a mountain (Matthew 28:16-20)
- The believers at the ascension (Acts 1:3-11)
- The apostle Stephen (Acts 7:55-56)
- Saul of Tarsus (a.k.a. Paul) - (Acts 9:1-8)
- The Apostle John (Revelation 1:12-20; 22:20).

The significance of Christ's resurrection provides us with proof that He is God. The Resurrection offers us hope. It is the key that unlocks the door to eternal life. As Jesus, himself, said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die"* (John 11:25-26).









# our values

## **We are whole life, faith filled, all in risk takers**

We'll never insult God with small thinking & safe living

## **We are all about the local church**

The local church is God's "Plan A" to reach the world - He has no "Plan B!"

## **We will do anything short of sin to reach people who don't know Christ**

To reach people no one is reaching, we'll have to do things no one is doing

## **We will contribute more than we consume spiritually**

The church does not exist for us. We are the church and we exist for the world

## **We will keep short accounts**

The greatest weapon we have against the Devil is repentance and confession

## **We will be relentless with truth and grace**

We will teach and model the hard truths of Jesus so that we can experience and model the deep grace of Jesus

## **We will practice irrational generosity**

We truly believe it is more blessed to give than to receive

## **We will intentionally listen to the voice of God**

We recognize that the voice we listen to the most will determine the direction of our life



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