

NewLife Series
EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, MISSIONS
English, Tagalog & Cebuano Versions.

By Pastor Bien Llobrera

BOOK 1

Right Hand of a Spiritual Baby
The Gospel

*NOTE: Please read APPENDIX
at the back of Book 1 before starting to teach the series.*

LESSON 1

BABY RIGHT HAND: THE GOSPEL
“God Has a Gift for You”



Do you know that God loves you, and He has a gift for you? Are you experiencing His love? Have you received His gift?

To experience God’s love and to receive His gift, you need to know SIX TRUTHS. To remember these truths, let’s put them on our right hand.

THUMB: GOD’S LOVE

On our THUMB, we place this truth: GOD LOVES YOU, AND HE WANTS TO GIVE YOU THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. Let's read John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Eternal life means unending life. It means that someday, when this life is over, you will be with God forever in heaven and in His eternal kingdom.

More importantly, eternal life means PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP with God. It means God will be with you here on earth. The Lord Jesus promises to give you ABUNDANT LIFE throughout your earthly journey. Let's read John 10:10, 11. In these verses the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, contrasts Himself with Satan, the thief or robber:

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

With the Lord Jesus as your Good Shepherd, He will protect you from the three-fold evil plan of Satan against you:

- Satan, the thief, wants to steal your peace, your happiness, and your future.

On the other hand, Jesus the Good Shepherd offers you forgiveness of sins with peace and joy and assurance for the future.

- Satan, the thief, wants to kill you. Through destructive sinful activities and lifestyle, he will ruin your health and eventually cause your premature death. Not only that, he will prevent you from receiving God's gift of eternal life.

On the other hand, Jesus the Good Shepherd gives you eternal life in the future and abundant life in the present, with purpose and meaning, and with His promise to supply all your needs.

- After stealing and killing, Satan the thief wants to destroy your family, your friends, your career, and everything else that's precious to you. The tragic life of a drug addict illustrates the results of all the three-fold evil plan of Satan.

On the other hand, Jesus the Good Shepherd will not only bless you; you will become a blessing to your family and to everyone else around you.

Yes, God loves you and He wants to give you eternal life and abundant life!

But a big question: Why do people not receive God's gift of eternal life and abundant life?

POINTING FINGER: MAN'S PROBLEM

On our POINTING FINGER, we place the second truth: SIN PREVENTS US FROM RECEIVING ETERNAL LIFE AND ABUNDANT LIFE.

We are not able to receive God's gift because our hands and our hearts are not clean enough to receive the gift. The Bible tells us that sin prevents us from receiving God's gift.

Let's read Romans 3:23: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

What is sin? Sin is BREAKING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS. All of us know that God gave the TEN COMMANDMENTS. Let's make a quick review of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:2-17

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make any graven image.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness.
10. You shall not covet.

If you disobey any of these ten commandments, you commit sin.

But what is the root of SIN? The root of sin is found in the very first sin that Adam and Eve committed. Remember God's command to them? God commanded them, "Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you will eat of it, you will surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God's prohibition. They ate of the forbidden fruit. Now, we ask, what was wrong about eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Well, the absolute evil of their sin can be understood from Satan's temptation regarding the forbidden fruit. Satan said, "'You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" (Genesis 3:4-5)

The temptation was to become like God knowing good and evil. In other words, Adam and Eve decided to become their own god, who will have the right to decide good and evil for themselves apart from God. The essence of S-I-N is the big, proud letter "I" (SELF) taking the throne and sitting on the throne as the king or queen of one's own life. SIN is declaring my independence from God and telling God to stay out of my life. SIN is declaring, "I will do whatever I like, and I don't care about what God or other people say, and I don't care if anybody gets hurt as long as I'm happy."

SIN PREVENTS US FROM RECEIVING ETERNAL LIFE

God wants to give us the GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE and the GIFT OF ABUNDANT LIFE, but sin is preventing us from receiving God's gift.

Why? Because the Bible warns us, "*The wages (salary or reward) of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23).

God warned Adam and Eve, that the moment they ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would die.

But why were they very much alive even after they ate of the forbidden fruit?

Well, they did not realize that DEATH comes in three stages:

- **STAGE 1: SPIRITUAL DEATH** or spiritual separation from God. The moment Adam and Eve sinned, their spirits were cut off from God; they lost their connection with God. They died spiritually. That's why they were cast out of the Garden of Eden.

In the same way for us today, because of sin in our heart, we are spiritually separated from God. How does this spiritual separation show itself? It shows itself by people's lack of interest in God and His Word. If you invite people to Bible study, they usually say no. That's a sign of spiritual death.

- **STAGE 2: PHYSICAL DEATH** or the separation of the soul from the body. Adam and Eve eventually died physically when their soul left their body.

Even so for all of us, because of sin, we will all eventually die physically. But that is not the end. The question is, where will your soul go after you die? The Bible warns us, if we don't solve our problem of sin, we will suffer the final stage of death.

- **STAGE 3: ETERNAL SEPARATION FROM GOD.** The Bible calls this the second death, when the sinful soul will be separated from God permanently. God gives us the list of people who will suffer this eternal separation from God. Let's read Revelation 21:8.

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Please note carefully who are included in the list of people who will suffer the second death. Are you sure you are not included in this list?

Revelation 21:8 warns us that even if we have only committed the sin of lying, we will be in danger of the second death. Can you honestly say that you have never, never told a lie, even a white lie? Be careful; if you say, you have never lied, you will actually be telling a lie now.

We face a very BIG PROBLEM.

All of us – you and I and everybody else – are in danger of suffering the second death or eternal suffering in the lake of fire. Why? Because everyone of us have told at least one lie, and that makes us liars. God says that even if we have not committed murder or adultery or any of the other terrible sins, if we have told a lie, that makes us liars deserving of eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

That's a very big problem. Is there an answer to our problem? Yes, there is an answer!

MIDDLE FINGER: CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

On our MIDDLE FINGER, we place this truth, that CHRIST IS THE ANSWER to the problem of sin and death.

This is the GOOD NEWS we want to share with you. Let's read John 3:16 again:

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.

God loves us so much, He wants to give us His GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE and ABUNDANT LIFE, and He sent His own Son Jesus Christ to become the solution to our sin problem. How did Christ solve our sin problem?

Christ the Son of God came down to earth from heaven, to save us from sin and death by paying the penalty of our sins with His own death on the cross. Let's read 1 Peter 3:18.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.

God's law declares clearly: the sinner must die for his sins. But Christ came to earth, He lived a perfect life, and then He died on the cross for our sins. Christ is the just and sinless one; we are the unjust and sinful ones. God's law demanded that we, the sinners, must die for our sins. Instead, Christ became our Substitute and died for our sins on the cross.

Christ did not remain dead. On the third day, He rose again. He is alive today, and He stands as our LIVING WAY – our LIVING BRIDGE – in order to bring us back to God. Let's read John 14:6.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

The BRIDGE back to God is ready! It is now possible to go back to God.

Once more, let's clarify why Christ is the only BRIDGE back to God.

There are at least two reasons:

- **First**, Christ solved the problem of the PENALTY of sin.

Sin is breaking the laws of God. And sin needs to be paid. We have no means to pay for our sins. Money, prayers, punishing our bodies, our good works such as giving to charity – all these are not sufficient to pay for our sins. But Christ came, and there on the cross He offered His life, His body and His blood as payment for our sins.

- **Second**, Christ solved the problem of our falling below God's standard.

Which person is worthy of acceptance before God? Only that person who has perfect righteousness. But who of us has perfect righteousness? Nobody. The Bible declares that all our righteousness and goodness are like filthy rags, full of holes and foul-smelling and utterly abominable in the sight of God (Isaiah 64:6). But Christ came! He was born as a human being like us, and as a human being He lived a perfect life without any sin. And now, when we put our faith in Him, He will give to us, freely as a gift, His perfect righteousness that He puts around us like a pure white robe that makes us acceptable before God.

Christ, the BRIDGE back to God, is here.

But we ask, "How do we cross the bridge?" We cross the bridge by establishing a personal relationship with Christ.

RING FINGER: CHRIST'S INVITATION

On our RING FINGER, we place this truth: CHRIST INVITES US TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

We cross the bridge by establishing a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with Christ.

Christ invites us in Revelation 3:20.



Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

According to this verse, what is Christ doing?

He is knocking at the door of every person's heart.

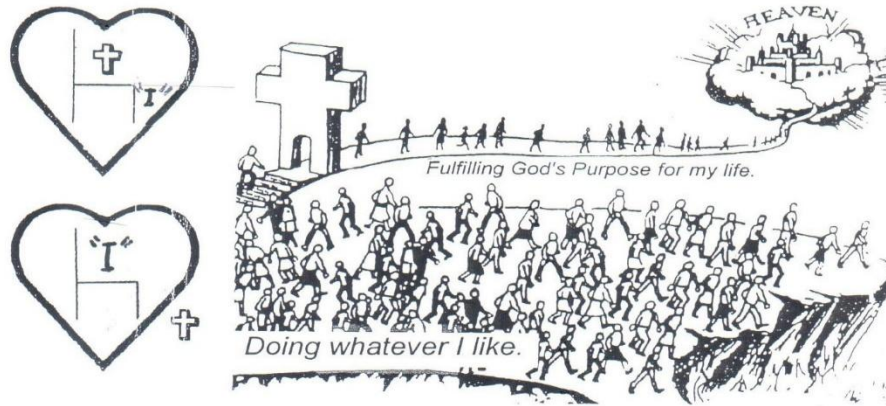
What is Christ waiting for us to do?

He is waiting for us to open our heart and receive Him into our life.

Now, here's a very important question.

Christ is knocking at the door of your heart today. WHERE DO YOU WANT CHRIST TO BE – OUTSIDE or INSIDE your heart? Please study the illustration below. Which kind of heart do you want to be?

- The BOTTOM HEART, with Christ outside?
- Or the TOP HEART, with Christ inside?



LITTLE FINGER: YOUR DECISION

On the LITTLE FINGER, we place this truth:

If you wish the TOP HEART to represent your life, YOU MUST BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND RECEIVE HIM INTO YOUR HEART.

How do you receive Christ? You receive Christ in a simple prayer. Please carefully study the prayer below:

“Lord God in heaven, thank You that You love me and You want to give me eternal life and abundant life. I admit that I am a sinner. Forgive me of all my sins. Lord Jesus, I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. I believe that You rose again to be the Only Way to God. I now open the door of my heart and I receive You as my Savior and Lord. I now surrender to You the throne of my life. Take full control of my life and help me to follow You from now on. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Is it your desire to receive Christ in your heart? Are you ready to surrender the throne of your heart and receive Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life? If you are ready, pray this prayer sincerely from your heart.

PALM: CHRIST’S ASSURANCE

On the PALM of our hand we place the truth about CHRIST’S ASSURANCE.

Did you pray that prayer to God sincerely, from your heart? God sees your heart. The moment you truly receive Christ, He promises to come into your heart. He will forgive all your sins, and you will be born again. Let’s read John 1:12-13:

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Did you see that? When you receive Christ in your heart you are born again. This means that today is your spiritual birthday! And today, God is giving you the double gift of eternal life and abundant life.

Please study again the diagram above; compare the two hearts:

- The BOTTOM HEART represents the non-Christian: the SELF (“I”) is sitting on the throne, and Christ (+) is standing outside; this person is on the road to hell.
- The TOP HEART represents the Christian: Christ (+) is sitting on the throne, and the SELF (“I”) has now surrendered to Christ. Because you have received Christ as your Savior and Lord, this heart now represents your life. You have been born again, and you are now a child of God! You are now on the road to heaven.

As a child of God, you receive TWO GIFTS:

- **FIRST GIFT: ETERNAL LIFE.**

This is the promise in 1 John 5:11, 12: *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

This is God’s promise and guarantee. Because you have Christ in you, you have eternal life, because eternal life is found in Christ. Eternal life does not depend on being a member of any religion or church. It depends only in Christ living and ruling in your heart. Eternal life means that you are assured that you will live with God forever in heaven after your earthly journey is over, because Christ is in your heart,

- **SECOND GIFT: ABUNDANT LIFE.**

Not only does God promise you heaven someday. God has a promise for you in this life. Because Christ is in your heart, God promises always to be with you in this life your Father, Protector and Provider through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the abundant life promised in John 10:10. The blessings of this abundant life are guaranteed in God’s promise in Matthew 6:33: *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Did you notice those words: ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU. With Christ in your heart, God promises to supply all your needs in this life. God is now your heavenly Father, and you are His child, and He promises to provide for all your needs in this life, sufficiently and abundantly!

But this promise has a condition attached to it: ***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.***

What does this mean? The kingdom of God and His righteousness mean that God has a special plan for your life. God has a special assignment and mission for you to do in this life. God promises that, if you make His plan and His mission the priority in your life, He guarantees that all the other things that you need in life will be provided.

So, the question now is: WHAT NEXT?

The next step is to discover God's plan for your life and to find out His mission for you. It is important for you – and for every Christian – to continue studying God's Word, the Bible, in order to understand clearly God's plan and mission. Christ commanded all those who believe in Him continue in His Word:

³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)

We invite you to join us as we continue studying the Bible to know more about God's purpose and assignment for your life.

LESSON 2. THE WORD

LESSON AIM: *To know who Christ is, and to have a right relationship with Him.
Please read John 1:1-14.*

When you have a letter in the mail, who delivers the letter to you? The postman, right?

Do you know who delivered God's message of love to you? No, it wasn't an angel. You'll be amazed to know that God sent His own Son to deliver His message of love. In John 1:1-14 we are told some things about God's Son and about His first coming into the world.

1. In John 1:1 God's Son is introduced as "the Word". This is one of His many names. His other names include Jesus, Christ, Son of Man, Savior, Lord, Good Shepherd, and many more. As the Word, what three truths about God's Son should we know? Please read John 1:1.

***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
(John 1:1)***

- (a) In the beginning the Word was already there. The Word's existence did not start FROM the beginning; IN the beginning the Word already existed.

- (b) The Word was with God in the beginning. Scholars say that the Greek preposition PROS (“with”) means the Word was “in face to face fellowship with” God. In other words, in the beginning the two Persons, God the Father and His Son the Word, had a face to face relationship in which they interacted with each other.
- (c) The Word was God. In other words, the Word shared in the nature of deity. God the Father possessed the nature of deity; His Son the Word also possessed the same nature of deity.

2. Let’s read John 1:3.

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3)

According to this verse how important was the Word in relation to all created things? All things were created through the Word; and without the Word, nothing could ever have come into existence. Imagine how important the Word really was! Look above you at the skies... without the Word there would be no stars, no galaxies, no sun, no earth or any other planet. Look around you and underneath you... at the trees and flowers and birds and all the animals, the fish and creatures of the sea and living things that live inside the earth – none of these could have come into existence without the Word.

3. Let’s read John 1:4.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

How important was the Word in relation to life? Life was in the Word. This means not only that the Word was alive. More than that, the Word possessed the power of life, and it was this life that He imparted to the living creatures which He created. All living things (including human beings) owe their life to the Word.

4. As a human person you are a created being and you have life. Based on John 1:3-4, how important was the Word in your becoming a created person, and in your having life right now? Think about this. You exist in this world because the Word gave you existence. You have life and you enjoy the blessings of life, because the Word gave you that life.

5. We discovered in John 1:1 that the Word possessed the nature of God. Yet, in spite of the very high position of the Word as God, what did He do? Let’s read John 1:14?

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

- (a) The Word became flesh. This means He took on the nature of a human being; He was born as a human being in this world.

- (b) He was born by Mary through the miracle of virgin birth. This means that Mary became pregnant without having any sexual relations with a husband. Rather, the baby was formed in her womb through the power of God's Holy Spirit alone, without the participation of a human father. Let's read Luke 1:26-35.

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"^[c] ²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)

- (c) When the baby was born, He was given two names. Let's read Matthew 1:20-23.

²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." (Matthew 1:21-23)

His name JESUS (verse 21) announced the purpose of His coming into the world: to save His people from their sins. His name IMMANUEL (verse 23) emphasized that He was not an ordinary human being. He was actually the Son of God who took upon Himself a human nature in order to bring God's message of love to people. Let's read John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TO THE SON OF GOD

6. The Son of God became a human being in order to tell people of God's love. But what was the people's attitude toward Him? The story was sad and tragic. Let's read John 1:10-11.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own,^[c] and His own^[d] did not receive Him. (John 1:10-11)

- (a) His own creation, the people who owed their life and existence to Him, did not recognize Him (verse 10).
- (b) His own chosen people, the nation that He chose from all the nations of the world to be His chosen people, the Jews, did not receive Him (verse 11).

7. Suppose that you were already there when Jesus first came, and you already knew the truths about Jesus (the Word) mentioned in John 1:1-4, that He was God, that He created everything, and that He gave life to you and to all people. What would you tell those people who rejected Christ? Most probably, you would call them “ungrateful”. In Tagalog, you would call them “Walang utang na loob!”

8. Thank God, not everyone rejected Jesus. Let’s read John 1:12.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12)

- (a) According to this verse, what was the attitude of some people to Jesus?
- (b) Also according to this verse, what great blessing was given to the people who believed and received Jesus?

9. Those who believed and received Jesus were given the blessing of being called the children of God! They were adopted into the family of God.

10. In contrast, those who rejected Jesus were told that their father was the devil; in other words, they were children of the devil. Let’s read John 8:44.

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE

11. In this lesson we came to know about two kinds of people – one group ACCEPTED Christ, another group REJECTED Him. To which group do you wish to belong? If you wish to belong to the group that accepted Jesus, pray this prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You for creating me and giving me life. I am sorry that many people reject You. But I want to belong to the group that accepts You. Lord

Jesus, I believe in You and I want to receive You into my heart. Help me to know You more and love You more and serve You more beginning today. Amen.

MEMORIZE:

John 1:1 – In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. – John 1:1

FURTHER STUDY:

Some people ask, if Christ is God, and the Father is God, therefore, how many Gods are there?

One important truth in the Bible concerns the TRINITY: ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS – FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.

The truth concerning the TRINITY is a mystery that the human mind cannot fully understand. This truth is REVEALED by God, not discovered by people. We will discuss the topic of the TRINITY in future lessons. For now, it is enough for us to know that the TRINITY is already hinted at in the very first verses of the Bible.

Genesis 1:1-3:

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness ^[a]was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

1. In verse 1, God the Father is referred to.
2. In verse 2, the Holy Spirit is shown actively working in creation.
3. In verse 3 the Son of God, the Creative Word, is hinted at (compare John 1:1-3 and Hebrews 1:1-3).

John 1:1-3:

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Hebrews 1:1-3:

¹ God, who ^[a]at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the ^[b]worlds; ³ who being the brightness of His glory and

the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had ^lby Himself purged ^lour sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

LESSON 3. THE LAMB OF GOD

LESSON AIM:

To discover the purpose why Christ came into the world, and to allow Him to fulfill that purpose in us. Please read John 1:29-36.

In the previous lesson we learned that in the beginning the Son of God was called the Word. In this lesson we learn about another of His names.

1. By what name did John the Baptist call Jesus? Please read John 1:29?

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

2. John the Baptist called Jesus as the Lamb of God.

According to John 1:29, what was the purpose of Jesus as the Lamb of God?
As Lamb of God He would take away the sins of the world.

3. The lamb is a young sheep.

In the Old Testament God gave the lamb as a symbol of Jesus Christ. Please study Leviticus 4:32, 33, 35.

*If he brings a **lamb** as his sin offering, he shall bring a female **without blemish**. Then **he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering**, and **slay it as a sin offering** at the place where they kill the burnt offering... So the priest shall make **atonement for his sin** that he has committed, and it **shall be forgiven him**.*

- The lamb should be without blemish. Jesus, as Lamb of God, was without sin.
- The offerer must put his hand on the head of the lamb. In the Old Testament, this laying of the hand on the head of the lamb symbolized the transferring of the sinner’s sins upon the lamb. On the cross all the sins of the world were transferred upon Jesus as the Lamb of God.
- Then the lamb was killed as a sacrifice or atonement for the sins of the offerer. On the cross, Jesus died to pay for the sins of the world that were transferred upon Him.
- Because of the sacrifice, what did God do to the sins of the offerer? The sins of the offerer were forgiven by God because they were already paid for by the sacrifice of the lamb. Even so, today God will forgive the sins of any person who believes in Jesus as his/her sacrificial lamb.

4. When Christ came into the world, He became the Lamb of God. Study 1 Peter 3:18 below and see what Christ accomplished for us as the Lamb of God.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.

- Who had no sin, Jesus or we human beings? Jesus had no sin; we humans are the sinners.
- We, sinners, deserved to die for our own sins; but what did Jesus do for us? Jesus died for us; He became our Substitute, who took our punishment.
- What was the purpose of Jesus' death? Jesus died in order to bring us back to God.

5. Why do we need Christ as our substitute Lamb sacrifice?

- We need Christ because we have no perfect righteousness to offer to God. According to Isaiah 64:6, how does God look at our human righteousness?

But we are all like an unclean thing,^[1] and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.

- According to 1 Peter 2:22 and Hebrews 4:15, what kind of righteousness does Christ have?

1 Peter 2:22: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"

Hebrews 4:15: For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- We need Jesus as our Substitute Lamb sacrifice because salvation – forgiveness of sins and eternal life – is God's free gift. According to the following verses, what is the right way to obtain salvation?

Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

6. In the Old Testament, before Jesus came, the sinner himself must offer his own sacrifice personally. Now that Jesus has come and has already died for the sins of the whole world, we don't need anymore to bring an animal sacrifice to the temple. We only need to believe in Christ and receive Him personally as our Lamb sacrifice.

- Have you received Jesus as your Lamb and Savior from sin? When did you receive Him?

- If you have not yet received Him, are you ready to receive Jesus today as your Savior? If you wish to receive Him, please pray this prayer sincerely from your heart:

Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, including my sins. Thank You for dying on the cross as my substitute Lamb sacrifice. I believe in You and I receive You as my Savior and Lord. Help me to trust in You to give me continual victory over sin from now on. Amen.

MEMORIZE:

John 1:29 – Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. – John 1:29

LESSON 4. THE TEMPLE OF GOD

LESSON AIM:

To realize that we are God's temple, and that Christ came to clean up our lives to make us a worthy dwelling place of God. Please read John 2:13-25.

1. The physical temple in Jerusalem was the building dedicated to the worship and service of God. Instead, what did Jesus find inside the temple court in Jerusalem? (John 2:14.) Jesus found sellers and merchandise being sold in the temple court.

2. What did Jesus do to those things which should not be found in the temple? (John 2:15.)

Jesus threw out of the temple court the sellers and their merchandise.

3. For what purpose should the temple be used? But what did people make of the temple in Jerusalem? Please read John 2:16.

The temple was dedicated for the worship and service of God alone. However, the people turned it into a market place to make earthly material profit for themselves.

4. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed long time ago. But there is one temple that continues to exist today. Please study 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

- What is God's purpose for our body?

God intended our body to serve as His temple.

- Who is supposed to live in our body?

The Holy Spirit is supposed to live in our body.

5. Our body is a temple of God. God wants to live in us. But according to Mark 7:21-23 what unclean things do we usually put in the temple of our body?

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.

6. In a similar way that Jesus cleaned up the temple in Jerusalem, even so He wants to clean up our lives today. Have you asked Jesus to come into your heart and to remove all the evil things which make you unworthy to be God's temple?

7. Please read John 2:23-25.

- a. How many people believed in Jesus during that time?
- b. Why did Jesus not entrust Himself to people who claimed to believe in Him?
- c. You believe in Jesus; that is good. But the question is: Does Jesus believe in you?

8. Compare the experience of the Christians in the city of Corinth during the time of the apostle Paul. Let's read carefully 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In ancient Greece, during the time of the apostle Paul, the city of Corinth was notorious for being the most wicked example of "sin city". In fact, when someone was described as "living like a Corinthian", that meant he was a very wicked, immoral person.

- a. From 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (above), list the kinds of sinners that the apostle Paul found in Corinth.
- b. But according to 1 Corinthians 6:11, when the Gospel of Christ came to Corinth many of these sinners believed and were transformed. Please notice the gracious actions of God upon their lives:
 - *They were washed: cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Please read 1 John 1:7.*

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

- *They were sanctified: chosen out of the sinful world and set apart specially to serve God. Please read Ephesians 1:4.*

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

- *They were justified: all their negative standing in sin was forgiven and they were given a positive standing in Christ. Please read Ephesians 1:7.*

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

- *All these divine gracious actions were made possible in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- *As a result, these former Corinthian sinners have become a temple of the living holy God! Please read again 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (see Question 4 above).*

9. You may think that you are the worst sinner in the world like the Corinthians. But will you believe in Jesus today and allow Him to cleanse you and make you His temple? If so, please sincerely pray the prayer below:

Lord Jesus, with shame and sorrow I admit that I have allowed all kinds of wicked and filthy sins to take up residence in my life. But today I believe in You as the only Savior who can wash me and cleanse me with Your precious blood poured out on the cross. I receive You as my Lord and Savior. I have wasted too much time in the past living for self and sin and Satan. Now, Lord Jesus, I pray that you will make me a worthy and holy temple for God, that I may love and serve You for the rest of my life. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

MEMORIZE:

1 Corinthians 6:19 – Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? – 1 Corinthians 6:19

LESSON 5. THE SECOND BIRTH

LESSON AIM:

To understand what the second birth means in order to know whether or not we have experienced it. Please read John 3:1-7, 16.

1. We become members of the human family by being born into it. According to Christ, how do we become members of the family or kingdom of God? (Please read John 3:3)

To become members of the family of God we must be born again.

2. When Nicodemus heard Jesus talk about the second birth, how did he react? (Please read John 3:4).

Nicodemus was puzzled. He wondered how an adult person can be born again. He did not realize that Jesus was talking about spiritual birth, not physical birth.

3. The second birth happens through the agency of two elements. What are these elements? (Please read John 3:5).

Jesus said we must be born again by *water* and by the *Spirit*.

4. “Water” represents the first (physical) birth. During physical birth the mother’s “water bag” breaks before the baby is born.

“Water” also symbolizes the Word of God (Please read Ephesians 5:26; John 15:3). Before we are born again we must first hear or come to know the Word of God as proclaimed in the Good News of the Gospel. Please study 1 Peter 1:23,25:

Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever... Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

5. “Spirit” refers to the Holy Spirit. When we believe in Christ, God gives us new spiritual life and sends His Holy Spirit into our hearts. The indwelling Holy Spirit assures us that we have become children of God. Please study Romans 8:15-16:

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father”. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

6. How do we become children of God? Please read John 1:12 again.

We become children of God when we believe in Jesus and receive Him in our hearts.

7. What do you need to do to receive eternal life? Please read John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

When you believe in Christ, you are born again and you receive the gift of eternal life from God.

8. Who needs to be born again? Please read John 3:7.

Every person needs to be born again.

9. Have you experienced the new birth? How can you be sure that you have experienced the new birth? In the physical life, how do you know that a newborn baby is alive? Even so in the spiritual life, a person who is truly born again will show the following evidences:

(a) Conviction and repentance (Acts 2:37-38)

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(b) The inner witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:15-16)

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

(c) The outer witness of a changed life (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

2 Corinthians 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

10. There are many other evidences that we will study later. But ask yourself: Have I experienced the evidences mentioned above to prove that I am truly born again?

MEMORIZE:

John 3:3 – Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” – John 3:3

LESSON 6. LIFE-GIVING WATER

LESSON AIM:

To discover the life that really satisfies. Please read John 4:1-26.

1. One day Jesus and His disciples passed through the city of Samaria. While the disciples went away to buy food, Jesus sat by the well to rest. By and by, a Samaritan woman came to fetch water. Jesus asked her for some water to drink. This resulted in their conversation about earthly water from the well and the spiritual water that Jesus would give.

2. What was the difference between the water from the well and the water that Jesus would give? (Please read John 4:13-14.)

After drinking water from the well, a person will become thirsty again. But if a person drinks of the water that Jesus gives, that person will never thirst again. Instead, there will be a fountain of living water inside his/her being.

3. The water from the well symbolizes the things of this world which do not satisfy. The life-giving water from Jesus symbolizes the abundant life which Jesus gives. From your experience, what things in this world have you tried to obtain, but when you obtained them they proved unsatisfying?

4. In the Old Testament, King Solomon proved by experience that the things of this world do not really satisfy.

(a) From Ecclesiastes 2:1-10, take note of the things and activities that King Solomon pursued.

Ecclesiastes 2:1 I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also was vanity. 2 I said of laughter—"Madness!"; and of mirth, "What does it accomplish?" 3 I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.

4 I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. 5 I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. 7 I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. 8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.

9 So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor.

(b) But according to Ecclesiastes 2:11, in the end what was the value of all these things?

Ecclesiastes 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.

5. From the New Testament, let's read a parable about a man who spent his whole life in searching for and gathering material wealth in this world. We read this parable by the Lord Jesus in Luke 12:16-21:

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

- (a) Just like the man in the parable of the Lord Jesus, almost everyone today is busy saving for their retirement. But according to Christ, what value is wealth in this world if we don't also prepare for the eternal future of our souls?
- (b) Let's think over the reminder of Christ in Matthew 16:26: ***For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?***
 - One personal question: What are you doing now in order to prepare for the eternal destiny of your soul after this life?

6. According to the New Testament:

- (a) What are the three things that people pursue in the world apart from God? (1 John 2:16)

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

- (b) What will be the end result of these three things? (1 John 2:17a)

And the world is passing away....

- (c) In contrast, who will be assured of eternal life and lasting rewards? (1 John 2:17b)

... but he who does the will of God abides forever.

7. What did the Samaritan woman ask to have from Jesus? (John 4:15) She asked Jesus to give her the life-giving water.

8. Before the Samaritan woman could obtain the life-giving water, what three things should she do first?

- First, she needs to receive God’s forgiveness for her sins. (John 4:16-18)
- Second, she needed to know that true religion or true worship of God should be in spirit and in truth and not in worshipping idols. (John 4:19-24)
- Third, she should believe in Jesus as her Messiah or Savior. (John 4:25-26)

9. Today the requirements for receiving life-giving water or eternal life remain the same.

- First, we must admit that we are sinners, who need God’s forgiveness.
- Second, we must recognize that no religion can save us.
- Third, we must believe in Jesus as the only Savior who can save us, and we must accept Him into our heart.

10. In order to fulfill the requirements above, you may pray this prayer sincerely from your heart:

Holy and loving God, I want to receive the water of eternal life. I admit that I am a sinner; I ask You to forgive me of all my sins. I realize that membership in any church will not bring me forgiveness of sins; and there is no religion that can give me eternal life. Only Christ can give me forgiveness, because He alone died for my sins on the cross. Only Christ can give me eternal life, because only He conquered death through His resurrection from the dead. I open my heart and receive Christ as my Savior and Lord today. Amen.

MEMORIZE:

John 4:24 – God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” – John 4:24

LESSON 7. ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LESSON AIM:

To discover the basis and evidences of assurance of eternal life. Please read John 5:24; 8:31; 13:34-35; 15:8.

1. Many people say that we cannot be sure of eternal life until after we die. But according to Jesus, if you hear His word and believe in God who sent Him, what three things can you be sure of? Please read John 5:24.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

- Regarding the PAST, we have already passed from death to life.
 - Regarding the PRESENT, we now have eternal life.
 - Regarding the FUTURE, we will no longer be judged.
- (a) The basis of the assurance of eternal life is the promise of Christ Himself. Let’s read John 5:24 again (above). Did you hear the word of Christ? Did you believe in God who sent Him? Therefore, based on this verse, do you believe that you have eternal life?
- (b) Assurance of eternal life does not depend on human opinion. It does not depend on the authority of a religious group or religious leaders. Assurance of eternal life depends entirely on God Himself and on His Word. Please carefully study 1 John 5:11-13:

¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, ¹⁴and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

- a. According to 1 John 5:11, who is giving the testimony or guarantee about eternal life?
- b. God Himself is giving the testimony or guarantee. And what is God’s testimony?
- c. God’s testimony is that He has given us eternal life. Where is eternal life found?
- d. Eternal life is found in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Eternal life is inside Jesus Christ. Therefore, if you have Jesus in you, what precious treasure do you also have, according to 1 John 5:12?
- e. If you have Jesus in you, you also have eternal life because eternal life is in Jesus. You cannot have eternal life apart from Jesus.
- f. On the other hand, according to 1 John 5:12, if you don’t have Jesus in you, what precious treasure do NOT have?

2. If you don't have Jesus in you, then you do not have eternal life. Why not? We repeat: Eternal life is in Jesus; if you don't have Jesus, you do not have what's inside Jesus, eternal life. Therefore, how important is it to respond to the call of Jesus in Revelation 3:20?

Revelation 3:20: Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

- (a) Have you opened the door to receive Jesus in your heart? Do you remember exactly when you asked Jesus to come in and be the Savior and Lord of your life?
- (b) Because you have received Jesus in your heart, do you have the assurance that you have eternal life, based on 1 John 5:11, 12?

3. Please carefully study 1 John 5:13 again.

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

- (a) In 1 John 5:13 the apostle John is giving the reason why he wrote his letter (1 John) to Christians. He wrote in order to give assurance to Christians that they have eternal life because they have believed in Jesus. The apostle John represents all the human writers that God's Holy Spirit inspired to write the Bible. The Bible is God's written record or testimony on which we can base our assurance that God has given us eternal life.
- (b) How can we be sure that we have eternal life? Our assurance is not based on human opinion or on the authority of any religious group or religious leaders. Our assurance is based solely and exclusively on God's clear promises in His Word, the Bible.

EVIDENCES OF ETERNAL LIFE

4. However, Christ teaches that His disciples (those who have eternal life) will show three evidences in their life. Look at the following verses, and from each verse describe one evidence:

- John 8:31 _____

The first evidence of having eternal life is OBEDIENCE to the words of Christ (John 8:31). In order to obey the words of Christ, we must regularly study the Bible personally and in a group with other Christians.

Have you begun doing your personal study of the Bible?

Have you begun attending a group study of the Bible?

- John 13:34-35 _____

The second evidence of having eternal life is LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS (John 13:34-35). This means that you are developing closer relationship with other Christians, specially those who have helped you to accept Christ.

Have you begun attending group fellowship meetings with other Christians?

- John 15:8 _____

The third evidence of having eternal life is BEARING FRUIT. Fruit in the Christian life means two things:

First, the fruit or qualities of the Holy Spirit which show that you are growing in your character: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Since you received Christ, in what ways have you experienced Christ changing your character?

Second, the fruit or result of your witness for Christ. Are your friends and relatives becoming more interested to know about Christ as a result of your witness?

5. Fruit is not the result of your human effort; rather it is the result of close relationship with Christ. Christ says in John 15:5: ***“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”***

Keep developing a closer relationship with Christ through daily Bible reading and prayer.

After completing this present study, NEWLIFE BOOK 1, ask your spiritual leader how you can join a cell group in order to continue growing in your relationship with Christ by studying NEWLIFE BOOK 2: NEEDS OF A SPIRITUAL BABY.

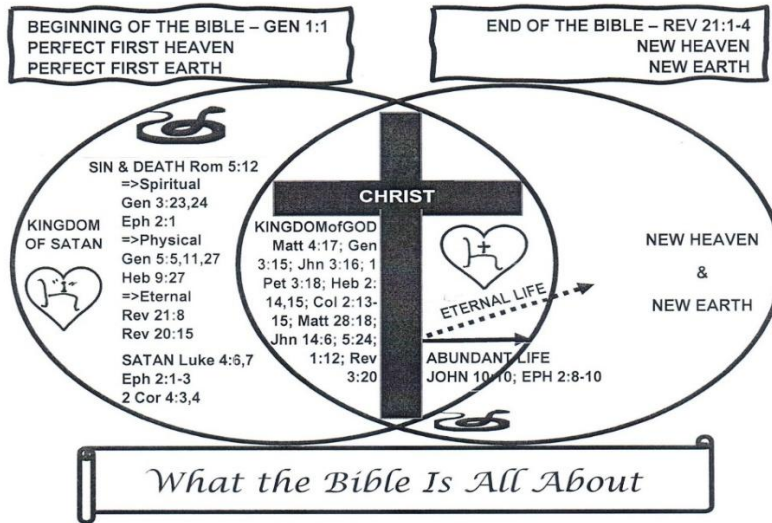
MEMORIZE:

John 8:31 – Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. – John 8:31

LESSON 8. WHAT THE BIBLE IS ALL ABOUT

LESSON AIM:

To discover God’s plan of salvation as revealed in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.



NOTE TO TEACER:

This is a long lesson, and you may wish to discuss this in 2 or 3 meetings, depending on the wishes of your class.

PART ONE: PERFECT BEGINNING

The Bible is the story of the progressive unfolding of God’s plan of salvation. When we open the Bible to the very first chapter of the very first book, we read of a perfect creation, a perfect heaven and earth.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . . Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Genesis 1:1, 31).

But when we turn to Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we read this:

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Revelation 21:1).

The stark contrast between these two statements at the beginning and the end of the Bible causes us to wonder and ask: “What happened?”

What made it necessary for God to create a new heaven and a new earth? What happened to the original perfect heaven and earth? (Please see diagram above.)

The story of the Bible is the story of the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation. It is the story of how God set about to restore what was damaged and lost. It is the story of how this salvation required a tremendous cost, and how, because of His great love, God willingly paid the cost.

The account of creation tells us that in the beginning, God brought into existence everything by His Word. He spoke, “Let there be!” and there they were – the vast expanse of space containing

countless planets, stars and galaxies; the earth and all the creatures that would inhabit its land masses and rivers and oceans and surrounding atmosphere.

But in bringing forth the crowning glory of His creation, God did not only speak; He bent down to mold humanity with His own hands.

Genesis 1:26-28:

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 21, 22:

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being . . . 8 The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil . . . 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." . . . 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

RULERS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Adam and Eve were created to rule God's creation, therefore God created them in His image and imparted to them qualities that were over and above the rest of creation.

- **SPIRITUAL COMPONENT.** Adam and Eve had physical bodies with material characteristics like the rest of creation. God also imparted to them a spiritual component, which the Bible would later define as soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- **MORAL SENSE.** Furthermore, Adam and Eve were given a moral faculty, free will, along with the faculties of mind and emotion. Heavenly bodies automatically followed laws that kept them in their fixed orbits; animals and plants were dictated upon by natural instincts. Humans were different in that they could make choices. Free will was necessary for them not be robots but free agents, who could relate to God in a fellowship of love and partnership. In a sense, we might say that God took a tremendous risk; free will enabled humans to say yes or no to God Himself. In fact, as we read in Genesis

2:16,17, God gave them from the very beginning the opportunity to exercise their freedom to choose.

- **PERFECT ENVIRONMENT.** God placed Adam and Eve in a perfect environment in the Garden of Eden where all their needs were supplied. The different trees in the garden represented their various needs and God's provision to meet those needs – physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual and eternal. Let's read Genesis 2:8-9.
 1. For *physical needs* God provided trees for food.
 2. For *intellectual needs* God provided beautiful trees, representing everything in nature that people can admire, think about and study and which gave satisfaction to their feelings and emotions.
 3. For *moral needs* God provided the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so people can exercise their power of choice.
 4. For their *spiritual need* and the *need for eternal significance* God gave the tree of life that promised eternal life. Isn't this absolutely amazing? The same Creator, who designed us to have different kinds of needs, also created simultaneously all the things that would satisfy those needs correspondingly!
 5. Humans also had the *need for love, companionship and relationship*. How did God provide for this need? Let's read Genesis 2:18, 21-25. God provided for the need for love, companionship and relationship through marriage and the family and society.
- **MANDATE TO RULE.** Thus equipped with mind, emotion and will and soul and spirit, God gave humans the mandate to rule over creation.

This is the picture given by the Bible of the beginning. We see Adam and Eve, two perfect humans, placed in a perfect environment and given a perfect assignment. From the beginning humans had a perfect relationship with God as His viceregents of His perfect creation.

PART TWO: TROUBLE IN PARADISE

It did not take long before trouble entered Paradise when the Tempter, in the form of a serpent, came into the Garden. The Bible identifies this Tempter in Revelation 12:9:

“... the great dragon ... that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world....”

How did trouble begin in Paradise? Let's read Genesis 3:1-8:

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the ^lcool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Many people ask, “Why did God plant the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil only to forbid Adam and Eve from eating of its fruit? Why did God allow Satan to tempt Eve?”

We must admit that our human minds will never fathom God’s reason for these things. Suffice it to remind ourselves that God did not create robots; He gave Adam and Eve the gift of free will, the freedom and ability to choose. Free will is not really free without the opportunity to choose one way or the other.

Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, and by their disobedience sin entered the human race and human history.

What exactly was wrong with eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? We discover what’s wrong when we examine the nature of Satan’s temptation; he said, “When you eat of this forbidden fruit, you will become like God, knowing good and evil.”

Well, first of all, eating of the forbidden fruit was wrong because they were directly disobeying a clear prohibition by God. But more serious than just disobeying a clear command, Adam and Eve chose to take for themselves the authority to decide what was good and evil for themselves, instead of looking to God to guide them with His Word. Only God had the right to define good and evil. Instead, Adam and Eve grabbed that right for themselves; in that sense, they have become like God. More precisely, they became a god to themselves, with the power to define what is good or evil.

To use an illustration:

In the heart of Adam and Eve there is a throne; only God deserves to sit on that throne as Creator, Owner, and King of their lives. When they ate of the forbidden fruit, they kicked God out of the throne and installed their SELF as god and king on the throne of their heart. This is the root meaning of sin, spelled “S – I – N” (with the big proud letter “I” in the middle), declaring:

“I am the King/Queen of my life, and I decide what to do, when and where and why and how to do it, and I don’t care what God or others will say; and I don’t care whether or not other people are hurt as long as I’m happy.”

Sin is rebellion against God and declaring independence from God. And this rebellious, independent, self-centered attitude was passed on by Adam and Eve to all their descendants, including you and me.

What were the results of sin? The immediate results included the following:

- **SHAME & PRETENCE BEFORE OTHERS.** Adam and Eve saw their nakedness and began to make coverings for themselves to hide their shame from one another. Bible scholars believe that before they committed sin, a cloud of glory from God covered Adam and Eve like a garment in such a way that they could be totally transparent and totally accepting of each other because they had nothing to hide. The moment they ate of the forbidden fruit, that glorious covering vanished, along with their sense of mutual transparency and acceptance, leaving them with the feeling of shame and the need for covering. From that point on, all honesty disappeared and pretense took its place.
- **GUILT & ALIENATION TOWARD GOD.** After Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they started running away and hiding from God, and all their descendants have been fugitives from God ever since.
- **SUFFERING, DECAY, & DEATH.** Through their sin, Adam and Eve brought into the world suffering, decay, and death. Many say, “But Adam and Eve stayed alive after they ate of the forbidden fruit.” Let me ask you: “When you cut off a branch from a tree, do the leaves on that branch still look alive, fresh and green?” Yes; but you know that the branch is already dead because it’s no longer connected to the source of life. The same

thing happened to Adam and Eve. Physically, they remained very much alive after they committed sin. But the punishment of death had been immediately imposed on them. The Bible tells us that death is experienced in several stages:

STAGE 1: SPIRITUAL DEATH. Adam and Eve became spiritually separated from God the moment they sinned. And all their descendants are born spiritually separated from God. Ephesians 2:1 describes this condition of spiritual death: *“And you ... were dead in trespasses and sins”*.

STAGE 2: PHYSICAL DEATH. Physical death happens when the soul/spirit leaves the body; the soul/spirit returns to God to face judgment, and the body returns to the dust from which it was originally taken. Adam and Eve eventually died physically. And every human being born into this world will die physically without exception. Someone commented, “The chance of death for every person is still 100%.” Sadly, according to the Bible, physical death is not the end.

STAGE 3: ETERNAL DEATH. Revelation 21:8 tells us, “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” The second or eternal death is that condition wherein the soul/spirit of a person (who died without receiving forgiveness of his/her sins) will be cast into the place of eternal suffering, eternally separated from God. God’s plan of salvation was implemented to provide a way for people to receive forgiveness of sins in order to be spiritually reconnected with God and eventually receive bodily resurrection and be saved from eternal death.

- **SATAN BECAME THE RULER OF THIS WORLD.** Adam and Eve were originally installed as rulers of all creation under God. The moment they sinned they lost their position of authority and Satan usurped that position, so much so that he could even boast about this to Jesus, the Son of God:

⁵ Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours” (Luke 4:5-7).

Jesus did not contradict the claim of Satan. In fact, three times He referred to the devil as the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

The whole world is under the control of Satan and he manipulates people through sin, using three the main avenues of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These were the same three avenues that he used with Adam and Eve and Jesus:

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17).

Even worse, Satan maintains his hold on people by blinding their minds so they will not see their only way of escape through Jesus Christ:

³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Satan has never changed his strategy or tactics. He continues to offer the kingdoms of this world to people – satisfaction of their physical and emotional passions, satisfaction of their greed for possessions, and satisfaction of their hunger and thirst for power and position. What people do not realize is that obtaining the wealth, fame and power in this world will cost them their most precious possession, their soul. In the end, they will realize too late that they have sold their soul to the devil. But the devil did not lie to them; just like he said to Jesus, the devil continues to tell people very frankly:

“All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”

No wonder, when you talk to people about God or Christ or the Bible, they will say, “Sorry, I have no time for that.” Why? Because they are worshiping the devil. But someone would protest, “No, I don’t worship the devil.” The truth is, the devil is happy enough that you have no time to worship God, no time to follow Christ, no time to listen to His Word the Bible, because, in effect, when you don’t worship God you are actually worshiping Satan. And Satan will keep you busy in acquiring all the wealth and fame and power in the world in order to prevent you from having time for God.

Please study carefully the diagram above; notice that Satan, the Serpent, is ruling on top of the world of sinners.

PART THREE: GOD PROMISED THE COMING MESSIAH

The sin of Adam and Eve plunged the world into the darkness of sin. But in the midst of that tragic darkness, God immediately caused the light of His promise to shine. This promise came in the form of God's curse upon Satan in Genesis 3:15:

***“And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”***

God's promised the coming of “the Seed (or Son) of the woman, who would eventually defeat Satan. Later on, the prophets of Israel would call Him the Messiah, the Lord's Chosen or Anointed One, who would bring salvation to Israel and to the world. The Messiah would engage Satan in a do-or-die conflict. In their mortal combat, Satan will succeed in crushing the heel of the Son, but the Son will triumph by crushing the head of Satan. The Messiah would solve the problem of sin and all its results; He would deliver the world from the dominion of Satan.

Adam, the first representative head of humanity, failed and lost his position of authority. The Messiah, the second representative head, would achieve complete victory over Satan and would regain all that Adam lost, including the position as ruler of all God's creation.

Who was this Son of the Woman? This was Jesus, the Son of God, who humbled Himself and came down from heaven in order to be born as a human being through the miracle of virgin birth.

- God's angel announced the manner of His birth to the virgin Mary. Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they officially got married and came to live together, Mary conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's read Matthew 1:18-23:

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

- The moment Satan saw that the promised Son of the Woman was born in the city of Bethlehem, he immediately plotted to kill Him. Satan incited Herod, the king of the Jews at that time, to kill all the children ages two downwards to make sure the baby Jesus would not escape. However, before Herod's soldiers were able to start the massacre God

had already warned Joseph to take the child Jesus and His mother and flee to Egypt, where they hid for a time until the death of Herod. After some time, Joseph received instruction from God to return to the land of Israel and settle in a little town called Nazareth. There Jesus grew as a normal obedient son of Mary and Joseph for thirty years. Luke 2:51-52 summarizes those years in two verses:

⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- After thirty quiet years in Nazareth, God's hour struck! The moment had come to begin the assault on the strongholds of Satan. God called Jesus to begin His public ministry, beginning with His baptism through John the Baptist. Let's read Mark 1:9-13:

⁹ It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹ Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

¹² Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

- At His baptism, God put His seal of approval on the perfect life of Jesus during the thirty silent years by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit and by publicly declaring, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Immediately after His baptism the Holy Spirit drove Jesus to the wilderness to meet Satan in open combat for forty days and nights, without taking any food or water. During the thirty silent years, Jesus certainly was attacked by the usual temptations of everyday existence; Jesus overcame all those temptations. However, during the forty days and nights in the wilderness, the temptations piled upon Him with greater intensity. Satan threw at Jesus all the tactics and stratagems that he had used successfully against people since the time of Adam and Eve. But by using the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, Jesus routed all the Tempter's attacks (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13 cp. Ephesians 6:17).

Hebrews 4:15-16 summarizes the overwhelming victory of Jesus over all temptations and the reason why He had to undergo this terrible ordeal:

"¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Jesus overcame all temptations for our sake. In the Garden of Eden, the first human representative head, Adam, failed miserably under temptation and passed on to all his descendants his guilt and all the destructive results of his failure. In contrast, here in the wilderness, the second human representative head, Jesus, triumphed convincingly and He

now passes on to us, who believe in Him, all the precious fruits of His victory (Romans 5:12-21).

PART FOUR: THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND!

Emerging victorious from his battle with Satan, Jesus began His campaign to save humanity and to reclaim the throne that Adam had lost to the enemy. The inaugural proclamation of Jesus is very significant:

Mark 1:14-15: ¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

With this proclamation, the kingdom of God, under the generalship of Jesus, began the invasion against the kingdom of Satan.

Please study again our diagram. Note the two circles. The first circle represents the world under the dominion of Satan, the Serpent. As earlier explained, because of Adam’s sin Satan was able to usurp (forcibly and deceitfully take over) the dominion over the earth, which originally belonged to humans. The second circle represents the kingdom of God. Note the overlap between the two circles. This overlap means that with the coming of Jesus, the kingdom of God has invaded the kingdom of Satan; this is the meaning of “The kingdom of God is at hand”. Now, the peoples of the world have to make a choice between the two kings and the two kingdoms; this is the meaning of “Repent”:

- Will people continue to remain under the kingdom of Satan?
- Or will people renounce their former allegiance to Satan and transfer their allegiance to Jesus? To repent means to reject Satan and to accept and follow Jesus as the new King of one’s life.

To “believe in the gospel” means to put one’s confidence in the good news that Jesus has provided the way for former rebels to receive full amnesty for their treason against God and to be welcomed back again as full citizens of the kingdom of God.

You see, because of sin all humanity had become slaves of Satan. But humanity’s need was not only how to be delivered from Satan’s bondage. Humanity’s greater need was how their rebellion against God was to be forgiven. How was God going to provide this forgiveness? From the human perspective, God seemed to be “caught between the horns of a dilemma” (to use an old expression). God was caught between the demands of His love and the demands of His justice.

On the one hand, God’s love moved Him to rescue humanity. On the other hand, God’s justice demanded that every human being must be punished to the full extent of God’s law. In the

words of the apostle Paul, “How could God be just and at the same time be the justifier of the ungodly”? (Romans 3:26).

How God reconciled His love and His justice was a mystery deeply embedded in His plan of salvation.

As Jesus pressed His assault against the enemy kingdom, Satan and all his hosts of demons and evil spirits tried to oppose Him at every turn. But every time there was an encounter between Jesus and evil spirits, they immediately realized they were totally powerless to resist. The Messiah always cast out the evil forces and delivered the victims from their clutches. This is how Acts 10:36-38 describes the earthly ministry of Jesus:

³⁶ The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ— He is Lord of all— ³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Satan knew his only hope was to kill Jesus before Jesus could crush his head. Satan used jealousy to inflame the hatred of the Jewish religious and political leaders against Jesus. And using greed, masquerading as concern for the poor, he gained entry into the heart of Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, causing him to sell his master for thirty pieces of silver. With the help of Judas, the murderous Jewish leaders implemented their plot to arrest Jesus on trumped-up charges and they successfully manipulated the justice system to condemn Jesus to die by crucifixion.

But unbeknownst even to angels and Satan and evil spirits and humans, God was actually working out His secret plan. In the coming of Jesus the love of God reached its fullest expression in His determined pursuit to restore humanity to Himself. The joining of deity and humanity in the incarnation of Jesus was the closest that God could come to humanity. In Jesus God was giving Himself totally to humanity while at the same time God was taking humanity back to Himself.

Since the Garden of Eden, God has been relentlessly pursuing humanity, while humanity was relentlessly fleeing deity. In the joining of deity and humanity in the incarnation of Jesus and in His decision to live as a human among humans, God had in a real sense caught up with fugitive humanity and boxed him into a corner. God and humanity were finally face to face, with God offering Himself completely in love to the fugitive.

And what does the fugitive do? Instead of surrendering himself to the arms of divine love, he allies himself with God’s enemy and kills the only Person who truly loves him! When utmost love encounters utmost hate, hate plunges the dagger deep into the heart of love. The creature kills his Creator, humanity murders his God!

There in that act of murdering the Son of God, sin achieves its fullest expression. And what does God do? Instead of pulverizing the murderer, God offers His own Son on the altar of His divine

justice as the atoning sacrifice for all the sins of humanity. Having satisfied the demands of His justice, He turns to the murderer and offers him complete forgiveness and total acceptance.

Watching from the sidelines, Satan is totally blindsided. He has been jealous of humanity all along, while at the same time feeling thoroughly frustrated by his inability to hit back at God Himself. He had thought that by getting God to become so angry as to destroy sinning humanity, he would gain a measure of satisfaction in seeing God's plan for humanity derailed, if not defeated.

But, no! Just when Satan expected the full force of God's wrath to fall on humanity, God deflects His wrath instead toward His own Son and pours upon His Son the full fury of divine judgment. With the cup of justice completely emptied, God now stretches out His hands of forgiveness to offending humanity!

Satan thought he had the last laugh when he succeeded in getting Jesus nailed to the cross. Now his laughter reverberated like echoes bouncing between heaven and earth taunting and mocking him as the eternal loser.

At the resurrection of Jesus, God stripped Satan of all his powers while at the same time investing Jesus with all the authority and power in heaven and on earth, far above all rule and authority and might and dominion and above every name that can be named in this age and in that which is to come, declaring Him Lord and Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords.

And in the name of Jesus, God now proclaims complete amnesty and release and restoration to all of Satan's former slaves. The condition is easy and simple – that they repent (renounce their former allegiance to Satan and sin) and believe in (pledge their allegiance to) Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives.

It was on the morning of the resurrection that Satan realized that in killing the Son of the Woman physically, he succeeded only in bruising his heels. To the contrary, through that same death followed by His resurrection the Son crushed Satan's head, defeating him totally once and forever. Thus the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 was finally fulfilled. The author of Hebrews describes this powerfully:

Hebrews 2:14-15: ¹⁴ *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

Now, please note in the diagram the picture of the two hearts. The sinner (the heart on the left hand side) is under bondage to Satan only because SIN (represented by the big, proud letter "I") is reigning as king/queen in his/her heart.

The moment the sinner repents, the moment he/she accepts Jesus as Savior and Lord of his/her life, that very moment he/she will be delivered from Satan's bondage and snatched from the

kingdom of Satan and transferred into the kingdom of God (the heart on the right hand side, under the cross).

The transfer from Satan's bondage to the freedom in Jesus is offered in the proclamation: "Repent and believe in the good news!"

CORE GOSPEL TRUTHS

The core truths of the good news (gospel) are presented in the following verses:

John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

1 Peter 3:18: *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring ^{us} to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*

I Corinthians 15:3-4: *³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Colossians 2:13-15: *¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

This passage in Colossians pointedly clarifies the two works of Jesus as Savior: (1) first, by His death He made possible the wiping away of all sins (forgiveness); (2) second, He defeated Satan and all his army of principalities and powers.

Matthew 28:18: *¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

John 14:6: *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

John 5:24: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."*

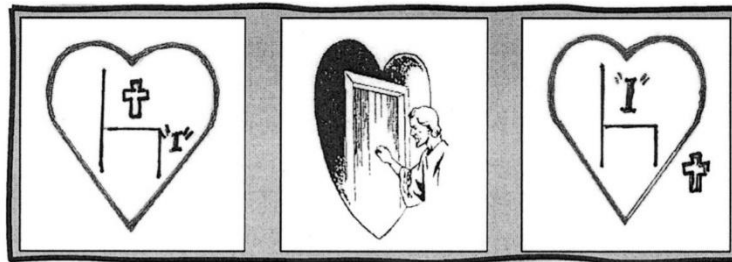
John 1:12-13: *¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the ^{le}right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

John 10:10-11: **10** *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.* **11** *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*

Ephesians 2:8-10: **8** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,* **9** *not of works, lest anyone should boast.* **10** *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Revelation 3:20: *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

PART FIVE: TIME TO CHOOSE



Christ is knocking.

Which heart do you choose your life to be?

- The heart with CHRIST on the throne, and your “I” (SELF) surrendered to Him?
- The heart with your “I” (SELF) on the throne, and with CHRIST outside?

If you choose CHRIST to be on the throne of your life, pray this sincerely from your heart:

“Lord God in heaven, thank You that You love me and You want to give me eternal life and abundant life. I admit that I am a sinner. Forgive me of all my sins. Lord Jesus, I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. I believe that You rose again to be the Only Way to God the Father. I now open the door of my heart and I receive You as my Savior and Lord. I now surrender to You the throne of my life. Take full control of my life and help me to follow You from now on. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Did you pray sincerely to receive Christ as your Savior and Lord?

If you did, what does Christ promise? Let’s read Revelation 3:20 again:

Revelation 3:20: ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.***

- If you hear Christ's voice and open your heart, what two things will happen?
- Two things:
 - (1) First, Christ will come in your heart.
 - (2) Second, Christ and you will dine (eat) together.

You may ask, what does eating with Christ mean?

In the Bible, to eat together means to have a permanent relationship with one another. In other words, if you sincerely receive Christ as Savior and Lord in your heart, He guarantees that He will come in to sin on the throne of your life. He will establish a permanent relationship with you that will last throughout this life; and after this life, He will take you to be with Him forever in heaven, in the eternal kingdom of God.

- This is a good time to pray a prayer to thank Christ. Pray sincerely:

Lord Jesus Christ, You see my heart; I have sincerely received You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You have come into my heart, and You have given me a personal relationship with You, which begins in this life and which will continue in the eternal kingdom of God. In Your name, I pray. Amen.

WHAT NEXT?

Please look again at our diagram (above). Note the two arrows on the right hand side of the cross.

- The arrow with the dashed line represents eternal life, which means that the person who has received Jesus as Savior and Lord is assured of living someday with God forever in the new heaven and new earth in the eternal kingdom of God.
- The arrow with the solid line represents the ABUNDANT LIFE that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, promises in this present life to you who have received Him as your Savior and Lord. To be assured of ETERNAL LIFE and heaven in the future is great.

Your ABUNDANT LIFE with Christ begins now. With Christ on the throne of your life, and with you totally surrendered to His kingdom and to His will, this is His promise in Matthew 6:33:

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

This is the meaning of "eating with Jesus". Throughout your earthly journey, Jesus will share His bread with you. And what is His bread? His bread consists of all the blessings and provisions He will supply for all that you need. This does not mean that He will

make you healthy, wealthy and prosperous in this world. This does not mean you will not suffer the trials and temptations that come to all who still live in this sin-cursed world.

Rather, Jesus promises that He will always be with you in every situation in life, and He will supply all that you need (not what you want), He will not deny anything that you need in order for you to fulfill His purpose for your life.

HEAVEN CAN WAIT

Yes, the Lord Jesus saved you for a great purpose.

This is why He prayed that God should not take Christians to heaven right away. Did you know that? Lord Jesus does not want you go to heaven right away. In fact, He prayed to the Father to keep and protect Christians here on earth, because He has a great plan for them on this planet. The prayer of Jesus included all future believers, and that includes you!

On the night before His arrest, and looking beyond the cross to His eventual resurrection and return to heaven, He prayed this prayer for His disciples (which includes you):

“¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:15-18).

The Lord Jesus did not want His disciples to go to heaven immediately. He wanted them to remain on earth because He had a great mission for them to do in the world. That mission is to go and tell the whole world that Satan and sin have been defeated, and that the WAY OR BRIDGE BACK TO GOD has been established! That WAY is no other than Jesus Christ Himself!

You and I and all who believe in the Lord Jesus today are given the same mission. Fulfilling that mission is part of the ABUNDANT LIFE that He gives us. This mission is usually called the GREAT COMMISSION as given in Matthew 28:18-20:

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Christ has saved us in order to become soldiers in His GREAT COMMISSION ARMY. The Great Commission involves EVANGELISM and DISCIPLESHIP.

1. **EVANGELISM** is helping people to know Christ and to have a personal relationship with Him.
2. **DISCIPLESHIP** is teaching and training people to become CHRIST-LIKE, to obey all that Christ commanded (in the Bible, God's Word), and to apply His commands in their daily life.

WHAT ABOUT SATAN?

Finally, please note in our diagram (above) that the Serpent, Satan, has been cast down at the foot of the cross.

This means that Satan is a defeated enemy, already a permanently defeated foe. However, God has a special mission from God as well. God allows Satan and his evil hosts to continue operating at the present time. This is the reason: God is using Satan and his demons to test people. Someone said, "Satan is prowling around like a lion in this world, but God has already pulled out all his teeth." The Lord Jesus has stripped Satan of all his powers, except for one. Satan's only remaining weapon is lies and deceptions.

This is why God has given us the most powerful, undefeatable weapon against Satan: GOD'S TRUTH. For those who know the truth in Jesus, Satan's lies will no longer have any effect. God's TRUTH will defeat all of Satan's lies and deceptions.

This is why it is absolutely important for all disciples of the Lord Jesus to KNOW THE TRUTH revealed in the Bible, God's Word. Not only to know but to MASTER God's Word. As you master God's Word, you will discover the complete victory of Christ. And you will know and enjoy all that God has prepared for you in this life, and in the world to come!

John 8:31-32: ³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

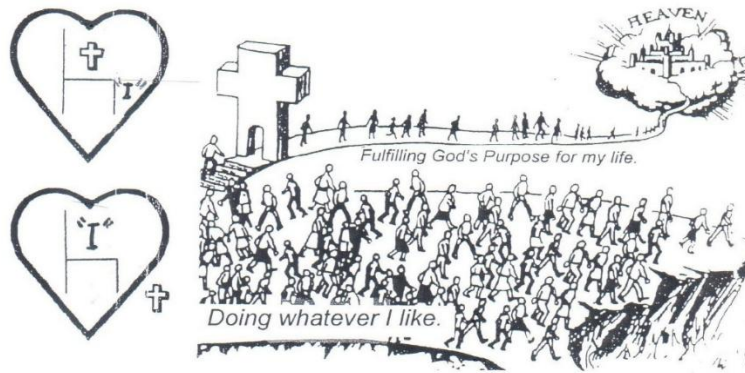
THAT'S WHAT THE BIBLE IS ALL ABOUT

The Bible BEGINS with the creation of the original perfect heaven and earth. Sin entered and destroyed that perfect creation. The Bible ENDS with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

And in between the beginning and the end, the Bible tells the story of how God is forming a perfect family for Himself through His plan of salvation in His own Son Jesus Christ. This family will spend eternity with God forever in the new heaven and new earth.

A PERSONAL QUESTION

This reminds of the personal question we asked earlier.



Which heart do you choose your life to be?

- THE SELF-CONTROLLED HEART, with your big, proud “I” sitting as the BOSS of your life? If you are this kind of heart, the Bible warns you in Revelation 21:8:

Revelation 21:8: ***But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.***

- THE CHRIST-CONTROLLED HEART, with Jesus reigning as the KING of your life? If you are this kind of heart, praise God! The new heaven and new earth await you where you will enjoy love, joy and peace forever and ever with God!

Revelation 21:1-7: ***Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”***

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

INVITATION

The last lesson in this book will be about water baptism. After your baptism, we have a special invitation for you.

We invite you to join us for regular Bible study, in order to know more of God’s Word, to be assured of your relationship with Christ, and to discover the full blessing of abundant life in Christ.


Place: _____



Day & Time: _____

Contact Person & Phone #: _____

LESSON 9. WATER BAPTISM

LESSON AIM: *To know the meaning and importance of water baptism.*



 <p>THE OLD LIFE SELF ON THE THRONE</p>	<p>Romans 6:3, 4: ³Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.</p>	 <p>THE NEW LIFE CHRIST ON THE THRONE</p>
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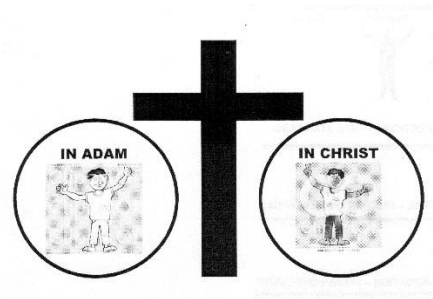
BAPTISM: UNION WITH CHRIST
 In His death and burial (to sin and the old life), and in His resurrection (to holiness and the new life wholly devoted to God).

1. What is the meaning of water baptism?

(a) MEANING (Romans 6:1-4): Water baptism symbolizes a Christians union with Christ and of the Christian’s identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrections.

The action of going into the water pictures the death and cutting off of the Christian’s connection with his old life of sin; the going down into the water also pictures the cutting off of the Christian’s connection to Adam, First Representative of Humanity.

The action of getting out of the water pictures the Christian's rising to new life in union with Christ to a new life that from now on will only be dedicated to doing God's will and glorifying Him. The getting out of the water also pictures the Christian's union with Christ, the Second Representative of Humanity.



- (b) COMMAND (Matthew 28:18-20): The Lord Jesus Christ commanded water baptism as the public declaration of a believer's faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord (Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10).
- (c) UNION with God (Matthew 28:19): To be baptized IN (Greek: EIS, literally INTO) the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, means to be joined in a permanent relationship with the Triune God, which fulfills God's plan: "I will be your God, and you will be My people" (1 John 1:3; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

2. Infant baptism vs. Believer's baptism,

Infant Baptism was not practiced in the New Testament. Rather, following the example of the baby Jesus, infants are dedicated to God (Luke 2:22, 23).

Baptism requires personal conscious faith in Christ; infants are not yet capable to make such a decision; therefore, infants are not qualified to be baptized. Infants are dedicated to God.

- 3. Baptism is not necessary for salvation. Faith in Christ is the sole requirement for salvation (Acts 16:31); baptism is done as a public testimony of that faith (Acts 2:37, 38). The repentant thief on the cross was assured by the Lord Jesus of salvation without baptism (Luke 23:42, 43). Simon the Magician was baptized but he later proved to be unsaved (Acts 8:13, 20-23).
- 4. But baptism is not optional. The Lord Jesus commanded it, therefore it must be obeyed to make clear the meaning of water baptism as a public testimony of faith in Christ.

5. Baptism is the beginning of a life-long spiritual journey toward Christ-like spiritual maturity. Baptism serves as a life-long memorial and reminder of the believer's permanent separation from the old life, a constant remind of his permanent union with Christ in order to live the new life wholly dedicated to God.
6. Church Membership. Baptism also inaugurates a believer's incorporation into the Body of Christ manifested visibly in the local church. As a member, the believer will grow spiritually as he participates in the basic functions and ministries of the local church (Acts 2:41, 43). He will also be involved in a program of discipleship training to help him grow intentionally and progressively toward Christ-like spiritual maturity (2 Peter 3:18; Colossians 2:6, 7).
7. Practical Matters

On the day of baptism you must bring an extra set of clothes to change into. Bring a towel and a comb. Also bring a plastic bag in which you will put your wet clothes.

NOTE:

In *NewLife Book 4*, the topic of Baptism & Church Membership will be discussed more fully.

APPENDIX

T – R – U – M – P – S
Bible Study For Everyone!

LEADER'S GUIDE

You do not need a special training to lead this Bible study. The series is designed following the **T – R – U – M – P – S** strategy:

- Together
- Read
- Understand
- Memorize
- Pray
- Share.

Follow this SCHEDULE for your Bible study:

- (1) BEGIN with fellowship time.

WELCOME everybody to the Bible study. If there is a newcomer, ask everyone to introduce themselves again, their name, where they live, and who invited them to this study. After the welcome time, SING three or four lively praise songs. Then have an OPENING PRAYER by the leader or by someone he/she requests.

- (2) LEAD the study,
following the **T – R – U – M – P – S** outline:
- **Together** – Everybody should have a copy of this Bible study book, because the plan is to do the activities TOGETHER as a group.
 - **Read** – Going in a clockwise direction (from right to left) assign each member to read sections or verses of the lesson.
 - **Understand** – After each section or verse is read, ask if someone has a question or comment. Answer the question briefly or appreciate the comment, then move on to read the next section or verse.
 - **Memorize** – At the end of the lesson, spend about 5 minutes memorizing the new verse. (Below we will describe one method of memorizing a verse.)
 - **Pray** – After memorizing the verse, divide the group into prayer partners of two or three. Let the prayer partners give brief testimonies of answered prayers and share new prayer requests, and then spend about 10 minutes praying.
 - **Share** – After the prayer session, ask everybody to give the name of one PROSPECT (relative, friend, neighbor, co-worker) that they will invite to Bible study next week. Everybody should write down the names of the prospects for the week and pray daily that God will enable them to come to the Bible study.