

Lesson One

Some people believe God is distant and does not communicate with us. Not long ago, many were even trying to convince us that God was dead. Far from being dead or even disinterested, God longs to communicate with us. In this lesson we will look at a brief summary of the important message God has for us. We will also look at how he presents this message to us.

The message God wants all people to hear and to take to heart centers on his Son, Jesus Christ. Let's begin by looking at why each of us needs to know about Jesus Christ.

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Matthew 5:48</i> "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."</p> <p><i>Psalms 5:4</i> "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell."</p>	<p>God demands that we never sin if we are to get to heaven on our own. Just one sin is all it takes to keep us out of heaven forever.</p>
<p><i>Romans 3:23</i> "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."</p> <p><i>James 2:10</i> "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."</p>	<p>We have all sinned and are not perfect as God demands. No matter how hard we try, we cannot meet God's standards for living with him in heaven.</p>
<p><i>Romans 6:23</i> "For the wages of sin is death."</p> <p><i>Ezekiel 18:4</i> "The soul who sins is the one who will die."</p>	<p>Not only can't we get into heaven on our own, we deserve eternal death, eternal separation from God, because of our sins.</p>

Obviously, we are all in deep trouble! God has set a requirement for getting into heaven that none of us can hope to meet—perfection. We cannot go one day without sinning, let alone our entire lives. God tells us that we are all sinners in need of a savior. The good news is that God tells us how Jesus meets that need.

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>John 1:29</i> "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"</p> <p><i>1 John 2:2</i> "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."</p>	<p>Jesus took our sins away when He sacrificed His life for us on the cross.</p>
<p><i>2 Corinthians 5:21</i> "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."</p> <p><i>Colossians 1:28</i> "We proclaim him (Jesus), ... so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.</p>	<p>God gives Jesus' perfect, sinless life to us in the place of our sinful lives.</p>

Now that we know Jesus has done for us what we could never do, the obvious question is, "How does what Jesus did become mine?"

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Romans 6:23</i> "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."</p>	<p>Eternal life in heaven is a gift from God.</p>
<p><i>John 3:16</i> "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."</p> <p><i>Ephesians 2:8, 9</i> "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God---not by works, so that no one can boast."</p>	<p>What Jesus accomplished is ours simply through faith (believing, trusting) in Him. It can't be earned. It is a gift.</p>

Man-made religions demand that people do the impossible and earn their way into heaven. But God simply gives eternal life as a gift to everyone who trusts that Jesus saved them from their sins by his death on the cross. So how do people come to trust in Jesus as their savior?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Romans 10:17</i> “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”</p>	<p>God has given us His word, the Bible, so that we can believe in Him.</p>
<p><i>Luke 24:27</i> “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he (Jesus) explained to them what was said in the Scriptures concerning himself.”</p>	

Since the Bible tells us about Jesus so we can believe and be saved, we should spend some time learning about it. What Does God tell us about the Bible?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>2 Peter 1:21</i> “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”</p>	<p>The Bible is the Word of God. God used men to write the Bible but made sure the very words He wanted written down were written down. The phrase used to describe this process that God used is Verbal Inspiration.</p>
<p><i>2 Timothy 3:16, 17</i> “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”</p>	

Here are some other interesting facts about the Bible. The Bible contains 66 books and was written over a period of about 1600 years (1500 B.C. - 100 A.D.). Although there were about 36 different human authors, God is the true author. The Old Testament has 39 books. It was written in Hebrew and Aramaic by men called prophets and its primary purpose is to point ahead to Jesus Christ. The New Testament has 27 books. It was written in Greek by men called apostles and its primary purpose is to point people back to Christ.

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>John 17:17</i> “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”</p>	<p>God's Word is true. There are no errors or mistakes in the Bible.</p>
<p><i>Psalms 18:30a</i> “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless.”</p>	

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Matthew 5:18</i> "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."	God will make sure His true word is preserved.
<i>John 10:35</i> "The Scripture cannot be broken."	Everything God has said has already happened or will happen. It is the authority for what we believe and what we do.
<i>John 20:31</i> "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."	The Bible gives us everything we need to be saved.

So we have seen that the Bible is God's word and that it is the thing God uses to bring us to faith in Jesus. What then should we do with the Bible?

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Psalm 1:1, 2</i> "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD and on his law he meditates day and night."	We need to study the Bible.
<i>Luke 11:28</i> "He replied, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.'"	We need to take it to heart and apply it to our lives.

All Bible passages are from the New International Version.