

To Earth
With Love

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Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is history's most influential person. His birth and death receive world-wide attention and observance. Even our calendar year is based on His birth in Bethlehem, a town near modern-day Jerusalem in central Israel.

One of the more controversial aspects of His brief, thirty-three year life on earth is the matter of His resurrection; that He returned to life from the dead.

Today some people wonder what possible significance there could be in the life of a man who lived nearly two thousand years ago in an obscure, war-torn part of the world. In a land that, even today, is not free from conflict generated within its borders and from oppression by foreign powers.

How could this one man, who owned no land or ruled no earthly nation, be significant enough to impact the people around Him during His lifetime, let alone affect the entire world through 2,000 years of history?

This study presents Jesus Christ and His memorable walk as a man on earth. The four lessons in the study are:

1. Earth Visited
2. Visitor Unique
3. Love's Plan
4. Mission Accomplished

This man's life and works have affected all mankind for all of history. What effect does He have on your life, today?

L E S S O N O N E

Earth Visited

“I came that they might have life, and might have *it* abundantly” (John 10:10).

Does man control this earth and the circumstances of life? Or, is there a God who affects our lives, and our eternal destinies? If there is a God, what is He like? What does He expect of us? How does He communicate with us?

God Has Revealed Himself In Three Ways

1. **The Creation:** Romans 1:18-20; Psalm 19:1
2. **The Bible:** 2 Timothy 3:16
3. **Jesus Christ:** Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1,14

The Bible says that God entered history to rescue humanity from the consequences of individual misconduct. According to the Bible, God walked the earth nearly 2,000 years ago as a man. He was a sinless, perfect man whose name was Jesus Christ. What He said and did answers man’s questions about God, and about life.

One such question is:

Why Did God Have To Become a Man?

- **To fulfill Old Testament promises:** Isaiah 9:6
- **To give us greater understanding of God:** John 1:18
- **To give us an example to follow:** 1 Peter 2:21
- **To put away sin:** Hebrews 9:26
- **To destroy the works of Satan:** Hebrews 2:14

Romans 5:12

All humanity is separated from God by sin (missing God's standard of perfection). Standing alone, no person can establish a right relationship with God.

John 3:16; John 15:13

To clear the way of the roadblock of sin, Jesus Christ came to earth with love, offering Himself as payment for every sin of mankind, past, present and future. He became the final sacrifice made to a just and righteous God.

Old Testament Expectations Shadows of Christ

Exodus 12:4-7,13; 1 Corinthians 5:7

The need for Christ's sacrifice was made clear by the men who, under God's direction, wrote the Old Testament of the Bible. Such a sacrifice, the Bible says, includes elements of the Jewish Passover:

- The lamb is unblemished, spotless
- The innocent must die for the guilty
- God's judgment will be withheld because of the sacrifice

Old Testament Expectations Prophecies About Christ

When Christ came to be the sacrifice for man's sin, it should have been no surprise. The Jewish Scriptures, preserved in the Old Testament, were filled with prophecy about Him.

Luke 24:27

**Isaiah 7:14
Matthew 1:23
Deuteronomy 18:18
Luke 7:16
Acts 3:22,23**

**Psalms 110:4
Hebrews 5:5,6**

**Jeremiah 23:5,6
Matthew 21:5**

Beginning with Moses and the prophets, He explained the things concerning Himself in the Scriptures.

The name of Jesus was also Immanuel, God with us.

He is the Prophet who would represent God before men.

He is the Priest who would represent men before God.

He is the King who would be the Sovereign the ruler of all.

Amazing Fact The Virgin Birth

Matthew 1:18,19

The Bible says that Jesus was the son of a young Jewish woman named Mary. She was married to a man named Joseph, yet according to the Bible, Joseph was not the father of Jesus. We must conclude, then, that Jesus was

1. Illegitimate, and a sinner, or
2. Born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit of God

Matthew 1:20

The Bible says that God the Holy Spirit was the father of Jesus, and that Mary remained a virgin until the birth of the child.

Matthew 13:55-56

Mary and Joseph had other children, but none were like Jesus. Only Jesus had God as His Father. Jesus had a human mother and a divine father. He was human and divine.

- He had to be human to die.
- He had to be divine so that His death would be of unlimited value.

The Humility of Humanity

Philippians 2:5-8

As God, Jesus Christ could have entered the world as a king, clothed in purple and crowned with gold. Even such a grand entry would not have suited the Creator of the universe! However, He chose to come in more humble circumstances.

2 Corinthians 8:9
Galatians 4:4
John 1:14

He came as a helpless baby, born to a poor family, hated by the king of the land, limited by His human body. He submitted to the law which He gave men. He did not demand rights due the great God of heaven.

Jesus Christ is the greatest example of humility for all time.

A Controversial Figure

Although Jesus was humble, everything He did became a controversial matter over the course of history. Consider:

His origin—in heaven

His birth—to a virgin

His teaching—of forgiveness by faith

His conduct—without sin

His death—on a cross

His resurrection—according to prophecy

His ascension—to heaven

His return—coming to earth again

Jesus left a remarkable legacy of material for discussion—all recorded in the Bible.

Does Jesus Christ simply occupy a place of honor in the Christian faith, much like Confucius occupies in Confucianism or Mohammed in Mohammedism? Or, is Jesus Christ unique?

Jesus said there is no way to God but through Him. No other man has ever claimed, “No one comes to the Father but through me.”

The next lesson in this series examines Jesus Christ, a man who said He was God in the flesh.

L E S S O N T W O

Visitor Unique

They became astonished and said, “Where did this man *get* this wisdom and *these* miraculous powers?” (Matthew 13:54).

Jesus Christ walked on this earth nearly 2,000 years ago. Yet, the influence of His life and impact of His teachings are still felt today. Never has any one man affected human history more than He has. His greatest claim, and perhaps most controversial one, is that no one will have eternal life without believing He is the Son of God.

Either Jesus Christ was an ego-maniac with a great desire to be God or He is the living God. Evaluate the facts concerning Him recorded in the Bible, then ask yourself the question,

If God Were to Come to Earth As a Man, What Would You Expect of Him?

Luke 1:26-35

His entrance into life would be unique.

Jesus came as a baby, not as a king. Jesus had a human mother and a divine father.

1 Peter 2:21,22

John 8:46

Mark 3:1-5

Mark 6:34

Mark 7:6-8

He would be without sin.

Jesus had extreme concern for those people caught in sin. Jesus was grieved by the spiritually dead condition of all people.

Mark 6:1-2
 Matthew 7:28,29
 Matthew 12:9-14

He would perform miracles.

Jesus was seen as a threat by the religious leaders because He had extraordinary power to perform miracles, and taught with authority.

John 7:29-34
 Matthew 12:19
 Mark 3:6,22

He would be unique.

Jesus did not conform to meaningless rituals and customs. Jesus was a friend to sinners. Jesus was misunderstood and mistreated by the people. Jesus was one of a kind, without like or equal.

Luke 4:22,32
 Mark 1:27

He would speak the greatest words ever spoken.

Jesus taught with authority. The religious leaders were threatened by His teaching.

Revelation 5:9-13

He would have a permanent and world-wide influence.

Even after 2000 years, Jesus' impact on humanity has not worn off.

John 7:37-39
 John 6:67-69
 John 4:10-14
 Matthew 11:28

He would satisfy men's spiritual hunger.

Jesus taught about heaven and hell, and revealed the way to eternal life.

“Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ ” (Luke 5:23).

Mark 4:41
 Matthew 8:14-17
 John 11:43,44
 Luke 5:17-26

He would have unlimited power.

Jesus had power over:

- nature
- sickness
- death
- sin, and the authority to forgive.

Luke 4:32-36
 Mark 1:24

He would recognize and be recognized by the spirit world.

Jesus spoke with the demons.

John 5:17,18
John 8:48-59
John 10:30-33

Matthew 3:17
Matthew 17:5
John 15:26
Luke 4:41
Matthew 16:16
John 11:27
Matthew 27:54
John 16,13,14

He would claim to be God.

What did others say about Him?

God, the Father said that Jesus was His beloved Son. The Holy Spirit testifies of Him and glorifies Him. The demons call Him the Son of God. The apostles say *He is the Christ, the Son of the living God*. Friends say He is *the Christ, the Son of God*. Even enemies admitted that *truly this was the Son of God*.

John 7:40-47

There were some conflicting opinions about Jesus Christ. Some people said, "He is a good man." Others said, "He is from Satan and is leading the people down the wrong path."

Does this man measure up to prophecy and what you would expect God to be?

Lesson three addresses the suffering and death of Jesus Christ at the hands of godless men. However, we will see that His death was necessary to pay the debt of sin we owe to a holy God.

L E S S O N T H R E E

Love's Plan

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before his shearers, so He did not open His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

Jesus Christ was loving, kind, truthful and authoritative. He was a man who offered hope and a better way of life to all who would believe in Him. How strange that He would suffer personal humiliation and physical abuse and be led away to die unjustly! But, the Bible makes it clear that:

The Suffering & Death of Jesus Was Sure to Happen

Mark 10:45
Acts 2:23
Isaiah 53:5
Daniel 9:26.
Hebrews 10:8-12

That is why He came to earth.
It was prophesied.
The Old Testament sacrifices pointed to Christ.

Both Heaven and Earth are Vitally Interested In God's Plan of Redemption

1 Peter 1:12
Luke 9:31
Revelation 5:8-14

The angels desire to see it.
The Old Testament saints spoke of it.
The host of heaven praised God's mighty plan and work.

Interest in Jesus Christ extends to all creation, because:

Jesus Christ Is Fully God and Fully Man

As God, He knew of the events that would lead to His death. As man, He displayed the strongest of all human desires—the will to survive.

Matthew 16:21

Jesus told His disciples that He would die. He shared a final meal with them, then spent His last day as a man in greater physical and mental suffering than was ever endured by any human. His suffering included:

<p>Matthew 26:20-25; 36-46 Luke 22:39-46 Hebrews 5:7,8 Romans 5:8 John 15:13 Matthew 26:55,56</p>	<p>Betrayal by a friend. Loneliness in the garden. Submission to the Father's will, not to His personal desire. Displayed as a common criminal. Desertion by His disciples.</p>
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Trial by Error

<p>Matthew 26:3-5 John 11:47-53</p>	<p>The religious leaders were determined to kill Jesus.</p>
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Jesus Christ endured the shame and humiliation of six kangaroo courts that violated the standards of the day for fair trial, which included:

1. statement of charges;
2. witnesses to support charges;
3. punishment only after conviction.

The trials of Jesus Christ met none of these criteria. **The trials of Jesus Christ were not legal**, according to the Jewish religious system nor the Roman political system.

The Jewish leaders subjected Jesus to three

Religious Trials

1. **Annas**, the former high priest;
2. **Caiaphas**, the current high priest;
3. **Sanhedrin**, the council of religious leaders.

These court sessions were held at night, out of the public eye. **False witnesses were produced to lie about Jesus.** Yet, the Jews under Roman rule were not allowed to put anyone to death. They had to appeal to the civil authorities to carry out their plan.

The Romans subjected Jesus to three

Civil Trials

1. **Pilate**, Roman governor of Judea;
2. **Herod**, Roman governor of Galilee;
3. **Pilate.**

During these trials, Jesus Christ was:

Luke 22:54-65
Matthew 26:67,68
Isaiah 50:6
Isaiah 52:14
Isaiah 53:7
John 19:1,2.
Matthew 27:27-31

Denied by Peter. Beaten and abused by Roman soldiers. Oppressed and afflicted.
 Given a crown of thorns and subjected to shame, humiliation and ridicule.
 Scourged (a beating so severe that many men died before their execution could be carried out).

Jesus was accused of blasphemy, because He claimed to be God. By Jewish law He should die if in fact He were not God. Although He had proven His deity many times, the Jewish leaders refused to believe.

John 19:4

They brought in false witnesses against Jesus. They abused Him although He was not convicted of any crime. He was declared innocent by Pilate, but at the demands of the people He was beaten and led away to a cross for execution.

John 19:17

He carried His own cross. He was physically exhausted by lack of sleep, loss of blood, pain and mental anguish.

What Happened on the cross at Calvary?

Isaiah 53:3-12

Psalm 22:6-8; 14-18

Psalm 22:1

Matthew 27:46

Jesus Christ was crucified as a common criminal. He was separated from God the Father. Jesus suffered the torments of hell.

What was the purpose of all that happened on that pivotal day in the history of mankind?

The death of Christ was:

Choice One

An unfortunate accident. His principles and methods did not appeal to the people of His day, so they killed Him. It is too bad that a good man had to die in such a manner.

Choice Two

The act of a martyr. He was faithful to His principles, had a strong sense of duty and was willing to die for it. He gave us an example of how to stand for truth and duty even to the point of death.

Choice Three

Acts 2:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:10

For the redemption of man. The death of Christ was fore-ordained by God to pay the debt of death that we owe a holy God. He was the innocent dying for the guilty. His death made it possible for sinful men to have the right relationship with God.

Lesson Four, the last in this series, focuses on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Skeptics doubt the reality of that event. They say that either *He was dead and did not come back to life*, or *He never died, yet gave the appearance of conquering death*.

Think of this question: Can the evidence for the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ stand up to the skeptic's claims? Can the evidence overcome your doubts?

L E S S O N F O U R

Mission Accomplished

“Why do you seek the living One among the dead?”
(Luke 24:5).

The third day following Jesus’ death, the disciples came to the garden tomb where He had been taken. They found the stone covering the grave rolled away and the tomb empty. What happened to the body of Jesus? It was obvious that the grave was empty. The question is:

How Did it Get That Way?

Four Choices

1. Christ was not really dead, He only fainted. The coolness of the tomb and the spices revived Him and He left the tomb.
However, the centurion said Jesus was dead (see Mark 15:39, 44,45); the soldiers saw He was dead (see John 19:33); Jesus said He was dead (see Revelation 1:18).
2. Only a spiritual resurrection had taken place. The disciples so wanted Jesus to be alive that they had visions and Christ lived on in their hearts.
However, the facts support a bodily resurrection (see Luke 24:39-43).
3. The disciples stole the body.
However, the tomb was orderly (see Matthew 27:62-66; 28:11-15); they didn’t understand the resurrection. They had no reason to simulate one (see John 20:6,7-9).
4. Or, a miracle (departure from natural law) took place.

We cannot, from nature, show how a miracle happens, but we can have valid proof of its happening.

1 Corinthians 15:20
1 Peter 1:3

The Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

“To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a *period* of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

Verifying the resurrection were:

Eyewitness Reports

How reliable were these reports?

John 20:19-20
1 Corinthians 15:5-8

They were first hand.
They were a sufficient number.
They were by people of good reputation.

Results of the Resurrection

The resurrection had dramatic results in the lives of Jesus’ followers, including:

Sunday worship to honor the day of resurrection.
The founding of the Church.
The writing of the New Testament.

The Importance of the Resurrection

It is the basis of the teaching of the apostles.

Acts 2:22-24
Acts 3:15
Acts 4:10
Acts 10:40
Acts 13:30-37
1 Corinthians 6:14
2 Corinthians 4:14
1 Peter 1:21

The resurrection is the difference between a religious system following a dead leader and Christianity, which follows the living and resurrected Lord!

The resurrection is integral to our salvation.

John 16:7

Death ➡ *Resurrection* ➡ *Ascension* ➡ *Giving of the Holy Spirit*

Acts 2:24

The resurrection shows the power of God.

Romans 4:24,25

The resurrection is God's seal of approval on the death of Christ as sufficient payment for the sins of mankind.

Q. How do I know the death of Jesus Christ was sufficient to cleanse me of sin?

A. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead to prove His power over sin and death.

What if Christ were not raised from the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

If Jesus were not raised from the dead, preaching of Him is worthless and empty; we are false witnesses; our faith is worthless; we are still lost in sin; those who died with their hope in Christ are lost forever and Christians are a pitiful bunch, putting their faith in a dead man.

John 13:1; John 16:10; Acts 1:9

After Jesus finished His work on earth, He returned to His Father in Heaven. He was raised, to be praised in heaven.

Jesus Christ: Raised to be Praised

Philippians 2:5-11; Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Peter 3:22

The biblical account of Jesus Christ is in some ways beyond human understanding. It is true, though, that the eternal God came down from heaven in humility to become a man, **to die for our sin**. He rose from the dead, victorious as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He returned to heaven to God the Father who exalted Him over all the universe.

2 Thessalonians 1:8,9

The Bible says that one day, all people will bow down before Jesus Christ. We will bow and acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior, or as righteous judge who will sentence all unbelievers to eternal punishment.

He Will Return!

*Acts 1:10,11; Zechariah 14:4; John 14:2,3;
Hebrews 9:28; 2 Peter 3:9-13*

As surely as Jesus Christ came to earth 2000 years ago, so He will return to fulfill prophecies in the future. He will not return as the meek and humble babe in a manger, but as the great Redeemer of His people, the Ruler of the universe, the Prince of Peace.

Are You Ready For Him?

Has Jesus Christ influenced your life? All people have been separated from God by sin. We have missed God's standard of perfection—God is just and righteous. Without forgiveness, all that awaits us is an eternity in hell.

But God is also merciful and loving. He has provided Jesus Christ, so that through Him we can be put right with God the Father. Jesus Christ died in our place to satisfy the anger of God against sin.

The Bible says your sins can be forgiven and you can have eternal life by trusting, by having faith. Not by trusting in your

own goodness, because you have none. Not by trusting in a church, because no church saves. But by trusting that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for your sin, that He rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God the Father.

Do you believe that Jesus paid the price for your sin when he suffered and died on the cross? Will you someday stand before Jesus Christ as a redeemed child of God? Or will you be among those condemned to suffer, away from the presence of God, forever? You see, **the decision to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the most important decision you will ever make.** Whether or not you believe in Him will affect your life today and forever.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24).

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Assurance: Our Seal and Pledge
Baptism: Truth or Tradition
Bible Study Tools for the Layman
(The) Bible Workbook: What Is It All About?
By Faith: Abraham
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