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Be Prepared



A Series of 6 studies on understanding
the fundamentals of our faith

5. • Why do you think God is so keen for us to be sure of our eternal salvation in Christ? What risk is he taking in encouraging us to have this assurance? What has he done to minimise the risk?

6. • Think back over all we've learnt this week about ourselves and God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). As you go home, how will this change ...

> how you relate to God?

> How you share Jesus with your non-Christian friends?

3. Read Romans 8:33-34

- If people question your right to call yourself a Christian or accuse you of not being good enough to be a Christian, what can you say to them?

- What has Jesus done for us? What is Jesus doing for us now?

4. Read Romans 8:35-39

- What are some things that have gone wrong in your life lately? If you're a Christian, should you be surprised when bad things happen? How does God use bad times to get us back on track with him?

- What are some of the things that might seem to have the power to separate us from the love of God that he has given us in Jesus? Are they in Paul's list of things he is confident that **can't**? (Note especially the last item on the list!)

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What does the Bible say about the new me?

1. Read Romans 8:26-28

- Re-tell this passage in your own words. Does “all things” mean every single event in your life? What does it (or should it) change your life make to your attitude and lifestyle to know about ...

> this work of the Holy Spirit for you?

> God’s plan for your life in Jesus?

2. Read Romans 8:29-32

- If you’re a Christian, what specific plan does God have for you? What has he done to achieve this?

- Can anything ever hijack this plan? What has God done to show he will make sure the plan will be completed perfectly?

Does the Bible Matter?

1. Read Psalm 19:1-6

- What can we know about God by looking at the Creation around us?

- How do people who don't want to believe in God explain the existence of the Universe? What are some problems with these explanations?

- What does the Psalmist mean when he says that the **heavens/skies declare/proclaim God's glory/handwork**? Does this "message" have any cultural or language barriers?

- Read **Romans 1:18-20**. If all you knew about God was looking at creation, is that an excuse? Is that fair?

- How do you think a conversation might go between an atheist (someone who doesn't think there is a God) and God on the Day of Judgement?

2. Read Psalm 19:7-10

- What different word does the Psalmist use to name God's **written** word?

- What different words/phrases does the Psalmist use to **de-scribe** God's written word?

- What different words/phrases does the Psalmist use to describe what God's **written** Word does?

- Why use so many names and descriptions? What do they mean in practice?

3. Read Psalm 19:11-13

- According to the Psalmist, what is the main purpose of the written Word? (*see also Psalm 119:9-11,97-102,105,128*)

- What's wrong with relying on our own wisdom to know how God wants us to live or relying on our own conscience to warn us when we are off the track?

5. Go back to John 16 and read verses 5-15.

- How does the Holy Spirit work in the world?

- How do the Holy Spirit and Jesus work together (from John 6)?

- How can you see the Holy Spirit working in your life?

3. Read John 6:41-46

- The Jewish people are again offended by Jesus' claims.
 - > How are people offended by Jesus' claims today? What kind of things do they say?

 - > Does Jesus respond to the Jews' negative reaction by trying to make his message more 'user-friendly'? What can we learn from this?

- Look carefully at verse 44.
 - > What two important points is Jesus making?

 - > What encouragement does this give you?

4. Read John 6:47-51

- What does Jesus say is required of us if we are to be among those who will spend eternity with God in heaven?

- The most important thing is to **believe**. Is **what** we believe important, or just having some sort of faith? What do Jesus' words imply about **his** place in human history?

Read Psalm 19:14

- Why does the Psalmist address God as "my Rock and my Redeemer"?

- On what basis can he assume that "the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart" will be pleasing in God's sight?

A quick checklist...

What is the "Good News" about Jesus?

How can we know this is the "Good News"?

How important is it to know and believe this "Good News"?

What would we know about the "Good News" – Who Jesus was... Why he came to earth... Why he died on the cross and rose again... etc – if we didn't have God's Word in writing in the Bible?

How important is it to believe the Bible is God's inspired Word?

What does the Bible say about God the Holy Spirit?

1. Read John 16:7-11

- What did Jesus say is the task of the Holy Spirit ('Counsellor')?

- Now look at John 6 to see how this works itself out.

2. Read John 6:28-40

- Look carefully at verse 37.
 - > Who, according to Jesus, takes the initiative in our salvation?
 - > Why is this necessary?

 - > Did Jesus allow for the possibility of a spiritual 'abortion'?
 - > Why does Jesus add, "... and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."?

- What does Jesus see as **his** responsibility in verses 38-40? Can we trust him to fulfil this responsibility? Why?

What does the Bible say about me?

1. Read Genesis 2:8-17 and 3:1

- What were the 'rules' in the Garden?
- Who made them? Was this fair/right? Why/why not? (Were the rules designed to make things tough or unpleasant?)
- What different emphasis did the **serpent** put on the rules? How did this change them?
- What are some of the ways the devil (the serpent) does the same thing today?

2. Read Genesis 3:2-5

- The serpent now moves from subtlety to straight out **lies/deception**. How is his version of what God said wrong?
- What difference does this make?

- What did the serpent mean by “**knowing** good and evil”? (The same verb translated here as ‘knowing’ is translated ‘lay with’ in 4:1 !)
- How has the devil been using this same lie ever since?

3. Read Genesis 3:6

- What were the **3** attractions of the forbidden fruit?
- How was Jesus tempted in these **same 3** ways? (see Matthew 4:1-10)
- How does the devil continue with these tricks today? (see 1 John 2:15-17)

4. Read Genesis 3:6-11

- Why did the man and woman want to hide?
- How do you feel when you know (and especially when others find out) that you’ve done something wrong?

5. • Is Jesus death limited by how much it can achieve for us? What is the limit?
6. • If you are a Christian, what difference does it make to how you relate to God to know that when Jesus was nailed to the cross, and his precious blood was shed as a sacrifice for sin, it was **your** name and **your** sins, specifically and particularly, past, present and future, that he had in mind?

- Who are the people excluded from both of these categories?

3. Read Titus 2:11-14

- Paul makes the point in verse 14 that Jesus **gave** himself for a very specific purpose:
 - for us;
 - to redeem us from all wickedness;
 - to purify for himself a people that are his very own.

Who are the 'us' and the 'people that are his very own'? What does this tell us about the scope of the intended purpose of Jesus death?

4. Read Ephesians 1:3-12

- What came first, God's choosing of his children, or Jesus' dying for them on the cross?
- What does this **order** have to say about why Jesus died and for whom?

5. Read Genesis 3:12-13

- What **further** sin(s) did the man and woman commit after they had been sprung by God?
- Can you relate to this? In your experience, how does one sin lead to another ... and another ... and another ... and another ... and another?

6 . Read Genesis 3:14-19

- In God's "rules" the penalty for disobedience was **death** (see 2:17). How do the curses show God's mercy?
- What very special merciful provision does God promise in verse 15?
- What was the final death sentence in verse 19b?

7. Read Genesis 3:20-24

- How do verses 23-24 show that Adam's sin affects everyone who will come after him as well?

 - What parts of us (of everything that makes you you - your brain, your mind, your heart) are exempt from God's death sentence?
8. • Why do your non-Christian friends have trouble accepting God's statement that every part of us is affected by the Fall and we are in total bondage to sin?

What does the Bible say about God the Son?

1. Read Romans 3:21-26

- How can we be put right with God? Does this apply to everyone, or are there exceptions? Is there any other way to become part of God's family?

- What does verse 25 mean? On what basis were Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, etc, accepted into God's family? (cf John 8:56). Would there have been any point in Jesus' dying for Pharaoh's sins?

2. Read Matthew 20:25-28 and John 10:11-18

- What conclusion can we draw from the fact that Jesus said he came "to give his life as a ransom for **many**"? (Matthew 20:28)

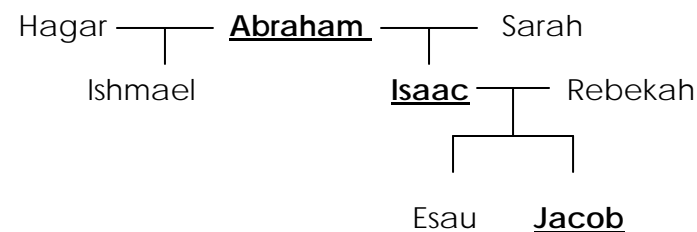
- Who are the '**sheep**', whom the 'good shepherd' owns and knows personally by name, and for whom he came specifically to lay down his life in obedience to his Father's command? (John 10:11, 15-16)

What does the Bible say about God the Father?

1. Read Romans 9:1-5

- Paul was a descendant of Abraham (a Jew) (see Philippians 3:4b-6). Why was he especially concerned for his fellow Jews?

Look at Abraham's family tree. **Now read Romans 9:6-13.**



What particular point does Paul make in verse 11 to show that God's choosing (election) is purely his decision and is not influenced by our actions (that is, it is **unconditional**)? Does God have the right to make decisions like this? Why? Why not? (What does grace mean? How do we see it here?)

- Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Is it possible for something that is dead to bring itself to life without any outside help? What are the different parts played by **faith** and **grace** in vs 8?

3. Read Romans 9:14-21

- Paul drives home the point he is making here by giving examples from the Old Testament about Moses and Pharaoh. Paul wants us to understand that God is sovereign – because he is God, he doesn't have to explain his actions to us. God decides what he wants to do, and we have to go along with it (and this is what happened for Moses and Pharaoh.

- If Pharaoh was “raised up for this very purpose” by God, how can he be responsible for his actions? Do you think he will be able to prove “It wasn't my fault” on the Day of Judgement? Do you think he will want to?

- Can we question God's justice? Why do we struggle with this? (See Genesis 1:26-27. What went wrong after Genesis 1 that changed the situation?)

4. Read John 6:37

- Do you think there is anyone who really wants to be a follower of Jesus (with all that that means) but the only reason they can't is because God has not chosen them?

- How does God **let us know** that he has chosen us?