

Discovery Lessons

Introduction

The idea behind this course is to present major, foundational concepts about God and Christ to the Muslim who has either received Christ, or is merely willing to take a good look at the Bible. Because it is hard to predict how long a “seeker” will stay studying with you, the course is as short as possible, just six lessons.

This material has been developed in the crucible of real life ministry to Muslims in the Middle East. We have had the blessing of teaching the course many times to a large number of people, and so it has been refined through experience. Our objective all along has been to keep what works.

It seems that most discipleship courses presuppose too much Christian understanding. Certain basic principles, such as God’s goodness, are taken for granted. As a result many courses begin in the New Testament, but we have felt that we must start at the beginning. Consider the basic truths of the first two lessons which are taken from Genesis 1-3: Who God is; the basic quality of creation; man; man’s relationship to God; temptation; sin; the fall and the curse. The latter topics can be summed up as man’s terrible condition in contrast to his once perfect condition, an exposure of man’s sin-nature, and the need for God to rescue and put things right. If the Muslim has a good grasp from the Genesis account of these things, then he has gone a long way toward making sense of the gospel. And many scholars, especially from the field of Biblical Theology, agree that in non-Christian cultures, one must start from Genesis.

The fourth lesson concentrates on the core themes of blood sacrifice, substitution, and atonement in the Old Testament. There is a brief look ahead at Christ as the ultimate atoning sacrifice but the emphasis is on setting the stage from the Old Testament, so that when we get to Christ, it makes sense. Thus the three lessons on these core truths (together with Genesis 1-3) are an indispensable foundation.

Another precept of the course is that it ought to be taught in a face-to-face setting by a real teacher, preferably one who is qualified to minister the Scriptures. Other courses have students look up verses ahead of time, fill in the blanks, and then the group compares answers together; but we don’t believe this is the best approach in the Muslim environment.

Three of the lessons are topical, and three are expositional (i.e. they concentrate mainly on studying one passage together in an inductive manner). As our preference is to make the whole course as expository as possible, we have found it best for the group to learn through discussion whenever practical. A good approach is for the teacher to ask leading questions, and then allow the students to discover for themselves the truths that are in front of them in the text. Not only does this keep them from getting bored, it also helps the truths to stick in their minds, and hopefully in their hearts. Some of the material, however, will simply have to be taught.

Some Practical Matters

Group size: between 1 and 10 students. A large group may cause some to be silent and for discussion to be limited. Some may even gang up against the biblical material. Obviously the teacher should know his students pretty well before creating a large group.

In many cases, these lessons only mention the point to be made. The teacher will need to work out how he wants to explain it. The material is not specially contextualized, but it can certainly be used, even without adaptation, in the setting of a highly contextualized ministry.

Each study is designed to take 45 - 60 minutes. In addition, the teacher may want to have singing, sharing and prayer, drills for finding verses, or whatever else he sees as appropriate.

The teacher may assign work for the students to study ahead of time. This is not necessary, and in some situations may hinder some from continuing. It may be more fruitful to have the students memorize verses after they’ve learned the meaning of them during a particular study, and then to review those verses at the beginning of the next lesson.

If possible, there should be a Bible for each student. When dealing with illiterate people, time should be given

for slow and expressive reading of the text, and key verses should be recited more than once.

The design of the course is a gradual buildup for five lessons, with Lesson Six calling for a decision and commitment to Christ.

The teacher should plan on spending no less than 2 hours in preparation with the biblical texts and this material. This does not include the time necessary for preparing it in another language. Remember that you are ministering the Word of God, not just reading through a guidebook.

The material is presented here in English. If you are teaching in another language, especially if it is not your native language, then it is strongly recommended that you rehearse thoroughly, explaining everything in the target language once or twice before teaching the lesson.

What comes next after these six studies? We have prepared a course called The Growth Group (available in Arabic only) which is longer, and is geared mainly for believers. It is hoped that by this time the student will already have some deeper involvement with other believers.

Many debate the question of which type of teaching is more fruitful in discipleship, that is, Biblical content or the so-called “obedience-oriented” teaching. The question is similar to “Which wing of the airplane is more important?” Clearly to concentrate on one to the detriment of the other can short-circuit the believer’s new walk with Christ. Many verses could be given to show the urgency of balance between these two, or rather, the necessity of both. The disciple who is fed only content, truths, and theology week after week is left unchallenged in his faith and may be continuing to study for a variety of unhealthy reasons. Likewise, the new disciple who is merely given commands of Christ to obey, almost as challenges, but who is not helped to grow in the “knowledge of Christ” at the same time (2 Peter 3:18), is likely to suffer from a real lack of depth and the spiritual understanding necessary to make the right choices.

May God use you greatly as Christ is reproduced in those you are called to disciple!

(Note: Please do not use these lessons unless you have already read this book. You need to understand when and how to use them. The material here is simply given as notes to guide the religious teacher in preparing his lessons. Abdalla expects all teachers to do just that: teach. All he provides is the rough outline; the teacher is expected to fill it out, and make the lessons live. Ed.)

Discovery 1

God, Man, and Creation

Bible Texts: Genesis 1 and 2

Introduction

The Bible teaches that Jesus came to give us a better life (John 10:10). Everyone that I meet seems to want a new life. Jesus has promised us that life.

The goal of these lessons is to help us understand who Jesus Christ is, why He came, and what He can do for us.

In order to understand who Jesus is, we must understand what happened in the world before He came. To do this, we are going to take a closer look at a familiar story: the creation of the world.

The Seven Days of Creation - The Importance of the Word of God

- 1) READ: Genesis 1:1-2
 - a) Was there anything in existence before the creation of the world? God and the Spirit of God.
 - b) When God began creating the world, what was its condition? Formless, empty, confusion, darkness.
- 2) READ: Genesis 1:3-5.
 - a) What did God create on the first day? Light.
 - b) How did He create it? Did He use tools? No. He spoke and it happened.
 - c) The Word of God is the foundation to the existence of everything is built upon the Word of God.
- 3) READ: Genesis 1:6-25.
 - a) How did God create everything? By His Word.
 - b) There was an order and a purpose to God's creation.
- 4) The expression 'the Word of God' does not refer to a book. It means the voice of God, the will of God, and the revelation of God.

Creation of Man-God's Love for Man

- 1) READ: Genesis 1:26-27
 - a) Man was created in the image of God.
 - b) Are animals created in the image of God? Of course not.
 - c) What does it mean that we are created in the image of God? Do we resemble God physically? No. God has given man abilities greater than the rest of creation. God has distinguished man by giving him some of His (God's) characteristics.
 - d) What are some of the ways that man is created in the image of God?
 - i) Man has authority
 - ii) Man has absolute responsibility
 - iii) Man has the ability to communicate
 - iv) Man can distinguish between good and evil
 - v) Man can have a relationship with God
 - vi) Man has life after death
- 2) READ: Genesis 1:28-31
 - a) Do you see anything that points to the value of man?
 - b) Do you see God's love for man?
 - c) When God said that creation was good, what did He mean? Perfect, complete. No sickness, war, pain, sadness, crime, or even death. The relationship between God and man was perfect. Man was close to God. He had fellowship with God.
- 3) READ: Genesis 2:1-3
 - a) What did God do on the seventh day? He rested
 - b) Why did He rest? Was He tired? No. He rested because He had finished.
 - c) It is very important that we notice the condition of creation at this time. It was perfect. It was complete. God rested because there was nothing else for Him to do.
 - d) Notice that God made the seventh day holy. To this day, man rests one day out of seven because God made this day holy. This points to the holiness of the relationship between God and man.
 - e) When a family moves into a new home, the parents want to prepare the children's room with a bed, toys, etc. In the same way, God prepared a beautiful world for us because He loves us.

The Garden of Eden-Man's Freedom to Choose

- 1) READ: Genesis 2:8-9
 - a) Where was the Garden of Eden located? In the East. (If necessary read vv. 10-14. Point out that the Garden of Eden was located on earth. It was part of creation.)
 - b) How many kinds of trees did God put in the Garden? Three: the Tree of Life, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and all of the normal trees. The trees we shall focus on are the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life.
- 2) READ: Genesis 2:15-17
 - a) Which trees did God allowed them to eat from? All of them except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - b) This meant that they could eat from the Tree of Life. What was the importance of this tree? If they ate the fruit of this tree they would never die.
 - c) What was God's command to them? Do not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - d) What would happen if they did? They would die.
 - e) Man has responsibility before God: responsibility of obedience.
 - f) Man has a choice, he has freedom. He can obey or disobey. Man has complete freedom to choose.
 - g) Was God's command difficult? No. He gave Adam and Eve thousands of trees to eat from. Only one was forbidden. Even today God's commands are not difficult. Man makes religion difficult.

The First Marriage

- 1) READ: Genesis 2:18-25
 - a) Marriage is a gift from God
 - b) Marriage and sex within marriage are holy
 - c) The will of God from the beginning concerning marriage is one man for one woman for life
 - d) Why did Adam and Eve feel no shame even though they were naked? Because there was no sin. When there is no sin, there is no shame. Shame and guilt are consequences of sin.

Application

- 1) God created this world out of darkness and confusion. Because He is the Creator He can take the darkness and emptiness of our lives and give us new and beautiful lives. His Word is the foundation of spiritual life.
- 2) God created us to have fellowship with Him. Close fellowship. He created us so that we can glorify Him with our lives. God loves us. We have value.
- 3) The original condition of man in the Garden was perfect and complete.
 - a) He was physically complete (no sickness or death)
 - b) His relationship with God was complete (no separation because of sin)
 - c) The environment around him was complete
 - d) The marriage relationship was complete (respect between husband and wife, no divorce)
 - e) No sin, pain, suffering, sickness, death, or problems.
- 4) Man has complete freedom to obey or disobey God.

Closing

- 1) The things we see in the world today that are not right were not that way in the beginning. When we read about the perfect life in the Garden of Eden, we are reading about God's will for us. He wants us to have a perfect, complete life.
- 2) In the next lesson we will see how man destroyed the perfect world God gave him, and in the lessons that follow, we will see how God has made a way to restore us to our original condition with a perfect, complete life.

Discovery 2

THE FALL OF MAN - THE ORIGIN OF SIN

Bible Texts: Genesis 3

Introduction

- 1) Review the purpose of the course: to help the student understand who Christ is.
- 2) Review last week's lesson: Creation. The three main points to remember about last week's lesson are:
 - a) All of creation and man's relationship with God were complete.
 - b) God's will for man is that his life should be complete and perfect.
 - c) God gave man a choice. READ: Genesis 2:16-17. What was that choice?
- 3) The story could have ended here and man would have lived in the perfect will of God for eternity, but the world we live in today is not perfect or complete. Today we will see what happened. We can divide this lesson into four parts.
 - a) Satan's temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-6).
 - b) The sin of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:7).
 - c) The punishment and consequences of that sin (Genesis 3:8-24).
 - d) The promise of reconciliation (Genesis 3:14-15; Genesis 3:21).

The lesson today has many new ideas. We will not be talking about Jesus yet, but this lesson will help us understand why we need Him.

Part 1: The Temptation

- 1) READ: Genesis 3:1-6
 - a) Who was the snake? Satan. Satan used the snake. Satan came to Eve in the form of a snake.
 - b) What do we mean by the word 'temptation'?
 - i) A temptation is when the desire or will of man goes against the will of God. When a man wants to do something against his conscience or against the Word or will of God, that is temptation.
 - ii) Temptation is not sin, but it can lead to sin if we do not resist it.
- 2) How did Satan tempt Eve? Read the passage verse by verse and notice the five steps Satan uses.
 - a) He causes doubt to the Word of God (vs. 1). 'Did God really say ...?' This question transmits doubt. This is Satan's first step. Even today he wants to bring doubt concerning the Word of God.
 - b) He exaggerates the command of God (vs. 1). 'You must not eat from any tree in the Garden...' Was this God's command? No! Satan makes God appear difficult and strict. He wants to lessen our confidence in God.
 - c) Eve adds to the command of God (vs. 3). How did Eve answer Satan's question? Was her answer correct? No. She added something. Many times we add things to what God has required.
 - d) He contradicts the command of God (vs. 4). 'You will not die.' He calls God a liar.
 - e) He lies (vs. 5). Satan says that the created ones can become like the Creator! Satan is the Father of Lies.

Part 2: Sin

- 1) READ: Genesis 3:6
 - a) What were the three things that attracted Eve to break her obedience to God?
 - i) It was good for food
 - ii) It was beautiful to the eyes
 - iii) It was desirable
 - b) Are these things bad? Not necessarily, but if they are against the will of God they are sin.
 - c) What did Eve do after she ate? She gave some to Adam. When Adam and Eve disobeyed the relationship between God and man was broken.
 - d) It is not only adultery, stealing, and killing that are sins. Anything that is disobedience to God is sin. Anything before God in our lives is sin.

The root of the problem is not disobedience, but lack of faith and confidence in the Word of God ('Don't eat from the tree or you will die').

Adam and Eve did not believe what God said about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If man's

problem is bad works, what is the solution? Good works. If man's problem is lack of faith, what is the solution? Faith. The focus of the true believer is faith in God's word.

Part 3: The Punishment and Consequences of Sin

1) READ: Genesis 2:17: Punishment

God is holy. He cannot accept sin in spite of His great love for man. This does not mean that God abandons us.

- a) What is the punishment if man disobeys God? Death.
 - b) Death is the only punishment or recompense for disobedience and sin. But there are three types of death:
 - i) Spiritual death: Separation from God.
 - ii) Physical death: The age of man is limited.
 - iii) Eternal death: Damnation in hell for eternity with no hope for reconciliation with God. READ: 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.
- 2) READ: Genesis 3:7: The Feelings of Guilt, Shame & Fear
- a) What does it mean that their eyes were opened after the fall into sin? They experienced inner emptiness. This resulted in three emotional responses: guilt, shame, and fear. They felt the need to hide impurity and uncleanness.
 - b) What did they do to try to cover their guilt, shame and fear? Made coverings of leaves. Hid themselves from God.
- 3) READ: Genesis 3:8-9: Destruction of the Relationship Between God and man.
- a) What was God's question? 'Where are you?' This was not because God did not know where man was, but because the close relationship between God and man had been broken.
 - b) Why were Adam and Eve hiding? They were ashamed. This is the normal response when we sin. We want to be far from God.
 - c) Do you see anything that points to the value of man? God was searching for him. Even today God searches for sinners.
- 4) READ: Genesis 3:11-12: Blame in the Relationship Between Husband and Wife.
- a) What was Adam's response? He blamed his wife.
 - b) Who else did he blame? He even blamed God: 'The woman you gave me'
- 5) READ: Genesis 3:16-19: Some specific results.
- a) What are the specific curses (judgments) against men and women?
 - i) Women will have pain in childbirth.
 - ii) Women will be subject to their husbands.
 - iii) Work will be difficult for men, and it won't be satisfying.
 - b) Have these things affected you? We have all been affected by sin.
- 6) READ: Genesis 3:22-24: Banishment
- a) What did God do to Adam and Eve? He banished them from the Garden of Eden.
 - b) Why? If they remained in the Garden they could eat from the Tree of Life and live forever.
 - c) By being banished from the Garden, man was being banished from three things:
 - i) The presence of God.
 - ii) The Tree of Life (eternal life).
 - iii) The perfect life-environment in the Garden of Eden.

Part 4: The Promise of Reconciliation

Compare the condition of the world before and after the fall. Everything changed. However, one thing did not change: God's love for man. There are two things that reveal God's love for man: a promise and a provision.

1) READ: Genesis 3:14-15: The Promise.

- a) What is the prophecy here? An offspring of Eve will crush the head of Satan, and Satan will strike the heel of this same offspring.
- b) Who is the offspring of Eve mentioned? Jesus.
- c) When did Satan strike Jesus? At His death.
- d) When did Jesus crush Satan? At the resurrection.
- e) Notice that Satan will only strike the heel of the Messiah, but the Messiah will crush Satan's head.

This prophecy is a promise to all mankind that God will defeat Satan and overcome the effects of sin in our lives. It is a promise that even though we are far from God because of sin, God will reconcile us to Himself someday.

- 2) READ: Genesis 3:21: The Provision.
- a) What did God do for Adam and Eve? He gave them clothes made of animal skin.
 - b) Why did God give them clothes made of animal skin rather than clothes made of leaves? Two reasons:
 - i) Only God can provide cover for the shame and guilt of sin.
 - ii) God provides this cover through sacrifice: the shedding of blood.

Application:

- a) How many sins did Adam and Eve commit? One.
- b) How many good works did God say they had to do to return? None. No good work that they could do would make returning possible.
- c) Even today people believe that if they have more good works than bad they can go to heaven. This is not true.
- d) John Bunyan: 'One leak will sink a ship and one sin will destroy a person.'
- e) Because of one sin, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. Only one sin will block the way to heaven for us as well. Only God can bring us back to our original condition.

Summary:

- 1) Satan tempts us by decreasing our confidence in the Word of God.
- 2) Sin has separated us from God.
- 3) All of the problems we see in the world have come as a result of sin.
- 4) God has promised to solve the problem of sin, reconcile us to Himself, and overcome death.

Closing: READ: Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23.

Discovery 3

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE BIBLE

Bible Texts: Various

Introduction: The Purpose of the Lesson:

- 1) To give the student a comprehensive view of the Bible.
- 2) To present the idea of the inspiration of the Bible.
- 3) Remember that the goal of the course is to help the student understand who Christ is; but to do this we must understand the Bible since it is the source of our knowledge of Christ.

Structure of the Bible

Some general statements:

- 1) The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before the birth of Christ. The New Testament was written after. Jesus is the link (In Arabic this is like the hamzet wassel) between them.
- 2) A testament is a promise from God. The Old Testament and the New Testament are the same promise but in two forms.
- 3) The whole Bible was written over a period of 1600 years by about 40 authors.
- 4) It was written in different situations: during times of war, happiness, sadness, etc.
- 5) There are different types of literary styles: songs, poetry, history, law, prophecy, and letters.

The Old Testament

- 1) 1) The Old Testament contains the books of Moses, historical books about how God worked in and through the Jews, poetical books including Psalms, and books of the prophets.
- 2) There are 39 books in the Old Testament. Each book is complete on its own.
- 3) The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew.
- 4) The Jews refer to the Old Testament as the Law and the Prophets. All of the Old Testament books point forward to the coming of the Messiah. READ: Matthew 5:17; John 5:39-40.
- 5) The prophets prophesied details about the Messiah's life to prepare the world for His coming. We will study this later.

The New Testament

- 1) There are 27 books in the New Testament. Each is complete on its own.
- 2) The New Testament was originally written in Greek.
- 3) The New Testament includes the Gospels, Acts, Letters of the Apostles, and Revelation.
 - a) The Gospels give details about the life and teaching of the Messiah.
 - b) Acts tells of the growth of the church in the first century. The focus is on the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.
 - c) Letters giving believers instructions on the Christian life.
 - d) Revelation: the Second Coming of the Messiah.
- 4) The meaning of the word 'gospel'.
 - a) The gospel is not a doctrine or religion that came down from heaven.
 - b) The gospel is not a means of communication or group of commands or laws about how to go to heaven.
 - c) The word 'gospel' is a Greek word meaning 'good news'. What is this good news? READ: 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

Closing points on the structure of the Bible

- 1) The books of the Bible are powerfully united and arranged and their foundation is Jesus Christ Himself.
- 2) The Old Testament prophesied the coming of the Messiah with amazing detail.
- 3) As for the Gospels, they inform us 'according to eyewitnesses' about that coming of the Messiah which prove it to be true.
- 4) The rest of the books of the New Testament inform us about the establishing of the first church and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ by the apostles.

The Inspiration of the Bible

- 1) Many people stumble over this point because the language and style of the Bible is different from that of other religious books.
- 2) The main principle that Christian believer concerning the inspiration of the Bible is that God inspired the Bible through the control of the Holy Spirit over the writers who wrote the divine Word. Each of them wrote in his own language but under the direction of the Holy Spirit in facts and words.
- 3) The original Bible was written in Greek and Hebrew (show original languages). It has been translated into thousands of languages. The Arabic is not an original. It is a translation.
- 4) Has the Bible been corrupted or changed as some people say?
 - a) There are hundreds of copies of the Bible from the first and second centuries. Could all of them have been changed?
 - b) If there are mistakes in the Bible, this means one of two things:
 - i) God made a mistake (impossible).
 - ii) The Bible is not nor has it ever been the Word of God.
 - c) God protects His Word. READ: Isaiah 40:8.
- 5) How then was the Bible written? READ: 2 Peter 1:21.
 - a) All of the writers wrote under the control of the Holy Spirit. Their words are the words of God.
 - b) God respected the personality of the writer. Even though God respected the personality, the Holy Spirit led the writer.
 - c) Each writer wrote in the language of the people because God was concerned that the people understand His Word.

The Purpose of the Bible

- 1) The focus of Christianity is not a book. It is a person: Jesus.
- 2) The Bible is the written Word of God, but Jesus is the living Word of God.
- 3) The purpose of the Bible is to lead us to Christ. The Bible is a door to a personal relationship with God because it leads us to Christ. It is possible to study the Bible for years and yet not have a personal relationship with God.
- 4) READ: Luke 24:44-45. Jesus 'opened the minds' of the disciples so that they could understand that the Scriptures taught about the Christ.
- 5) READ: 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
 - a) Who is the source of the Scriptures? God.
 - b) What is the purpose of Scripture? Teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

Closing

READ: Hebrews 1:1-2.

True knowledge of God cannot come through books, but through Christ alone.

Discovery 4

REDEMPTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT-THE NECESSITY OF BLOOD FOR SALVATION

Key Bible Texts: Leviticus 16:15-19; 29-34; Isaiah 52, 53

Introduction

Review of Lesson 2.

- 1) What are the consequences of sin?
- 2) Do these things affect our lives today?
- 3) Are you pleased with the world today?
- 4) Man is always looking for a solution to the problem of sin. Today we will be looking at God's solution for the problem of sin.
- 5) We are not looking at a specific event today, but at a subject that can be found throughout the whole Bible from beginning to end: blood sacrifice.

The Problem of Sin

- 1) What God's Word says about sin:
 - a) READ: Psalm 14:3. Does this describe people today?
 - b) READ (Optional): Psalm 143:2. Who is righteous?
 - c) READ: Ecclesiastics 7:20. Who is righteous?
 - d) READ: Isaiah 59:2. What is the worst consequence of sin? Separation from God.
- 2) What are some of the things that man has done to solve the problem of sin? Religion, science, good works, etc. Man looks for salvation from good works.
 - a) READ: Ephesians 2:8-9. What does it mean to be saved? What are we saved from? From the consequences of our sin. Can good works save us? No.
 - b) READ: Romans 3:20. Can we become righteous through the Law? No
- 3) The greatest problem in the world is sin. Because sin is a spiritual problem, we cannot solve it alone. We must depend on God. What is God's solution? This week we will look at the answer in the Old Testament and next week in the New Testament.

God's Plan for Salvation

The Law and the Prophets point forward to Christ.

- 1) All through the Old Testament we read about the men of God offering sacrifices, e.g. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. Why are these sacrifices necessary? According to the Law, forgiveness and redemption from sin only comes through the shedding of blood.
- 2) READ: Leviticus 16:15-19; 29-34. The Day of Atonement.
 - a) What was the sacrifice? A goat.
 - b) Why was this sacrificed? For sin.
 - c) What did the sacrifice do? Atoned for sin. Covered sin. Purified the people from sin.
 - d) Who was this sacrifice for? The whole nation.
- 3) READ: John 1:29. The Perfect Sacrifice. An animal does not have the same value as a man. Therefore we need a more perfect, final sacrifice.
 - a) Who is the lamb that John is referring to? Jesus.
 - b) Why did he call Jesus the Lamb of God? Because Jesus Himself was a sacrifice like the Old Testament sacrifices.
 - c) For whom was He a sacrifice? The whole world.
- 4) READ: Romans 5:18. How could one man be a sacrifice that purifies the whole world?
 - a) What was the one act of disobedience that brought death to the world? Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.
 - b) What was the one act of obedience that brought life to the world? The death of Christ on the Cross.
 - c) Through Adam all of the problems of sin entered our lives. Christ brought the solution.
- 5) READ: Hebrews 9:22. According to the Bible, there must be the shedding of blood for forgiveness of sins. It is important to highlight the importance blood has in the Middle East:
 - a) a) When a group of people go out to greet the president or king of the country, they yell with one

- voice, "By spirit, by blood, we redeem you, oh ..." Why blood? Why isn't it said, 'By money or by land?'
- b) What erases a debt other than blood? Blood revenge still exists in Arab villages. If something shameful happens to a member of a family, especially girls, they take their blood revenge by killing. They will not be satisfied except by blood. Why?
 - c) Why do people sacrifice on the roof of their houses? Someone told me that it is so God will protect the house! Just as with the Passover, the blood is protection.
 - d) Where did these traditions come from? God has put a special knowledge concerning blood inside us. We understand the importance of blood.
- 6) Prophecies of the coming Messiah. The Law states that there must be a blood sacrifice for forgiveness. It also states that the sacrifice of an animal is not enough (this is why there must be continual sacrifices). But the prophets describe the final, perfect sacrifice.

The following prophecies from Isaiah help us to understand this:

- a) READ: Isaiah 52:13. Who is the servant? Jesus.
- b) READ: Isaiah 52:14-15. How does Isaiah describe Christ's body?
- c) READ: Isaiah 53:1-3. Describe the physical appearance of the Messiah. Even today people do not recognize the greatness of the Messiah. They think He is only a prophet or teacher.
- d) READ: Isaiah 53:4-5. Why did the Messiah die?
- e) READ: Isaiah 53:6. How are we like sheep?
- f) READ: Isaiah 53:7-8. How is Christ like a lamb?
- g) READ: Isaiah 53:9. What is the prophecy here?
- h) READ: Isaiah 53:10. What is a guilt offering?
- i) READ: Isaiah 53:11-12. What are the results of the Messiah's suffering?

Homework:

READ: John 18 and 19. Notice the similarities between the prophecies of Christ's crucifixion in Isaiah 53 and the actual crucifixion as described in John 18 and 19.

Closing

- 1) Both the Law and the Prophets point forward to Christ.
- 2) The Law teaches us that without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness for sin. This is the justice of God.
- 3) The Prophets teach us that God will send a final, perfect sacrifice, Christ. This is the mercy of God.

Discovery 5

WHO IS JESUS

Bible Texts: John 1

Introduction

Review lessons 1 -4.

- 1) Lesson 1: How did God create the world? By His Word. What was the condition of the world when He finished creating it? It was perfect.
- 2) Lesson 2: How did the world become so bad? The result of sin.
- 3) Lesson 3: What was the purpose of the Old Testament Law and Prophets? To prepare us to receive the Messiah.
- 4) Lesson 4: What does the Law teach us about redemption? Without blood there is no forgiveness for sins.

What was the theme of the prophets? They prepared the way for the Messiah.

The Bible tells us that the Messiah is the solution to all of our problems. But to understand the solution, we must understand the problem: sin. This has been our main focus. (NOTE: If this needs more explanation use the first part of the 'Steps to God' tract to illustrate how separates sin us from God.) Man is not able to remove the guilt, shame or fear of his sin by religion or good works.

Today's lesson is a simple introduction to the Messiah. We cannot say everything. However, we must remember that the entire Bible, even what was written before the Messiah's birth, was written about Him. He is the focus and the center of the Bible. He is the focus and center of our faith. John 1 gives us five titles for Christ the Messiah. We shall study these titles today.

Titles for Christ in John 1

Jesus is the Word of God. READ: John 1:1-3, 14.

The most important word in this section is 'word'. A word is an important part of the way in which understanding is established between people. How could we understand one another without words? God communicates to us through His Word.

- 1) What are some of the attributes of God's Word we discover in these verses? (Read again if necessary.)
 - a) The Word of God is eternal.
 - b) There is no distinction between God and His Word.
 - c) Everything was made through the Word of God (Remember Genesis 1).
 - d) The Word of God became a person.
- 2) If the Word of God became a person, who do you think that was? Jesus.
- 3) What does it mean that Jesus is the Word of God? He is much more than a prophet. He is the revelation of God to man.
- 4) The Word of God must have authority in our lives. This is why we accept Christ not only as Savior, but also as Lord. He has authority.

Jesus is the Life. READ: John 1:4.

- 1) READ: John 6:35
 - a) Who is the Bread of Life? Jesus.
 - b) What does Jesus mean when He says that we will never be hungry or thirsty? Does He mean physically? No. He means spiritually. We will be satisfied.
- 2) READ: John 6:51.
 - a) Where did Jesus come from? Heaven.
 - b) What will we receive if we eat this bread from heaven? Eternal life.
 - c) What is this bread? The flesh of Christ.
 - d) This is symbolic. It refers to accepting Christ as Savior.

The important point here is that Jesus is Life. There is no eternal life apart from Jesus.

Jesus is the Light. READ: John 1:4-9.

- 1) Explain who John the Baptist was. Do this before reading the passage.

- 2) How is Jesus described here? Light.
- 3) What are some of the things that light does?
 - a) Light reveals the straight path so that we do not fall.
 - b) Light exposes the darkness (darkness is a symbol for sin).
 - c) Light helps living things grow.
- 4) How is Jesus like the light?
 - a) READ: John 8:12. Jesus reveals the way to God.
 - b) READ: John 12:46. Jesus overcomes darkness (sin).

Jesus is the Lamb of God. READ: John 1:29

- 1) What is Jesus called here? The Lamb of God.
- 2) Do you remember why Jesus is called the Lamb of God? Because He was a sacrifice.
- 3) As the Lamb, what does Jesus do? Takes away the sin of the world.
- 4) READ: Hebrews 9:27-28.
 - a) What was Christ's purpose the first time He came to earth? To be a sacrifice for sin.
 - b) What will be His purpose when He comes again? To bring salvation to His followers.

Jesus is the Son of God. READ: John 1:30-34

- 1) What does John call Jesus here? The Son of God.
- 2) There are many misunderstandings concerning this expression.
 - a) It does not mean that He was born in the natural way with God as His father and Mary as His mother. Mary was a virgin. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) It does not mean that God adopted Him as a son. He was not born like the rest of humanity. Because of this He was righteous, without sin.
- 3) The meaning of this expression 'the Son of God' is that Jesus had a unique relationship with God and that He came directly from God.
- 4) After understanding these five titles for Christ, can we still think that Jesus was merely a prophet?

Application Rejecting and Receiving Christ

- 1) READ: John 1:10-11
 - a) What does it mean that the world did not recognize Him? The people did not recognize Him as the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God.
 - b) Who were His own? The Jews.
 - c) Did they accept Him? No.
 - d) Why do people today reject Christ? They accept Him as a prophet or a teacher, but not as the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, or the Son of God.
- 2) READ: John 1:12-13
 - a) What does it mean to receive Christ? To accept Him as the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God.
 - b) What happens to those who receive Christ? They become children of God.
 - c) What does it mean to be a child of God? A child has an inheritance from his father. We inherit eternal life from our father, God.

Closing

- 1) Do you understand what I mean when I say that Jesus is the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God?
- 2) Do you understand how Jesus is Savior? Do you understand how He is Lord?
- 3) There is one more thing that distinguishes Jesus from all of the other prophets: He is alive. Because of this, He is much more than a prophet. Prophets make bad people good, but Jesus makes dead people live. He is the source of life. QUOTE: John 14:6.
- 4) READ: Revelation 3:20. The decision is yours. Do you want to accept Christ and become His child?

Discovery 6

THE PROPER RESPONSE TO GOD

Bible Texts: Various

Introduction

Review Lesson 5: Jesus is the Word of God, the Life, the Light, the Lamb, and the Son of God. Answer any questions.

The lesson today begins with a story. Tell how Saul persecuted the early Christians. Explain how he thought he was obeying God. He thought he was fulfilling the will of God. One day as he was traveling to Damascus to persecute the believers there, something very strange happened to him.

READ: Acts 9:3-9. As Paul traveled, he saw a bright light from heaven:

- a) Who was the light? Jesus.
- b) What were Paul's two questions to Jesus? 'Who are you?' and 'What do you want me to do?'

These are two important questions that we must ask today. In the first five lessons we have tried to answer the question, 'Who is Jesus?' In this lesson we will answer the second, 'What does He want us to do?' This is a very dangerous question because the way you answer it will affect your entire life on earth and your eternal life.

In today's lesson we will answer this question with four points. These are not four steps to arriving at salvation, but one step with four sides. Example: How do you show love to your wife? You are kind, don't hit her, provide for the family, etc. Are these many things? No. They are all expressions of love.

1) **Consider the Cost.** READ: Luke 14:25-30

- a) What do you think Jesus means when He says that we must hate our families and our life? Christ must be our priority. He must come before our families, our job, our house, our honor, etc.
- b) What does He mean when He says that we must carry our cross? The Cross is a symbol of suffering. If we follow Jesus we will suffer. There will be persecution.
- c) What do you think Jesus is telling us in the story of the tower (vv. 28-30)? If you decide to follow Christ it means that you will follow Him, obey Him, in every area of your life.
- d) READ: John 14:15. What is the proof that we love God? Obedience.
- e) The first thing you must do is to consider the cost of following Christ. Do not promise to give Him your life if you are not committed to obeying Him, following Him, and carrying your cross. If you start on this way and then turn back you will bring judgment on yourself.

2) **Repent.**

- a) READ: Matthew 3:1-12. (You may want to read this verse by verse.)
- b) Who was John the Baptist? A prophet. He prepared the Jews to receive the Messiah.
- c) What was John's message? Repent.
- d) What was his message to the religious leaders? Repent.
- e) What were the religious leaders trusting in (v. 9)? They were trusting in their religion. This is why it is so hard for religious people to come to the Messiah. They trust in their religious rituals and they don't think they need to repent.
- f) Repentance is the preparation for experiencing the presence of God.
- g) When we repent we are emptying ourselves of our old life in order to receive a new life.
- h) READ: Luke 18:9-14
 - i) Describe the two men. The Pharisee was a religious man and the tax collector a sinner.
 - ii) Which man repented? The tax collector.
 - iii) Who did Jesus say was justified before God? The tax collector. Why? Because he repented.
 - iv) Repentance means that we confess we are sinners. We confess that we need the grace of God. We confess that we do not deserve God's love. Repentance takes humility.

5) **Have Faith.** READ: John 6:27-29, 40

- a) What kind of work should we do? Work that leads to eternal life.
- b) What is the work that God requires for eternal life? Believing in the one He has sent.

- c) Who is the one He has sent? Jesus.
 - d) What does the word 'faith' mean?
 - i) It does not mean that you believe in God in a general sense.
 - ii) It does not mean that you only believe that Jesus was a prophet or teacher.
 - iii) It means that you believe Jesus is the Savior of the world.
 - iv) It means that you believe He is your personal Savior. You believe that without Him you could not have eternal life.
 - v) It means that you believe that Jesus was without sin, that He died on the Cross for your sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He is coming again.
 - vi) Specifically there is a link between faith and trust. When we have faith, we are trusting God to save us. We are not trusting in our works.
 - vii) When we have faith, God in Jesus satisfies us.
 - e) There are two kinds of faith.
 - i) Religious faith: believing in the doctrines of a religion. It is possible to have religious faith and yet not have a personal relationship with God.
 - ii) Personal faith: opening your heart and life to God through Jesus. This is a personal relationship with God.
- 6) **Receive Christ** READ: John 1:12-13
- a) What happens to those who receive Christ? They become children of God.
 - b) What does it mean to be a child of God? To be an heir of eternal life.
 - c) To accept Christ means that we open our hearts to Christ and allow Him to give us a new life and to change us.
 - d) To accept Christ means that we have personally accepted the way of Christ for our life.
 - e) When we accept Christ He lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

Invitation

- 1) Have you considered the cost of following Christ? Do you understand the commitment?
- 2) Do you confess that you are a sinner in need of God's grace and forgiveness?
- 3) Do you believe that Jesus is the Savior who died on the Cross for you? Do you believe that He is the only way to God? Do you understand that He is much more than a prophet?
- 4) Do you want to accept Christ and allow Him to be your personal Savior and Lord? Are you willing to follow Him?

READ: Romans 10:9-10.

- 1) According to these verses, what are the two things we must do to be saved? Confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that He rose from the dead.
- 2) What is the means of believing? Our heart.
- 3) What is the means of confessing? Our mouth.
- 4) This faith must not be religious faith, but personal faith.
- 5) Would you like to pray now with me to receive Christ?

Salvation Prayer

Oh, Lord Jesus, I confess to you that I am a sinner needing your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins, and now I repent of them. I call on you to enter my life. I am putting my trust in you as Savior, and I will follow you as Lord all of my life. Thank you, Master, Lord, because you have saved me. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.