

Good News Bible Study

When you think about Jesus, does anything about him seem like “good news” to you? When Jesus walked the earth the people around him could genuinely tell he cared. Jesus loved people and if you were around him, his love for you would be obvious. This allowed Jesus to reach into the lives of all kinds of people – from the demon possessed to the outcast of society – Jesus impacted the lives of people because He loves everyone.

Jesus had a positive impact on the lives of those he came into contact with. He healed the sick. Cast out demons. He even raised the dead and returned them alive to their grieving loved ones. If you experienced any of that with Jesus, I imagine it would be natural to think of Jesus as a good news person. Jesus did all of this with a purpose – to demonstrate what life in His kingdom really looked like – a king where sickness, demons and death were no longer present.

Many people think the good news about Jesus is that he came to take away our sins. The idea is that Jesus came to die so we can go to heaven. There is a lot of truth in that but it isn't the whole picture. Having our sins forgiven through Jesus is a huge piece of good news but it isn't the whole story. Through this study, we are going to walk along with Jesus and learn about the good news of the kingdom and what makes that good news for us now, 2000 years later.

During this study we will follow along with Jesus to hear his message and observe his way of life. We will examine what this means for us today and how this good news affects our lives and gives us hope.

Lesson 1: God's Promises

The most well-known verse in the Bible is John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.”

Who doesn't want everlasting life?

God loves all people. He loves His creation. When God created everything, he declared each day that what he had created was “good” (See Genesis 1). There were two things in the first three chapters of Genesis that were not good. When God has created Adam and not yet made Eve (the first two human beings) he declared, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Gen 2:18). God knew people need community. People need relationships.

The second thing that wasn't good was the first sin. As a loving God, God didn't make people to be robots who were always guaranteed to do the right thing. Love requires choice or else it isn't love. God gave Adam and Even free will, the choice to make decisions for how they would live their lives, who they would love, who they would obey (or not), etc.

God gave them one command – to not eat from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden or they would surely die (Gen 2:17). In time, Adam and Eve made one of the most significant choices that has ever been made. They choose to disobey God. They ate the fruit and they became aware of things they had never become aware of before (like the fact that they were naked). While they didn't die in that instant death something changed. They changed that day. Decay entered into their lives. Sin means to disobey God's commands. The end result of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If there had been no sin there would have been no death or disease. Neither sin nor death were part of God's desire for His good creation.

God had a plan for how he would take care of both sin and the consequence of sin – death. We see that plan begin to take shape in Genesis 12 when God calls Abram (who would later have his name changed to Abraham). God tells him to leave his home and go to a new place to live that God would show him. God had in mind to take this old man and his barren elderly wife and raise a nation through their offspring. Using a 90 year-old barren couple to save the world through their future children was like bringing life from death...the exact thing humanity needed!

Read God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:1-11 & 22:17-18

What did God promise Abraham in these verses?

This promise from nearly 4000 years ago is what started Judaism and eventually Christianity. The promise of descendants would start with their son Isaac (Gen 21) and be passed down eventually to Jesus. The Jewish people in the Old Testament were looking for a descendant of Abraham to be born who would do some very special things, fulfilling the promises you just read (see also Genesis 12 & 15). That leads us to the second promise.

Read God's promise to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16

What did God promise King David in these verses?

The book of Genesis was written nearly 2000 years before Jesus was born. 2 Samuel was around 1000 years before Jesus was born. It is important to recognize that these things were not written after the fact. These are prophecies where God tells people in the past of things that will happen at some point in their future.

God promised Abraham that God would bless the nations through his descendants and that this was a forever promise. God promised He would keep a king on the throne of Israel who was a descendant of David forever. Because Israel was constantly occupied by foreign powers they were always going back to their Bible (the Old Testament) for hope and for God's promises of future deliverance from their oppression. They kept looking and waiting for God to fulfill these promises – that the King of the line of David would come and He would liberate the people from their political oppressors.

Read Matthew 1:1

Matthew shows us that Jesus was a descendant of both Abraham and David. Matthew isn't randomly giving us details or trying to see how serious you are about reading the Bible by giving us a list. Matthew is proving something. He is proving the legitimacy of Jesus being the One who was to come and right the wrongs. What Matthew wrote is significant because of what God promised 1,000 and 2,000 years prior. The coming king would have to be a descendant of both Abraham and David.

There's more...

Read Micah 5:2 & Matthew 2:1

We see how God told His people exactly where this new King would be born, the one who would come and rule and deliver God's people. He would be born in Bethlehem. Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Read Hosea 11:1 & Matthew 2:13-19

God has promised that He would call His own Son out of Egypt. This is fulfilled when Jesus was very young in Matthew 2. All of these things were written 500-700 years before Jesus was born.

There are other prophecies like this we can turn to but what we see coming together is a picture of God prophesying these things and them happening just like God said they would. God knows the end from the beginning and is moving things forward to accomplish his purposes to rescue the world!

In the next lesson we turn to Jesus' life from the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) to learn more about who Jesus is and what He came to do.

What made God's promises to Abraham "good news" to Abraham?

What makes God's promises to Abraham "good news" for us today?

What is an "I will" statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Lesson 2: The Good News of the Kingdom

The first time we see Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is at his baptism. The word “baptism” means to be immersed in water. Before Jesus launched into His ministry, He was baptized by John the Baptist.

Read Mark 1:9-13

What happened when Jesus came out of the water?

Of all the baptisms I have ever witnessed I haven't ever heard God speak or seen the Holy Spirit descend on someone in a visible way. Something different was happening with Jesus.

Read Mark 1:14-15

Remember back to Lesson 1 – Israel was expecting a descendant of both Abraham and David to come as the eternal King. The Jewish people in Jesus' day believed that when the eternal King (Messiah) came, he would right all the wrongs and restore Israel to a place of political prominence. It should be no surprise to us that a coming King would pronounce messages about His coming Kingdom.

What does Jesus call on people to do in response to the coming of His Kingdom?

Repent means to change your ways – make a 180° in life. To turn from doing evil things to do right things. This also comes with a change of mind, not just a change of behavior. To think on good things, not on evil things. Jesus wants people who are going to come into His kingdom to live in a way that is consistent with how His kingdom works. When you are used to living by the ways of this world it requires a change, a turn (repentance) to realign with Jesus' kingdom priorities, values and behaviors.

Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36) so we have to learn what life is like in this new kingdom that Jesus rules and reigns supreme in. This change requires us to believe what He is saying (his message) and to repent of whatever is in our lives that runs against Jesus and His kingdom.

Read Mark 1:16-20

When Jesus begins His ministry with a call to the coming kingdom, He invited people to come along with Him. Jesus didn't set up a classroom and stay in one place. He went to the people and invited others to come along with Him.

What did Jesus say he would send His followers to do and what do you think that means?

Sometimes people have a very negative view of themselves and have a difficult time thinking the holy God of the universe would want anything to do with them. Jesus was quite the opposite. When He encountered people at their worst, he offered to help them. God wants all of us to come and follow Jesus (**2 Peter 3:9 & John 3:16**).

There is no better way to live your life than the way of Jesus' kingdom. In Jesus' kingdom wrongs are righted and the broken nature of this world is eventually fixed. Jesus gives us a glimpse at what His kingdom is like in what He does next (Lesson 3).

What made Jesus' invitation for these people to follow Him good news for them?

What makes Jesus' invitation to all people good news for us today?

What is an "I will" statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Lesson 3: Jesus Brings Healing and Wholeness

Jesus' message is communicated in two ways. First there is what he says, "The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" We also learn Jesus' message from watching his actions. Like they say, "actions speak louder than words." At the end of Mark 1 and moving into Mark 2 we get an idea of what makes Jesus the bringer of the good news of the kingdom. Remember, Jesus was the expected coming King. As the coming King, Jesus demonstrates His supreme and sovereign authority over all things on the earth. Part of putting sin and death in their place is to break the power of sin and death. It takes someone with more authority and power to overcome the forces of darkness in order for the kingdom of God to reign.

Read Mark 1:21-28

What do you see Jesus doing in these verses?

How does Jesus get the demon to come out of the man?

Jesus commands the demon out of the man. The demon obeys! Jesus is exerting his authority as Messiah/King. He speaks and demons must obey him. This is because Jesus is the divine King of the divine kingdom and He has more authority than demons and their kingdom, the kingdom of darkness.

What we are seeing in these verses is spiritual warfare. There is a war going on in the world between the forces of darkness/evil and the forces of life/good. It is a power struggle. Jesus' power and authority working on behalf of the hurting and broken is good news for those who are suffering spiritual oppression. Jesus came to liberate people from the power of the devil. If you are undergoing spiritual warfare, Jesus has come to put you in his kingdom where his power and authority can help liberate you from those battles.

Mark 2 opens up with Jesus in Capernaum. In this next story we are going to find out that Jesus cares about bringing people wholeness and healing from their most pressing problems.

Read Mark 1:29-34

What do you see Jesus doing in these verses?

Jesus not only liberates people from demons, he liberates people from dis-ease. While we don't point to a specific sick person and say their sin made them sick the Bible teaches that the result of sin in Genesis 3 was a broken world and part of that broken world is illness and disease (like we covered in Lesson 1).

If all Jesus cared about was forgiving sin he would have just gone around and forgiven sin. But far more often we find Jesus healing people rather than forgiving people. It shows us that making people whole was very important to Jesus because God didn't make the world like this and God is determined to make the world as it was in the beginning – free from demons and disease and death.

The only path to that outcome (a disease and death free world) is for God to send Jesus to set everything in motion to overcome and overpower the forces of darkness to set us free!

With each miracle Jesus does, He gives us an inside look at what is most important to God (that people are made whole physically and spiritually) and that Jesus was making things on earth as they are in heaven (Matt 6:10). There is no disease in heaven. There is no death in heaven. At the end of time Jesus throws death into hell (Revelation 20:14). How does He do that unless He is more powerful than death itself? How does Jesus demonstrate His power over death? We will find out in future lessons!

Revelation 21 is a picture of what eternity is going to be like...a prophesy. Here is what it says, “ (Rev 21:1-5),

“Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!””

We are getting ahead of ourselves a bit but it is important that we know where this whole thing is headed! Jesus’ ministry and miracles give us perspective on what God cares about most. So many people think that they will live in eternity like a ghost...a soul without a body...the Bible never teaches that. We will talk about later but first let’s talk about God’s solution for sin and what that teaches us about who Jesus really is.

What areas of your life are a struggle that you seem to be powerless to do much about?

What made Jesus driving out a demon good news for that demon possessed man?

What makes Jesus power over the forces of darkness good news for us today?

What is an "I will" statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Lesson 4: Jesus Forgives Sin

We have seen Jesus cast out demons and heal diseases. In Mark 2, Jesus takes this a step further in a way that shows us more of who he really is.

Read Mark 2:1-12

What did Jesus do to heal this man?

When a paralyzed person walks again that is good news. It is good news because what was broken and taken from a person is restored. God cares about people being made whole. Jesus also cares about broken relationships – especially between people and God. Sin breaks our relationships with God. It takes forgiveness for that relationships to be set right again. The good news of Jesus is that he has more power than the demons, he has more power than sickness, and he has more power than sin. Jesus can fix all of these things to make people whole again. All three of these things: casting out demons, healing disease, and forgiving sin, are part of making people whole again. Jesus liberates people from what oppresses them in order to restore them back to how God intended their life to be in the beginning. That is good news!

I cannot forgive someone for what they do to you. Only you can do that. Only God can forgive sins against himself. Notice how upset the teachers of the law in the crowd were and what they accused Jesus of in 2:6). They were upset because by forgiving the man's sins Jesus was putting himself in the place of God.

Here is where it gets interesting. Putting yourself on level with God, basically saying you are God, is blasphemy. Jesus was clearly able to heal the man's paralysis. Would God empower Jesus to restore the man's legs if Jesus was also sinning by claiming to be God like this? To put it simply, Jesus' claim to be able to forgive the man's sin is a claim to divinity. And God does not allow those who make false claims about that kind of thing to do miracles. The man standing up was the proof that Jesus was, in fact, on level with God himself.

What makes forgiveness good news?

Read Mark 2:13-17

What do you think Jesus meant by what he said in 2:17?

Tax collectors were considered traitors. Many of them would pay a set fee for the taxes of a village and then go collect as much tax as possible to keep the difference. Jewish tax collectors ran this scheme with their Roman overlords who were non-Jews (Gentiles). In short, they were working with outsiders to steal money from their own people. This Gentile association, paired with their unscrupulous behavior made tax collectors a hated group of people.

Jesus knew Levi needed God too. For anyone to even associate with a tax collector would get them ostracized in the community. Jesus cared more about Levi than He cared about people's opinions. Jesus was willing to take on all kinds of accusations from misunderstanding people if it meant that he could reach just one more person.

What do you think Jesus thinks of you? Why?

Is there any area of your life that you need a doctor on?

So many people look at all the things they have done in their life and assume or conclude God would want nothing to do with them. That wasn't true with Jesus – He truly did love everyone and want what was best for them. Jesus wanted everyone to come into relationship with God and would do whatever He could to help make that happen.

This is good news for us because on our own we are pretty helpless. But with God's power being at work in our lives we have hope and yes, that is good news!

God cares about tax collectors and sinners. He cares about the worst of the worst. He cares about the outcasts and the people no one wants to be around. We often form our view of God based on human relationships – that if we have struggled to feel loved, accepted and a sense of belonging from people (especially from parents) that God too would reject us just like people have. But that isn't true of God.

What made Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners good news for them?

What makes Jesus' willing association with sinners good news for us?

What is an "I will" statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Lesson 5: Jesus Overcomes Death 1

In Mark 5 we have a double miracle. Sometimes these are called sandwich stories where one story starts, another story interrupts and then the first story comes back around.

Read Mark 5:21-43

It is hard for us to appreciate or empathize with this woman's situation to the extent that it was a problem 2000 years ago. According to the Old Testament, a woman on her cycle was unclean and couldn't do certain things in the community. Being in this state perpetually would have put this woman on the margin of her community.

How does Jesus heal the woman?

Jesus exudes power and authority...so much so that her touching him healed her! Jesus not only has power over disease and demons and sin...Jesus has authority over death. Resurrection is the ultimate good news – it is one thing to be healed from disease. It is quite another thing to be brought back from the dead!

How did Jesus raise the dead girl?

Jesus used a command. He used a command because Jesus has authority to command dead people to come back to life and he has the power to bring them back! Remember Genesis 1? God spoke and things came into existence. That is because God has supreme power and authority. Not even sin and death can resist His command. Jesus merely needs to say something for new things to come into existence!

Remember when Jesus was baptized and God called Jesus his "Son"? Jesus is the divine Son of God. Like God the Father...Jesus speaks and things happen. Demons obey. Sins are forgiven. Illness goes away. The dead hear his command and even they obey him and bodies come back to life!

That is incredible power. And Jesus wants to use that power in our lives (Eph 1:17-21)! This is good news! God doesn't leave us without hope. God doesn't leave us without a way back to Him. God is giving us a way back through Jesus – the good news of the kingdom. Jesus' kingdom

is breaking into this world – sins are forgiven, the dead got their lives back, sicknesses were healed. All of this was done by the authority of King Jesus to show us what life is really like in his kingdom.

Every person Jesus raised from the dead would die again one day but it is all demonstrating something even more important that we will get to in the next lesson.

What made their daughter raised back to life good news for them?

What makes Jesus' resurrection power good news for us?

What is an "I will" statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Lesson 6: Jesus Overcomes Death 2

Let's hit pause for a moment and consider what we have learned about Jesus. We learned Israel had hundreds of years of prophesy and God's promises of a coming King. That King would be a descendant of Abraham and David (as we saw of Jesus in Matthew 1:1). That King would come out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 & Matt 2:1) to liberate the people and bless the nations, just as God promised Abraham his descendant would do.

We are seeing exactly what God had in mind. God didn't have in mind a political kingdom where Jesus would kick Caesar off the throne and take charge in that way (remember John 18:36 from Lesson 2 – Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world in competition with Caesar or Pilate or Rome). Jesus came to bring the kingdom of heaven here to earth – where God's will for the world and humanity is done. Sickness is not the will of God. Death is not the will of God. Demon-possession is not the will of God. Jesus came to set people free from the forces of darkness that bind people up. It was true then and it is true now.

That brings us to Mark 8 – Peter's confession. Up to this point the disciples have experienced all these things. They have watched Jesus exert his power and everything from demons to dead people and they all obeyed him...they have watched him forgive sins and multiply bread in the wilderness to feed the 4000 (Mark 8:1-13).

What does all of this tell us about who Jesus really is?

Read Mark 8:27-30

Notice Jesus changes the question from the first time he asks it to the second time he asks it. The first time Jesus asks who people say He is (8:27). The disciples report some of what they hear (8:28). Then Jesus asks them directly "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

8:29 - "Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah.'"

Messiah is a Hebrew word that means "Anointed one". In Greek the word is "Christos" that we get "Christ" from. "Anointed one" is a king. When you say "Jesus Christ" you are saying "Jesus the anointed One" or "King Jesus". Peter declares Jesus as the coming King of Israel who they had been expecting based on the scriptures we covered (as well as many other prophesies we didn't get to cover) in Lesson 1. See **Appendix 1** for more scripture fulfilled.

After all you have seen and heard from Jesus in the gospel of Mark, how would you answer Jesus' question? Who do you say He is?

Read Mark 8:31-38

Once Jesus heard Peter's answer, Jesus finally gave them clear teaching on Jesus being Messiah really meant and it wasn't what they expected. All their lives they expected a King who would come do what any king as powerful as Messiah would do – take control of the world, sit on a throne, kick out the powers that be and establish His kingdom in place of Rome and all the other competing kingdoms out there (see their question in **Acts 1:6**). But Jesus doesn't say that is how it is going to happen. Instead He says He is going to suffer and die and then rise again.

Peter doesn't understand. Peter rebukes Jesus. Last, Jesus calls his disciples to come and follow in his footsteps by them too taking up their own crosses to follow Jesus.

This kingdom living wasn't going the way they expected! It appeared the one who had come to claim victory was going to be defeated and do so willingly. The kingdom of God doesn't work by the rules of the kingdoms of this world. God had another plan because God was dealing with fixing the system, not just tidying things up and keep them running as they were. God was sending Jesus to bring in the kingdom and that meant taking on sickness, demons and spiritual forces of darkness, sin and ultimately death...and unlike anyone who had come before Him or who came after Jesus...Jesus would win!

There are still two more steps we need to take from Jesus doing all of these things to Jesus doing his final two acts to bring his kingdom to fulfillment and subdue the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of darkness.

The first step is that Jesus would take on death head on. Jesus would go through death and come out on the other side alive....alive in a way unlike all those who had come back from the dead before (like the dead girl in the last lesson). Jesus would be raised incorruptible...never to be sick again, never to die again. His resurrected body would be new creation life. Every person who had ever been raised from the dead died again. They died again because they were raised back in the same kind of body they had when they died – a body that is corruptible. Jesus would die and rise into the same physical body but in a new state – his old body raised incorruptible (Read 1 Corinthians 15 for more information on resurrection).

Read John 19-20

We see in John 20:24-29 that Jesus didn't get a new body. They couldn't find the old body because the body rose from the dead. Again, not like others who had been raised from the dead, though, Jesus was raised incorruptible – to never die again. His raised body bore the marks of his crucifixion...and yet Jesus' resurrection body was in a new state – the first human being to ever experience that. Jesus had overcome death itself!

And that is good news! It is good news that there is a way for death to no longer get the final word for our lives. There is hope beyond the grave and just like Jesus invited those fishermen to

follow Him in His ministry, He now invites us to follow Him to and through death to come out the other side victorious just as He is victorious over death!

John 20:31 says, “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

There is a final step – will we believe in Jesus to have life in Him? Will we choose to follow Him and have hope that can ever overcome death itself?

What made Jesus’ resurrection from the dead good news for them?

What makes Jesus’ resurrection from the dead good news for us?

What is an “I will” statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Lesson 7: Blessing the Nations

Remember how in lesson 1 there were two “not good” things that happened with Adam and Eve? The first was that it wasn’t good for Adam to be alone. The second was their sin and rebellion. In Christ, God was resolving both of those problems. He was doing so through the work of Jesus and then through the work of the Holy Spirit to gather a people (a community) for himself that would be the forgiven community where no one had to go on the journey alone.

Read Acts 2

In Lesson 1 we saw how God made a promise about how a descendant of Abraham would bless the nations. That promise is fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus said he came first for the house of Israel (Matt 15:24) but not just for the descendants of Abraham. Jesus ultimately blessed the nations through allowing those who were not Jewish to become part of God’s family (John 10:16).

Most of us are not Jewish. We are Gentiles (everyone who is not Jewish). God didn’t just want to bless Abraham’s descendants. He wanted to bless the whole world. God loves the whole world (John 3:16) and wants to reconcile the world to himself through Jesus (2 Cor 5:19).

Jesus promised that when He left that the Holy Spirit would come to help his apostles continue in the mission of proclaiming the kingdom. That is exactly what happens in Acts 2. The Spirit comes, Jesus is preached, and people respond.

How do we see the crowd respond to this message in 2:37?

How does Peter answer their question in 2:38-40?

3000 people put their faith in Jesus, repented and were baptized to receive the Holy Spirit to dwell in them from that point onward! What an unbelievable day that must have been!

Read Acts 2:42-47

Those new disciples met every single day to grow in their knowledge, faith and relationships in their newfound faith community.

What kinds of things were they doing?

Where were they meeting and how often?

What do you think it would have been like to be part of a community like this?

This is what God designed church to be like – close connections, helping each other, blessings others, being in the Word (apostles' teaching) and prayer together. Living and serving and loving like this creates a community that can change the world. And they would change the world.

So far the message was still among the Jewish people but that would soon change.

Read Acts 10

We are now seeing the promise to Abraham becoming reality – through the descendants of Abraham that all the nations of the world would be blessed. Jesus had made a way to bring people into the family of God without having to become Jewish first.

It was a great mystery exactly how God would bring the Jewish people and the Gentiles together into one perfectly unified family. God would do so through sending Jesus that those who place their faith in Jesus would be able to join the family of faith (See **Ephesians 3:1-6**).

You will notice that the Gentile Cornelius, and his family, were all baptized into Christ just as the Jewish believers were in Acts 2. God had offered salvation to the whole world through Jesus and access to the same promises – hope of eternal life through our future resurrection and entrance into the kingdom of God!

God sent Jesus to make us whole. Jesus makes us whole by his divine authority where he will eventually subdue every power, every authority that stands between us and God (Read **Romans 8:31-38**).

Have you joined this faith community like we see in Acts 2:42-47? Today we call this “church” which really isn’t a building or an address. Church is a people – God’s people.

If you want to be part of this Jesus' community – those who have received the Holy Spirit as Peter promised we would must also respond to God in faith in the way Peter also told us – to repent and be baptized. We then become the good news people as we live out the kingdom life in the world, helping and loving those around us!

If this is something you have done before – how is the church (God's people) good news to you?

If this is something you haven't done, do you have any desire to respond to the message of Jesus to be blessed by God's promises here and now and have hope beyond the grave in the future?

What is an "I will" statement you can live out this week based on what you have learned?

Appendix 1 – Scriptures Fulfilled by Jesus

Genesis 12:1-3 & Matthew 1:1

Genesis 49:10 & Luke 3:33

Deuteronomy 18:15-16 & John 5:45-47

2 Samuel 7:12-16 & Matthew 1:1

Psalms 16:9-11 & Acts 2:31

Psalms 22 & Matthew 27, John 19

Psalms 31:11 & Mark 14:50

Psalms 69:21 & Matt 27:34

Psalms 78:1-2 & Matt 13:34-35

Isaiah 6:9-10 & Matt 13:13-15

Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:22-23

Isaiah 8:14 & 1 Peter 2:7-8

Isaiah 9:1-2 & Matt 4:12-17

Isaiah 25:7-8 & 1 Cor 15:54

Isaiah 35:5-6 & Matt 11:2-6

Isaiah 40:3-4 & John 1:23

Isaiah 53 & Various passages in the Gospels

- **53:1 & John 12:37-41, Romans 10:16-17**
- **53:4 & Matthew 8:14-17**
53:4-6, 9 & 1 Peter 2:19-25
- **53:7 & Matt 27:14**
- **53:7-8 & Acts 8:32-35**
- **53:12 & Luke 22:36-38**
- **And many more...**

Isaiah 61:1 & Luke 4:16-21

Jeremiah 31:31 & Matt 26:28

Hosea 11:1 & Matthew 2:14-15

Micah 5:2 & Matt 2:4-6

Zechariah 9:9 & Matt 21:8-10

Zechariah 11:12-13 & Matt 27:6-10

Malachi 4:5-6 & Matthew 11:10-15

Exodus 12:46 & John 19:31-36

Appendix 2 - Further Evidence About Jesus

Part 1 - Evidence that We Can Trust the Bible

Some people will point out that there are thousands of variations in the ancient copies of scripture we have discovered. They will say all that variety proves we cannot trust the Bible. Scriptures are handed down by people who copied by hand. Copies of copies will contain variations. You might misspell a word, leave out a word, or miss an entire line of a verse as you copy. Most of the variations that exist are extremely minor: things like misspelled words and words or lines that got left out as someone was making a copy. There are two things you need to know when it comes to these differences:

1. No major teaching of the Christian faith depends on any of these variations
2. We can be certain that 95% of what we read are the exact words from the original. That is impressive given that the New Testament was written nearly 2000 years ago.

Conclusion – The Bible we hold in our hands is accurate. That is an important conclusion because we are basing our faith on the evidence provided in the Bible about who Jesus is and about how he wants us to live.

Part 2 - Proof of Jesus' existence outside the Bible

There are two types of writing from Jesus' day that give proof about Jesus' existence.

Christian writings – The New Testament The New Testament gives information about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is written by his followers after his death. It is written from the perspective of multiple insiders and followers of Jesus.

Non-Christian First Century Writing:

This is an important group of writings because it is coming from people who didn't have an agenda when it came to matters of faith. They testify that Jesus was a real man, was crucified and raised from the dead.

Pliny – A Roman who wrote about the attempts to get Christians to deny Christ as divine and the punishments they inflicted on Christians in order to get them to confess Caesar instead. Here is what Pliny wrote,

“Those who denied they were, or had ever been, Christians, who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered adoration, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the Gods, and who finally cursed Christ; none of which acts, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing; these I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by that informer at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion but they had quitted it, some three years, others many years, and a few as

much as twenty five years ago. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, and cursed Christ. They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food; but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.” (Pliny 10.96)

Tacitus – Another Roman who wrote that Jesus was a real man who was arrested and tried by Pilate and who was given the sentence of capital punishment. Here is what he wrote,

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car.” (Tacitus, 15.44)

Suetonius– wrote about why Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius in 49, that their leader was a name named Chrestus (Christ)

“As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome.” (Suetonius, 25.4)

Josephus (Jewish) – He was a Jewish historian who wrote about Jesus as the messiah, his miracles, death and resurrection. He also writes about James as the brother of Jesus.

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.” (Antiquities 18.3.3)

This helps us see that Jesus is not just a made up character by a bunch of men in the first century but that he was a real man who was crucified under Pilate and some of them even agree he was raised from the dead.

Part 3 - What happened to Jesus followers?

Let's assume that Jesus didn't actually rise from the grave. All of Jesus' followers are let down, depressed and upset. They have lost all their hope. Would you continue to follow a man who promised he would rise from the dead in three days but who stayed dead days, weeks, and even years later?

Here is what happened to Jesus' followers:

- Andrew – crucified for his faith in Jesus
- Bartholomew – crucified for his faith in Jesus
- James – stoned for his faith
- James son of Zebedee – killed with a sword
- John – died of old age
- Matthew – died naturally
- Simon Peter – crucified
- Philip – crucified
- Simon – died naturally
- Thaddeus – died naturally
- Thomas – killed with a spear

7 of the 11 died for their faith that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Would you die for a lie? If the resurrection didn't happen these guys would not have stood firm in their faith. If a court asked you to choose between Caesar as Lord or Jesus as Lord and choosing Jesus meant death, would you still choose Jesus if he hadn't risen from the dead? Their willingness to die points to the truth of the resurrection.

Appendix 3 - Other religions

Christianity is different from every other religion known to man. Every other religion is about how you work your way to the goal. A brief summary of how the other three main religions say we solve the problems of life and gain the life we were meant to live give these solutions:

Islam – submit perfectly to the will of Allah and you can go to heaven

Buddhism – empty yourself of all desire so you can blend into a sea of nothingness

Hinduism – Through meditation and seeing through the illusion of the world around us we move up the reincarnation ladder toward our escape into Brahman

The common theme is that the burden is on us to get it all perfect. There is no room for grace. There is no one reaching down to pull us out of this mess. That is where Christianity is different. Christianity says God is reaching down toward us and has provided the answers for life's problems through Jesus Christ. God offers us grace and an abundant hope because our destiny is not based upon our ability to work the system perfectly but to put our faith in the One who did, Jesus Christ. In him and through him we receive eternal life.