

LESSON 2: FINDING JESUS, THE WAY

Following Jesus as the Way means following His example and teaching. He said, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

Jesus chided the people of His day who claimed to accept Him as Lord, but disregarded His teaching. "And why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46).

The Bible is the only dependable source of information about Jesus. Producers of films and authors of novels take many liberties in dealing with stories about Him. Many parents and acquaintances who talk to us about Jesus have never made a serious study of the Bible. Often preachers and teachers who have studied the Bible for years add so many of their own opinions and philosophies that we can scarcely know what is from the Bible and what is not; the fact that they differ so widely is proof that many are mistaken. It is essential, therefore, that each of us make his own study of the original source of truth concerning Jesus.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Bible is divided into two major divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The writing of the Old Testament was completed 400 years before Jesus was born, yet it contains many things about Him.

The Old Testament provides glimpses of Jesus in a pre-fleshly state. When God was about to make man, He said to another divine being: "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26).

The New Testament identifies this divine being as "the Word". "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

The Old Testament predicts His birth of a virgin. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The name Immanuel means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

The Old Testament even predicts the place of His birth in Micah 5:2.

JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

The New Testament records the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions. John testifies: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Four writers give accounts of His life. These accounts are commonly called the Gospels, a word which means "good news". Each of the writers seems to emphasize something different about Jesus.

MATTHEW emphasizes His teaching, especially that concerning the "Kingdom of heaven".
MARK features the miracles of Jesus, showing His power.
LUKE seems to stress the perfect humanity of Jesus without detracting from His divinity.
JOHN seems to stress the perfect divinity of Jesus without detracting from His humanity.

Though different, the gospels give a perfectly harmonious description of one person, the greatest of history. No one can know JESUS, THE WAY who has not read these records carefully. Reading them, we may well be surprised to find how far the real Jesus differs from the imaginary one who has been created in our minds by the misinformation so commonly circulated among us.

JESUS IN ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

The gospels do not contain all of the teaching of Jesus. They report only the teaching which He did while on earth. This had to be limited to what His disciples could comprehend in the short time that He was with them. Before He left them, He told them of the arrangement by which He would continue to speak to them: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:12-14).

The Holy Spirit came upon them soon after Jesus returned to Heaven. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

This means that the preaching and writing of the inspired apostles, which we find in the remainder of the New Testament, are as much the teaching of Jesus as what we read in the gospels. The apostle Paul wrote: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37).

NO OTHER REVELATIONS

The revelation of Jesus and His teaching in the New Testament is complete. The writers warned: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

The writer of the last book of the New Testament gives warning: "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18).

OLD OR NEW TESTAMENT?

Though many things about Jesus are foretold and foreshadowed in the Old Testament, it is in the New that God speaks to us through Him. "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His

son" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

This means that we must not go back to the Old Testament to learn how to follow Jesus, the Way. The law was intended simply to bring men to Jesus. Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24-25).

To test your comprehension of what you've just studied, email the answers to the questions below to the address on our "Contact us" page. Your graded responses will be returned by e-mail. Be sure to include your name and email address.

Lesson 2 - Finding Jesus, The Way

1. The _____ was with God in the beginning and the Word was _____ (John 1:1).
2. Isaiah foretold that a _____ would conceive and bear a son (Isaiah 7:14).
3. The name of the virgin's son, Immanuel, means " _____ with us" (Matthew 1:23).
4. John says the Word became _____ and dwelt among us (John 1:14).
5. There were many things Jesus could not tell His apostles while He was on the earth because they were not able to _____ them (John 16:12).
6. Jesus sent the _____ to guide His apostles into all truth (John 16:13).
7. On Pentecost the apostles spoke as the _____ gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).
8. Paul said the things he wrote were the commandments of the _____ (1 Corinthians 14:37).
9. Anyone who preaches another gospel (good news) than what the apostles preached is to be _____ (Galatians 1:8).
10. What will be added to those who add to the prophecy of the last book of the New Testament? _____ (Revelation 22:18)
11. God spoke in times past to the _____ by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us through His _____ (Hebrews 1:1-2).
12. The Law was our _____ to bring us to Christ, but now we are no longer under a _____ (Galatians 3:24-25).
13. Where does Micah 5:2 predict that the ruler of God's people would be born -- Jerusalem, Rome, Bethlehem or Nazareth?
14. Two of the gospels give details of the birth of Jesus within their first two chapters. Which two -- Matthew, Mark, Luke or John?

15. Which is the shortest of the gospels -- Matthew, Mark, Luke or John?

16. Which is longer, the Old Testament or the New Testament?

Comments/questions:

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