RELATE CHURCH

Journey 1 · Relationship · Lesson 2 of 3

What is Mankind's Biggest Problem? Is it Sin?

Relate Church • Foundations for a Growing Faith

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16

What is Sin?

Sin is best defined as anything done that isn't done in **love**.

Sin is a word that means *missed the mark*. Love is the mark; sin is missing that mark.

For example, if someone is using cocaine with a friend, why is that wrong? Even if the friend is happy about it, if it causes their God-given life's purpose to not be able to be accomplished, I'm a part of that. If I participate in anything that will shorten their lifespan, bring harm or punishment to them, or cause separation from those who love them, that's sin.

Under the Old Covenant, sin was failing to live up to God's law and standard of perfection. But under the New Covenant, it's bigger than that. It's about **relationship**.

> [23] *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
>
> **Romans 3:23 NIV**

Sin is anything that slows down my pursuit of God.

> [1] *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*
>
> **Hebrews 12:1 NIV**

What is God's Law Under the Old Covenant?

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:3-17.

What is God's Law Under the New Covenant?

> [34] *Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.* [35] *One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:* [36] *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"* [37] *Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'* [38] *This is the first and greatest commandment.* [39] *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* [40] *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*
>
> **Matthew 22:34-40 NIV**

Who Has Broken God's Law? Who Has Sinned?

All have sinned.

> [10] *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;"*
>
> **Romans 3:10 NIV**

> [23] *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
>
> **Romans 3:23 NIV**

How Bad Do I Have to be to be Guilty of Sin?

One wrong makes one guilty.

> [17] *Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*
>
> **James 4:17 NIV**

What Are the Results of Sin?

The immediate results are found in Genesis 3:7-13: **shame** (v.7), **we isolate ourselves from God** (vv.8-10), **fear** (v.10), and **excuses** (vv.11-13).

> [7] *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.* [8] *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.* [9] *But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"* [10] *He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."* [11] *And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"* [12] *The man said, "The woman you put here with me–she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."* [13] *Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*
>
> **Genesis 3:7-13 NIV**

The long-range results are found in Genesis 3:14-17: the serpent was cursed (v.14), Satan was condemned (v 14), woman was to experience pain in child-bearing and to struggle with her role in reference to her husband (v.15), man was to work a now cursed earth (v.17), the earth was now abiding under a curse (vv.17-18), and all of mankind was to experience death (v.19).

For unbelievers sin makes it impossible for them to please God (John 6:63; Romans 7:18; 8:9) and deserving of death (Romans 6:23). The word **death** denotes **separation**.

- Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body.
- Spiritual death is separation of the soul from God (Ephesians 2:1-3; Isaiah 59:1-2).
- Ultimate death is eternal separation from God (Matthew 25:46).

How is the Sin Problem Resolved?

Under the Old Covenant, priests offered blood sacrifices to serve as a temporary covering of the believer's sins.

> [4]*Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.* [5]*Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD.* [6]*Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar.* [7]*Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."* [8]*Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."*
>
> **Exodus 24:4-8 NIV**

The death of the innocent sacrifice in place of the death of the sinner.
Leviticus 9:7-22, 16:6-22 :: Hebrews 9:1, 6-7

Under the New Covenant, Christ offered the sacrifice of His own blood as a permanent payment for sin, the death of the innocent and perfect sacrifice in place of the death of sinners.
Hebrews 9:11-28 :: Romans 6:23 :: 1 Peter 3:18

In the Old Testament the covenant of forgiveness went into effect when the sinner offered the sacrifice. Today it goes into effect when the sinner puts faith in the sacrifice made by Christ.
John 3:16-18, 3:36 :: Romans 3:22-26 :: Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9

Fact: We are all sinners.

> [10]*As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;"*
>
> **Romans 3:10 NIV**

> [23]*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
>
> **Romans 3:23 NIV**

Fact: Sin results in death.

> [23] *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 NIV*
> *Isaiah 59:1-2 ::*
>
> **Matthew 25:26**

Mankind + Sin = Death

Fact: Jesus never sinned.

> [5] *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin."*
>
> **1 John 3:5 NIV**

> [15] *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are–yet was without sin.*
>
> **Hebrews 4:15 NIV**

Fact: Jesus deserved life.

If the wages of sin is death, then the wages of perfect righteousness must be life. If death is separation, then life must relate to union. Physical life is the union of the soul with the body. Spiritual life is the union of the soul with God and eternal life is the union of the souls with God forever in heaven.

Jesus - Sin = Life

Fact: Jesus died.
Romans 6:23 :: Matthew 27:26, 45-46

Fact: Jesus provided life for us.

> [18] *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 1 Peter 3:18 NIV*
> *Romans 6:10 :: Hebrews 10 :: Isaiah 53:4-5 :: 1 Peter 2:24 ::*
>
> **2 Corinthians 5:21**

Jesus - Sin + Death = Life For Us

Fact: Jesus is our bridge to God.

> [3] *This is good, and pleases God our Savior,* [4] *who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* [5] *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* [6] *who gave himself as a ransom for all men–the testimony given in its proper time.*
>
> **1 Timothy 2:3-6 NIV**

He died to bring us to God, to be our bridge (mediator) to God.

If this is the case, that Jesus died for all of our sins, is sin mankind's biggest problem?

Mankind's Biggest Problem is About Relationship

Sin is All About Relationship

> [12] *So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.* [13] *Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.* [14] *I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean.* [15] *If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.* [16] *Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil.* [17] *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,* [18] *because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.* [19] *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.* [20] *Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.* [21] *It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.*
>
> **Romans 14:12-22 NIV**

Jesus fulfilled the law in that He made sin about our relationship with Him and others.

Sin is now based on the law of love.

- Is how I am treating this person good for them?
- Am I living a life of true love for God and others?

As a Christian, instead of sin causing you to isolate yourself from God and others and selfishness taking over, you can become grateful!

As a Christian, you can know that your sin is covered. God wants you to see it, confess, and go make it right. Instead of getting stuck in your shame and trapped in selfishness, begin to say, "God, thank you for your forgiveness. I'm so grateful, I will make this right. You are my God and I want to be as generous and gracious to others as you are to me!"

> *40 Jesus said, "Simeon, I have a word for you." "Go ahead, Teacher. I want to hear it," he answered.*
> *41 "It's a story about two men who were deeply in debt. One owed the bank one hundred thousand dollars, and the other only owed ten thousand dollars. 42 When it was obvious that neither of them would be able to repay their debts, the kind banker graciously wrote off the debts and forgave them all that they owed. Tell me, Simeon, which of the two debtors would be more thankful? Which one would love the banker most?" 43 Simeon answered, "I suppose it would be the one with the greater debt forgiven." "You're right," Jesus agreed.*
>
> **Luke 7:40-43 TPT**

> *1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*
>
> **1 John 2:1-2 (NIV)**

It is important to not reduce the freedom God gave us to legalism (some find peace in religious bondage). The early church, the Apostle Paul specifically, fought for the continued freedom from the law they had found in Christ (such as Paul rebuking Peter in Galatians 2:11-21).

Salvation is All About Relationship

From Adam to Jesus, the greatest barrier between humans and God was sin. Because God is just, He could not even begin to have a relationship with a human without some sort of justice being brought to that human's sin through a sacrifice. That is why God had the Israelites performing sacrifices to cover over their past sins. God wanted to have a relationship with them.

But God had a better plan. A plan to make a sacrifice once and for all so that the legal part, justice, was taken care of. That is why Jesus came and died. A perfect human tasted of death. He became the sacrifice once and for all.

What Does it Mean to Be "Born Again"?

This question is important because unless one has been born again, they can never even see, let alone enter, the kingdom of God.

> [3] *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

> [5] *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

> [7] *"You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"*
>
> **John 3:3, 5, 7 NIV**

What Did Jesus Not Mean When He Said "Born Again?"

> [1] *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.* [2] *He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."* [3] *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.'"* [4] *"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"* [5] *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.* [6] *Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.* [7] *You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'* [8] *The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."*
>
> **John 3:1-8 NIV**

Sometimes in order to understand what something means, it is helpful to determine what it does not mean. The Bible teaches that being 'born again' does not mean several things.

Being Born Again Does Not Mean Being Religious

He did not mean being **religious** (John 3:1-7).

1. Nicodemus already was religious. In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3). He was a Jew. Beyond that, he was a Pharisee. Beyond that, he was a leader of the Pharisees!
2. Nicodemus' religion was not good enough. Jesus still told him that he had to be born again (John 3:3-7).

3. The apostle Paul, after being born again, stated that in terms of eternal benefit, all of his pre-born again religion was worthless.

> [1] *Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.* [2] *Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.* [3] *For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh–* [4] *though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:* [5] *circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;* [6] *as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.* [7] *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.* [8] *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ* [9] *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ–the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*
>
> **Philippians 3:1-9 NIV**

Being Born Again Does Not Mean Baptism

He did not mean being **baptized**.

1. In this chapter the requisite for salvation is belief, not baptism.

> [16] *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* [17] *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.* [18] *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*
>
> **John 3:16-18 NIV**

> [36] *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*
>
> **John 3:36 NIV**

2. Baptism is a **work** and as such cannot save. "By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:2) " For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourself, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)
3. The passage used by some to teach the necessity of baptism actually teaches that belief, not baptism, is the requirement for salvation.

> [15] *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.* [16] *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*
>
> **Mark 16:15-16 NIV**

4. Baptism is not central to the gospel.

> [17] *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel–not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 1:17 NIV**

Being Born Again Does Not Mean Reformation

He did not mean **reformation**.

*Reformation is the notion that one can turn over a **new leaf** or **clean up their act** and get to God. The Bible teaches that this is impossible.*

1. Reformation does not **erase** past sins.

> [23] *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
>
> **Romans 3:23 NIV**

> [10] *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*
>
> **James 2:10 NIV**

> [22] *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*
>
> **Hebrews 9:22 NIV**

2. Reformation does not **produce** works of righteousness that please God.

> [6] *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*
>
> **Isaiah 64:6 NIV**

3. Reformation does not **save**.

> [5] *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*
>
> **Titus 3:5 NIV**

What Did Jesus Mean When He Said "Born Again"?

Being born again is not a matter of generation, confirmation, perspiration, inspiration, educational, reformation, aspiration, or inclination. Now that what we know what born again does not mean, let's see what it does mean.

A Second Birth is Required

Being born again requires a **second birth**.

> [3] *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.'"* [4] *"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"* [5] *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.* [6] *Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.* [7] *You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'* [8] *The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."*
>
> **John 3:3-8 NIV**

Our first, physical birth is not sufficient. A second, spiritual birth is required. Verse 3 says that in order to see the kingdom of God one must be born again. Verse 4 tells us that this was not speaking of a return to the womb. Verse 7 reemphasizes the absolute necessity of being born again.

A Spiritual Birth is Required

Being born again requires a **spiritual birth** (John 3:3-7 above).

1. Our first birth is corrupted by our sin nature, called the flesh.

- Romans 5:12, 19, all have sinned.
- John 6:63, the flesh counts for nothing (the flesh is our sin nature).
- Romans 7:18, nothing good resides in the sinful nature.
- Romans 8:9, the flesh or sinful nature cannot please God.
- Galatians 5:19-22, the works of the flesh are awful and will keep one from inheriting heaven.

2. Jesus contrasts the physical birth, with the spiritual birth - "born of flesh" vs "born of the Spirit" (John 3:3-6 above).
3. Jesus describes the spiritual birth as being like the wind, invisible except for its results. "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:8 above).

A New, Life-Giving Birth is Required

Being born again requires a new, life-giving birth.

1. Prior to being born again one is spiritually dead because of sin.

> [1] *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,* [2] *in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.* [3] *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*
>
> **Ephesians 2:1-3 NIV**

2. After being born again one becomes a new creation spiritually.

> [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*
>
> **2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV**

A Choice is Required

Being born again requires a **choice**.

> [12] *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, [even] to those who believe in His name,* [13] *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
>
> **John 1:12-13 NASB95**

John Wesley near the end of his life was asked, "Why do you always preach that 'Ye must be born again'?" "It's simple," he replied, "because, ye must be born again."

Just as there was a definite date, time, and place of your physical birth, there is a definite date, time, and place of one's spiritual birth.

- Do you know the date, time, and place of your spiritual birth?
- Do you know if you have been born again?

- If not, will you choose to be born again tonight; on this date, at this time, at this place? "Now is the time of God's favor. Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Who Is Jesus?

Why is it important to know who Jesus is? Because as one man has noted, "Christianity is Christ. The person and work of Christ are the rock upon which the Christian religion is built. If He is not who He said He was, and if He did not do what He said He came to do, the foundation is undermined and the whole superstructure will collapse. Take Christ from Christianity; and you disembowel it; there is practically nothing left. Christ is the center of Christianity; all else is circumference." (John Stott)

The Bible tells us that the identity of Jesus Christ is the basis of salvation (Acts 4:12), and that only by believing in Him can we be saved (John 3:16-18, 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).

Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Of all great religious teachers, Jesus was the most self-directed in His teaching and outlandish in His claims.

His Indirect Claims of Who He Was

Jesus claimed to be the answer to the needs of people.

1. John 6:35 the **bread** of life.
2. John 8:12; 9:5 the light of the world.
3. John 10:9 the gate to salvation. Shepherds served as human gates for the sheep pens at night in order to protect the sheep.
4. John 10:11 the good shepherd.
5. John 11:25-26 the resurrection and the life.
6. John 14:6 the **way**, the truth and the life.

Man + Sin = Death Romans 6:23 Jesus - Sin = Life

Jesus + Our Sin = Death on Cross 1 Peter 3:18

Us + His righteousness = Eternal life 2 Corinthians 5:21

7. John 15:1, 5 the true vine.
8. John 5:36, 45 the one the Old Testament was talking about (the Messiah or the Christ).

His Claims of Authority

Jesus claimed to have the authority to do things only God could do.

Authority to Forgive Sins

[1] A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. [2] So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. [3] Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. [4] Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. [5] When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." [6] Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, [7] "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" [8] Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? [9] Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? [10] But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins …." He said to the paralytic, [11] "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." [12] He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Mark 2:1-12 NIV

Luke 7:36-50

Authority to Give Life

[21] "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes."

John 5:21 NASB95

John 17:1-2

Authority to Judge the World

[22] "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,"

John 5:22 NIV

[25] "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. [26] For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. [27] And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. [28] Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice [29] and come out– those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

John 5:25-29 NIV

His Direct Claims of Who He Was

Jesus said He was the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament (John 4:25-26) and He is God Himself.

Responding to Jesus is Responding to God

1. He equated one's response to Him with their response to God.

> [19] *Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."*
>
> **John 8:19 NIV**

He is the I AM/Jehovah/Yahweh/God Himself

He claimed to be the "I Am"/Jehovah/Yahweh/God Himself.

> [51] *I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." [52] At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. [53] Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" [54] Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. [55] Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. [56] Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." [57] "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" [58] "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" [59] At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*
>
> **John 8:51-59 NIV**

He Claimed to be God

Jesus claimed to be **God** because He said that He and the Father are one.

> [30] *"I and the Father are one." [31] Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, [32] but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" [33] "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."*
>
> **John 10:30-33 NIV**

Our Choice Concerning His Identity

Fact: Jesus claimed to be God.

If His Claims About Himself Are False

If His claims about Himself are **false**, He is not God. If you do not believe His claim that He is God, then you are left with two choices. Either:

- He thought He was God, but was mistaken, which would mean that Jesus was a lunatic.
  or
- He knew He was not God, and He lied, which would mean that Jesus was a liar.

If you do not believe that He is God, it is impossible to accept Him as some great moral teacher. Great moral teachers are not liars or lunatics at the same time they are great moral teachers.

If His Claims About Himself Are True

If His claims about Himself are **true**, He is God.

Fact: Jesus is Lord.

Before you say that Jesus is God—He is the Lord—realize that such a statement has deeply significant moral implications. If He is Lord, you had better be willing to do what He says.

Jesus Fulfilled Prophecies Made Long Ago

There are hundreds of prophecies—some fulfilled and some not yet fulfilled—about Jesus Christ in the Bible. Nine of the prophecies Jesus has fulfilled are shown in the table on the next page.

Topic	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Place of birth	"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2), 700 B.C.	"Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea." (Matthew 2:1).
Born of a virgin	"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14), 700 B.C."	His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18).
His triumphal entry	"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9), 500 B.C.	"They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!' Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it" (John 12:13-14).

Topic	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Betrayed by a friend	"Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9), 1000 B.C.	"Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them" (Mark 14:10).
His rejection	***"He was despised and rejected by men… Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3), 700 B.C.	"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11).
Crucified with sinners	"He… was numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12), 700 B.C.	"Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left" (Matthew 27:38).
Hands and feet pierced	***"They have pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16), 1000 B.C.	"Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side" (John 20:27).
His resurrection	***"You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay" (Psalm 16:10), 1000 B.C.	"You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead" (Acts 3:15).
His ascension	***"You ascended on high" (Psalm 68:18), 1000 B.C.	"He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight" (Acts 1:9).

With God There Are No Coincidences

Peter Stoner, a scientist and professor, developed what is called the science of probability, which was reviewed by the American Scientific Affiliation members and their executive council. They found it to be a thoroughly sound gathering of principles of probability.

Using this science of probability, Stoner says that if you only take eight prophecies, "We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power." That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (one hundred quadrillion, or one million billion). To illustrate this, Stoner calculated that if we took the amount of 10 to the 17th power silver dollars, and lay them on the face of the State of Texas, they will cover all the state two feet deep. Now take one of the silver dollars, and simply mark it with a red marker, throw it into the pile, stir up the pile, and blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one.

The same chances that man has of picking up that one red marked silver dollar are the same odds of one man coming and perfectly fulfilling only 8 of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled!

What Did Jesus Do?

In the Past He Created All Things

As part of the Trinity, He created everything that has been created.

> [1]*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [2]*He was in the beginning with God.* [3]*All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*
>
> **John 1:1-3 NASB95**

Genesis 1 :: Colossians 1:16 :: Hebrews 1:11

What Does Jesus Do?

In the Present He Cares for Us

He is preparing a place for us (John 14:2); providing us access to grace and mercy (Hebrews 4:15-16); praying for us (Hebrews 7:25); pleading our case (I John 2:1); planning His return (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

What About Divine Healing?

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement and is the privilege of all believers.

> [4]*Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted.*
>
> **Isaiah 53:4 NIV**

Isaiah 53:5 :: Matthew 8:16, 17 :: James 5:14-16

What Will Jesus Do?

In the Future He Will Return To Rule

He will return in the air to take away the church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:50-57) for reward (I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10) and marriage (Revelation 19:7-10). Seven years later, He will also return to earth to win the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21), bind Satan for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3), rule on earth (Revelation 20: 4-6), judge Satan and all unbelievers (Revelation 20:7-15), and then rule in the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21-22).

When He Became a Man He Did Miracles

He healed the sick and He cast out demons (36 recorded different individuals), He fed the hungry (Matthew 14:1-21;15:29-39), He raised the dead (3 separate individuals), He walked on water (Matthew 14:22-23), He calmed a storm (Matthew 8:22-27), He taught fantastic truths (Matthew 5-7, Luke 15, Matthew 24), He rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-7), and He rose bodily into heaven (Acts 1:9).