

# Tell Me the Truth

*A Bible Study Correspondence Course*

*from*

*Lighthouse Seafarers' Centre  
North Vancouver, BC  
Canada*



# ***What is the Truth?***

## *Introduction*

As a seafarer your work has probably given you the opportunity to sail thousands of miles and see many different lands and peoples. Your visits to foreign countries may have caused you to wonder about the many different ways that people live and the great variety of beliefs that they hold. Individuals and groups differ from one another in their choice of clothing, food and housing, for example. They also differ in their beliefs about whether or not there is a God and, if there is, who God is and how God relates to people. In the midst of all of these different beliefs about God, you may wonder what really is the truth about God?

Approximately, two thousand years ago, the question of truth about God arose in the midst of a serious crisis. During the crisis a ruler asked this basic question: “What is truth?”<sup>1</sup> Two thousand years later, people are still asking this same question because for many of them there is no clear sense of truth. Instead, it is common to hear people state that “each person has their own truth” and “no one should try to impose what they believe to be true on someone else.” Unfortunately, one significant problem with this manner of thinking is that it excludes the possibility of the existence of a single, all powerful God who is the ultimate authority on truth.

In response to this issue of the truth about God (and therefore the people He created), this study course was developed by Lighthouse Seafarers’ Centre. Over the past twenty five years, Lighthouse personnel have met with thousands of seafarers and have often asked them questions about their spiritual future and what they believe is true about God. For example, the following question has commonly been asked: “If you were to die today, would you go to heaven?”

Different answers have been given by seafarers to the above

<sup>1</sup> Pontius Pilate—The Holy Bible New International Version (John 18:38)



question. However, in reviewing these answers it is possible to see many similarities. That is, the answers can be grouped together into a relatively small number of categories. Of these, seven have been chosen as the basis for this course. These are not the only answers that seafarers have given but they are either very common or are significant in that they get to the heart of a struggle that we as humans often seem to have. This is the struggle to accept that there is one truth about who God is and how we are to relate to Him.

The following eight chapters examine these seven answers (one answer is covered in two chapters) through the writings of seven different Bible scholars. Each scholar is knowledgeable about what the Bible teaches about Jesus and our relationship with God.

At this point, you may be wondering why you should accept what is written in the Bible. Maybe you have doubts about the trustworthiness of the Bible. (For example, some seafarers have revealed their belief that the Bible has been translated so many times that it has lost its power or truthfulness. Therefore, they claim that they don't accept the teachings of the Bible.) Or perhaps you do not believe that Jesus is the One He claimed to be. That is, you don't have faith in Him because you think that He is simply a good man or, at most, one of God's many prophets.

With regard to the trustworthiness of the Bible and its many translations, Chapters 1 and 2 of this study guide address these issues very well and, therefore, if you have doubts about the Bible's authority, you are strongly encouraged to read these chapters before reading any further.

In terms of the identity of Jesus, people have proposed many different theories about who He is. These theories, however, are not based on personal experience with Jesus and are, therefore, open to question. But, documentation does exist which is not based on human guessing but, instead, on real fact. This documentation is based on eyewitness experience. For example, an eyewitness account of the life and teachings of Jesus was written by a man named John. John's writings



are valid and deserving of very careful consideration because he was one of Jesus' very close friends. John spent approximately three years as a student of Jesus and after this experience he shared what he saw and heard from Him. He did this so that others would be able to understand the deep significance of what Jesus said and did.

Included in John's writings are many of Jesus' sayings. Some of these are Jesus' own claims regarding His identity. They are very revealing and bold. Among them, Jesus said seven great "I ams":

- I am the bread of life. 6:35
- I am the light of the world. 9:5
- I am the gate. 10:7
- I am the good shepherd. 10:11
- I am the true vine. 15:1
- I am the resurrection and the life. 11:25
- I am the way and the truth and the life. 14:6

These statements are significant claims as to who Jesus is. If true, they reveal that He is the source of life, the light for all people, the gate to heaven, the One good guide, God's means of sharing Himself, the power to bring dead people back to life and, lastly, the way to God, the truth of God and the very life of God. In short, these statements reveal that Jesus is God.

In response to the above statements of Jesus, you may say, "anyone can claim great things but that does not mean much." This is true. However, Jesus also did incredible things. For example, John wrote about the following:

- Jesus changed water into wine without touching the water.
- Jesus healed the sick and disabled.
- Jesus fed 5,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish.
- Jesus gave sight to the blind.
- Jesus walked on water.
- Jesus gave life to a man who had been dead for four days.
- Jesus predicted the future.
- After Jesus, Himself, had died, He rose from the dead.



These are just some of the incredible things that Jesus did, according to the writings of John. They provide solid support that Jesus was not just a man, but, something much more. (It is important to note here that when Jesus performed a miracle, He did not do it in the name of God, He did it by His own power. This confirms that Jesus had power that only God, Himself, has and, therefore, Jesus was and is God.)

In addition to what was written by John, there are other sources available which confirm that Jesus was someone incredibly important. For example, the calendar that most of the world follows is based on the recording of years after Jesus Christ was born. Also, Jesus definitely was a historical figure who has been written about by people other than Christian writers. So, His existence is supported from sources other than the Bible. But, perhaps most importantly, the truth of Jesus' existence is proven through the changes in the lives of people who have had a living encounter with Him. Since Jesus walked on earth approximately 2000 years ago, large numbers of people have testified to the fact that as a result of their hearing about and believing in God the Son, Jesus Christ, their lives have been positively changed forever. This continues today as people open their hearts to the love of God revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As you work on this study course, it is the hope of all the people who were involved in the preparation of the course that you also will experience a new and changed life through Jesus. Jesus came for this very purpose. However, if at the end of the study you are still not convinced of the truth of Jesus Christ there is something further that you may consider doing. It involves taking a very simple step of faith; one where you try to follow what Jesus taught. If His words were those of God, by following them you will experience God in your life. However, if His words were not God's words you will not have lost anything but will, instead, have attempted to follow some very good teaching. So, why not take this risk? You can find out for yourself if Jesus was who He claimed to be. Jesus said, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own." (John 7:17)



## Course Outline and Explanation

This course has 8 chapters for you to read and 8 examinations for you to complete. The chapters are based on 7 comments (chapters 1 & 2 answer the same comment) made by seafarers and are as follows:

1. The Bible cannot be trusted because it has gone through too many translations from the original. **(Part I)**
2. The Bible cannot be trusted because it has gone through too many translations from the original. **(Part II)**
3. All religions are the same; they all tell you to do good.
4. I don't accept religion because the leaders are all corrupt and their primary interest is about money and power etc.
5. Every path/religion will lead you to God.
6. I just try to be nice and, if there is a God, that should be enough.
7. I am from a part of the world that doesn't believe in Jesus so the Christian religion is not for me.
8. What I believe is up to me so don't force your ideas on me.

After reading each chapter, please turn to the middle of the booklet and complete the examination for the chapter. The examinations will help you to make sure that you understand the material you have read in the chapters. If you want to read the chapters more than once before completing the examinations, please feel free to do so.

The format for the examinations is *multiple choice*. So, to answer the questions you simply need to choose the correct answer from one of the four choices (A, B, C or D) given. Put the letter of the correct answer in the space next to the question. At the end of each examination there is also a question which requires you to give a short answer in your own words.



After you have completed all 8 chapters and examinations, please remove only the examination pages from the booklet, put them in an envelope and post them to the Lighthouse Seafarers' Centre. The address is shown on the back cover of this booklet. After we receive the examinations, we will grade them and return them to you with any corrections. This will help you to know how well you understood the ideas presented in this study. We will also send you a certificate indicating that you have completed the course.

We wish you the Lord's guidance as you work on this course.

(Editor's note: As you read through this study course you will see many references such as this "(Genesis 3:1-24)." Each of them is telling you where in the Bible you can look to find the idea or words that the author is describing.)

**Please proceed...**



# Chapter 1

*Some seafarers have said, “The Bible cannot be trusted because it has gone through too many translations from the original.”*

*Is this true?*

*(Part I)*

*Answer by Dr. John Williams*

To respond to the above claim we need to deal with its two parts. First, there is the matter of the trustworthiness of the Bible and second, the fact of its translations. It may surprise you that it is partly because it has been through so many translations and survived, that Christians can trust the Bible. In this regard, the issue of Bible translations is examined in Chapter 2 so we will not deal with it here. In this chapter we will focus our attention on some of the reasons that the Bible is worthy of our trust.

Let's begin with a brief look at the history of the Bible, to put things in perspective. Unlike many other so called “Holy Books,” the Bible's story goes back over thousands of years and represents the work of dozens of writers. Parts of the Old Testament go back four thousand years when people wrote on clay tablets and animal skins. Prophets, poets, kings and wise men wrote down God's Truth. Surprisingly, although the actual writing down of the books of the Bible took place over almost 2000 years, there is a remarkable unity about their message. All these writers present the same truths about God, sinful humanity (people acting against God's will) and Salvation (being saved from punishment) through faith in God's provision.

At this point, you may wonder how the Bible could possibly contain one basic message even though it was written by so many different people over such a long period of time. Well, we believe it has to do with “divine inspiration.” Divine inspiration means that the Bible's various writers wrote down the words of the Bible as God's Holy Spirit “breathed” it out, or “revealed” it to them.





That sounds like a difficult idea and may appear to suggest that although men wrote it down, the Bible is actually God's own Word. In fact that is exactly what we mean: the Bible *is* God's own Word. That's why we say that although men, who were sinners like ourselves, wrote the text (words), it was protected from error by God's Holy Spirit. The Bible, unlike any other book written by men, is as it claims to be, over and over again, the very Word of God. In fact, the Old Testament (the first part of the Bible), actually claims to be God's Word over 4000 times!

The Bible is unique in that although scholars and sceptics (people who doubt an idea) have scrutinized (carefully looked at) its text many times, they have failed to disprove it or to discover errors. Of course, you might find odd mistakes in copying or spelling but you will not find anything which when read carefully, objectively and in context, is untrue.

In addition to the fact that the Bible is without error, there is the impressive fact of fulfilled biblical prophecy (predictions about future events). The Bible makes quite detailed predictions about events which were still in the distant future at the time of writing and have since been precisely fulfilled. For example, over 300 Old Testament prophecies, written about Jesus, centuries before His birth, were fulfilled during Jesus' life on earth. You may have heard Christians claim that the Bible says, Jesus has promised to return one day. That is certainly true and many things that Jesus said would happen before His return are taking place in our world today. But, that is a topic for another time.

Despite the efforts of all kinds of people to destroy the Bible, it remains intact and is still the world's best selling book. The Bible is unique in the whole field of historiography (the writing of history). We have Old Testament manuscripts and fragments of biblical documents that date back to the 2nd century B.C. You have probably heard of the "Dead Sea Scrolls" which were discovered in 1948 and confirm the accuracy of the Old Testament Bible text.

This story is even more impressive regarding the New Testament (the last 27 books of the Bible). We have *thousands* of Greek manuscripts (documents written by hand), some of which date back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. – just a single generation from their



original writing! If you are interested in researching this subject there are all kinds of scholarly books available today. To show how remarkable the preservation of these biblical texts is, it is worth mentioning that there are no copies of the original texts of the famous Greek and Roman authors that pre-date the 10th century A.D. Even the 17<sup>th</sup> century works of William Shakespeare have very slim early manuscript support.

This chapter has presented just a few facts that support the claim that the Bible is completely worthy of our trust. More facts do exist but have not been included here. Next, in chapter 2, we will look at some of the reasons why the different translations of the Bible have not reduced the authenticity of this great Book's message.

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 1 EXAMINATION NOW**



## Chapter 2

*Some seafarers have said, “The Bible cannot be trusted because it has gone through too many translations from the original.”*

*Is this true?*

*(Part II)*

*Answer by Dr. John Williams*

Although the facts mentioned in Chapter 1 which support the claim that the Bible is trustworthy are remarkable, you may still be curious about all the different translations of the Bible and how we can know which of them are authentic (true ones). So, let's look at this issue more closely. Let's begin by asking, "What really is the purpose of translations?" A quick answer is, so that people everywhere may be able to read God's Word in their own language and idiom (words that are used in a way that is unique to a particular language).

People who argue that a book is only reliable if read in its original text appear to be overlooking a few things. First of all, for centuries most people were illiterate, unable to read anything, let alone religious books. How could they have read the original manuscripts? Second, there were and still are people who, while able to read the "originals" themselves, do not want the average person to know what the Bible actually says. These people hope to exercise control over people's thinking and secondly, to prevent people from recognizing errors in the religious practices that they support. As a matter of fact, this was the policy of the official "Church," prior to the Reformation. For example, by insisting that the Bible be read only in Latin, the clergy (priests and other religious leaders) could represent themselves as its only qualified interpreters!

This brings us to the story of English translations. The translation of the Bible into English took place relatively recently. The Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Aramaic, and Coptic versions were much



earlier. In fact, the Hebrew text (of the Old Testament) was translated into Greek - (the version known as the *Septuagint*) - as far back as 200 B.C.! So you see, the Bible text was known, loved and preserved long before there were any English translations. The Bible is essentially a Middle Eastern book; many of its cultural references and idioms (idiom - defined above) are to be read in that light.

The real story of the English Bible goes back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, to the work of a great man called John Wycliffe – known as, “The Morning Star of the Reformation.” Parts of the Bible had been translated into English earlier, but Wycliffe (1329 - 1384 A.D.) was the first to translate it from Latin into English. He tells us his purpose was that ordinary folk might be able to read the Word of God for themselves. Surprisingly, many of the clergy opposed Wycliffe’s efforts; they preferred to keep “lay people” (regular people) in the dark. Wycliffe recognized, as did Martin Luther later, that the official Church was practising things contrary to Scripture and, therefore, abusing its power. These translators wanted people not only to know the Truth of the Bible but also to recognize error.

The “father” of the English Bible was William Tyndale (1493 - 1536 A.D.). He translated **major parts of the Bible** into English from the original Greek text. Wycliffe, you remember, had translated the Bible from the Latin version which was itself translated from Greek. Tyndale paid dearly for his efforts: he was strangled and burned at the stake because of the misguided efforts of people who were part of the Church! It seems strange to us today, but one of the people who hated Tyndale’s work and publicly burned copies of his translation was the Bishop of London, a man named Cuthbert Tonstall.

In our look at the story of the Bible so far, we have seen all too briefly, how our English version has come down to us today. Now let’s look at the topic of why there are so many modern English language versions. There truly are numerous modern versions in English; some more reliable than others. Several of these are not literal, “word for word” translations but what we might call, *paraphrases*. The intent of a paraphrase version is to convey the general ideas and themes of the text. While they are not exact translations, they help convey the meaning for the cas-



ual reader.

In addition to paraphrases, there are the more dependable, widely recognized versions, often sponsored by Christian groups such as the Bible Societies. These versions are prepared by careful scholars whose main concern is to be loyal to the original text while conveying its truth in accurate, readable English. A few translations are the work of individual Christian scholars. While outside the scope of our immediate inquiry, we should mention the tremendous work being done by such groups as the Wycliffe Bible Translators, who are seeking to provide the Bible in the languages and dialects of the world.

The point of all of these translations or versions of the Bible is that they are done primarily to help us understand the message of God's Word. None of them alone is to be regarded as the last word. The only ultimate, authentic Word of God is the "text as originally given by God." Although we do not have those original "autographs" - as we call them, as noted above, we are fortunate to have thousands of Bible manuscripts, some dating back to the very early years of Christianity. After careful research based on years of language study, scholars are now able to assure us that the Bible as we have it today, is a thoroughly reliable representation of the original text. The important thing is to be sure that the version you are using is faithful to God's Truth as "originally given." Beware of any version which may be biased through heretical (false) teaching.

That brings us back to what was said earlier in this chapter. It's because we have all these different manuscripts and versions available that we can compare and research them and conclude that the Bible is trustworthy. We can actually be grateful that there are so many accurate translations. Language is a living thing and word meanings change with the passage of time. Therefore, each generation needs to have God's Truth in words and ways of expression that are specifically familiar to them, so that they can more clearly understand God's Eternal Word.

Of course, the important thing is not only to read the Bible but to listen to it and allow God's Holy Spirit to apply it to our lives. In the final analysis, Christians accept the Bible and obey its teaching not because it's a "Holy Book," but because Jesus Christ



Himself regarded it as “the Word of God that cannot be broken.”  
(John 10:35)

Our submission to Scripture results from our acceptance of the authority of Christ, our Divine Saviour and Risen Lord. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.” (Matthew 24:35) Speaking of a right attitude to the Bible, Jesus said: “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39)

Let us be sure to heed Jesus’ warning. To know the words of Scripture is one thing; to know its Author and to trust in Him is not only the secret of understanding the Bible, it is the key to Life and Salvation.

In conclusion, here are a couple of useful quotes about the Bible:

1. This was said to Queen Elizabeth II, as she was given a copy of the Bible, at her coronation in June, 1953:

“We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; This is the Royal Law; These are the lively oracles of God.”

2. The following words are from the translators’ introduction to the King James Version of the Bible of 1611:

“If we be ignorant they (the Scriptures) will instruct us; if out of the way, bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull quicken us; if cold inflame us.”

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 2 EXAMINATION NOW**



## Chapter 3

*Some seafarers have said, "All religions are the same; they all tell you to do good."*

*Is this true?*

*Answer by Rev. Dan Gifford*

When people discuss religion, often someone will say, "All religions are the same; they all tell you to do good." This statement is largely true because almost every religion does teach about how people can live a good moral life. Most religions teach that there are certain things a person must do in order to be rewarded both in this life and the after-life. In other words, much of religious teaching is based on how one can *earn* God's favour/approval.

However, what God has revealed through Jesus Christ is very different. It is all about God coming to rescue the world. The Bible reveals that not even one person is good enough to know God and go to heaven. In the Book of Romans chapter 3 verse 10 (Romans 3:10) it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one. Also, Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The Bible teaches us here that God is a holy God and that even the greatest person cannot measure up to God's standards. In every person's heart there is an attitude of rebellion against God. We naturally do not want to listen to Him or obey Him; this is what the Bible calls "sin." Unfortunately, if a person sins even once in a lifetime, this is considered a violation against all of God's law (James 2:10) and it keeps him or her away from God. As a result of sin, God's wrath, or anger, is directed against us. (Romans 2:5)

If this is true then the question must be asked, "How can anyone know God and go to heaven?" The answer is that it is impossible unless God shows us Himself and brings us to heaven. He must do what we cannot do: remove our sin from us. The good news is that God has done this through Jesus Christ, His only Son. John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One



and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." The "One and Only who is at the Father's side" is Jesus Christ. This means that Jesus has shown God to us. Colossians 1:15 says, "He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God." Therefore, when we see Jesus we see God.

The news gets even better because Jesus also can make us friends with God. He does something about our rebellion and sin against God. Colossians 1:19-22 says, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Jesus), and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation (being charged with doing wrong)."

These verses reveal the very essence of what the Bible teaches about God's rescue of mankind through Jesus. This message is known as the *Gospel*, which means "good news." It reveals that Jesus gives us peace with God because of His death for us on a cross. In other words, even though Jesus (being God) was perfect, He took our sins onto Himself and died on a cross in our place. In this way, Jesus provides what is needed for us to receive God's forgiveness. It may seem almost unbelievable, but Jesus has made a way for the enemies of God to be changed into friends of God who are then considered to be holy, without blemish (a bad spot or marking) and free from accusation. This is a wonderful gift. It describes what it is like to be forgiven by God through what Jesus did on the cross. This is how God rescues us and brings us out of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus (Colossians 1:13).

You can now see that the Gospel message of the Bible stands in complete opposition to the idea that "all religions are the same; they all tell you to do good." In Jesus Christ, God has revealed something that is radically different from all other forms of religious teaching. Through Jesus we are made aware that pleasing God is not about earning His favour by working hard at being good. It is about God rescuing us by sending Jesus because He loves us. Jesus said, "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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:16,17

In the past, I lived in a small fishing village on the coast of British Columbia, Canada. I have a friend there who is a crewmember on a small fishing boat. One morning, while fishing way out in the North Pacific Ocean in very stormy weather, he happened to look out and see a small red object. My friend’s ship changed course to investigate and discovered five men in a small life raft whose fishing boat had capsized and sunk. They had been floating for five days and if my friend had not seen them they may have died. In their situation there was nothing these five men could do to save themselves; they had to be rescued in order to live.

Spiritually, all people in the world are in the same situation as the five men that were floating in the life raft. There is nothing we can do to avoid spiritual death. We cannot live unless God rescues us by sending Jesus to us to forgive our sins. And John 3:16 tells us that we can only respond to God’s rescue by trusting and believing in Jesus.

God has given the world the greatest gift by sending Jesus to save us. As Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” Because God has revealed that His favour can be obtained only through faith in Jesus Christ, every person is faced with this most important question: What will you do about Jesus? Will you trust Him to save you by forgiving your sins and giving you peace with God? Or will you reject Him and try to save yourself? If you choose to try to save yourself, there is a powerful warning given in the Bible: “All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’” (Galatians 3:10) This means that if you try to attain God’s approval by being “good” you will be judged by God’s standard: perfect obedience to His law. As Galatians 3:10 tells us, God’s curse will be on anyone who tries to be good (by observing the law) but sins, even once. Can you reach this standard?



The Bible reveals that to choose Jesus is to choose life that is eternal. In John 5:24 Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." The reason Jesus came to earth was to give eternal life to all who believe in Him. It is His loving rescue of us, helpless sinners, that makes the Gospel message so incredible and different from all other messages that promote doing good to receive God's approval. So you can now, hopefully, see that the central teaching of God through Jesus is not about doing good, but about receiving God's goodness by believing in Jesus. He will, first, save you and then give you a new life forever. Then, He will show you how to follow Him as you read His word, the Bible.

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 3 EXAMINATION NOW**



## Chapter 4

*Some seafarers have said, "I don't accept religion because the leaders are all corrupt and their primary interest is about money and power etc."*

*Is this true?*

*Answer by Harvey Guest*

Jesus of Nazareth is described in the Bible as a man who went about doing good. If there is any truth to this description (and very few would really argue against this) an obvious and painful question arises: Why would a man who "went about doing good" be arrested and put to death?

Before we attempt to answer the question, we should remember, in general terms, what the goodness of Jesus looks like in the Bible (especially in the four books called "Gospels": Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). In terms of His actions, Jesus healed the blind, the lame, the mentally ill, and the leper. He befriended the lonely, accepted the outcast and forgave those tormented by a guilty conscience. Jesus taught the priority of mercy and forgiveness. Love of neighbour, love of stranger and love of enemies are central to the teaching and life of this most humble and kind of teachers. This is Jesus: One who acted in compassion and taught and practised a costly love.

Nevertheless this man was put to death in an extremely cruel way: crucifixion (death on a cross). This was a method of execution that inflicted unspeakable pain. It was a public act meant to maximize humiliation and contempt for its victim. Jesus was not merely rejected. The man "who went about doing good" was despised, denigrated (made extremely low in importance) and excluded from the world in a way meant to emphasize His complete worthlessness. If crucifixion had a voice it might say to its victim, "you are nothing and this death proves, publicly, that you are nothing."



The above facts form a backdrop and help us to consider another fact: it was religious leaders, powerful and influential leaders, who played a significant role in the rejection and death of Jesus.

Religious leaders are everywhere. Cultures around the world appear to need these leaders. Sometimes these people are popular and sometimes they are not. Sometimes they are powerful, sometimes not. Directly or indirectly they influence everyone. They teach different messages and people often repeat what these leaders teach. Their teaching takes different forms and, for good or for bad, they have a big influence on how people think and live.

The teachings of religious leaders take, indeed, many, many different forms. That is why there are so many religions in the world. However, they do have some very simple things in common. Religious leaders teach what they believe the world we live in is really all about, where it comes from, how it will end or whether it will have an end. They teach about how to tell the difference between what is good and what is bad; what is right and what is wrong. People everywhere think about these things, sooner or later, but religious leaders commonly take the lead in discussions about them. Because issues of religious belief are so important, people will often fight about them. Sometimes fights and disputes about religion may even cause violence.

We are now in a position to see why Jesus was rejected and put to death. When we begin to see the answer it shocks us. It may be the most difficult of truths ever to confront the world and, in particular, with regard to what is called religion.

Jesus, we remember, taught that to love and to forgive and to live in patient mercy toward other people is the best way to live. He taught that this way to live is in fact God's desire for us. Jesus called God, His Father, and claimed that as His Son, He knew what His Father desired (John 6:40). Here is where the fact of Jesus being rejected becomes strangely understandable.

The Father's love is free, says Jesus. You cannot earn it. You may know all about right and wrong, all about what is good and evil but that's not the most important thing. Being religious, even a religious leader, makes no difference. "The kingdom of God is



at hand” taught Jesus: “repent (turn away from) your way of thinking and believe the good news.” (Mark 1:15)

Jesus called people to repentance from sin (to turn away from living life in disobedience to God) because, the Bible tells us, the current way of living (in rebellion to God) will lead everyone to eternal death (eg. John 8:24; Romans 6:23). In other words, if people live their whole lives in this world apart from God, because of sin, they will ultimately, after this life, exist forever apart from God. Living forever apart from God is called hell. So, the question becomes: how can people change their lives and become what God wants them to be? The answer to this question is the message that Jesus came to deliver (by His words and actions). This message is called “good news.”

Jesus’ good news message challenges so much of what goes by the name of religion in our world. Jesus says that if we know Him and believe in Him, we will, ultimately, overcome the difficulties and struggles of this world (John 16:33). Jesus taught this on His own authority. His message is essentially this: God loved people so much that He gave Jesus, His Son, as a sacrifice for them. (John 3:16) That is, Jesus, by God’s plan, laid down His life so that the sins of the world would be paid for through His death and, as a result, people would be acceptable to God. Jesus told us that only by believing in Him in accordance with this message of good news will people receive God’s forgiveness and favour. (John 14:6)

To believe such a message, such good news, changes everything. It gets rid of a lot that goes by the name of religion. It caused (and continues to do so today) some to deeply hate Jesus – they were so committed to the way of knowing God which says, keep a lot of rules; prove to God you are good and then, and only then, will God accept you.

The good news of Jesus Christ is, make no mistake, a revolutionary message. It tells us that no one is able to please God because of sin (Romans 3:10-20). But it also tells us that God through His own goodness and love gave Jesus to die so that, through faith in Jesus, we would be given a right relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:21).



Do we hate or feel superior to the people who hated and killed Jesus? Jesus did not. As He died, He prayed for their forgiveness. (Luke 23:34) He loved His enemies. His death actually bore (took care of) their death. His resurrection was for them. Jesus gives salvation (a new and perfectly safe world to be in) to all who simply say, "yes," to Him.

Religious leaders are often seeking power; they go bad in many ways. Of course, we all do because, like them, we have all sinned (Romans 3:23). But, Jesus our Lord loves and forgives all who will come to Him by faith.

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 4 EXAMINATION NOW**



# Chapter Examinations

## Seafarer's Information:

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Name	Ship Name	End of Contract (Month/Year) (approximate date when signing off)
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Home Address

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Ship Address





## Chapter 1 Examination

*Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:*

1. Even though the parts of the Bible were written over a period of about 2,000 years, it is surprising (amazing) that:

- A) there is very little unity in the Bible.                      C) there is remarkable unity in the message.  
B) only 26 languages were used in the original.                      D) no one can understand the Bible. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Divine inspiration of the Bible means:

- A) God had no influence in the writing of it.                      C) every person should write their own Bible.  
B) God doesn't care if there are any errors in it.                      D) the writers of the Bible wrote as God's Holy Spirit revealed the words to them. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Although sinful humans wrote down the Bible text (words), the Bible:

- A) has exactly 100 mistakes in it.                      C) still cannot be trusted as God's word.  
B) has only 224 mistakes in it.                      D) has been preserved from error by God (it has no mistakes in it.) \_\_\_\_\_

4. The Bible claims to be:

- A) an interesting book.                      C) the shortest holy book in the world.  
B) the Word of God.                      D) partly true, but not all true. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Scholars (those who study) and sceptics (those who doubt) have:

- A) failed to discover errors in the Bible.                      C) completely ignored the Bible.  
B) found a small number of errors in the Bible.                      D) all donated money to Bible research. \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Bible includes over 300 predictions (prophecies) about Jesus which were:

- A) fulfilled during Jesus' life on earth.                      C) not fulfilled at all.  
B) were 43% fulfilled during Jesus life on earth.                      D) not possible to fulfill because they were false. \_\_\_\_\_

7. The Bible has:

- A) very poor historical documentation.                      C) only one single document in Greek to support its theme.  
B) very early and impressive support from manuscripts.                      D) No historical support before 1934. \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer in your own words:*** *Why can you completely trust the message of the Bible?*

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## Chapter 3 Examination

*Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:*

1. Through Jesus, God has revealed a message that is:  
A) the same as what all religions teach.                      C) not possible to understand.  
B) very different from what other religions                      D) only for seafarers.                      \_\_\_\_\_  
teach.
2. The Bible tells us, in Romans 3:23, that:  
A) all people are basically good.                      C) all people have sinned (disobeyed) God.  
B) nice people are everywhere.                      D) only murderers need forgiveness.                      \_\_\_\_\_
3. How is it possible for a sinful person to know God?  
A) it is not possible.                      C) by promising to give God money.  
B) by quitting their job.                      D) God must remove a person's sin through  
Jesus.                      \_\_\_\_\_
4. How did Jesus make peace between God and man?  
A) by speaking nicely to God.                      C) through His death on a cross.  
B) by telling people to be nice.                      D) through 5 prayers that He said.                      \_\_\_\_\_
5. Through Jesus, we learn that pleasing God means that we must:  
A) earn God's favour by being good.                      C) listen to Christian music frequently.  
B) look inside ourselves to find goodness.                      D) be rescued from sin by God.                      \_\_\_\_\_
6. A person who tries to please God by being good, but rejects Jesus:  
A) will be judged according to God's                      C) can easily go to heaven.  
standard: perfection.  
B) will have no problems.                      D) can be sure they are right.                      \_\_\_\_\_
7. When a person listens to Jesus and believes He died for them, the person will:  
A) become taller.                      C) receive eternal life.  
B) become famous.                      D) not live forever.                      \_\_\_\_\_
8. It is God's loving rescue of people who are helpless sinners that makes the Gospel message:  
A) not very important.                      C) the same as every other religious message.  
B) only important for priests who have spent                      D) so different from all other messages that  
all of their lives studying religious things.                      promote doing good to receive God's  
approval.                      \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer in your own words:*** *What do you think about the statement: "All religions are the same; they all tell you to do good."?*

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## Chapter 4 Examination

*Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:*

1. The way Jesus died (crucifixion-death on a cross):

- A) was not really painful. C) both A) and B).  
B) was a peaceful, nice way to die. D) was very painful and humiliating (made Him seem totally unimportant). \_\_\_\_\_

2. Jesus called (or spoke of) God as:

- A) His student. C) Jesus never spoke about God.  
B) His child. D) His Father. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Jesus taught that God's love is:

- A) not important. C) only available to religious leaders.  
B) free. It cannot be earned. D) only given to quiet people. \_\_\_\_\_

4. If people live their whole lives (from birth to death) apart from God because of sin:

- A) they will end up in hell when they die. C) they will die for sure at age 38.  
B) they have a 50% chance of going to heaven. D) they will still go to heaven. \_\_\_\_\_

5. The basic message Jesus taught was:

- A) God loved people so much that He gave Jesus as a sacrifice for them. C) God will never forgive people for sin.  
B) God doesn't really care if people sin. D) Having a good education is the most important thing in life. \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Good News of Jesus Christ is a revolutionary message because it tells us that:

- A) kings and queens cannot go to heaven. C) no one can please God because of sin.  
B) only through faith in Jesus people are given a right relationship with God. D) both B) and C). \_\_\_\_\_

7. Jesus Christ loves and forgives people who:

- A) stop doing most, but not all, sins. C) sing beautiful songs.  
B) are good at playing sports. D) come to Him by faith. \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer in your own words:*** Do you agree with a person who says, "I don't accept religion because the leaders are all corrupt and their primary interest is about money and power etc.?" Why or why not?

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## Chapter 5 Examination

*Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:*

1. The Bible teaches that Jesus is:

- A) one of many ways to reach heaven.                      C) able to help only the tallest prophets.  
B) not the way to heaven.                                      D) the (only) way to God.                      \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sin created a separation between God and people and the result of this for people is:

- A) they must have 2.5 children per family.                      C) they must listen to classical music.  
B) death (spiritual and physical).                                      D) they can go to heaven easily.                      \_\_\_\_\_

3. God's Word reveals that sin can be forgiven:

- A) only by a sacrifice that involves the shedding of blood.                      C) if a person reads any religious book.  
B) only by an older priest.                                              D) by anyone who is intelligent.                      \_\_\_\_\_

4. The final, and the only sufficient sacrifice for sin occurred:

- A) when God created all of the animals.                      C) when Jesus died on the cross.  
B) when Abraham killed Isaac.                                      D) when Jonah went to Nineveh.                      \_\_\_\_\_

5. Jesus forgives our sins when:

- A) we go to a religious school.                                      C) we promise to attend Church.  
B) we are nice to animals.                                              D) we ask Him.                                      \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Bible teaches that the gift of God is eternal life:

- A) for those who pray hard.                                              C) for nice people who sin only in small ways.  
B) in Christ Jesus our Lord.                                              D) for those who live in cold parts of the world.                      \_\_\_\_\_

7. Eternal life is:

- A) a free gift received by faith in Jesus Christ.                      C) both A) and B).  
B) achieved by going to college.                                              D) earned when people work very hard for it.                      \_\_\_\_\_

8. True or False: He who has the Son (Jesus) may go to heaven, but not for sure:

- A) True. We cannot be sure of going to heaven.                      C) True. God never promised eternal life.  
B) True. Heaven is certain only for people who have joined a monastery.                      D) False. The Bible says that he who has the Son has life forever (1 John 5:11-12).                      \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer in your own words:*** *What do you think about this claim: "Every path/ religion will lead you to God."*

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## Chapter 6 Examination

Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:

1. When anyone acts against God's will it is called...  
A) free thinking. C) doing the best I can. \_\_\_\_\_  
B) sinning. D) a good thing. \_\_\_\_\_
2. In the Bible, who decides what is good and what is bad for mankind?  
A) each person decides for himself. C) God. \_\_\_\_\_  
B) Baasha king of Israel. D) King Darius. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The way to heaven is found by:  
A) being "good" according to each person's C) being the best musician in your city.  
understanding of "good."  
B) asking any police officer. D) being good as God understands "good."  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Part of a Bible verse (Romans 5:1) says, "Since we have now been justified," and it means:  
A) we are made good (by God). C) we make ourselves okay with God by being  
good people.  
B) justice can only be found in a court of law. D) justice will never occur in the future. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The next part of Romans 5:1 says, "through faith in Jesus Christ" and this tells us:  
A) Jesus was only a teacher. C) how God made it possible for us to go to  
heaven.  
B) Jesus was only a good man. D) Jesus' death on a cross was an accident. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Because of sins, we suffer eternal separation from God. How did Jesus help us to avoid this?  
A) Jesus died near your home. C) He told us to simply do our best.  
B) In love, Jesus chose to suffer that separation D) Jesus said that if we look deep inside our-  
for us so that we would not have to. selves we will find goodness. \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the result of Jesus' death on the cross?  
A) God lost His Son forever. C) people can choose to believe in any religion.  
B) God requires all people to wear a cross D) if we believe Jesus died for us, we have  
around their neck. peace with God. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Whether or not we will be pleasing to God is based on:  
A) our own efforts to be good. C) what Jesus did on the cross.  
B) how many poor people we have helped. D) how many holy books we have read. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer in your own words:** What do you think of this idea: "I just try to be nice and, if there is a God, that should be enough."

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## Chapter 7 Examination

*Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:*

1. What is the result of having a living encounter (a real experience) with Jesus Christ?  
A) people will believe that Jesus was just a good moral teacher, but nothing more.  
B) a promotion to captain for all seafarers.  
C) knowing that Jesus was not just a man, but, in fact, God the Son (the Son of God).  
D) you will only like to eat raw fish. \_\_\_\_\_
2. By reading the New Testament people are seeing that in Jesus:  
A) God came into the world as a Saviour.  
B) a simple life is all that God desires.  
C) you can get much gold, silver and copper.  
D) life is about what you say not what you do. \_\_\_\_\_
3. When we are weak and need our spirits strengthened, the words of Jesus tell us:  
A) "just try to be happy and you will be fine."  
B) "I am the bread of life." (Jesus is all we truly need.)  
C) "wait for a sunny day to make you happy."  
D) "taking vitamins will strengthen you." \_\_\_\_\_
4. When the burdens and cares of this life seem to overwhelm us Jesus invites us (in Matthew 11:28) to:  
A) "attain a higher level of consciousness through meditation."  
B) "celebrate our birthday and enjoy life."  
C) "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."  
D) "register for more education." \_\_\_\_\_
5. If we sense our own unworthiness and fear there is no hope, Jesus says (in John 6:37):  
A) "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away."  
B) "Your fear will probably not kill you."  
C) "I will try My best to help you but I am not promising that it will work."  
D) "sin is not as bad as people say it is." \_\_\_\_\_
6. The author of Chapter 7 gives an example of tasting a mango to tell us that:  
A) mangos are a religious fruit.  
B) if you want to be wise you will eat mangos.  
C) Jesus loved mangos more than anything else.  
D) anyone who turns to ("tastes of") Jesus will know the glory of God. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Through knowing Jesus, you will be certain that:  
A) you will become rich.  
B) you will like Elvis Presley.  
C) you will live to be 100 years old.  
D) God will be with you all of your days. \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer in your own words:*** Do you think that Jesus is God only for some people or for everyone in the world? Please explain your answer.

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## Chapter 8 Examination

*Please choose the correct answer and write the letter in the blank space:*

1. According to Jesus, what is the only way you can truly have meaning in life, fulfill God's purpose for you and avoid being lost eternally in hell after you die?  
A) by becoming a religious leader. C) by entering into a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ.  
B) by going to visit any religious shrine. D) by studying philosophy. \_\_\_\_\_
2. In order to have a relationship with God, what does the writer of chapter 8 say is the first truth we must understand?  
A) we need to try our best to be good. C) God loves us and doesn't mind if we sin.  
B) we are sinners ("you and I"). D) small sins won't hurt us. \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the most damaging result of sin?  
A) children talk back to their parents. C) our hair falls out.  
B) the pollution in major cities. D) our relationship with God is broken. Sin makes us enemies of God. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Jesus do to take away the punishment (hell) that people deserve for their sins?  
A) He traveled to Africa and back to Galilee. C) He died on the cross and rose again.  
B) He climbed Mount Ararat. D) He made a special lotion to wash away sin. \_\_\_\_\_
5. According to the Bible, what can we do to make God forgive us for our sins?  
A) do many good things. C) just avoid mortal sins.  
B) nothing, because "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (for sin). D) read the newspaper and hope for the best. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of the following is not a result of Jesus' death and resurrection:  
A) you can be forgiven. C) you can become God's child.  
B) you will never have peace. D) you can be set free from the fear of death. \_\_\_\_\_
7. If you wish to surrender (give your life over to) God, what do you need to do:  
A) talk to God and tell Him that you are sorry for your sins and you want to turn from them. C) tell God you are determined by His help to follow Jesus daily in faith and obedience.  
B) tell God that you believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save you from sin. D) all three: A, B and C. \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer in your own words:*** Why is it important to consider carefully what you believe about God?

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**END OF CHAPTER EXAMINATIONS**



## Chapter 5

*Some seafarers have said, "Every path/religion will lead you to God."*

*Is this true?*

*Answer by Pstr. Paul Peterson*

The Bible (God's Word) reveals the way to be with God, our creator, in heaven for eternity. It teaches that Jesus is the way to reach heaven. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

If seafarers want to go from one harbour to another harbour across the ocean there is more than one route like the great circle and rhumb line. But, there is only one route that will bring a seafarer safely to the harbour of heaven. We will now navigate this route.

God made the heavens and the earth. God made all living things, including the first people, Adam and Eve. The Bible tells us, "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply...'" Genesis 1:28

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed God. This is called "sin." They chose to live independent of God. Over time, people became so bad that God was actually sorry that He had created them and decided to destroy the earth with a flood. However, He did not put an end to all people but actually saved us from complete destruction through one man, Noah, and his family.

The sinful nature of the first people has been passed on to all humans. Sin created a separation between God and people and death (physical and spiritual) is the result of this. The Bible says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Romans 5:12



God was merciful to Adam and Eve and even sacrificed an animal to clothe them. This was the first sacrifice to cover for the sin of man. God's Word reveals that sin can be forgiven only by a sacrifice that involves the shedding of blood: "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Hebrews 9:22

The final, and the only completely sufficient sacrifice for sin, occurred when Jesus died on the cross for you. The Bible reveals the following: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit." 1 Peter 3:18

If you believe in Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead then you will come to the safe harbour of heaven. No other religious leader has died for you and risen from the dead. No other religious leader has the ability to forgive your sins. No other man in history can grant you eternal salvation. No other person can give you permission to enter the Lord God Almighty's presence in heaven.

Jesus forgives our sins when we ask Him. Jesus gives us eternal salvation. Jesus is pictured in the Bible as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29 He will take away your sins if you ask Him. The Lord God does not want to remember your sins. In fact, if you know Jesus as your Lord, God will throw away your sins infinitely ( $\infty$ ) far away from you. As a result of Jesus' loving sacrifice we can rejoice in what the Bible tells us: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions (sins) from us." Psalm 103:12

When your ship sails on the waters and you look toward the horizon, how far away is east? West? In truth, they go on into infinity. Psalm 103 tells us that our sins are thrown the same distance away. In another part of the Bible, we can see again that, as a result of Jesus' sacrificial death, our sins have been totally removed from us by God. We are told that the Lord God takes our sins and throws them into the depths of the sea. "You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19 If you dropped your wrist watch in the ocean while sailing, would you be able to find it? Probably not. In the same way, the Lord does not want to find your sins so He throws them into the deep sea.



The gift of spending an eternity (eternity = forever) in heaven with our creator comes only through Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23 Also in Ephesians 2:8,9 the Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Our eternal life is not achieved by anything we do or don't do. It is a free gift. The gift is offered to you in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the gift. Jesus exists from eternity to eternity. Jesus possesses eternal life. All who have Jesus living in them have eternal life. There can be no other way; there is no other route to be with God forever in heaven than through Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." 1 John 5:11, 12.

Once you invite Jesus to come into your heart and life, Jesus' eternal Spirit lives in you. Jesus will never leave you and will give you life forever. As a result of having Jesus in your heart, you will know for sure that you have been saved from going to hell.

There is only one way to heaven. Jesus is the way for you to enter heaven. Believe in Jesus now as Saviour and invite Him to be Lord of your life. Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the way. Jesus is the life.

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 5 EXAMINATION NOW**



## Chapter 6

*Some seafarers have said, "I just try to be nice and, if there is a God, that should be enough."*

*Is this true?*

*Answer by Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor*

There is a story in the Bible in which a man off the street went up to Jesus and said this: "Master, what good deed must I do, to go to heaven?" Jesus replied to him: "Why do you ask me about what is good. Only God is good." (Matthew 19.16-17)

In the part of the Bible called "Genesis" God has revealed how the world was created. Included in this story is a description of how the evil snake tempted the first woman, Eve, to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had warned the first people not to do this; He said it was a bad thing to do. The snake said it was a good thing to do. Eve ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and, therefore, acted against God's will. When anyone acts against God's will it is called sinning.

Just like Eve, we, as human beings want to be able to decide for ourselves what is good and what is bad. However, if we claim that God will accept us because we are good people who try to be nice to others, we are making a decision about what is good and what is bad. The problem with this type of thinking is that what is good or bad may not be judged to be the same by everyone. For some people, swearing is bad; for others, it is okay. For some people, having sex with strangers is bad; others say that it is okay. In our world, everyone is free to decide for themselves what is good and what is bad.

But in the Bible, things look different. *God* has decided what is good and what is bad. In the Bible, human beings do not present themselves to God to be accepted on the basis of what they think is good and what is bad. Instead, they are to present themselves to Him so that He can decide what is good and what is bad.



When someone believes this statement: "I just try to be nice and that should be enough for God," they are trying to justify (justify = judge as correct) their life before God. That is, they are claiming that their behaviour and thoughts are right before God based on their terms and according to their standard. But what is the right standard? People's standard, or God's?

The real way to heaven, in the Bible, is not found by trying to be a good person. It is not about being "good," as we understand good. It is about being good, as God understands it. The only standard that really matters is God's standard, not yours or mine.

A verse from the Bible that really helps me think about this is from the book of Romans (chapter 5, verse 1): **Since we have now been justified through faith in Jesus, we have peace with God.**

Romans 5:1 reveals something very different from the belief that we can make ourselves acceptable to God through the way we live our lives. Let us now look in detail at what the verse actually reveals:

### **1. Since we have now been justified**

This part of the verse does not tell us that we make ourselves okay with God by being good people. Actually, it says something quite different. It says that we are made good. That is, by some special way, we are able to tell God that we are "sorry" for all the things we have done wrong and know that He has accepted us anyway. As a result, we can go to Heaven and be with God forever. How is this all possible? The answer is next.

### **2. Through faith in Jesus Christ**

This part of Romans 5:1 reveals how we are able to go to heaven. In the Bible, Jesus is revealed to be not just a teacher or a good man who comes to teach us how to live. In the Bible, Jesus is, Himself, God the Son who comes from the Father to make it possible for everyone who believes in Him, to have a friendship with God in this life and, also, to live forever with Him in heaven. The way Jesus did this was by giving up His life for all people. Jesus died on a cross and this was no accident; Jesus willingly chose to die (John 10:17-18). The reason He died



was because of the things (called “sins”) we all do that are wrong and against God’s will (eg. 2 Corinthians 5:21). Because of sins, we suffer eternal (forever) separation from God. But, in love, Jesus chose to suffer that separation Himself. Now, as a result of Jesus’ loving sacrifice, if you choose to believe in Him, you can know that when God looks at Jesus He sees you, and when He looks at you He sees Jesus. That is what it means for Jesus to die in your place: He took your sin and said: “I am responsible.”

Because Jesus is the Son of God, when He died, He was able to go into Hell and come back again. Even Hell did not have power over Him. Jesus came back to life, and went back into Heaven where He continues to live even now. The result of all of this is revealed in the last part of Romans 5:1.

### **3. We have peace with God**

Peace with God results in our lives when we follow Jesus. Because of what He did, we can have peace with God. That means that we can have a friendship with God in this life and go to Heaven when we die.

So, whether you (and I) will be pleasing to God or not, is based on what Jesus did, rather than what you do or have done. The Bible teaches that it is by faith in Jesus, alone, that gives us the ability to be acceptable to God (Ephesians 2:8-9). The key to being “okay” in the end comes down to accepting what Jesus did for you, and embracing Jesus as your friend and king. You say “thank you, Jesus, that you did that for me. I want to be your friend. I want to have a friendship with God now and go to Heaven to be with you when I die. I want to live for you now.”

That is what makes you okay in the end. That is what makes you okay forever. I encourage you to think about this!

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 6 EXAMINATION NOW**





## Chapter 7

*Some seafarers have said, "I am from a part of the world that doesn't believe in Jesus so the Christian religion is not for me."*

*Is this acceptable/true?*

*Answer by Ken Getty (Missionary)*

You may be from a part of the world where people do not consider themselves "Christian." Still, however, you will most likely have heard something about Jesus Christ. He has influenced the world more than any other person in history. Every time the date is written on a letter or a document it testifies to the fact that over 2000 years ago someone was born to be the Saviour of the world. Jesus' life has divided history into BC (before Christ) and AD (the year of our Lord). Although twenty centuries have passed since He walked the dusty roads of Palestine, Jesus still stands out as the "Incomparable Christ" – the One above all others. Read what the historian and author Phillip Schaff claimed about this unique person:

*"Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms (weapons), conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar...and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of the school, He spoke words of life such as were never spoken before nor since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet.*

*"Without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, works of art, learned volumes, and sweet songs of praise than a whole army of great men of ancient and modern times."*

Up to date information shows that every week 4,500 new congregations (gatherings) of new believers in Jesus are springing up throughout the world. So great is the number of people coming to trust in Jesus in Africa and Asia that they now outnumber the



Christians in Europe and in the West. This situation may cause a person to ask this question: What is the drawing power and tremendous influence for good of one person over so many millions of people and how has this been possible for such a long period of time?

In answering this question, first of all we need to recognize that when we consider the great number of people turning to Jesus, we are not speaking of people changing religions. Instead, the situation is one where individuals are having an encounter (meeting) with the living Lord Jesus Christ. They are hearing the good news about Him and are convinced that He was not a mere man but in truth the Son of God. By reading the part of the Bible called the New Testament, people are seeing that in the life of Jesus, God came into this world not just as a teacher but as a Saviour – a Deliverer. He healed the blind, the lame and the paralytic. He touched and cleansed lepers and restored to wholeness those afflicted by demons. Yes, and on three separate occasions He raised the dead to life again. These were not magical or spectacular shows or tricks. They were expressions of God's compassion and love for the needy. And they were signs for all people in every time period to know that God has sent His Son Jesus to save us from all evil in this world and in the world to come. Jesus has all authority and power in heaven and earth. Also, wherever He is received as Lord and Saviour the result is His reign of love, joy, peace and hope in people's hearts and homes.

The life of Jesus as revealed in the New Testament shows us that His mighty deeds and His gracious words made a tremendous impact on His listeners. They marvelled at the gracious words that came from His lips. They also saw clearly that He did not give simply opinions but "spoke with authority". Yes with the very authority of the living God.

It seems evident to me that Jesus' teaching impacted His followers then and now because He answered the truly big questions of life. For example, Jesus spoke words that responded to the following:

- Does God care about me?



- How can I find peace and satisfaction in my heart?
- Can God forgive my sin and change my life?
- Is there a life after death and can I be sure of heaven?
- How can I know God's guidance and protection day by day?

All of us, no matter what our race or education, face these same questions. If you look in the New Testament and read Jesus' gracious words you will see that they speak peace and assurance (certainty) to your heart. When we are weak and need our spirits strengthened, the words of Jesus tell us, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never go thirsty." (John 6:35)

In response to times of doubt and uncertainty in our lives, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) When the burdens and cares of this life seem to overwhelm us we hear Jesus' loving invitation, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt.11:28-29)

If we sense our own unworthiness and fear that there is no hope, Jesus speaks this: "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away." (John 6:37) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms...I am going there to prepare a place for you ... I will come back and take you to be with me... I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:1-3,6) "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

In North India where I lived for many years I always looked forward to mango season. What a wonderful gift from God the juicy, tasty mangos were in the midst of the hot season. We were blest with a great abundance of mangos in the market and a great variety of flavours. Of course bargaining for the right price was an essential part of any purchase. Sometimes, in order to try to get a seller to lower the price of the mangos, a buyer would make a negative comment such as, "Oh they [the mangos]



are probably not very tasty in any case.” The seller’s response was immediate and very clever. He quickly produced a knife and cut a good slice of mango. Passing it to the customer he would say, “Taste it and see.” Invariably this led to a sale and a happy and satisfied customer! It also produced the saying, “Only the man who has tasted a mango can tell the flavour.”

In this article, “the mango” I have been speaking about is the Incomparable Christ. Along with millions of others I have “tasted” Him and found Him to be unbelievably sweet and precious. Now it is your turn - your opportunity to turn to Him and to receive Him into your life. In Him you will find joy that is unspeakably great and will know the glory of God. Through knowing Jesus you will be certain that God will be with you all of your days and you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 7 EXAMINATION NOW**



## Chapter 8

*Some seafarers have said the following (or something like it): “What I believe is up to me so don’t force your ideas on me.”*

*Is this acceptable to God?*

*Answer by The Rev. Dr. Felix Orji*

It is absolutely true that what you believe is up to you and no one has the right to force their beliefs on you. God doesn’t force anyone to believe in Him. He does not force anyone to love Him or to enter into relationship with Him. As a matter of fact, God does not want you to love Him or believe in Him because it is required of you. Rather, as the Bible tells us, He wants you freely, by His enabling grace, to choose His way.

Although God gives you the freedom to believe what you want, it is also important for you to know three very necessary truths regarding belief. First, God is concerned about what you believe because it has the potential to either **help you** or **hurt you**. Second, even though what you believe is up to you, the results of your beliefs and actions are not up to you. Instead, they are up to the One who created you, who controls the world and will cause all people, including you and I, to be held responsible for the way we live our lives. Third, the fact that an idea has formed in your brain as a belief is no guarantee that it is right or true. The basic question that you must face is: **“Do you know for sure that what you believe is true or do you hold to your belief because it allows you to live a lifestyle that is centered on your own desires?”**

What you believe can hurt you seriously, beyond your imagination. The Bible and human history are full of examples of people who have been hurt and who have hurt other people by their sincerely held beliefs. Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-24), Pharaoh king of Egypt (Exodus 7:14-21;12:29-32), Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-20), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts



5:1-11), and every one who refuses to turn from sin and follow Christ before death (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:10-15) are some of these examples. Perhaps you or someone you know have been hurt because of a belief or action that was harmful. But, God does not want you to be hurt or, even worse, perish (die) eternally in hell because of your wrong belief. Rather He wants you to be saved from sin, Satan and death because He loves you (John 3:16-18). This is why, through various means, God in His mercy tries to convince us to come to Him for eternal life and everlasting hope.

The above truths about what you believe are so important that, if you do not mind, I would like to share with you what I believe and why.

In accordance with the teaching of Jesus, the only way you can truly have meaning in life, fulfill God's purpose for you, and avoid being lost eternally in hell after you die is to enter into a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. So, you can see that, from God's point of view, what you believe is important. It will make the difference between having a life of joy, holiness and godly fulfillment in this world, with eternal peace and glory in the life after death, versus a life of momentary pleasure in this world and an eternity of regrets and separation from all that is good. (Please feel free to look at the following parts of the Bible that reveal the importance of what we believe: Deuteronomy 6:1-19; 18:15-18; Isaiah 9:1-7; 53:1-12; Psalm 2; 22; 110; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 1:18-23; 25:31-46; Luke 2:8-20; 24:44-49; John 1:1-4, 9-14, 35-42; 3:1-21; 6:35-69; 10:1-18; 14:1-7; 15:1-13; 17:1-5; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; 17:22-31; 1 Timothy 2:3-7)

### **Reasons for Believing in Jesus Christ**

You may be asking, "Why should I believe in Jesus Christ? Why do I have to believe in Jesus Christ in order to have a relationship with God and receive eternal life?" In order to answer these questions we must first understand several truths that God has revealed.

First, you and I are sinners. The Bible says that we have all "sinned" against God (Romans 3:9-20, 23). What is sin? Sin is thinking, saying or doing anything that is contrary to God's Word



and Nature as taught in the Bible (1 John 3:4). For example, God has told us not to tell lies, not to cheat, not to have sex with someone to whom we are not married. God has also told us to believe, obey and serve Him; to love one another (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:37-40). But we have not done what He has said. We have done things our own way and believed what we want to believe. That is true of all of us. What do you think God will do about our refusal to believe, love and obey Him with all our hearts? What will be the result?

Second, the Bible teaches that there are very serious results for knowingly or unknowingly disobeying God. These include a lack of peace and satisfaction in your life, broken dreams and broken relationships with others. But the most damaging result of sin is that our relationship with God is broken. In fact our sin makes us enemies of God. (Romans 5:10) Now, it is true that God loves us but we need to be reminded that the Bible says God is angry with the wicked (those who ignore Him) (Psalm 5:4-6; 7:11-13). His judgment is to send people who don't know His forgiveness to an eternal hell of suffering and separation from Him. This is the wages or result of sin - death (Romans 6:23). I am so glad this is not the end of the story. There is good news (the Gospel).

Third, God in His love, not wanting us to die in hell, sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins and on the third day rise again from the dead. The Bible and the fact that for more than 2000 years lives have been changed by believing in Jesus Christ give evidence that this is worthy of belief (1 Corinthians 15:1-28; Luke 24:1-49). Jesus the perfect Son of God took the punishment that you and I deserve for our sins when He died on the cross. He saved us from the penalty and power of our sin so that we can have freedom and friendship with God Himself. Jesus died on the cross so that you can live forever with God. Jesus had to die because our good works are not good enough for a perfectly holy God. There is nothing we can do to make God forgive us because the Bible says, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin." (Hebrews 9:22) That is why we need the perfect blood of Christ to wash away our sins. As a result of Jesus' death and resurrection, you can be forgiven; you can have peace with God, become His child and, therefore, be part of His family. You can be set free from the power of Satan and the fear of death forever. You can have the free gift of 'right-



standing' with God and the power of the Holy Spirit to enable you to obey and follow Jesus as your Lord and King (John 1:12; 3:14-17;1 John 4:9-10; Romans 3:21-26; 5:1-11; 6:23b; Ephesians 1:3-8; Colossians 1:12-14, 21-23; 2:13-15; Isaiah 53:4-11) .

### **Receiving God's Blessings**

If you wish to surrender to God and receive His blessings through Christ, what you need to do is really quite simple. First, you need to talk to God and tell Him that you are sorry for your sins and that you want to turn away from them (Matthew 3:2, Acts 2:38). Second, tell Him that you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again from the dead to save you from the penalty and power of sin, Satan and death (Romans 10:13; Acts 16:29-31). Third, tell Him that you are determined by His help (the Holy Spirit) to follow Jesus daily in faith and obedience for the rest of your life (Matthew 7:21-23; 28:18-20; Luke 6:46, 9:57-62; 2 Corinthians 4:5).

Finally, begin to follow Him today by attending Church (Hebrews 10:23-25), reading the Bible daily (Matthew 4:4; Colossians 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; Joshua 1:8-9; 2 Timothy 3:16-17), praying daily (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17), and telling other people about what Christ has done for you and can do for them as well (Matthew 10:32-33; 28:16-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Also, you will be on the correct path of following Jesus if you live in love toward people (John 13:34-35;1 John 3:10,16-18;1 Corinthians 13), in obedience and love toward God (Matthew 22:37; John 14:21, 23-24; 15:14; Deuteronomy 6:5;10:11-13), and live to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31;15:58; Colossians 3:17; Romans 14:7-9), depending daily on the Holy Spirit to help you till you meet God face to face (Galatians 5:22-23, 25;1 John 2:20, 27).

You can see that from God's point of view even though what you believe is up to you, what you believe and how you live in the light of that belief is important both now and forever. While it is wrong for me to force you to believe what I believe, it is my hope and prayer that you will come to know the truth of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

**PLEASE TURN TO CHAPTER 8 EXAMINATION NOW**





## An Invitation to know God's love and forgiveness...

Perhaps you are a seafarer who has been sailing for many years. Or, maybe you are new at sea. Either way you have probably experienced times of loneliness while on board your ship. Being far away from family and friends may have caused you to feel discouraged and sad.

Although working on a ship can intensify your experience of loneliness, you may also be able to identify times in your life when you have felt "alone" even though you were back at home with family and friends. This may seem surprising. After all, if being away from your family and friends makes you feel very lonely, shouldn't your return to them solve this problem?

The Bible tells us that, in truth, there is a much deeper issue that must be dealt with in order for you to know what true peace, love and joy are. The issue is sin (all the things that people do against God). Sin causes separation from God (Romans 3:23) and the resulting experience of painful things such as sadness, loneliness and, eventually, death (physical and spiritual).

The Good News is that, although you (and every person) is separated from God because of sin, God has lovingly offered a way to return to Him. He has mercifully provided you with a pathway that will lead you back to a perfect, loving relationship with Him. Are you interested in this? If so, it is time to give your life to Jesus, God the Son, who died for you. It is time to be honest with God regarding your sin, to ask for His forgiveness and believe that Jesus died to heal your broken relationship with God. If you would like to do this why not pray the following prayer?

*Dear God,  
I have sinned against you and accept that I should be punished for my sins. I am sorry for doing these sins and turn away from them now. I accept and believe that Jesus Your Son, who is God, received my punishment when He died on the cross and that through His death my punishment has been paid. I receive Jesus as my Lord and Saviour now. Please help me to follow Him for the rest of my life. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.*

If you have prayed this prayer honestly, congratulations, you have become a child of God! You have received God's forgiveness and love and His promise of eternal life with Him!

We would be happy to hear from you. Please write to us at the address on the next page.



## *Further Information*

We hope that you learned many things from your study of this course. If you have found the material beneficial and would like to continue sailing toward a growing knowledge of what is true and the way to follow God, we would be happy to hear from you. Please contact us to request further Bible study courses so that your understanding of "Truth" may increase.

Please contact us at:

**Lighthouse Harbour Ministries  
1 - 260 East Esplanade  
North Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada V7L 1A3**

**email: [info@sealight.org](mailto:info@sealight.org)**

Also, please visit our web site at **[www.sealight.org](http://www.sealight.org)** in order to find a listing of evangelical Christian seafarer's missions located in different countries around the world.

Finally, may Jesus, Himself, be your great Captain as you sail the seas of the world!

*“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the  
Father except through Me.”*

*John 14:6*

