

## God and the Good News

[Welcome to the first lesson in the course DISCOVER THE GOOD NEWS!  
(Display and Read)]

In this course we study the message of Jesus Christ, which is the basis for the Christian faith.

[This message of Christ is in the Bible, and we will be studying it as we go through these lessons.

You know, the Bible is composed of many books.

We are going to look at one of these books that records the life of Christ.

This is written by one of His followers named Matthew.

We are going to find out what this message is called.]

### 1. What is this message called? Matt. 4:23

(Display and Read)

[Matt 4:23 *Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.*

According to this, what did Jesus begin teaching and preaching? (THE GOOD NEWS).

That is the name for the message of Christ.

It is the Good News about LIFE.

Another word for the Good News is GOSPEL.

So, the message of Christ is called...]

*Good News (Gospel). It is the good news about life.*

[The next question is...]

### 2. What makes it Good News? John 10:10

[Jesus Himself explained why His message is the Good News, in John 10:10b.

(Read) John 10:10 (Jesus said)... *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

So What did Jesus come to offer? (Life to the full) or a life that is fully fulfilling].

*Jesus came to offer fulfilling life for all.*

[That is what makes His message Good News.  
A natural question at this point is..]

6

---

What kind of life is a fulfilling life?

[You know, all over the world people are seeking a fulfilling life.  
But what things should be there in life to make it a fulfilling life?  
(Get responses that include the following)]

*A life of peace, love, satisfying accomplishments, happiness etc.*

7

---

(Display and Read)

Is knowing the purpose of life important for a fulfilling life? Why?

[Suppose you spend time and money in studying for years in some field.

How important it is to know the *purpose* of your study and hard work?  
Very important, isn't it, because, if there was no purpose, you will not be motivated to do all that hard work; also, in the end you will feel that your grades and accomplishments had little value, so it did not bring you any fulfillment.

So, the answer to the question: 'Is knowing the purpose of life important?' is ...]

*Yes. Only then we know if our life and accomplishments have true value.*

[You know, the question about the purpose of life is one of the *BASIC* questions about life.

It is sometimes put in another way: "*Why are we here?*"

There are other basic questions also which we want to think of.]

8

---

What are some of the basic questions about life, whose answers are important for us?  
[(Get responses that include the following)]

*Why are we here? (Purpose of life)*

*Where did we come from? (Origin)*

*Where do we go after this life? (Destiny)*

*Who am I? (Identity)*

[I am sure almost everybody has asked these questions some time or other.

That leads us to the next question...]

9

What does the Good News offer regarding these basic questions?

[As we are going to see, the Good News that Jesus brought has the correct ANSWERS to all these questions]

*Offers correct answers to the basic questions on life.*

[There is another important reason why the Good News is related to a *fulfilling* life.

If we look around, we find that there are so many problems in the world, and so much unhappiness.]

10

What are some serious problems in our world that cause unhappiness to many?

[Obtain responses that include the following]

*Crime, war, poverty, hatred, destructive habits, etc.*

11

What does the Good News offer regarding these problems?

[As we are going to see, the Good News offers not only the answer to life's basic questions but also the correct SOLUTIONS to our problems]

*It offers the correct solutions for all the problems.*

[At this point we should ask a question: Well, all this sounds good, but is it really true?

You see, we often hear about wonderful programs that will double our income, or the good news that we have won a free vacation and so on, but they often turn out to be scams or exaggerated offers.

So it is important that we ask if the Good News is really TRUE, and why. That is the next question]

12

### 3. Why is this Good News True? Romans 1:1 (\* 1)

[To find the answer, we go to the sixth book in the New Testament called Romans.

It is written by Paul, one of the earliest Christian leaders.

It explains the Good News in a very orderly way.  
We go to the very opening verse.

Rom 1:1 (Display and Read) "*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God...*"

Paul is called an apostle, which means a messenger approved by God. He says he is a messenger of the gospel, the Good News, of God. So he tells us the Source of this Good News: It is from (God). If the Good News were simply the idea of humans, we could not be sure if it is true.

But the Good News is from God, that is why it is true]

*True, since it is from God.*

[Now at this point we need to stop and look at the concept of God in the message of Christ.

Even though the word "God" is used around the world, you may be surprised to know that people attach different meanings to the word "God."

The concept of God in the message of Christ is concept of God in the Bible.

So the question is...]

13

---

**4. What is the concept of God in the Bible? Genesis 1:1**

[Fortunately, we don't have to search around in the Bible because the very opening verse of the Bible gives us the answer.

The Opening book of the Bible is called *Genesis*, which means "Beginnings."

The first verse of this book reads:

Gen 1:1 (Display and Read) "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

So God is introduced at the very beginning as doing what? (God CREATED).

So what is the concept of God? God is - (Creator or Maker)]

*God - Creator*

[Let us think for a moment why this concept of God is important]

14

---

**5. Why is this fact about God important? (for obtaining the answers and solutions for our life)**

15

---

(Display and Read)

If you bought a camera, who would you ask about operating it and fixing it if it needs repair?

[(Get the following response)]

*Camera maker - Would know how the camera operates, what it is for.*

*Would also know how to fix it if it has problems.*

16

---

In the same way, how can you know the answers and solutions for our life?

[(Get response)]

*As Creator, God would know the answers and He can solve our problems.*

[Now consider the question: "Where does the Bible come in, if God is the Source of the answers and solutions?."

That is the next question]

17

## 6. What is the importance of the Bible?

[To find the answer, let us look at a related question: When you buy a camera, and you don't know much about it, how will you get information about the camera? (From the camera manual, provided by the camera maker).

In the same way...(Display and Read)]

How can we know the answers about life, if God is the Creator?

[(Get response)]

*God as Maker - can give us an "Owner's Manual."*

18

---

(Display and Read)

Has God given us the answers in this way? 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

[The Bible answers this question.

Let us look at the answer in the passage: 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

(Display and Read) 2 Tim 3:16-17

*16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

*17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

"Scripture" is another word used for the Bible.

It says here that all of the Bible is God-breathed - that is, written with God as the Source.

So, it is the book from the Maker.

It also says what the Bible is for: teaching on every area we need to know about our life.

So, the Bible is the Manual for us from the Maker]

*The Bible - Manual from our Maker.*

[You know how important the Owner's Manual is when you buy an appliance or a computer.

You keep it in a safe place for reference because you know you will need to go to it again and again.

If you ever lost it, it would be a big problem, wouldn't it?

But you know, what is worse is never getting the Manual for the appliance.

Why am I saying this?

Because a lot of people in the world have never had the Bible, the Owner's Manual.

How will they ever know about life's questions and solutions?

We know that the right Source of these answers and solutions is God.

So the next questions is:]

19

7. **How do people all over the world who do not have the Bible know about God?** Rom. 1:19,20.

[The apostle Paul, as he explains the Gospel, addresses this question in the first chapter of Romans:

Rom 1:19-20 (Display and Read)

19 *since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.*

20 *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

This says that all over the world there is the awareness of a Creator God because nature points to a Creator.

That is how people without the Bible know there is a Creator God.

(Display and Read)]

*From nature, which is God's creation.*

20

(Display and Read)

Why does nature (universe) point to a Creator?

(Think of how a camera leads you to believe there is a camera maker; then think of the human eye)

[To answer why nature points to the existence of a Creator, let us go to the camera example.

All of us would agree that a camera is a complex appliance that cannot just assemble itself by chance.

It takes intelligent scientists and engineers to make a camera.

Now think about the human eye and the brain which are infinitely more complex than any camera or computer.

If a camera and computer point to an intelligent maker, our human eye, our brain, and the whole physical universe definitely point to a superintelligent Creator.

The popular idea that we can explain the universe by chance and evolution has miserably failed with the advance in knowledge of the complexity of our universe.

So, it is still true that the creation explanation is the only rational explanation.

So, the answer to the question of why nature points to a Creator is...]

*The complex design and order in the universe point to an intelligent Creator.*

*Chance and evolution have failed to explain origins.*

21

---

(Display and Read)

What is known about God from creation?

[At least three things about God are revealed through nature:

(Display and Read)]

*God's existence, power, intelligence.*

[We should pause at this point and ask: Can we know all we want to know about God through nature?

Or are there things about God we cannot know this way?

(Display and Read)]

22

---

- 8. What things about God cannot be known through observing nature? Why? (\*2)**

(Think of knowing about Henry Ford by studying the Ford car)

[To see why we may not be able to know all about God through nature alone, consider the example of knowing about Mr. Henry Ford from a Ford car.

I know that Mr. Ford is not really the original maker of the car.

He is the one who invented the assembly line manufacture of cars.

Any way, he is a car maker in a secondary sense.

Now suppose you examine the Ford car.

What can you tell about Mr. Ford from this?

Well, I can say someone must have made it.

Since the car bears his name, I am sure there is a Mr. Ford.

Also, he must be pretty intelligent, and has the ability and resources to make the car.

But suppose I ask these questions: Is he a kind man? Does he treat his wife well?

Can you find the answer by studying the Ford car?

Certainly not, because Mr. Ford is not part of the Ford car.

He is outside the car, and he existed before the car he made.

So, studying the car cannot tell much about the character of the car-maker.

In the same way, God, as Creator, pre-existed the universe.

He is not part of the universe.

So, all our study of the created universe will not give clear knowledge of God's character.

For example, if we want to find out from nature if God is loving or cruel, we can find evidence of both love and cruelty in nature, so that does not answer our question clearly.

Another thing we cannot know is what His wishes are.

We call it His will or laws.

So at least two things about God cannot be known through nature alone:]

*Not known - God's character and will clearly.*

*(e.g. Is He loving or cruel? Evidence for both in nature)*

[Now these days there is so much confidence in what science and philosophy can discover.

So we raise the question: (Display and Read)]

23

---

Can science and philosophy give us knowledge of God in these areas? Why?

[We have already hinted at the answer.

This is because science and philosophy study the *created* universe.

So, they can't give us clear knowledge of God's character and will either.

The same applies to religions based on observation of nature.  
That is what Eastern religions are.  
Thus the answer is...]

*No! Since Science and philosophy study creation, not the Creator.  
So also religions based on nature (e.g Eastern religions)  
The Creator is not part of creation!*

[The natural question, then, is, "Is there any other way of knowing  
God's character and will"?  
That is the next question.]

24

---

**9. How then can we know about God's character and moral laws?**

(If my mother wants me to know what she wants me to do, how will I know it?)

[Let us consider an example to analyze this problem.  
Suppose my mother wants to let me know that she wants me to help  
her with the dishes.  
How will I know?  
If she comes to me and just stands there, will I be able to guess what  
she has in mind?  
No.  
So how does she let me know?  
She opens her mouth and speaks to me!  
All right, can God also communicate to us by speaking to us?  
For example, can He speak to me from the sky in English?  
Does He know English?  
There are some philosophers called agnostics who say that God is  
infinite and we are finite so we cannot understand even if He can  
communicate to us.  
I find this objection not valid.  
You see, the scientists who made the computer can certainly  
communicate with the computer in a way the computer can  
understand - through computer languages.  
If God is our Creator, we can certainly expect Him to know our  
languages and how our mind works, so He should have no problem  
in communicating with us in a way we can understand.  
And that is ...(Display and Read)]

*By God speaking to man. (e.g. my mother speaking to me about  
what she wants me to do)*

[The question is, has God spoken to human beings?  
Is there any historical record?]

25

---

Has God spoken to human beings? (\* 3)

[We are going to see that the answer is Yes.

We are going to look at some historical records of God speaking to man, by going to the first and second books of the Bible.

In the first book, which is Genesis, we are going to look at Gen. 12:1.

(Display and Read)

Gen 12:1 *The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*

Here we read that God spoke to Abram.

His later name is Abraham, and he becomes the founder of the nation of Israel.

God told Abraham what He wanted him to do.

In the second book, which is Exodus, we read in Exod. 3:6:

(Display and Read)

Exod 3:6 *Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.*

What we have here is God speaking to an important person called Moses, from the middle of a burning bush.

How did Moses know that it was God?

Well, God introduced Himself saying, "I am the God of Abraham..." etc.

Following the account we see that God revealed Himself as a merciful God who wanted to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Then God told Moses to be the leader of this deliverance mission.

Thus we see God revealing His character and will

Gen. 12:1      *God spoke to Abraham*

Exod. 3:6      *God spoke to Moses (He can! He spoke in Hebrew)*

What are people like Abraham and Moses called? (\*4)

Prophets.

[Prophets are ordinary people.

If God spoke to you today, and asked you to go and tell others, you will be a prophet from then on]

What was revealed this way?

*God's character and will.*

Where is the record of God's speaking to mankind through prophets?

[Abraham and Moses are just two examples of people to whom God spoke.

There are many more.

The record of God speaking through prophets in Israel is the first part of the Bible called the Old Testament.]

*Old Testament - record of God speaking man through prophets of Israel until the time of Christ. (First part of the Bible)*

[Now the Bible also has a second part, called the New Testament, which begins with the life of Christ.

The question we want to consider is, "Did God reveal anything new in the New Testament?"

If so, what?]

**10. What is new about the revelation of God in the New Testament? Heb. 1:1,2**

[To find the answer we go to a book in the New Testament called Hebrews and look at the opening verses:

Heb 1:1-3 (Display and Read)

- 1 *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,*
- 2 *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*
- 3 *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word...*

The first verse says that God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets.

This is a summary statement about God speaking to man through the prophets in the Old Testament.

But look at verse 2, which says that in these last days He has spoken us by (His Son).]

*God spoke through His Son.*

28

---

Who is referred to as the "Son"? (\* 5)

[This is a title of Jesus]

*God's Son is Jesus (Not in the physical sense).*

29

---

What is the meaning of the title "Son of God"? Heb. 1:3  
(e.g. If some one is "son of a man," what nature will he have?)

[It is important to understand what is meant by the title "Son of God." Even though Jesus was born through his human mother Mary, He was not conceived through any physical union between God and Mary. His conception was through a supernatural act of God.

In Luke 1:34 we read about it.

When Mary was visited by an angel who told her that she was going to have a child, she asked him how that is possible since she was not yet married.

The angel answered that it was through the Holy Spirit of God.

Luke 1:35 says that this is why Jesus was going to be called the Son of God.

So this is not in any physical sense.

Then in what sense is He the Son of God?

Heb. 1:3 explains. (Display and Read)

*"The Son is ...the exact representation of God's nature."*

In other words, Jesus is One who has the identical moral nature or character of God.]

*"Son of God" means He has the exact character of God.*

[Let me give you an example of how the title "Son of God" can have this meaning.

Suppose I tell you that I am born from a horse.

Then whose nature will I have?

A horse's nature.

But if I say that I am a son of a man, then you understand that I have human nature.

In the same way, by the title Son of God, we understand that Jesus has God's nature.

Now Jesus has other titles also]

30

---

What is another title for Jesus? John 1:1,14

[(Display and Read) John 1:1,14 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...The Word became flesh and made His dwelling with us..*"]

This is talking about the birth of Jesus as a man and living with us. His title was ...the (Word), or Word of God.]

*Jesus - also known as the Word of God.*

30

---

What do verses 1 and 14 of John 1 say about Jesus?

[According to verse 1 He always existed as God under the title "Word of God."

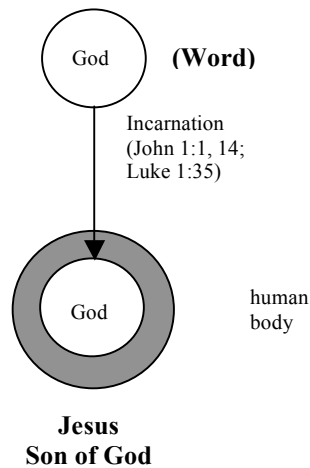
According to verse 14, He then took a human body and lived with us.]

*He existed always as God (under the title "Word of God").  
He then took a human body (When He was born through Mary).*

32

---

(diagram)



How is the title "Son of God" more appropriate to Jesus than the title "God"?

[If you read the record of Christ's life, you will find that Jesus is referred to as Son most of the times, although He was God living in a human body.

Why is this?

Well, the first point to note is that Jesus got the title Son of God only after He was born as a man, according to Luke 1:35.

What would have happened if He had gone around calling Himself God?

Do you see any possibility of misunderstanding?

What would people think about the way God is?

Seeing that Jesus had a human body, they would think that God also has a human body.

But God, in His eternal form, does not have a human body.

The Bible says God is a Spirit Being.

So it was safer to refer to Jesus as Son of God.]

*Son of God refers to Jesus as God after He took human body.*

*If Jesus called Himself "God," people would misunderstand that God, in His eternal form, has a human body.*

*(It is alright to call Jesus God if we mean only His divine nature)*

[The next question is...]

How did Jesus Christ reveal God's nature? (as Son of God)

[Since Jesus is the Son of God, He has the exact moral nature of God.

So, Jesus reveals God's nature by His own character.

In other words, Jesus is the direct revelation of God in a Person.

That answers how Jesus reveals God more fully]

*By His own character. Direct revelation in a Person.*

[Now we know that God has revealed Himself through nature and through prophets.

So the question is...]

35

---

Why is this more complete than the knowledge through prophets? (\* 6)

[To understand this, consider the matter of knowing that God is a loving Person.

This was certainly revealed through the prophets.

But there was a problem.

When God spoke to man that He is a loving God, how could we understand the meaning of His love?

You see, the problem is that we can only understand the meaning of any word based on our own experience.

So when we hear that God is a loving Person, we will think of our human experiences of love – the way a mother loves, a husband and wife love each other, and so on.

But if God's love is much deeper and purer than any love we are familiar with, we will not be able to understand His love by simply hearing that He is a loving God.

So how did God overcome this problem?

God took human body and lived with us.

Then, instead of just telling us that He is loving, He acted out His love.

This is like an English teacher explaining to her foreign students the meaning of the word "jump."

Instead of giving the translation of the word in their native language (which is a poor method), the teacher explained the word "jump" by acting it out — by actually jumping.

So also God acted out His love through Jesus.

That is how we understood the nature of God's love.

In other words, the revelation through Jesus is..]

*Direct and clear revelation of God's character.*

*Cannot clearly reveal His character through messages to prophets. (e.g. God's love, which is different from human love).*

*Jesus acted it out to explain it.*

36

---

What other knowledge did Jesus give?

[God came in human form in Jesus not only to fully reveal His nature, but also to give us the clear answers and solutions to our problems.

This solution is called SALVATION. It is the Good News Jesus brought]

*Jesus also brought knowledge of salvation (the solution to all our problems)*

37 \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY**

[Let us review the main points of this lesson:]

38 \_\_\_\_\_

What are the three ways of knowing God?

*God = Creator**First, general revelation through nature - God's existence, power, and intelligence.*

["General" in the sense that it is given to all]

39 \_\_\_\_\_

*Second, special revelation through prophets - God's character and Will (in Old Testament)*

["Special" in the sense that is through messages given to specially chosen people]

*Third, Personal revelation in Jesus Christ (God's Son) in the New Testament*["Personal" because God revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ]

40 \_\_\_\_\_

Today, if we want to know about God, what is the best place to begin? (\* 7)

[Should we go back to study more science or begin with the Old Testament ?

No, because we have the best and most complete revelation of God through Jesus.

Consider, for example, a student wanting to learn about the moon. Should he try to learn about the moon by reading books about the moon written before 1950?

No, since man has gone to the moon and brought back moon rocks.

So, we should go to the latest and best knowledge.

In the same way, we should go to Jesus who is the Son of God and the BEST revelation of God]*Begin with Jesus Christ.*

[That is what we are going to do in the next four lessons.

Begin with Jesus.

We don't want to go to the prophets.

Even if some one claims to be a prophet after Jesus came, the communication through a prophet is not as good and final as communication through the Son of God.

It is not the LATEST revelation that is important, but the best QUALITY of revelation.

(You can apply this principle to Mormonism which claims to be based on God's communication to Joseph Smith who claims to be a prophet after Jesus)]

Where in the Bible is the record of Jesus? (\* 8)

*In the four Gospels in the New Testament, which are the first 4 books of the New Testament.*

[So the next four lessons will be based on the Gospels]

