



The Way of Life

Part 2

Student's Notes

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With thanks to the young people at Knowle and Dorridge, who acted as patient and good-humoured guinea-pigs for the materials in these notes.

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Dear young person,

By now you're probably getting the hang of these notes, and we hope that you are finding them interesting and helpful.

The world in which you are growing up is a beautiful one, full of the signs of God's handiwork. But it can also be an evil place in which men and women ignore their creator and go their own way. The choices you make in your teens, and the values you adopt, will probably shape the rest of your life, and so the topics in these notes are important. A lot of the subjects are practical, to do with what you will do when you finish at school, your choice of career, and beyond that the shape of your family life.

Only you can decide what to do with your life, but we hope that you will determine to follow the way of the Lord Jesus. It is not always the easy way, but it is the best. It brings blessings in this life, and leads us on, by the grace of God, to eternal life in his kingdom.

May God be with you,

The Sunday School Union Committee

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Make notes about the following events and people that were significant in the Bible coming to us in a form we can understand.

The writing of the Old Testament



The Septuagint; Why was it produced, and how?



The writing of the New Testament



John Wycliffe



Johann Gutenberg



William Tyndale



The King James Version



Points to consider

Why did these reformers go through what they did in order to translate or print the Bible?



What response should this make us have?



A Summary: Who wrote the Bible and how it was handed down

Byblos

The name 'Bible' comes from the Greek city Byblos. If you have maps in your Bible you can look for it by its other name, Gebal. It is on the coast about 50 miles north of Sidon. Byblos was a famous centre for trading in papyrus. Biblion = papyrus scroll; biblia = set of scrolls.

Papyrus

Papyrus is a sort of reed, perhaps the same as the rushes in which Moses' ark was laid. It grew about eight to ten feet tall, and had very fibrous stems. In Old Testament times, papyrus was cut into long strips, which were laid side by side, with others across them. These were then soaked and beaten with a mallet to make them join together to make a sort of paper.

The Old Testament

A series of scrolls, 1450 BC - 70 AD written in Hebrew

The original book of the law was put in the side of the ark (Deuteronomy 31:26) and later books were laid up before the Lord (1 Samuel 10:25). Altogether the Old Testament amounted to about 40 papyrus scrolls.

Copies of these scrolls were made in order to:

- preserve the word of God
- help the copier to learn the word of God

Copies were made by:

- leaders - Joshua 8:32
- kings - Deuteronomy 11:18
- scribes - Ezra 7:6

Copying the Hebrew text was laborious. Rules governing copying were extremely strict, and many checks were built in to avoid error. The scrolls were:

- difficult to read, because there were
 - no gaps between the words
 - no punctuation
 - no lower-case letters
 - no vowels, only system of dots
- cumbersome to refer to, because Papyrus scrolls are so large and heavy.
- very expensive - it took a scribe 10 months to complete a set. So only rich and affluent people such as the eunuch (Acts 8:28) could afford them.

By 200 BC many Jews outside Israel spoke no Hebrew so in 258 BC the Old Testament was translated into Greek. It was called the Septuagint version supposedly completed in 72 days by 72 Greeks in Alexandria and was a step forward because:

- it allowed the Old Testament to reach a wider public
- it was more intelligible (Greeks introduced vowels circa 850 BC)
- it was more durable (written on parchment)

By the time of Christ each synagogue had its own set of scrolls.

The complete Bible - from scrolls to codex, 65-350 AD

A codex was a number of folded pages, sewn together, with text written on both sides. It was developed by the early Christians, who found the Old Testament scrolls too cumbersome for daily reference. We are told that they searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). We can say that Christianity brought literacy and the introduction of books.

The New Testament, written in Koine (common) Greek, was largely completed by AD 65. The Septuagint Old Testament was added to it to make a complete Bible in Greek.

The complete Bible was reduced from several volumes written on parchment, thin leather, to one volume written on vellum (thinner leather, yet strong and capable of being written on both sides) by about AD 350 (Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus). The Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Alexandrinus are both in the British Museum.

Methods of copying had become less laborious; Greek scribes employed dictation, which was fast, and they wrote from left to right, which lessened the risk of smudging the text (most people being right-handed). So, the new Bibles were more portable and more easily referred to, also less costly - although still beyond the ownership of all but a few.

From Greek to Latin codex, 404 - 1454 AD

By 170 AD Latin was replacing Greek as the language of the empire. In 404 AD Jerome had completed the first official Latin version of the whole Bible, called the Latin Vulgate (Latin vulgaris = common) commissioned by Pope Damasus. Over the next 1050 years the Latin Vulgate spread throughout western Europe. Paradoxically, it became less accessible to the common man because:

- ordinary people did not speak Latin
- the church denied access to the scriptures to all but clerics, stopped translations into common tongues, blocked reform and then condemned the use of the Bible altogether
- the church wielded greater power than temporal leaders through its sanction of excommunication.

King Alfred and a monk called Bede translated part of the Latin Bible. But the earliest surviving Anglo Saxon translation is the Lindisfarne Gospels. This was also a translation by monks who wrote the Anglo Saxon between the Latin lines.

1382 - John Wycliffe

produced the first complete Bible in English. It was translated from the Latin, and cost 13 times a labourer's annual salary. A Master of Balliol College, Oxford, he had encouraged his theology students to preach in English to villagers and poor labourers. He was expelled from Oxford the same year and died two years later. His translation of the Bible into English marked the beginning of the Reformation in England and his many religious tracts inspired followers both at home and abroad. He and his followers, the Lollards, moved around the country with their Bibles preaching to the common people.

In 1408 the English Church ratified the Constitutions of Oxford. These stated that:

... no one henceforth on his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English or other languages ... and that no book, pamphlet, or tract of this kind be read, either recently composed in the time of the said John Wycliff ... or that may in future be composed ... under pain of the greater excommunication, until the translation itself shall have been approved ...

From codex to printed Bible, 1454 - 1516 AD

The unlocking of the knowledge contained in the scriptures, which very few priests could read and understand, was helped by two events:

1453 - the sack of Constantinople by the Turks, which resulted in the rediscovery of many ancient Greek manuscripts, in the fields of science, literature and religion - including the Codex Vaticanus (the oldest and most complete Bible yet discovered). Two great movements resulted from these discoveries:

- The Renaissance - a renewed enthusiasm for the Greek language and a reawakening of interest in culture and learning
- The Reformation - a desire to reform the church's beliefs and practices, as a result of the discovery that Jerome's Latin Vulgate, upon which many of the church's teachings were based, was an inaccurate translation of the Greek text. (100 or so early copies of the Greek New Testament and Septuagint had come to light).

1454 - Johann Gutenberg printed the Latin Vulgate using moveable type face on parchment. He printed as much in one day as was formerly printed in a year. Now the Bible could be accessible to the farm labourer.

The Reformation gets underway: 1516 - 1611 AD - the age of the translations

Some scholars and priests tried to reform from within the Church. Most reformers incurred the wrath of the Holy Roman Emperor, the Pope and the Spanish Inquisition, and were excommunicated or worse. The most important were:

Erasmus

An eminent scholar from Rotterdam. His Greek and Latin New Testament, printed in 1516 was the basis for later translations in the common tongue. His work showed the Latin Vulgate to be incorrect. He wished to see the scriptures translated into every language, but left that controversial task to others.

Martin Luther

A German Augustinian monk, called "The Father of the German Reformation". In 1517 he openly attacked the excesses of Rome. Excommunicated in 1521, he translated and caused to be printed the first German New Testament in 1522, and the first complete German Bible in 1534. He was protected from the agents of the Pope and Holy Roman Emperor by the Elector of Saxony. Lutheran Protestantism spread throughout North Germany, Prussia and Scandinavia.

William Tyndale

A theological scholar at Oxford and Cambridge, he was refused permission by the church to translate Erasmus' New Testament into English. He fled to Hamburg in 1524 to do so. "If God spare my life, e're many years, I will cause a boy that drives the plough to know more scripture than the priests." In 1525 he translated, printed and smuggled into England from Worms, the first printed English New Testament. It cost a farm labourer one week's wages. In 1534 he had completed a translation into English of much of the Old Testament but was captured in 1535 by the agents of the Bishop of London, and strangled and burnt near Brussels, on the jurisdiction

of the Holy Roman Emperor. Martin Coverdale, his collaborator, carried on his work in exile. Tyndale's contribution to the English Bible and to the English language was immense.

John Calvin

A French lawyer and classical scholar, who took up the Protestant cause from his base in Geneva in 1536, which he transformed into an evangelical republic, based upon austere Stoic principles. Scholars flocked to the University of Geneva, established in 1559, to escape persecution and to translate the Bible. A revised translation of the Bible was already underway in Geneva in the 1540's and spread in France under the guidance of Calvin, who shaped the Protestant cause in France, Holland, Scotland, East Switzerland, the Palatinate and parts of Hungary.

The King James Version

During a conference held at Hampton Court in 1604 James I ordered a new English translation to be made. It was published in 1611 and we know it as the Authorised Version. It contained a large percentage of Tyndale's and Coverdale's translations - was to shape the English language for the next 300 years, being the Bible used in almost every English church and chapel until the 1950's.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1947 a Bedouin boy, looking after his goats at Qumran, on the north-east side of the Dead Sea, found a cave in which had been hidden many jars containing scrolls. Many more jars were found in other caves nearby. The scrolls were of various documents, but include extracts from every book of the Old Testament, except Esther. In particular there is a complete text of



the book of Isaiah, which is now displayed in a museum in Jerusalem.

Dead Sea Scrolls, documents of great historical and scholarly value, found in 1947 and later in caves above the NW Dead Sea. Archaeologists have shown that the scrolls stored in jars in the first cave at Qumran were written or copied between the 1st cent. B.C. and the first half of the 1st cent. A.D. Chief among the scrolls are two copies of the Book of Isaiah, almost 1,000 years older than any Hebrew biblical manuscript previously known. Another important scroll was the so-called *Manual of Discipline* for an ascetic community, which has been identified with both the ruins at nearby Qumran and the Essenes, a Jewish religious sect living an ascetic communal agricultural life in that region between the 2d cent. B.C. and 2d cent. A.D.

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What answer would you give to these views of the Bible?

Outright opposition - the views of the atheist.

“It is a collection of verbal traditions.”



“It is myth, portraying unhistorical characters.”



“It was written after ‘prophecies’ had happened.”



“We cannot accept the miracles.”



“It is full of contradictions.”



“It was written by many now-forgotten authors.”



Anything else?



Faint Praise

Some people are apparently supportive, but they don't like accepting that The Bible was inspired by God.

“It is a valuable history book - no more.”



“It is the world’s greatest work of literature.”



“It is one of several ‘holy books’.



“It is the Word of God in the words of men.” or “It contains the words of God.”



“The Bible is true but God has since revealed further truths to men”



Anything else?



Unless you can read Hebrew or Ancient Greek, you depend on a translation when you read the Bible. Although in general these have been produced by well-meaning people who are well qualified to carry out the work, there is no perfect translation, for a number of reasons.

Texts

The original Bible manuscripts have not survived, and the translations have to be based on copies of copies of copies which are for the most part many generations removed from the original texts. Copying by hand inevitably introduces errors, and there are many small differences between the various texts available for translation. At best, the translation can only be as good as the text from which it was translated, so that a faithful translation of an unreliable text can never produce an accurate Bible version.



Look at 1 John 5:6-8

This is a well-known example of a text which is not in early manuscripts, but appeared in the Latin Bible (known as the Vulgate, because it used to be in 'common' - as in 'vulgar' - use). It appears in the Authorised version and, disappointingly, the New King James Version. It was added, no doubt, by someone wishing to provide justification for the doctrine of the Trinity.

Authorised Version

6 This is he that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

New International Version

6 This is the one who came by water and blood - Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

Revised Version

6 This is he that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Which would you expect to be more reliable? Older manuscripts or more modern ones?



Interpretation

Sometimes a word in one language has no direct equivalent in another, and the translator has to choose the word which is closest in the particular context. Think of English words like 'stick', 'set', or 'fitter', each of which has several unconnected meanings. A translator has to study the context and try to work out which meaning is intended, and the translation will reflect his own understanding of the meaning of the text. This can of course be dangerous because the translator may not be right.



Look at Philippians 3:12-14.

Paul is talking about his single-mindedness in seeking the kingdom of God.

Authorised Version

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

New International Version

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead,

14 I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

J B Phillips

Yet, my brothers, I do not consider myself to have "arrived" spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect.

But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now.

But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal - my reward of being called by God in Christ Jesus.

How would you compare these different versions? Where does the NIV reflect a misunderstanding on the part of the translator?



Figures of Speech

These present a dilemma to the translator as they may be meaningless when translated literally. For example, common English expressions, like 'I was pulling his leg', or 'I was running flat out' would not mean anything if they were translated directly into French or German. So in the case of the Bible, should the translator translate the words or try to express the meaning? For instance, 'house' is a term used in Hebrew to mean 'family', but it can be misleading.



Look at Exodus 1:19-21.

Pharaoh has instructed the Hebrew midwives to kill all male children.

Authorised Version

19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women [are] not as the Egyptian women; for they [are] lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.

20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty.

21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.

New International Version

19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

New King James Version

19 And the midwives said to Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women [are] not as the Egyptian women; for they [are] lively, and give birth before the midwives come to them.

20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and grew very mighty.

21 And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that he provided households for them.

In this case it seems better to translate the word 'house' as family, although in others it would be a mistake, as in 2 Samuel 7, where the same Hebrew word is used. See how other versions translate this passage.



Read 2 Samuel 7, and see how the word 'house' is deliberately used with different meanings.

Look in particular at verses 12-13. How does this passage apply both to Solomon and to the Lord Jesus?



Dimensions, Quantities, Times, Titles and Values

Translators have to decide whether to convert

- distances from stadia into miles,
- lengths from cubits into metres,
- volumes from hins into litres,
- money from shekels into pounds sterling (or simply into the more timeless day's wages),
- titles from Satrap into District Officer,
- weights from talents into grammes,
- time from hours into o'clock

and so on, or whether to leave well alone? Again it depends whether the main objective is to make the text easy to understand or to provide an English version as close as possible to the original.

Style

The translators of the Authorised Version based their work upon William Tyndale's translation and chose to keep his highly literary style. They tried, for instance, to avoid repeating the same word in a single passage, and at times they went to great lengths to disguise repetition in the Hebrew or Greek text by using a series of different English words to translate a single original word.



Look, for example, at Romans 4:3-6

Authorised Version

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was **counted** unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not **reckoned** of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is **counted** for righteousness.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God **imputeth** righteousness without works,

New International Version

3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was **credited** to him as righteousness."

4 Now when a man works, his wages are not **credited** to him as a gift, but as an obligation.

5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is **credited** as righteousness.

6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God **credits** righteousness apart from works:

Revised Standard Version

3 For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was **reckoned** to him as righteousness.

4 Now to one who works, his wages are not **reckoned** as a gift but as his due.

5 And to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is **reckoned** as righteousness.

6 So also David pronounces a blessing upon the man to whom God **reckons** righteousness apart from works:

The Authorised version, in the interests of English style, has avoided repeating the word 'counted', but in doing so it has lost the emphasis that comes from the repetition in the Greek.

Sometimes modern language can convey the meaning of the original much more clearly, as in Numbers 31:38

Authorised Version

And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and twelve.

New International Version

36,000 cattle, of which the tribute for the LORD was 72;

On other occasions the desire to use modern language can destroy the dignity and meaning of the original, as in the terrible NEB rendition of Psalm 22.

Authorised Version

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

New International Version

16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.

18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

New English Bible

16 The huntsmen are all about me; a band of ruffians rings me round, and they have hacked off my hands and my feet.

17 I tell my tale of misery, while they look on and gloat.

18 They share out my garments among them and cast lots for my clothes.

Where do you think the priorities should lie: producing a translation with a good grammatical style; conveying the meaning accurately; or using words that are easy to understand?



Corrections

The quality of the Hebrew text is amazingly good, to the extent that it is very rare that there is any difficulty in working out what was originally written. Very occasionally, however, there do seem to be errors. One of these rare examples occurs in 1 Samuel 13:1

Hebrew text	Authorised Version	New International Version
Saul was one year old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel.	Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, ...	Saul was [thirty] years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel for [forty-] two years.

The AV translators tried their best to make sense of the original text, even though commentators tell us that the words could not mean what the Authorised version says.

The NIV translators on the other hand, tried to work out what the original text might have been, and they indicated this by including the words 'thirty' and 'forty' in brackets. They worked out what to put by looking at passages like

Acts 13:21 'And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years'.

2 Samuel 2:10 'Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he reigned two years.'

What conclusions would you draw?

What do you think is the best approach to choosing, and using, Bible Translations?



English versions in common use today

King James Version 1611 (KJV), also known as the Authorized Version (AV)

A revision of William Tyndale's translation, using the Masoretic text, a fairly late compilation.

Revised Version 1884 (RV)

A revision of the KJV using older and more reliable texts, notably Codex Sinaiticus and setting out also to eliminate inconsistencies of KJV while retaining its style and language. The American Standard Version 1901 (ASV) is the US variant of the RV.

Revised Standard Version 1952 (RSV)

An American revision of RV/ASV using modern language but retaining 'thee' and 'thou' for God only. A 1973 revision called the Common Bible is acceptable to Roman Catholics also.

New World translation 1961

The Jehovah's Witnesses own translation.

The Jerusalem Bible 1966

A Catholic translation into modern English.

New English Bible (NEB) 1970

A completely new translation tending towards idiomatic rather than literal translation but still retaining 'thee' and 'thou'.

The Living Bible 1971

A highly readable but rather loose American version. Being a paraphrase rather than a translation, it is not recommended for serious study.

Good News Bible (Today's English Version) 1976 (TEV)

An American translation by the united Bible Societies, following the Masoretic Text. It tidies up the text by always using the same name for the same individual even where different versions of the name appear in the texts. Famed for the line drawing appearing in some editions.

New International Version (NIV) 1978

A recent American translation showing admirable respect for the inspired word, but occasionally betraying an evangelical bias.

New King James Version 1982

A new translation seeking to retain the character of the KJV. It uses 'You' with a capital 'Y' when referring to God or Jesus.

The following table is intended to provide a basis for thinking about the importance and consequences of authority in daily life. You may like to add to it from your own thinking and experience.

Source of Authority	Why trust it?	Strengths	Weaknesses
Parents	Nature? Power? God's law	They care. They have experience	Human! Out of date?
School Teachers/ College Lecturers			
Police			

The next table follows the same pattern, but looking at sources of authority in religious belief.

Source of Authority	Why trust it?	Strengths	Weaknesses
What I learnt from my parents	Respect, tradition, convenience	Avoids upset, continuity	Could be wrong, not own conviction
Personal 'revelation', a 'call'			
The church			
An individual (e.g. the Pope or an influential person)			

Source of Authority	Why trust it?	Strengths	Weaknesses
Own choice			
The majority			
Books other than the Bible			
The Bible			

What principles should to determine how we should decide whether or not to accept a particular source of authority:



The Bible makes specific and testable claims to be the Word of God. This lesson does not set out to prove the truth of the Scripture; rather it aims to show that the Bible makes clear claims to be inspired by God and to have authority. The following passages are relevant:

Acts 3:18, 17:10-11, 18:9

1 Corinthians 2:4-7

Galatians 1:1, 1:11-12

Ephesians 2:20

1 Thessalonians 2:13, 4:15

2 Timothy 3:16

Hebrews 1:1-2

1 Peter 1:10-12

2 Peter 1:21

1 John 2:27

In the beginning - Some lessons from Genesis

What principles do you learn from the events recorded in Genesis 2, where Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden, and from chapter 3.



Lessons from Psalms and Ecclesiastes



What do we learn about work from Psalm 104.16-24?



How many lessons in Ecclesiastes 5:8-20 can you find that apply to work, money, etc.? Try to use several Bible versions and compare them. Would you have said the same from your own experience?

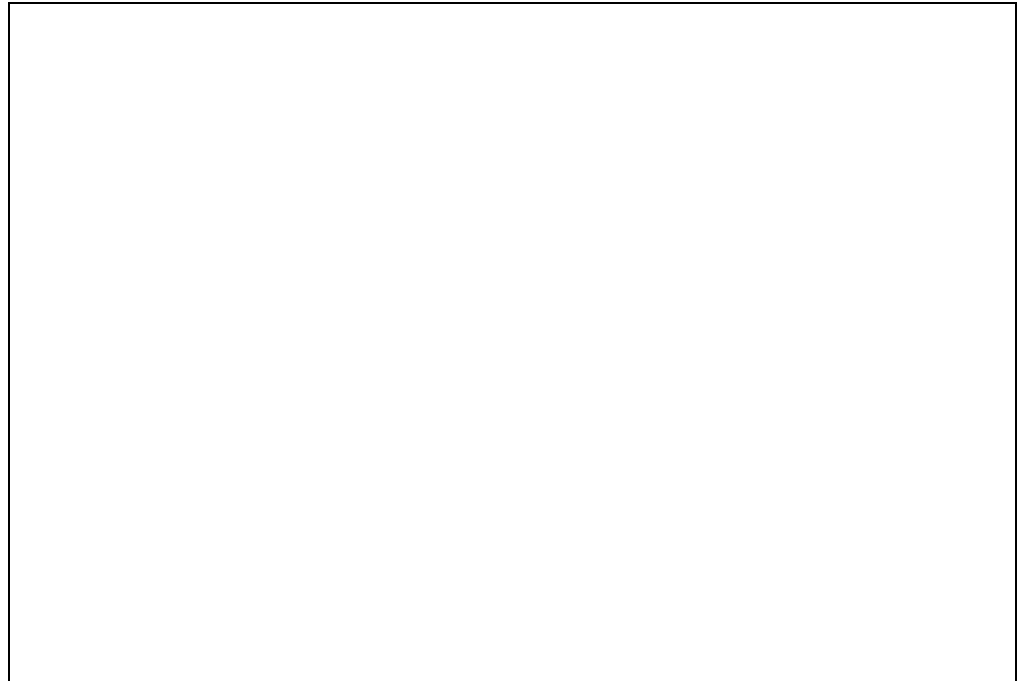


Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief

Think of as many Bible characters as you can and fit them into the chart below. Do they all fall into the same category? If someone's circumstances changed during their life, write their name twice and draw an arrow between the names. To how many people does this apply? What would you deduce from the chart when you have finished?

MANUAL
WORK

MENTAL
WORK



RICH

POOR

It's not what you know, but who you know

What are the characteristics of people who get promoted at work, and are 'successful'?

Which of these would you expect to apply to a follower of Jesus?





Read Luke 18:18-27 and 12:13-21. What are the risks and dangers associated with 'success'? What should we do to avoid them?



Think about Proverbs 30:8,9 and Philippians 4:12,13. What lessons do we learn from these passages? How would we apply them in practice?



**Read Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:22-24**

What points does Paul make in these passages? Pick out some key phrases.



If you work like that, what is a boss likely to think of you?



What about your colleagues? What will they think?



Which of the following expressions are likely to be used about you? Score 4 = all the time, 0 = never. (For he read she as appropriate!)

	0	1	2	3	4
He's bone idle					
He's a real company man					
I don't understand what makes him tick					
I can't trust him					
He's the most hard working person in my department					
He's always happy!					
He's a real soft touch; never says no, whatever I tell him to do					
The trouble is, he has too many out-of-work activities					
I can't understand why he hasn't got on better					



Jesus said that no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6.24).

What examples can you think of where your allegiance to Christ will bring you into conflict with the demands of a job?



Think of some examples of people in the Bible and their relationship with their employer. What lessons can you think of?



Write an imagined account of a Christian at work, including:

- the sort of job he (or she) chose, and why
- what problems he faced during the interview, and why he was offered the job
- the account of his employment; how he got on with his boss and colleagues, and how the job progressed

In the beginning

This subject cannot be separated entirely from home life, so it is important that we consider both aspects of God's teaching. Make some notes based on Genesis 2:18-21; Genesis 3:16: 1 Timothy 2:9-14.



Women in Authority

Think of some women in Scripture who worked for a living, or were in positions of some authority - say as queens, judges or business women.



Look at Proverbs 31, and read verses 10 - 31. What would you learn about:

Her position at home



Her occupation and status



Her relationship with her husband



What conclusions would you draw so far?



What risks are associated with a woman working?

If a woman is single:



What about both husband and wife going out to work?

If they have no children:



If they have children:



What about a wife working instead of her husband?



Working relationships



Introduction

This topic covers typical situations which may arise in many jobs. Although there are rights and wrongs involved, there is a significant grey area in each case, so there is no 'correct' answer. You have to, as you would in real life, work out for yourself what you would do, being guided by the teaching of Scripture and praying for help.

When people depend on you

You have a key job in meeting the needs of 'customers'. (A customer in this sense could be a hospital patient, somebody who wants to buy something from the company you work for, or anyone who depends on you). Partly because of the high quality of what you do, the level of work has risen a great deal recently. However, in the last few weeks there have been several problems which have resulted in a large backlog of work, and a lot of overtime is needed if things are not to get out of hand. You are asked to work in the evenings, on Saturdays, and finally on Sundays.

What are the scriptural principles?



What are the alternative courses of action?



Which would you, personally, choose, and why?



How would you explain your decision to your customers?



The office party

You are in charge of a department of about 20 men and women. In December you are all invited to the annual office party. These events are regarded by the company as a good way for people to 'let down their hair', and they provide plenty of alcoholic and soft drinks. Previous parties have become a bit wild, and several 'affairs' have begun which caused problems with the marriages of those concerned. The entertainment is heightened by the presence of enthusiastic amateur photographers! Your boss thinks you should be there, partly to show your face, partly to keep things under control. Your staff want you to go because they like you.

What are the scriptural principles?



What are the alternative courses of action?



Which would you, personally, choose, and why?



How would you explain your decision to your staff?



The Sweepstake

It is the week before the Grand National, and time for the annual draw. Everyone pays 10p and is given, at random, the name of a horse. If your horse wins you get £1. Any proceeds go towards a local scheme to buy a new kidney machine for the hospital.

What are the scriptural principles?



What are the alternative courses of action?



Which would you, personally, choose, and why?



How would you explain your decision to your colleagues?



Scripture Union

There are about 200 people in the department in which you work. Each Wednesday lunch time there is a 'Scripture Union' meeting at which a variety of scriptural and practical topics are discussed. These are poorly attended; only 3 or 4 people go (2 Baptists, a Methodist and an occasional C of E), and they are generally regarded as wimps! You are invited.

What are the scriptural principles?



What are the alternative courses of action?



Which would you, personally, choose, and why?



How would you explain your decision to your colleagues?



The Share Option Scheme

Your firm has an employee share option scheme which would enable you to save for 5 years with a Building Society, and at the end of that time have the option to use the money to buy shares at a very favourable price. The company's motivation is

- to make their employees feel more loyalty to the company
- to encourage people to stay with the company for at least 5 years
- to get their shares into the hands of people who are committed to the company

What are the scriptural principles?



What are the alternative courses of action?



Which would you, personally, choose, and why?



What are the differences and similarities between this and the Sweepstake?



Write a short prayer for help, which you could pray in one of these situations



Use the references to identify differences and similarities between the kingdom of God under David and Solomon and under Jesus Christ.

Under David and Solomon

1 Kings 10:26; 9:21; 1:35; 3:1, 1 Kings 2:10;
11:42-43



Under Christ

Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 7:21; John 10:16,
Revelation 11:15; 21:2-4; 2 Samuel 7:16,
Revelation 21:25-26; Jeremiah 23:5-6

What are the similarities?



What are the differences?

<i>Under David and Solomon</i>	<i>Under Christ</i>
	

There was a view of the kingdom of God which was popular in Victorian times. The 19th century was an era of scientific advance, when people believed that learning would gradually improve everything until the world was a perfect place. Medicine would rid the earth of all diseases, improved agriculture would provide plenty of food for everyone, and education would lead people to behave sensibly so that wars would cease. The theory of evolution provided support for this idea with its concept of improved species progressively triumphing over inferior ones.

So the idea became widely accepted that the kingdom of God would arise gradually in the earth. It was thought that although Christianity began in a small way, its influence would spread throughout the world and would become stronger and stronger until all the earth would become 'The kingdom of God'. This belief was supported by an interpretation of some passages of Scripture which is still held today in some (but not all) parts of the established church.

Two examples



Look at Matthew 13:31-32

'The interpretation of the parable lies almost on the surface. Here again the sower is the Son of Man; but the seed in this case is not so much the 'word' as the Christian society, the Church, which forms, so to speak, the firstfruits of the word. As it then was, even as it was on the day of Pentecost, it was even smaller than any sect or party in Palestine or Greece or Italy. It was sown in God's field of the world, but it was to grow till it became greater than any sect or school, a tree among the trees of the forest, a kingdom among other kingdoms (comp. the imagery of Ezekiel 31:3; Daniel 4:10), a great organised society; and the 'birds of the air' (no longer, as before, the emblems of evil) - i.e. the systems of thought, institutions, and the like, of other races - were to find refuge under its protection. History has witnessed many fulfilments of the prophecy implied in the parable, and those who believe that the life of Christendom is an abiding life will look for yet more.'

(from A Bible Commentary for English Readers, edited by C J Ellicott, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester)

When you think about the state of the world, of human nature, and of the Christian churches, does this seem likely to be a correct understanding of the passage?





Look at Luke 17:20-21

This is another passage which may seem to support this understanding. It is not immediately clear, from these verses alone, whether the phrase 'within you' means 'in your souls', as in

'The Kingdom of God never comes by watching for it. Man cannot say, 'Look, here it is', or 'there it is', for the Kingdom of God is inside you.'

from 'The Gospels translated into Modern English' by J. B. Phillips

or whether it was referring to the presence of the Lord Jesus among the people.

The same Greek word occurs in only one other place in the New Testament:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the **inside** of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Matthew 23:25-26 (NIV)

This passage effectively rules out the understanding that the kingdom of God is an inner experience. Although Jesus was speaking of the inside of people - their human nature - he was speaking to the Pharisees again, as in the passage in Luke 17. It is very unlikely that he would have meant that the kingdom of God was in a place 'full of greed and self-indulgence'.

God's kingdom established in the future to save a doomed world



Read Matthew 24:21-31

What do you learn from this passage about the sort of world into which the Lord Jesus will return?



It is clear, from Daniel 2:44,

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever.

that there is a specific future time in which God will establish his kingdom, which will overcome the kingdoms of the world, and Christ will rule on the earth.

The kingdom of God - being prepared now

There is another aspect of this subject that we should not ignore, however. There are many passages in the New Testament (we have already looked at Luke 17:20-21) where it is clear that the 'kingdom' is used of Christ himself. When God's power was wielded in the earth, and used to overcome the powers of evil, it could be said that the kingdom of God was near.



Look, for example, at Luke 11:17-20; 10:8-12

Similarly, when people turn to God they are, in a sense, citizens of his kingdom now. They obey his commandments and seek to serve him.



Now read Colossians 1:12-13; Philippians 3:17-21

What do these passages teach us about the connection between our life now, and the coming kingdom when Christ returns?



What other denominations believe about what happens when we die,- a summary

The teachings of many churches are unclear, partly because they have always welcomed members with varying views, regarding the desire to worship together as more important than unanimity on points of detail, and partly because their position has changed with time; they may still officially hold a doctrine which few members now believe.

For instance, the Anglicans officially accept the Apostles and Nicene Creeds which teach the Second Coming of Jesus, but many members, clergymen and bishops no longer hold it to be literal truth.

Evangelical Christians accept the second coming and have difficulty reconciling it with the belief that you go to heaven when you die.

The Methodist Church looks to Scripture and to Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and his 44 sermons for doctrinal guidance, but the latter do not impose a system of formal theology; their concern is the gospel of redemption and the experience of salvation. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is even less specific; it has no written creed and does not require its believers to accept any formula of beliefs. They are more concerned with their quality of living and knowledge of God than with their future destiny.

Apart from Methodists and Quakers, it is noticeable that all of the churches listed believe in some sort of eternal life in some sort of heaven or spirit world.

	Return of Christ	Eternal Life in			Bodily Resurrection	Death State
		Heaven	Hell	Earth		
Assemblies of God	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	immortal
Baptists	varies	yes	yes	no	varies	immortal
Plymouth Brethren	varies	yes	yes	no	no	immortal
Roman Catholics	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	immortal
Christian Scientists	no	yes	no	no	no	immortal
Anglicans	varies	yes	yes	no	varies	immortal
Mormons	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	immortal
Elim Pentecostalists	yes	yes	yes	no	no	immortal
Jehovah's Witnesses	no	yes	no	yes	no	unconscious
Methodists	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies
United Reformed Church	no	yes	varies	no	no	immortal
Quakers	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies
7th Day Adventists	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	unconscious
What the Bible teaches						
References						

The Seventh Day Adventists believe in the unconscious state of the dead, followed by bodily resurrection at the return of Jesus, with bodily ascension to heaven for 1000 years, then descending to the new earth for eternity. Jehovah's Witnesses hold that there will be a spiritual resurrection for the 144,000 to heavenly existence, but that during the millennium there will be a general resurrection to renewed human life on earth. Apart from these 2 faiths, none of those listed have any place for eternal life on earth.

The Catholic Church is surprisingly open-minded and even vague in its approach, in principle at least. For instance, it believes in the resurrection of the body, but

“the exact nature of the transformation cannot now be known, nor the exact relationship of the risen, glorified body to the earthly one.” (*Entry by Father A Toffolo of Plymouth, approved by the Catholic Information Office in the International Church Index.*)

It has, however, a clear belief on purgatory as a process of purification for those not perfect in their love of God when they die.

“The Catholic Church does not uphold any particular images of purgatory, but does profess the need for purification so that man’s heart may be totally open to the love of God - which is in heaven.”

In practice, some local clergy and laity may have a crystal clear image of purgatory as well as of heaven, hell and, for that matter, limbo. It is the view of the Catholic Church that the Lord’s promise to guide believers to all truth (John 16:12-13) is vested in their church in the person of the Pope, or Pope and Bishops speaking ‘Ex Cathedra’. They believe that when he or they pronounce definitively on some matter of faith or morals in this way, they do so by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and their words have the infallible power and authority of Scripture itself. It is by this process that the concept of purgatory has come to be added to the scriptural account.

The Mormons, although vastly different from the Catholics in detail, have arrived at their present (and still developing) position by a similar process. They too believe that their leader can be inspired to speak the word of God. They have a hierarchy of prophet, apostles, the seventy and so on, derived from the New Testament. Their current position is that a pre-existing spirit enters a human body at its birth and leaves at its death. If worthy, it becomes a god upon the death of its human body, and may become the god of some distant planet. They sincerely hold that the Lord God became god of planet Earth by this process, having previously been a man, and having parents and grandparents. This is not based upon Scripture or even upon the Book of Mormon, but upon subsequent ‘revelation’ through the incumbent prophet. An effective means to counter this error is to show that there are irreconcilable discrepancies between the ‘revelations’ including the Book of Mormon and the Bible.

Difficult Passages

Genesis 35:18 (AV)- Did Rachel have a soul?

Soul (Hebrew ‘nephesh’) is often translated ‘life’ - i.e. her life was leaving her. NIV has ‘breathed her last’.

Matthew 10:28: Have we got souls?

Both soul and body can be destroyed in Gehenna - therefore the soul CAN be killed and is not immortal. Soul (Greek ‘psyche’) is translated ‘life’ in Matthew 16:25. Man can kill the body, but only God can end life forever.

Luke 16:19-31: Is this a picture of heaven and hell?

The parable is not about souls or spirits but bodies with eyes, fingers and tongues, which have to be carried by angels and which are confined by the physical barrier of a great gulf. Like the Old Testament parable of the trees speaking to one another, this need not be taken literally. The rich man in hell was able to see and speak to those in Abraham’s bosom!

What about spirits and souls in these passages?

Acts 7:59

Verse 60 says that Stephen fell asleep, not that his soul left his body to remain awake elsewhere. John 11:11-14; 24-25 shows that this is unconscious sleep awaiting resurrection. The spirit is the life, temporarily suspended but hid with Christ (Colossians 3:3-4) to be re-activated on Christ's return.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

i.e. Mind and life and body - the individual words are so translated elsewhere in the New Testament. All are needed for effective operation of the person. Thus the expression means the whole person.

1 Peter 3:19

Romans 6 teaches that we are either servants of Christ or of Sin. Paul declared himself a captive of Christ. Those without Christ were captives of sin. The 'spirit of Christ' in Noah enabled him to preach to such imprisoned spirits - i.e. to sinners.

NB Spirits in Scripture are not disembodied beings. Angels are ministering spirits but have bodily presence; the 'try the spirit's' passage (1 John 4:1) is referring to prophets, whether genuine or false. That Noah was able to preach in the spirit of Christ is confirmed by 1 Peter 1 v.11.

Is there a heaven?



Look at Matthew 5:12; Colossians 1:5 ; 1 Peter 1:4; 1 Peter 5:4

Put the above passages together and it is clear that the reward in heaven is brought to believers on earth, and not vice versa. See Revelation 22:12 - "...I come quickly and my reward is with me..."



Luke 23:43

The thief asked Jesus to remember him when he came in (RSV 'in', not 'into') his kingdom. He was asking to be included in a future kingdom.

The position of the comma is crucial to the meaning, but the punctuation is not in the Greek text. The comma can legitimately be repositioned to give the reading:

"...I say unto you today, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

This reading makes better sense since if the thief were to be with Jesus later that day, it would not be in heaven. When Jesus rose from the dead 3 days later, he said that he still had not ascended to his Father.

Paradise is mentioned only 3 times in the Bible and is not identified with heaven. In Revelation 2:7, the tree of life grows there.



John 14:2

NIV - Mansions = rooms

In the Bible, God's house is always the temple, and never heaven. The temple at Jerusalem really did have many dwelling places. However, it is effectively replaced by the ecclesia whose members form a spiritual temple, again with room for all.

See verse 3:

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again
...that where I am there ye may be also".

Jesus will return to be with his followers on earth, not in heaven. People who use verse 2 to support heaven going usually overlook verse 3.

The disciples asked two questions, though they may not have realised how separate they were:

Q1 When will the temple be destroyed?

Q2 What signs will there be of Jesus' coming and of the end of the world?

The temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70 following a terrible war, but we still await the fulfilment of the second part - the return of Christ to the earth.

Jesus answers both questions, but it is not always clear which of his words apply to which question. It is worth trying to understand how his answers apply, however, as a pattern emerges which can be helpful.

One of the Old Testament tests for a prophet was whether his prophecy came true. This was not much help to the prophet's contemporaries if the prophecy took 1000 years to be fulfilled. Perhaps for this reason, many OT prophecies had an initial, early (and probably partial) fulfilment as well as a long term application, (e.g. David's house building son, Isaiah's child is born, Jeremiah's return of the Jews etc.) Using the texts below, or your own Bible, try to work out which of the following parts of The Olivet prophecy may well have such "dual fulfilment" elements:

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21	Q 1	Q 2
4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no-one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.	5 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no-one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many.	8 He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and 'The time is near.' Do not follow them.		
6 You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth-pains.	7 When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth-pains.	9 When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." 10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.		
9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,	9 "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.	12 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13 This will result in your being witnesses to them.		

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21	Q 1	Q 2
13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.	10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. 12 “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.	14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17 All men will hate you because of me. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By standing firm you will gain life.		
14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.	(10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.)			
15 “So when you see standing in the holy place `the abomination that causes desolation’, spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--	14. “When you see `the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong--let the reader understand--	20. “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.		
16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no-one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no-one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.	then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let no-one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16 Let no-one in the field go back to get his cloak. 17 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter,	21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written. 23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.		

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21	Q 1	Q 2
21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.	19 because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now--and never to be equalled again. 20 If the Lord had not cut short those days, no-one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.			
23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time. 26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.	21 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect--if that were possible. 23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.			
29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'	24. "But in those days, following that distress, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'	25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.		
30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.	26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.	27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."		

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21	Q 1	Q 2
31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.	27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.			
32. “Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.	28. “Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.	29. He told them this parable: “Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.		
34 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.	30 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.	32 “I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.		
36 “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.	32 “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35	34 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.		

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21	Q 1	Q 2
<p>42 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.</p>	<p>35 “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: `Watch!’“</p>	<p>36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”</p>		



Look at 1 Peter 2:9-10, Colossians 1:13-14, Philippians 3:20.

What does citizenship mean for the follower of Jesus?



Read 1 Peter 2:13-17, Jeremiah 27:4-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

What does God expect of his citizens in relation to their secular leaders?



Look at 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, Galatians 6:10, Colossians 3:17,23 & 4:2-6.


What should be our overall standards of behaviour?



Now turn to Acts 4:18-20 & 5:28-29, Daniel 3:16-18.

What should we do if conflict arises between the state's requirements and God's?



Activity	OK?	 Reason
Police		
Solicitor		
Jury Duty		
Witness in a trial		
College Representative		
Neighbourhood Watch		
Scouts/Guides		
Trades Union		
Professional Institutions		
Pressure Groups, like Friends of the Earth, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament		

Military Service		
Nurse/Doctor In Wartime		
Munitions		
Staff Representative		
Voting		



Isaac - Genesis 17:19-22



Joseph - Genesis 37; 41:41-57; 41:46; 42-46



Joshua - Joshua 3 and 6





David - 1 Samuel 16:11; 17:28; 2 Samuel 5:1-5; 1 Chronicles 28



Elisha - 1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:23-25, 4:8-36, 42-44, 6:1-6, 13:20-21



Job - Job 1:1, 1:4-5, 2, 38, 42:10 and 12



Jonah - Jonah 1:15-16; 1:17; 2:10; 3:1-3



Write down any references you can think of (using a concordance if you wish) in the New Testament linking Jesus and the law of Moses.



What are the similarities between the Passover lamb and the Lord Jesus?



What happened on the Day of Atonement?

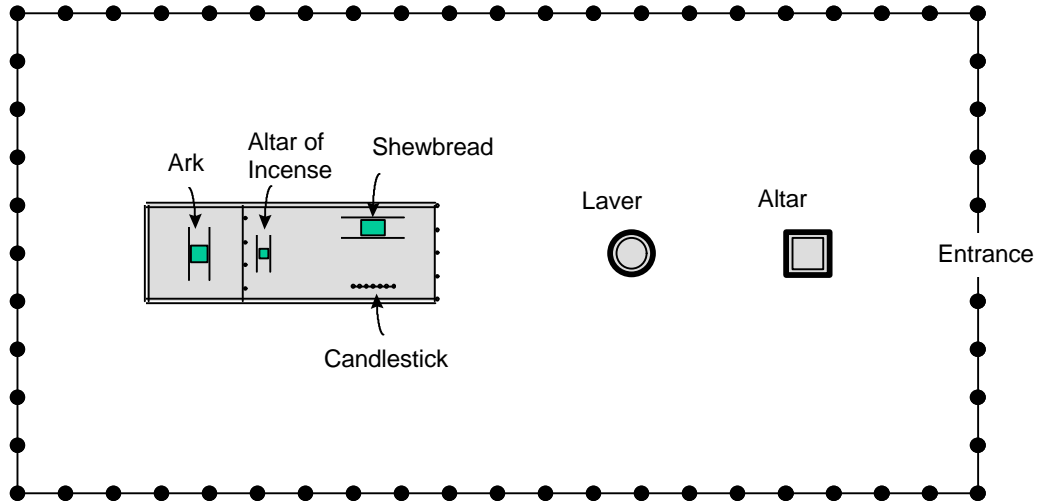


In summary, what did the law of Moses provide for the forgiveness of sins. What did it not do?





Read Hebrews 10:19-22 together and then look at this diagram of the Tent of Meeting.



How could you get from the entrance to the Most Holy Place? What would have to be done?



In the Old Testament anyone offering a sacrifice had to place his hands on the head of the finest of his flock, to identify himself with it. What can you do to identify yourself with Jesus?



Romans 12; Hebrews 13:15-16; Psalm 50:14-15,23

What sacrifices does God ask of us?



Jewish Laws

Mishna, collection of interpretations of the legal portions of the Torah and a codification of traditional Jewish practice. The Mishna and the Gemara, a commentary on the Mishna, constitute the Talmud. Next to the Scriptures, the Mishna is the basic textbook of Jewish life and thought, covering, e.g., agriculture, Sabbath and festivals, marriage and divorce, and civil and criminal matters. The final compilation of the Mishna was made under the direction of Judah ha-Nasi from the work of the Tannaim, a group of sages of the 1st and 2d cent. A.D., including Akiba ben Joseph. The Mishna has been widely translated and has had a considerable influence beyond the confines of Judaism.

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Think about these points in the context of Christ's trial:

- a) Members of the Sanhedrin were accomplices in the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Knowing that blood money had been paid over should have convinced the judges to quash the whole trial.
- b) Jesus was alone and friendless amongst a hostile crowd - just the kind of conditions where law was instituted to protect the weak.
- c) By Hebrew law it was the witnesses who had to satisfy the court that there was indeed a case to answer - Deuteronomy 17:6. The case should be abandoned if witnesses did not agree.
- d) So Caiaphas took to questioning Jesus - just to formulate a charge. Proceedings could not find a legitimate start so he defied the law and began an inquisition of the defendant. This was illegal - the charge had to come from witnesses. The charge could not legally be founded on Jesus' answers. Jesus' reproof to him was grounded on this law, "I have spoken openly to the world. I ever taught... in secret I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that heard me." In their angry embarrassment they struck Jesus on the face - again wrongly. As one judge put it, 'Putting the question to the accused and founding a condemnation on his answer was therefore the last violation of formal (Jewish) justice.' "Art thou the Christ, the son of God?" They took his confirmation of this as blasphemy, which under Hebrew law is worthy of death.
- e) The Jewish Mishna stated that trials for life could only be conducted during the day. Moreover a condemnation of the prisoner had to be postponed to a second day - to guard against hasty decisions!
- f) The council must not meet on a feast day.
- g) If a capital charge were being considered, forty days must be allowed for the assembly of evidence for the defence.
- h) The Sanhedrin was not to meet on the Day of Preparation.
- i) The Talmud says that in trials for life, they should begin with evidence to acquit a man, not condemn him.
- j) They must not condemn a man out of his own mouth.

The Jewish Trial



Read Matthew 26:59-66; Mark 14:55-64; Luke 22:63-71, and list the illegalities of the Jewish Trial



Jesus was pronounced guilty by the Sanhedrin of blasphemy - not the original charge - but one seized upon in desperation

The Roman Trial



Read Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-12; John 18:28-38

What accusations did the Jews make to Pilate so that he would pronounce the death penalty?



What was Pilate's verdict?



But Pilate had a history of blunders in his governorship which the Jews were well aware of. He could not afford to be in trouble with Rome.



Read Matthew 27:15-31; Mark 15:6-20; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16

What did they say which made him give the Jews what they wanted?



What is marriage?



To marry or not to marry? Why do people choose to live together instead?



What is commitment? Can a marriage work without it, or fail with it?



The Foundations

Here are some foundations for a happy marriage that will please God



Ephesians 3:14-15; Matthew 23:9; Hosea 11:1-4



2 Corinthians 6:14-16; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6



1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Ephesians 4:1-2 and 15-16





Galatians 6:2-5; 1 Peter; 3:8-11; Ephesians 5:29-32



The Framework of the Family - Husband and Wife

What attitudes should husbands and wives have for each other?



Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7



What do you learn from these passages about the rôle of a husband?



And of the wife?



Do you think these rôles should be interpreted differently today?



Children

What responsibilities do children bring?



2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Timothy 3:4; 1 Samuel 3:13





Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:7; Proverbs 19:18



Ephesians 6:1-4



Parents and grandparents

What special contribution can grandparents make to a family? What responsibilities do younger members of the family have for them?



1 Timothy 5:1-8



From your own experience and observations make a list of the pressures that can affect a marriage, particularly for believers; in the second column add the effects those pressures can have. Leave column three for later.

<i>PRESSURE</i>	<i>EFFECT</i>	<i>SOLUTION</i>

<i>PRESSURE</i>	<i>EFFECT</i>	<i>SOLUTION</i>

After discussion fill in the third column indicating possible solutions or principles to apply when faced with these pressures.

What do you mean by a 'successful' marriage?



What things will help to make a marriage successful? Why?



<i>What problems can arise in a family with children?</i>	<i>How would you tackle this problem as a parent?</i>	<i>How would you tackle this problem as a child?</i>

<i>What problems can arise in a family with children?</i>	<i>How would you tackle this problem as a parent?</i>	<i>How would you tackle this problem as a child?</i>

Look at the following examples of the way God treats people who have sinned. Read through the passages and make notes, where the Bible gives you information, about:

- What was the sin?
- What sort of sin was it - was it, for example, a deliberate act of disobedience, a moment of weakness, an error of judgment?
- Did anyone repent, or learn from the experience?
- Was anyone punished? Were they forgiven? Why do you think God treated them as he did?



Genesis 3:16-23



Leviticus 10:1-7



Numbers 15:32-36





2 Samuel 6:6-9



2 Samuel 12:1-14



John 8:1-11



Matthew 23:13-15, 28-39





What conclusions would you draw from the passages about how God judges people?

What do these passages teach us about how we should behave towards each other, bearing in mind how God behaves towards us.



1 Samuel 16:4-12



1 Peter 3:1-5



 Psalm 139:1-5



 Matthew 7:1-5



 Romans 2:1-4



 1 Corinthians 6:1-6



Consider each of the passages listed below and record what it tells you about “The Day of Judgment”



Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43



Matthew 25:31-46



John 5:21-30



Luke 21:25-27





2 Timothy 4:1, 8



Romans 14:10-13; 2 Corinthians 5:10



1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 51-54



Revelation 20 v 11-15



1 John 4:14-18, Luke 12:27-34



Here are some points and questions for you to discuss.

Prejudice

Galatians 3:26-29

What does this say about how we should regard people? Should we judge people's looks, colour, sex, intellectual and social standing?

Does it happen in society generally? Amongst Christians?

So does this mean that you should never form any opinion of anyone about anything, based on their appearance? Really?

Don't Judge?

Romans 2:1-4; Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37-42

Are we qualified to judge one another? Do you think there are some situations where we might be and others where we aren't? How do you tell the difference?

Forgiving others

Matthew 6:9-14

How successful are we at fulfilling the conditions for obtaining forgiveness?

When someone sins

Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11

If we definitely know someone is breaking God's commandments how should we go about dealing with the problem?

Should we ever refuse fellowship to anyone?

If so, what should be the purpose of it?

Are you as bad?

Cathy comes to you in tears and tells you how Rachel has been saying unkind things about her to the rest of your friends. You had joined in this gossiping the previous week. Do you

- a) remember and feel guilty,
- b) remember and think Cathy deserved it,
- c) remember and immediately push it from your mind,
- d) or would you not have remembered your part in it at all?

Do you

- a) confess to Cathy,
- b) keep quiet but make up your mind not to do it again,
- c) tell Cathy not to make a fuss

What do you say to Rachel and the others?

When someone confesses to doing something wrong ...

You are a parent. Your son comes to you and confesses tearfully that he has stolen a bicycle from a friend and sold it, then used the money to go to a rave. He says that he is truly ashamed and promises never to do the same again. Of the principles you have discussed in the last two topics, which are relevant to this situation? What do you do?

... and when they don't

Your daughter did not realise that you saw her when she took some money from your pocket so that she could buy some sweets. When you ask her about it she denies taking the money and complains that you never give her enough anyway. What do you do?

Discrimination

It is an established fact that some groups of people are discriminated against. Before you discuss this situation think of real people you know who are of a different nationality to the majority, different colour, physically or mentally handicapped, with perhaps a police record and try to think how you would really feel rather than how you know you ought to feel.

There has been a spate of stealing at your place of work or school. Someone accuses this person you know. What is your reaction? Is there anyone in your list of people that you might without any foundation think is more likely to be guilty? Think of some different accusations such as bullying, cheating or sexual harassment.

Feeling guilty?

The mathematics test was terrible. You hadn't worked very hard at school, and then when you sat down and read the questions you realised you were going to do very badly. It was pure chance that your friend Simon is very good at maths, was sitting only a few feet away, and is right-handed, which meant that you could look across and read what he was writing. Your teacher had some suspicions when she realised that you had got one of the questions wrong in exactly the same way as Simon had, but she couldn't prove anything. Now you're feeling guilty, and wondering if you should tell anyone. Should you? What would that person say to you if you did?

The sources of sin and evil

What do these passages say about the source of sin in the world?



Mark 7:20-23

James 1:14

Romans 7:18-21

Jeremiah 17:9

What about the sources of evil?

'Evil' is often used to mean simply 'sin', as in Zechariah 1:4 'Turn ye now from your evil ways and from your evil doings'. But not always. What does it mean in these passages, and where does 'evil' come from?



Genesis 6:5

Genesis 37:20

Isaiah 45:5-7

Job 2:7-10

So what is the difference between sin and evil?



Satan in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, Satan is an ordinary Hebrew word meaning 'adversary'. Can you find 'Satan' in these passages? Who is referred to as the adversary?



Numbers 22:22	
1 Kings 5:4	
1 Kings 11:25	
Psalms 71:13	

Compare 2 Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:2

So what is 'Satan' in the Old Testament?



The Devil in the Old Testament

The word 'devil' only occurs in four places in the Old Testament:



Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, 2 Chronicles 11:15, and Psalm 106:37.

What does it mean?



The Devil and Satan in the New Testament

Many times the Authorised Version translates the Greek word 'diamonion' as 'devil'. This is used in the context of people who were sick, and it's a different subject which we will think about some other time. The NIV always translates the word as 'demon'.

Satan in the New Testament

'Satan' is a Hebrew word, not Greek. So where it occurs in the New Testament it must be for a particular reason. What does it mean in these passages?



Mark 8:33	
Luke 13:11-16	
1 Thessalonians 2:18	
1 Timothy 5:15	
Acts 5:3	
Matthew 4:1-10	

So what is Satan in the New Testament?



The Devil in the New Testament

The Greek word for devil is 'diabolos', which means 'accuser'. In 1Timothy 3:11; 2Timothy 3:3; and Titus 2:3 it is translated as 'slanderer', 'malicious talker' or 'false accuser'. The devil stands for whatever accuses us before God, and we know from the earlier parts of this study that it is our sins, which come as a result of the temptations within us.



John 6:70	
Ephesians 6:11	
James 4:7	
1 Peter 5:8	

So what is the devil in the New Testament?



Finally, spend some time thinking about Hebrews 2:14

What was destroyed in the death of Christ?

How does his death help us in our battle against our human nature?



Introduction

GOATS AND THE DEVIL

Sir, Woodrow Wyatt writes (January 31): 'Cloven-footed goats were considered unclean by rabbinical writers, hence their choice of the symbol for the Prince of unclean spirits, the Devil'.

Lord Wyatt could not be more wrong. Goats were never regarded as unclean animals, either by biblical or rabbinical writers. Being cloven-footed was the sign of a clean, not an unclean, animal (see Leviticus XI, 3).

The rabbis did not have a symbol for the Devil, because they did not believe in the Devil, who does not appear anywhere in the Hebrew canonical writings. According to rabbinical ideas, the angel Satan, who acts as accuser, or counsel for the prosecution, plays a role assigned to him by God.

The Devil does play a prominent part in early and medieval Christianity. He was often pictured as goat-like, not because of any Jewish-derived ideas, but probably because of the influence of Greek mythology, which portrayed the mischievous god Pan as having the body of a goat.

Yours faithfully, HYAM MACCOBY, Leo Baeck College, Manor House, East End Road, N3.

Letter published in the London Times newspaper, February 1995

Many denominations believe that the Devil is a fallen angel, who was cast out of heaven for disobeying God and is the source of all the evil in the world. In particular, evangelical Christians have a very strong belief in a personal devil and see superstitions such as tarot cards, ouija boards, hallowe'en, and the like, as dangerous opportunities for him to work.

Satan the prince of the demons, the author of evil, persecuting good men, estranging mankind from God and enticing them to sin, afflicting them with diseases by means of demons who take possession of their bodies at his bidding.

Definition taken from the OnLine Bible

Here are some of the Bible passages that seem to talk about an angel being cast out of heaven. After you have looked at them all and thought about the questions that follow you may like, if there is time, to make some notes about individual passages.



Isaiah 14

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (AV)

Luke 10

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ... 17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." 18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

John 12

31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Hebrews 2

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil.

Romans 16

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Revelation 12

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

If these passages are all taken literally, what would you conclude?



And what do you think is the explanation?



What Jehovah's Witnesses believe

The Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, believe that much (some would say all) of what goes wrong in the world is caused by the devil. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Satan first appears as the serpent in Genesis, and is a fallen angel who was cast out of heaven in 1914.

The following extracts (the bits in boxes) are taken from one of their books.

Satan the Devil - Definition:

The spirit creature who is the chief adversary of Jehovah God and of all who worship the true God. The name Satan was given to him because of his becoming a resister of Jehovah. Satan is also known as the Devil, because he is the foremost slanderer of God. Satan is described as the original serpent, evidently because of his using a serpent in Eden to deceive Eve, and for this reason "serpent" came to signify "deceiver". In the book of Revelation, the symbolism of a devouring dragon is also applied to Satan.

How can we know whether such a spirit person really exists?

The Bible is the chief source of evidence. There he is repeatedly referred to by name (Satan 52 times, Devil 33 times). Eyewitness testimony as to Satan's existence is also recorded there. Who was the eyewitness? Jesus Christ, who lived in heaven before coming to earth, repeatedly spoke of that wicked one by name - Luke 22:31; 10:18; Matthew 25:41.

From 'Reasoning from the Scriptures', © Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

Does the Bible teach that Satan exists?



Does it teach that Satan is a spirit person?



Is Satan perhaps only the evil within people?

Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7 tell about conversations between Jehovah God and Satan. If Satan were the evil in a person, the evil in this case would have to be in Jehovah. But that is in complete disagreement with what the Bible tells us about Jehovah as being One “in whom there is no unrighteousness.” (Psalm 92:15; Rev. 4:8). It is noteworthy that the Hebrew text uses the expression *has Sa tan*’ (the Satan) in the accounts in Job, showing that reference is being made to the one who is outstandingly the resister of God. See also Zechariah 3:1, 2, footnote in NW Reference edition.

From ‘Reasoning from the Scriptures’, © Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

Although the Bible does indeed teach that Satan is human nature, there are occasions when individuals (like Peter) are referred to as Satan, because their human nature had taken charge. Remember that in the Old Testament Satan is simply an adversary; so in the book of Job the passages are simply referring to someone who is opposed to Job. Clearly there is a person involved, but he is under God’s control, and there is no suggestion of a ‘spirit person’.



Read Job 1:6-12 and Job 2:1-7

Note that where the NIV refers to angels, the Hebrew (and the AV) simply speaks of ‘sons of God’, which is an expression used in Genesis 6:2-4 to refer to people living on the earth. In Psalm 82:6 the Jewish people are referred to as ‘sons of the most High’.

Luke 4:1-13 reports that the Devil endeavored to tempt Jesus to do his bidding. The account relates statements made by the Devil and answers given by Jesus. Was Jesus there being tempted by evil within himself? Such a view does not harmonize with the Bible’s description of Jesus as being sinless. (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22) Although at John 6:70 the Greek word *diabolos* is used to describe a bad quality that had developed in Judas Iscariot, in Luke 4:3 the expression *ho diabolos* (the Devil) is used, thus designating a particular person.

From ‘Reasoning from the Scriptures’, © Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania



This passage suggests that being tempted is the same as sinning. Is that true? Look at Hebrews 2:14-18 and 4:15.

From where did Satan come?

All of Jehovah's works are perfect; he is not the author of unrighteousness; so he did not create anyone wicked. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 5:4). The one who became Satan was originally a perfect spirit son of God. When saying that the Devil "did not stand fast in the truth," Jesus indicated that at one time that one was "in the truth" (John 8:44). But, as is true of all of God's intelligent creatures, this spirit son was endowed with free will. He abused his freedom of choice, allowed feelings of self-importance to develop in his heart, began to crave worship that belonged only to God, and so enticed Adam and Eve to listen to him rather than obey God. Thus by his course of action he made himself Satan, which means "adversary - James 1:14,15

From 'Reasoning from the Scriptures', © Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

It is not easy for us to understand how sin came into the world, but this explanation makes things more complicated rather than easier. We have to understand not only how Adam and Eve abused the free will that God had given them, but how a 'perfect spirit son of God' did the same.



Read John 8:44, which is referred to above. It is not easy to understand, and Jesus is using figurative language, but even if you take it literally, does it teach that Satan is a person who once was 'a perfect son of God' but who chose to become an adversary to God?

How powerful a figure is Satan in today's world?

Jesus Christ referred to him as being "the ruler of the world," the one whom mankind in general obeys by heeding his urgings to ignore God's requirements. (John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2) The Bible also calls him "the god of this system of things," who is honored by the religious practices of people who adhere to this system of things - 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 10:20.

When endeavoring to tempt Jesus Christ, the Devil 'brought him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in an instant of time; and the Devil said to him: "I will give you all this authority and the glory of them, because it has been delivered to me, and to whomever I wish I give it. You, therefore, if you do an act of worship before me, it will all be yours.'" (Luke 4:5-7). Revelation 13:1,2 reveals that Satan gives 'power, throne and great authority' to the global political system of rulership. Daniel 10:13,20 discloses that Satan has had demonic princes over principal kingdoms of the earth. Ephesians 6:12 refers to these as constituting 'governments, authorities, world rulers of this darkness, wicked spirit forces in heavenly places.

No wonder that I John 5:19 says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." But his power is only for a limited period of time and is only by the toleration of Jehovah, who is God Almighty.

From 'Reasoning from the Scriptures', © Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

God Almighty.

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the devil and his angels are actually in charge of the world, and govern the countries.

Who does the Bible say rules the world?

So what does it mean, for example, when it talks about the whole world lying in the power of the wicked one?

It is true, of course, that without the influence of God and his word, Satan rules the actions of all men and women. It's just a matter of what Satan is, and we have learned that it represents our human natures. As we read in Galatians 3:22 'But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe'.

Human Lusts



Read 1 John 2:16 and note that it lists 3 categories of temptation as fleshly appetites; the desire for what the eyes can see and human pride. Can you link these with Jesus' temptations?



The Crucifixion of Christ

Elements of all 3 temptations are found in Jesus' crucifixion.



Look at Matthew 27. Can you spot them?



Jesus gave a different answer to each temptation, but they all came from a common source. This suggests that Jesus' prior study had helped prepare him to cope with each of these temptations when it came. Matthew 4:1-11

The record of the temptation of Jesus suggests that he confronted in advance some of the major temptations which would face him during his ministry. Our position is different from his in that we do not have the power of the Holy Spirit with which Jesus was endowed, and we therefore do not face all the same temptations as he. Similarly we do not have the resources to create temptations at our whim. For instance, we may think that if we were rich, we would be tempted to lash out large sums on riotous living; in practice, we will not have the opportunity to test our resistance to that temptation while we remain penniless.

The lesson of Jesus' temptation is nevertheless well taken. Hold your finger an inch in front of your eye. It will loom very large, but you will not see it clearly. It is out of focus because it is too close. Situations of temptation are rather like that. If we never give any thought to a particular matter until the opportunity arises, then we shall find it difficult to apply a clear head to assessing the rights and wrongs when we are intimately involved in the situation.

What is the right thing to do if you find a £20 note in the street? Pocket it, or hand it in at the lost property bureau at the Police Station? When it is presented in the abstract, the answer is obvious. Having thought about it, we know what to do if and when the time comes. On the other hand, if the possibility has never occurred to us, and then at a time when the ecclesia/church/youth club/school is collecting for some good cause, we find the money, might it not be an easy matter to convince ourselves that the right thing to do is to pass the funds on to the collection? And is it not a small step from there to convincing ourselves that if we need exactly £20 ourselves to make up the amount we need for the cost of a badly needed holiday, or for a present for someone special, or for some other project which seems to us important and worthy at the time, then we ought to apply the money to that purpose. It becomes difficult for us to see the situation clearly because we are too close to it. It is like the finger directly in front of the eye.

Can you find Bible passages which give guidance on practical situations such as:

What to do when you find money in the street	
What to do when you have an opportunity to cheat in an exam	
What to do when the conversation turns smutty	

What to do when offered illegal drugs	
What to do when Jesus is ridiculed	

Try to think of your own examples, but if you need some help, you could look up these passages and think which situations they apply to.

Exodus 22:7; Judges 13:4; Psalm 36:1-4; Proverbs 6:30-31; Proverbs 31:6; Isaiah 5:11,22, 56:12; Luke 22:59-62; Ephesians 4:22; Ephesians 4:29, 5:3-4; Colossians 3:8

How can you avoid temptation?

We may decide in our minds what is best for us to do, but our bodies have powerful appetites and desires which may pull in the opposite direction. It is sometimes possible to avoid the situations in which the temptations to fulfil such appetites arise.

The temptation to get drunk	
The temptation to neglect Bible reading	
The temptation to misbehave sexually	
The temptation to be unkind to people	
The temptation to be unhelpful at home	

Again, you may find these passages helpful:

Genesis 39:7-10; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 19:11; Proverbs 5:1-8, 6:23-29; Proverbs 19:17; Isaiah 5:11,22, 56:11-12; Isaiah 58:7:10; Hosea 4:6; 1 Corinthians 6:15-19; 1 Timothy 4:5,8; James 1:25

Fill the vacuum

The difficulty is that however perceptive or even cynical we may be about other people's motives, however hard to convince, we tend to be able to deceive ourselves very easily. No-one else will be taken in, but we alone will be convinced of the uprightness of our motives. If

only we could step back and take a more detached look, we should be able to see how ridiculous is our stance. But that is not possible. The next best thing is to think about the commandments, and to think through how they apply in everyday situations, so that we know what to do when the time comes. Knowing what to do is the first part of dealing with temptation.

A man was a compulsive gambler. He squandered all his wages on betting, occasionally winning but more often losing, and his family went hungry. He got into debt, believing that a big win was just around the corner, and then he could give up gambling for ever. Of course, it never came. When the man met the Gospel and was converted, he came to realise that gambling was evil, that it was based upon a love of money, a greedy desire to be rich and a trust in wealth rather than in God. He decided never to bet again. He made the conscious decision to abandon that part of his past life. But gambling was an addiction for him, and it was no easy matter to give it up.

(Read Romans 7:15-24. Paul describes the same problem. His head decided upon one course of action, but his body seemed almost to have a mind of its own as its desires and appetites dragged him towards a totally different course. There was an internal conflict between the part of him which wanted to do God's will, and the part which wanted to fulfil his own desires. Anyone who has ever tried to follow a slimming diet or give up a bad habit is all too familiar with the syndrome.)

The reformed gambler was determined not to get caught up again in the spiral of hope, disappointment and debt from which he had escaped, but his addiction did not let go easily. He missed the excitement of the gambling den, and he decided to go to the betting shop just to soak in the atmosphere and enjoy the spectacle of the races on the monitors. He would not place a bet. At least, he did not intend to. But of course, he did. Once he was over the threshold, there was little doubt that he would fall. The excitement seized him, a friend tipped him off about a 'dead cert', and the bet was placed almost before he knew what he was doing. The horse came second, a sure sign that the tip had not been entirely worthless. He had come so close to winning a fortune that it seemed natural to place just one more bet, because the next one was almost certain to win; or the next one; or the one after that ... A wise old man once said that you should not hang around at the door of your secret sin.

Jesus told a parable (Matthew 12:43-45) about a man out of whom a demon was cast. The man remained empty so that the demon was able to return bringing with it seven other demons more virulent than itself. The man was worse off in the end than at the beginning. Our story about the gambler is another version of this same parable. After his conversion, he did not fill his life with wholesome activities. Instead, he returned to his old haunts. He was an inevitable victim to his addiction. A better way for him to tackle his problem would have been for him to spend his spare time visiting someone who was sick or lonely instead of visiting the place of his temptation.

There is also the example of the bad apple. One bad apple in a box of fruit can quickly spread disease through the whole box. Our man would have been better to have sought the company of people who would bring out the best in him rather than his old gambling mates who would pull him down. The worst possible way to cope with temptation is to place yourself in the most dangerous environment.

A life from which self destructive influences have been driven is prey to further and even more damaging influences if nothing replaces the originals.

What activities and influences will be helpful?



Inevitably, we all yield to temptation. All is not then lost. What should we do?



Luke 15:18-22



Background

Think how water played a part in the salvation of these characters?

Noah



Moses and the people of Israel



Naaman



Why are these incidents important when we are thinking about baptism?



I Corinthians 10:1-6. I Peter 3:18-22.



The word baptism is taken straight from the Greek 'baptiso', which means dipping or washing by immersion. Notice its use.



Mark 7:2-4



The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change.

From the OnLine Bible. Note on the words 'bapto', meaning to dip temporarily (Luke 16:24, John 13:26, Revelation 19:13) and 'baptizo' meaning to soak.

Principles. Baptism is ...

A public act of repentance for the remission of sins



Luke 3:3

Why did the disciples of John need to be baptised again into Jesus?



A public act of faith in and association with the death and resurrection of Jesus



Romans 6:1-4

The death and Resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of Christian beliefs. What has baptism to do with this?



A rebirth



John 3:1-5

How is baptism a “Rebirth”?



The answer, or pledge, of a good conscience towards God



1 Peter 3:18-22

What did Peter mean by this? Think of Peter’s own experience at Jesus’ trial.



Practice

The Apostles Baptised



Acts 2:37-41

Why did people want to baptised?



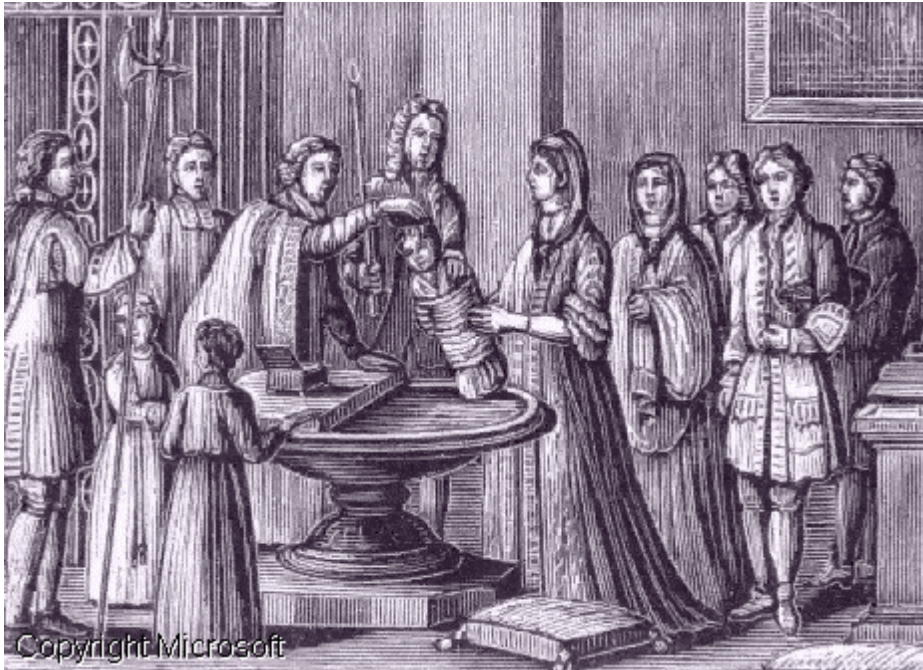
Jesus was baptised



Matthew 3:13-17

Why did Jesus insist on being baptised?





During the late 4th and 5th centuries, Saint Augustine laid the foundations for infant baptism in the Roman Catholic church. According to him, people are born with an affinity for sin and, as descendants of Adam and Eve, share in the guilt of original sin.

Saint Augustine stressed the importance of infant baptism, a ceremony in which the child's head is sprinkled with water to cleanse its soul and prepare it for a life in Christ. This woodcut depicts a priest baptising a child.

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Christening



Mark 10:14; Matthew 18:4

These verses are used to justify the widespread practice of "baptising" infants. What was Jesus really saying?



How do the principles you learned about last week compare with the practice of sprinkling infants or dipping their heads in water?



Confirmation?

Have a discussion about what this is and what it means. What do you conclude?



Baptism for the dead.



1 Corinthians 15:29

Does this passage mean that we can save those who have died by being baptised for them, as the Mormons would have us believe? Or can we only be baptised to save ourselves?



Mormonism

Mormonism, major world religion of more than eight million members, founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith, known as the prophet. From a handful of members at the beginning, the movement has grown steadily through proselytising and a relatively high birth rate. By the early 1990s there were four million Mormons in the United States and the number in other countries around the world totalled slightly more than that. Before World War II conversions had been most numerous in the United States, Great Britain, and Scandinavia, but during recent years Mormonism has grown rapidly in Third World countries. In Mexico, for example, there were more than 600,000 Mormons in 1992, most of them converted since 1975. In South Korea, Mormonism had no adherents before 1950, but by 1990 there were more than 100,000. A vigorous missionary program—a rotating force of about 45,000 preaching Mormonism in missions in the U.S. and abroad—assures a steady influx of new members.

Doctrine

Mormons support religious toleration and hold that all religions contain elements of truth and do much good. Nevertheless, the Mormon church sees only itself as fully authorized and recognized by God—"the only true and living church upon the earth." This exclusive claim to truth and authority explains the determination of Mormons to carry their message worldwide, even to Christians of other denominations.

Mormon doctrine is derived from four basic scriptures: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants (135 revelations and other statements, almost all of them issued by Joseph Smith in the 1830s and early 1840s), and the Pearl of Great Price (1842, a compilation of shorter works, both ancient and modern). The truths enunciated in the various scriptures are subject to interpretation and expansion by church leaders, who are believed to receive additional revelations and inspiration.

Certain Mormon doctrines diverge sharply from traditional Christian orthodoxy—a belief in the prenatal existence of human souls; a definition of the Trinity as three separate individuals, God the Father and Jesus Christ being physical persons united in purpose; and a belief that human beings can, if they live the commandments of God to the full, attain the status of godhood in future aeons. Critics have charged that Mormons, in proclaiming their own prophets, give insufficient attention to Christ. In response, Mormons have argued that Christ's disciples have always been misunderstood and persecuted. Like Anabaptists and other restorationists, they have maintained that even such a basic statement as the Nicene Creed (AD 325) is a departure from the purity of original Christian teachings. As a result, Mormons have not sought to participate in the ecumenical movement or such organizations as the World Council of Churches.

Worship and Activities

Worship is simple, consisting of hymns, prayers, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (celebrated with bread and water), and sermons delivered by lay members of the congregation. Auxiliary organizations for children, teenagers, and women provide additional activities and service projects. In temples—only about two dozen of which exist throughout the world—vicarious ordinance work is performed, in which Mormons of certified faithfulness act as proxy for dead ancestors, and marriages between devout Mormons are consecrated "for time and all eternity."

In addition to their vigorous missionary program, Mormons are well known for their welfare program, and organized effort to provide for those in need, and for their Word of Wisdom, a code of health prohibiting tea, coffee, alcohol, and tobacco. The church also supports the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Brigham Young University, with more than 25,000 students, at Provo, Utah.

History

Mormonism came into existence during the early 19th-century American movement of religious revivalism called the Second Great Awakening. About 1820, according to his own account, when Joseph Smith was 14 years old and living with his family near Palmyra, New York, he had a vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ, informing him that the true church was not on the face of the earth.

Founding of the Church

During the 1820s, Smith worked as a farm laborer and developed his religious ideas, inspired by other supernatural encounters. After 1827, by his own account, he yearly visited a book written in a hieroglyphic script on golden plates buried in a nearby hill; the book's location, he said, had been disclosed to him by an angel. In 1830 he completed the translation of these plates, "by the gift and power of God," and published the Book of Mormon, which he believed to be a religious record of the ancient inhabitants of North America. On April 6, 1830, he organized the Church of Christ, soon known by its present title, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The organization of the church is traditionally said to have been established in Fayette, New York. Within a year, by early 1831, the center had moved to Kirtland (now Kirtland Hills), Ohio, where the ex-Campbellite Sidney Rigdon and much of his congregation had heard the message of Mormon missionaries and been baptized. At almost the same time, another Mormon settlement was made in Missouri, primarily in the area around Independence, which was designated by Smith as the place to which Jesus Christ would return. Converts flocked into both northeastern Ohio and western Missouri.

The Contemporary Church

An unusual combination of biblical Christianity, American pragmatism, millennialist expectations, economic experimentation, political conservatism, evangelical fervor, and international activity, Mormonism is still a dynamic, rapidly growing religion in an uneasy relationship with the surrounding culture.

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Before baptism

What things might prompt someone to say they want to be baptised? Are they good reasons?



What practical problems might someone have?



What have you learned about why a person should ask to be baptised?



At baptism.

What have you learned about why we conduct baptisms the way we do?



After baptism

What is different about someone as they come out of the waters of baptism?



What have you learned about a person's life after baptism?



Some things to think about and discuss:

What are Stress and Anxiety?

Do you think everyone suffers from them?

What are typical causes?

How do they make you feel? How do you recognise them in other people?

What can you do about them?

How can you avoid them?

Can they be good?

What can we do to help other people?

What the Bible says:

Tell God

Psalm 55:16-22, when David was fleeing from his own son and his best friend had deserted him. Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Peter 5:5-7; Philippians 4:6-7, 10-15.

Recognise that some things are a result of our faith, and view them positively

2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 1 Peter 4:12-16.

Coping with guilt - ours and other people's

Talk to the person we have offended, or who we think is in the wrong. Be 'up front'.
1 John 1:8 - 2:2, Matthew 18:15.

Trust God about the future; he does understand

Luke 12:22-32.

Recognise that God brings difficult times to develop us.

Hebrews 12:5-11.

Make time to think and meditate

Mark 6:31-32, Luke 10:39-42, John 21:3-6

'Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted and by your words you will be condemned.'
Matthew 12:36-37

Gossip



1 Timothy 5:13, Romans 1:29-30, James 3:2-8

What does the Bible say?



What is gossip?



Discuss what these two sayings mean: 'Give a dog a bad name' and 'There's no smoke without fire'. How does this affect what you say?



What rules could you make for yourself about gossiping?



Lies



Leviticus 19:11, Colossians 3:9.

What does the Bible say? Can you think of a verse that says the opposite?



What is lying? Is it lying if you are asked if you like someone's clothes - you don't, but say 'yes'?



Discuss what this saying means: 'The essence of a lie is the intent to deceive'. ('Did you take five pounds [dollars] from my purse?' 'No mum' [I took six]).



What rules could you make for yourself about lying?



Swearing



Matthew 5:34, James 5:12, Ephesians 4:29, Colossians 3:8.

What does the Bible say?



What is swearing?



Why are some words worse than others?







What rules could you make for yourself about swearing?



Coping with a new environment away from home.

What advice does Solomon give to his son, which is applicable to all young people about to leave home?

 Do's	
Proverbs 18:15	
Proverbs 13:3&16, 19:2	
Proverbs 17:10	
Proverbs 16:32	
Proverbs 25:16	
Proverbs 19:11	
Ecclesiastes 12:1	
 Don'ts	
Proverbs 6:6-11	
Proverbs 6:8	
Proverbs 23:29-35	
Proverbs 7:7&21	
Proverbs 22:26	
Proverbs 13:20	
Proverbs 2:24&4:14	
Ecclesiastes 12:12	

Two examples of sons leaving home:

Contrast the conduct of Jesus and the prodigal son.

Christ, Luke 4

The Prodigal Son, Luke 15

Are you planning Further Education?

If so, what is important in your choice?



What do you personally want to do? Can you foresee any problems with your choice?



What general guidelines would you suggest for choosing a course of study?



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