



THE PERFECT SOLUTION

DISCOVERY LESSON 4

Purpose: In our studies so far, we have discovered that evil began in our world when Satan, who with his angels had been cast out of heaven, succeeded in leading our first parents to disobey God. Because the penalty for sin is eternal death (Romans 6:23, God decided that He Himself would suffer mankind's punishment. Then those who would believe in the Messiah, who was to come and die for human sin, would have the gift of eternal life.

God's plan for man's salvation was made known to the world, but Satan did everything he could to keep people from believing in the coming Messiah. His attempts to lead people into sin were so successful that millions died with no hope of eternal life. So that He could preserve knowledge of His love and willingness to save, God selected Abraham and his descendants as a chosen nation, giving them the responsibility of telling the world that all was not lost; by faith in God and in the Messiah to come everyone could have life in the hereafter. Unfortunately, Israel largely failed in its task of making known God's love. The Jews turned away from the faith relationship with God that Abraham had enjoyed and gave themselves to the idolatrous and immoral practices of the nations around them.

After patiently working with His chosen people for centuries, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. A few of the Jews were ready to receive Him, but most were not. He did not fit their specifications of the kind of political messiah who would give them back their national greatness. They wanted someone to release them from the overlordship of the Roman Empire; someone who would give them worldly predominance without expecting much of them spiritually.

In this lesson we will study the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. This is the very heart of the good news that God has for the world. Jesus Christ was born into a Jewish family in Palestine, lived the life of a humble carpenter until He was 30 years of age, and then carried out a public ministry of 3 ½ years. Finally, He was put to death by the people of His own nation, who had failed to grasp that He was God in human form, and that He had come to die for the sins of the whole world.

The question is often asked, "What is God like?" Often, He is depicted as a cruel Judge who is in the business of destroying those who do not measure up to His standard. People sometimes conclude from their misunderstanding of the Old Testament that God is harsh and unloving. But when we look at the very merciful way He treated rebellious ancient Israel, we can have no doubt as to His wonderful concern for human happiness. The Bible represents Satan as constantly accusing God and His people (Revelation 12:10). Hence, the misunderstanding of God's character is the result of the devil's work. If he can persuade people that God does not love them, and has no real concern for them, they will not turn to Him for salvation, and the number of Satan's subjects will be increased.

What is God really like? That is a pressing question that the whole world needs to have answered. Jesus Christ declared: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). The Bible claims that Jesus, in His life on this earth, was the greatest possible representation of the infinite love and character of God. The Bible says that God "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" who was and still is, "the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:2-3). Then to know Christ is to know God. Jesus was "the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). As supreme Deity, living on this earth in the form of a man, Jesus revealed to our world, and indeed to the entire universe, the infinite glory and unsurpassed love of the eternal God.

Objectives: First, we will study the birth of Jesus Christ, in an effort to understand a little better the divine miracle that introduced into our world the supreme Deity who came in the fullness of humanity. Second, we will consider His baptism and temptation in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry. In this way we can view Him as our great Example in the battle with sin. As He overcame, so may we. Third, we will study the purpose of His ministry, and the theme of His teaching. Fourth, it is very important to look closely at Jesus' sacrificial death; for it was this event that made it possible for all believing souls to be saved from sin. Fifth, the resurrection of Christ makes possible the resurrection of the multitudes of believers at His second coming. Christ's resurrection from the dead, his subsequent ministry in heaven for us, and His coming again in glory are events which mark the final redemption of those who accept Him as a Savior and Lord.

I. The Birth of Jesus Christ

The conception of Jesus was a divine miracle. His mother was a pure Jewish maiden, but His Father was the Holy Spirit. Thus, it was, that the infant born to the virgin Mary was fully God and fully man. As both God and man, He is able to bind redeemed humanity to the heart of the Deity. As God, He was able to endure the infinite suffering necessary to atone for our sins. As a man, he showed us how to live the victorious life, and how to suffer and die without giving in to the fierce temptations of Satan.

The Word:

1. How was Jesus conceived? What is the meaning of "Emanuel"?

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being ^[a]a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is ^[b]conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name ^[c]Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Matthew 1:18-23

2. What text in Matthew gives the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14?

²³ Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us. Matthew 1:23

3. What do you discover when you compare Isaiah 9:6 with the story of Luke?

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Luke 1:32-33; 2:11

Explanation: The Bible refers to Christ as God in human form. Here is one of the greatest miracles and mysteries in the Scriptures. No one can explain how the little babe in the manger in Bethlehem could be the supreme God of the universe. Yet it was so! And, by faith, we accept the inspired account and are drawn to wonder at the mighty power and condescension of God in being willing to come to our sin-cursed world to redeem people fallen and degraded by sin.

Relevance: By comparing the Old Testament predictions with the New Testament fulfillment, the God of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New Testament. We can have confidence that the Christ who lived and died for us is no inferior Deity. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16).

When you invite Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, you are accepting the "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36) into your heart by the Holy Spirit.

II. The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus marked the beginning of His public ministry. According to Luke, this event took place in "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3:1, 21-23). Tiberius' 15th year was from the autumn of CE 27 to the autumn of CE 28. Since Jesus attended four Passovers during His ministry (in the spring of 28, 29, 30, and 31), we can safely assume that it was sometime late in CE 27 when He was baptized. Immediately following His baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness to pray and meditate. Satan came to Him and fiercely tempted Him to sin. Relying upon His Father for strength, Jesus gained the complete victory. He showed us how to be overcomers.

The Word:

4. Why was Jesus baptized?

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

¹⁵ But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. Matthew 3:13-15

5. How was Jesus baptized?

¹⁶ When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and ^[a]He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. Matthew 3:16 (compare John 3:23).

6. What happened when Jesus was baptized?

¹⁶ When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and ^[a]He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matthew 3:16-17

7. How many days was Jesus tempted by Satan?

¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him. Mark 1:13

8. What were the three major temptations towards the end of Jesus' period in the wilderness?

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

'He shall give His angels charge over you, and

*'In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"*

⁷ Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not ^[a]tempt the Lord your God.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You fall down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, ^[b]"Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Matthew 4:1-11

Explanation: Jesus was not baptized because He needed to be cleansed of sin. He was the sinless One. He was baptized as an example to us. Later in His ministry He commissioned His followers to go into all the world baptizing those who accept Him as their Savior (Matthew 28:19-21)

Jesus had undertaken to carry our griefs and sorrows. Even though He was sinless, He walked through life bearing to some degree the weaknesses and guilt of fallen humanity (Isaiah 53:4-6). Because of His intense suffering in the wilderness of temptation, we can know that Jesus was bearing weakness that belonged to fallen humanity. Paul later explained: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus conquered Satan, after having taken on our sinfulness and woe. He was the sinless One. But He mysteriously took upon Himself our fallenness, so that He could demonstrate that, by dependence upon the Father, the evil tempter could be conquered.

Relevance: The Bible teaches that as Jesus overcame, so may we (Revelation 3:21). For to this you were called, because "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22) How may we refrain from sinning? "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5)

When you are tempted to sin, do you turn to the Lord for power to overcome, as Jesus turned to His Father?

III. The Ministry and Teaching of Jesus

Jesus' ministry and teaching were designed to demonstrate to the world the infinite love of God. He presented God's way of saving man and illustrated by reference to the things of nature. He rebuked pride and self-sufficiency, but always in a spirit of love and concern. He healed the sick and responded to the appeals of those in need. When any needy soul believed in Him, Jesus worked a miracle to heal a body, or a mind, or to save from the power of sin.

The Word:

9. What did Jesus present as the only way for a person to be saved?

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God John 3:3, 5, 16-18.

10. How promptly did Jesus answer a request made by one who had faith, even if it were only small faith?

So, Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain ^[a]nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

⁴⁹ The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So, the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. ⁵¹ And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!"

⁵² Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." ⁵³ So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

⁵⁴ This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.
John 4:46-54

11. Why were the works of the Pharisees unacceptable to Jesus?

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ Therefore whatever they tell you ^[a]to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. Matthew 23:1-4

12. Why did Jesus so often teach in Parables?

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

¹¹ He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the ^[a]mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;

¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I ^[b]should heal them.'

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.
Matthew 13:10-16

Explanation: Jesus presented the new birth experience, which is given to the person who believes in Him, as the means of salvation. Nicodemus was a representative of one of the most self-righteous, legalistic sects, the Pharisees. Yet, Jesus treated Him with love and tenderness. The message He gave Nicodemus is perhaps the most beautiful in the whole Gospel story. Jesus explained the only way to be saved from sin. The work of the Holy Spirit for the believer is possible because of Jesus' sacrifice upon the cross.

Jesus healed sick bodies as an illustration of His power to heal sick minds and deliver people from the power of darkness and evil. The healing of the nobleman's son, for example demonstrates how prompt the Lord is to answer our prayers when we trust in Him for deliverance. It may not always be His will to heal the physically sick, but it certainly is His will always to heal the spiritually sick.

Jesus' stern denunciation of the Pharisees' religious practice reveals God's disgust for hypocrisy and pride. A religion of saying and not doing is not acceptable to God. Our works are to be the result of our faith, not the means of earning favor with God and man. The Pharisees were seeking righteousness by their own works, by their own obedience to the law, instead of believing in Jesus and humbly accepting His gift. (See also Romans 2:13; 9:30-33).

Jesus often used the parable method of teaching. This was for two reasons: (1). So that people who believed in Him could more clearly understand the Gospel; (2) so that people who refused to believe in Him would not be able to understand. God gives spiritual light and blessing to those who believe, not to those who reject Christ and spurn the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Relevance: Even though we are sick with sin, the Lord Jesus can heal us if we believe. The sin of pride is the worst of all sins, but Jesus demonstrated that He could heal that too, if the individual would respond to His love.

Have you enjoyed the new birth experience that Jesus explained to Nicodemus? Have you allowed the Holy Spirit to transform your heart, and are you allowing Him to live in your life? Do you trust in Christ's power daily as the means of living for Him and doing those things that he asks of you?

IV. The Death of Jesus on The Cross

The sacrificial death of Jesus on Calvary's cross is the most remarkable example of the infinite love of God that our world has ever seen. We read earlier, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). The message of Scripture is that Jesus bore the punishment for all our sin, so that when we accept Him, we are forgiven and saved.

The Word:

13. Who were crucified with Jesus?

where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. John 19:18; Luke 23:33.

14. What request did one make of Jesus?

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ^[a]"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said ^[b] to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:39-43

15. How did Jesus show His concern for His mother?

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. John 19:26-27

16. How did Jesus reveal love for His persecutors?

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. Luke 23:34

17. What did Jesus take upon himself for us?

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord ^[a] has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 2

Explanation: The suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross was for every human being who has ever lived (Hebrews 2:9). The guilt of the whole world was placed upon Him, and He was punished accordingly. The Bible teaches that there is only one God (Malachi 2:10; Deuteronomy 6:4-6). The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are so mysteriously bound together that they comprise one God. On the cross Jesus, who is eternal God, was separated from the Father, who is also eternal God. This separation within the Godhead involved infinite suffering which man can never fully comprehend. It was this agony that led Christ to cry out, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama Sabathani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46

Relevance: No wonder the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31). He is the only means of salvation (Acts 4:12) because only He has undertaken to suffer for our guilt. When you accept Jesus, you accept forgiveness and cleansing which make eternal life a reality (John 3:36).

V. The Resurrection of Christ

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, there would be no hope of a resurrection of believers. Although His suffering and death were infinitely more terrible than that which the unrepentant sinner will suffer at the end of time, it is still true that Jesus never sinned. As the sinless One, He came forth from the tomb and now ministers for us in heaven. He is able to forgive our sins when we come to Him, to give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to prepare us spiritually for His second advent. It is then that the believing dead will be raised and, with those who have never died, taken to the heavenly Kingdom. Praise God, we have a living, Savior!

The Word:

18. On which day of the week was Jesus crucified?

That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. Luke 23:54

19. What day followed His crucifixion?

That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. Luke 23:54-56

20. On which day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead?

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, ^[a]and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. Luke 24:1; Mark 16:2; 1 Corinthians 15:4

21. What did the women believers find when they went to the garden tomb?

² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were ^[a]greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" ⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Luke 24:2-9

22. What great event at the end of time will occur because Jesus rose from the dead?

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have ^[a]fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have ^[b]fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. 1 Corinthians 15:17-23

Explanation: Jesus was crucified on a Friday, rested in the tomb over the Sabbath (Saturday), and rose on the Sunday morning. His followers also "rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56) and visited the tomb early on the Sunday morning.

Even though believers before the time of Jesus died with the hope of eternal life, they will be raised at His second coming only because He died and rose again. (See 1 Corinthians 15:51-54). If He had not risen, that would have indicated that He

had failed in His mission. The truth is that Christ's resurrection makes possible the resurrection of the faithful dead. It also makes possible the translation to heaven of the faithful who are living at His second advent.

Relevance: Praise God, there is hope beyond the tomb, and there is hope of eternal life in the heavenly Kingdom for every one of us. The only condition is that you accept Jesus as Savior and Lord and resolve to live as He lived. He has promised to give you the strength to become like Him. The life of Jesus showed us how to live, His death earned our eternal salvation, and His ministry in heaven for us now, as our living Mediator and High Priest (Hebrews 8:1-2) makes it possible for us to come close to God and have power in our lives to be the kind of people God wants us to be.

Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? If not, would you like to accept Him right now and allow Him to come into your life by the Holy Spirit? Yes _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Review Questions

1. True or False:

- a. Jesus was not God in the fullest sense. _____
- b. Jesus suffered for our guilt. _____
- c. Jesus was not really a man; He only seemed to be human. _____
- d. His resurrection makes possible the resurrection of the dead at his second coming. _____

Discuss: What are the major differences between Jesus' way of ruling His people and that of earthly rulers?