



## Lesson 1 - The Bible

The Bible is God's letter written to us. He wants to talk with us about Himself, about ourselves and about our relationship with Him. As we study chronologically through the Bible our history from the beginning, we learn and understand more and more about God.

The author of the Bible is God Himself. He spoke to the prophets with words, visions, or into their minds. It is written: **"All Scripture is God-breathed."** - 2 Timothy 3,16

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." - 2 Peter 1,20+21

God wrote the Bible over the course of 1,600 years, using over 40 men. But the Bible has absolute unity, from beginning to end, because God is its one author. All but one of the men whom God used to write His Word were Jewish. God talks to us through the men and history of Israel.

The copies and translations of the Bible were done with extreme care. The Bible has not changed. The Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, were copied about 900 AD and found in 1947. There are no significant differences from our Bibles today. Archaeological discoveries and history support the accuracy of the Bible. The Bible is the absolute truth.

God Himself does not change. He keeps His word. He keeps His promises.

**"Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens."** - Psalm 119,89

God wants to talk to us. Let us read His letter.



## Lesson 2 - God alone

The author of the Bible is God. The main character of the Bible is God. Only God can tell us about Himself. God wants us to know Him.

Only God can tell us about the beginning, because only He was there in the beginning. Everything had a beginning except God. "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Ps 90,2).

God did not have a beginning. He was not created. He has always been alive. He has always been and will always be the same. There never will be a time when God does not exist. God can never die. God is eternal. God is eternally the same.

**"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** - Genesis 1,1

The Hebrew name for God - 'Elohim' - is plural. When God created man, He said: "Let us make man" (Gen 1,26). God is Trinity. He is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Gal 1,1; Col 2,9; 2 Cor 3,17+18). All are equally one and the same God (Dt 6,4), and all are there in the beginning.



God does not need anything. He existed before all things. He does not need air to breath, food to eat, or water to drink.

God knows everything. It is written: "Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding has no limit" (Ps 147,5). God does not need a teacher.

God is Spirit (Jn 4,24). He has no bodily needs. He is not limited like we are. God is higher than all. He is greater than all He has made. God is above all.

God is in all places at the earth at the same time. God is here right now and sees me. God fills the whole universe. God is everywhere.

**"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"** - Psalm 139,7



"Am I only a God nearby, and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?" - Jeremiah 23,23+24

God alone is greater than all. "No one is like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is mighty in power" (Jer 10,6).

### Lesson 3 - Doctrine about the Spirits



In the beginning God created all of the spirit beings. They witnessed the creation of the earth (Jb 38,4-7). There are angels, cherubim, seraphim and other spirits.

"For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him."

- Colossians 1,16

**"You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you."**

- Nehemiah 9,6

God is greater than the spirits. He created them. He made them to love and to serve Him. They belong to Him. 'Angel' means 'messenger' or 'servant'. Spirits have no body. They can go everywhere, but they cannot be everywhere at the same time like God. Sometimes, spirits show themselves as human beings or in other forms (Mt 1,20; Lk 1,26; Hebr 13,2).

God created all the spirits perfect. God did not create anyone evil, because God is holy. Everything He thinks, says and does is perfect.

**"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."** - Genesis 1,31

God gave the spirits great wisdom and strength. He created "thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" (Rev 5,11). All of the spirits lived in heaven with God in the beginning, where "the Lord is on His heavenly throne" (Ps 11,4).

The greatest angel was called Lucifer, which means 'morning star'. He was created perfect (Ezk 28,15), and given the highest position over all of the other angels. Like all the other angels, Lucifer should have loved and served God. But he became proud and wanted to be like God himself. He wanted to be ruler of all things (Ezk 28, 12-19; Is 14,12-15). Many angels followed Lucifer, their leader (Mt 25,41). They hate God and every good thing God loves. They are fighting against God.

God is sovereign. He is everywhere at the same time. He knows everything. He knew about Lucifer and his angels. God removed them from their position as God's servants in heaven. Lucifer still had access to God in heaven but no longer lives there. He is active all over the earth (Jb 1,7; 2,2). Lucifer is now called 'Satan', which means 'enemy' or 'accuser'. His angels are called demons.



God has prepared eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire for Lucifer and his spirit followers. God is sovereign and just (Mt 25,41; Rev 20,10).

**"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."** - Romans 16,20

## Lesson 4 - Creation 1

**"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** - Genesis 1,1



The word 'Genesis' means 'beginning' or 'origins'. 'Created' means 'to make out of nothing'. God is all-powerful, almighty. Nothing is too hard for Him. God is all-knowing; He has all understanding. "God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding" (Jer 10,12).

**"Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."** - Jeremiah 32,17

When first created, the earth was formless and empty. No life was on earth. The earth was covered with water and surrounded by darkness. And "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen 1,2). The Holy Spirit was moving over the waters with dynamic energy to create all things. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all participated in the mighty act of creation. We cannot comprehend God's Trinity, as we cannot comprehend God's awesome power.

On the first day, God created light (not: the sun). He called the light 'day' and the darkness 'night'. He created light simply by speaking. He said: 'Let there be light' (Gen 1,3).

**"For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm."** - Psalm 33,9

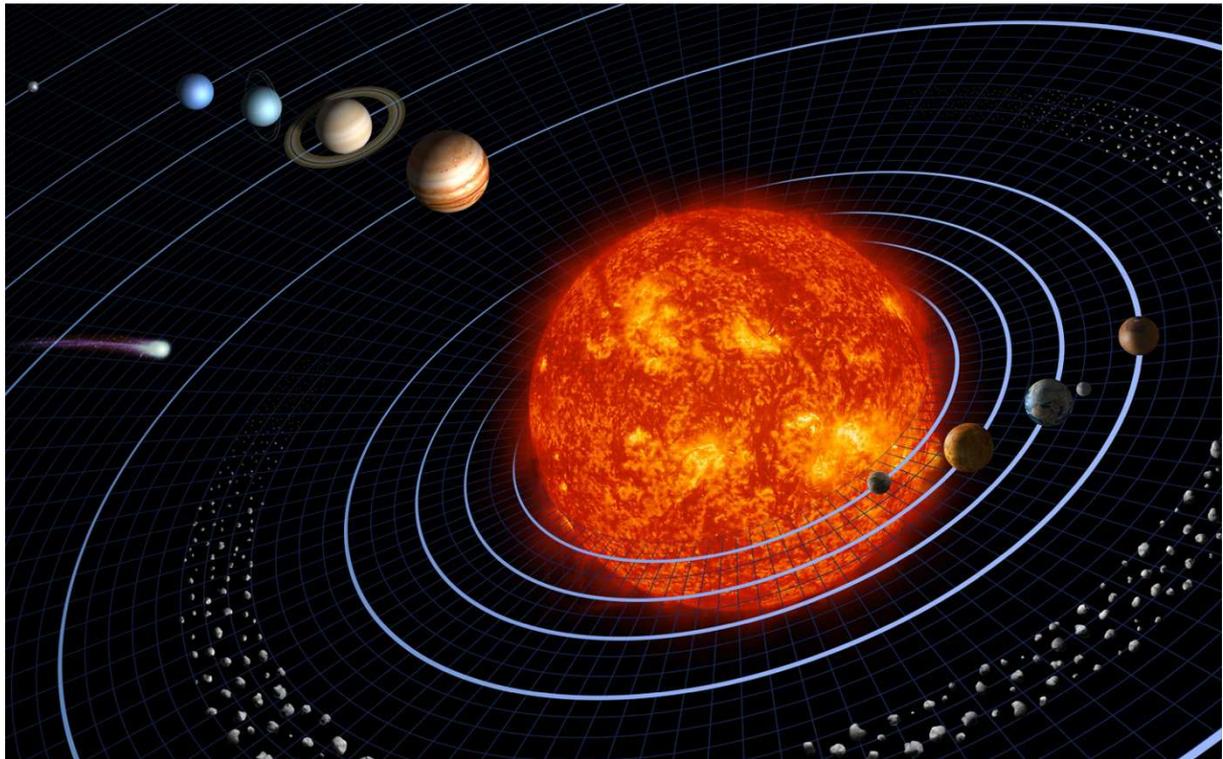
Nothing is too hard for God. He created out of nothing by speaking. "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Gen 1,31). He created a perfect world out of nothing. On the second day, God placed some water from the earth above the atmosphere. He created air and sky. Again, He created by speaking (Gen 1,6).

70-75% of the earth's surface is water-covered. Up to 60 % of the human body is water. To meet our basic needs, we need 20-50 liters of clean water each and every day. Water is unique in that it is the only natural substance that is found in all three states - liquid, solid (ice), and gas (steam) - at the temperatures normally found on earth.

"Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea? Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail? Who fathers the drops of the dew? From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens? Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water?" - Job 38,16.22.28+29.34



## Lesson 5 - Creation 2



God created the world in six days (Gen 1). On the first day, He created light. On the second day, He created the sky. On the third day, He created the land and the vegetation.

God made flowers, trees and plants because He loves and cares for us. The plants and trees produce food for us, give off oxygen for the air we breathe and provide wood for building. God created colours, flavour and fragrances for our pleasure. God loves us. God is the Creator, who "richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6,17b).

On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon and the stars. "God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding" (Jer 10,12).

At the speed of light you circle the earth seven times in one second, pass the moon in two seconds, Mars in four minutes and Pluto in five hours. You will reach the closest star in 4.3 years (40,682,300,000,000 km), the next closest galaxy in 2 million years and the next cluster of galaxies in 20 million years. At this point you have only begun to travel the universe...

**"The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands."** - Psalm 19,1

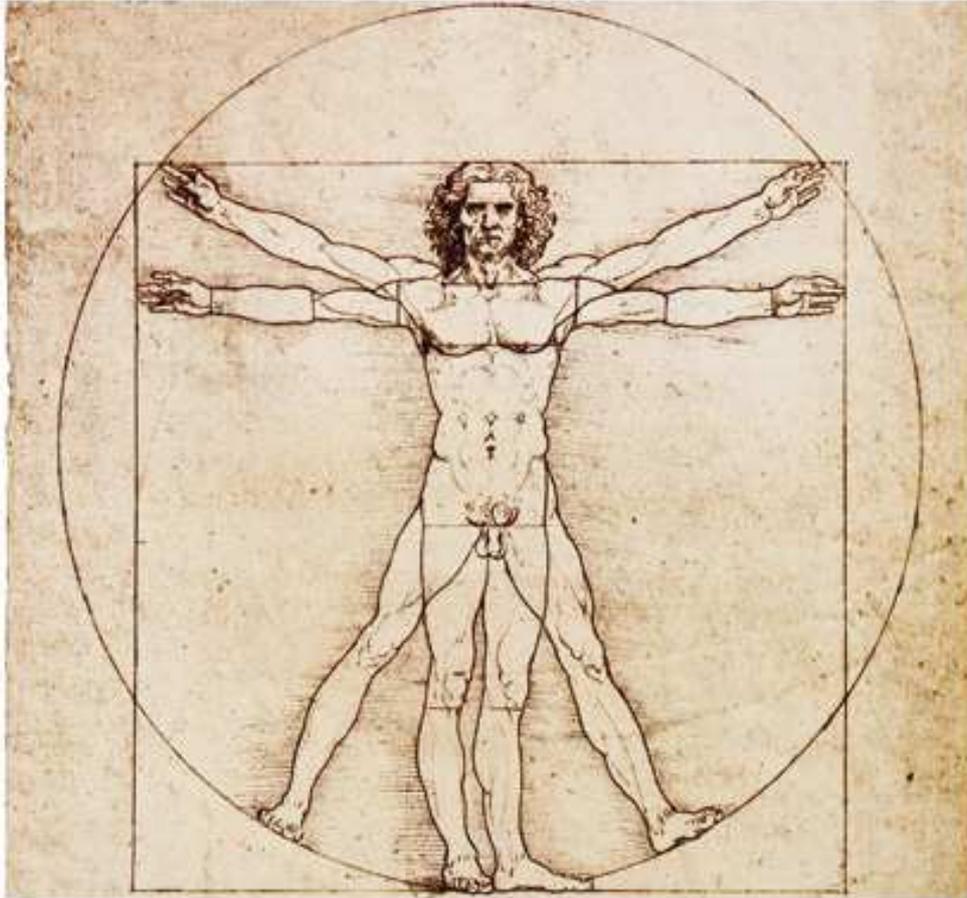
God is everywhere, He fills the whole universe (Jer 23,24). God is all-knowing, "by understanding He set the heavens in place" (Prov 3,19). All physical laws are established by God; He created an orderly world.

On the fifth day, God created the sea animals and birds. On the sixth day, He created the land animals. Even the smallest creatures are very complex. No man can ever create an animal. The animals were made very beautiful for our pleasure, and there are many kinds of animals, a great variety. Moreover, every being is unique. Everything God made was perfect. God is perfect and holy.



"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory." - Isaiah 6,3

## Lesson 6 - Creation 3



God created light, the oceans, the land, the plants, trees and flowers, the sun, the moon, the stars, the fishes and birds and all kinds of land animals. God did not create all this for Himself; He does not need anything. God prepared a place for His final and most important creation: man.

And God said: "**Let us make man in our image.**" - Genesis 1,26

God decided to make man in His image; we are not animals. God gave man mind and intellect, emotions and feelings, and a free will, the ability to choose. Because we have a mind, we can communicate with God. Because we have emotions, we can love God. And because we have a free will, we can choose to listen to God or to ignore Him.

"The Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." - Genesis 2,7

After God formed man's body, man still did not have life. Man needed God's breath of life, the part which was to be in God's image. Then, man was breathing, and he was a strong, healthy man. There was no sickness or death in the world. God created a perfect world (Gen 1,31).



Adam ('man') was the first and only man God created from the ground. Adam is the ancestor of all nations. "From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth" (Acts 17,26).

And God said: "Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food" (Gen 1,28+29). God gave the whole earth to man. He gave man the responsibility and privilege to rule over the earth.

**"When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"**

- Psalm 8,3+4

## Lesson 7 - The Tree of Life



"By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work" (Gen 2,2). God finished His creation. God always finishes His plans. He is not like man who changes his mind, loses interest, runs out of time or money. His "plans stand firm forever" (Ps 33,11). God does not change.

On the seventh day God rested, but not because He was exhausted. God does "not grow tired or weary" (Is 40,28). He rested and "saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Gen 1,31).

"Now the Lord God planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed" (Gen 2,8). God put Adam in the garden. He did not ask him. He created him. God had the right to put him wherever He wanted him. God is his creator-owner.

**"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours."** - 1 Chronicles 29,11

Adam could not complain about his place. God gave him a perfect place to live. God had filled the garden with an abundance of everything, as an outpouring of His love. "And the Lord made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground - trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2,9).

God told Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **"for when you eat of it, you will surely die"** (Gen 2,17). Adam would be separated from God, the source of life. Adam would be separated from his body, he would die physically. And, Adam would be separated from God forever in the Lake of Fire, together with Satan and his demons.



Adam could choose between two trees. He could eat of the tree of life and live forever or choose the tree of the knowledge and die. Nowadays, we have God's word. We also have a free will, the choice to listen to God or to reject Him.

**"This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life."** - Deuteronomy 30,19

## Lesson 8 - Eve

**"It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."** - Genesis 2,18

God knew about Adam's need and wish. God loved Adam and wanted him complete. So He created Eve, his wife. Eve was God's perfect gift for Adam. They could communicate with each other and with God. God knows about our needs and He alone knows the right way and time to meet our needs. "Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (Mt 6,8b).



God created Eve not from the ground like Adam but from Adam's rib. Eve was taken from Adam. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen 2,24).

Only in marriage we are in total unity. No one is more important than our marital partner. No one else is our own flesh. Therefore, "husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body" (Eph 5,28+29).

God told them: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1,28). God made woman for man so they could live together and have children.

### REVIEW

We have read about the beginning in Genesis 1 and 2 - about God, Satan and man.

**God** is almighty, all-knowing and everywhere. Out of His love He perfectly created heaven and earth. God is the author of the Bible and wants to talk to us.

**Satan** was the highest angel Lucifer. He wanted to be like God and rebelled. Together with his demons he is the enemy of God and fights against God and His creation here on earth.

**Man** is the crown of creation. He is created in the image of God. We have understanding, emotions and a free will to choose.



## Lesson 9 - The Fall of Man

The Garden of Eden was the perfect place for man. Adam was in paradise. He lived together with his wife Eve and with God in peace.

Satan is God's enemy. He hates God and His creation; he hates man and wants to destroy him. So Satan asked Eve through the serpent:

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" - Genesis 3,1

What did God say?

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." - Genesis 2,17

What does the serpent say to Eve?

"You will not surely die. You will be like God." - Genesis 3,5



Satan calls God a liar. Eve trusts Satan and denies God's word. She chooses to eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then, she gives some fruit to Adam, and "he ate it" (Gen 3,6).

Both Adam and Eve chose to follow Satan and not God. They rebelled against God and wanted to be like God. Satan had reached his goal.

Satan is "the father of lies" (Jn 8,44). God does not change; He keeps His word. His word is the truth. Adam and Eve have to die. Their sin separates them from God, who is the source of life. "Your iniquities have separated you from your God" (Is 59,2).

**"The wages of sin is death."** - Romans 6,23



Now they realized that they were naked, so they "made coverings for themselves" (Gen 3,7). They tried to provide their own needs by themselves. They also tried to be accepted before God by their outward appearances, "but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16,7).

When God came to visit Adam and Eve, they tried to hide from Him. They were afraid. Sin causes fear. They were afraid of God, "who gives all men life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17,25). God is their Creator.

No one can hide from God. He fills the whole universe. God sees and knows everything.

## Lesson 10 - Curse and Promise

God had given Adam and Eve everything they could ever need, because God loved them. He had warned them about death, but Adam and Eve had chosen to disobey God, the source of life.

God calls Adam: "**Where are you?**" - Genesis 3,9

God is everywhere, He knows everything. God calls Adam so that he can reply and repent. God loves Adam. He gives Adam the opportunity to confess and to agree with God that they were wrong and that God had told them the truth.

God still calls today. He calls through His creation and by giving us His word, the Bible. God loves us, and does not want "anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet 3,9).

Adam was hiding. He was afraid of God, who gives life and everything. So God asked him: "Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" (Gen 3,11).

We all have to answer to God about our deeds. "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebr 4,13).

How did Adam answer? Adam put the blame on Eve. How did Eve answer? Eve put the blame on the serpent. How will you answer? We are responsible for our deeds.

God's justice is holy and perfect; He is not man. Because of their disobedience, God cursed the serpent; the woman would suffer in childbirth; and man's work would become difficult because God had cursed the ground. All creation still suffers from this curse. All of the bad things exist because of disobedience to God.

The punishment for sin is death, eternal separation from God. Because of his sin, Adam would die, and all of his children, too. Adam is the father of all nations (Acts 17,26).

Satan had reached his goal. Adam and Eve followed him. They were separated from God and controlled by Satan, who had become prince of this world.

God is all-powerful and loving. God is holy and righteous, but He is also gracious and merciful. God promised a Deliverer, the child of a virgin (Is 7,14).

**He would overcome Satan and "crush his head"** (Gen 3,15).



## Lesson 11 - Provision and Judgment



Adam and Eve had disobeyed God, even though He loved and warned them. God cursed the earth and death came into this world. From that time, man was separated from God and controlled by Satan. However, God promised a Deliverer who would overcome Satan and deliver man from his power.

Adam and Eve realized that they were naked, and they made coverings of leaves. But God did not accept their clothes. God does not accept anything that is done according to man's own ideas. Because God loves us, He Himself provides a way for us to be accepted.

**"The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."** - Genesis 3,21

God loved Adam and Eve. God provided them with clothing, although they did not deserve it. God Himself put the clothing on Adam and Eve and made them acceptable to Him. God killed animals to provide the clothing. Disobedience to God brought death into the world.

**"The Lord God banished him (Adam) from the Garden of Eden. After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."** - Genesis 3,23+24



God put the man out of the Garden. He did not ask the man. Cherubim guarded the tree of life, so they could not go back. And so they would die, just as God said.

Because of his sin, Adam was then under Satan's control, separated from God. Eve became pregnant and gave birth to Cain and Abel. They were born outside the Garden, separated from God and under the control of Satan.

Adam is the father of us all. We are all born outside of the Garden, under the control of Satan. We are born sinners. We are separated from God, we will die.

We need a Deliverer, we cannot deliver ourselves. God promised us the Deliverer.

## Lesson 12 - Cain and Abel



Cain and Abel were the descendants of Adam and Eve. They were born outside the garden, separated from God. Cain and Abel brought offerings to God.

"Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor." - Gen 4,3+4

Abel came to God according to God's way, Cain went his own way. God Himself shows us the way to be acceptable before Him. Abel killed and offered an animal. Cain offered fruits. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6,23). Sin brought death into the world. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebr 9,22). Without forgiveness of our sin we have no way to receive eternal life.

**"It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."** - Leviticus 17,11

Because God rejected Cain's offering, "Cain was very angry" (Gen 4,5). He wanted to go his own way, not God's. But God asked him: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" (Gen 4,7) Cain still could follow God, but he did not want to. It was his choice.

Instead, Cain followed Satan's will. "Cain attacked his brother and killed him" (Gen 4,8). Satan lied to Adam and Eve, and they trusted him. This time Satan moved Cain to kill his brother.

Satan is God's enemy and hates men. "He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him" (Jn 8,44). Satan wants to destroy men, you and me.

Cain did not trust God and His way; he went his own way. But Abel trusted God and His word. He followed God by faith.

**"By FAITH Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did."** - Hebrew 11,4

We are separated from God, who gives all life. We cannot save ourselves. By faith we can come to Him. We have to know and to trust God's word.



## Lesson 13 - Noah and the Flood



About 1,500 years after Adam and Eve, there was already a large population living on earth, probably over 3 billion people.

At that time the earth was full of violence. People were deceiving and murdering each other. They were proud and self-centered. The people were obsessed with sex and marrying, in natural and unnatural relations. They married, divorced and married again (Gen 6,5.11; Rom 1,18-32). The people rejected God and His calling for repentance. But God saw all their sins. He is all-knowing and He is everywhere.

"But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God" (Gen 6,8+9). Noah walked with God; he listened to God's voice, trusted Him and brought Him blood sacrifices like Abel did before (Gen 8,20). God told Noah:

"I am going to put an end to all people. I am going to send floodwaters on the earth. I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made" (Gen 6;13.17;7,4) It had never rained on the earth; God watered the earth by streams (Gen 2,5+6).

God hates and punishes sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6,23). God is holy and righteous. But because of His love and grace, God also provided a way for Noah to live.

"So build yourself an ark. Go into the ark, you and your whole family. Take with you every kind of animal, to keep their various kinds alive." - Genesis 6,14.22;7,1-3

Noah listened to God and trusted Him. He built the ark. Until then, it had not rained, but Noah knew God. God keeps His word, He does not change. "By FAITH Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark" (Hebr 11,7).

God told him, "This is how you are to build it..." (Gen 6,15). The ark had only one door. There was only one way to be saved from the flood. Everyone who wanted to be saved had to go through this door.

**"And the Lord shut them in."** - Genesis 7,16

Because God designed the ark, and He Himself shut the door behind Noah and his family, they were saved inside the ark. When God shut the door, it was too late for the people outside the ark. God warned them (Jude 14-16; 2 Pet 2,5) and "waited patiently while the ark was being build" (1 Pet 3,20), but no one listened and repented before God.

Then, "rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days" (Gen 7,12.24). No one survived except Noah and his family. No one else walked with God.



## Lesson 14 - History of Language



The people in the days of Noah rebelled against God. They sinned before God and did not repent, so He judged them and flooded the earth. Only Noah and his family survived, because they trusted God and built an ark.

God kept His promise to Noah. After 150 days, He "sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded" (Gen 8,1). God is under control. He controls the waters and the wind. Moreover, God promised never to send a flood again. He has set a "rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant" (Gen 9,13).

God has given Noah and men the responsibility and privilege to rule over the earth (Gen 1,28;9,1+2). He said:

**"Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."** - Genesis 9,1

Some one hundred years later, the people rebelled against God and ignored Him, again. They worshipped the creation but not the Creator. They made images and called them 'Baal', they worshipped the stars and the animals. Moreover, they became proud and wanted to be great and exalted themselves. They said:

"Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth." - Genesis 11,4

They called the city Babylon ('babili' - 'the gate of God'). They rebelled and fought against God, like Satan, Adam, Cain and the people of Noah's day before. But God is sovereign. God saw everything, and He said:

"Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.' So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called 'Babel'." ('confused') - Genesis 11,7-9

The Bible tells us about the history of men. People rebel against God, and God judges them. By God's love and grace He provides a way to live, but people rebel against God again and again.

God is still the same today. He knows if we rebel and want to make a name for ourselves, or if we walk with God like Noah did before. God is sovereign, and He influences the history of men as well as our personal lives.

**"The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good."** - Proverbs 15,3

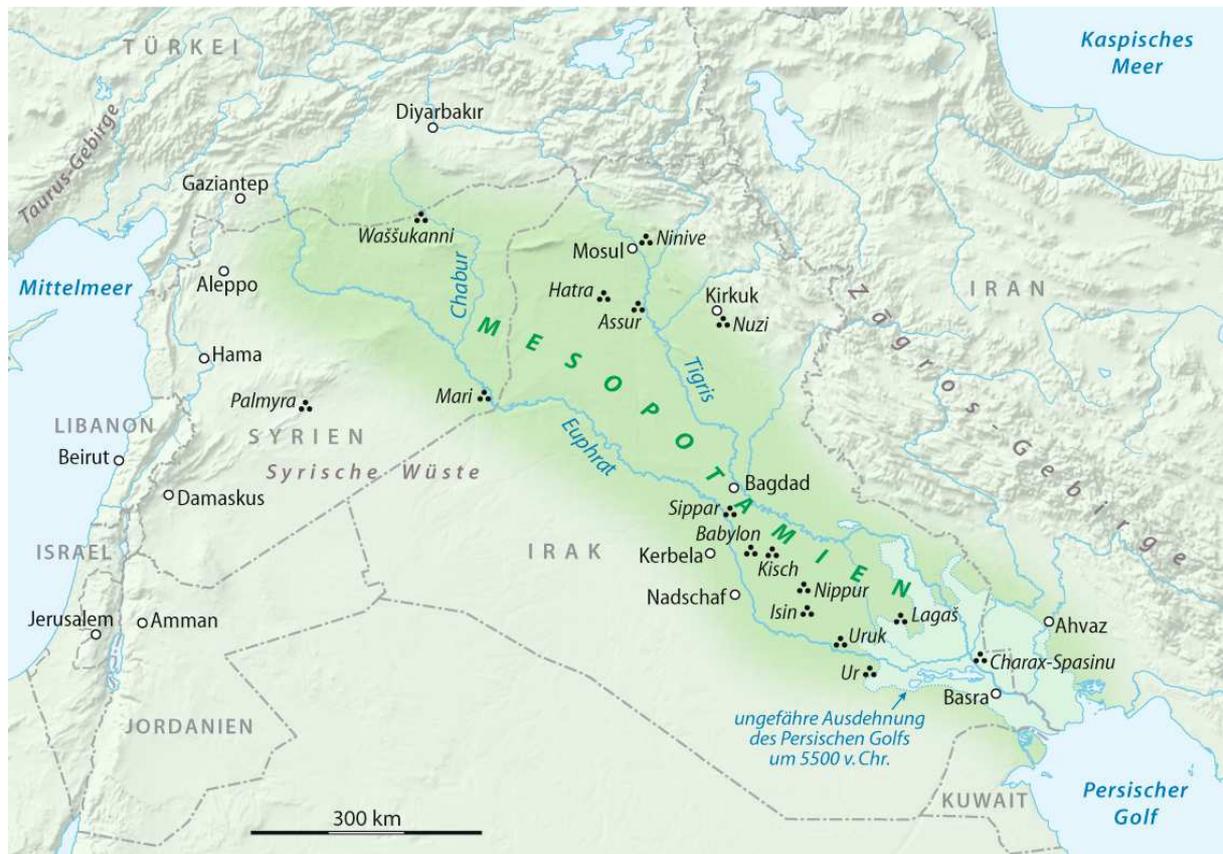


## Lesson 15 - Abram's calling

Abram (later: Abraham) lived about 4,000 years ago. His home country was Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), where the people worshipped idols. Again, the people rebelled against God. Abram's father "worshipped other gods", too (Jos 24,2).

God told Abram: "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Gen 12,1). God called Abram. He still calls us today and talks to us through His word, the Bible. We have to trust God like Abram did.

"By FAITH Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." - Hebrews 11,8



In the past, Noah built an ark, even though he had never seen rain before. Then Abram did not know where he was going, but he trusted God and followed Him.

Since Adam's disobedience, men have been separated from God. We are born sinners, and Abram was a sinner, too. However, from the beginning God promised a Deliverer (Gen 3,15b). Now, God gave this promise to Abram:

**"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; and all people will be blessed through you."** - Genesis 12,2+3

God made promises about the nation of Israel and said the promised Deliverer would be a descendant of Abram. Until then, Abram and his wife Sarai were childless.



"Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him" (Gen 12,4). In Canaan, God told him: "To your offspring I will give this land" (Gen 12,7). Today, Israel is a nation.

Lot was the nephew of Abram. He was very rich and needed land for his household. Abram gave Lot the choice to take some land. Lot did not consult God, but chose the best-looking land, which was near Sodom. "Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord" (Gen 13,13).

Lot made the wrong choice, because he did not ask God. He did not walk with God like Noah and Abram.

**"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."** - Proverbs 14,12

## **Lesson 16 - Promise and Judgment**

God led Abram to Canaan and promised to make him into a great nation (Gen 12,2). In Canaan, God renewed His promise to Abram and told him that his offspring would be countless like the dust of the earth and the stars in heaven (Gen 13,16;15,5).

Until then, Abram still had no children. He was more than 75 years old, and it seemed impossible. Could Abram believe and trust God?

**"Abram BELIEVED the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness."** - Genesis 15,6

Abram was born outside the garden of Eden as a sinner. Abram sinned before God like all men. But because he believed God's word, God regarded him as 'righteous', as if he had never sinned before and would never sin in his whole life. It was God Himself who 'credited it to him' out of His grace and love. God did so not because of Abram's deeds, but because of his faith.

When Abram was 99 years old, God renewed His promise again, and He gave 'Abram' ('exalted father') the new name 'Abraham' ('father of many'). One year later, God gave him his son Isaac (Gen 21,5). God is almighty, and He keeps His promises. God does not change; His Word stands firm forever (Ps 119,89).

Lot went with Abraham and chose to live near Sodom. Later, he even moved inside the town. "The men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord" (Gen 13,13). God saw all their sins, He is everywhere and sees everything. God waited patiently as in Noah's days, but again no one repented. Finally, God judged their sins.

**"... the Lord rained down burning sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah."** - Genesis 19,24





Beforehand, God sent angels to Lot and his family. He warned them, and they fled to the mountains. "He brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived" (Gen 19,29). God cares about people; He warns them. Because Lot believed the Lord, he fled.

"But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen 19,26). Lot's wife did not want to go, she liked living in the sinful city more than walking with God.

God "condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly." - 2 Peter 2,6

## Lesson 17 - Isaac and the Lamb



When Abraham was about 80 years old, God promised him that his offspring would be like the stars in the sky, and Abraham believed the Lord. About 20 years later, when Abraham was 100 years old, his wife Sarah gave birth to their son Isaac. When Isaac was a young man, God told Abraham:

**"Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."** - Genesis 22,2

God has all authority over all people and all things. He is the Creator. God alone gives life. Therefore, all life belongs to Him. Abraham knew God and trusted Him. God never fails. Abraham did not question God about the promise. Instead, "he took his son Isaac and set out for the place God had told him about" (Gen 22,3).

Isaac asked his father: "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb" (Gen 22,7+8). "When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son" (Gen 22,9+10).

Isaac was bound and helpless. Like the people in the days of Noah and later the people in Sodom, he was in the hand of God, facing his judgment. In the past, God saved Noah and Lot. Only God himself could also save Isaac from being killed. Only God can save us from eternal judgment.

And "the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham! Do not lay a hand on the boy'" (Gen 22,11+12). Abraham did not need to sacrifice his son. Instead, God provided a ram nearby. It was "caught by its horns" (Gen 22,13), so it was not injured and without defect, a perfect sacrifice acceptable to God.

**"Abraham went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son."** - Genesis 22,13

The lamb was the substitute for Isaac. God Himself provided for the sacrifice. God is faithful and trustworthy, He keeps His promises.

God promised that "all people on earth will be blessed through Abraham, and "my covenant I will establish with Isaac" (Gen 17,21). Abraham trusted God, and he was not disappointed.

Abraham was a man of faith. Because he believed God, he was regarded as a perfect man without sin. We have to follow his example.



## Lesson 18 - Jacob's dream



Abraham did not need to sacrifice his son Isaac. God provided a lamb as a substitute for him (Gen 22,13).

Isaac married Rebekah, who gave birth to Esau and Jacob. Esau was the firstborn, to whom God gave certain rights, inheritance and blessings. But Esau despised his birthright, he was not interested in the promises of God. Instead, he was only interested in worldly matters.

Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob for a meal. As a result, all of the promises God gave to Abraham were now inherited by Jacob, not by Esau. God spoke to Jacob in a dream:

**"All people on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring."** - Genesis 28,14

God gave Jacob the promise He gave to Abraham before, that the promised Deliverer would be one of his descendants.

In the dream, Jacob "saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it" (Gen 28,12).

God gave Jacob the vision of a stairway between heaven and earth. The stairway was not made by men, resting on heaven. The stairway came down from heaven, and rested on the earth. God himself provides the way and comes down to earth. We cannot reach God by ourselves.

Later, God gave Jacob the name 'Israel' (Gen 32,28). To him were born 12 sons, who became the twelve tribes of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin.

God spoke to Joseph in a dream and gave him the promise that he would become a great leader. His brothers envied Joseph and sold him as a slave to Egypt.

However, God knew about Joseph's situation. God carries out to completion every promise He makes. He knew Joseph's future, and He knows your and my future, too.



## Lesson 19 - Joseph



God promised Joseph in a dream that he would become a great ruler over his brothers. His brothers were envious and sold him as a slave to Egypt (Gen 37). In Egypt, Joseph served the Pharaoh and after some time he was wrongly put into prison. However, Joseph trusted God, and God was with him (Gen 39).

The Pharaoh had two dreams about seven good years of abundance and seven bad years of famine (Gen 41). Because no one except Joseph could interpret his dreams, the Pharaoh finally put him in charge of his palace, the position second to the Pharaoh. He put him "in charge of the whole land of Egypt" (Gen 41,41).

During the seven years of abundance Joseph collected and stored food for the seven years of famine. Then, "all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world" (Gen 41,57).

Also Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food, and finally "they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground" (Gen 42,6). When Joseph disclosed to his brothers who he was, he did not punish them for what they did to him. Instead, he said to them:

**"Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."** -  
Genesis 50,19+20

Israel (Jacob) and his sons settled in Egypt and lived together as "strangers in a country not their own" (Gen 15,13), like God told Abraham a long time before. Moreover, "as the time drew near for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased" (Acts 7,17).

God is in control. Just as God fulfilled His promise towards Joseph, God keeps all His promises.



## Lesson 20 - Moses



God gave Abraham and his grandson Jacob the promise that "all people will be blessed through you" (Gen 12,3;28,14). Jacob had twelve sons, who became the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. His son Joseph was sold by his brothers as a slave to Egypt, but God intended it well to provide food for the nations and the saving of many lives. God made Joseph a ruler over Egypt, Israel settled in Egypt, and the number of the people greatly increased (Gen 37-50).

When a new king came to power in Egypt, he "put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour" (Ex 1,11), because "the Israelites have become much too numerous" (Ex 1,9).

However, God told Abraham long before that his "descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and ill-treated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves" (Gen 15,13+14).

The Pharaoh even gave order to his people that every Hebrew new-born boy must be thrown into the Nile. But God protected a child named Moses, who grew up in the Pharaoh's house and lived in Egypt for forty years. When Moses saw an Egyptian beating one of his Hebrew people, he killed the Egyptian and fled into the desert. After forty years in the desert, God called Moses at the Horeb, the mountain of God: "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Ex 3,10).

Moses could not help his brothers, but God himself promised deliverance. He called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. So Moses, together with his brother Aaron, went back to Egypt. God promised: "I lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord" (Ex 7,4+5).

God performed ten miracles before the Pharaoh to deliver Israel from their slavery in Egypt:

- 1) God turned the river waters into blood (Ex 7,14-24)
- 2) God sent plagues of frogs, 3) of gnats and 4) of flies (Ex 8)
- 5) God caused the Egyptians' horses, sheep, camels, donkeys to die (Ex 9,1-7)
- 6) God caused all Egyptians to have terrible boils (Ex 9,8-12)
- 7) God sent a terribly destructive hailstorm (Ex 9,13-35)
- 8) God sent plagues of locusts (Ex 10,1-20)
- 9) God sent darkness over all Egypt for three days (Ex 10,21-29)

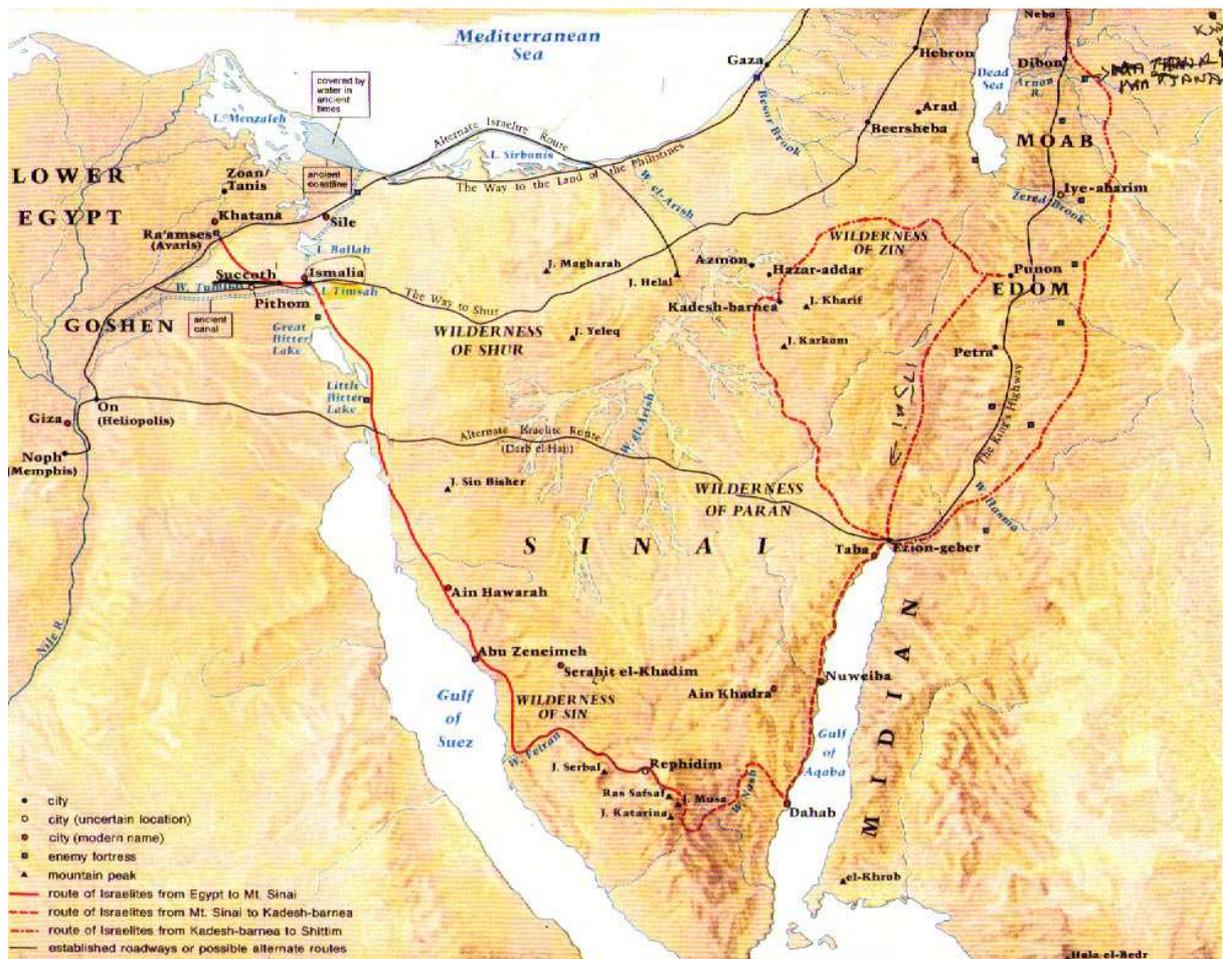


Finally, God "struck down all the firstborn in Egypt" (Ex 12,29), and then the Pharaoh released the Israelites. God instructed Moses to tell his people that every household should kill a lamb sacrifice and place the blood on the doorposts and above the door of their houses, so that the Lord "passes over" their home and does not kill the firstborn of the Israelites, too. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex 12,13).

The human race faces judgment, which will be far more severe than the judgment upon the Egyptians in those days (Rev). "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebr 10,31). But by God's grace and love, He provides the way of faith in the lamb sacrifice.

**"Whoever BELIEVES in Him is not condemned."** - John 3,18

## Lesson 21 - Exodus



God performed mighty miracles and brought judgment upon Egypt and the Pharaoh, so that he would release the Israelites from their slavery and let them go to Canaan, where God wanted to lead them just as He promised Abraham and Moses before (Gen 15,16; Ex 3,8). And "God led the people around by the desert road towards the Red Sea. By day, the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night" (Ex 13,18.21).



Then, the "Pharaoh and the officials changed their minds" and pursued Israel with the best of their army. As the Israelites were standing in front of the Sea, their enemies were behind them, and they became afraid and complained to Moses: "It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Ex 14,12) But Moses replied:

**"The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."** - Exodus 14,14

God moved the cloud that was leading Israel and placed it between them and the Egyptians. He divided the water, and the Israelites "went through the sea on dry ground" (Ex 14,22). God is the Creator of the sea, nothing is too hard for Him.

"The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea" (Ex 14,23). The Lord fought for Israel. He threw the army into confusion and made the wheels of the chariots come off. Finally, "the water flowed back and covered the entire army. None of them survived" (Ex 14,28).

God rescued Israel from the army of Egypt, but the people still did not trust in God. They complained to Moses again. In Egypt we "ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into the desert to starve this entire assembly to death" (Ex 16,3). But the Lord gave quail in the evening and bread in the morning, and "they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan" (Ex 16,35).

God gave them food to eat from heaven, but the people still did not trust God and complained again. "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us die of thirst?" (Ex 17,3) But the Lord "opened the rock, and water gushed out; like a river it flowed in the desert" (Ps 105,41; Ex 17,6).

**"In spite of all this, they kept on sinning; in spite of His wonders, they did not BELIEVE."**

- Psalm 78,32

## Lesson 22 - Mount Horeb



The Almighty God rescued Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. They went through the Red Sea on dry ground and escaped the Egyptian army. In the desert, God provided for food and water.

God led Israel to the mountain Horeb, where God called Moses to be the leader of the Israelites. Then, God gave the Ten Commandments at this mountain. Before giving them the law, God prepared Israel for His presence. "There was thunder and lightning, with

a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast", so that "everyone in the camp trembled with fear." (Ex 19,16;20,18).

God is love, but He is also holy and perfectly righteous, and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov 1,7). God gave the Israelites the promise to bless them, "if you obey me fully and keep my covenant" (Ex 19,5). God demanded perfect obedience and faithfulness.



**"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."**

- James 2,10

God hates and punishes sin with eternal death in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20,15).

What did the people answer? "We will do everything the Lord has said" (Ex 19,8;24,7). The Israelites were proud and forgot about their sin they committed. They did not trust God three times.

No one can keep the commandments of God perfectly. Only God is perfect; but we are not. We are all sinners. "Who can say, I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?" (Prov 20,9)

"There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins." - Ecclesiastes 7,20

"We are all under sin" (Rom 3,9). God has given us the law to realize our situation. The law is like a mirror, so that we can see ourselves, our hearts. "No one will be declared righteous by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Rom 3,20).

## **Lesson 23 - The Ten Commandments**

At Mount Horeb, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments (Ex 20,3-17). "And God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery..."

1. "You shall have no other gods before me"

The Lord who brought Israel out of Egypt "is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other" (Deut 4,39). We shall not place ourselves on God's throne. Going our own way is the root principle of sin, "being lovers of ourselves" (2 Tim 3,2). Whatever is more important than God itself becomes our 'god' - family, friends, work, money, position, reputation, appearance, sports, TV, Internet, games

2. "You shall not make yourself an idol"

Idols "have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see" (Ps 115,5). "God is Spirit", eternal, everywhere. He has all power; there is no power in man-made things. We cannot see God, but we can learn about Him by reading the Bible. We "must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4,24) and not worship idols.

3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God"

We shall not disrespect God and use His name in a careless way, but realize that He has the power to take our lives and to destroy us all in everlasting punishment.

4. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy"

God has set a time for us to concentrate on Him, a special day of rest in honour of Him. We shall take time to honour our Creator.



5. "Honour your father and your mother"

God has set authorities over us to lead us in a right way. If we reject the authority's right to rule, our rebellion and desire to go our own way are revealed.

6. "You shall not murder"

No one has the right to take another person's life unless God says so in His word. Furthermore, we shall not murder in our hearts, because "anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment" (Mt 5,22).

7. "You shall not commit adultery"

"Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5,28).

8. "You shall not steal"

God Himself "gives all men life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17,25). He gives the right to own and keep his property. If we steal, we sin against God.

9. "You shall not give false testimony"

We shall not make false accusations against others out of jealousy, anger or hatred. We shall not start rumours or gossip. We shall not lie.

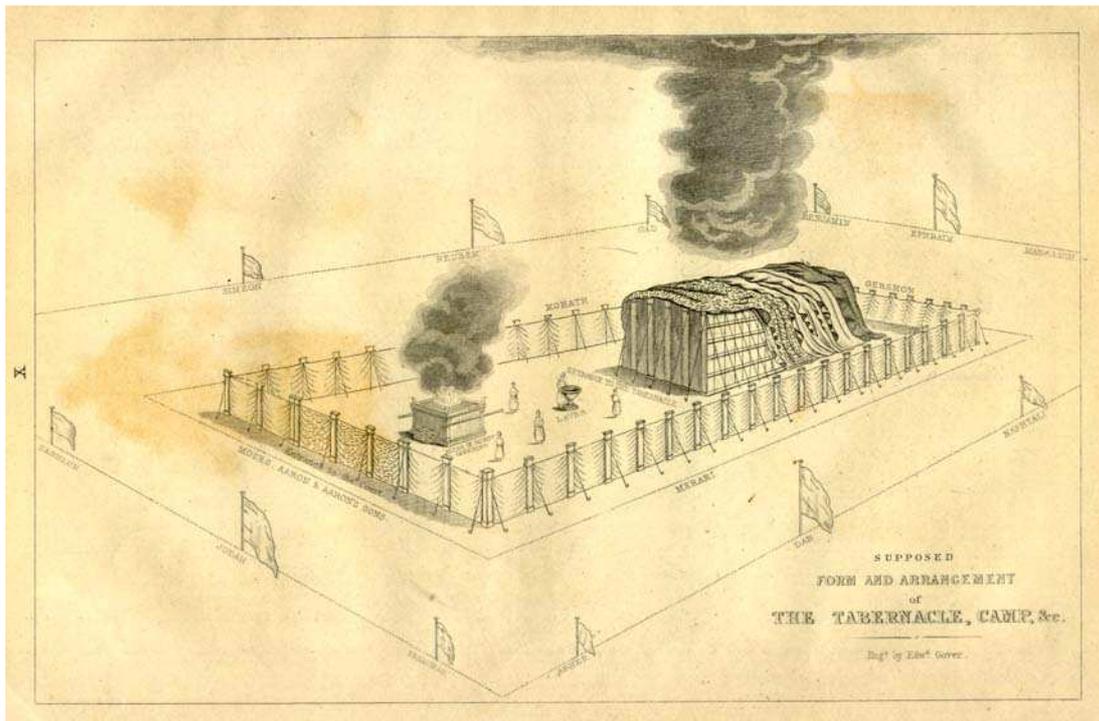
10. "You shall not covet..."

We shall not be greedy and jealous of other people's possessions, neither stealing them nor competing with our neighbours.

**The proud man says: "All these I have kept" (Mt 19,20) - Really?**



## Lesson 24 - The Tabernacle



After receiving the Ten Commandments, God told the Israelites to build the Tabernacle, a sanctuary where God "will dwell among them" (Ex 25,8). The Tabernacle had to be built exactly as God commanded, so that Israel could learn how God must be approached.

God told Moses that the Tabernacle must have two rooms. The first room, which was entered from the outside, was called the 'holy place'. It was used only for God, who is holy, perfect and righteous. Only God's chosen priests could enter this room to serve God.

The second room, the inner room, was called the 'most holy place'. This room was set apart for God's presence. "The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (Ex 40,34). Only once a year, on the 'Day of Atonement', the High Priest was allowed to enter. If anyone else had gone in, he would have died immediately. In the most holy place, they placed the Ark of the Covenant, where they placed the Ten Commandments written on the two stone tablets.

The two rooms were separated by a beautiful thick curtain, the veil. Like the veil separated the people from the presence of God, so "your iniquities have separated you from your God, your sins have hidden his face from you, so that He will not hear" (Is 59,2).

God also told Moses to make a fence of cloth curtains to place around the Tabernacle. Just inside the entrance of the curtain fence, they were to place an altar overlaid with bronze. When a person wanted to approach God, his first step was to bring a burnt offering to the Lord, a male without defect from the herd. "He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Lev 1,4).

The punishment for our sin is eternal death. Like the ram, which was offered in place of Isaac, the burnt offering died in the place of the person who wanted to come to God in the Tabernacle. They must come to Him believing Him and bringing a blood sacrifice for forgiveness of their sins.



"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Hebr 10,4), but the offering in the Tabernacle is one step further towards the revelation of the Promise Plan of God. He promised a Deliverer.

**Who died for your sins?**



## Lesson 25 - The bronze Snake

God led Israel out of Egypt, and even though the Israelites complained and did not trust in God, He provided them with food and water in the desert. God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, and Israel was proud to say: "We will do everything the Lord has said" (Ex 19,8).

Israel went on with God, following the cloud, and they arrived at the border of Canaan, as God promised Abraham: "In the fourth generation you will come back here" (Gen 15,16).

Because the people who lived in the land of Canaan were very wicked and worshipped idols, the Lord planned to have them destroyed and to give the land to the Israelites. He said, "on account of the wickedness of these nations the Lord is going to drive them out before you" (Deut 9,4).

As God judged the people in the days of Noah because of their sins, and as He judged and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, so He judged the Canaanites. God is righteous and holy, and the punishment for sin is death.

Now God told Moses to send twelve men to explore the land. When they came back, ten of them said: "We cannot attack those people, they are stronger than we are" (Numb 13,31). And so Israel complained again and did not trust God: "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!" (Numb 14,2)

For this reason the Lord declared: "I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall" (Numb 14,28+29). Their descendants would enter Canaan, but not these people. For forty years they had to live in the desert until the whole generation died.

When the community had no water, the people complained again: "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? There is no water!" (Numb 20,5) But God was gracious and provided water that came out of a rock (Numb 20,11).



Again, when the people had no bread to eat, they complained: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread!" (Numb 21,5)

**"Then the Lord sent snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died."**

- Numbers 21,6



Finally, God brought judgment upon Israel because of their unbelief. They did not trust God but complained again and again. But again, God provided deliverance.

**"Make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."**

- Numbers 21,8

Israel's unbelief brought judgment, but through faith and Trust in God's way the people stayed alive. "When anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived" (Numb 21,9).



## Lesson 26 - The Temple Curtain



After the death of Moses, God chose Joshua to lead Israel into Canaan. "So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel" (Jos 11,23). God keeps His promises, "not one has failed" (Jos 23,14).

After the death of Joshua "another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what the Lord had done for Israel. They forsook the Lord and followed and worshipped various gods of the people around them" (Jdg 2,10-13). According to God's warning, God sent nations to destroy Israel because they forgot the Lord their God (Deut 8,19). God keeps His word.

Whenever Israel repented before God, He chose someone to lead them and deliver them from their enemies. God is still gracious and full of love.

After some years, around 1,000 BC, Israel rejected God as their king and asked for a human king like the nations have around them. God granted their request, and many kings ruled over Israel. Most of them did not walk with God but led the people into sin against the commandments of God.





King David believed God and walked with Him. In obedience to God he also offered blood sacrifices for forgiveness of his sins (2 Sam 6,18). In place of the Tabernacle he wanted to build a Temple for the Lord, but God chose his son Solomon to build this Temple.

The Temple structure was the same as that of the Tabernacle. The inner room, the most holy place, where the ark of the covenant was placed and where God dwelled among Israel, was separated from the first room by a thick curtain. No one could come into the presence of God. If someone tried, he had to die. The Israelites were always reminded about the fact that their sins separated them from their God (Is 59,2).

God promised a Deliverer who would lead the people out of their sins into the presence of God. God gave His promise to Adam (Gen 3,15), to Abraham (Gen 12,3), to Jacob (Gen 28,14) and then He promised David:

**"Your throne shall be established forever."** - 2 Samuel 7,16

The promised Deliverer will destroy Satan and reign forever. He will take away the Temple curtain and will make the way into the presence of God, the way into eternal life.

## Lesson 27 - The Prophets

God loves us. God loves Israel. God sent messengers to warn the people about the coming punishment. God spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and the prophets.

Israel's sin was great before God. The prophets reminded Israel of their history and the law, but the people did not repent. The prophets warned Israel of their coming punishment, but still the people did not repent.

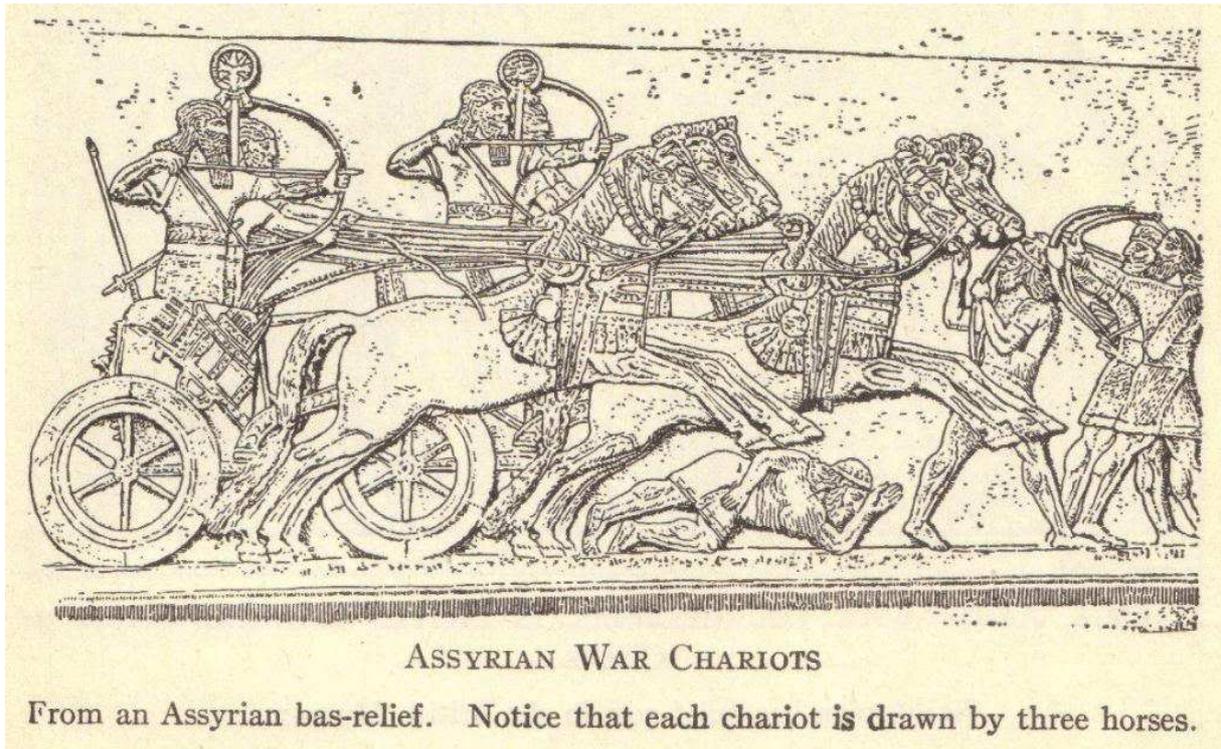
Isaiah warned Israel of Assyria, a nation which God would send against Israel to punish them for their sins (Is 10,5+6). Jeremiah warned Israel of Babylonia, "who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword" (Jer 20,4).

God warned Israel that they would go into exile, but the people did not repent. The people "honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Is 29,13). In 722 BC, Israel was conquered by Assyria (2 Ki 13,1-8), and in 586 BC, the people of Judah and Jerusalem were sent into exile by the Babylonians (2 Ki 25,1-12).

God remains the same today. He gives us warnings and waits patiently for us to repent. "For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!" (Ezk 32,18) If we do not repent, we will die in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20,15).

When the Israelites were distressed in exile, they prayed to the Lord and repented of their sins, asking for forgiveness. God was gracious and brought many of them back to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the city and the Temple.





In Israel, especially in Samaria, the Jews intermarried with the Assyrians and Babylonians. They worshipped God, but "even while these people were worshipping the Lord, they were serving their idols" (2 Ki 17,41). The Samaritans worshipped God, even though they did not know Him (Jn 4,22).

Because of their sins, God punished Israel again and again. In 330 BC, the Greeks took control of the Jews. In 63 BC, the Romans overcame the Greeks and took control of Jerusalem and Israel.

**"A people without understanding will come to ruin."** - Hosea 4,14

## Lesson 28 - Jesus

After Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden, God banished Adam from His presence, and from then on men have to die. But God promised a Deliverer to rescue men from Satan and eternal punishment (Gen 3,15).

God promised Abraham and Jacob that all people would be blessed through their family line (Gen 12,3;28,14). King David, who was one of their descendants, was told that his kingdom would be established forever (2 Sam 7,16).

Many promises are written in the OT, and we can read in the NT how these promises were fulfilled. The last prophet of the OT, Malachi, prophesied about 400 BC that a prophet would prepare the way for the Deliverer.



"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me', says the Lord Almighty."

- Malachi 3,1

400 years later the angel of the Lord came to Zacharias and told him that his wife would give birth to a son, whose name would be John. "He will go on before the Lord" (Lk 1,17).

John the Baptist went on before the promised Deliverer, who was prophesied to be the Lord Himself.

A few months later the angel came to the virgin Mary and told her that she would give birth to a son.

**"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. For nothing is impossible with God."**

- Luke 1,35-37

The Father of the child is God, not Adam. He was born sinless and lived without sin. His name is JESUS, which means 'Saviour' or 'Deliverer'.

**"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** - Acts 4,12

## Lesson 29 - Jesus' Birth



About 2,000 years ago, Jesus was born of Mary, who became pregnant through the Holy Spirit. About 2,700 years ago Isaiah prophesied: **"The virgin will be with child"** (Is 7,14).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as Micah prophesied 700 years before: **"Out of Bethlehem will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel"** (Mi 5,2).

The wise men knew this prophecy and went to worship Jesus. When King Herod heard about this, he searched for Jesus in order to kill Him. But God warned Joseph in a dream, so they fled to Egypt until the death of Herod, as it is written in the Old Testament: **"Out of Egypt I called my Son"** (Hos 11,1).

When they came back to Israel, they settled in Nazareth, and Jesus "grew and became strong; He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him" (Lk 2,40). As it was written long before:

**"The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."** - Isaiah 11,2



## Lesson 30 - Jesus the Son of God

John the Baptist preached:

**"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."** - Matthew 3,2

People came to him and agreed: 'God is right! I am a sinner!' Confessing their sins, they were baptized. The people knew about the Ten Commandments, that "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (Jam 2,10).



To fulfill all righteousness, Jesus Himself came to John the Baptist to be baptized, but He was not a sinner. "As soon as Jesus was baptized, heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said: **'This is my son'**" (Mt 3,16+17).

And John the Baptist confirmed:

**"I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."** - John 1,34

## Lesson 31 - The Temptation of Jesus



In the beginning, Satan tempted Adam to rebel against God. Now, Satan was trying to tempt Jesus to rebel against God, His Father, too.

Jesus was man; He became hungry. Satan told Him: "Tell these stones to become bread" (Mt 4,3). But Jesus did not obey Satan. He always followed God's will. Jesus resisted the devil.



Then, Satan twisted God's word and tempted Jesus on the top of the Temple: "Throw yourself down." The angels "will lift you up in their hands" (Mt 4,6; Ps 91,11). But Jesus did not need to test God and His faithfulness, He simply trusted His Father's words.

Finally, "the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me'" (Mt 4,8+9).

When Lucifer rebelled against God, many angels followed him. When he deceived Adam, he took control of the human race. Satan became the "prince of this world" (Jn 12,31), the "god of this age, who blinds the minds of the unbelievers" (2 Cor 4,4).

But Jesus did not bow down before Satan. Jesus is the Son of God; He is God the Son. He is the triune God, supreme and almighty. He "holds the keys of death and Hades", and the devil will soon be "thrown into the lake of burning sulphur" (Rev 1,18; 20,10).

Jesus was tempted by Satan many times, but He always fully obeyed His Father and resisted the devil. Jesus was the only sinless man on earth. Adam was tempted and rebelled against God - but when Jesus was tempted, He resisted.

## Lesson 32 - Jesus' Authority



After John the Baptist was put in prison, where he was finally killed by King Herod, Jesus began His preaching: **"The kingdom of heaven is near. Repent and believe the good news!"** - Mark 1,15

In the synagogues, Jesus preached with authority, and "the people were amazed at His teaching" (Mk 1,22). When a demon-possessed man saw Jesus, he cried out: "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" (Mk 1,24)

Jesus commanded the evil spirit to be quiet and to come out of the man, and the demon came out. Jesus has authority over Satan and his demons. Sometime later a man with leprosy came to Jesus. The man knew and believed Jesus and begged Him: "If you are willing, you can make me clean" (Mk 1,40). Jesus had compassion, and He cured the man.

Jesus is the Son of God. He says: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28,18). He is the only one who can heal us and save us from Satan and eternal punishment.

Jesus wants to save you!

### **Lesson 33 - Rebirth**

One day Nicodemus came to Jesus, because he knew that Jesus was "a teacher who has come from God" (Jn 3,2). Jesus taught him:

**"No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."** - John 3,3

As descendants of Adam we are born under Satan's control. We are born sinners. To escape punishment, we have to be born a second time.

We have to be born of the Spirit, born of God, so that we can be the children of God (Jn 1,12+13; 3,5). Jesus taught him:

**"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who BELIEVES in Him may have eternal life."** - John 3,14+15

In the desert, the Israelites grumbled against God and He sent snakes to punish the people. Because of His grace and love, God told Moses to make a bronze snake and to put it up on a pole, so that everyone who looked at it and trusted God could survive (Numb 21,4-9).

If we trust in Jesus Christ as the Israelites looked at the snake, we have "eternal life and will not be condemned". We have "crossed over from death to life" (Jn 5,24).

As children of God "we have received the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us" (1 Cor 2,12).



## Lesson 34 - Belief and Unbelief

One day a paralytic was brought to Jesus, and when He "saw their faith", He said:

**"Son, your sins are forgiven"** (Mk 2,5).

Some teachers of the law thought: "He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mk 2,7) They did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

To demonstrate His authority, Jesus told the paralytic: "'Get up, take your mat and go home.' He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all" (Mk 2,11+12).

One Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and met a man with a shrivelled hand. "'Stand up in front of everyone. Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored" (Mk 3,3.5). Then the Pharisees thought about "how they might kill Jesus" (Mk 3,6).

**"Jesus did many other miraculous signs, which are not recorded in this book (the Bible). But these are written that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."** - John 20,30+31



The Pharisees did not believe. They said: "We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God" (Jn 19,7).

Jesus chose His twelve disciples, ordinary men (Mk 3,17-19). But He also knew and foretold them: "One of you will betray me" (Mk 14,18).

## Lesson 35 - Jesus the Creator

One day Jesus and His disciples crossed a lake by boat, and a furious storm came up, so that the "waves broke over the boat" (Mk 4,37). But Jesus was sleeping in peace.

"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?", the disciples asked. Then Jesus rebuked the wind: "Be still!", and the "wind died down and it was completely calm" (Mk 4,38+39).

Jesus is God the Son; "by Him all things were created" (Col 1,16). Just as God opened up the Red Sea for the Israelites to escape from Egypt, so Jesus calmed the waves. God created the wind and the sea.

When they reached the other side of the lake, they met a demon-possessed man who lived in the tombs. Whenever people chained him, "he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. Night and day he would cry out and cut himself with stones" (Mk 5,4+5).

God created "things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col 1,16). He created the wind, the sea, and also the spirits. Jesus had authority to command the demons: "Come out of this man!" (Mk 5,8) And the evil spirits left him.





When the people came to see what had happened, "they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind" (Mk 5,15).

**"If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."** - John 8,36

### **Lesson 36 - Jesus the Bread of Life**

Jesus performed many miracles on the sick, and a great crowd of people followed Him to receive physical benefits. When Jesus saw the crowd, He took five loaves bread and two small fishes, broke them, "gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted" (Jn 6,11+12). About 5,000 men and their woman and children were there. After all of them had eaten enough, twelve baskets of loaves were left over.

Jesus is Almighty God, and the people began to realize that and said: "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world", and "they intended to come and make Him king by force" (Jn 6,14+15).

The disciples got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. Later, Jesus came to them, "walking on the water" (Jn 6,19). Jesus created the sea, so it was not difficult for Him to walk on it. The next day, the people "got into the boat and went to Capernaum in search for Jesus" (Jn 6,24). They wanted to make Him king for their earthly benefits, but God wanted to bring them eternal life.

Jesus taught the people:





**"You are looking for me, because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." - John 6,26.35.51**

Some of the disciples said: "This is hard teaching. Who can accept it?", and "many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed Him" (Jn 6,60.66). And "the Jews were waiting to take His life" (Jn 7,1).

## **Lesson 37 - The Pharisees**

The Pharisees were teachers of the Law given by God to Moses and the Israelites in the desert at the mountain Horeb. Beside God's law they added hundreds of rules and principals for the people to obey, for example 39 'Principal Species of Prohibited Acts on the Sabbath.'

They prided themselves on doing all those outward things and asked Jesus: "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders?" (Mk 7,5) Jesus replied as Isaiah had prophesied 700 years before: "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Mk 7,6).

The Pharisees loved to give money to the poor before the eyes of people, and to pray aloud in public so that everyone could hear. They were proud people, and their hearts were far away from God, full of "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly" (Mk 7,21+22).





The Pharisee prayed to God: "God, I thank you that I am not like the other men. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." The tax collector prayed: **"God, have mercy on me, a sinner!"**

The second man "went home justified before God" (Lk 18,11-14).

## Lesson 38 - The Transfiguration

Jesus said that He is the Son of God. Some people thought that He was Elijah the Prophet or John the Baptist. "Who do you say I am?", Jesus asks. Peter answered: **"You are the Christ!"** (Mk 8,29)

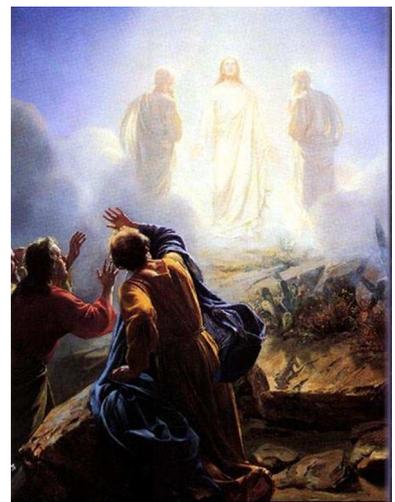
What do you say?

"Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There He was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus." - Mark 9,2-4

Elijah and Moses trusted in God during their lives on earth hundreds of years before. Therefore, God saved them and accepted them to live with Him in heaven. Eternal life in heaven is reality. Moses and Elijah are still living.

"Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: **'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!'** Suddenly, when they looked round, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus." - Mark 9,7+8

Jesus Christ is the Son of God!



## Lesson 39 - The only Way



Shepherds sometimes have to leave their homes and lead their sheep a long way in search for food. At night, the shepherd protects his sheep by gathering them at one place which is surrounded by a wall of stones and thorn bushes. The sheep enclosure has only one door, where the shepherd is lying. Inside, the sheep are safe, but outside are robbers and wild animals.

Jesus says: "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (Jn 10,9). If you enter the kingdom of God through this gate, you are safe and secure. Outside, you are living in Satan's territory. There is only one gate!

Some thousand years before, Noah built only one ark, which had only one door! He and his family went through this door when the flood came, and "the Lord shut them in" (Gen 7,16). Noah was saved. Outside the ark, all the people died.

Satan is a liar and a murderer; he does not want us to live. He offers many different ways and doors, which "seem right to a man, but at the end leads to death" (Prov 14,12). Jesus said, "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**" - John 14,6

Jesus Christ is the "good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep" (Jn 10,11). For forgiveness of our sins He died for us at the cross, like Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years before about Jesus:

**"He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed."** - Isaiah 53,5



## Lesson 40 - Lazarus

One time Lazarus from Bethany was very sick. Even though Jesus loved him and his sisters Martha and Mary, "yet He stayed where He was two more days" (Jn 11,6). Jesus waited until Lazarus was dead. He told His disciples: "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up, **so that you may BELIEVE**" (Jn 11,11.15).

On Jesus' arrival in Bethany, "Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days" (Jn 11,17). Jesus met Martha and Mary, who believed that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world" (Jn 11,27). They said to Him: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (Jn 11,21.32). Jesus replied, "Your brother will rise again" (Jn 11,23).



At the last day, we will all rise again. "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, other to shame and everlasting punishment" (Dan 12,2). God is the source of life. In the resurrection, He restores life to the dead.

This time, Jesus wanted to bring Lazarus back to life right away. **"It is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified"** (Jn 11,4).

Jesus came to the tomb, they took away the stone, and He called in a loud voice: "'Lazarus, come out!' The man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face" (Jn 11,43+44).

Jesus said: **"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"** - John 11,25

## Lesson 41 - Welfare

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." - Luke 12,15

God is the one who gives life and who takes life.

A rich man said to himself: "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him: "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you" (Lk 12,19+20).

When God decides that it is the time for a person to die, he will die. No riches can save him.

Another rich man died and found himself in hell. "In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side" (Lk 16,23). On earth, Lazarus was a beggar at the rich man's gate. He was "covered with sores, and even the dogs came and licked his sores" (Lk 16,20+21). However, Lazarus knew God.



The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his side, "to dip the top of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire" (Lk 16,24). But Abraham replied: "Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us" (Lk 16,26).

It is better to be poor and ill but to know and live with God than to be rich and healthy but live without God. Today, the rich man is still in hell, but Lazarus lives in heaven!

**"What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" - Mark 8,36**



## Lesson 42 - The Passover

Shortly before the Passover Feast, Jesus sat on a donkey and rode into Jerusalem as God had said through the prophet:

"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey." - Zechariah 9,9

The people regarded Jesus as their earthly king to deliver them from the Romans. They "spread their cloaks on the road" and "branches they had cut on the fields" (Mk 11,8).

But "the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill Him" (Mk 14,1), because they were afraid to lose their position and authority.

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, "went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them" (Mk 14,10). As it was prophesied long before: "Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Ps 41,9;55,14).

"On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb" (Mk 14,12), Jesus ate the Lord's supper with His disciples. He gave bread to them and said: **"Take it; this is my body"** (Mk 14,22).

When God led the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt, He killed every firstborn in every household living in Egypt, but He 'passed over' every household who sacrificed a lamb and placed the blood of the lamb at the doorposts of his house (Ex 12,21-27). Since then, Israel has celebrated the Passover Feast every year.





Jesus is the eternal Passover Lamb, the **"lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** (Jn 1,29) Right before His death He broke the bread and drank wine with His disciples in illustration of His body to be broken and His blood shed as a sacrifice for those who believe.

Jesus had never sinned, yet He was going to give His life for us, for sinners. This is the Love of God.

### Lesson 43 - Jesus arrested

Even though Jesus is God, He is also man. Before He was arrested, "He began to be deeply distressed and troubled" (Mk 14,33), because He knew that in order to be our Saviour, He would have to go through more terrible suffering than anyone had ever endured.



Judas and "a crowd armed with swords" (Mk 14,43) came to Jesus, arrested Him and brought Him "to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together" (Mk 14,53). "They were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, but they did not find any" (Mk 14,55). Jesus had not done anything wrong; He was sinless.

"Many testified falsely against Him" (Mk 14,56), as it was prophesied: "False witnesses rise up against me" (Ps 27,12). However, "Jesus remained silent and gave no answer" (Mk 14,61), as it was prophesied: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth" (Is 53,7).

When they asked Him: "Are you the Christ?", He answered: "I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mk 14,61+62). Then, they began to spit at Him and struck Him with their fists, and they condemned Him as worthy of death. They rejected Him and accused Jesus of blasphemy, as it was prophesied: "He was despised and rejected by men" (Is 53,3).

Even though Pilate, the Roman governor, knew that "it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Him over to him" (Mk 15,10), "he had Jesus flogged, and handed Him over to be crucified" (Mk 15,15).

700 years before it was written:

"I offered my back to those who beat me, I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting."

- Isaiah 50,6

**"When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. He Himself bore our sins in His body; by His wounds you have been healed."**

- 1 Peter 2,23+24



## Lesson 44 - Jesus crucified



"They led Him out to crucify Him" (Mk 15,20). Nails were driven through Jesus' hands and feet into the wooden cross, as prophesied: "They have pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps 22,16). They placed the cross in an upright position, "just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert" (Jn 3,14). Just as the Israelites in the desert could survive the bites of the venomous snakes by looking at the bronze snake (Numb 21,8), so "everyone who BELIEVES in Him (Jesus) may have eternal life" (Jn 3,15).

**"And they crucified Him.** Dividing up His clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get" (Mk 15,24), as prophesied before: "They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing" (Ps 22,18). In the Old Testament 456 passages are written referring to the Messiah Jesus Christ. The whole Promise Plan of God points to Jesus Christ. His death is the core of the Gospel. The Son of God came into this world to die. He died for sinners, was buried, and rose again. Of all the facts of history, this is the greatest.

Sin must be paid for. Jesus was sinless, so He was able to offer Himself to God as the offering for our sins. "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5,21). The light of the sun was blotted out, and there was darkness for three hours, because God the Father turned His back on Jesus the Son (Mk 15,33+34). God left Him, because He punished Him for my and your sins. Through Jesus, sin is completely punished and paid for by separation from God at the cross.

And so Jesus cried out: **"It is finished."** - John 19,30



And "the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mk 15,38). God Himself opened the way for us into His holy and glorious presence. Jesus is the way.

## Lesson 45 - OT Review

After Adam and Eve sinned, they made coverings of leaves to clothe themselves, but God refused their appearance. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God. Instead, God Himself killed animals and made clothes for them (Gen 3).

All who trust in Jesus Christ alone are forever accepted by God, because they are clothed with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. "I delight greatly in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness" (Is 61,10).



When Cain and Abel brought their offerings to God, God accepted only Abel and his sacrificed lamb. The lamb reminds us of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the "Lamb of God" (Jn 1,29).

When God was going to destroy the world by a flood because of the wickedness of the people, He provided a way for Noah and his family to survive, the ark. This ark had only one door. Likewise, Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life (Jn 14,6).

When God led the Israelites out of slavery, He killed every firstborn in Egypt. But the Lord passed over every household who sacrificed a lamb and put the blood of the lamb on their door frames. Since then, the Israelites have celebrated the Passover Feast. At the time of this Feast, Jesus Christ was crucified. Jesus Christ is the Passover Lamb for everyone who believes in Him.

"BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." - Acts 16,31

## Lesson 46 - The Resurrection

Jesus Christ was crucified and buried in the tomb for three days and three nights. When two women from Galilee came to the tomb to anoint Jesus, the tomb was empty. Instead, they met two angels who said:

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." - Luke 24,5-7

Cleopas and his friend heard about all this, and "as they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them. And beginning with Moses and the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself." - Luke 24,15.27



Jesus rose from the dead, and He appeared to men. "He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time" (1 Cor 15,5+6). For this reason, Peter preached:

"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty." - 2 Peter 1,16

Finally, before the eyes of men, Jesus ascended to heaven. "He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight" (Acts 1,9). And the angels said: "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1,11).

Jesus Christ will return, not to save but to judge.

**"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."** - Revelation 22,21

