

# Theology Made Easy For Everyone

*Learn the Bible's Major Teachings in 1 Hour*

Stuart Pattico

Theology Made Easy for Everyone: Learn the Bible's Major Teachings in 1 Hour

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## Introduction

This book enables you to gain a good grasp of the Bible's major teachings in under an hour. That's how long it will take the average reader to complete this book. Each chapter has been laid out as a structured bulleted list, using indentations for subordinate information. This contributes to making the content easy to follow and understand. Chapter and verse references for the various points made are supplied, usually in parentheses.

The topics covered are: the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, human beings, salvation, sin, the church, church leadership, supporting the church, healing, angels, the devil, prayer, worship, death, and the second coming of Christ.

My original intention was simply to make a condensed version of my book, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*. However, I have added additional information to the chapters on human beings, salvation, sin, the church, supporting the church, church leadership, worship, and the second coming.

This book contains my understanding of the matters addressed. Therefore, readers are encouraged to do their own research. I pray that this book helps you to gain a solid understanding of the topics addressed.

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# 1. The Bible

Let's begin with an overview of the Bible.

- The Greek word for "Bible" is *biblia* which means "books"
- The Bible is a collection of 66 books
  - 39 books in the Old Testament
  - 27 books in the New Testament
- The Old Testament
  - Written in Hebrew, some parts in Aramaic
  - The history recorded in the Old Testament took place between the creation of the world and the 5th century BC. This does not include the subsequent events that were predicted by Old Testament prophets
  - Four sections:
    1. The Law/Pentateuch/Torah
      - Books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
      - Contains the Law of Moses and the events that led up to the giving of that Law, namely, the creation and fall of man, God's covenants with Noah and Abraham, and Israel's exodus from Egypt
    2. History of Israel
      - Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
      - Contains the account of Israel's possession of the Promised Land, their various kings, the splitting of the nation into two (Judah and Israel), Assyria's conquest of Israel, Judah being taken into exile by the Babylonians, and the return of the Jews to their land
    3. Wisdom and Poetry
      - Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon
      - In addition to the story of Job, the Wisdom and Poetry books contain wise sayings, songs, and prayers
    4. Prophets
      - Books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi
        - The larger books are known as the Major Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel)
        - The shorter books are known as the Minor Prophets (Hosea – Malachi)
      - These books contains messages that God spoke to His people (and to other nations) through the prophets during the years of their kingdom, exile and return from exile
- The New Testament
  - Written in Greek

- Written by Christian leaders in the first century AD after Jesus Christ ascended to heaven
- Five sections:
  1. The Gospels
    - Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
    - The Gospels are four collections of the teaching, actions, and events surrounding Jesus' ministry
    - Each Gospel is written with a different style, with different levels of detail, and from a different angle. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels because of their similarities. Synoptic means "seen together"
  2. History
    - One book: Acts of the Apostles
    - Contains an account of events surrounding the early church
  3. Pauline Epistles
    - Books: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon
    - Contains letters written by Paul the apostle to churches and individuals
  4. General Epistles
    - Books: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude
    - Contains letters written by James, Peter, John, Jude, and the anonymous writer of Hebrews
  5. Apocalyptic Literature
    - One book: Revelation
    - Contains a series of prophetic visions
    - "Apocalyptic" refers to a type of literature that is characterized by symbolic visions that provide hope and encouragement to God's people
- The Bible:
  - Teaches us (Romans 15:4)
  - Corrects us (2 Timothy 3:16)
  - Trains us to live righteously (2 Timothy 3:16)
  - Equips us to do good (2 Timothy 3:17)
  - Encourages us and gives us hope (Romans 15:4)
  - Makes us spiritually strong (Acts 20:32)
  - Enables us to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2)
  - Shows us the way to salvation (2 Timothy 3:15; James 1:21)
  - Makes us wise (Psalm 119:98-100)
  - Gives us understanding (Psalm 119:130)
  - Guides us (Psalm 119:105)
  - Teaches us God's will (Romans 2:18)

- The Bible is the word of God. As such, it is the final authority for Christians on all matters of faith and conduct (John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15-16)



## 2. God

We will now look at some of the basic biblical facts about God.

- God is the creator of the universe (Genesis 1:1)
- God is eternal (Psalm 90:2)
- In Hebrew, God's name is YHWH
  - Popularly pronounced as "Yahweh" but we are not certain about the proper pronunciation
  - Rendered as "the LORD" [in block capitals] in the Old Testament of most English Bibles
- The meaning of the name "YHWH" is debated. One view is that it means "He is". If this is correct, it denotes God's eternal existence – the One who always is
  - Compound names of YHWH in the Bible:
    - **YHWH-Yireh** (Genesis 22:14). This means, "YHWH will provide"
    - **YHWH-Rapha** (Exodus 15:26). This means, "YHWH your healer"
    - **YHWH-Nissi** (Exodus 17:15). This means, "YHWH is my banner [victory]"
    - **YHWH-Mekoddishkem** (Exodus 31:13). This means, "YHWH your sanctifier [the one who makes you holy]"
    - **YHWH-Shalom** (Judges 6:24). This means, "YHWH is peace"
    - **YHWH Saboath** (1 Samuel 1:3). This means, "YHWH of hosts [armies]"
    - **YHWH-Rohi** (Psalm 23:1). This means, "YHWH is my shepherd"
    - **YHWH-Tisdkenu** (Jeremiah 23:6). This means, "YHWH is our righteousness"
    - **YHWH-Shammah** (Ezekiel 48:35). This means, "YHWH is there"
- God is omnipotent i.e. He can do whatever He wants to do (Psalm 115:3)
- God is omniscient i.e. He knows everything (Proverbs 15:3)
- God is omnipresent i.e. He is everywhere (Psalm 139:7)
- God is holy (Isaiah 6:3)
  - "Holy" means "set apart"
  - There are two dimensions to God's holiness:
    - Moral holiness – He is set apart from sin
    - Majestic holiness – He is set apart/in a class of His own/unique
- God is invisible (1 Timothy 1:17)
- God is spirit, undetectable by science and known by faith (John 4:24)
- God is good (Psalm 34:8)
- God is just/righteous (Ezra 9:15)
- God is light, having no moral darkness in Him (1 John 1:5)
- God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29)
  - This is an image of destructive power
  - God is not to be messed with
- God is love (1 John 4:16)
- God is wise (Romans 16:27)
- YHWH is the only God (Psalm 18:31)

### 3. Jesus Christ

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ

- Jesus is God's Son (Mark 1:1)
- Jesus is eternal (1 John 1:1-2)
- Jesus is the one through whom God created all things (Hebrews 1:2)
- Jesus sustains the universe (Hebrews 1:3)
- Jesus is God (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1; 1:18; 20:28; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20)
  - The one true God eternally exists in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (we will explore who the Holy Spirit is in the next chapter)
  - This concept is often referred to as “the Trinity” by Christians
  - Analogy: the substance water exists as liquid, ice and steam; yet all three are the same substance – water. Even so, God exists in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – yet in each person, we meet the same God
  - Ice is not steam, and neither ice nor steam is liquid, yet they are all water. Similarly, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit is the Father; yet they are all God
    - This is evident at Jesus' baptism where the Son is baptised, the Father speaks from heaven, and the Spirit descends on Jesus (Matthew 3:16–17)
  - When Jesus is called “the Son of God” it does not mean that He is the Son of the whole Trinity; it means that He is the eternal Son of God the Father. It is an eternal relationship that has always existed within the Trinity – Jesus has always existed as the Father's Son
- The Son became a human being, and was given the name “Jesus”, which means “He saves” (John 1:14; Matthew 1:21)
- On earth, Jesus healed the sick, preached about the kingdom of God, and taught the word of God (Matthew 4:23)
- Jesus Himself was sinless, but He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Matthew 26:28)
- Jesus rose again on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
- Jesus ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19)
- Jesus is now:
  - Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36)
    - “Christ” means “anointed”. It is equivalent to “Messiah”. It highlights Christ as the One whom God has anointed as King
  - The Head of the church (Colossians 1:18)
  - Our Advocate with the Father who pleads our case before God when we sin (1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25)
- Although Jesus is Lord, as an obedient Son, He is subject to God the Father (1 Corinthians 11:3)
- Jesus will come again to judge the world and complete the salvation of those who believe in Him (Acts 17:31; Hebrews 9:28)

## 4. The Holy Spirit

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2)
- The Holy Spirit is the means by which God is present everywhere (Psalm 139:7)
- As the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit, He is therefore also "God".
- The Holy Spirit is not merely a force; He is a person
  - This is evidenced by the fact that
    - He can speak (Acts 10:19)
    - He has emotions (Isaiah 63:10)
    - He has a mind (Romans 8:27)
- The Holy Spirit is also referred to as
  - The Spirit of the Lord
  - The Spirit of Christ
  - "the Spirit" (with a capital "S")
- The Holy Spirit is the means by which God inspired the writers of the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- In the Old Testament, the Spirit was not given to everyone. He was given to chosen servants of God to empower them for their work
- In the New Testament:
  - The Spirit enabled the Virgin Mary to supernaturally conceive Jesus (Matthew 1:18)
  - The Spirit empowered Jesus to do His miracles (Acts 10:38)
  - Jesus told His disciples to ask God for the Spirit in anticipation of the Day of Pentecost (Luke 11:13)
  - On the day of His resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples a foretaste of the Holy Spirit by breathing on them (John 20:22)
  - After returning to heaven, Jesus poured the Spirit upon the church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4,33)
  - The Spirit enabled the apostles to remember Christ's teachings (John 14:26)
  - The Spirit lives in every person who belongs to Christ (Romans 8:9)
    - When we received the Spirit, we were also:
      - Baptized in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)
      - Sealed with the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)
      - Anointed with the Spirit (1 John 1:20)
    - During the transitional period of the book of Acts, there were two occasions when the Spirit was withheld from believers until the apostles laid hands on them (Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-7)
      - These occasions were to demonstrate the unique authority of the apostles as the pioneers of the church (2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 2:20)
      - Today, all who belong to Christ have the Spirit. Paul told the Corinthians that we have "all" been baptized in the one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)

- The Spirit gives each Christian a spiritual gift to empower them to serve in the church (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 7:7)
  - As the Spirit gives us different gifts, possession of one particular gift, such as tongues, should not be seen as *the* sign that someone has the Spirit. Not everyone will speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:30)
- The Spirit assures us that we belong to God (Romans 8:15-16)
- The Spirit helps us to understand spiritual truths (Ephesians 1:17)
- The Spirit empowers us to pray effectively (Jude 1:20)
- The Spirit gives us a foretaste of our heavenly inheritance (Ephesians 1:14)
- The Spirit empowers us to not yield to our sinful nature (Galatians 5:16)
- The Spirit forms godly character within us (Galatians 5:22-23)
- The Spirit brings conviction to unbelievers (John 16:8)
- The Spirit guides us as we endeavour to serve God (Acts 16:6-10)
- The Spirit prays to God for us (Romans 8:27)
- We are to be continuously filled with the Spirit, which means that we are to allow the Spirit to have full control of us at all times (Ephesians 5:18)
- The Spirit is portrayed by various symbols in the Bible
  - Wind – denotes the Spirit’s power (Acts 2:2)
  - Fire – denotes the Spirit’s purging, glory and the zeal He imparts (Acts 2:3-4)
  - Water – denotes the cleansing, refreshment and life the Spirit brings us (John 7:38-39)
  - Oil – denotes the Spirit’s work in consecrating and empowering us for God’s work (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)
  - A Seal – denotes the Spirit marking us as belonging to God (Ephesians 4:30)
  - A Dove – portrays the Spirit as a person who is gentle and comforting (Matthew 3:16)
  - A Gift – the Spirit cannot be purchased. God gives Him to us as a free gift (Acts 2:38)

## 5. Human Beings

We will now briefly cover some basic facts about human beings.

- God created humans in His own image, and told them to have dominion over the earth, and to populate the earth through having children (Genesis 1:26-27)
- As humans, we consist of an outer self, and an inner self (2 Corinthians 4:16)
  - Our outer self is our body
  - Our inner self is called our “heart”, “soul”, “mind”, and “spirit” (Mark 12:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:23)
- God created human beings to bring Him glory (Isaiah 43:7)
  - The Bible states that the following brings God glory:
    - Giving God praise (Psalm 86:12)
    - Seeking to please God in everything we do (1 Corinthians 10:31)
    - Doing many good works (Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; Colossians 1:10)
    - Using our spiritual gifts to the best of our ability (1 Peter 4:10-11)
    - Being holy (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)
  - By doing these things, we fulfil our purpose, which is to glorify God
- The first man was called “Adam” (Genesis 4:25)
- The first woman was called “Eve” whom God created to be Adam’s companion and helper (Genesis 2:18)
- Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Sin is simply when we disobey God’s commandments. The consequence was:
  - Their immediate spiritual death, which means separation from God (Genesis 2:15-17)
  - All their descendants being born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) and with a sinful nature in their bodies [“the flesh”] (Romans 7:21-23; Galatians 5:16)
  - Our eventual physical death (Romans 5:12)
- This means that all human beings need salvation, which we’ll look at in the next chapter
- Adam and Eve are the first example of a marriage
  - When commenting on marriage, Jesus pointed back to the beginning as the standard we are to follow (Mathew 19:4-6)
  - For this reason, followers of Jesus accept marriage as the union between one man and one woman
  - Marriage represents Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32)
    - The wife is to submit to her husband as the church does to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-24)
    - The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25)
  - Parents are to love their children and teach them to follow the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 1:8-9; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:4-8)
- Singleness
  - Not everyone will be married

- Jesus taught that those who are able to stay single for the sake of God's kingdom should do so (Matthew 19:10-12)
  - Paul advised the Corinthians to stay single if they could so they could be devoted to the Lord without distraction, but acknowledged that not everyone has that ability (1 Corinthians 7:7–9, 32-34, 39-40)
- As humans, we require organisation
  - God has ordained that there be governments over people for our good and to punish evil (Romans 13:1-4)
    - We should be subject to them, honour them, pray for them, and pay our taxes (Romans 13:5-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
    - However, we are not to obey human authority when they tell us to do something that is contrary to the word of God (Acts 5:29)

## 6. Salvation

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about salvation.

- All of us have sinned (Romans 3:23)
  - The Greek word for “sinned” means “missed the mark”. This indicates that we have all fallen short of the standard God requires
- As God is holy and just, we must be judged for our sins. All sinners are therefore destined to suffer the eternal punishment of hell (Revelation 21:9)
- Jesus came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21)
  - His salvation sets us free from slavery to sin and grants us eternal life instead of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 3:16; John 8:34-36)
- The message of salvation is called “the gospel” which means “the good news” (Ephesians 1:13)
- Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that God could let us go free without compromising His justice (Romans 3:25–26; 5:8)
- To receive salvation, we must do the following:
  - Repent of our sins (Acts 2:38)
    - “Repent” means a change of mind
    - It refers to making a decision to turn away from sin
  - Believe in Jesus, and that God raised Him from the dead (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10)
  - Confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10)
  - Be baptised (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)
- Baptism
  - The mode of administration:
    - The Greek word for “baptize” [*baptizo*] was used for dyeing material, for washing utensils, and even for washing a couch
      - The idea is that something is made wet
    - Baptism can therefore be administered by pouring water or by immersing
    - That pouring water is a legitimate way to baptise is evidenced by the fact that when Jesus baptises people in the Holy Spirit, He does so by pouring the Spirit on them (Acts 1:5; 2:16)
  - The ritual of baptism represents
    - Our old sinful self being buried with Christ (Romans 6:4)
    - Rising with Him with a new life (Romans 6:4)
    - Having our sins washed away (Acts 22:16)
    - The Spirit being poured on us (Titus 3:5-6)
- People can only respond to God’s offer of salvation if God Himself draws them to Christ (John 6:44)
- Those whom God draws to Christ, were chosen by God before the world was created (Ephesians 1:4-5)
- Salvation is ours so long as we remain in Christ. If we choose to forsake Christ, we forfeit our salvation (John 15:6; Romans 11:22)

- When we respond to the gospel by repenting of our sins, believing in Jesus and being baptized, various things happen immediately:
  - God forgives all our sins (Ephesians 1:7)
    - This is also called “justification” (Romans 5:1) which means that God acquits us of all wrongdoing
  - We become a child of God (John 1:12)
    - This is also known as being “born again” (John 3:3)
  - We receive the Holy Spirit (Galatians 4:6)
  - A process of character transformation begins in which we become more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18)
  - We are set free from the power of darkness and transferred into Christ’s kingdom (Colossians 1:13)
  - We are given the hope of eternal life and a heavenly inheritance to look forward to (Titus 3:7; 1 Peter 1:3-4)
  - We are set free from bondage to the Law of Moses (Romans 7:4-6)
    - The Law of Moses is the 613 commandments that God gave to Israel under the leadership of Moses after they came out of Egypt. It includes laws not only about moral conduct, but also about religious festivals, Sabbaths, the protocols of sacrifices for the atonement of sins, dietary laws, inheritance laws, and other regulations including the type of clothes you could wear and even how your beard must be kept
    - Christians are to live righteously not by being in bondage to the Law of Moses, but by:
      - Being led by the Spirit rather than by the sinful nature (Galatians 5:18)
      - Loving our neighbour as our self (Romans 13:8-10)
      - Obeying the teachings of the New Testament (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 14:37)
    - This does not mean that we are to ignore the Old Testament. We are still to read it, allowing it to teach, correct, and instruct us in righteousness (1 Timothy 3:16-17). However, as we read the Law of Moses, we are to do so with the awareness that it does not have jurisdiction over us



## 7. Sin

We will now explore what the Bible teaches about sin. This is not an exhaustive treatment, but seeks to cover some of the major areas.

- Freedom from the Law of Moses does not mean that we are free to sin (Romans 6:2)
- If we sin, we are to repent and confess our sin to God. He will then forgive and cleanse us (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9)
- There are various behaviours and attitudes that we are to avoid
- These include the following:
  - We are not to worship anyone or anything other than God (Matthew 4:10)
  - We are not to disrespect our parents (Ephesians 6:1-3)
  - We are not to exasperate our children (Ephesians 6:4)
  - We are not to murder or hate others (1 John 3:15)
  - We are not to steal (Ephesians 4:28)
  - We are not to use our mouth to lie, slander, harm others or to utter anything that is morally corrupt (Colossians 3:9; Titus 3:1-2; Ephesians 4:29)
  - We are not to be greedy (Luke 12:15)
  - We are not to ignore the poor and needy (Proverbs 21:12)
  - We are not to be proud or haughty (James 4:6; Proverbs 16:18)
  - We are not to commit sexual immorality
    - This includes adultery, any sex outside of the marital union of husband and wife, and any forbidden sexual activity (Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27)
    - We should also remember that Jesus taught that to look at a woman lustfully is to commit adultery with her in your heart (Matthew 5:27-28).
      - Therefore, things such as pornography should not be viewed by a Christian
      - Also, we should not dress in ways that may encourage others to lust. For example, clothing should not be too tight or revealing (1 Timothy 2:9)
    - Jesus also taught that divorcing one's spouse and marrying another is adultery (Mark 10:11-12)
      - In God's sight, divorce does not dissolve a marriage. Marriage is dissolved by death. Therefore, to divorce and remarry is to commit adultery (Romans 7:2-3)
      - As such, marrying a divorced person is also to commit adultery as their previous marriage has not been dissolved in God's sight (Luke 16:18)
      - The Bible does recognize that sometimes divorce is unavoidable
        - Divorce is permitted on the grounds of infidelity (Matthew 19:9)
        - Exodus 21:10-11 made provision for divorce in abusive contexts

- In a mixed marriage, if the unbeliever wishes to leave, the Christian is to let that happen (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)
- Whether or not remarriage is permissible in these cases is debated by Christians
  - Paul said that if a Christian divorces their spouse they are to stay unmarried or be reconciled to their spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Therefore, some believe that remarriage after divorce is never permissible, especially as marriage is dissolved by death (Romans 7:2-3)
  - Other Christians believe that in the cases where God permits a divorce, He also permits remarriage
    - If infidelity makes remarriage permissible, then it logically follows that if one's ex-spouse commits adultery by remarrying, then the other spouse becomes free to remarry
- Those already in a remarriage when they come to Christ should stay in that remarriage and live from that point onwards in accordance with Christ's teaching knowing that God has forgiven and cleansed us of our past sins (1 Corinthian 7:17-24; 1 John 1:9)
- Christians are not to marry unbelievers (1 Corinthians 7:39)
  - However, Christians already married to an unbeliever are to stay in the marriage as long as the unbeliever is willing to (1 Corinthians 7:12)
- Husbands are not to mistreat their wives; and wives are not to rebel against their husbands (Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:22)
- We are not to get drunk (Ephesians 5:18)
- We are to have nothing to do with the occult
  - In Galatians 5:19-21 "sorcery" "and things like [it]" are forbidden
    - Consequently, Christians should not engage in things such as horoscopes, black magic, palm reading, contacting the dead etc.
- We are not to obey people when they tell us to do something that is contrary to the word of God (Acts 5:29)

## 8. The Church

We will now look at what the Bible says about the church.

- The word “church” refers to all those who belong to Jesus
  - The Greek word for “church” is *ekklesia* which was used with reference to an assembly of people
  - In the Bible, the word “church” never refers to a building; it always refers to people
- The church is said to be:
  - “The body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27)
    - This indicates:
      - We are one with Jesus who is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18)
      - We are one with each other, part of the same body (1 Corinthians 1:13)
      - We are each a bodily part with a role to play
        - God gives each member of the body a spiritual gift so that they can contribute to the body (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 7:7)
          - Gifts mentioned in those passages include the ability to:
            - Prophecy
            - Serve
            - Teach
            - Encourage
            - Give
            - Show mercy
            - Give a message of wisdom
            - Give a message of knowledge
            - Have extraordinary faith
            - Heal the sick
            - Perform miracles
            - Distinguish between spirits
            - Speak in tongues
            - Interpret tongues
            - Serve as an apostle
            - Provide practical help
            - Be an administrator
            - Evangelise
            - Shepherd God’s people
            - Speak God’s word
            - Be single

- “Promised in marriage to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2)
  - This indicates:
    - We are to look forward to Christ’s coming
    - We are to keep ourselves pure and holy
- “God’s temple” (2 Corinthians 6:16)
  - This indicates that we are God’s house; God lives amongst us
  - We are also the priests in the temple who offer God spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15)
- “The pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15)
  - This indicates that the church is to uphold and proclaim God’s truth to the world
- The church is to:
  - Preach the gospel, teach converts, and to baptise them (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20)
  - Meet together (Hebrews 10:25)
  - Observe Holy Communion in remembrance of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:23-28)
  - Praise God together (Ephesians 5:19)
  - Pray together (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1-4)
  - Fellowship (Acts 2:42)
  - Exercise spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:26)
  - Exercise discipline where members are sinning, which may result in excommunication if there is no repentance (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Galatians 6:1)
  - Love each other (John 13:34)
- Church gatherings must be conducted in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40)
  - Utterances in tongues are to be limited to two or three, and must be interpreted so that others can understand what has been said (1 Corinthians 14:23, 27-28)
  - Prophetic utterances are to be limited to two or three, and must be tested (1 Corinthians 14:29)
    - Someone giving a prophetic word must give way to someone else who has just received a revelation (1 Corinthians 14:30)
  - Paul wrote that when praying or prophesying, men were not to have a covering on their heads, and women were to have a covering on their heads (1 Corinthians 11:4–7)
    - By having their heads uncovered, men honoured Christ (1 Corinthians 11:4)
      - There are Roman statues that show senior men partially covering their head when offering sacrifice and divining through the animal’s entrails. It may be that Paul doesn’t want the men to worship God in the same way that the pagans worshipped<sup>1</sup>
    - By covering their heads, women honoured their husband’s authority (1 Corinthians 11:5,10)

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<sup>1</sup> ESV Archaeology Study Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), page 1710.

- In the English Standard Version, “woman” is translated “wife” in this passage. In Greek, “woman” and “wife” are the same word – context must determine which is meant
  - In Corinth, it was customary for married women to cover their heads with a veil. To uncover her hair would signify that she was single and sexually available, which would dishonour her husband in that culture<sup>2</sup>
- Paul wrote that women were to be silent in the church, and were to ask their husbands questions at home (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)
  - However, a few chapters earlier Paul gave instructions to women regarding praying and prophesying (1 Corinthians 11:6)
    - As such, Paul cannot mean that women can’t say anything in church
  - The women and men likely sat separately. During the sermon, it seems that women were shouting questions to their husbands, which was disorderly. This disruptive behaviour is what Paul forbade in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
- Because we live in a world that is opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is inevitable that the church will suffer persecution (John 15:18-20)
  - Such persecution may also include Christians being put to death for their faith (Revelation 2:13)
  - When we are persecuted, we should not do to our persecutors what they do to us. Instead, we should rejoice because we have a great reward in heaven (Matthew 5:10-12)

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## 9. Supporting the Church

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about supporting the church.

- Each member of the church who has an income has a responsibility to contribute financially to the church. This is so that the church can continue to function, pay its staff and support the poor (2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6)
  - This is a continuation of the Old Testament practice of supporting the temple, but now applied to the church (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)
  - Under the Law of Moses:
    - The Israelites were to give the annual temple tax for the upkeep of the temple (Exodus 30:11-16; Matthew 17:24)
    - The Israelites were to give various offerings to provide food for the priests (Deuteronomy 18:3)
    - The Israelites were to give various parts of their land to the tribe of Levi who assisted the priests (Numbers 35:2-3)
    - The Israelites were to give one-tenth (also known as a “tithe” or 10%) of the increase of their produce and livestock each year to the tribe of Levi (Leviticus 27:30-32 and Numbers 18:21)
      - If an Israelite wanted to keep the tithe of the land’s produce, Leviticus 27:31 tells us that they could give 120% of its monetary value instead (Leviticus 27:31)
      - The practice of giving a tithe predates the Law of Moses
        - Abraham gave a tithe of the spoils of war to the priest Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18–20)
        - Jacob vowed to give God a tithe of everything if He brought him back safely (Genesis 28:20–22)
      - Jesus affirmed that tithing should not be neglected (Matthew 23:23)
    - Every third and sixth year of the seven-year agricultural cycle, the Israelites were to give a tithe for the Levites, foreigners, orphans and widows (Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26:12-15)
    - The Israelites were also to leave the gleanings of their fields for the poor (Leviticus 23:22)
  - Many Christians follow this example by giving a tithe (10%) of their income to their local church, as well as additional offerings
    - This is fitting as Paul said that the Old Testament is useful for training us in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
    - However, Christians should not feel guilty if they cannot afford to give a tithe – we are not under the Law of Moses. It is there as an example. We should give according to our ability (1 Corinthians 16:2)
    - We should also not see a tithe as the ceiling of our giving. In Acts 4:34-35 we read that believers sold land and houses and gave the proceeds
      - Furthermore the tithe was only a part of an Israelite’s giving

- We should give as generously as we can, with a cheerful heart and not under compulsion. If we give sparingly, we will reap sparingly. But if we give generously, we will be reap generously (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)
- Luke 21:1-4 tells us about a poor widow who put only a very small amount into the temple treasury. Jesus said that she gave more than anyone else because that was all she had to live on, whereas the others gave from their abundance. As such, generosity is not measured by how much we give. It is measured by how much we have left after giving

## 10. Church Leadership

We will now look at what the Bible says about church leadership.

- The church has three levels:
  - The universal church, which refers to all believers throughout the world (Ephesians 1:22)
  - The area church, which refers to all believers in a town or city (Acts 11:22)
    - Paul's letters were often addressed to the entire area church e.g. "the church of God in Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2)
  - The local church, which refers to an individual congregation within a city or town.
    - In the early church, individual congregations met in a house (Romans 16:5)
      - Excavations from that period indicate that larger homes could hold up to 36 people. If the courtyard was used, up to 200 people could be accommodated
- The apostles appointed leaders over the various churches
  - These leaders are usually referred to as "elders" in the New Testament (Acts 14:23)
  - These "elders" are also referred to as "overseers" and "pastors" (Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5-7)
    - Some translations render "overseer" as "bishop", but both terms are translated from the same Greek word – *episkopos* – which means "overseer"
      - In the New Testament, a bishop was simply another term for a pastor/elder
      - Later on in church history, bishops and elders were distinguished, and the elders became subordinate to the bishop
      - However, in the days of the New Testament, this had not yet happened. Therefore, when we read the New Testament, we are to understand the terms "elders", "overseers", "bishops", and "pastors" as interchangeable
  - Elders are to be an example to the church, teach the word of God, provide pastoral care, oversee and lead the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Peter 5:1-3; James 5:14)
  - Elders are to be remunerated for their work (1 Timothy 5:17-18)
  - The church also has "deacons" who served in practical ways. The underlying Greek word for "deacon" is *diakonos* which simply means "servant"
  - Both elders and deacons are to be spiritually mature persons
    - 1 Timothy 3:1-13 tells us about the integrity and character such persons were to have
  - There are different views about how the local church was structured
    - One view is that each local church was assigned one pastor, and that all the pastors in a given area were collectively known as the "elders" of that area church. In this view, each local church pastor was assisted by a team of deacons



- 1 Timothy chapter 3 seems to support this model. In this chapter, Paul describes the type of persons that bishops and deacons must be. In verse 2 he speaks of a "bishop" (singular). The Greek has a definite article, which is roughly equivalent to "the", before the word "bishop" (Greek: *ton episkopon*). So, he literally refers to "the bishop". However, in verse 8 he speaks of "deacons" (plural). Interestingly, in discussing the bishop's qualifications, he asks, "If someone [singular] doesn't know how to lead his own house, how will he [singular] take care of God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:5). Thus, the role of the bishop is likened to a father who leads his house. A house does not have more than one father. Similarly, the local church, which met in a house, may have had one bishop/elder. However, a house in that culture may have had several household servants, and so it is fitting that the plural term "deacons" (which means "servants") is used in the same chapter. This may account for why Paul uses the singular "bishop" and the plural "deacons" in this chapter – he is thinking of a local church which met in a house, the oversight of which is exercised by "the bishop" who is assisted by a plurality of "deacons".
- In Titus 1:5, Paul instructed Titus to "appoint elders in every town", not in every house. This indicates the plural term "elders" applied to the area church, not the local church
- In Acts 14:21-23, we are told that they "appointed elders in each church". "Each church" here refers to each area church i.e. the churches of the towns mentioned in verse 21, namely, "Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch". Again, the plural term "elders" is used with reference to the area church rather than the local church
- However, the various local churches in a given town functioned as one area church. For example, when Paul would write a letter to the area church of Corinth, it would be read in all the local churches in Corinth. The elders in a given town were part of the same team insomuch that a sick congregant could call for all the elders to come and pray for him (James 5:14)
  - Another view is that each local church had a group of elders assigned to it, who were assisted by a team of deacons
- Jesus taught that church leaders are not to be addressed by special titles (Matthew 23:8-10)
- In 1 Timothy 2:12-14, Paul told Timothy that he did not permit a woman to teach or usurp authority over a man because Adam was formed before Eve, and it was Eve, not Adam who was deceived. Consequently, some argue that women cannot be leaders in the church. However, we should be aware of the following:
  - One of the false teachings the early church had to contend with is known as Gnosticism
  - The Gnostics taught that Eve was created before Adam, and that she was created to be his instructor

- This teaching is found in their late 3<sup>rd</sup> century/early 4<sup>th</sup> century document later entitled *On the Origins of the Word*
- An early oral form of this false teaching may have been present in Ephesus where Timothy was based, causing the women to see themselves as the men's instructors and to boss them around
- It may have been this behaviour that Paul forbade, which would be why he mentions that Adam was formed before Eve
- The Greek verb translated "usurp authority" (KJV) is *authentein*. In the New Testament, it only occurs in 1 Timothy 2:12 and can also mean "domineer"<sup>3</sup>
- When Paul said that he didn't permit a woman to "teach nor to domineer/usurp authority" the Greek word for "nor" is *oude* which Paul sometimes used to connect two parallel thoughts e.g. "we are not of the night **nor** [Greek = *oude*] of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5)
  - Consequently, Paul could be forbidding teaching in a domineering manner, or in a way that usurps authority over the men rather than forbidding teaching in a loving and gentle manner. Even male elders are forbidden from "lording it over" the church in 1 Peter 5:3
- Other scriptures indicate that God can speak and lead through women:
  - The prophetess Deborah who led men (Judges 4:4)
  - The prophetess Huldah who gave instruction to men (2 Chronicles 34:22-28)
  - "Your sons and **daughters** will prophesy" (Acts 2:16-17)
  - "**Priscilla** and Aquilla... explained to [Apollos] the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26)

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<sup>3</sup> William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1101.

## 11. Sickness and Healing

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about sickness and healing.

- The Bible states that God is our healer (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:2-3)
- Healing was one of the dominant features of Jesus' ministry, which was a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy about Him (Matthew 8:16-17)
- Jesus' miraculous healings were also to prove that He is the Son of God (John 20:30-31)
- God still heals today through the prayers of His people (James 5:14-16)
- God does not heal everyone
  - The prophet Ahijah was not able to see properly, but God didn't heal him (1 Kings 14:14)
  - The prophet Elisha died from an illness, despite doing many miracles (2 Kings 13:14)
  - Paul was not able to heal Trophimus, whom he left sick in Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20)
  - Such examples highlight that God heals according to His sovereign will
- God also provides healing through natural means
  - Paul told Timothy to not drink only water but to use a little wine for his stomach and frequent illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23)
    - In those days wine was used to purify water
  - God also uses doctors
    - Luke was a doctor and remained a doctor as a Christian (Colossians 4:14)
- The most important type of healing is spiritual healing
  - When Peter stated in 1 Peter 2:24-25 that we were healed by Jesus' stripes/wounds, he was referring to spiritual healing, as the context makes clear
  - He states that we were going astray like sheep. But because Jesus healed us, we have now returned to the Shepherd of our souls
- God can use sickness to help us grow spiritually
  - King Hezekiah became sick and was healed
    - He testified that his illness taught him humility and that the ordeal was for his benefit (Isaiah 38:15-17)
- Sometimes, sickness can be caused by sin (1 Corinthians 11:29-32; James 5:15)
- However, we should not think that every sickness is the result of a specific sin
  - In these present bodies, all of us suffer with the rest of creation (Romans 8:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:4)
- When Jesus returns, we who belong to Him, will be given a new, glorious body that will never experience sickness or pain again (Romans 8:23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:53; Philippians 3:20-21)

## 12. Angels and Heavenly Beings

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about angels and heavenly beings.

- Angels
  - Angels were created by Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16)
  - Angels are spiritual beings (Hebrews 1:14)
    - Whilst they are spirits, they can appear in physical form (Genesis 19:1-3)
  - Angels cannot die (Luke 20:36)
  - The amount of angels that exist is innumerable (Hebrews 12:22)
  - Angels do not marry (Matthew 22:30)
  - Angels are organised
    - E.g. Michael is called an “archangel” which means “chief angel” (Jude 1:9)
    - This indicates that there is rank and order amongst the angels
  - Angels are obedient to God (Psalm 103:20)
  - Angels worship God and His Son Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:11; Hebrews 1:6)
  - Angels are strong (Psalm 103:20)
  - Angels are holy – set apart by and for God (Luke 9:26)
  - Angels execute judgement on behalf of God (2 Kings 19:35)
  - The Hebrew and Greek words for “angel” mean “messenger”
    - God uses angels to give messages to people (Acts 10:3-6)
  - Angels are sent by God to be of service to His people (Hebrews 1:14)
    - This includes protecting God’s people (Psalm 34:7)
  - We are not to worship angels (Revelation 19:10)
- Other heavenly beings
  - Cherubim
    - Each cherub has four faces, one on each side of their head, so that they never need to turn around (Ezekiel 10:11)
      - One of their faces looks like a human, another like a lion, another like an ox, and the other like an eagle (Ezekiel 1:10)
    - Each cherub has four wings (Ezekiel 1:6)
    - God is said to ride on a cherub, which indicates that they are His mode of transportation (Psalm 18:10)
  - Seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-3)
    - The word “seraphim” means “burning ones”
      - This may depict their fiery appearance
    - They have six wings
      - With two they cover their face because of God’s glory
      - With two they cover their feet, which may denote reverence
      - And with the other two they fly (Isaiah 6:2)
  - The Four Living Creatures (Revelation 4:6-8)
    - These have six wings like the Seraphim, and each has the appearance of one of the four faces of the Cherubim
    - They are covered with eyes

- They continually declare God's holiness day and night
- Owing to the apocalyptic genre of the book of Revelation, and as these four living creatures seem to be an amalgamation of the seraphim and cherubim, it may be that they are not literal creatures but appear in the vision for symbolic reasons to highlight God's holiness and to characterise the author of Revelation as standing in the prophetic tradition of Isaiah and Ezekiel
- The 24 elders
  - These seem to be senior persons who are seated before God's throne (Revelation 4:4)
  - It has been suggested that these are symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. It may be that they are symbols of heavenly wisdom

## 13. The Devil

We will now look at what the Bible says about our spiritual enemy, the devil.

- The Bible reveals, that in the distant past, there were spiritual beings who rebelled against God. The leader of these rebels is referred to in various ways, including the following:
  - “Satan” (Mathew 4:10)
    - This name means “adversary”, and depicts him as the enemy of God and His people
    - In this capacity, he seeks to oppose the preaching of the gospel and inspires the persecution of God’s people (1 Thessalonians 2:18; Revelation 2:10)
    - He also hates humanity in general and has wicked spirits working for him that cause sickness and mental affliction (Luke 8:26-35; 13:11)
  - “The devil” (Matthew 4:1)
    - This name means “slanderer” and points to the fact that he makes malicious statements about God and people
    - In fact, the devil is described as accusing God’s people day and night before God (Revelation 12:10)
  - “That ancient serpent” (Revelation 12:9).
    - This reveals the true identity of the serpent that deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.
  - “The tempter” (Matthew 4:3).
    - This points to one of his chief activities – he tempts people to sin against God
  - “The god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4)
    - This designation reveals that currently, this world system is run by the devil. That is why as Christians we are told to “not be conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2)
    - It was only after the transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that the devil’s current position of influence was obtained
  - “The deceiver of the whole world” (Revelation 12:9)
    - This description of Satan reveals why the majority of people have not repented of their sins and turned to God – they are deceived by Satan
- The angelic rebellion in the time of Noah
  - Some of the angelic rebels found the women on earth beautiful to behold and had intercourse with them. These rebellious angels have been confined to a place called Tartarus until the day of judgement. Their offspring were killed in the flood that occurred in the time of Noah (Genesis 6:1-4; 2 Peter 2:4)
  - However, not all of the angelic rebels were involved in that incident, and so there are still wicked spiritual beings at work in the world today
- The devil’s cohorts seem to be an organised army and are referred to by various names according to their function: including principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual wickedness, demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits etc. (Ephesians 6:12, Luke 8:2;9:42;10:17)
- Our victory over Satan through Jesus Christ:

- When Jesus came, the devil and his cohorts had no authority over him. Instead, Jesus had total authority over them (Matthew 8:16; Mark 1:32–34)
- Through Christ, God has rescued believers from the devil’s power (Colossians 1:13)
- We defeat the devil’s accusations by the blood of Jesus, which was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We rescue people from the devil’s grip by preaching the gospel to them. We overcome his persecutions by being willing to die for Christ (Revelation 12:11)
- We are protected from the devil’s attacks by wearing the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10–18)
- We overcome the devil’s temptations by resisting him, praying, and being led by the Spirit instead of by our sinful nature (James 4:7; Matthew 26:41; Galatians 5:16)
- The ultimate destiny of the devil and his angels is the eternal fire that has been prepared for them (Matthew 25:41)

## 14. Prayer

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about prayer.

- The primary Hebrew and Greek words for prayer carry the sense of asking and making a petition. Prayer is simply making requests of God
- Here are some guidelines for prayer:
  - If we want our prayer to be answered, what we pray must be in keeping with God's will for us (1 John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 12:7-10)
  - We must also pray with faith
    - In other words, we must believe that God is able to do what we are asking (Matthew 21:22; James 1:6-8)
  - We must pray with humility (Luke 18:9-14; James 4:6)
  - We must not pray with selfish motives (James 4:3)
  - We must be willing to be persistent in our prayers (Luke 11:5-9)
  - Our prayer must be sincere, and not mere lip service (1 Samuel 1:15; Psalm 119:145)
  - If we want our prayer to be answered, we must be living righteously, in keeping with God's commandments (James 5:16; 1 John 3:22-23; 1 Peter 3:7)
  - We should also ensure we have forgiven those who have wronged us (Mark 11:25-26)
  - We are to give God thanks when we pray (Philippians 4:6)
  - Prayer should never be a means of showing off (Matthew 6:5-6)
  - We are not to babble on and on in our prayers (Matthew 6:7-8)
- Jesus gave His disciples a model prayer in Matthew 6:9-13
  - "Our Father who is in heaven"
    - "Our" – we should pray together with other Christians
    - "Father" – we should know that God is a loving parent
    - "who is in heaven" – God is above us, we must approach Him with humility
  - "Hallowed be Your name"
    - To "hallow" means to make holy
    - This is a request that people will honour God's name as holy
  - "Your kingdom come"
    - A request that God's heavenly kingdom will come soon
  - "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
    - In heaven, God's wishes are unopposed. We are to pray that such would be the case on earth also
  - "Give us this day our daily bread"
    - We are to bring our needs before God
  - "Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors"
    - We are to confess our sins to God asking Him to forgive us; and we are to ensure that we have forgiven all who have mistreated us
  - "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"
    - We must never be complacent but always on guard against the evil one, trusting in God's help and deliverance



- Some translations add “For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory”
  - However, this line is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts and may have been a later addition
- We should also pray:
  - That God would send out labourers (Matthew 9:36–38)
  - For secular leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
  - For those who lead God’s people (Colossians 4:2-3)
  - For all believers (Ephesians 6:18)
  - For God to bless those who mistreat us (Luke 6:28)
- All three persons of the Trinity are involved in prayer
  - Jesus taught that we should pray in His name to God the Father (John 16:23)
  - Jesus also invited us to pray to Him (John 14:14 CSB/ESV/NIV/NRSV)
  - Paul and Jude taught that we are to pray in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 1:20)
- In the Bible, different postures accompany prayer
  - Sitting down (1 Chronicles 17:16)
  - Standing up (Mark 11:25)
  - Hands lifted to God (1 Timothy 2:8)
  - Kneeling (Luke 22:41)
  - Lying prostrate before God (Matthew 26:39)
- The Holy Spirit gives some believers the ability to thank, praise, and pray to God in a language that they have never learned
  - This is called speaking in a “tongue” (1 Corinthians 14:14-17)
    - Not everyone has this gift (1 Corinthians 12:30)
    - Paul referred to speaking in human and angelic tongues (1 Corinthians 13:1)
      - Some interpret the reference to angelic tongues to be hypothetical

## 15. Praise and Worship

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about praise and worship.

- We will first explore praise
  - To praise God means that we exalt Him by declaring how good, wonderful and awesome He is
    - Various physical expressions may accompany our praise. Such expressions include:
      - Singing (Psalm 100:2)
      - Dancing (Psalm 149:3)
      - Clapping our hands (Psalm 47:1)
      - Joyful shouting (Psalm 66:1)
      - Lifting our hands (Psalm 63:4)
      - Playing music (Psalm 33:2–3)
    - We should praise God because:
      - It is commanded in Scripture (Revelation 19:5)
      - It is our purpose (1 Peter 2:9)
      - It pleases Him (Psalm 69:30-31)
      - He is good (Psalm 135:3)
      - He is worthy of our praise (Revelation 4:11)
      - His glory is unparalleled (Psalm 148:13)
      - It is good, pleasant and fitting (Psalm 147:1)
      - Our praise tells others about God’s goodness (Psalm 9:11; 34:1-2)
      - We are grateful for
        - What He has done for us (Psalm 118:21; Isaiah 61:10-11)
        - His mercy and faithfulness (Psalm 138:2)
        - His strength, protection and help (Psalm 28:7)
        - His salvation (1 Peter 1:3)
    - Corporate praise and thanksgiving is one of the ways that we stay full of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-20)
    - Hebrews 13:15 refers to praise as a “sacrifice”. Jesus taught His Jewish hearers that when they bring a gift to the temple altar, if they remember that their brother or sister has something against them, they should first be reconciled to their brother or sister before offering their gift (Matthew 5:23-24). We cannot mistreat others and expect God to accept our praise. We must put that right first
- We will now examine the meaning of “worship”
  - The primary Hebrew word for worship is *shâchâh*, which means to “prostrate oneself”
  - The primary Greek word for worship is *proskuneō* which also means to “prostrate oneself”
  - Biblically, worship is something that is done on one’s face rather than on one’s feet. It is an act in which we lower our self before God in homage and reverence

- However, it is not only our external posture that matters. More important is the condition of our heart. Jesus taught that worship should be offered sincerely – “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24)
  - The New International Version interprets “in spirit” to refer to the Holy Spirit i.e. “in the Spirit”. If this is correct, then this verse also shows us that we should worship in the power of the Holy Spirit

## 16. Death

We will now look at what the Bible teaches about death. When looking up the corresponding Bible verses, it will be best to use a translation that retains the Hebrew word “Sheol” and the Greek word “Hades”. Suitable translations for this include the New American Standard Bible, the English Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the Christian Standard Bible.

- Because of sin, death is inevitable for all human beings (Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27)
- After death, the body begins to decompose. However, our soul/spirit continues to exist outside of our body. In Matthew 10:28 Jesus told His disciples not to fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. This indicates that when our body dies, our soul continues its existence
- Before Christ ascended back to heaven, when people died, whether they were righteous or unrighteous, their soul went to a place that is called “Sheol” in Hebrew
  - For example, Jacob and the author of Psalm 88 anticipated going to Sheol when they died (Genesis 42:38; Psalm 88:3)
  - The wicked also went to Sheol (Psalm 9:17)
- The Greek word for Sheol is “Hades”
  - For example, Psalm 16:10 mentions “Sheol”, but when Peter, speaking in Greek, quotes it in Acts 2:27, he uses the word “Hades”
- At death, the righteous went to a compartment in Hades where the patriarch Abraham was. The wicked went to a different compartment in Hades where they were tormented (Luke 16:19-26)
- Ephesians 4:8 refers to Jesus leading a host of captives when He ascended to heaven. This has been interpreted to mean that when Jesus ascended to heaven, He took with Him all the righteous who were with Abraham in Hades
  - However, this is not the only way to understand this verse. When the Romans won a battle, conquered soldiers would be stripped of their clothes and weapons, and the general would lead his captives in a triumphal procession through the streets of his city so that everyone could see the evidence of his complete victory. Ephesians 4:8 could be employing such imagery to describe Jesus returning to His city, the heavenly Jerusalem, having conquered the powers of darkness
- Today, now that Jesus died for our sins and has gone back to heaven; when believers die, our spirit goes straight to heaven to be with Christ. We no longer go to Hades (Acts 7:59; Philippians 1:21-24)
- However, the unrighteous still go to the place of torment in Hades when they die. They are there waiting for the Day of Judgment. When that Day comes, those in Hades will be reunited with their bodies and thrown into yet another place called “the lake of fire”. Hades and death itself will also be thrown there too, and death will be destroyed forever (Revelation 20:11-15)
- In the original Greek of the New Testament, Jesus referred to this final lake of fire as “gehenna”, which is often translated as “hell” (e.g. Matthew 10:28)

- When we die, though our body is dead, our soul is conscious of what we are experiencing in either Hades or heaven. This is evident in that when Jesus told the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16, both men were very conscious of what was going on when they were dead. Also, in Revelation 6:9-10, John saw the souls of martyrs as very much alive and conscious in heaven, and in Revelation 7:9-14 he saw Christians who had died now in heaven praising God
- Some wrongly teach that at death, the soul “sleeps” and is not conscious
  - When the Bible speaks of the dead sleeping, I understand it to be a reference only to the body
  - In Acts 7:59-60, before the martyr Stephen died, he asked Jesus to receive his spirit. His body then “fell asleep”. When Jesus returns, Stephen’s body will be awakened and reunited with his spirit (which is now with Jesus)
- When Jesus returns, the bodies to those who belong to Him will be raised as immortal bodies, just like Jesus’ body (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:42; Philippians 3:20-21)

## 17. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

We will now look at what the Bible says about Christ's return.

- Jesus has returned to heaven, but He is coming back again (Acts 1:10-11)
- He has gone away to prepare a place for us in His Father's house i.e. in heaven. He will come again and take us there (John 14:1-3)
  - This is likely a reference to the Heavenly Jerusalem (see below)
- No one, except God, knows when Christ will return (Matthew 24:36)
- Before Christ returns, there will be a time of "great tribulation" on the earth i.e. a time of great difficulty worse than anything the earth has experienced before (Matthew 24:29; Revelation 7:14)
  - During this time, there will be a wicked ruler known as "the antichrist", and as "the man of lawlessness" (1 John 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:3)
    - He will sit in the Jewish temple and claim to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
      - As the Jewish temple was destroyed in 70 AD, it will presumably be rebuilt (it has not yet been rebuilt at the time of publication)
- When Jesus comes again the following will happen:
  - The dead believers will be resurrected and they will be caught up to meet Christ in the air. Believers who are still alive when He comes will also be caught up to meet Him in the air. Our bodies will be gloriously transformed so that they are just like Jesus' body (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Corinthians 15:42–49)
    - Some wrongly believe that this event, often called "the rapture", will happen before the great tribulation
      - This view contradicts Jesus' own teaching
        - He taught that the righteous and the unrighteous will not be separated until the end of the age (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). As such, the rapture cannot occur before the end of the age, which rules out a pre-tribulation rapture
      - This view also contradicts Peter
        - He taught that Jesus must stay in heaven until the time to restore all things (Acts 3:21). As that time does not come until after the tribulation, Jesus cannot leave heaven to rapture the church until after the tribulation
      - This view also contradicts Paul
        - He taught that believers will not be gathered to meet Christ in the air until the antichrist is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3). As that is part of the tribulation, the rapture cannot occur before it
        - Paul also taught that the rapture will happen at "the last trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Jesus said that at His glorious return "after the tribulation" there would be a great sound of a trumpet (Matthew 24:29-31). As such, "the

last trumpet” which accompanies the rapture, can only be after the tribulation, otherwise, it is not the last trumpet

- There is only one second coming of Christ; this occurs after the great tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31)
- Jesus will destroy the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- Jesus will unleash great vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8)
  - Jesus likened this to the days of Noah. Noah entered the ark and was protected, and those left behind were swept away by the flood. Even so, when we meet Christ in the air at His return, we will be protected from the wrath that will be unleashed on the earth (Matthew 24:37-42)
  - This is likely “the wrath to come” mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 that Jesus delivers us from
- Jesus and His people will rule over the earth for 1,000 years, over those who have been spared Jesus’ wrath (Revelation 20:4)
  - During the 1,000 year reign, Satan will be bound and placed in the bottomless pit, unable to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:1-3)
  - At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released to deceive the nations for one final rebellion (Revelation 20:7-8)
  - Fire from heaven will destroy the nations, and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:9-10)
  - Some believe that the 1,000 years refers symbolically to the church’s present reign with Christ or to deceased Christians’ present reign with Christ in heaven. However, this results in a very strained reading of the passage. Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 4:8 that believers on earth do not presently reign with Christ – such belongs to the future (2 Timothy 2:12). Furthermore, it is abundantly clear that Satan is presently active on earth deceiving the nations – he is not currently bound in a bottomless pit unable to deceive
- After the 1,000 years, the unrighteous dead will also be raised so that they can appear before God for judgement and be thrown into the lake of fire (2 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 2:5–8; Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11–15)
- The current earth and heavens, which have been corrupted by sin, will pass away (Matthew 24:35; 2 Peter 3:10)
- "Heaven(s)" here refers to the sky i.e. the space above where we see the clouds and stars. For example, Genesis 1:25 speaks of the "birds of the heavens". It is not to be confused with the heaven where God lives
- In place of the current heaven and earth, there will be a new heaven and a new earth (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1)
- God’s city - the heavenly Jerusalem – will descend from heaven. God and His Son will be with us forever, and we will reign throughout eternity (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2-4, 9-11, 22–23, 22:3-5)

