

# THE SUBSTITUTE

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light of life films 

**Journey**  
CHURCH

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# THE SUBSTITUTE

## *A study of the greatest love*



**Introduction** - If you are reading this, you most likely watched the short film ***The Substitute*** recently. And while you may have mixed feelings about the way the film ended, the purpose of this Bible study is to cause you to think much more deeply into the meaning of the story. That is because *The Substitute* is not just intended to be an entertaining film. It is really a **modern-day parable**. Some have described a "parable" as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

The Greek word for parable is "parabole" which means "a casting beside."<sup>1</sup> *The Substitute* is a story surrounding circumstances that, unfortunately, we are far too familiar with today. The creators and actors of this short film have taken something familiar and "cast it beside" a series of important truths in order to illustrate those truths. But, a word of caution! When His disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the people in parables (Matt. 13:10), he answered them saying that parables have a two-fold purpose: They illuminate the truth for those who want to know it and yet they harden the hearts of those who are indifferent or whose hearts are hostile to spiritual truth.

### **Preparation for this Bible Study -**

With the above in mind, it is important for you to approach this Bible study with a "soft" heart and with ears that really hear. The question that the disciples asked Jesus is recorded for us in Matthew 13. Speaking in direct reference to the Pharisees, Jesus said in verse 13:

*"Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." (NKJV)*

Our prayer for you as you approach this study is found in verses 16-17 of Matthew 13:

*"But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."*

In order for this to take place, you must be guided by the Holy Spirit because spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Stop right now and ask the Holy Spirit of God to do just that. Not sure how to talk to God? Then try this simple, straightforward prayer:

*"Father God, I have many questions about you, your word, and your nature. I truly want to know you more. Please open my heart to receive your message for me and my life. I claim your promise that, if I am sincere, you will reveal yourself to me. Thank you for what you are going to do. I pray in the Name of your Son, Jesus, Amen."*

## Who's Who in *The Substitute*?

While no comparison or extended analogy is perfect, we can identify the roles played by various people in the film. Understanding this will create a much clearer picture of what the film is trying to convey. So, let's get started:

### Sergeant William (Bill) Burke -

In the film, Sgt. Burke is not only an experienced police officer, he is also a loving father. As the story develops, he must make the unthinkable decision to sacrifice his child at the hands of an angry and frantic student with a gun. He does this so that the other students in the classroom may go free. Sgt. Burke is the "God" character in *The Substitute*.



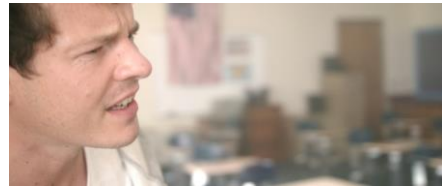
### Jennifer Burke -

I am sure that by now you have discovered that the title of this film has a double meaning. Jennifer is "*The Substitute*" in more ways than one. She is substitute teaching in a history classroom at a local high school and she ultimately makes the conscious decision to become the "substitute" hostage that allows the students to go free in spite of the gunman's epithet that "you idiots all deserve to die!" In alignment with her father's will, she allows herself to be detained by a young man who is confused, violent, bent on destroying his perceived enemies, and whose decisions are chaotic and erratic. Jennifer is the "Jesus" character in *The Substitute* parable.



## Ryan Edmonds -

Ryan is in search of control. He feels that he has been shut out of the "good life" and he is willing to kill and destroy to gain a sense of control. He feels he has nothing to lose! When Ryan speaks with Bill on the phone, he asserts that control. While he doesn't see any way out of the situation he himself has created, he persists in "prowling around the classroom like a roaring lion." (1 Peter 5:8) Ryan is the "Satan" character in the film because he hates those who he thinks have "perfect" lives and he especially hates Christians.



## Students in the Classroom -

Did you know that you (yes YOU!) are in the parable told by The Substitute. As we will see in this Bible study, those who are condemned to die are saved by a substitute who takes their place. That is exactly what happened when God gave His only Son as a substitute to die for sinners. The students who fled the classroom represent all who have accepted this free gift of substitution. **But why?** Why did it have to be that way? That is what this study is all about.



## Foundations -

Since this is a Bible study, it would be prudent for us to state our position on the Bible itself. Here is that statement of faith:

We believe the Bible is the Word of God and is free from errors or contradictions in its original manuscripts.

We believe the Bible is God breathed meaning that God inspired men to write His message to us. ([2 Peter. 1:21](#), [2 Tim. 3:16](#))

We believe the Bible to be the only infallible, inerrant, authoritative, and trustworthy guide for faith and life.

We believe the Bible is to be read as literally as possible except where obvious figurative language is being used. <sup>2</sup>



## Audience -

Just as a movie has an audience, this Bible study has an intended audience consisting of two groups. In the first group are those who may not have already made the decision to become followers of Jesus Christ and accept His wonderful gift and yet are seekers after the truth. There is a wonderful verse found in Hebrews 11:6

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a **rewarder** of those who **diligently** seek Him. (Emphasis mine)*

If you are a diligent seeker after the truth, this Bible study is for you.

The second group consists of those who are already followers of Jesus Christ; have already trusted Him as their *Substitute*. This Bible study will prepare you to share your faith *"and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you."* (1 Peter 3:15b) Having deepened your understanding of the basic doctrines of your faith, you will have fulfilled that command from our Lord given through His apostle Peter as well as the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19).



Captain Graham makes a difficult call.



*"The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the doings, and the existence of the great God which he calls his Father." - Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

**A**ccording to a recent Gallup poll, 89% of Americans believe in God.<sup>3</sup> All is well then, right? Not so fast! What do these respondents really mean when they say, "I believe in God?" Further research reveals that 53% of Americans have read relatively little of the Bible and one in ten has read none of it.<sup>3</sup> Many of these are church goers.

It gets worse! In the above cited survey, pollsters George Gallup and Jim Castelli were forced to draw the conclusion that, "because they don't read it (the Bible) they have become a nation of biblical illiterates." <sup>4</sup> How bad is it? Consider the following statistics:

- Fewer than half of adults can name the four gospels.
- 60% of Americans cannot name even 5 of the 10 Commandments.
- 82% believe that, "God helps those who help themselves" is in the Bible (It isn't).
- 50% thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.
- 12% indicated that they believe Joan of Arc was Noah's wife.<sup>5</sup>

Why is this a problem? Quite simply, a group of people cannot say they believe in Someone they just don't know. That is a shame! It is a shame because God has gone to great lengths to reveal Himself to us. Further, to create your own "god" from your imagination or from human wisdom is idolatry.

In order to understand the parable we call "The Substitute," you must know the characters the film symbolizes. We begin with God the Father.

### **God is the Sovereign Creator of the Universe -**

The Apostle Paul told the Romans that coming to know God and learn of His wisdom is a vast endeavor. He put it this way:

" Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!" (Rom. 11:33 ESV)

But, it is a worthy endeavor; quite possibly the most valuable investment of your time and energies. So let's begin:

Please read Isaiah 42:5 and write its meaning in your own words below:

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Did you realize that, if you believe the very first verse in the Bible, believing the rest of the Bible should be a breeze? If you truly believe that God is the omnipotent Creator of all things and that He spoke them into existence out of nothing (ex nihilo), believing in, say, the "burning bush," or the Red Sea crossing, or escape from the fiery furnace should be a piece of cake.

Now, consider Romans 1:19-20. What does this passage teach you about God?:

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God has made it very plain that creation itself is ample proof of His existence and his unlimited power (Gr. "dynamis"). Because of creation men are still without excuse to say that there is no God. In fact, Psalm 19:1-2 puts it this way,

"The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.  
Day to day pours out speech,  
and night to night reveals knowledge."

As we continue to learn of the one true God, it becomes more and more obvious that any attempt to explain or describe Him fully is impossible. However, in order to



understand our story, we must continue to try. Toward that end, please look up the following verses describing God's attributes and write down what you feel is the most important word or phrase in the passage that explains a quality or characteristic of God:

Acts 17:31\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:4-5\_\_\_\_\_

Numbers 23:19\_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 6:3\_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 1:3\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 9:15\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 5:17\_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 5:5\_\_\_\_\_

Psalms  
130:4\_\_\_\_\_

Any god who does not display the attributes described in these verses is not the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and not the One True God!

**The Bible Declares that the One True God exists in a Trinity -**

Although it is difficult for our finite minds to understand, the one true God exists in three persons while sharing the very same essence and unity. One example of this "tri-unity" is found in Matthew's gospel, chapter 3 and verses 13-17. Read this passage and describe in your own words how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (the three Persons of the Trinity) acted separately and yet in complete harmony at the baptism of Jesus:

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## God is Holy -

We would be remiss if we didn't focus on another important characteristic of God - that is

**HE IS HOLY!** If you will remember reading Isaiah 6:3 from our exercise above, you recall that, God is not just holy, nor is He holy, holy. No, the angels "cried to one another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.'" In ancient literature, saying something 3 times was not considered redundant. It was for emphasis. It was also in recognition that each member of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is holy.

However, what does it really mean that God is "holy?" As R.C. Sproul points out in his book *The Holiness of God*,

*The primary meaning of holy is 'separate.' It comes from an ancient word that meant, 'to cut,' or 'to separate.' Perhaps even more accurate would be the phrase 'a cut above something.' When we find a garment or another piece of merchandise that is outstanding, that has a superior excellence, we use the expression that it is 'a cut above the rest.'*<sup>6</sup>

When the Bible says that God is holy, it doesn't just mean that He is more powerful, smarter, or greater than us. No! It means, "He is transcendently separate. He is so far above and beyond us that He seems almost totally foreign to us."<sup>7</sup>

One of the greatest understatements of all time is found in the Bible. It is found in Isaiah 55:8-9. Look it up now and write your paraphrase of those two verses below:

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However, when we are compiling a list of God's attributes (as we are here), we dare not just tack holiness onto the list and be done with it. Holiness is not just one of God's qualities. It defines His very essence, His intense moral purity, and His deity. Holiness is the overarching, pervasive, fundamental nature of God.

Let's look at a couple of verses that broach this overarching theme. Look them up and write them out below. It will be worthy of your time:

Exodus 15:11 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Samuel 2:2 \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Lesson 1 - Discussion Questions**

1. What is something you learned about God the Father that you didn't know before, had misunderstood, or had forgotten?

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2. Based on lesson 1 and your own experience, what is the biggest misconception people have about God?

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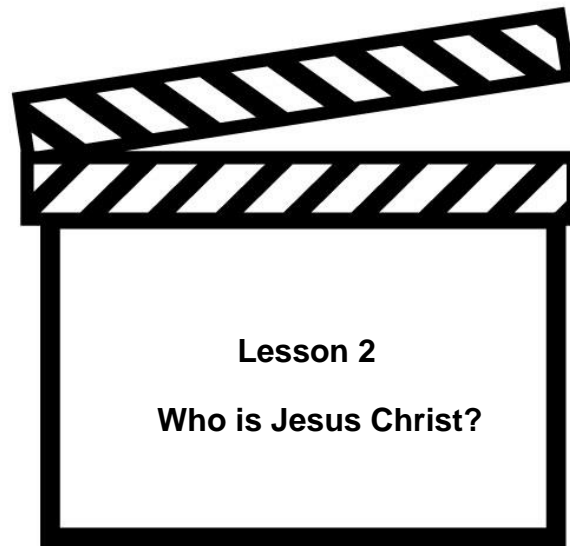
3. Sometimes people say they believe in God but live as if He doesn't exist. For example, we cannot say that we believe that God is omnipresent and then view pornography without being a hypocrite.

When the prophet Elijah was up on Mount Carmel facing off against 450 prophets of Baal, he told the Children of Israel simply, *“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”* Let's personalize that saying to reflect that thing in your life that vies to replace God or come before Him. Place something that you struggle with in the first blank and the appropriate pronoun in the second.

If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if \_\_\_\_\_ is God, follow \_\_\_\_\_ (he, she, it).

**Lesson 1 Epilogue** - Based on some of the things we have learned about God in lesson 1, one might be led to think that He is distant, detached, or alien to us, our problems, and our lives. As we will see in subsequent lessons, **nothing could be further from the truth.** God is intensely relational, merciful toward us, and loving. In fact, He loves you so much that He wants you to be a part of His eternal family and He sent a substitute to take your place and bear your sins and shame. In exchange, you get Christ's imputed righteousness. With that in mind, let's take aim at lesson 2.





*A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher...Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. - C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity (abridged)*

**S**cene 23 of *The Substitute* is a poignant moment where Jennifer (the Jesus character) looks upon the wounded and dying student with compassion and makes a conscious decision to stay and become the substitute so that the student can live. In fact, all of the students who chose to accept her sacrificial gift, lived!

This is analogous to the plan God the Father put in place in eternity past (we don't know when) to save mankind from their sins and be reconciled to Him. The sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden did not take God by surprise. The plan was set. Jennifer's decision to stay, as excruciating as it was, is also reflective of the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus actually sweat drops of blood as He asked the Father if there was any other way but the cross. (By the way, sweating blood is a real medical condition known as hematidrosis.)

But there wasn't any other way! No one else could have been *the substitute*; no one but Jesus. Why? What is so unique about Him? Do you know Him? Let's proceed and find out:

## **The Real Jesus -**

In Matthew 24:23-24 Jesus explains to His disciples how important it is to identify "the real Jesus." In speaking of a terrible future time of great tribulation on earth Jesus tells them: (paraphrase these two verses in your own words.)

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It is critical that we know and understand who Jesus really is in order for us to understand why He is our substitute. We cannot just "assemble" a Jesus to our liking as we would our meal at a buffet (a little of this, a little of that). We cannot borrow ideas from human sources to construct our mental image of Jesus either. That is called syncretism and it is heresy! When pressed on the person of Jesus Christ, Oprah Winfrey said the following:

"Jesus can't possibly be the only way to heaven!"<sup>8</sup>

How does Jesus Himself refute that statement in John 14:6?

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## **Jesus is God -**

We must start here because so many of the cults get this wrong. Jesus did not become a god. He always was God. Jesus was not created. He is eternal. He was and is and always will be with the Father. Let's take a glance at what the Bible (not celebrities) says about the deity of Jesus Christ:

**Jesus was present in the beginning with God and has always been God.**

John 1:1-2 (your paraphrase) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Jesus accepted worship as God.**

Matthew 14:32-33 (your paraphrase) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Jesus proclaims His own deity.**

In the following verse, Jesus identifies Himself with the most holy name for God. Find John 8:58 and identify the two words spoken by Jesus that nearly got Him stoned to death for perceived blasphemy: \_\_\_\_\_

**Again, Jesus claims to be God.**

Paraphrase John 10:30-33 in your own words:\_\_\_\_\_

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**Jesus will be worshiped in heaven.**

Revelation 5: 13-14 (paraphrase)\_\_\_\_\_

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**God Himself declares Jesus' deity.** Twice, God spoke verbally to declare this; once at the baptism of Jesus and once on the Mount of Transfiguration. What did God say on those two occasions

Matthew 3:17b, 17:5c\_\_\_\_\_

Author's note - It may help here to understand some of the imagery in the Bible. What's special about this imagery is that it ties the Creation to the Gospel. Here is how Pastor Tim Keller explains it:

*"In the creation account the Spirit of God is likened to a dove, and that is in the Targums, the Aramaic of the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Creation account, the book of Genesis 1:2 says that the Spirit "hovered" over the face of the waters. The Hebrew verb here means "fluttered"...like a dove. And God spoke: Let there be light. There are three parties active in the Creation of the world: God, God's Spirit, and the Word. The Father is the voice, the Son is the Word, and the Spirit is fluttering like a dove."<sup>9</sup> (Now compare the Creation account with the Baptism of Jesus and look at it in a new light.)*

**God became a man.**

John 1:14\_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 2: 5-7\_\_\_\_\_

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## Jesus was sinless.

What we have seen so far in our brief study of the Man Christ Jesus is that:

- God Himself became a man and took on human flesh.
- The man (Christ Jesus) was both fully God and fully man (this is called the hypostatic union and is just as difficult to understand as the Trinity. Don't worry too much if you can't quite wrap your mind around it. Would you really want a God you could completely understand?).
- As God, Jesus is worthy of our worship, love, and adoration.

Now, because Jesus was both God and man, it is important to understand here that He was also sinless. This is so important to discern the meaning of our parable. Here is how Nicholas Batzer of Ligonier Ministries explains it:

*In a life that spanned three decades, our Lord never entertained a thought, never uttered a word, and never carried out an action that was defiled by impure motives. He always honored His Father in heaven, always honored His earthly father and mother, never lusted, never uttered a word in sinful anger, never gossiped about or slandered His neighbor. He never stole, never lied, and never coveted. In short, He submitted to every commandment of the law of God without wavering. He loved the Lord with all His heart, soul, mind and strength, and He loved His neighbor as Himself.<sup>10</sup>*

Unlike Jennifer in our movie, our substitute had to be a perfect sacrifice; a sinless one. In the Old Testament, the Hebrews were asked to bring a sacrificial lamb. But it had to be spotless. Jesus was the once-for-all spotless lamb who takes away the sins of the world! He is the Lamb of God!

Read John 1:29 and identify the speaker: \_\_\_\_\_

Read Revelation 12:11 and explain how the Lamb enables us to overcome Satan:

\_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 Peter 1:18-19 and explain how God redeemed us from the tyranny of sin:

\_\_\_\_\_





## Lesson 2 - Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn about Jesus Christ for the first time? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. If our sin is so great that it required God the Son, the perfect One, to die on a cross to remove our guilt, why do so many people think they can earn their way to heaven through good works? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Behind the scenes (BTS) at the filming of *The Substitute*



*"Of all kinds of knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important." - Jonathan Edwards*

**W**hy is this such an important question? I mean, who is man anyway? There are those who tell us that we are random accidents of time and evolutionary forces. And, there are those who say we emerged from primordial goo. But, if we are just accidents of biology, what meaning is there in life? What purpose? Is it any wonder that those who live in cultures where this is the predominant philosophy ( secular materialism), that suicide is one of the leading causes of death? For example, it should come as no surprise that North Korea, a godless nation, has an extremely high suicide rate. In Japan, a nation with nearly no Christian population base, 25,000 people took their own lives in 2015.<sup>11</sup>

Clarence Darrow, the famous lawyer who defended John Scopes in the so-called "Monkey Trial" of the 1920's, has said the following about our human existence:

*"The purpose of man is like the purpose of the polywog - to wiggle along as far as he can without dying."*<sup>12</sup> Now, I don't know about you, but those words don't exactly make me want to jump out of bed in the morning. No purpose? No destination? Uncertain origin? Is this all there is? When you're dead, that's it? Please tell me there's more!

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The Bible tells a far different story about us. And we had better get to looking at what God says about us rather than what man has conceived in his, darkened, futile thinking.

Now, when it comes to who the Bible and God Himself say we really are, there's good news and there's bad news. Let's tackle the bad news first:

**We are sinners -**



Write Romans 3:23 here word-for-word: \_\_\_\_\_

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**People are not basically good -**

Read Jeremiah 17:9 and paraphrase it here in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Left to his carnal instincts, man can be exceedingly wicked -**

Read Genesis 6:5 and write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Our hearts can be hardened to the truth and toward God and we will not repent -**

Read this devastating passage from the book of Revelation which describes a time in the future when there will be no doubt that God Himself is judging the world. Read Revelation 9:20-21 and describe what is going on here in your own words:

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**Another View of Man -**

Yes, we are fallen. We are sinful. We all have the capacity for breaking God's laws and separating ourselves from Him. And we do! We all fall short of His holiness and glory. But, thankfully, that's not the end of the story!

What does God think about when He thinks about us? We are going to answer that question as if God Himself were speaking.

**You have value** - *"I Am the Creator and you are my creation. I breathed the breath of life into you."* Read Genesis 2:7 and write the last six words of that verse:

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*"You are more valuable to me than many \_\_\_\_\_."*  
(answer in Matt. 10:31)

*"Since I am your Creator ,I know all about you.*

*Read Psalm 139 and find at least five things I know about you."*

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God says that we are more valuable to Him than sparrows, or any animal for that matter. This is where the radical animal rights advocates err. Ingrid Newkirk of PETA has said, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."<sup>13</sup>

*"Even while you were rejecting me, I did something very unexpected for you."*

(Answer found in Romans 5:8) \_\_\_\_\_.

**It Gets Even Better!**

For those of you who have already decided to become Jesus followers, the news about who we are in God's eyes is....well, it's out of this world!

*"You are a new creation in my sight."* (Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 aloud)

*"You are no longer a slave to sin."* (Read Romans 6:11 and Ephesians 2:4-5 aloud)

*"You have my Spirit."* (Read Galatians 2:20 aloud)

*"You can be forgiven of your sins."* (Read 1 John 1:9 aloud)

*"I love you so much that I want to be with you throughout eternity in heaven."* (Read John 14:3 aloud)

*"While you are still here on earth, you represent me."* (Read Acts 1:8 and write it below)

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### Lesson 3 - Discussion Questions

As you can see, we humans have the capacity to be both magnificent and dreadful at nearly the same time. Why is a biblical view of mankind so important?

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In the movie, Jennifer was offering Ryan hope and forgiveness but he didn't accept it. Why do you think that is?

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How was Jennifer being "Christ-like" in her attitude and approach to Ryan?

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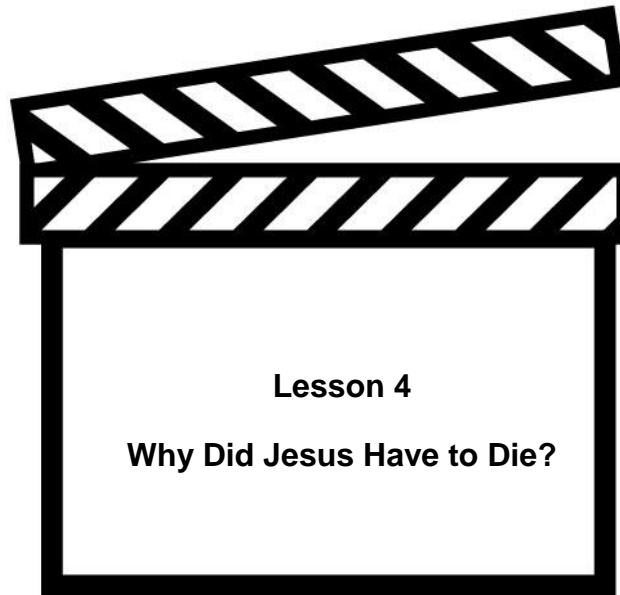
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### Lesson 3 - Epilogue

I trust that you realize how important it is to see ourselves as God sees us; sinners in need of grace, love and mercy. I also hope that you can see how the culture is trying to squeeze us into its godless mold. After all, if there is no Creator, there can be no accountability and everyone just lives to please themselves (sound familiar?). If there is no Supreme law-giver, there can be no hard-and-fast law. If you are looking for the motivation behind the so-called "theory of evolution," look no farther than this quote by atheist G. Richard Bozarth:

*'Christianity has fought, still fights, and will continue to fight science to the desperate end over evolution, because evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the Son of God. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing.'*<sup>14</sup>

But God has known all of this before time began, even before the creation of the world. He knew we would sin. He knew we, like those who agree with the above quote, would reject His righteous standard. He knew that sin must be paid for. And that takes us to our next lesson: ***Why Did Jesus Have to Die?***



**Lesson 4**  
**Why Did Jesus Have to Die?**

*"If God were not just, there would be no demand for His Son to suffer and die. And, if God were not loving, there would be no willingness for His Son to suffer and die. But, God is both just and loving. Therefore, His love is willing to meet the demands of His justice." John Piper in Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die, p. 20*

**J**ust like the students in our movie, we also need a substitute in order to escape the "classroom" of sin. However, it wasn't always this way. After all, in the beginning God created the earth and mankind perfect. Genesis 1:31 says:

"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."

Mankind had not yet disobeyed God or broken His law. Adam and Eve were living in innocence. Then one fine day, the tempter came along and approached Eve with the suggestion that God didn't really mean what He said (Genesis 3:1). Satan, in the form of a serpent, placed a question in the mind of Eve. He questioned the purity of God's motives. He even went to so far as to say, "You shall not surely die" if you eat of the tree in the midst of the Garden. Satan has been a liar from the beginning (John 8:44). When he lies, he speaks his native tongue.



## What A Mess!

Eve fell for the lie and Adam, whether he was deceived or not, went along with it as well. Now what? Adam and Even immediately knew that their perfect fellowship with God had been broken. Read Genesis 3:8-11 and explain how we know that Adam knew he had sinned:

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## The Punishment for Sin is Death -

In lesson 1, we have already determined that God is holy and righteous. If you will remember, we also said that "Holiness is not just one of God's qualities. It defines His very essence, His intense moral purity, and His deity." (from lesson 1) As such, God just cannot overlook or condone sin. If He were to do that, he would no longer be a just judge because the job of a judge is to uphold the law.

Read Romans 6:23a and write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

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## But all was not lost!

God immediately promised a "substitute" (Gen. 3:15) He said it would come from the Seed of a woman. He said that, even though Satan would bruise his heel, that Seed would bruise his head. Explain the imagery here in your own words:

The Seed of the woman: (Matt. 1:23) \_\_\_\_\_

Satan shall bruise His heel: (Mark 15:20) \_\_\_\_\_

He shall bruise Satan's head: (Heb. 2:14) \_\_\_\_\_

## Nevertheless, someone had to die for your sins and mine -

Herein lies the beauty and simplicity of God's perfect plan of redemption. In order to satisfy God's righteous demands, there had to be a **perfect sacrifice** for our sins. Throughout the Old Testament time, the people would bring an animal sacrifice but these were only a foreshadow of what was to come. What does Hebrews 10:4 say about this?

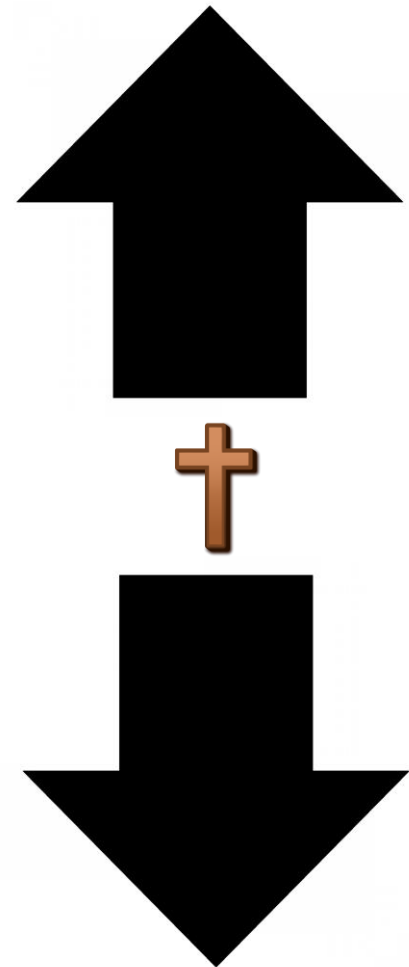
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Jesus was the perfect sacrifice or "substitute" to pay for our sins! At this point in the discussion, those who have been Jesus followers for a while might say, "Jesus had to die on the cross to redeem us." You would be correct! Redemption is an important part of God's marvelous plan and I praise Him for it. When Jennifer offered to remain with Ryan, the students who fled the classroom were redeemed. However, that is only half of the equation.

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**Consider this -**

We tend to always think of ourselves. However, if we think of Christ's work on the cross only as for our redemption, we have missed a valuable part of God's plan and His very nature. God cannot overlook sin. Sin must be punished with death. We cannot approach God in our own righteousness. They are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, we can only approach a holy God through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (2 Corinthians 5:21)



Therefore:




On the line above the up arrow, place the word "satisfied."



When Jesus, the perfect substitute for our sins, gave of Himself to die according to the will of the Father, the wrath of God was SATISFIED! That is why He said this from the cross just before He died: (write John 19:30 below)

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Now read Luke 1:68 and write the proper word in the blank below the down arrow of the previous page. 

#### **Lesson 4 - Discussion Questions**

(This is such an important lesson! Please use this time to sort through the important biblical teaching of this lesson.)

Suppose you are talking with a friend and you asked them, *"If you were to die tonight and found yourself standing before an almighty God and He asked you why He should let you into His heaven, what would your answer be?"* Your friend answers, *"Because I am a good person."*

Based on the scripture and teachings in this lesson, how would you respond?

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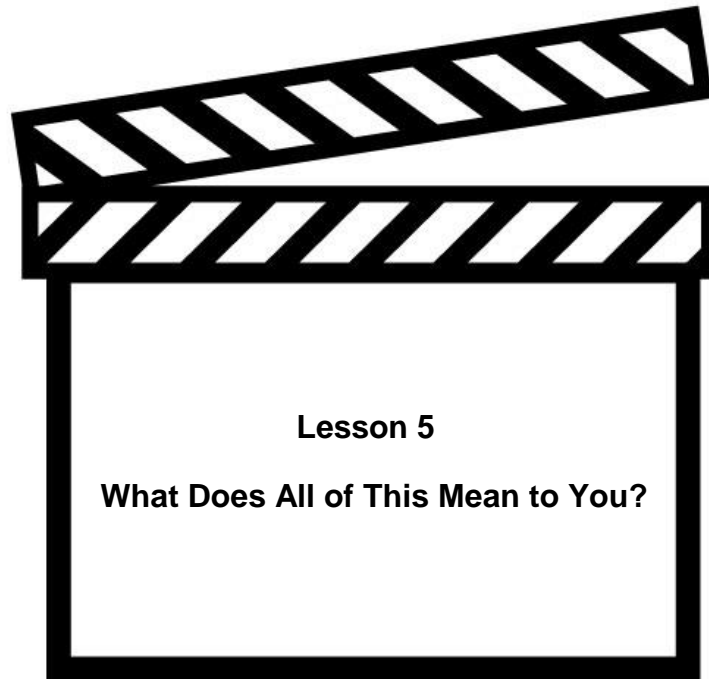
One of the favorite "gotcha" questions unbelievers ask of believers is this one: "How can a loving God possibly send anyone to Hell?" Based on this lesson, we are going to invert that question. Here it is. How would you handle it?

"How can a holy God allow a sinful human into His presence?" What is your answer?

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*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22  
NIV*

**W**e have covered much ground in the first four lessons, used various scriptures and let them speak for themselves, and attempted to explain God's wonderful plan of salvation as simply and succinctly as possible.

Now it is time for application. Whether you are still considering becoming a follower of Jesus, are a new "baby" Christian with lots of questions, or whether you have been a believer for a while and are looking to grow in sanctification (becoming more like Christ), this lesson is for you. We are going to progress through these stages of faith and would encourage you, no matter in what stage of the Christian life you find yourself, to "Press on toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14). This lesson will utilize a question and answer format.

Ready? Lights! Camera! Action!



## Part 1 - I Am a Seeker

**Question - Why should I decide to repent and follow Jesus now? I've got lots of time.**

Answer: Did you know that, worldwide, 3 people die every second, 180 every minute, and nearly 11,000 die every hour? If we do the math, that means that 264,000 people every day go either to heaven or hell - forever. Most of them did not expect to die.<sup>15</sup>

Life is short. Here is what the Bible has to say on that matter: (Write James 4:14 below)

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**Question - So what if I did die today? Surely God would give me a second chance!**

Answer: The concept of a "second chance" after death is found nowhere in scripture. In fact, just the opposite is true. Read Hebrews 9:27 and fill in the blanks below

"It is appointed unto man \_\_\_\_\_ to die and after this the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Bible teaches that what you do with Jesus and His substitutionary death on the cross is for this life only. Fill in the blanks in this verse from 2 Corinthians 6:2:

"In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. I tell you, \_\_\_\_\_ is the time of God's favor, \_\_\_\_\_ is the day of salvation.

**Question - Why do I need this? I am not really a sinner.**

Answer: In lesson 3, we learned from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans that we are all sinners and we have all fallen short of the glory of God. The mistake we make is to compare ourselves with the worst individuals in our society. We say, "I have never robbed a bank, abducted a child, raped anyone, or committed murder. We can rationalize feeling pretty good about ourselves by comparing ourselves to the worst criminal we heard about on the 6:00 news. It is the wrong comparison.

Let's take a little test. Please be painfully honest with your answers.

Have you ever told a lie? Yes / No (next page) →

Have you ever stolen anything, even something small? Yes / No

Have you ever looked upon someone with lust in your heart? Yes / No

Have you always loved the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your strength and loved your neighbor as you love yourself? Yes / No

If you were honest, your answers above were "Yes," "Yes," "Yes," and "No." In that case, you need a savior! Jesus, God's perfect substitute for our sins, paid the penalty for those sins on your behalf. You must trust Him and forsake those sins. Yes, it's that important.

Let's consider just one more "seeker" question we often hear.

**Question: What's the big deal? I've always believed in God!**

Answer: Did you know that the devil and his demons also believe in God and shudder? (James 2:19) Did you know that Satan has actually seen God? (Job 1:6) It's too late for the devil but not for you! Just giving mental assent to the fact that there is a God is not saving faith. You must trust Jesus as the only perfect sacrifice for your sins.

In Acts 16 we read the story of Paul and Silas in prison in Philippi. After a violent earthquake that caused prison doors to fly open and everybody's chains to come loose, the jailer first tried to kill himself. Paul prevented him from harming himself by saying, *"Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"* After that, the jailer asked what must be the most important question anyone could possibly ask. Write that important question from Acts 16:30 below:

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What was Paul's answer to that destiny-changing question?

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But, belief means totally surrendering your heart and mind to the gospel. Let's look at another passage and fill in the components of that gospel message:

Romans 10:9-10 -

"That if you confess with your \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is Lord,  
and believe in your \_\_\_\_\_ that God raised Him from the dead,  
you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and  
are \_\_\_\_\_, and it is with your mouth that you confess  
and are \_\_\_\_\_."

Justification (Gr. dikaiosis) is a Bible word that means to pronounce or declare as righteous. It is an acquittal. It signifies the new birth. It came about through the death of Christ and is offered to us as a free gift of God. It is offered by grace through faith. The object of that faith is Christ.<sup>16</sup>

## Part Two - I Am a New Christian. Now What?

If you have recently given your life to Christ, congratulations! You are a new believer and your eternal destiny has been changed. In fact, you have been translated from darkness to light, from death to life, from an enemy of God to a beloved child.

Spiritually speaking, it's as if you were in a coffin and placed in a grave. Suddenly, the coffin swings open and you experience glorious light and freedom in Christ. Worship artist Kristian Stanfill expresses this exuberance in his song "*Glorious Day: I Ran Out of That Grave!*" It can be found on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfzpfqrPUDo>

But you must grow in the Christian life! This process is called sanctification. The Greek word (hagiosmos) means "separated unto God." That is, separated from the world and its God-hating system and becoming more like Christ. Here are some practical steps that will take you in that direction:

- **Begin reading the Bible.** Don't be confused by all of the translations and versions. Just choose a version that you understand well. Some of the more popular ones are New King James Version (NKJV), New International Version (NIV), English Standard Version (ESV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB). Of course, there is the always popular King James Version (KJV) but be prepared for some old English as it was first published in 1611.

Also, did you know that a Bible is just as close as your smart phone? There are hundreds of free Bible apps for any operating system. My favorites are Bible Gateway and YouVersion. Most of these apps also have an audible mode so that you can listen to the Bible as you drive to work or school.

The Apostle Paul encouraged his young protege' Timothy to get into the word with this verse:

2 Timothy 2:15

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- **Jump start your prayer life.** Prayer is just talking to God. It does not have to take place in a church or any other "religious" venue. In fact, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, how often are we to pray?

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That sounds impossible but the meaning is that we are to be in an attitude of prayer , ready to go to the Father at any time, even about little things.

- **Find a local Bible-believing, Bible teaching church.** No one is called to be the "Lone Ranger" of Christianity. You may remember way back in lesson 1 (page 12) we said that God is intensely relational. Just as God wants a personal relationship with you, He wants you to have strong personal relationships with other believers. The author of Hebrews said it this way:

Hebrews 10:25\_\_\_\_\_

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I personally do not know what I would do without the encouragement of my brothers and sisters in Christ at the local church.

- **Get baptized.** Let's say this right up front. Baptism does not save you. It is symbolic of what has already taken place in your heart. It is a testimony to witnesses that you are serious about following Christ. Finally, its rich symbolism portrays you being buried with Christ (going down under the water) and being raised to new life as you come up out of the water. It is a beautiful and joyous ceremony. And besides, the very first Christians were baptized:

Acts 2:41\_\_\_\_\_

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- Finally, find a place of service. The "prime directive" for Christianity is to "go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19a)." But, there are so many ways to do that. Sharing your faith one-to-one has always been the most effective way to complete the Great Commission. But one does not have to be a vocational pastor or missionary to serve the Lord. The Apostle Peter put it this way:

1 Peter 3:15 - "But in your hearts, set apart Christ as\_\_\_\_\_

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the \_\_\_\_\_ that you have.

I close this section with a verse that has encouraged me when I felt that I was not growing in Christ. That verse is Philippians 1:6. Please write it below:

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Robert Evades Bill



Why did Light of Life Films make this movie and this follow-up Bible study? While we hope that the movie is entertaining, that is not why we filmed it. While we used professional actors, sound and lighting technicians, and the best equipment we could afford, the purpose was not just to make a good film that would entertain you for a little while. No way!

We made this film for one primary purpose - to introduce you to the most amazing "Substitute" of all time - Jesus Christ. It is crucial that, having seen this short film and worked through this Bible study, you understand the following truths:

- All sin is an insult to the holiness of God.
- The severity of the insult escalates exponentially with the nobility of the one being insulted.
- God is infinitely worthy of all the respect in the universe - His universe.
- Sin against God must be punished. Someone must pay for sin against God. The punishment is death.
- Jesus Christ didn't just cancel God's wrath. He absorbed it - for you.
- God poured out His wrath, because of sin, on His own Son so that you could be acquitted of your sin, your record expunged, and God's wrath removed.



- Jesus willingly laid down His life for you. While we can argue about who was responsible for His death, the truth is that it was God (Isaiah 53:10)...and Jesus submitted to it (John 10:18). That is why we read this in Philippians 2: 9-11

*Therefore God exalted him to the  
highest place  
and gave him the name that is  
above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee  
should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under  
the earth and every tongue  
acknowledge that Jesus Christ is  
Lord,*

- Once again, how will you escape if you ignore such a great salvation?<sup>17</sup>

Many movies have been made about love, but there is no greater love than the love of God as expressed through the substitutionary death of His Son. The purpose of this film is to cause you to think about "substitutionary atonement." But, it doesn't end when the lights come up or even when you complete this Bible study. Light of Life Films wants to come alongside you in your journey with Christ.

If you have made any decisions during this process, we want to know about it. If you rededicated your life to Christ, please email and tell us.

If you have any questions about the Bible or your faith walk, we would like to help you.

### **Most importantly, you need know only two things to be saved:**

1. **You are a great sinner!** (Romans 3:10 - "As it is written, there is no one righteous, not even one!")
2. **You have a great Savior!** (Romans 10:13 - "for Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.")

If this film and Bible study has spoken to you, you can be sure that God is at work in your life. Don't ignore Him! (Hebrews 2:3)

If you trusted Jesus for the first time as a result of this movie and Bible study, we would like to celebrate that wonderful event with you.

If you are looking for a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, vibrant church near you where you can grow and serve the Lord and where other believers will pray for you and support you, we want to help with that too.

Why did we make this movie?

**BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUBSTITUTE!**

Please contact us at

**[info@light-of-life-films.com](mailto:info@light-of-life-films.com)**



A Ministry of Journey Church Joplin, MO

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