

GENESEO CHURCH OF CHRIST

Basic Study Lesson #1

You Can Know That You Have Eternal Life

One of the most frightening passages in Scripture is the statement of Jesus to those who claimed to be believers on Judgment Day, ***“Depart from Me, I never knew you.”*** Read this statement as recorded in **Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)**:

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

This statement is made by Jesus to people who believed they were His disciples; it is made to people who were calling Jesus “Lord;” and were doing right things in His name, or by His authority. This passage says that Jesus is going to say too many people on Judgment Day who thought they were in a right relationship with God through Him, ***“Depart from Me...”*** That is a frightening thought; living life thinking you are in a relationship with God and discovering on Judgment Day you are not.

How could that be possible? To think I am in a right relationship with God but not be, is an eternal mistake. How can that happen? The Bible says ***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it” (Jeremiah 7:9)***. How do I guard against that; how can I be sure? How can I know I am in a right relationship with God? The Bible says we can be sure by reading, studying its words (**1st John 5:13**). This short series of lessons is designed to guide your understanding to what the Bible says you must do to make sure you are in a relationship with God.

You must study the Bible and prove it for yourself. Please don’t take any person’s word for this; this is important, it is about where you spend eternity. Read and study these Bible passages and compare “the thoughts in these lessons” with what the Bible says. If you don’t believe “the thoughts in these lessons” are what the Bible is teaching, **do what you believe the Bible teaches**. Our purpose in providing these lessons is to get you to read and study the Bible; to get you to think about what God said you need to do to have a relationship with Him for eternity.

Please open your Bible and read each listed scripture, not just the thoughts about the Scripture in the lesson plan.

Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV) - ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

Who was Jesus talking to when He made this statement?

Jesus was talking to Jews, religious people that knew who and what He was (Lord). These people called Jesus their Lord. He was talking to people who had been doing religious things in His name or by His authority.

Jesus said that on the Day of Judgment there are going to be many religious people that believed He was Lord and called Him Lord; many who had been doing religious (good) things by His authority that He is going to tell to depart from Him.

This is a different group of people in His time than the Jews of His time who rejected Him.

Jesus said the reason He was going to tell these people to depart from Him was because they were **“workers of lawlessness.”** That phrase means **“contempt for, or violation of the law.”**

This passage says it is possible to deceive yourself about your relationship with Jesus.

The Bible says there is no reason for a person to be frightened by this Scripture; there is no reason to have any doubt about what is going to happen at judgment.

1st John 5:13 (ESV) – ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”

God does not want people living in fear of their eternal destiny. He has given man a way that he can do away with that fear. That way is through His Word. John, directed by the Spirit of God, wrote that a part of the reason God gave His inspired writing, His Word, was so men can be assured of **where they will spend eternity.**

In this short series of lessons we will examine the Bible, the Word of God, searching to find out what it says a person must do so that on the Day of Judgment they will not hear Jesus say, “Depart from Me...”

The Bible says Jesus will be the judge of all men in the end and His Word (the Bible) will be the standard for judgment.

Acts 10:42 (ESV) – “⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.”

Acts 17:31 (ESV) – “³¹ because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.”

John 12:47-48 (ESV) – “⁴⁷ If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”

Since the Bible is going to be the standard on Judgment Day, let's spend a few minutes learning or reviewing some things about this Writing.

The Bible is not a book even though we have it in book form.

The Bible is a collection of writings from God who used men as His writers –
2nd Peter 1:21.

The collection of writings, over the years since God began giving them to men, have been collected and put into “book form” by men to make it easier to read and study. The writings were originally written on scrolls, clay tablets and other writing materials of their time.

Now we call this collection of writings “**The Bible.**” The actual meaning of the word from which our English word “bible” is derived means “*the books.*”

The Bible is a collection of writings from God, written by men who God guided by His Spirit (**1st Corinthians 2:12-13**), that have been collected and put into book form.

Your copy of the Bible is a translation of these writings into the language you read and speak, in this case, English. Another word meaning about the same thing as “translation” is “version.” You will hear people speak of their Bible translation or their Bible version.

Since you and I can't read the ancient languages of the Bible, it is translated into a language we can read and understand. A translation is the work of men and women who are scholars in ancient languages, who have taken copies of these writings from God, that were written in different languages, and translated them into our language,

English or some other current spoken language. Since most people do not read Aramaic, Hebrew or Greek (languages of the Bible times), scholars of these ancient languages translated these writings into modern day languages such as English.

Some of the Bible translations you may encounter are: the King James Version; the New King James Version; the New International Version; the New American Standard Version; the New English Translation; the New Revised Standard and the English Standard Version. (Remember, “**Version**” is just another word for “**translation**”.) **This list is neither exhaustive nor intended to imply these are the only good translations.**

Make sure your “translation” or “version” is the work of a group of scholars from different religious backgrounds and not from one religious belief (those listed below are from one religious belief).

The **Watchtower Bible** is a translation by a group of scholars from one religious group, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and is not recognized by most other scholars as an accurate or good translation.

The **Book of Mormon** is not a translation of the Bible. It is a book that the Mormon Church claims is also from God and is equal to the Bible. However it is rejected by other religious groups. It does not contain the same information as the Bible.

Make sure your primary Bible is a “translation” and not a “paraphrase.”

A “paraphrase” is a statement of what you think someone said or meant to say.

In a “paraphrase” someone reads the letters from God and then writes out what they think God was saying.

Read the Preface in your Bible. It tells you how the translators put your particular version together. Each group of translators do some things differently as they compile a translation. For example any time you translate from one language to another the translation may not read smoothly so the translators **add words** to make it read better. The translators of the New American Standard translating committee decided that when they added a word for smoother reading, to “**italicize the added words**” so the reader can know the added words were not in the original language. This is the type of information found in the preface.

Everything contained inside the covers of the Bible is not from God.

Men have added information they believed would help a person as they read and studied the Bible.

Dictionaries of **Bible** words, introductions to different books, information about some of the people in the Bible, study helps and others tools, like maps and time lines, are some of the additional added material published in some Bibles.

All this added material is good and useful for your Bible studies, but it is not **God's Word**; it is just the thoughts of the translators, men. It is not the Word of God, even though contained inside the covers of a **Bible**.

The Words from God in your Bible can be found in 66 writings that men have collected and placed in two sections in the book: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word "testament" means book, law or covenant.

Contained in the Old Testament are 39 writings from God that were written before the life of Jesus.

The names of those writings are: **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings, 2nd Kings, 1st Chronicles, 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.**

In the New Testament there are 27 writings from God written from the time of the life of Jesus to about 60 years after His death, or about 100 AD. The names of those writings are:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2nd Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1st Peter, 2nd Peter, 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, Jude and Revelation.

When the writings from God were collected and put into this book, the Bible, they were not arranged in chronological order.

They were arranged in the Bible by subject matter: **Law, History, Poetry**, etc.- not in the chronological order of the story they tell.

All 66 writings in the Bible in some way present the main story line of the Bible or fit into the story line in some way. The story of the Bible is the story of God's creation of this physical

realm, and man, and His relationship with man. However, since the writings in the Bible were not arranged in the Bible in the chronological order of the events happening, sometimes it gets confusing when you are reading.

You can read your Bible and get the basic story of the Bible, just like you read a novel, starting at the beginning of the story and reading through to the end of the story, by reading these books in this order:

From the Old Testament read: **Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy chapter 34** (only this chapter in this book), **Joshua Judges, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings, 2nd Kings and Ezra.**

From the New Testament read: **Luke** and then **Acts.**

In the next lesson we will look at the Hub of the Bible, Genesis chapters 1-3.