

Lesson One
THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

from
A Time To Build
by Brad Sherman
Abridged

No one can gain an understanding of the gospel without first recognizing the dilemma resulting from our own sinfulness contrasted against the righteousness and purity of God. When we do, our need for the Savior becomes evident. Then we are able to embrace the gospel as our only hope and find purpose in this life.

Man's Dilemma Before God

God Is Holy

God is perfectly pure, immaculate, and complete in moral character. Holiness is His nature; therefore, holiness is part of who He is, and He will not change or deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13). God is beyond our experience or comprehension, yet His holiness exists as the standard we are judged by (1 Peter 1:15–16).

1. Read Romans 11:22 and write down two characteristics of God's nature we must understand to have an accurate understanding of who He is.
a. _____ b. _____
2. God's Word says, "The wages of sin is _____" (Romans 6:23).
3. Will God ever break His Word (Matthew 24:35)? _____
4. What holds all creation together (Hebrews 1:3)? _____
5. What do you think would happen if God did not stand true to His Word? _____

6. Why does God sometimes seem to be slow in bringing judgment on sin (2 Peter 3:9)?

All People Are Sinners Before God

Sin is essentially rebellion against God. Rebellion is the willful and selfish rejection of God while choosing to live independently of Him. More than choices or actions, it is a state of being.

7. What is the state of sinful mankind (Genesis 6:5)? _____

8. How many people have sinned against God (Romans 3:23)? _____
Is anyone innocent in God's eyes? _____

9. What is the penalty for someone found guilty of sin (Romans 6:23)? _____

10. Read Romans 2:5 and answer the following questions:
- a. What causes the wrath of God to come upon people? _____
 - b. Is God's judgement righteous? _____

God's Answer to Man's Dilemma

The Redeeming Work of Christ

The word *gospel* means "good news." The good news is that God gave His only Son to provide an answer to the dilemma of God's holiness and man's sin. The word *redeem* simply means to trade one thing for another. Redemption takes place every time we take in empty soda bottles for the deposit money. Empty bottles have no use as they are. They only have value to someone who can clean them and refill them.

This is what Christ made available to mankind in His work of redemption on the cross. Without the work of Christ in our lives, we were like empty bottles which are of little use. However, God has a purpose for us, so He paid a price for us that He might clean us out and fill us up with the Holy Spirit.

11. As we have seen, all of mankind is guilty of sin, and the unchangeable law of God requires death as the payment for sin. Therefore, what did Jesus do (Romans 5:8)? _____

12. What shall we be saved from if we believe in and obey the gospel (Romans 5:9)? _____

13. The gospel message reveals God's motive and His purpose in sending Jesus to die on the cross. Read John 3:16. According to this verse:
- a. What was God's motive? _____
 - b. What was His purpose? _____
14. Why was Jesus' death an acceptable sacrifice to pay for the sins of the whole world (Hebrews 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:21)? _____

15. Who is Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3,14; Colossians 2:8-9)? _____
16. Have there been other figures in history who have been equal to Jesus but have gone by different names (Acts 4:12)? _____

Jesus Christ is more than just a good man, He is God in the flesh. Though He God in the flesh, He was also fully human. He was tempted in all the ways we are, but He never sinned. He was the perfect sacrifice and this is what qualifies His death as payment for the sins of the world, for all who trust Him.

The Coming Kingdom

17. Name three things characteristics of the kingdom of God (Romans 14:17).
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
18. What did Jesus teach us to pray concerning the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:10)?

19. What question did the disciples have regarding the kingdom of God (Acts 1:6; Luke 19:11)?

20. When did Jesus say the end would come (Matthew 24:14)? _____

Because of God's love for man, He laid aside His glory and humbled Himself in the form of a man. He lived a sinless life, yet He was illegally murdered by the enemies of God. No one took His life; He laid it down. Jesus Christ satisfied the requirement of the law of God which says the wages of sin is death. Therefore, the reliability of God's law is intact and always will be.

Now, however, there is a way of salvation for those who will believe, trust and follow Jesus. When this gospel of the kingdom is preached to the ends of the earth, Jesus will return to establish His kingdom, make eternal life a physical reality, and bring righteousness, peace and joy to the entire earth. This is the fulfillment of God's answer to man's dilemma.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Christian message can be summarized in four parts, all of which are necessary for a solid foundational understanding of the Christian message. Based on the this study guide, fill in the blank spaces in the outline below.

- I. Man's _____ Before God
- A. God is _____
 - B. All people are _____ before God
- II. God's _____ to man's dilemma
- A. The _____ work of Christ
 - B. The _____

Answers

1. a) Goodness b) Severity
2. death
3. No
4. The Word of God
5. All creation would come apart
6. He is waiting, giving more people time to repent
7. Wickedness and evil continually
8. All people. No one (unless they have been redeemed)
9. Death
10. a) hardness of heart b) yes

11. He died for us, He took our sentence of death upon Himself
12. The wrath of God
13. a) Love b) that we would not perish, but have eternal life
14. Jesus was not contaminated with sin.
15. God
16. No
17. 1) Righteousness 2) Peace 3) Joy
18. That the kingdom would come on earth.
19. They wanted to know when the kingdom God would appear?
20. When the message of the kingdom was preached to all nations.

General Outline for this Lesson: The Christian Message

- I. Man's dilemma before God
 - A. God is Holy
 - B. All people are sinners before God

- II. God's answer to man's dilemma.
 - A. The redeeming work of Christ
 - B. The Coming Kingdom