

DISCOVERY Lesson 5 Worksheet – I’m Saved! No Doubts

These common assumptions about God can rob people of their certainty of eternal life in heaven. How might you answer the person who says these things?

EXAMPLE: All religions are basically the same; they point people to God and how to live a happy life.

Your response: So, you’re saying that the point of religion is just happiness in this life? There’s no hope for what happens after death? How sad. Christ offers so much more.

1. It’s arrogant to say that Christianity is the only true religion in the entire world—and only those Christians who truly believe what the Bible says.
2. At least in part, people get to heaven by trying to live righteously, that is, according to God’s holy will for mankind.
3. God did his part; now you have to do your part to be saved.
4. For reasons we can’t begin to comprehend, from way back in eternity, God chose some to be saved and some to be condemned. You can’t really be sure where you stand.
5. I have the power to accept Jesus, and I have the power to reject him.
6. There’s a little bit of good in everyone.
7. God justifies only those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world.

MEMORIZE Ephesians 2:8-9, “*It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*”

In preparation for our discussion about the Bible next time, please read carefully this

SHORT BIBLE HISTORY NARRATIVE

The Beginning (Genesis 1-11)

1. The Bible is divided into two parts, based on the time frames it focuses on. The part we call the Old Testament deals with history from the beginning of time to the centuries just before the coming of Jesus Christ. It focuses especially on God's choice of the Jewish people to be his vessel to bring forth and prepared to receive the Messiah when he came.
2. The book of Genesis, "Beginnings", starts with the account of God creating everything that exists—sun, moon, stars, galaxies, the whole universe, and especially our planet earth. It was a perfect creation—all completed in six consecutive days. God ceased his creative work on the 7th day.
3. Within a paradise garden called "Eden" he placed his first two human beings—Adam, molded out of dirt and given God's breath of life, and Eve, created to be his lifelong helper and wife out of a rib from his side. They were created in the image of God himself, holy, perfect, and in unity with their creator.
4. Satan, a fallen angel, took the form of a serpent and tempted Eve to disobey God's one command not to eat from a special tree, called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam willingly joined in the rebellion against God.
5. Instantly, both of them knew they had done evil, and they tried to hide from God. But their Creator lovingly sought them out, confronted them with their disobedience, and in the first promise of a Savior, promised that the power of Satan would be crushed. As chastisement, the two were not permitted to remain in the garden. Sin entered the world and changed everything.
6. The results were seen in the very first children, Cain and Abel. Cain, jealous because his brother's sacrifices were acceptable to the Lord while his were not, killed his brother in the field. The Lord confronted him and called him to repent. He went away from his family and became a restless wanderer, while his descendants followed in his godless ways. Meanwhile another son, Seth, fathered a line of descendants who were faithful to the Lord.
7. The world became increasingly wicked. After several generations, God promised to destroy the world with a world-wide deluge, or flood. One man, Noah and his three sons and their wives, would be spared this destruction. God told them to build an ark and led at least two of every kind of animal on the ark.
8. After 120 years of preparation and warning, the flood finally came—rain for forty days and forty nights, and water gushing forth from the earth. The entire earth was covered with water for the better part of year.
9. Finally the water receded, and Noah and his family and the animals came forth from the ark. God promised him never to destroy the earth in such a way again, and sealed his promise with the appearance of the first rainbow. Noah and his sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth—worshiped the Lord, and they began to replenish the world with their children.
10. Again, several generations passed. The people gathered on the Plain of Shinar (modern day Iraq), and became a proud people—even scheming to build a huge tower, called

Babel, as a rallying point. God saw spiritual danger in this pride and confused the peoples' languages so they could not cooperate on this project any longer.

11. So the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth were forced to split up and go separate ways: Shem to the East, Ham down toward Africa, and Japheth up north toward Europe. These first eleven chapters of Genesis set the world stage for God's bigger story: preparing the world for the coming of his Son.

The Rise of Abraham and his Descendants (Genesis 12–50)

12. About 2,000 B.C., the Lord appeared to 75-year-old Abram and called him to leave his home, take his wife Sarai and his servants, and head south to the land we today would call Israel. God promised to bless him richly, giving him and his descendants their own land, and using him and his offspring to bless the entire world.
13. Abram became a rich and respected figure in the land, known for his faith in the unseen LORD rather than the many gods of the Canaanites.
14. But there was one heartache in his life: as a fairly old man, and Sarai herself being barren and old, he had no children. It would not be until he was 100 years old and Sarah 90 that the Lord fulfilled his promise of a child. His name was Isaac.
15. Isaac himself grew old with his wife Rebecca and were blessed with twin sons, Esau and Jacob. God had promised that Jacob, the younger, would be the bearer of the promise.
16. Jacob himself, after many struggles, grew old and had twelve sons. After wrestling with the angel of the Lord, he had been given the name "Israel": He struggles with God. His 12 sons each became the ancestors of large clans, which together became known as "the children of Israel," or just plain Israel.
17. Through animosity among the brothers, the second youngest, Joseph, found himself sold as a slave in Egypt; but by God's grace, he arose to the rank of second highest ruler in Egypt. During a mideastern famine, from which he had rescued the country by his wisdom, he invited his father and all his brothers' families to join him in this prosperous land.
18. The clan of 70 quickly grew in Egypt to a nation of nearly two million souls. This alarmed the Egyptians, who began to enslave the Israelites and treat them harshly. For the better part of 400 years, they cried out to the Lord for deliverance.

Moses and the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus – Ruth)

19. God's answer came in the person named Moses, who himself had been born to a slave family, yet was brought up in the house of Pharaoh's daughter. As an adult, he had to flee the land, until he was 80 years old. God called him to free his people from Egypt.
20. Moses appeared before Pharaoh multiple times, and called down ten plagues from heaven upon the Egyptians until Pharaoh agreed to release the Israelites. The last plague, the death of the firstborn, was prevented from harming the Israelites as they took the blood of a slaughtered lamb and painted it upon their doorframes. This was celebrated every year as the "Passover", because the angel of death passed over the homes marked with blood.
21. The people left Egypt with glad hearts, heading out into the desert of Sinai. God led them as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night.
22. When threatened with a massacre at the edge of the Red Sea, Moses parted the waters with his staff and the people were able to march through on dry ground. When Pharaoh's

pursuing army tried to follow, however, the waters collapsed upon them and they perished.

23. In the wilderness of Sinai, God provided for his people with bread-like manna on the ground every morning, and quail flying through the camp every night.
24. He brought them to the tip of the Sinai Peninsula, to the base of Mt. Sinai.
25. Here he revealed himself as their Savior-God, awesome in power and might, yet loving and kind. He made a covenant with Israel to be their only God, and they His chosen people.
26. Following a 40-year period of wandering in the desert as a chastisement for their disobedience, Moses dies and God appoints Joshua to lead the armies of Israel into Canaan. For the next three hundred years, the land is ruled by leaders called judges—under figures like Debora, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson.

The Period of Kings, Prophets, and Exile for Israel (Samuel – Malachi)

27. Finally, Israel demanded a king to rule them. The prophet Samuel, after anointing a disappointing leader in King Saul, anointed David, a young shepherd boy from Bethlehem, to be the next regent. He gained renown early on by slaying the Philistine giant warrior Goliath with his sling.
28. Despite some notable sins, David would become known as the greatest king of Israel. Perhaps his greatest asset was his public faith in the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He also was a great musician and composed many of the psalms, the songbook of Israel's worship life. Yet to him the LORD promised a greater King to come, the anointed Son of God.
29. His son, Solomon, succeeded him as king and ruled with great wisdom. Under his rule the magnificent temple and king's court was constructed in Jerusalem. The nation's borders reached their greatest extent, and it became a powerful force in the world.
30. But his son, Rehoboam, foolishly ignored the advice of his court leaders and ended up splitting Israel into two separate entities: the northern Kingdom, simply called Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, called Judah.
31. A series of kings, some godly, but many of them wicked, led both kingdoms eventually to their destruction. First the Assyrian Army attacked the northern kingdom of Israel...
32. ...then around 600 BC the Babylonian army under King Nebuchadnezzar, carried off the people of Judah into a 70-year captivity—their temple destroyed, their land decimated.
33. It was here, during this captivity, that we hear of stories like Daniel protected from the king's edict in a den of lions, or the three men spared death in the fiery furnace. Esther, a Jewish maiden, became the queen wife of a Persian king, Xerxes, and spared her people from certain death.
34. When Cyrus, king of Persia, overthrew the Babylonian throne, he permitted the Jews to return to their homeland. This was a joyful fulfillment of God's promises.
35. Here, under the priest Ezra and the governor Nehemiah, the Jews rebuilt the temple and the wall around Jerusalem. For the next four centuries they would reestablish themselves in the land—though never to the same extent and power they had enjoyed under David and Solomon.
36. At times during the Old Testament period, God raised up prophets to speak his words of warning and encouragement to his people. The last one, Malachi, prophesied around 400 BC, and predicted one who would come to “prepare the way for the Lord.”

37. Other prophets, like Isaiah, clearly foretold details of what the Lord, the Son of God, also called the Messiah or “anointed one” would do when he came. His best-known Messianic prophecy includes these words from chapter 53:
 - a. “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)
38. We now enter several centuries sometimes called the “Intertestamental Period”. The Bible contains no information about this time, though several extrabiblical sources give us insights of what was happening.
 - a. 400 years
 - b. No word of prophecy from the Lord
 - c. World power shifts from Persia, to Greece (Alexander the Great and his descendants), and then to the Roman Empire
 - d. Israel remains a vassal kingdom, with growing resentment against the Roman occupation.
 - e. Increasingly, “Messiah” is viewed as liberator from the Romans--and not from sin. This will be important to remember when we see Jesus increasingly rejected by Jewish leaders when he didn’t meet their expectations as an earthly ruler.

The Coming of Jesus the Messiah (Matthew – John)

39. Now we enter the age covered by what we call the New Testament—that portion of history which speaks of the arrival and work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah or promised King. By the way, the word “Christ” is the Greek word for the Jewish word “Messiah.”
40. The angel Gabriel appeared to a Jewish girl named Mary, from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. He announced to her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of the Savior—despite the fact that she was a virgin. She humbly believed the news and shared it with her fiancé, Joseph, who also needed a visit from the angel in a dream to convince him.
41. Mary excitedly visited her older cousin, Elizabeth, who told her that she had been similarly blessed—she who had been without children now was six months pregnant with the one who would announce the Savior’s arrival to Israel: John the Baptist.
42. Through a decree of Caesar Augustus, the two were forced to make a trip to crowded Bethlehem, where Mary went into labor and gave birth to the Savior of the world in a lowly stable.
43. The first to hear the news of the Savior’s birth were shepherds on the nearby hills, who received a surprise visit from an angel, and then a whole assembly of angels. “Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ, the Lord!”
44. Sometime later, Gentile court astrologers from the area of Babylon came to worship him, led on by a mysterious star seen in the east. God preserved his son from the resulting jealousy of wicked King Herod.
45. As Jesus grew up back in Nazareth, he was obedient to his parents and to his Father in heaven. He astounded rabbis with his questions and his understanding of the Jewish Scriptures.
46. At 30 years old, he first revealed himself as the Savior of Israel when he was baptized by John. He immediately gathered twelve followers around him—called disciples—from

different walks of life. Some were fishermen; one was a tax collector; another was a political zealot.

47. He astounded the crowds with his many miraculous signs, like healing the sick, restoring strength to the lame, giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He cast out many demons from possessed people.
48. His greatest miracles included raising the dead on at least three occasions, causing the entire countryside to say, “We have never seen anything like this!”
49. But some of his most memorable words were spoken in the privacy of the company of his twelve apostles, teaching them about the Kingdom of God, the need for repentance, and his upcoming suffering and death in Jerusalem.
50. Many Jews believed in him. But many of the Jewish leaders hated him; they didn’t believe that he could possibly be the coming King of Israel. Besides, they resented the fact that he told them to repent of their sins and not live like hypocrites.
51. Their idea of a Messiah was one who would deliver them from the hated Romans. They were hoping for one who would restore the nation of Israel to its former glory under King David. They were not looking for such a “spiritual” king as Jesus was.
52. So, after three years of intense preaching, teaching, and miracle working, Jesus headed up to Jerusalem for one final Passover celebration.

Jesus Redeems the World

53. During the last week of his life, he was first hailed with joy by the Jerusalem crowds on the day we call “Palm Sunday”. Yet the leaders were already plotting his death.
54. On Thursday of that week, he ate the Passover meal with his disciples in a prepared upper room. Some of his most passionate and heartfelt instruction with them took place that night.
55. Then he led them out to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed intently to his Father, “If it is your will, take this cup of suffering from me; yet not as I will, but as you will.”
56. One of his own disciples, Judas, had arranged to betray Jesus into the hands of his enemies for the paltry price of 30 pieces of silver. The soldiers bound him and took him away, while all the rest of his disciples fled.
57. In a midnight court, before Caiaphas, the high priest, Jesus was accused of a capital crime: blaspheming God by calling himself the Son of God. Jesus willingly accepted the charge and said not a word in his defense.
58. In the morning he was brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for sentencing. Cowing to political pressure, he finally agreed to have Jesus brutally flogged, then crucified.
59. Carrying his own cross for a way, he stumbled his way through the streets of the city to a place called “Golgotha,” the place of the skull.
60. Here he was crucified like a common criminal, with two other criminals. His mother, Mary, some other women disciples, and his disciple, John, are recorded as being present at his crucifixion. For six hours on that Good Friday, from 9:00-3:00, he hung on the cross, and he spoke seven times—forgiving his enemies, pleading to God for help, and finally declaring that his work was finished before he commended his soul to God. Then he gave up his life.

61. His body was taken down from the cross and was laid in the freshly carved grave of a man named Joseph, and the tomb was firmly sealed shut. The Jewish leaders made sure a watch was stationed, so no one would take away his body and declare him risen from the dead.
62. But all their planning was confounded. Early Sunday morning, angels rolled away the stone from the mouth of the grave and appeared to terrified soldiers and then to several women, showing that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as he said he would.

The Word of the Lord Grows (Acts)

63. For the next forty days he appeared to his disciples, proving that he indeed was alive and getting them ready to spread the news about his kingdom of salvation to the world. Before he ascended physically into heaven, he told them: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.”
64. Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, his disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit, just as he had promised them. They spoke in different languages, boldly proclaiming the great acts of God done through Jesus Christ. 3,000 people in Jerusalem for the feast came to believe in Jesus that day and were baptized.
65. The believers, led by the apostles, continued to meet in the temple courts and in their homes, encouraging one another in this faith that the Messiah of the world had indeed saved them from their sins.
66. Notably, Peter and John healed and were arrested by the Jewish authorities for speaking about Jesus. “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard,” they responded.
67. Saul, a Jewish Pharisee from Tarsus, later was personally visited and commissioned by an astounding vision from Jesus himself. He became known as the apostle Paul, perhaps the best-known voice speaking about Jesus especially among the non-Jewish citizens in Turkey, Macedonia, and Greece. He and all but one of the apostles died violent deaths for their unwavering faith in Jesus Christ.
68. The evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote down their accounts of Jesus as eyewitnesses or based on eyewitness accounts. Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would “remind them of everything he had said to them.”
69. So the word of God spread throughout the Mideast and the whole world.
70. At its center is the simple truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners. The cross became its symbol, and for a good reason. As St. Paul would later tell the people in Corinth: “We preach Christ crucified—a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”