



# **SIX TEACHINGS OF JESUS**

# **STUDY GUIDE**

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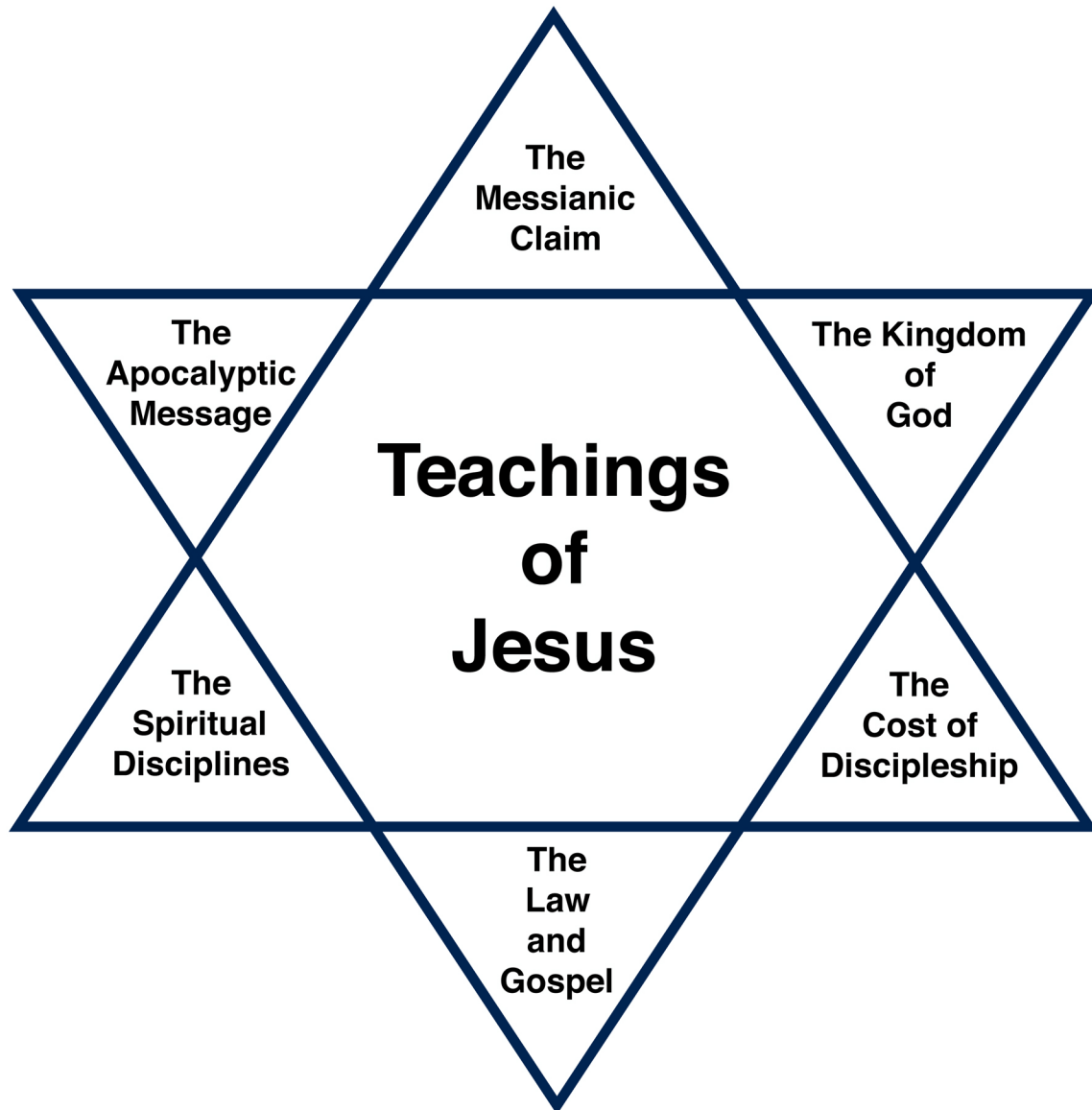
Dedicated to my Wife  
**Barbara Ann (Russell) Reuteler**



St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai in Egypt is the oldest continuously operating monastery and home to one of the largest collections of Coptic manuscripts and priceless paintings, such as this painting of Jesus, which I have placed on the cover.

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a *Study Guide* for those who want to study the *Six Teachings of Jesus*. It is a companion to my commentary, which is also entitled, the *Six Teachings of Jesus*. You do not have to read my commentary to study the *Six Teachings of Jesus*. This workbook will guide you through the relevant Scriptures that relate to the *Six Teachings of Jesus*. Are there other teachings besides these six? I do not pretend to claim that these are the only six, but these are the six teachings that I have identified.

There are two worksheets in every one of Jesus' teachings. The **Scripture Worksheet** will deal with the Scriptures that relate to the *Six Teachings of Jesus*. The **Response Worksheet** will ask you for a response. In addition to filling in your response, you should formulate at least **one insight** and **one question** to share with the group. The purpose is to encourage discussion.

In the Appendices, you will find documents and graphics that relate to the teachings of Jesus. Some of these documents and graphics relate only to one part of Jesus' teachings, but some of them relate to all of Jesus teachings.

The six teachings of Jesus are:

1. The Messianic Claim
2. The Kingdom of God
3. The Cost of Discipleship
4. The Law and Gospel
5. The Spiritual Disciplines
6. The Apocalyptic Message

These six teachings are not in any particular order. By this I mean that Jesus made his the Messianic Claim, then he went on to preach about the coming Kingdom of God, and then he listed the Cost of Discipleship for those who accept Jesus as their Messianic King. The order can be changed. It doesn't have to be the way I have arranged the *Six Teachings of Jesus*.

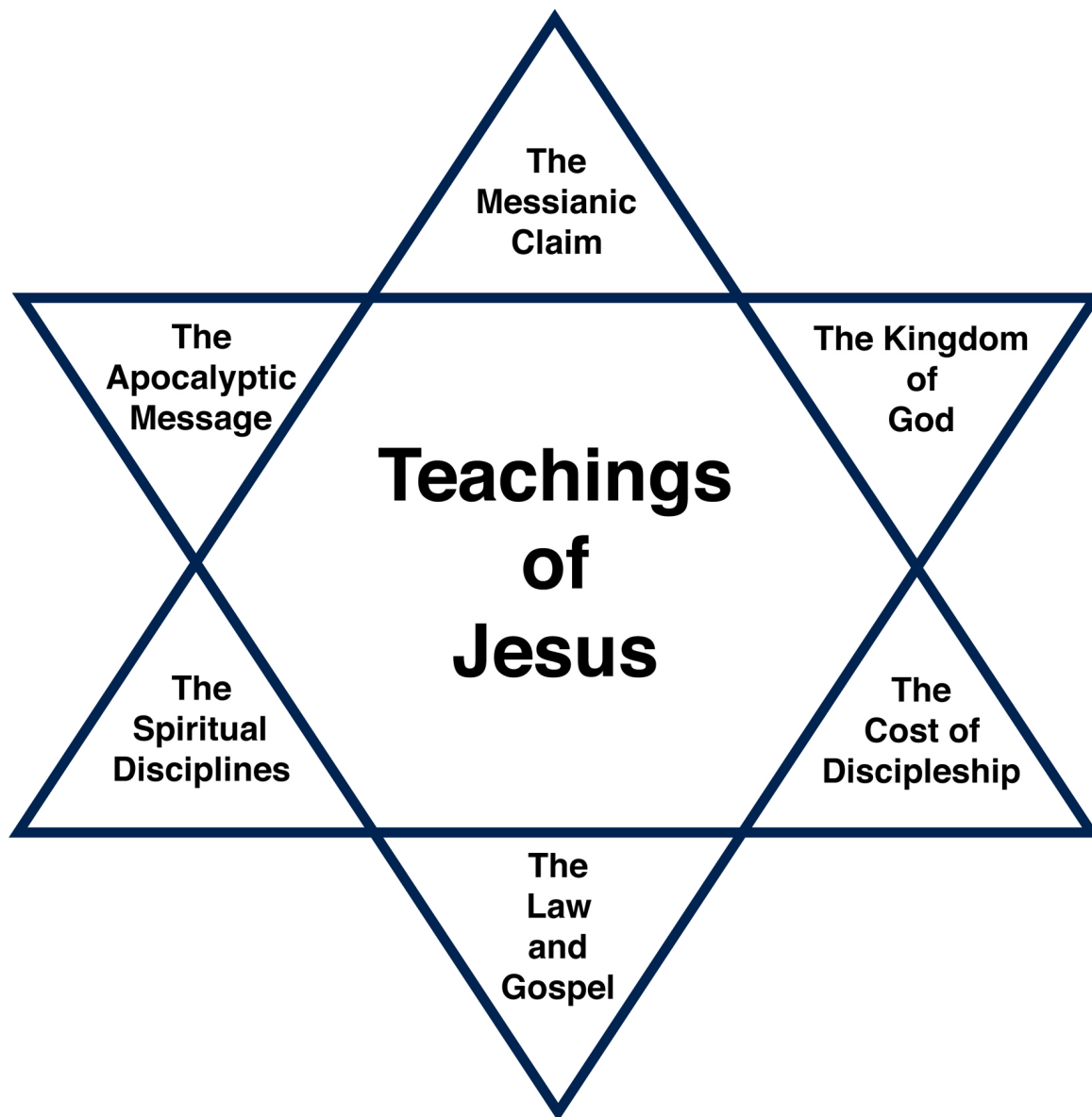


*“Jesus is LORD”*

**Romans 10:9**

**1**

# **THE MESSIANIC CLAIM**





# THE MESSIANIC CLAIM

*A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said  
wouldn't be a great moral teacher.  
He'd be either a lunatic...or else he'd be the devil of hell.*

**C.S. Lewis**

## THE READINGS

### 1. JESUS' TEACHINGS ABOUT HIMSELF

#### **In Nazareth**

Luke 4:16-30

#### **To John the Baptist**

Matthew 11:2-19

Luke 7:18-35

#### **In Caesarea Philippi**

Mark 8:27-33

Luke 9:18-22

Matthew 16:13-20

#### **In Jesus' High Priestly Prayer**

John 17:1-26

#### **In the I AM Sayings**

John 6:35; 8:12; 9:5; 10:1-9; 10:10-15; 11:20-27; 14:5-14; and 15:1-6

#### **To Pilate**

Mark 15:1-5

Matthew 27:11-26

Luke 23:1-5, 13-25

John 18:28-40

### 2. PAUL' TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS

Romans 10:5-13

Philippians 2:5-11

Colossians 1:15-20

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

**MY INSIGHT**

**MY QUESTION**

# THE MESSIANIC CLAIM

## WHAT JESUS SAID:

### In Nazareth

Luke 4:16-30

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### To John the Baptist

Matthew 11:2-19

Luke 7:18-35

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### In Caesarea Philippi

Mark 8:27-33

Luke 9:18-22

Matthew 16:13-20

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### In a Prayer

John 17:1-26

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**In the Gospel of John:** When Moses asked God what his name was, he replied in Exodus 3:14, "I AM WHO I AM." In the Gospel of John, Jesus identified himself as, "I AM..." What are the seven "I AM" statements of Jesus?

John 6:35

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John 8:12; 9:5

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John 10:1-9

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John 10:10-15

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John 11:20-27

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John 14:5-14

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John 15:1-6

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### To Pilate

Mark 15:1-5

Matthew 27:11-26

Luke 23:1-5 and 13-25

John 18:28-40

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# OUR RESPONSE TO THE MESSIANIC CLAIM

There are three possible responses we can make to the claims of Jesus. They are as follows:

1. Jesus was a Liar
2. Jesus was a Lunatic
3. Jesus is Lord

Read the following passages before deciding which of the above responses was made by Paul and the early Church.

In Romans 10:5-13, Paul described the kind of a response he expected from the members of the Church in Rome. From these verses of Scripture, what was Paul's conclusion. **Who was or is Jesus?**

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In Philipians 2:5-11, Paul wrote a hymn for the Christians who lived in Philippi. **What does his hymn say about who Jesus is and the kind of response that we shall all make in the future.**

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In Colossians 1:15-20, Paul describes the way in which Jesus was and is related to God. **What was God's purpose in Jesus Christ?**

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In 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Paul describes what happens to those who respond positively to Jesus Christ. **What happens to them and what do they become?**

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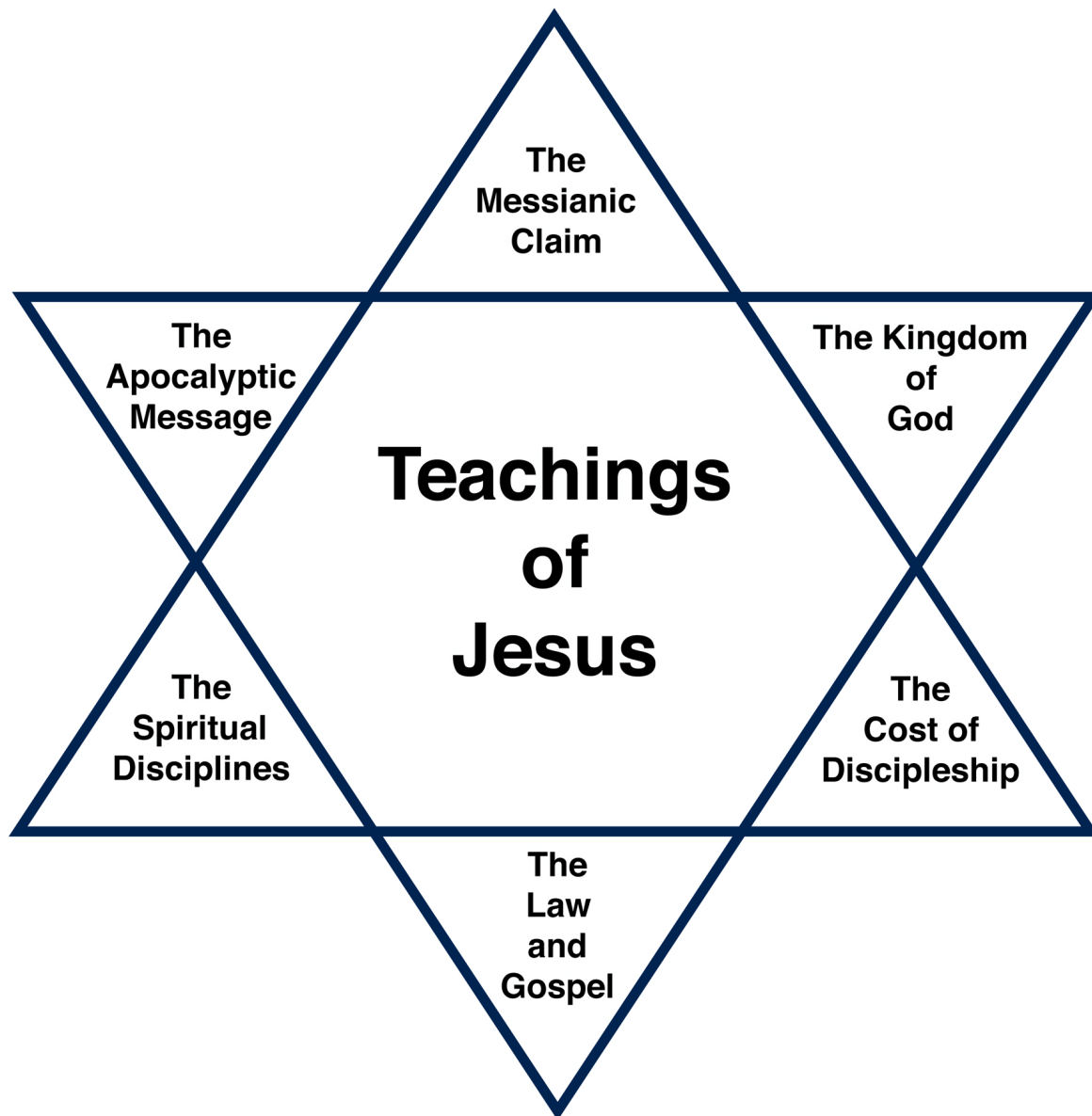
C.S. Lewis said, "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. He's either be a lunatic...or else he'd be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse."

*With what can we compare the kingdom of God,  
or what parable will we use for it?  
It is like a mustard seed, which,  
when sown upon the ground,  
is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;  
yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes  
the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches,  
so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.*

**Mark 4:30-32**

# 2

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD



# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*The person who puts the Kingdom of God first will have some troubles,  
But the person who puts the Kingdom of God second will have nothing but troubles.*

**Anonymous**

## HOW TO PROCEED

This is a workshop on the teachings of Jesus. This means that each participant is expected to read the scriptures and draw his or her own conclusions as to what Jesus' teachings are about The Kingdom of God. I have listed Jesus' main scriptures on The Kingdom of God. A second worksheet has been provided for you to record your own response.

If you feel that some scriptures have been left out that deal with the Kingdom of God, feel free to make a note of it and share your conclusions with the other participants.

In the appendices, you will find a list of Jesus' parables. Some of them might relate to this topic. If you think one or more, might relate, bring it to the attention of the group in its time together.

As you draw your own conclusions in regard to Jesus concept of The Kingdom of God, you might like to look up the most important words in a Bible dictionary.

In preparation for our time together, I would like to ask you to do two things. First, write out one question that you would like to pose to the group; and secondly, write out what you believe to be the most significant insight of Jesus on the Kingdom of God

## 1. JESUS' FIRST MESSAGE ABOUT THE KINGDOM

### Jesus First Message

Mark 1:14-15

Matthew 4:12-17

Luke 4:38-44

## 2. JESUS PARABLES ABOUT THE KINGDOM

### Seven Parables on the Kingdom in Matthew

Matthew 13:3b-9, 18-23

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Matthew 13:31-32

Matthew 13:33

Matthew 13:44

Matthew 13:45-46

Matthew 13:47-52

### **Other Parables on the Kingdom in Matthew**

Matthew 20:1-16

Matthew 22:1-14

Matthew 22:23-33

### **Parables on the Kingdom in Mark**

Mark 4:1-20

Mark 4:26-29

Mark 4:30-34

### **Parables on the Kingdom in Luke**

Luke 8:4-15

Luke 13:18-19

Luke 17:20-21

## **3. ENTERING THE KINGDOM**

### **The Narrow Gate**

Matthew 7:13-14

### **The Will of God**

Matthew 7:21

### **Jesus as the Only Way**

John 10:1-21

John 14:6

## **MY INSIGHT**

## **MY QUESTION**



# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

## WHAT JESUS TAUGHT:

**Jesus' First Message was to:**

Mark 1:14-15

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ the Good News of the Kingdom

**The First to Hear the Good News:** The land of...

Matthew 4:12-17

Luke 4:38-44

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**Jesus' message fulfills:**

Matthew 4:12-17

**Jesus' Headquarters was:**

Matthew 4:12-17

\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

**Seven Parables on the Kingdom:** Give a brief name to each of the seven parables on the Kingdom of God:

Matthew 13:3b-9, 18-23

Matthew 13:24-30 36-43

Matthew 13:31-32

Matthew 13:33

Matthew 13:44

Matthew 13:45-46

Matthew 13:47-52

**More Parables on the Kingdom:**

Matthew 20:1-16

Matthew 22:1-14

Matthew 22:23-33

Mark 4:1-20

Mark 4:26-29

Mark 4:30-34

Luke 8:4-15

Luke 13:18-19

Luke 17:20-21

# OUR RESPONSE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The phrase “The Kingdom of God” (or Heaven) is central to Jesus’ teaching. In the message of Jesus it can mean at least four things.

1. In the context of Jesus’ activity as a healer and exorcist, it refers to the power of God. The casting out of demons symbolizes the coming of God’s Kingdom.
2. In the context of Jesus’ wisdom sayings, it can refer to the presence of God as well as life under the lordship of God. The first is suggested by sayings like “The Kingdom of God is among you” and “The Kingdom of God is spread out upon the earth, only people do not see it.” The second is suggested by the teaching that life is only fulfilled under the lordship of God.
3. In the context of Jesus as a social prophet, the emphasis is upon the Kingdom of God as a social vision. Jesus proclaims a vision of what life would be like on earth if God were King instead of Herod or Caesar. It would be a world of social justice.
4. the Kingdom of God can and does also refer to the final or eternal Kingdom in which people from the east and the west, both the living and the dead, will join together in the Great Banquet.

Read the Parable of the Wedding Banquet in Matthew 22:1-14. What is the wedding garment?

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In Matthew 21:31-32, Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders: ““I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.” What is the relationship between grace and works? Which is necessary for entering into the Kingdom of God?

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In answer to why God raised up the people called Methodists, John Wesley replied, “Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.” How can this best be done?

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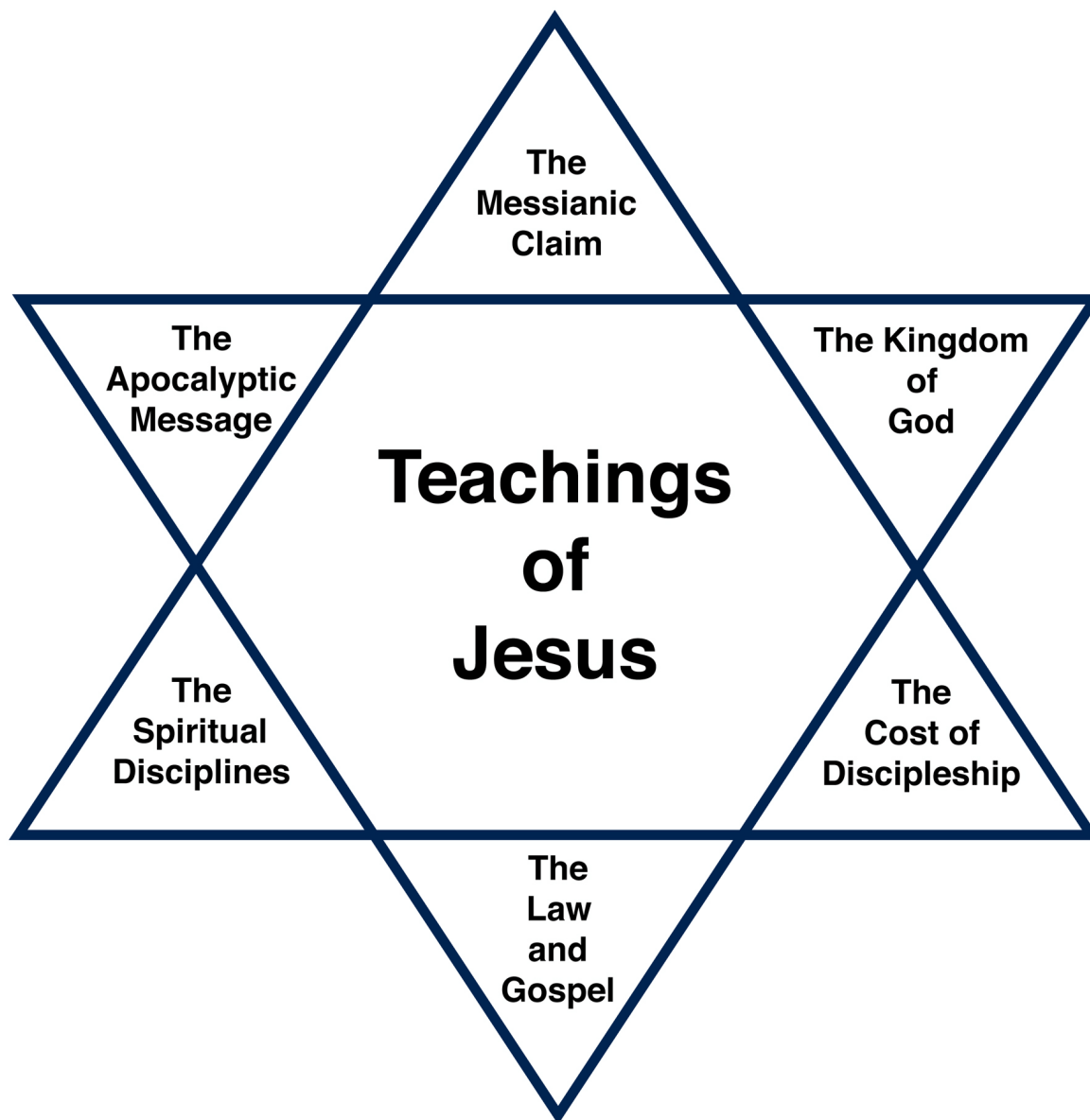
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*If any want to become my followers,  
let them deny themselves  
and take up their cross and follow me.*

**Mark 8:34**

**3**

**THE COST  
OF  
DISCIPLESHIP**



# THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

*When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.<sup>1</sup>*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## THE READINGS

### 1. THE BEATITUDES

Matthew 5:1-12

Luke 6:17-26

### 2. THE TASKS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Matthew 5:13-16

### 3. DISCIPLESHIP AND THE CROSS

Mark 8:34—9:1

Luke 9:23-27

Matthew 16:21-28

### 4. MISSION OF THE 12 AND THE 70/72

Matthew 10:1—11:1

Luke 10:1-24

### 5. THE GREAT COMMISSION

Mark 16:9-20

Matthew 28:16-20

Luke 24:36-49

John 20:19-23

John 20:30-31

### 6. DISCIPLESHIP AND THE FAMILY

Matthew 8:18-22

Matthew 10:34-37

Luke 9:57-62

Luke 14:15-24

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 99.

**MY INSIGHT**

**MY QUESTION**

# THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

## WHAT JESUS TAUGHT:

### **The Beatitudes in Matthew:** Give a brief name to each of the Beatitudes

Matthew 5:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:9 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:10-12 \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Beatitudes in Luke:** Give a brief name to each of the Beatitudes

Luke 6:17 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:21a \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:21b \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:22-23 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:25a \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:25b \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 6:26 \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Tasks of Discipleship:** What are they?

Matthew 5:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 5:14-16 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Discipleship and the Cross:** What does the cross mean?

Mark 8:34—9:1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 9:23-27 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 16:21-28 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mission of the 12 and the 70/72:** What was their mission?

Matthew 10:1—11:1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 10:1-24 \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Great Commission:** What are we to do?

Mark 16:9-20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 28:16-20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 24:36-49 \_\_\_\_\_  
John 20:19-23, 30-31 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Discipleship and the Family:** Who comes first?

Matthew 8:18-22 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 10:34-37 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 9:57-62 \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR RESPONSE TO THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

The word *Blessed* is frequently translated as *Happy*. The Hebrew words behind Blessed are *Ashar*, which means “to kneel or bow down before,” and *Burak*, which means “to find the right pathway in the face of false pathways.” In short *Blessed*, as used in the Bible, has to do with “finding meaning in the midst of chaos.” Do you think that most people use this definition? If not, what do you think most people think of when they hear the word *Blessed*?

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In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus’ followers are told to let their light shine? What happens if we as a church (the Body of Christ) allow our light to go out? See the warning given to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:2-5.

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In the chart on the Beatitudes, the eight Beatitudes are divided into three parts. Which beatitudes are you currently experiencing? Which ones are you not experiencing?

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What do you think Jesus means when he says that anyone who wants to follow him must take up a cross? See Mark 8:34.

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How do you think the Christian should go about fulfilling the Great Commission, particularly the part that commissions us to make disciples?

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Look at the chart on the three characteristics of a true Christian. Which of the three characteristics gives you the most difficulty?

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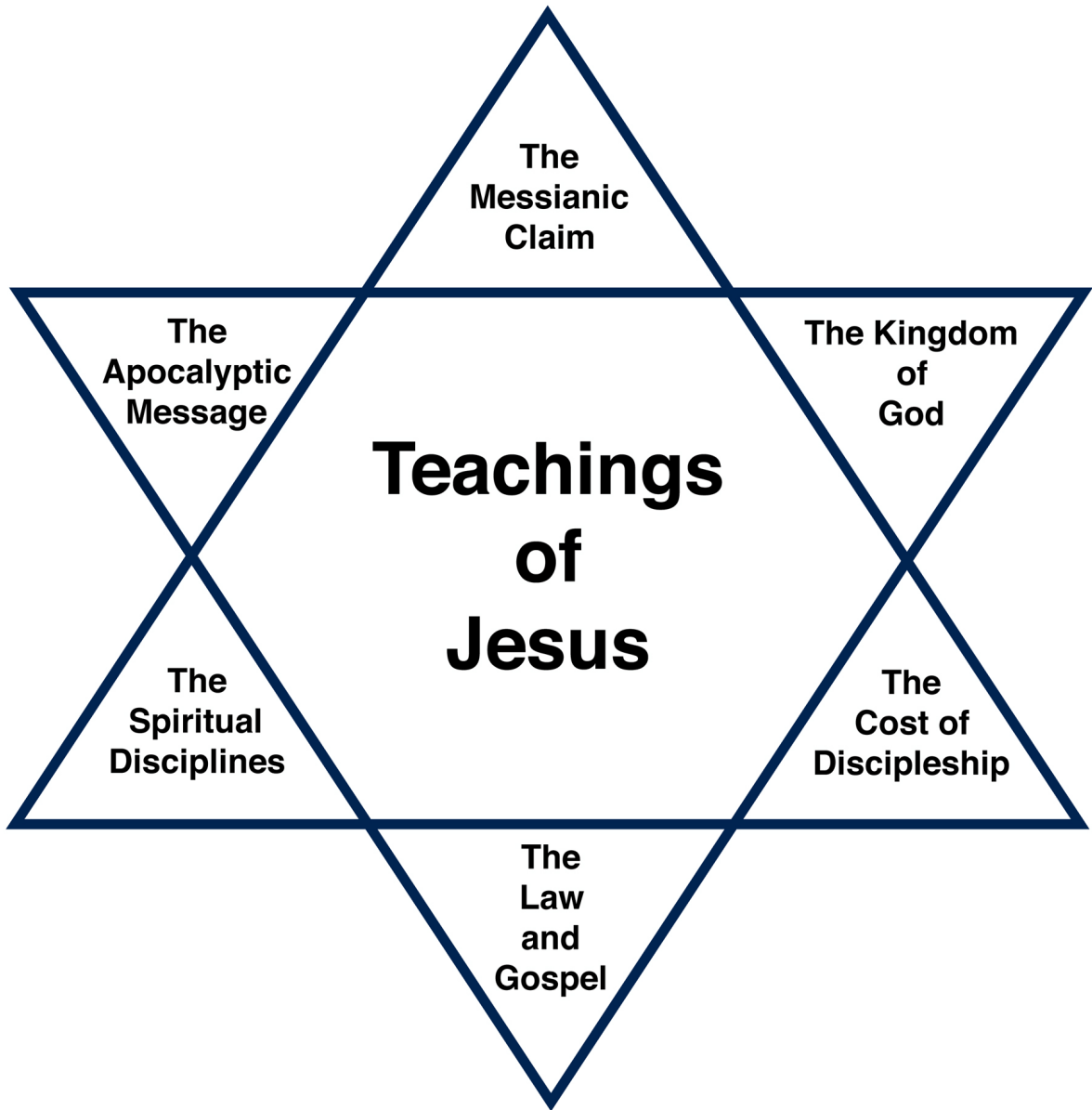


*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

**Mark 4:30-32**

# 4

## THE LAW AND GOSPEL



# THE LAW AND GOSPEL

*The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone  
is the man who has left all to follow Christ.<sup>2</sup>*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## THE READINGS

### 1. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5:17-20

Matthew 5:21-48

### 2. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

Mark 12:28-34

Matthew 22:34-40

Luke 10:25-37

### 3. LAW AND GOSPEL

Luke 16:14-17

Luke 16:18

Matthew 19:1-12

Matthew 22:23-33

### 4. FASTING

Matthew 9:16-17

Mark 2:18-22

Luke 5:33-39 9

### 5. THE SABBATH

Mark 2:23—3:6

Matthew 12:1-14

Luke 6:1-11

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<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (The Macmillan Company: New York, 1965), p. 60.

**MY INSIGHT**

**MY QUESTION**

# THE LAW AND GOSPEL

## WHAT JESUS TAUGHT:

### From the Sermon on the Mount:

In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus said that he came to \_\_\_\_\_  
the Law and that our \_\_\_\_\_ must exceed that of the  
Scribes and Pharisees.

In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus names some of the traditional laws, giving  
them new meaning. What do these laws require?

- Law against Murder \_\_\_\_\_
- Law against Adultery \_\_\_\_\_
- Law on Divorce \_\_\_\_\_
- Law on Oaths \_\_\_\_\_
- Law on Retaliation \_\_\_\_\_

**The Great Commandment:** Name the three parts of the Great Commandment!

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Law and Gospel:** What is the Good News (the Gospel) in the following passages?

- Luke 16:14-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 16:18 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 19:1-12 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 22:23-33 \_\_\_\_\_

**Fasting:** Why did Jesus and his disciples not fast? What was the original purpose of fasting? See Isaiah 58:6-10.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Sabbath:** What was the original twofold purpose of the Sabbath?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Jesus and the Sabbath:** What two things did Jesus do that got him in trouble over the observance of the Sabbath? See Mark 2:23—3:6; Matthew 12:1-14; and Luke 6:1-11.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The point being made by Jesus was that \_\_\_\_\_  
is more important than \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR RESPONSE TO THE LAW AND GOSPEL

Examine the chart, “Obeying God’s Law.” Which is easier to obey, the Ten Commandments of Moses or the interpretations of Jesus? Why?

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What does Jesus mean when he commands us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect? See Matthew 5:48.

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In the Great Commandment Jesus tells us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. What should one do who does not love him or her *self*? See John 13:34-35.

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Examine the chart on “The Christian Life.” What part does the Law play in the Goals of the Christian life?

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How does Jesus define marriage? See Matthew 19:1-12.

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Jesus named adultery as a legitimate reason for divorce. What about addiction and abuse? Are they covered under adultery?

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Today, very few people fast or observe the Sabbath; and yet, the Sabbath was the most important of all the Jewish Holy Days. What is the divine intention of fasting and Sabbath Observance? How can we obey these Laws today?

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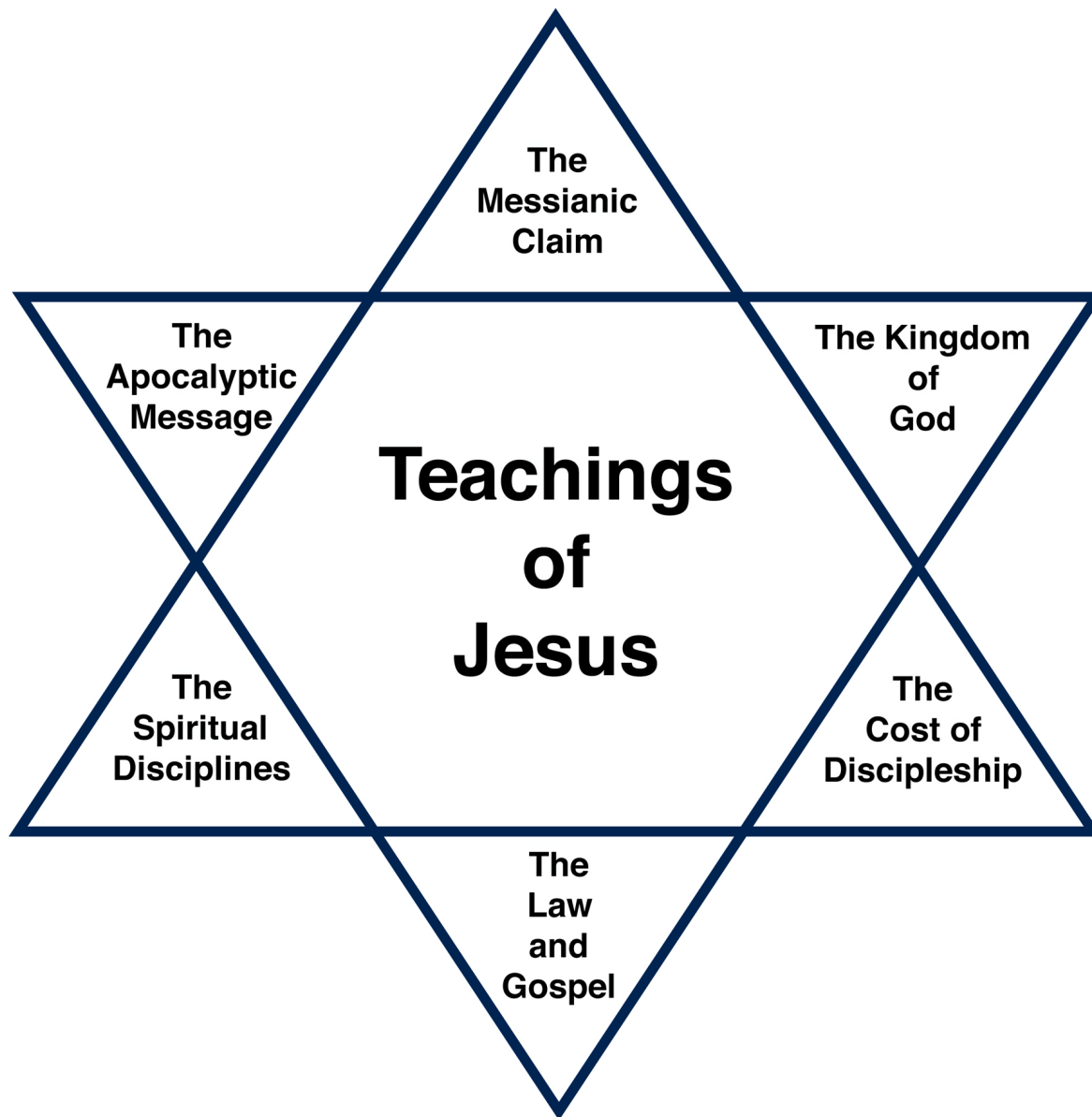
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*In the morning, while it was still very dark,  
He got up and went out to a deserted place,  
and there he prayed.*

**Mark 1:35**

# 5

## **THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**





# THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

*Man wants to travel to the moon. That is not far enough  
He must first travel to the depths of his own soul.<sup>3</sup>*

**Charles de Gaulle**

## THE READINGS

### 1. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 6:1-18

Matthew 6:19-34

Matthew 7:1-12

Matthew 7:13-29

### 2. THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN

Luke 6:27-36

Luke 6:37-45

Luke 6:46-49

Luke 11:1-13

### 3. ON GIVING

Acts 20:35

### 4. BONHOEFFER'S CRITICISM OF CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY

Cheap and Costly Grace

Baptism into the Body of Christ

Membership in the Body of Christ

The Secret Disciplines

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Emerson Colaw, *Beliefs of a United Methodist Christian* (Discipleship Resources: Nashville, 1978, p. 96.

**MY INSIGHT**

**MY QUESTION**

# THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

## WHAT JESUS TAUGHT:

### From the Sermon on the Mount:

List the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer! (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-13)

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**What are the three secret disciplines:** (Matthew 6:5-24 and Acts 20:35)

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**Read the Golden Rule:** (Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:27-36) Abraham

Lincoln said, "When you show me a church based on the Golden Rule as its only creed, then I will unite with it." What's right or wrong with this statement?

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**The Narrow Gate:** (Matthew 7:13-14) What do you think will be required to enter through the narrow gate?

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**The Place of Good Works:** (Matthew 7:21) If we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-10), then what role do good works play in our salvation?

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**The House Builders:** (Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49) What does it mean to build one's house on a solid foundation?

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# OUR RESPONSE TO THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

The word *Blessed* is frequently translated as *Happy*. The Hebrew words behind Blessed are *Ashar*, which means “to kneel or bow down before,” and *Burak*, which means “to find the right pathway in the face of false pathways.” In short *Blessed*, as used in the Bible, has to do with “finding meaning in the midst of chaos.” Do you think that most people use this definition? If not, what do you think most people think of when they hear the word *Blessed*?

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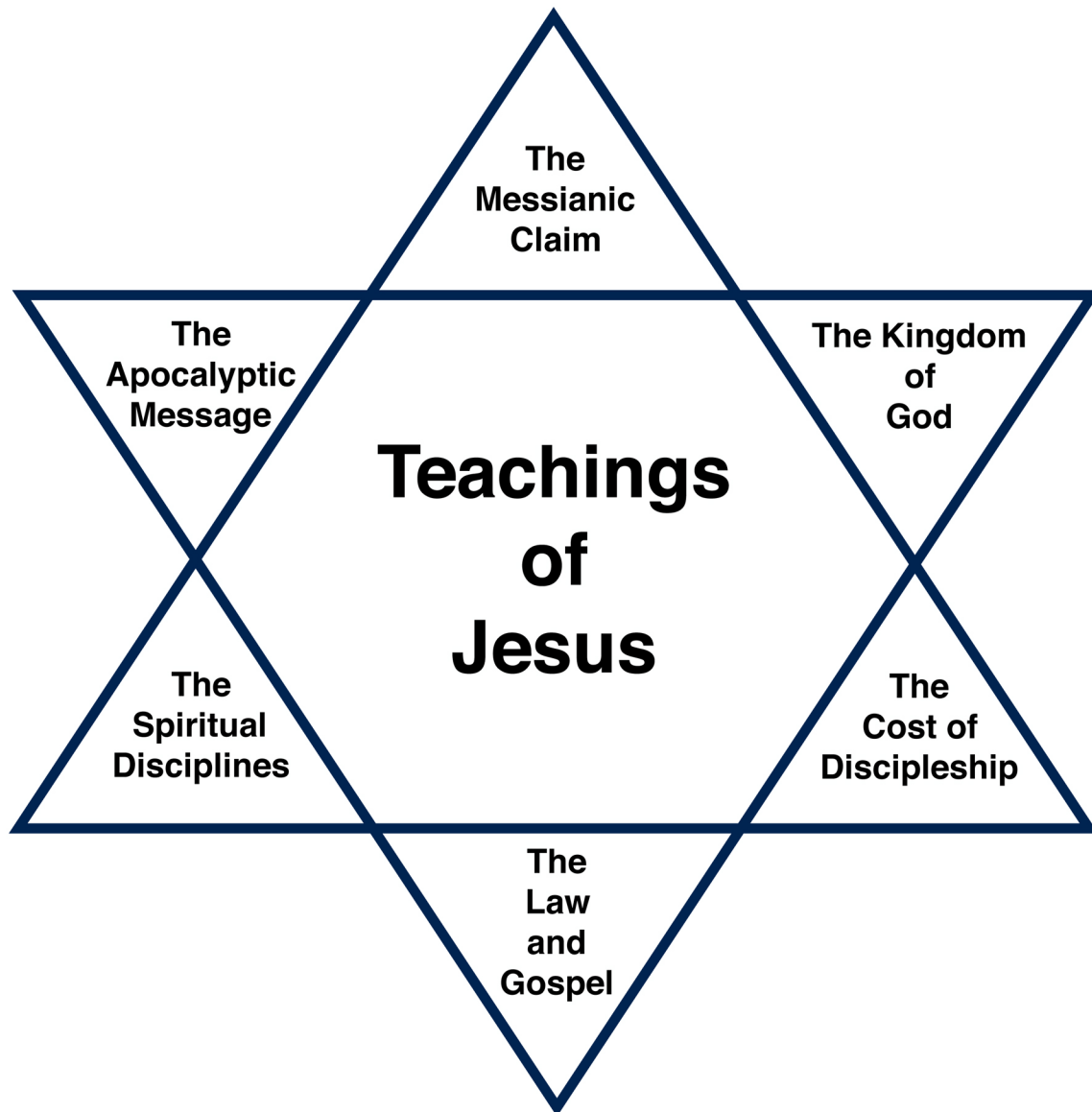
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“As for yourselves, beware;  
for they will hand you over to councils;  
and you will be beaten in synagogues;  
and you will stand before governors and kings  
because of me, as a testimony to them.  
And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations.

**Mark 13:9-10**



# **THE APOCALYPTIC MESSAGE**



# THE APOCALYPTIC MESSAGE

*We live each day as if it were our last,  
And each day as if there were to be a great future.*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## THE READINGS

### 1. THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE

Mark 13:1-37

### 2. THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 17:20-37

### 3. THE LAST DAYS

Luke 21:5-38

### 4. JESUS' LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

Matthew 23:37—24:2

### 5. THE END OF HISTORY

Matthew 24:3-51

### 6. THE PARABLES OF JUDGMENT

Matthew 25:1-46

### 7. JESUS' LAST WORDS ON EARTH

Acts 1:1-11

### 8. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SECOND COMING

1 Thessalonians 4:13—5:11

### 9. JESUS SPEAKS TO JOHN

Revelation 1:8, 11, 17-20

### 10. JESUS SPEAKS TO SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation 2:1—3:22

### 11. JESUS' FINAL WORDS

Revelation 22:7, 12-16, 20

**MY INSIGHT**

**MY QUESTION**



# THE APOCALYPTIC MESSAGE

## WHAT JESUS TAUGHT:

**What is the Desolating Sacrilege:** (Mark 13:14)

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**When will the end come?:** (Mark 13:32 and Matthew 24:36)

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**Where will the Kingdom of God begin:** (Luke 17:21)

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**Why is one taken and one left?:** (Matthew 24:39b-41; Luke 17:33-36)

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**What two things will be destroyed?:** (Matthew 24:1-2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:5-6, 20-24)

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**What must be proclaimed before the end?:** (Matthew 24:14)

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**What will be the two general signs at the end?:** (Mark 13:7-8, 24-25; Luke 24:29ff)

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**Summarize the main teaching of the following parables:** (Matthew 25:1-13 and 25:14-30)

The Ten Bridesmaids \_\_\_\_\_

The Talents \_\_\_\_\_

**What five things did the sheep do?:** (Matthew 25:35-36)

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**Instead of revealing the end, Jesus promised to give the disciples...:**  
(Acts 1:7-8)

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**Who will rise first?:** (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

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**Name the Good Churches and the Bad Churches:** (Revelation 2-3)

What do the bad churches lack?

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**When will Jesus come?:** (Revelation 22:20)

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# OUR RESPONSE TO THE APOCALYPTIC MESSAGE

Some read into Matthew 24:39b-41; Luke 17:33-36; and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 the idea of the Rapture. What are your thoughts on the Rapture? Does it mean that the Christian will escape the Tribulation, the Last Judgment?

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The primary and practical message in Jesus Apocalyptic teaching is that his followers must always be ready, for no one knows when the end of history will come. What we do know is that for us it will coincide with our death. When Martin Luther was asked the question: “What would you do if the end of the world would come tomorrow?,” he said: “I would plant my little apple tree today.” If you knew that your life would end tomorrow, what would you do today?

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A lady once asked John Wesley, “If you knew that the Lord would come at 12:00 tomorrow night, how would you spend the intervening time?” Wesley answered, “I would spend the intervening time just as I intend to spend it. I would preach tonight at Gloucester, and again tomorrow morning. After that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the society in the evening. I would then go to Friend Martin’s house, as he expects to entertain me. I would converse, pray with the family, retire to my room at ten o’clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, go sound asleep, and wake up in Glory.” If you knew your life would end at 12:00 Midnight, would you change your plans or would you maintain your schedule for the day?

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In Revelation 1:8 and 22:13, Jesus claims to be the Alpha and the Omega. What do you think he means by that?

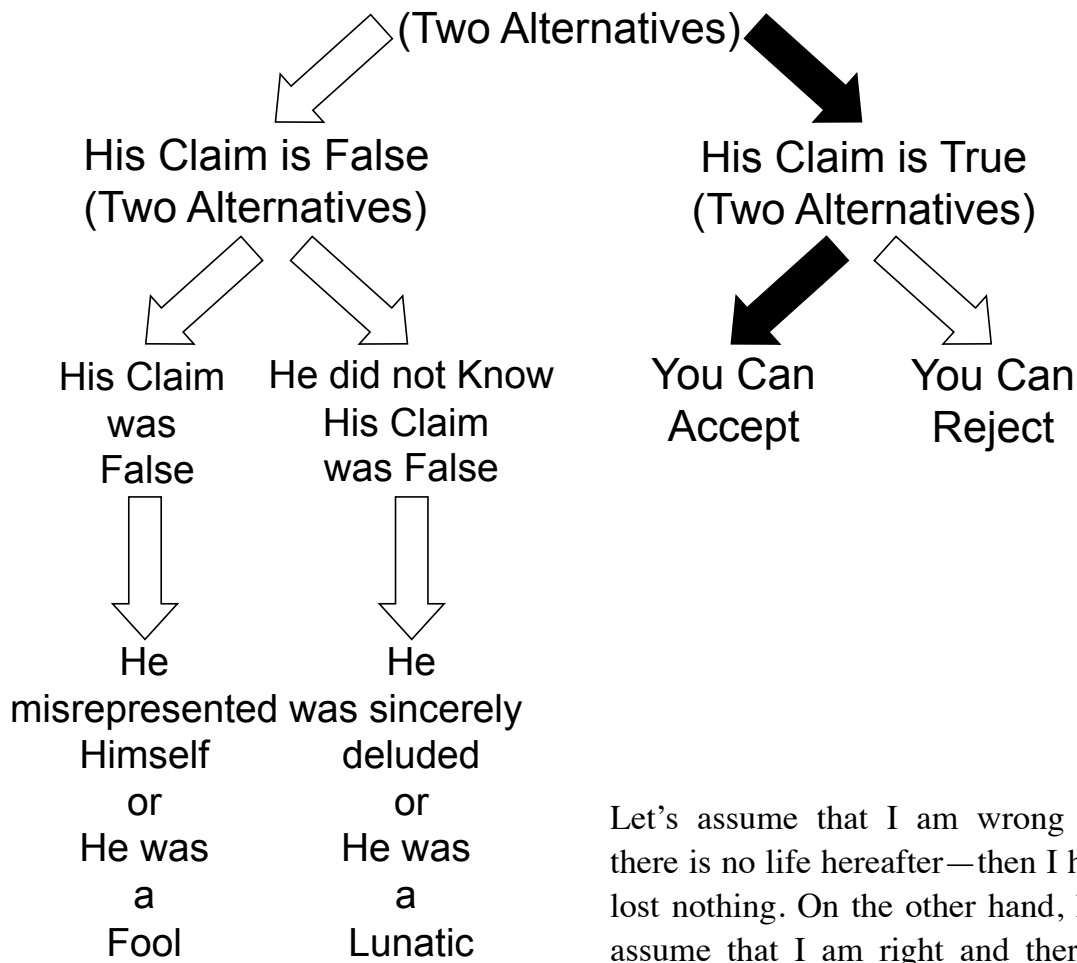
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# **APPENDICES**

# JESUS CLAIMS TO BE GOD



A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. He'd be either a lunatic on a level with a man who says he's a poached egg or else he'd be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. 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*

Let's assume that I am wrong and there is no life hereafter—then I have lost nothing. On the other hand, let's assume that I am right and there is life hereafter, then I have gained everything.

Blaise Pascal

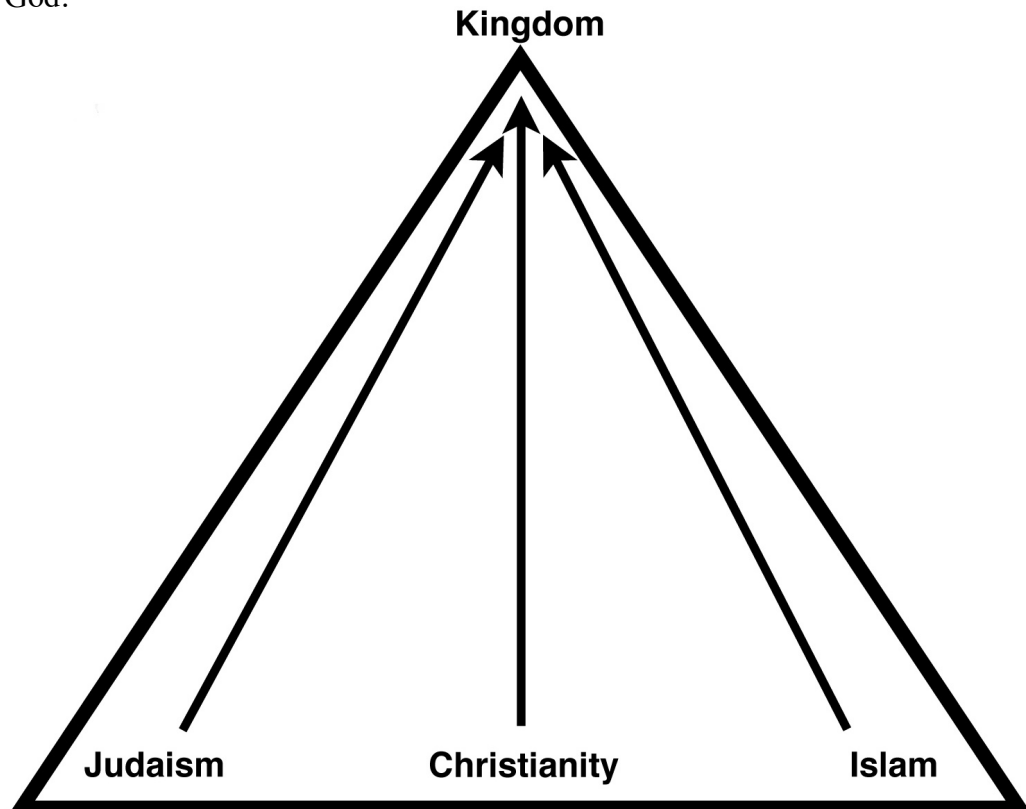
There are only three kinds of persons; those who serve God having found Him; others who are occupied in seeking Him, not having found Him; while the remainder live without seeking Him and without having found Him. The first are reasonable and happy, the last are foolish and unhappy, those between are unhappy and reasonable.

Anonymous

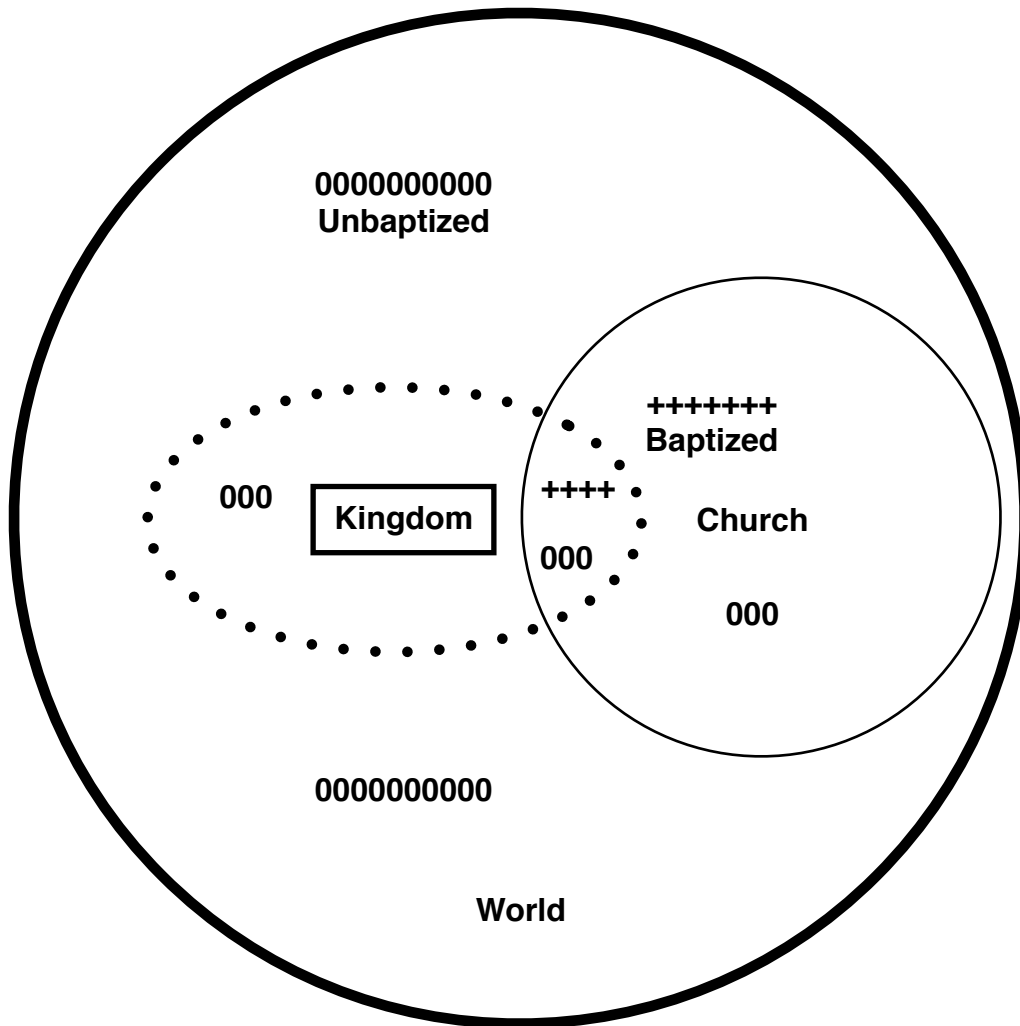
# ENTERING THE KINGDOM

The teachings of Jesus are very clear on this subject. Not everyone will enter the Kingdom of God. Matthew 25, a chapter used by conservatives and liberals alike, clearly indicates that some people will not enter. While most of us can understand why evil people, such as Hitler, might be rejected, we have difficulty accepting the fact that good people might be denied entrance as well. We have this difficulty in spite of Ephesians 2:8-9, which teaches that Salvation comes by Grace through Faith. It cannot be earned by our good works.

The image of entering the Kingdom of God frequently accepted by many well-meaning people is one of a huge mountain. On top of the mountain stands the Kingdom of God, and many roads, beginning at the bottom, lead up to the Kingdom. Each road represents one of the world's great religions. This is not the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testaments, but the projection of our human wishes. We would like it to be like that, but is it? I do not think so, but I say this as a Christian. Jesus made two statements that reject it. The first is found in Matthew 7:13-14, which says: "Go in through the narrow gate, because the gate to hell is wide and the road that leads to it is easy, and there are many who travel it. But the gate to life is narrow and the way that leads to it is hard, and there are few people who find it." The second statement can be found in John 14:6, where Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me." These verses tell us that the way into the Kingdom of God is a narrow gate and that Jesus alone represents the way. He is the way because he is one with God.



I would like to suggest a Biblical image for understanding entrance into the Kingdom of God. The image consists of two concentric circles and an ellipse. The larger circle represents the world in which we live. The smaller circle, about one-third the size of the first circle, represents the institutional church. About one-third of the world's population has been baptized. The ellipse is the smallest. I have represented it as elliptical because its boundaries are indeterminable, and the Bible teaches us that certain invisible boundaries do exist. This is why I have drawn this image with a dotted line.



To carry my image further I have placed crosses (+) and small zeroes(0) within the circles. The crosses symbolize baptized Christians, and the zeroes symbolize nonChristians. Since all baptized Christians are considered members of some congregation, all the crosses are contained within the circle of the Church. Some zeroes are also contained within this circle. I have discovered a number of unbaptized persons participating in the Church, who have not officially joined up. The crosses and zeroes within the circle of the world and Church are easily identified. Baptism makes the distinction.

The ellipse, representing the Kingdom of God, contains both crosses and zeroes. This is because God's Kingdom does not follow the lines of the institutional Church. Baptism does not insure entrance into the Kingdom of God. Some baptized Christians will travel through the narrow gate, but not all. Some nonChristians may also pass through this gate, even without knowing that they have entered the Kingdom. Certainly the patriarchs and prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures entered in; therefore, it is possible that nonChristians could do the same today, even if they do it accidentally. This is certainly the message of Matthew 25:33-40. What is important to bear in mind is that Jesus is the way into the Kingdom and not the institutional Church bearing his name.

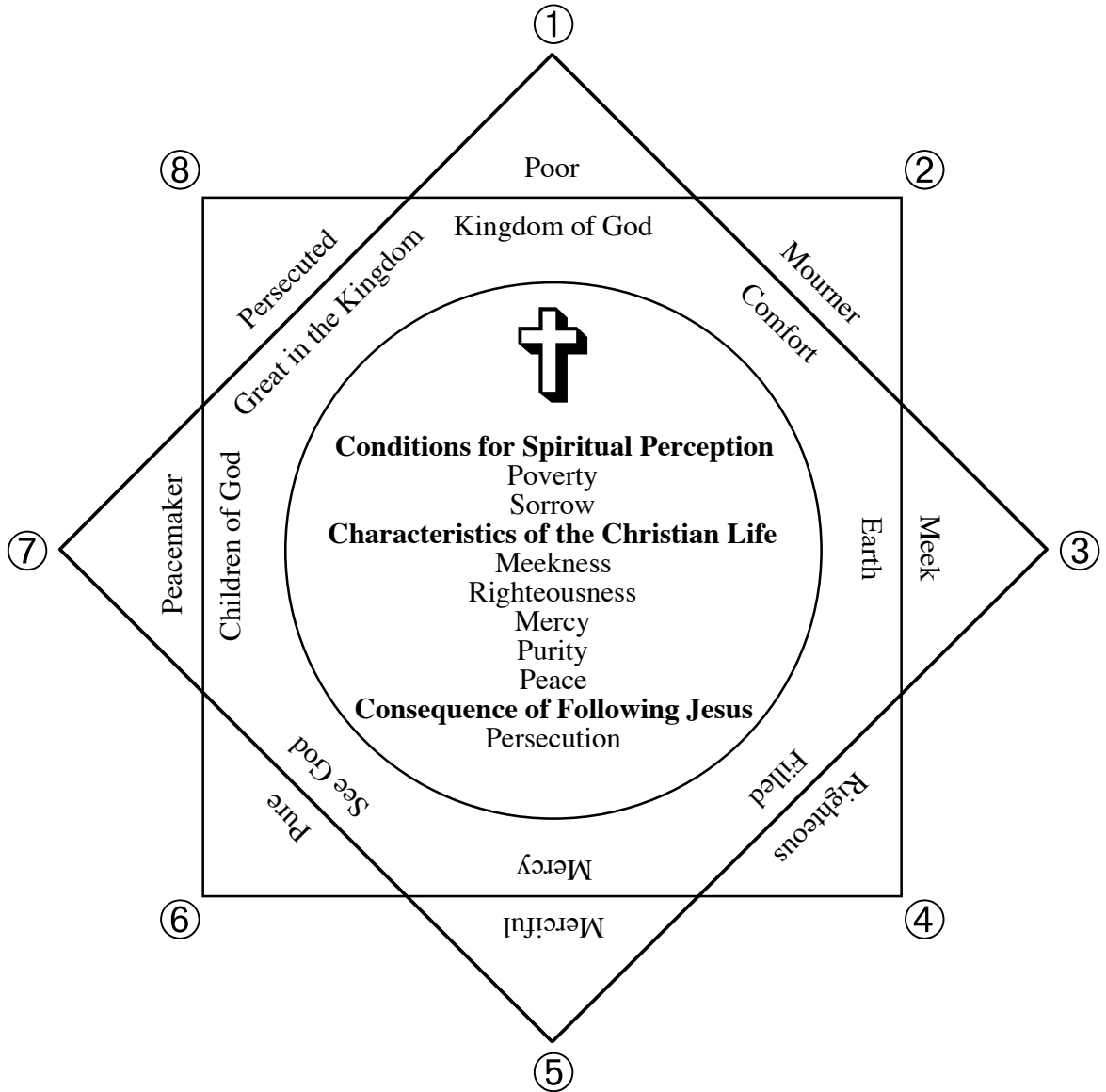
One thing I have noticed in the New Testament. Confessing the name of Jesus does not insure Salvation. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do what my Father in Heaven wants them to do." On the other hand, failing to confess him Lord, and yet living out the implications of his Lordship do not prevent people from entering the Kingdom. I appeal again to Matthew 25:33-40, where persons, not confessing Jesus as Lord, served him nonetheless. They are the "other sheep" of John 10:16, which Jesus would like to see in one flock and guided by one Shepherd. The flock however is not the institutional Church, nor is any bishop or pastor the Shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and his Kingdom is the flock. All my crosses and zeroes represent the sheep. Some sheep are safe within the fold, but many more sheep are climbing on the rocks, perilously close to the cliffs. They need to be led into the Kingdom, and that is our motivation for missions.

# PARABLES

<b>THE PARABLES OF JESUS</b>		<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>MARK</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	
<b>PARABLES IN ONE GOSPEL</b>					
1.	The Tares (Weeds)	13:24-30			Good and evil in life and judgment
2.	The Treasure in the Field	13:44			Choose what is most valuable for eternity
3.	The Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46			Choose what is most valuable for eternity
4.	The Net	13:47-50			Good and evil will be separated
5.	The Unmerciful Servant	18:23-35			Forgive because God forgives
6.	The Laborers in the Vineyard	20:1-16			Grace is not earned. It can only be a gift
7.	The Two Sons	21:28-32			In sincerity and repentance compared
8.	The Wedding Feast	22:2-14			The necessity of the robe of righteousness
9.	The Ten Virgins	25:1-13			We must be ready at all times
10.	The Talents	25:14-30	4:26-29		We must use our abilities or lose them
11.	The seed Growing Secretly		13:33-37		The law of growth in religion
12.	The Absent Householder				Watchfulness
13.	The Two Debtors			7:41-43	Gratitude for pardon
14.	The Good Samaritan			10:30-37	Do good to all in need
15.	The Impartunate Friend			11:5-13	Perseverance in prayer
16.	The Rich Fool			12:16-21	Worldliness and death
17.	Servants Watching			12:35-40	Watchfulness and expectancy of Christ's return
18.	The Faithful Steward			12:42-48	Conscientiousness in trust
19.	The Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9	Unprofitableness under grace
20.	The Great Feast			14:16-24	Universality of God's invitation to salvation
21.	Building a Tower and a King Going to War			14:25-32	Counting the cost of discipleship
22.	The Lost Coin			15:8-10	Joy over the salvation of one lost soul
23.	The Prodigal Son			15:11-32	Everyone should welcome the repentant sinner
24.	The Dishonest Steward			16:1-13	Use one's resources for good and the future
25.	The Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19-31	The hopeless future of the unfaithful
26.	Unprofitable Servants			17:7-10	Serve God out of gratitude
27.	The Unrighteous Judge			18:1-8	Persistence in prayer
28.	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector			18:9-14	Arrogance and humility
29.	The Pounds			19:11-27	Diligence rewarded, sloth punished
<b>PARABLES IN TWO GOSPELS</b>					
30.	The Two Builders	7:24-27		6:47-49	Wisdom and foolishness in building a life
31.	The Leaven	13:33		13:20-21	Transforming power of faith in the Kingdom
32.	The Lost Sheep	18:12-14		15:3-7	Joy over the salvation of one lost soul
<b>PARABLES IN THREE GOSPELS</b>					
33.	The Lamp Under a Bushel	5:14-16	4:21-22	8:16-17	Witnessing by radiant living
34.	New Cloth on an Old Garment	9:16	2:21	11:33-36	The new message does not fit old traditions
35.	New Wine in Old Wineskins	9:17	2:22	5:37-38	The new message does not fit old traditions
36.	The Sower	13:3-23	4:2-2-20	8:4-15	There are a variety of listeners to God's Word
37.	The Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19	The growth of the Kingdom of God
38.	The Wicked Tenants	21:33-45	12:1-12	20:9-19	Rejection of Christ by his own people
39.	The Fig Tree	24:32-44	13:28-32	21:29-33	Signs of our Lord's return



# BEATITUDES



**DISCOVERING JOY IN THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACES**  
**Matthew 5:1-12**

# THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN



**Orthodoxy  
(Right Beliefs)**

John 3:16

I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.  
Isaiah 42:6

Field Preaching  
Society Meetings  
Class Meetings

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.  
Matthew 5:16



1. Do no harm.
2. Do good.
3. Attend all the Ordinances of God
  - Public Worship
  - Ministry of the Word
  - The Lord's Supper
  - Family and Private Prayer
  - Search the Scriptures
  - Fasting or Abstinence

Luke 24:32

Matthew 7:21

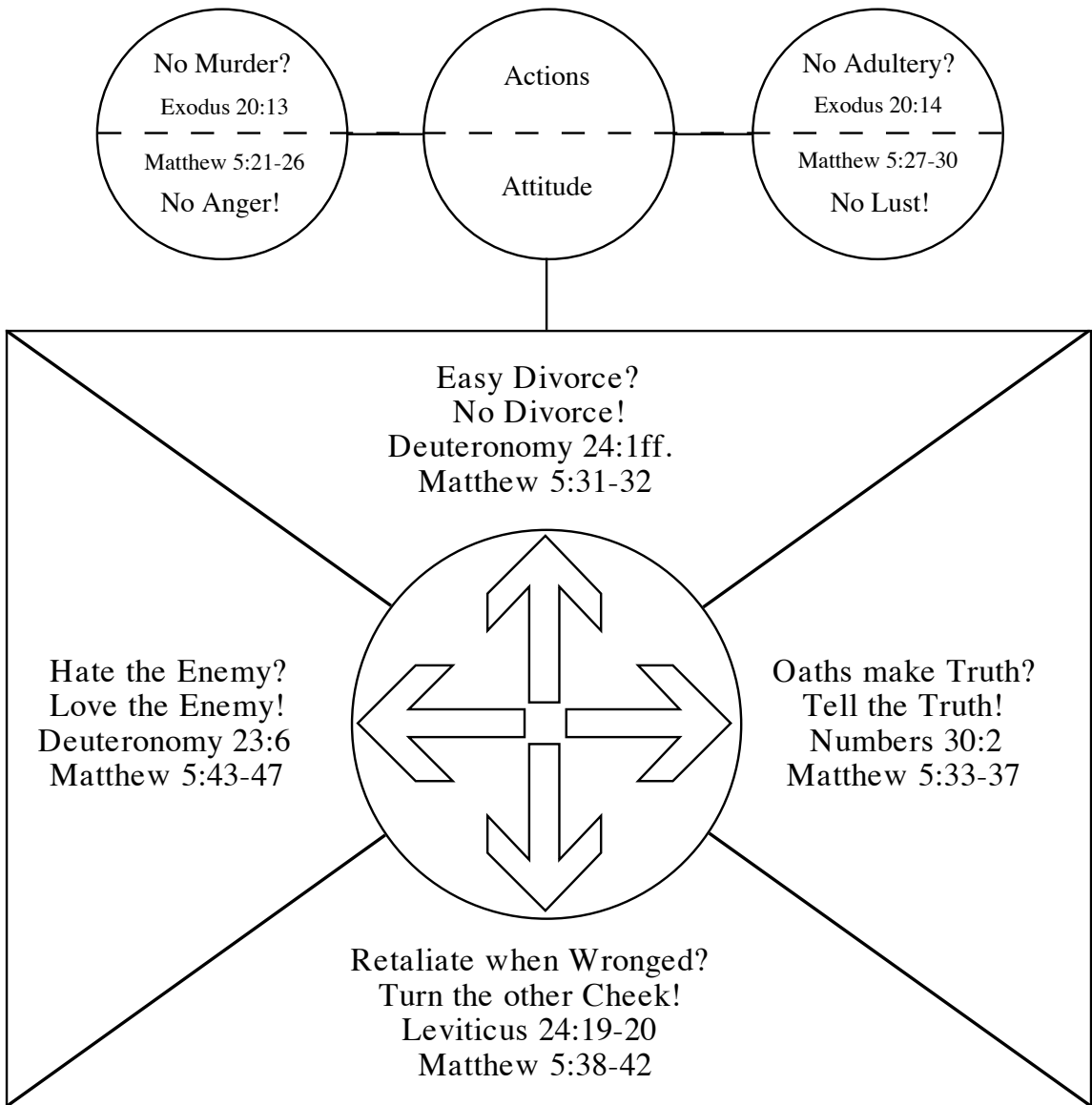


**Ortnopathy  
(Right Feelings)**



**Orthopraxy  
(Right Practices)**

# OBEYING GOD'S LAWS



The Goal



*“Be perfect, therefore,  
as your heavenly Father is perfect.”  
Matthew 5:48*

## OBEYING GOD'S LAW

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS CONTRASTED

Revelation through Moses		Revelation through Jesus	
Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,	One God (Exodus 20:2-3)	<b>but</b>  <b>I</b>  <b>say</b>  <b>unto</b>  <b>you.</b>	God is Father (Matthew 6:9)
	No Images (Exodus 20:4-6)		God is Spirit and Truth (John 4:23-24)
	No Blasphemy (Exodus 20:7)		Hallow God's Name (Matthew 6:9)
	Man for the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8)		The Sabbath for Man (Mark 2:27-28)
	Honor your Parents (Exodus 20:12)		Honor your Family (Mark 3:32-35)
	No Murder (Exodus 20:13)		No Anger (Matthew 5:21)
	No Adultery (Exodus 20:14)		No Lust (Matthew 5:27)
	No Stealing (Exodus 20:15)		Give Freely (Matthew 5:42)
	No False Witnessing (Exodus 20:16)		Tell the Truth (Matthew 5:33-37)
	No Coveting (Exodus 20:17)		Covet Righteousness (Matthew 5:6)

# THE GENERAL RULES

## **The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies**

In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the United Society, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than “a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”

That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled the leader. It is his duty:

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order:
  - (1) to inquire how their souls prosper;
  - (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require;
  - (3) to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.
2. To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order:
  - (1) to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reproved;
  - (2) to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.” But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

**First: By doing no harm**, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

1. The taking of the name of God in vain.
2. The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.
3. Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.
4. Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.
5. Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.
6. The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.
7. The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.
8. Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.
9. Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.
10. Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:
11. The putting on of gold and costly apparel.
12. The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.
13. The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.
14. Softness and needless self-indulgence.
15. Laying up treasure upon earth.
16. Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

**Secondly: By doing good**; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

1. To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.
2. To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that “we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.”

3. By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.
4. By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.
5. By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

**Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God;** such are:

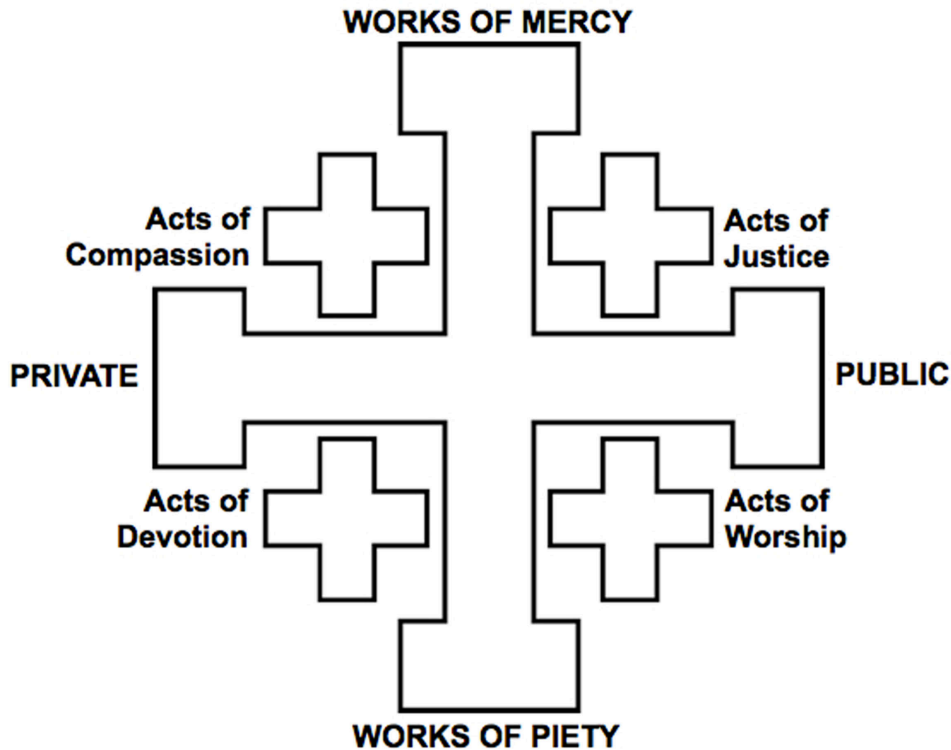
1. The public worship of God.
2. The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.
3. The Supper of the Lord.
4. Family and private prayer.
5. Searching the Scriptures.
6. Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our societies; all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

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# COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

A Covenant Discipleship Group consists of up to seven people who agree to meet together for one hour each week in order to hold themselves mutually accountable for their discipleship. They do this by affirming a written covenant on which they themselves have agreed.



## The General Rule of Discipleship

While each group writes its own covenant in the context of its members' discipleship, all covenants are shaped by a General Rule, patterned after John Wesley's General Rules.

*To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*



# THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

## Bonhoeffer's Criticism of Cultural Christianity<sup>4</sup>

### *Cheap and Costly Grace*

*Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church.  
We are fighting to-day for costly grace.*

*Cheap Grace.* This is what we mean by cheap grace, the grace which amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

*Costly Grace.* Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "Ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.

Costly grace is the sanctuary of God; it has to be protected from the world, and not thrown to the dogs. It is therefore the living word, the Word of God, which he speaks as it pleases him. Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. Grace is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

### *How Costly Grace became Cheap Grace*

As Christianity spread, and the Church became more secularized, this realization of the costliness of grace gradually faded. The world was Christianized, and grace became its common property.

Luther had said that grace alone can save; his followers took up his doctrine and repeated it word for word. But they left out its invariable corollary, the obligation of discipleship.

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<sup>4</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), p. 43ff. (First published in 1937)

The justification of the sinner in the world degenerated into the justification of sin and the world. Costly grace was turned into cheap grace without discipleship.

We Lutherans have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ.

We justified the world, and condemned as heretics those who tried to follow Christ. The result was that a nation became Christian and Lutheran, but at the cost of true discipleship.

But do we also realize that this cheap grace has turned back upon us like a boomerang? The price we are having to pay to-day in the shape of the collapse of the organized Church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost. We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale, we baptized, confirmed, and absolved a whole nation unasked and without condition. Our humanitarian sentiment made us give that which was holy to the scornful and unbelieving. We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard.

### *Baptism Into the Body of Christ*

The gift of baptism is the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is Christ himself dwelling in the hearts of the faithful (2 Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:9-11, 14ff; Ephesians 3:16f). The baptized are the house where the Holy Spirit has made his dwelling.

Baptism is similarly a public event, for it is the means whereby members are grafted on to the visible body of Christ (Galatians 3:27 f; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

When we join the Church we step out of the world, our work and family, taking our stand visibly in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. We take this step alone. But we recover what we have surrendered—brothers, sisters, houses, and fields. Those who have been baptized live in the visible community of Christ.

Baptism and the gifts it confers are characterized by a certain finality. The baptism of Christ can never be repeated.

This element of finality in baptism throws significant light on the question of infant baptism. The problem is not whether infant baptism is baptism at all, but that the final and unrepeatable character of infant baptism necessitates certain restrictions in its use. It was certainly not a sign of a healthy church life in the second and third century when believing Christians deferred their baptism until they reached old age or were on their death beds, but all the same it shows a clear insight into the nature of baptismal grace, an insight which we sadly lack to-day. As far as infant baptism is concerned, it must be insisted that the sacrament should be administered only where there is a firm faith present which remembers Christ's deed of salvation wrought for us once and for all. That can only happen in a living Christian community. To baptize infants without a Church is not only an abuse of the sacrament, it betokens a disgusting frivolity in dealing with the souls of the children themselves. For baptism can never be repeated.

### *Membership in the Body of Christ*

The Body of Christ is identical with the new humanity which he has taken upon him. It is in fact the Church. Jesus Christ is at once himself and his Church (I Corinthians 12:12). Since the first Whit Sunday the Life of Christ has been perpetuated on earth in the form of his Body, the Church. Here is his body, crucified and risen, here is the humanity he took upon him. To be baptized therefore means to become a member of the Church, a member of the Body of Christ (Gal. 3:28); 1 Corinthians 12:13). To be in Christ therefore means to be in the Church. But if we are in the Church we are verily and bodily in Christ. Now we perceive the whole wealth of meaning which lies behind the idea of the Body of Christ.

Since the ascension, Christ's place on earth has been taken by his Body, the Church. The Church is the real presence of Christ. Once we have realized this truth we are well on the way to recovering an aspect of the Church's being which has been sadly neglected in the past. We should think of the Church not as an institution, but as a person, though of course a person in a unique sense.

### *The Secret Disciplines*

*The Hidden Righteousness (Matthew 6:1-4).* Our activity must be visible, but never be done for the sake of making it visible. "Let your light so shine before men" (5:16) and yet: Take care that you hide it! There is a pointed contrast between chapters 5 and 6. That which is visible must also be hidden.

How is this paradox to be resolved? The first question to ask is: From whom are we to hide the visibility of our discipleship? Certainly not from other men, for we are told to let them see our light. No. We are to hide it from *ourselves*. Our task is simply to keep on following, looking only to our Leader who goes on before, taking no notice of ourselves or of what we are doing. We must be unaware of our own righteousness, and see it only in so far as we look unto Jesus; then it will seem not extraordinary, but quite ordinary and natural.

*The Hiddenness of Prayer (Matthew 6:5-8).* It matters little what form of prayer we adopt or how many words we use, what matters is the faith which lays hold on God and touches the heart of the Father who knew us long before we came to him.

Genuine prayer...is always the prayer of a child to a Father. Hence it is never given to self-display, whether before God, ourselves, or other people. If God were ignorant of our needs, we should have to think out beforehand how we should tell him about them, what we should tell him, and whether we should tell him or not. Thus faith, which is the mainspring of Christian prayer, excludes all reflection and premeditation.

The child asks of the Father whom he knows. Thus the essence of Christian prayer is not general adoration, but definite, concrete petition. The right way to approach God is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father.

True prayer is done in secret, but this does not rule out the fellowship of prayer altogether, however clearly we may be aware of its dangers.

True prayer does not depend either on the individual or the whole body of the faithful, but solely upon the knowledge that our heavenly Father knows our needs. That makes

God the sole object of our prayers, and frees us from a false confidence in our own prayerful efforts.

Jesus told his disciples not only how to pray, but also what to pray. The Lord's Prayer is not merely that pattern prayer, it is the way Christians must pray.

*The Hiddenness of the Devout Life (Matthew 6:16-18).* By practicing abstemiousness we show the world how different the Christian life is from its own. If there is no element of asceticism in our lives, if we give free rein to the desires of the flesh (taking care of course to keep within the limits of what seems permissible to the world), we shall find it hard to train for the service of Christ. When the flesh is satisfied it is hard to pray with cheerfulness or to devote oneself to a life of service which calls for much self-renunciation.

How is it possible to live the life of faith when we grow weary of prayer, when we lose our taste for reading the Bible, and when sleep, food and sensuality deprive us of the joy of communion with God.

Asceticism means voluntary suffering: it is *passio activa* rather than *passiva*, and it is just there that the danger lies. There is always a danger that in our asceticism we shall be tempted to imitate the sufferings of Christ. This is a pious but godless ambition, for beneath it there always lurks the notion that it is possible for us to step into Christ's shoes and suffer as he did and kill the old Adam. We are then presuming to undertake that bitter work of eternal redemption which Christ himself wrought for us. The motive of asceticism was more limited—to equip us for better service and deeper humiliation.

Jesus, however, bids his disciples to persevere in the practices of humiliation, but not to force them on other people as a rule or regulation.

*The Simplicity of the Carefree Life (Matthew 6:19-24).* The life of discipleship can only be maintained so long as nothing is allowed to come between Christ and ourselves—neither the law, nor personal piety, nor even the world. The disciple always looks only to his master, never to Christ and the law, Christ and religion, Christ and the world. He avoids all such notions like the plague.

Earthly goods are given to be used, not to be collected. ... where our treasure is, there is our trust, our security, our consolation and our God. Hoarding is idolatry.

But where are we to draw the line between legitimate use and unlawful accumulation? Let us reverse the word of Jesus and our question is answered: "Where thy heart is, there shall thy treasure be also." Our treasure may of course be small and inconspicuous, but its size is immaterial; it all depends on the heart, on ourselves. And if we ask how we are to know where our hearts are, the answer is just as simple—everything which hinders us from loving God above all things and acts as a barrier between ourselves and our obedience to Jesus is our treasure, and the place where our heart is.

Be not anxious! Earthly possessions dazzle our eyes and delude us into thinking that they can provide security and freedom from anxiety. Yet all the time they are the very source of all anxiety.

The way to misuse our possessions is to use them as an insurance against the morrow.

Anxiety is characteristic of the Gentiles, for they rely on their own strength and work instead of relying on God. They do not know that the Father knows that we have need of all these things, and so they try to do for themselves what they do not expect from God. But the disciples know that the rule is “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Before we start taking thought for our life, our food and clothing, our work and families, we must seek the righteousness of Christ.

Before we start taking thought for our life, our food and clothing, our work and families, we must seek the righteousness of Christ.

# SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST ALONE?

Here is another thing that used to puzzle me. Is it not frightfully unfair that this new life should be confined to people who have heard of Christ and been able to believe in Him? But the truth is God has not told us what His arrangements about the other people are. We do know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved through Him. But in the meantime, if you are worried about the people outside, the most unreasonable thing you can do is to remain outside yourself. Christians are Christ's body, the organism through which He works. Every addition to that body enables Him to do more, if you want to help those outside you must add your own little cell to the body of Christ who alone can help them. Cutting off a man's fingers would be an odd way of getting him to do more work.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.(New York: Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 65.

# ON THE END OF THE WORLD

## What We Cannot Know

They reckon as the first that made by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximin, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerian, the ninth Aurelian, the tenth by Diocletian and Maximian. For as there were ten plagues in Egypt before the people of God could begin to go out, they think this to be referred to as showing that the last persecution by Antichrist must be like the eleventh plague in which the Egyptians, while following the Hebrews with hostility, perish in the Red Sea when the people of God passed through on dry land. Yet I do not think persecutions were prophetically signified by what was done in Egypt, however nicely and ingeniously those who think so may seem to have compared the two in detail, not by prophetic Spirit, but by conjecture of the human mind which sometimes hits the truth, and sometimes is deceived.<sup>6</sup>

In vain, then, do we attempt to compute definitely the years that may remain to this world, when we may hear from the mouth of the Truth that it is not for us to know this. Yet some have said that four hundred, some five hundred, others a thousand years, may be completed from the ascension of the lord up to His final coming.<sup>7</sup>

## What We Can Know

Now Christ died when the Gemini were consuls, on the eighth day, before the kalends of April. He rose the third day, as the apostles have proved by the evidence of their own senses. Then forty days after, He ascended into Heaven. Ten days after, that is on the fiftieth after his Resurrection, He sent the Holy Spirit; then three thousand men believed when the apostles preached Him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *The City of God* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 663.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine, *The City of God* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 665.

<sup>8</sup> Augustine, *The City of God* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 667.





# STUDY GUIDES AND BOOKS

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7. **The Messengers:** The Four Gospels
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9. **The First E-Letters:** The Letters to Churches and Individuals
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