

Why Jesus?

Discover the life changing power of Jesus

by

Peter Baxter

Scripture quotations are from the
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This short course is a brief introduction to
the Christian faith.

Inside you will find the following lessons:

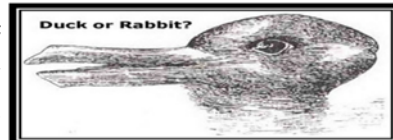
1. Looking for Jesus.
2. Living for Jesus.
3. Longing for Jesus.

Isaiah chapter 55 verse 6
Seek the Lord while He may be found;
Call on Him while He is near.

Chapter 1

Looking for Jesus

I find optical illusions fascinating. When I was younger, I had a book of them. Sometimes I could see exactly what the picture was portraying; at other times I just couldn't spot it at all!



Today, people are searching for that something in their lives which will give them what they are looking for - hope, happiness, excitement, love or stability. Some find it (if only for a short time); others do not. If you are someone who is looking for these things then I know just the Person Who can give them to you - and much more - Jesus! He can change your life.

I speak from personal experience when I say that He changed my life, and I know many others who could say the same. Most of them were

*Every person who looks for
and finds Jesus is an
amazing story of grace ...*

'good people who would never hurt a fly' but they knew that something was missing. Every person who looks for and finds Jesus Christ is an amazing story of grace and some have a remarkable

story to tell. I know of one person who, after living a life depending on drink and drugs, was literally lying in the gutter. He was told about Jesus and his life was changed!

Another man, whom we read about in the Bible, was named Saul and his desire was to destroy all the people who called themselves Christians. He did everything he could and travelled many miles to find them and to oversee their imprisonment and death. Later he described himself as '*the worst of sinners*'. When Saul met the Lord Jesus he was completely changed!

He was on his way to arrest and persecute more Christians, when a brilliant light shone around him. The light blinded him and he fell to the ground. He was scared, not knowing what had happened. Then he heard a voice saying to him, "*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?*" (Acts 9:4). He asked who it was speaking to him. The reply came,

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). Still unable to see, Saul was taken to Damascus where he waited for three days. I wonder what he thought about during that time. We are told that he prayed. Did he question his past actions and the life he was leading?

A man named Ananias was sent by God to visit Saul, to restore his sight and to explain God’s purpose to him . Saul became a changed man! He had seen Jesus and knew He was willing to save him from all his wrongdoing (sin). He was sorry for the things he had done and accepted that Jesus was the Son of God and chose to follow Him as his Lord and Saviour. Straightaway, Saul started telling others about how amazing Jesus is. What a change ! He even changed his name to Paul.

Perhaps things are going well in your life or maybe not. Whatever your situation - good, bad or indifferent - you will have done things that you should not have done **as we all have**. Have you ever told a lie, taken something that does not belong to you or driven over the speed limit? It may be you have done something more serious. What about ignoring God?

The Bible clearly tells us that *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23) and because of this *“the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23) and *“after this the judgement”* (Hebrews 9:27). Death is not the end. We **all** need to be saved. However, because Jesus loves us so much, over 2,000 years ago He, the sinless Son of God, came to this earth to die in our place and take the judgement we deserve. If we believe in Him and are truly sorry for the wrong things we have done then we – like Saul – can be saved. Think about him – he went around killing people and yet Jesus saved him. And he can save you, too! No matter what your past, Jesus Christ loves YOU! Jesus may not physically appear in front of us as He did to Saul, but we can still, by faith, see the Lord Jesus and know His forgiveness.

... the most wonderful thing is that Jesus is alive today.

The Bible is full of truths about the Lord Jesus and the most wonderful thing is that Jesus is alive today. The Bible encourages us to *“...fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who*

for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 12:2). Life is not easy and by

turning to Jesus it may not necessarily mean that all your troubles will suddenly disappear. But what is guaranteed is that if you truly trust in Jesus then He will be with you night and day to help and guide you.

Take a look at the optical illusion below. What do you see? My prayer is that you are able to see Jesus Christ, not just in this illusion, but most

What do you see?



importantly in reality. **Look for Him.**

Chapter 2

Living for Jesus

‘Living for the weekend’ is a common phrase. Google it and you’ll see that it is a song, which has been used as the music for TV adverts and is also the soundtrack of a well-known football computer game! It is certainly a concept shared by a large number of people. Whilst I can understand and appreciate the sentiments behind this phrase (I enjoy having some time at the weekend to spend with family, undertake hobbies etc.), I know that for many people life is such a burden that they really do just live for the weekend and ‘escape’.

Perhaps you are someone who ‘lives for the weekend’? Maybe you feel that there is something missing in your life? Or could it be that you are questioning life itself – what is the purpose of our being here?

Saul’s life had been changed by Jesus. His name had been changed to Paul and this reflected his new life and the way that he now lived. He

... people noticed that they were different in the way they lived -

no longer went around arresting and murdering innocent Christians. He himself was now a Christian. The word ‘Christian’ means ‘Christ-like’ and was a nick-name first given to those who believed in Jesus Christ, as people noticed that they were

different in the way they lived – both in what they did and how they spoke. So today, true Christians want to live a life which is pleasing to God - one which mirrors the characteristics of the Lord Jesus - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

As Christians we have the Holy Spirit – who is God – living within us. This fact changes everything! God is able to work in us, so that we do not place as much value on the things that are seen by the world as pleasurable or ‘the thing to do’, like getting drunk for example which gives only short-term pleasure and satisfaction. That is not to say that the Christian life is boring. I, myself enjoy watching and participating in lots of different activities, like many others. Rather, it is that we appreciate what the Lord Jesus has done by dying for us and, as a result, we have a desire to live in obedience to Him.

“... I have come that people may have life, and have it to the full”

Jesus once said, “... I have come that people may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). This life can be yours today, if you put your trust in Him. It is a **full** life; the Lord Jesus wants us to enjoy life – not in the way the world sees it, constantly living for the weekend and desiring to get involved in things which are against God’s ways. Jesus wants us to trust Him, enjoy the blessings of being a Christian and live for Him. By doing so, we can also show other people what true joy and happiness are – not emotions which are short-lived, that come and go - but in-dwelt characteristics that help us through difficult situations.

I look back at times when this has been my own experience. I, like many other Christians, am living proof that Jesus Christ loves, helps and guides us – if we allow Him to. My faith in the Lord Jesus has helped me through illness, job uncertainty and even family bereavements. I often wonder – in a compassionate way – how people who do not know Jesus cope with these difficult situations. This is why I am sharing these thoughts. I would love you to experience Jesus Christ as your Saviour, so that you can enjoy life, live it to the full and know Him as a True Friend. It does not mean that if you are a Christian you will be immune to hardship or struggles in life. However, you can be sure that God is always there for you.

After Paul started following Jesus, his life became very difficult. People now wanted to kill him for his belief – just as he had hounded others to death. Paul had to deal with many trials such as being shipwrecked, bitten by a deadly snake, suffering a long-term bodily affliction, and being flogged more than once; not an easy life! But now that Paul

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation,

followed the Lord Jesus he had someone he trusted and could rely on to meet his every need. He could say, “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I

have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12-13). It is Jesus who is the key, giving us the strength and ability to **live for Him** whatever our situation.

Chapter 3

Longing for Jesus

The Covid pandemic has made us all realise just how much we miss those things we love. The longer we are without them, the more we miss and long for them. How often in recent times have we heard somebody say, “I’m longing for a bit of normality!”?

What people long for differs from person to person but what is the same in every case is that the thing longed for means a great deal to the person who is longing. And this is why Christians say that they long for Jesus Christ to return.

... Jesus is coming back again!

Yes, that’s right, Jesus is coming back again! He is the One who died, rose again and now lives in Heaven anticipating the time when He Himself will come back and take Christians to be with Him. And that is what Christians long for: to be forever with the Person Who loves them, died for them and has given His all for them. Better still, it is what the Lord Jesus wants, too – to have with Him all those who trust

and believe in Who He is and what He has done.

Being with Jesus forever will be amazing! And it's not just the Person Christians long for, it's also the place in which this Person belongs – Heaven! One word describes Heaven – perfect! It is a place like no other: there is no sin, no crying, no death, no pain. Who would not want to live in a place like that? Imagine a place where you love to be. Now think about the feeling you enjoy when you are in that place. Multiply that feeling by many times and it still would not come close to the feeling and wonder that Christians will have when they get to Heaven. It will be that incredible.

If you are thinking that you might enjoy living in a place like that forever; then you can! *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16) *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”* (Acts 16:31) Admit that you are a sinner, believe that Jesus died to save you and accept Him as your Saviour and Lord, then you will be a part of all that Jesus promises.

Paul once wrote, *“our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body”* (Philippians 3:20-21). As Christians, we belong in Heaven – it is our true home. And what is more, our bodies will be transformed to be like Jesus, perfect in every way: no more death, pain or hurt, only perfection. Who would not want a body and a home like this? That's why millions of Christians alive today – eagerly await the Lord Jesus' return and long for that day when we will be taken to Heaven to meet Him.

In the previous chapter, we thought about 'living for Jesus' and how Paul made this a reality in his life. He declared, *“For to me, to live is Christ (that's Jesus) and to die is gain”* (Philippians 1:21). Paul did not live for earthly things such as fame, money or pleasure.

Rather, because he had experienced being saved and the change that had had on his life, Paul's desire was to do everything he could to live

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for Jesus Christ, by loving, worshipping and serving Him. If we are passionate or excited about something, then we are keen to tell others about it. It was the same for Paul – all that he said and did was about Jesus Christ: he lived out his Christ-like nature, truly living for Jesus!

But Paul also said, *'to die is gain'*. That may seem a strange thing to say, but he went on to explain that when he died he would *"be with Christ which is far better."* (Phillipians 1:21,23) Sadly, lots of people's thinking in today's world is 'to live is earthly gain, and to die would be the end'. That is just not true. Christians have everything to look forward to: new, perfect bodies living in a perfect place for eternity in perfection, with Jesus. If you trust in Jesus then you can be like Paul, myself and all true Christians, who look forward to this certainty, and **long for** Jesus.

Exam questions - please fill in the online exam form found at the bottom of the courses page.

1. How did Saul describe himself?

- a) The worst of sinners.
- b) A religious man.
- c) A leader of the Jewish people.

2. Who did the voice Saul heard say he had been persecuting?

- a) Christians.
- b) Jesus.
- c) The religious leaders.

3. Who was sent to explain what had happened to Saul?

- a) Peter.
- b) Barnabas.
- c) Ananias.

4. Which Bible book tells us "all have sinned" and "the wages of sin is death"?

- a) Acts.
- b) Romans.
- c) Revelation.

5. What happened to Saul to reflect his new life?

- a) He became a missionary.
- b) His name was changed.
- c) He returned to Jerusalem.

6. Which Gospel writer said about Jesus “I have come that people may have life”?

- a) John.
- b) Mark.
- c) Luke.

7. What happened to Paul after he became a Christian?

- a) He returned to his former life.
- b) He enjoyed a long and care free life.
- c) He was ship wrecked and flogged.

8. Which word best describes Heaven?

- a) Perfect.
- b) Unknown.
- c) Distant.

9. What does Paul say will happen to the body of a Christian?

- a) It will be buried and decay.
- b) It will be preserved for eternity.
- c) It will be transformed to be like Jesus.
- d)

10. How did Paul view his own death?

- a) Gain.
- b) Inevitable but nothing to worry about.
- c) An enemy to be fought at all costs.

What do you say?

What marks Jesus out as truly unique?

Once you have completed the questions please return this booklet for marking to:

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