

WE KNOW HOW THE STORY ENDS ...



JESUS WINS!

A BIBLE STUDY COURSE

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Welcome! Thank you for joining us
on this fascinating journey through
the Scriptures!



Study
01

On August 5, 2010, a mine collapsed in Chile, trapping thirty-three miners under 700,000 tons of rock. It was a desperate situation; help could only come from above. A rescue like this had never been attempted before. Sixty-nine days later, on October 12, television audiences around the world held their breath as they watched the thirty-three miners being brought to the surface one by one, in a specially designed capsule for the rescue. Imagine if these were your children, buried alive nearly half a mile underground. How would you feel? What would you do? But wait! The Bible announces an even greater rescue!

God's children were buried under sin, with no possibility of eternal life. Help could only come from above. And it did! In the first study of this series, we will discover that God is a loving Father who created the human race to experience happiness, fulfillment, and purpose. The Bible is the story of God and His children and how He rescued them from an evil kidnapper. Welcome to the beginning of the story of humanity!

God's PLAN

The Bible

This God-inspired book will be our textbook. The Bible consists of sixty-six books that were written over a period of 1,500 years by various authors. The wonderful thing is that there is perfect unity of thought from beginning to end. It contains the whole history of humanity: the creation of the human race by a loving God, the event that brought suffering and death into this world, the rescue that was necessary for the salvation of human beings, and the plan to end this world of pain. It's all there in detail. God is love, and He loves us like a Father who is unwilling to lose His children under any circumstances. That is why He left us the entire plan written out from beginning to end. It is God's message to you. You can trust that the Bible is the Word of God, "for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). If you would like more information on the truthfulness of the Bible as the Word of God, you can go to Jesus101.tv/beliefs/#God.



Creation

The Bible begins with a simple yet profound statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). These words introduce seven days of astonishing divine creativity. God wanted to enjoy intimacy with human beings, His children. He began by creating a perfect environment, a planet that would become our home (take a moment to read Genesis 1:1–25). And at the end of each day, He paused in His work, looked at the beauty He had created, and exclaimed, “It is good! It is good! It is good!”

How does it make you feel to know that the whole world was created for you?

In God’s image

Once our home was ready, a divine conversation took place: “Let us make mankind in our image” (Genesis 1:26; NIV). God decided to create the human race in His image. We have a Creator God in three Persons (the Trinity) that we generally refer to as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (For more information on this topic, go to Jesus101.tv/beliefs/#God, section 2.) “In our image” is a key concept. Human beings are the pinnacle of divine creativity, the very best that God made, the crown of creation. In ancient cultures, being in the image of a god was reserved for prominent people, like kings. But God makes no such distinction. When He created human beings in His image, He did not make some people more special than others. God did not create hierarchies or ranks of power—all people are equally important and valuable to Him. Every child of God, whatever their status, caste, or gender, bears the image of God. You are royalty because you are a child of God! And you are His most beautiful creation and the most precious to Him. God gave human beings significant purpose: to care for the earth (Genesis 1:26–30). It is important to note that at the end of God’s sixth creative day, right after bringing the humans into existence, God stopped one more time and said that His creation was not only good but very good! (Genesis 1:31). We are the most special part of creation to God—so much so that on the seventh day God rested to be with us. It was the first day that God and His children could enjoy intimate fellowship together. We are that valuable to Him! God tells us how valuable we are in His eyes:

“Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands” (Isaiah 49:15, 16).

Think of your child (or a close relative’s child) and imagine what you would do for him or her. How does this influence your concept of how God feels about you? _____

Paradise

The Greek version of the Bible Old Testament uses the word *paradeisos* (paradise) to introduce a special place of utmost beauty that God prepared for His children (Genesis 2:8, 9). It was the Garden of Eden, where the first human beings would live. In the ancient Semitic language, the root of the word “Eden” means “delight,” describing the state that humans enjoyed. In this beautiful garden, there were many trees. But one of them, the tree of life, had special significance. Eating the fruit of the tree of life signified that human beings would live forever. It was a constant reminder of their connection with the Giver of life, their eternal Creator God. But living forever was a gift, not an innate quality that humans possessed; and it was the result of remaining in God’s presence, under His moral authority. That’s where freedom of choice came into play.

We all need freedom; love cannot exist without it. Without freedom, we would simply be programmed robots behaving in a predetermined way. God placed another tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the Garden. This tree was a special symbol through which humans could exercise their free will. As long as they chose God and His moral authority and principles, they would stay away from this tree. However, they could, at any time, choose independence from God by tasting the forbidden fruit. But in renouncing their vital connection with God, they would become mortal beings (Genesis 2:16, 17). (If you would like more information on the creation of humanity, you can visit Jesus101.tv/beliefs/#humanity.)

There was no shame in God’s beautiful original plan (Genesis 2:24, 25). Why do you think we experience shame today? _____

Conclusion

God’s plan was to create sons and daughters in His image and likeness so that He could be close with them and share this beautiful world together forever. He gave them the ability to multiply and fill the earth and take care of it. He prepared the Garden of Delight as their home to enjoy. We can still see glimpses of the amazing beauty of His design in the magnificence of the nature that surrounds us. Tragically, deceived by the evil kidnapper (whom we will continue studying in the next lesson), God’s children chose to become independent of Him; and consequently, sin, decay, suffering, and death entered this world. They lost their beautiful Garden.

But God had a rescue plan! And He promised to bring them back to paradise again. In the following pages, we will discover more about that amazing rescue plan. For now, remember who you are and your value in His eyes.

God’s love for us is the source of our self-worth because we are His beloved children. The enemy of God thought he could leave us buried in sin. But God loves us too much and fought for us. And we already know how that story ends—*Jesus wins!*

To watch a short video summary for Study no. 1, scan this QR code or go to Jesus101.tv/study1-en.

