



Refreshing Theology

12 Evangelical Essentials

Author: Karl Niblock, MTh BD DipMin

Study Workbook

Twelve sessions on the foundations that unite evangelical Christians: what we believe, why we believe it, and how it shapes a life with Jesus.

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.

Rupertus Meldenius (c. 1626)

Name: _____

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12 Evangelical Essentials

What Baptists, Pentecostals, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists hold together, why we hold it, and how it shapes a life with Jesus.

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.

Rupertus Meldenius (c. 1626)

The word itself

What does "evangelical" mean?

The word comes from the Greek **euangelion**, "good news". Evangelicals are gospel people. We believe God has spoken, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again, and that everyone who turns to Him in faith is forgiven, made new and brought into His family.

The name has been used since the Reformation, and it became the banner of a great movement in the revivals of the 1700s. Today evangelicals are found in hundreds of denominations on every continent. Historian David Bebbington describes four marks that have run through evangelical Christianity for three centuries. Tap each card to read more.



Biblicism

A deep regard for the Bible

Evangelicals receive the Bible as God's Word: the final authority for what we believe and how we live. We open it, read it, preach it and expect God to speak through it.



Crucicentrism

The cross at the centre

The death of Jesus for sinners stands at the heart of the faith. Evangelicals sing about it, preach it and build their hope on it.



Conversionism

Lives need to be changed

Every person needs to turn to Christ in repentance and faith and be born again by the Holy Spirit. Being around church is never enough.



Activism

The gospel expressed in effort

Good news is for sharing. Evangelicals pray, give, go, serve and speak so that others may hear and believe.

Different churches, one gospel

Evangelicals belong to many church families. Each has its own history, confessions and style. Choose a family to meet it.

Anglican

Born in the English Reformation. Evangelical Anglicans stand on the Thirty-Nine Articles (1571) and the Book of Common Prayer, with a long line of preachers and teachers that includes Charles Simeon, J.C. Ryle, John Stott and J.I. Packer. Sydney Anglicans are among the best-known evangelicals in Australia.

Presbyterian

Shaped by John Calvin and John Knox and the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646). Presbyterians are known for careful Bible teaching, church government by elders, and a strong sense of God's sovereign grace.

Baptist

Rooted in the English Separatists of the early 1600s. Baptists baptise believers by immersion, stress the freedom of conscience before God, and gather as local congregations of people who know the Lord. William Carey, C.H. Spurgeon and Billy Graham are part of this family.

Methodist and Wesleyan

Grown from the eighteenth-century revival under John and Charles Wesley. Methodists prize heartfelt faith, assurance, holiness of life and preaching to everyone, everywhere. The Salvation Army and many holiness churches share this stream.

Pentecostal

Sparked in the early 1900s, especially at Azusa Street (1906). Pentecostals expect the Holy Spirit's power and gifts today. Through the twentieth century the movement spread across the globe, and in Australia it includes the Australian Christian Churches and many independent churches.

Brethren and independent

Bible-centred assemblies and independent evangelical churches, including many community churches, Churches of Christ and others. They often have simple church order and a strong emphasis on the Lord's Table and every-member ministry.

Essentials and liberty

Paul handed on the gospel "as of first importance" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Scripture itself ranks some truths as foundations. It also gives believers freedom on matters where faithful Christians reach different convictions (Romans 14:1-5). The twelve essentials in this study are the foundations. They are what every evangelical family confesses.

Held together

- ◆ The Bible as God's Word

- ◆ One God in three persons

- ◆ Humanity made in God's image and fallen

- ◆ Jesus fully God and fully man

- ◆ His death for our sins

- ◆ His bodily resurrection

- ◆ Justification by grace through faith

- ◆ The new birth

- ◆ The Holy Spirit's indwelling and power

- ◆ One body of believers

- ◆ The mission to all nations

- ◆ Christ's personal return

Held in liberty

- ◆ The age and mode of baptism
- ◆ How churches are governed
- ◆ Styles of worship and music
- ◆ How the gifts of the Spirit operate today
- ◆ Calvinist and Arminian accounts of grace
- ◆ Millennial and end-times timelines
- ◆ The exact meaning of the Lord's Supper

On these we hold real convictions, and we hold them with charity toward brothers and sisters who see them differently.

A long story

How we got here

The evangelical faith is the faith of the apostles, recovered and renewed again and again. Tap a moment on the timeline.

c. AD 55

Of first importance

Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel he received and handed on: Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The church has always known that some truths are foundations.

325

The Council of Nicaea

Church leaders confess that the Son is true God from true God, of one being with the Father. The Nicene Creed (completed in 381) is still said by evangelicals of every tradition.

451

The Council of Chalcedon

The church confesses Jesus as truly God and truly man, one person in two natures.

1517

Luther's Ninety-five Theses

Martin Luther's protest in Wittenberg opens the Reformation. The gospel of grace through faith in Christ is recovered and preached.

1526

Tyndale's New Testament

William Tyndale's English New Testament is printed so that ordinary people can read God's Word. He is executed in 1536.

1571

The Thirty-Nine Articles

The Church of England settles its doctrinal standard, still the confession of evangelical Anglicans.

1646

The Westminster Confession

English and Scottish divines produce the great Presbyterian confession and its catechisms.

1689

The Second London Baptist Confession

Particular Baptists publish their confession, closely following Westminster while setting out believer's baptism and congregational church life.

1738

Aldersgate Street

John Wesley hears Luther's preface to Romans read and feels his heart "strangely warmed". The Methodist revival follows.

1739

The Great Awakening

George Whitefield preaches the new birth to huge crowds in Britain and America. The word "evangelical" becomes the name of a movement.

1792

William Carey

A Baptist shoemaker calls the church to world mission and sails for India in 1793. The modern missionary movement is born.

1846

The Evangelical Alliance

Evangelicals from many denominations meet in London to unite around a shared basis of faith.

1906

Azusa Street

A revival in Los Angeles led by William J. Seymour gives rise to the worldwide Pentecostal movement.

1942

National Association of Evangelicals

American evangelicals from many denominations unite around a short statement of faith.

1974

The Lausanne Covenant

Evangelicals from 150 nations gather in Switzerland. John Stott leads the drafting of a covenant on the gospel, Scripture and world mission.

The rhythm of each session

How the study works

1

Read the Word

Each session starts with a key verse and three Scriptures. The Bible sets the agenda.

2

Dig deeper

Discover a word in the original Hebrew or Greek, a story from church history, and how each church family confesses the truth.

3

Talk it through

Discussion questions help the group think, pray and apply. Bring your questions too.

4

Take the pop quiz

Five quick questions. Finish to earn the session badge. Score five out of five for gold.

No device? Use the printed workbook. It has every session, space for notes, the quizzes and an answer key at the back.

The twelve

The sessions

01

The Word of God

God has spoken

God speaks by Scripture, and His Word gives Christ, truth, correction and life.

NOT STARTED

02

The Triune God

One God, three persons

The one true God has made Himself known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

NOT STARTED

03

Humanity and Sin

Made in His image, lost in our sin

God made every person with dignity, and every person needs saving grace.

NOT STARTED

04

The Person of Christ

Fully God, fully man

Jesus Christ is God the Son come among us as the true man who saves.

NOT STARTED

05

The Cross

Christ died for us

At the cross God judges sin, loves sinners, and brings us home through Christ.

NOT STARTED

06

The Resurrection

He is risen

God raised Jesus bodily, crowned Him Lord, and gives His people resurrection life.

NOT STARTED

07

Justification by Faith

Right with God by grace through faith

God declares sinners righteous by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

NOT STARTED

08

The New Birth

You must be born again

The Spirit gives new life from above and begins a new creation in Christ.

NOT STARTED

09

The Holy Spirit

The Lord, the giver of life

The Holy Spirit indwells believers, glorifies Jesus and empowers holy witness.

NOT STARTED

10

The Church

One body in Christ

Christ joins His people to Himself and to one another as one Spirit-filled body.

NOT STARTED

11

The Mission

The gospel to all nations

The risen Christ sends His church to make disciples among all nations.

NOT STARTED

12

The Return of Christ

He is coming again

Christ will return personally and visibly to judge, renew and dwell with His people forever.

NOT STARTED

01

Session 1 of 12

The Word of God

God has spoken

Key verse

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (LSB)

The big idea

God has spoken in Scripture. His breathed-out Word makes us wise unto salvation in Christ and equips His people for faithful life and ministry.

Overview

Christians from many evangelical traditions stand together because God has not left His people guessing. He has spoken through prophets and apostles, and the Scriptures bear His authority. The Bible is more than a religious classic. It is God breathed, truthful, sufficient for salvation, and powerful to train the people of God.

This conviction does not flatten every difference. Evangelicals still debate words such as inerrancy and infallibility, and they explain the place of tradition, reason and church history in different ways. Yet the shared confession is clear: Scripture rules over the church. Tradition may serve, reason may help, experience may illustrate, but God speaks finally through His written Word.

For us, Scripture leads us to Christ. Jesus trusted the Law, Prophets and Writings, fulfilled them, and opened them to His disciples. A Bible-shaped church listens

before it speaks, repents when the text wounds, and receives the healing that only the gospel gives.

At a glance

How Scripture comes to us

God breathed out Scripture through human authors moved by the Spirit. It is profitable for four things, and it equips us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21).



The word in the original language

Greek

θεόπνευστος

theopneustos

Meaning

God-breathed

2 Timothy 3:16

Word	θεόπνευστος
Say it	theopneustos
Meaning	God-breathed
Where	2 Timothy 3:16

Paul says Scripture is God-breathed. The point is source: Scripture comes from God Himself, so it speaks with His authority. Because God breathes it out, it is profitable for teaching, correction and training.

Three Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:14-17

But you, continue in the things you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Scripture makes us wise for salvation through faith in Christ, then trains us for a whole life of obedience.

2 Peter 1:19-21

And we have as more sure the prophetic word, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes by one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by the will of man, but men being moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The prophets did not invent the message. The Holy Spirit moved human authors so that God truly spoke through them.

Psalms 19:7-11

The law of Yahweh is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, even more than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your slave is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

God's Word restores, makes wise, rejoices the heart, warns and rewards. Authority and delight belong together.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals confess that Scripture is God's written Word and the final authority for faith and life. They do not all use identical vocabulary, but they stand together under the Bible as the rule that tests preaching, doctrine, worship, mission and conscience.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. VI

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith"

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 1

Westminster teaches that the whole counsel of God needed for His glory, human salvation, faith and life is either expressly set down in Scripture or may be drawn from Scripture by good and necessary consequence.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1.1

"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience."

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. V

Methodist doctrine receives the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary to salvation, so nothing outside them is required as an article of faith or necessary for salvation.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH 1

"The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct."

LAUSANNE COVENANT, SECTION 2

"We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

Where Christians differ

Inerrancy and infallibility

Some evangelicals use the detailed language of inerrancy, seen in the Chicago Statement of 1978. Others prefer Lausanne language: Scripture is truthful, authoritative and without error in all that it affirms. Both aim to protect God's truthfulness and Scripture's authority.

Why it does not divide us. Evangelicals remain together when they confess that Scripture is true, trustworthy and supreme over the church, even when their preferred terms differ.

Tradition and reason

Anglican and Wesleyan traditions often speak warmly of tradition and reason as servants under Scripture. The Wesleyan quadrilateral label was coined by Albert Outler in the 1960s to describe Scripture read with tradition, reason and experience.

Why it does not divide us. These helps become divisive only when they rule over Scripture. Used humbly, they can help the church hear Scripture carefully.

Bible translation and interpretation

Evangelicals may prefer different translations and differ on some interpretive conclusions. Faithful interpretation listens to text, context, grammar, canon and the whole counsel of God.

Why it does not divide us. Differences in translation preference and secondary interpretation remain inside fellowship when the Bible itself remains the final judge.

Where the line is. A church leaves evangelical ground when it gives another authority equal or superior standing over Scripture, or denies that God has spoken truthfully through the biblical writings.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, and Spirit-filled in life. We gladly stand with every tradition that bows under Scripture. In our preaching and practice, the Bible governs the church, calls sinners to Christ, orders worship, tests spiritual experience, and trains ordinary believers for ministry.

† Christ connection

Jesus read the Old Testament as the Word that pointed to Him. On the Emmaus road He began with Moses and all the prophets and interpreted the things concerning Himself. Hebrews says God has now spoken in His Son, the radiance of His glory. Scripture is the Spirit-given witness through which we meet Him truly.

🕒 From church history

1526

From church history

Tyndale's English New Testament

William Tyndale longed for ordinary English people to hear Scripture in their own language. His English New Testament was printed in 1526, smuggled into England, and fiercely opposed by church authorities. He once answered an educated opponent with the hope that a boy working the plough would know more of Scripture than many clergy. Tyndale was executed in 1536, yet his work shaped the English Bible for centuries.

» Voices from the evangelical tradition

“conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.”

David Bebbington

Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (1989)

Biblicism names the evangelical instinct to receive the Bible as God’s ruling Word.

“The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.”

Martin Luther

Ninety-five Theses (1517)

Scripture is treasured because it gives us the gospel of grace.

“Defend the Bible? I would as soon defend a lion! Unchain it and let it go.”

C.H. Spurgeon

Attributed

The image is memorable because Scripture itself has power when it is opened.

Packer argued that evangelical confidence in Scripture arises from confidence in the God who speaks and keeps His promises.

J.I. Packer

Fundamentalism and the Word of God (1958)

His approach joins trust in the Bible to trust in God’s character.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Reverent listening:** open the Bible expecting God to speak and correct you.
- ◆ **Humble testing:** weigh every sermon, tradition and impression by Scripture.
- ◆ **Christ-centred reading:** ask how the passage fits God’s saving work in Jesus.
- ◆ **Obedient response:** receive reproof and comfort as gifts from the same Father.

Memory verse

The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:8 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17 aloud three times and list what Scripture does.
- ☐ Before a major decision, write one biblical principle that should govern it.
- ☐ Memorise Isaiah 40:8 and pray it when human opinions feel loud.

Discussion questions

- 1 What has most shaped your confidence or struggle with the Bible?
- 2 Where do Christians sometimes put tradition, experience or opinion above Scripture?
- 3 How does Psalm 19 connect authority with delight?
- 4 What would change this week if Scripture had the first word in one hard decision?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What does θεόπνευστος, God-breathed, mainly teach in 2 Timothy 3:16?

- ☐ A Scripture has its source in God
- ☐ B Scripture works apart from faith in Christ
- ☐ C Scripture was written without human authors
- ☐ D Scripture is useful only when church tradition confirms it

2. Which historical figure is linked with the 1526 English New Testament and the ploughboy hope?

- ☐ A John Wesley
- ☐ B Martin Luther
- ☐ C J.I. Packer
- ☐ D William Tyndale

3. What do the Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal and Lausanne statements share in this session?

- ☐ A They place church tradition above private reading
- ☐ B They require one identical theory of Bible translation
- ☐ C They limit biblical authority to the New Testament
- ☐ D They confess Scripture as God's authoritative rule for faith and life

4. What is a faithful use of tradition, reason and experience?

- ☐ A They correct Scripture when culture changes
- ☐ B They supply doctrines Scripture does not teach
- ☐ C They serve under Scripture as helps for careful reading
- ☐ D They decide which biblical teachings still apply

5. Why does Luke 24 matter for evangelical Bible reading?

- ☐ A Jesus treats Moses and the Prophets as pointing to His suffering and glory
- ☐ B Jesus limits Scripture to Israel's national history
- ☐ C Jesus teaches that only direct heavenly voices give certainty
- ☐ D Jesus replaces the Old Testament with later church teaching

02

Session 2 of 12

The Triune God

One God, three persons

Key verse

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 (LSB)

The big idea

God is one, and God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the living God making Himself known so that we may know Him, worship Him and belong to Him.

Overview

The doctrine of the Trinity does not begin with a puzzle. It begins with the living God. Israel confesses that Yahweh is one. The New Testament does not loosen that confession. It reveals the Father sending the Son, the Son obeying and saving, and the Spirit descending, indwelling and giving fellowship.

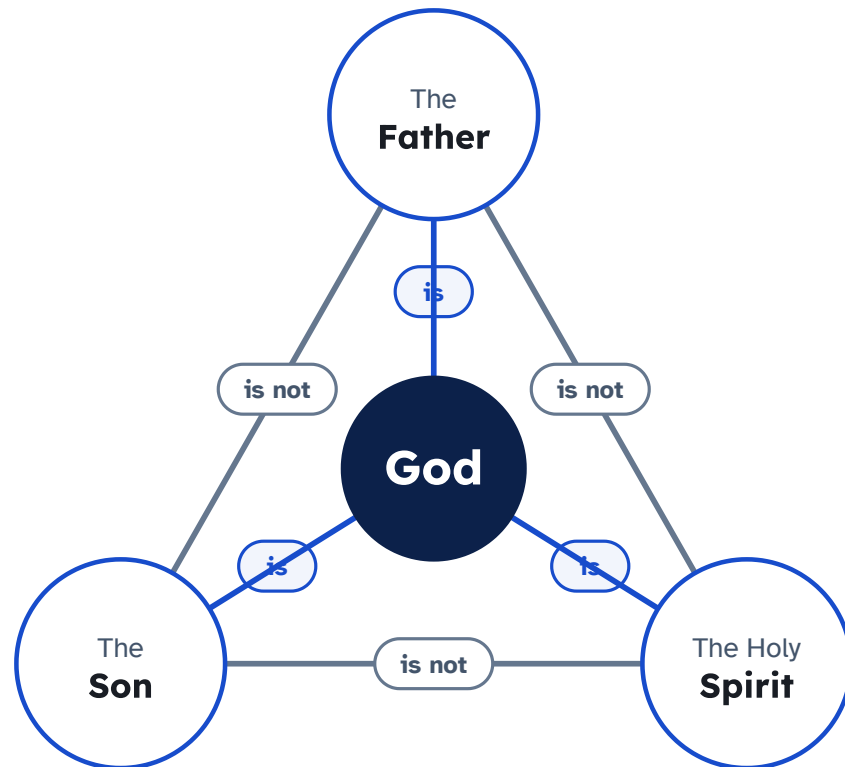
Evangelicals across traditions stand together here because Christianity stands or falls here. We are baptised into the singular name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We receive grace from the Lord Jesus Christ, love from God, and fellowship from the Holy Spirit. Salvation is trinitarian from beginning to end.

We speak carefully because God is holy. Analogies can help for a moment, then they usually mislead. The aim is worship, prayer and trust. God is eternal life, love and communion, and He has drawn us near through Jesus by the Spirit.

At a glance

The Shield of the Trinity

A diagram used by Christians since the Middle Ages. Each person is fully God. The persons are distinct. There is one God.



One God (Deuteronomy 6:4) in three persons
baptised into one name (Matthew 28:19)

The word in the original language

Hebrew

אֶחָד

'echad

Meaning

one

Deuteronomy 6:4

Word

אֶחָד

Say it

'echad

Meaning	one
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Where	Deuteronomy 6:4
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The Shema confesses that Yahweh is one. Christians keep that confession and also receive the fuller revelation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus says disciples are baptised into the singular name of the three.

Three Scriptures

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

“Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one! You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

The Trinity is never a denial of monotheism. Christians confess one God and love Him with the whole life.

Matthew 3:16-17

And after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him, and behold, there was a voice out of the heavens saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

At Jesus’ baptism the Son stands in the water, the Spirit descends, and the Father speaks His delight.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The singular name and the threefold naming give the church its baptismal confession and mission.

Why it unites us

Every evangelical tradition confesses one God eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is not a denominational accent. It is the shared grammar of Christian worship, baptism, prayer, salvation and mission.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. I

Article I confesses one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions, and names Father, Son and Holy Spirit as of one substance, power and eternity.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 2

Westminster confesses one only living and true God and, in the unity of the Godhead, three persons of one substance, power and eternity.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 2

The 1689 confession follows the same trinitarian pattern, confessing Father, Word or Son, and Holy Spirit as one God.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. I

Methodist Article I confesses the one living and true God and the three persons of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH 2

Assemblies of God doctrine confesses the one true God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinction of persons and unity of being.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS STATEMENT OF FAITH

"We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Where Christians differ

Language and analogies

Christians use terms such as person, essence and relation to guard biblical truth. Analogies such as water, egg or sun usually fail because they slide into error. Use them sparingly, then return to Scripture.

Why it does not divide us. Careful language differs across churches and writers, but evangelical churches share the confession of one God in three persons.

Prayer to the Spirit

Some believers usually pray to the Father through the Son by the Spirit. Others also address the Spirit directly in worship and prayer. Since the Spirit is fully God, direct prayer to Him is fitting, though Scripture's usual pattern should shape us.

Why it does not divide us. The difference concerns devotional pattern, not the deity or personhood of the Spirit.

Roles in the Godhead

Debates about eternal functional subordination became prominent in 2016. Some argued for eternal roles of authority and submission. Others warned that this risks confusing relations with inequality.

Why it does not divide us. Evangelicals remain together by confessing the full deity, equality and unity of Father, Son and Spirit, while speaking carefully about the Son's incarnate obedience.

Where the line is. Denial of the Trinity places a teaching outside evangelical Christianity. This includes Oneness theology, Unitarianism, and Jehovah's Witness teaching that denies the full deity of the Son.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, and Spirit-filled in life. We worship the one God who has made Himself known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We gladly pray to the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit, baptise disciples in the triune name, and seek fellowship with the God who first sought us.

† Christ connection

Jesus does not merely teach us about the Trinity from a distance. He brings us into the Father's love and gives us the Spirit. At His baptism the Father delights in the Son and the Spirit rests upon Him. In the Great Commission the risen Son sends His church under the one name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

🕒 From church history

325

From church history

Nicaea and Athanasius

The Council of Nicaea met in 325 to answer teaching that treated the Son as a created being. The church confessed that the Son is of one being with the Father. Athanasius later spent decades defending that truth through exile and pressure. His stand reminds us that the deity of Christ is not a fine point for specialists. It is the truth that makes Christian worship and salvation possible.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“"What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God."

J.I. Packer

Knowing God (1973)

The Trinity is personal knowledge of the living God.

“"Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord."

J.I. Packer

Knowing God (1973)

Doctrine leads to communion and reorders the whole life.

“"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

A.W. Tozer

The Knowledge of the Holy (1961)

A false view of God reshapes everything downstream.

“"true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father"

Nicene Creed

Creed of 381

The creed guards the full deity of the Son.

Köstenberger and Swain trace the Bible's trinitarian shape through the Father's sending, the Son's mission and the Spirit's witness.

Köstenberger and Swain

Father, Son and Spirit (2008)

Their work helps connect doctrine to the storyline of Scripture.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Worship:** praise the Father, Son and Spirit as the one God.
- ◆ **Prayer:** come to the Father through Jesus with the Spirit's help.
- ◆ **Identity:** remember that baptism placed you under the triune name.
- ◆ **Relationship:** knowing God is communion, not theory only.

💡 Memory verse

Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one!

Deuteronomy 6:4 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Memorise Deuteronomy 6:4 and say it before prayer each morning.
- ☐ Read Matthew 3:16-17 and name what each divine person is doing.
- ☐ Begin one prayer with praise to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Discussion questions

- 1 What part of the Trinity has felt most confusing to you?
- 2 How does Jesus' baptism help you see Father, Son and Spirit together?
- 3 How should the triune name shape baptism and mission?
- 4 What difference does it make that knowing God is relational?

My notes

Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What does יְהוָה אֱחָד , 'echad, do in Deuteronomy 6:4?

- ☐ A It names the Holy Spirit directly
- ☐ B It confesses that Yahweh is one
- ☐ C It proves the Trinity from Hebrew grammar alone
- ☐ D It means God is one person only

2. Which event in 325 helped the church confess the full deity of the Son?

- ☐ A The 1916 Assemblies of God council
- ☐ B The Lausanne Congress
- ☐ C The Council of Nicaea
- ☐ D The Reformation in Wittenberg

3. What do the major evangelical traditions agree about God?

- ☐ A There is one God eternally known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- ☐ B The Spirit is mainly God's power in action
- ☐ C The Trinity is a useful picture but not a boundary doctrine
- ☐ D The Father alone should receive worship

4. In Matthew 28:19, why does the singular “name” matter?

- ☐ **A** It joins Father, Son and Spirit in the one baptismal name
- ☐ **B** It means baptism belongs only to Jewish disciples
- ☐ **C** It removes the need to mention the Spirit
- ☐ **D** It proves the Father, Son and Spirit are the same person

5. Which teaching falls outside evangelical boundaries in this session?

- ☐ **A** Admitting that Trinity analogies are limited
- ☐ **B** Using the Nicene Creed to guard biblical language
- ☐ **C** Praying chiefly to the Father through the Son by the Spirit
- ☐ **D** Denying the full deity of the Son

03

Session 3 of 12

Humanity and Sin

Made in His image, lost in our sin

Key verse

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

GENESIS 1:27 (LSB)

The big idea

God made humanity in His image for His glory, and sin has left us guilty, corrupted and unable to rescue ourselves. Grace must come first.

Overview

The Bible gives humanity a double truth: dignity and depravity. Every person is made in the image of God. That means every neighbour, child, elderly person, unborn child, enemy and stranger has God-given worth. Human value is received from the Creator, not earned by usefulness, strength, beauty or success.

The same Bible tells the truth about our ruin. Genesis 3 shows shame, fear, hiding and blame entering the human story. Romans 3 says all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. Sin is more than mistakes. It is rebellion, corruption and guilt before the holy God.

Evangelicals agree that humans need saving grace. We differ on how to explain inherited guilt, inability and freedom, but we stand together against Pelagian optimism. We do not need advice only. We need mercy, new birth, justification and the Spirit's life.

At a glance

Four relationships: made, broken, restored

God made us for four good relationships. Sin broke every one (Genesis 3). Christ restores them.

	Made Genesis 1-2	Broken Genesis 3	Restored in Christ
God	Fellowship with God Gen 1:28; 2:16	Hides from God Gen 3:8	Reconciled to God 2 Cor 5:18
Self	Unashamed Gen 2:25	Afraid and ashamed Gen 3:10	A new creation 2 Cor 5:17
Others	One flesh Gen 2:24	Blame and conflict Gen 3:12	One new people Eph 2:15
Creation	Rule and tend Gen 1:28; 2:15	Ground cursed Gen 3:17	All things new Rev 21:5

The word in the original language

Hebrew

צלם

tselem

Meaning

image

Genesis 1:27

Word

צלם

Say it

tselem

Meaning	image
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Where	Genesis 1:27
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Tselem means image. In Genesis it tells us that humans represent God within creation. The image remains after the fall, so every person has dignity, even while every person is also a sinner in need of grace.

Three Scriptures

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, so that they will have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.”

Human dignity begins with God’s creative word. Male and female are blessed and commissioned as His image bearers.

Genesis 3:8-10

Then they heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God in the midst of the trees of the garden. Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

Sin brings fear, shame and hiding from the God who made us for fellowship.

Romans 3:21-26

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith, for a demonstration of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Paul levels every person under sin, then announces justification as God's gift through Christ.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals confess that humanity is created by God, bears His image, and has fallen into sin. We share a high view of human dignity and a serious view of human lostness. Salvation must be by grace because the human problem is deeper than ignorance or poor behaviour.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ARTS. IX AND X

Anglican doctrine teaches that original sin affects human nature and that human will cannot turn to God or do works pleasing to Him without God's grace going before.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 6

Westminster teaches that Adam's fall brought guilt, corruption and misery to humanity, leaving sinners unable to return to God apart from His saving grace.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 6

The 1689 Baptist confession closely follows Reformed teaching on the fall, original corruption and humanity's need for Christ's redemption.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ARTS. VII AND VIII

Methodist doctrine confesses original sin and the inability of fallen humanity to turn to God without preventing, or prevenient, grace.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH 4

Assemblies of God doctrine teaches that humanity was created good and upright, but by voluntary transgression fell and now needs salvation through Christ.

LAUSANNE COVENANT AND NAE STATEMENT

Global evangelical statements confess human lostness and sin, the need for regeneration by the Spirit, and salvation through the grace of God in Christ.

Where Christians differ

Original guilt and corruption

Reformed theology often speaks of Adam as federal head, so his guilt and corruption involve the whole race. Wesleyan-Arminian theology strongly affirms inherited corruption and the need for grace, and often explains guilt with more care around personal responsibility and prevenient grace.

Why it does not divide us. Both reject Pelagian confidence in unaided human ability and confess that grace must come first.

Human inability and free will

Calvinists usually describe fallen people as unable to come unless God grants effectual grace. Arminians describe enabling grace that genuinely frees a response and can be resisted. Our church's emphasis is enabling, resistible grace.

Why it does not divide us. Both traditions confess that sinners do not save themselves and that salvation is by grace through Christ.

Genesis 1 and the age of the earth

Evangelicals read Genesis 1 and 2 with several views on days, age and literary structure. Some hold young-earth creation, some old-earth creation, and some other conservative readings.

Why it does not divide us. The essential confession is that God created humanity in His image and that sin is real. Christians can remain united while leaving the age question open.

Where the line is. Pelagianism sits outside evangelical faith because it says humans can obey and come to God without saving grace. Scripture says sinners need God's gracious initiative, Christ's redemption and the Spirit's life.

Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, and Spirit-filled in life. We hold dignity and depravity together. Every person bears God's image, so we honour life. Every person has sinned, so we preach grace. We call for real repentance because the Spirit gives real help, and grace comes before the human response.

† Christ connection

Jesus is the true image of God and the Saviour of ruined image bearers. He entered our humanity without sin, died for sinners, and gives righteousness as a gift. In Him, God restores what sin has defaced and begins the new creation by the Spirit.

🕒 From church history

early 400s

From church history

Augustine and Pelagius

In the early fifth century Augustine opposed Pelagius, who stressed human ability so strongly that grace became assistance for people who could obey without saving renewal. Augustine insisted that sin reaches deeper than bad examples and that God's grace must awaken, forgive and heal. Evangelicals do not agree on every detail of Augustine's account, but they stand with him that sinners need grace before they can come home.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“"you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

Augustine

Confessions (c. 400)

Augustine captures humanity's created direction toward God.

“"The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man."

John Stott

The Cross of Christ (1986)

This gives a sharp gospel contrast between sin and substitution.

“We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”

Timothy Keller

The Meaning of Marriage (2011)

This helps hold honest sin and gospel comfort together.

“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question 1 (1647)

Human purpose is Godward before it is self-defined.

Moo treats Romans 5 as Paul’s account of Adam’s sin bringing death and condemnation into the human story, with Christ answering Adam’s ruin by grace.

Douglas Moo

Romans commentary

His work helps explain why Paul sees sin as both personal and corporate.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Honour:** treat every person as an image bearer, including the weak and unseen.
- ◆ **Honesty:** stop minimising sin as personality, background or mistake only.
- ◆ **Hope:** bring guilt and shame to Christ, where grace is given as a gift.
- ◆ **Humility:** remember that grace came before your response.

💡 Memory verse

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 3:23 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Memorise the Romans 3:23 excerpt, then read Romans 3:21-26 for the gospel answer.
- ☐ Choose one person you find hard to honour and pray for them as an image bearer.
- ☐ Confess one sin plainly to God without excuse, and thank Him for grace in Christ.

💬 Discussion questions

- 1 Where do you see human dignity denied in everyday life?
- 2 Why is it hard to hold dignity and depravity together?
- 3 How does Genesis 3 describe sin's effect on relationship with God?
- 4 How does Romans 3 move from universal sin to gospel hope?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What does תְּסֵלֶם, tselem, teach in Genesis 1:27?

- ☐ A The image depends on intelligence or strength
- ☐ B The fall removed all human dignity
- ☐ C Human beings are made as God's image bearers
- ☐ D Only rulers and priests represent God

2. Which early controversy helps explain why evangelicals reject unaided human ability?

- ☐ A Augustine against Pelagius
- ☐ B Tyndale against English bishops
- ☐ C Athanasius against Arius
- ☐ D Wesley at Aldersgate

3. What do evangelical traditions share in their teaching on humanity and sin?

- ☐ A They confess human dignity, the fall into sin and the need for saving grace
- ☐ B They all define original guilt in the same way
- ☐ C They all make creation chronology the centre of the doctrine
- ☐ D They deny that fallen people remain morally responsible

4. What does Genesis 3:8-10 highlight after the first sin?

- ☐ A Adam and Eve seek God with confidence
- ☐ B The image of God is no longer mentioned anywhere
- ☐ C Fear, shame and hiding enter the human story
- ☐ D Human culture immediately disappears

5. What emphasis on grace and response best fits this session?

- ☐ A Grace removes the need to call people to repent
- ☐ B Grace enables a real response and can be resisted
- ☐ C Original sin means image bearers no longer have value
- ☐ D Human beings begin salvation by unaided free will

04

Session 4 of 12

The Person of Christ

Fully God, fully man

Key verse

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

JOHN 1:14 (LSB)

The big idea

God has come to us in His Son. Jesus is fully God, fully man, and the only Saviour able to reveal the Father, stand with sinners, and bring us home.

Overview

Christians begin with Jesus Christ. The eternal Word who was with God and was God took real human flesh. He entered our history, weakness, temptation, grief, and death. In Him, God has come close enough to be seen, touched, rejected, crucified, and worshipped.

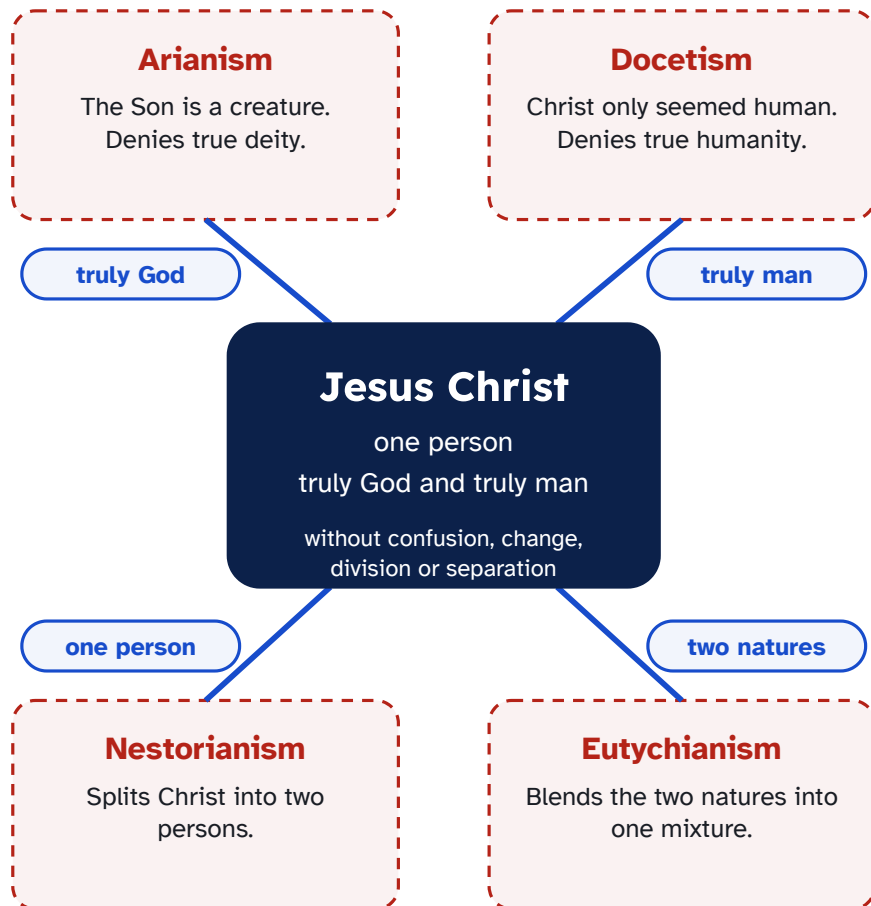
Every evangelical tradition confesses this together. Jesus is truly God and truly man. If He is less than God, He cannot reveal God or save us. If He is less than man, He cannot stand in our place. The wonder of the incarnation is that the Son did both. He came as Israel's Messiah, fulfilled the promises, gave His life as a ransom, and rose as Lord.

This truth keeps devotion warm and doctrine straight. We worship Jesus, trust Jesus, follow Jesus, and read Scripture with Jesus at the centre. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God pitched His tent in our neighbourhood.

At a glance

Guarding the truth about Jesus

The Council of Chalcedon (451) set four guard rails around the person of Christ. Each corner names an error the church rejected.



The Definition of Chalcedon, AD 451

The word in the original language

Greek

ὁ λόγος σὰρξ
ἐγένετο ...
ἐσκήνωσεν

ho logos sarx egeneto ...
eskēnōsen

Meaning

the Word became flesh ...
tabernacled

John 1:14

Word	ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο ... ἐσκήνωσεν
Say it	ho logos sarx egeneto ... eskēnōsen
Meaning	the Word became flesh ... tabernacled
Where	John 1:14

John says the eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The verb for dwelt echoes the tabernacle, the place where Yahweh lived among His covenant people.

Three Scriptures

John 1:1-5, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John gives both sides at once: the Word is God, and the Word became flesh. The tabernacle echo says that Yahweh has come among His people in Jesus.

Philippians 2:5-11

Have this way of thinking in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Son's humility is voluntary and saving. His exaltation means the crucified Jesus receives the worship due to the Lord.

Colossians 1:15-20

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created... And He is before all things, And in Him all things hold together... For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross

Paul presents Christ as creator, sustainer, head of the church, and reconciler. The fullness of God dwells in Him.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals across the traditions stand together here because the gospel depends on who Jesus is. The Son who saves is no creature and no apparition. He is the eternal Son made man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, sinless, crucified, risen, exalted, and coming again.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. II

The Son, the Word of the Father, took human nature in the womb of Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, Godhead and manhood, were joined in one person, Jesus Christ.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 8

The eternal Son took upon Himself true humanity, with a reasonable soul and true body, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, yet without sin.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 8

The mediator is the Son of God, who took human nature with all its essential properties and common weaknesses, yet without sin, so that He is very God and very man.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. II

The Son, the Word of the Father, took human nature, so that Godhead and manhood were joined together in one Christ who suffered, died, and rose for our reconciliation.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS, 3

Pentecostals confess the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, atoning work, bodily resurrection, exaltation, and future return.

LAUSANNE COVENANT, §3

Global evangelicals confess Jesus Christ as uniquely God incarnate, the only mediator between God and humanity, whose saving work is sufficient for the whole world.

Where Christians differ

The kenosis

Christians debate how to explain the phrase emptied Himself in Philippians 2. Classic evangelical teaching says the Son did not cease to be God. He humbled Himself by taking the form of a servant and accepting the path of obedience.

Why it does not divide us. The shared confession remains firm: Jesus is fully God and fully man. Careful discussion of how His humility works belongs inside that confession.

Impeccability

Some evangelicals stress that Jesus was genuinely tempted and truly obeyed. Others add that, as the holy Son, He could not have sinned. Both sides want to honour Hebrews 4:15 and the sinlessness of Christ.

Why it does not divide us. The boundary is Christ's real temptation and complete sinlessness. Evangelicals can discuss the mode of His temptation while worshipping the same Saviour.

Devotional style

Some churches express Christ-centred devotion through hymns, liturgy, creed, and sacrament. Others use contemporary songs, testimony, and spontaneous prayer.

Why it does not divide us. The style varies, but the centre is shared. Jesus Christ receives worship, trust, obedience, and proclamation.

Where the line is. Denial of Christ's full deity or full humanity breaks the gospel. Arianism, Jehovah's Witness teaching, adoptionism, and docetism give the church a different Jesus from the apostles' Christ.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life. We confess Jesus as the eternal Son made flesh, Israel's Messiah and the Lord of the church. We gladly say Yeshua when we want to remember His Jewish story, and Jesus when we speak to our neighbours. The Spirit makes much of Him, and so do we.

† Christ connection

Every session in this study bends toward Christ, and this session names why. Jesus is the centre because He is the one in whom God has come, spoken, saved, and reigned. The names of God, the tabernacle, the covenants, the sacrifices, and the promises find their living face in Him.

🕒 From church history

451

From church history

Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon gave the church careful language for confessing what Scripture teaches about Christ. It did not explain away the mystery. It guarded it. Jesus is one person in two natures, fully divine and fully human, without mixing the natures, changing them, dividing the person, or separating the natures. That boundary still helps ordinary believers worship the real Christ.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.

C.S. Lewis

Mere Christianity (1952)

Lewis presses the claim of Jesus beyond vague admiration.

“true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father

Nicene Creed

Creed of Constantinople (381)

The creed protects the full deity of the Son.

“truly God and truly man ... in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation

Definition of Chalcedon

Council of Chalcedon (451)

Chalcedon gives the church guardrails for faithful worship.

Köstenberger presents John's Gospel as a sustained witness that Jesus reveals the Father and shares the divine identity.

Andreas Köstenberger

A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters

This helps connect John 1:14 with the whole Gospel.

Driscoll and Breshears present the incarnation in accessible categories, stressing that the Saviour must be both God and man.

Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears

Vintage Jesus; Doctrine

Useful for simple explanation of why the Saviour must be both God and man.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Worship:** speak to Jesus as Lord and God with reverence and joy.
- ◆ **Trust:** bring your weakness to the Son who knows temptation from the inside.
- ◆ **Bible reading:** ask how each text leads to Christ, without forcing details the text does not give.
- ◆ **Witness:** present Jesus as more than a helper. He is God the Son and the only Saviour.

Memory verse

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read John 1:1-18 slowly and mark every claim about the Word.
- ☐ Memorise John 1:14, or the phrase And the Word became flesh.
- ☐ Pray one short prayer each morning: Lord Jesus, show me Your glory and make me faithful.

Discussion questions

- 1 Which part of John 1:14 most strengthens your worship of Jesus?
- 2 Why is it good news that Jesus knows human weakness from the inside?
- 3 Where do people around us admire Jesus while avoiding His claim to be Lord?
- 4 How can our group read Scripture with Christ at the centre this week?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. In John 1:14, what does the tabernacle echo in dwelt help us see?

- ☐ A God's covenant presence has come among His people in the Word made flesh
- ☐ B Jesus replaces Israel with a new ethnic nation
- ☐ C John is mainly describing the temple building in Jerusalem
- ☐ D The incarnation was only a temporary vision of glory

2. Which council is linked with the phrase truly God and truly man?

- ☐ A Dort
- ☐ B Trent
- ☐ C Chalcedon
- ☐ D Vatican I

3. What does emptied Himself mean in Philippians 2 in classic evangelical teaching?

- ☐ **A** The Son humbled Himself by taking servant form
- ☐ **B** The Son became a second divine person after Bethlehem
- ☐ **C** The Son stopped being divine for a time
- ☐ **D** The Son exchanged deity for humanity

4. Which error denies Christ's real humanity?

- ☐ **A** Docetism, which treats Christ's humanity as appearance
- ☐ **B** Modalism, which confuses Father and Son
- ☐ **C** Adoptionism, which treats Jesus as later adopted as Son
- ☐ **D** Arianism, which treats the Son as a creature

5. What do the evangelical traditions agree about in this session?

- ☐ **A** Christ's humanity matters mainly as a model for leadership
- ☐ **B** Christ is fully God and fully man, conceived by the Spirit, crucified, risen, and exalted
- ☐ **C** Only churches with formal creeds can confess Christ rightly
- ☐ **D** Every tradition explains the kenosis in the same technical way

05

Session 5 of 12

The Cross

Christ died for us

Key verse

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might bring you to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

1 PETER 3:18 (LSB)

The big idea

God saves sinners through the atoning death of Christ. At the cross, the righteous one dies for the unrighteous so that He might bring us to God.

Overview

The cross stands at the centre of evangelical faith because Scripture places it there. Jesus did not only teach, heal, and inspire. He died for sins. The righteous one stood in the place of the unrighteous. God judged sin and opened the way home.

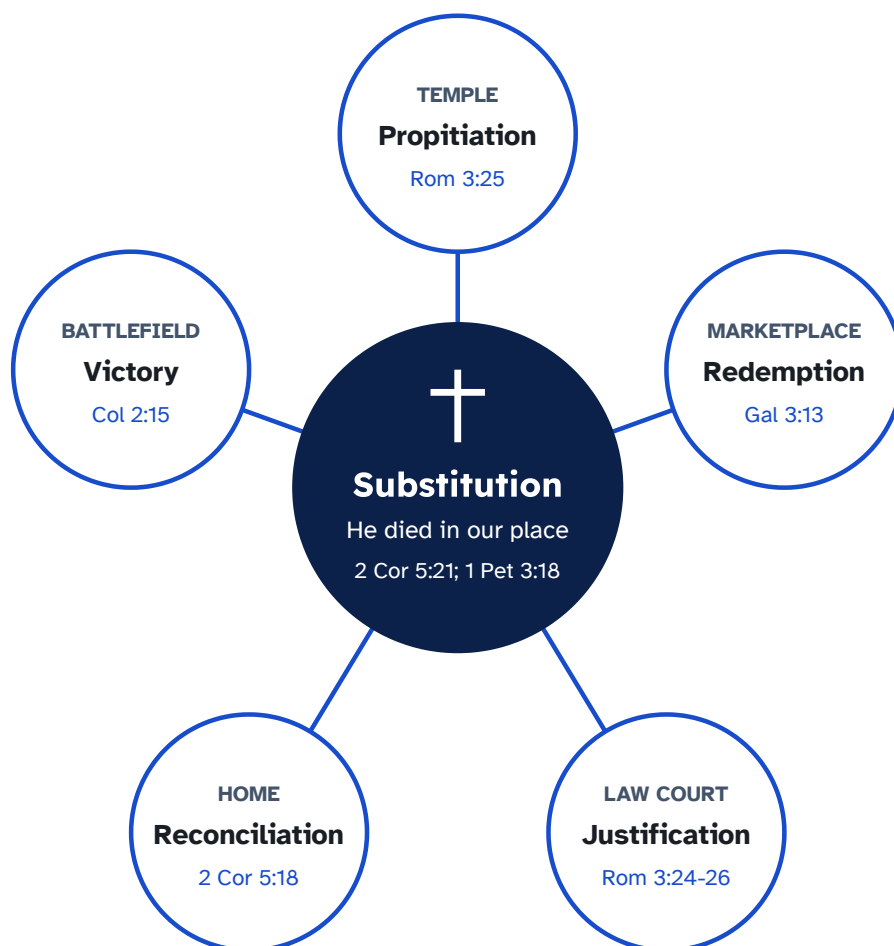
The Bible gives us a rich set of pictures for the cross: sacrifice, propitiation, redemption, reconciliation, victory, ransom, and example. Evangelicals welcome the whole biblical range, while keeping substitution at the heart. Christ died for us. He bore the judgement we deserved and gave the righteousness we could never produce.

This is why grace comes first. We do not climb to God with religious effort. God comes to us in the crucified Christ. The New Covenant is sealed in His blood, and guilty people receive forgiveness, peace, and a new life of gratitude.

At a glance

The cross from every angle

Scripture describes the cross with pictures from the temple, the marketplace, the law court, the home and the battlefield. Substitution sits at the centre of them all. (After John Stott, The Cross of Christ.)



Pictures of the cross from five settings of life

The word in the original language

Greek

ἱλαστήριον;
ὕπέρ

hilastērion; hyper

Meaning

propitiation or mercy seat;
on behalf of

Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Word	ἱλαστήριον; ὑπέρ
Say it	hilastērion; hyper
Meaning	propitiation or mercy seat; on behalf of
Where	Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Hilastērion points to sacrifice and the mercy seat, where sin is dealt with before God. Hyper means on behalf of, helping us see the personal substitution in Christ's death.

Three Scriptures

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely our griefs He Himself bore... Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our peace fell upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But Yahweh has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

The servant suffers for the sins of others. The language is personal, substitutionary, and healing.

Romans 3:21-26

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith, for a demonstration of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Paul shows how God remains just and justifies sinners. The cross displays God's righteousness and grace together.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This is one of the clearest summaries of substitution. The sinless Christ acts on our behalf so that we receive righteousness in Him.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals may explain aspects of the atonement with different accents, but they unite in confessing that Christ's death is a real, saving sacrifice for sin. His blood is New Covenant blood, His death is on our behalf, and His cross is the only ground of forgiveness.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. XXXI

Christ's offering of Himself once made is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 8.5

The Lord Jesus, by perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, satisfied divine justice and purchased reconciliation and eternal inheritance for those given to Him by the Father.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 8

Christ, by His obedience and sacrifice, fully satisfied the justice of God, obtained reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance for all those the Father has given Him.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. XX

The one offering of Christ is a perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS, 5

Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood provides redemption and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

DAVID BEBBINGTON, EVANGELICALISM IN MODERN BRITAIN

"conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross."

Where Christians differ

Extent of the atonement

Reformed evangelicals often teach particular redemption, saying Christ died with saving intent for the elect. Many Arminian and Wesleyan evangelicals teach general atonement, saying Christ died for all and salvation is received through faith.

Why it does not divide us. Both confess that salvation is by Christ's blood alone and that every saved person is saved through His atoning death. The gospel can be offered freely to every hearer.

Atonement models

Evangelicals speak of penal substitution, Christus Victor, ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, and moral example. The debate is about order and centre.

Why it does not divide us. Scripture uses the full range. Evangelicals keep substitution central while gladly preaching Christ's victory and the example of His self-giving love.

Public controversy

Some modern voices object that penal substitution makes the cross sound abusive. The 2003 UK controversy around Steve Chalke brought this into public evangelical debate.

Why it does not divide us. This conversation needs careful handling. The boundary is any denial that Christ's death was a real atoning sacrifice for sin.

Where the line is. A view that denies Christ's death as a real atoning sacrifice for sin falls outside evangelical faith. The cross is not only a tragic example or a political symbol. It is God's saving act for sinners.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life. We preach grace first. The cross is where the covenants meet: promise, sacrifice, priesthood, kingdom, and New Covenant blood. Christ died for all, and the gospel can be offered freely to all. Every response of repentance and faith is enabled by grace.

† Christ connection

The cross is Christ's work for us. He is the priest and the sacrifice, the servant and the king, the Passover Lamb and the mercy seat. At Calvary, Yeshua gives His life as a ransom and opens the New Covenant in His blood.

🕒 From church history

1707

From church history

Isaac Watts and the wondrous cross

Isaac Watts helped English-speaking churches sing the cross with both doctrine and affection. When I Survey the Wondrous Cross invited believers to contemplate the death of Christ with awe, repentance, and love. Its lasting place in evangelical worship shows that the cross is never mere theory. It becomes song, surrender, and grateful obedience.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man.

John Stott

The Cross of Christ (1986)

Stott gives a memorable summary of substitution.

“I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross.

John Stott

The Cross of Christ (1986)

The cross reveals God's holiness and love together.

“I have a great need for Christ; I have a great Christ for my need.

C.H. Spurgeon

Attributed

This fits the personal comfort of the atonement.

“We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.

Timothy Keller

The Meaning of Marriage (2011)

The cross tells the truth about sin and love.

Moo treats Romans 3 as Paul's dense account of God's righteousness displayed through Christ's atoning death.

Douglas Moo

Romans commentary

Helpful for explaining propitiation and justification.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Assurance:** look to Christ's finished work when conscience accuses you.

- ◆ **Repentance:** name sin honestly because the cross has already told the truth about it.
- ◆ **Forgiveness:** forgive others from the place of mercy received.
- ◆ **Worship:** let the cross shape your songs, prayers, generosity, and witness.

💡 Memory verse

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read Isaiah 53:4-6 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 on three different days.
- ☐ Write one sentence beginning, Christ died for me, and turn it into prayer.
- ☐ Share with one Christian friend how the cross gives you assurance this week.

💬 Discussion questions

- 1 Which cross picture in Scripture most helps you: sacrifice, ransom, victory, reconciliation, or exchange?
- 2 How does 2 Corinthians 5:21 speak to a guilty conscience?
- 3 Where do you need to receive grace before trying to change?
- 4 How can we speak about the cross clearly and warmly to a neighbour?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What is the key claim of 1 Peter 3:18?

- ☐ A Christ's death mainly shows Rome's injustice
- ☐ B Christ suffered for sins once for all to bring us to God
- ☐ C Christ's suffering was only one sacrifice among many continuing sacrifices
- ☐ D Christ's death teaches courage without dealing with sin

2. What does hilastērion in Romans 3:25 point toward?

- ☐ A A general word for human forgiveness between neighbours
- ☐ B Propitiation and the mercy seat
- ☐ C A word Paul uses mainly for baptism
- ☐ D The Roman practice of cancelling legal penalties

3. Which hymn writer is linked with When I Survey the Wondrous Cross?

- ☐ A Isaac Watts in the early eighteenth century
- ☐ B John Newton after writing Amazing Grace
- ☐ C Fanny Crosby in the nineteenth century
- ☐ D Charles Wesley in the Methodist revival

4. How do evangelicals best relate penal substitution, Christus Victor, and moral example?

- ☐ A They choose one picture and discard the others
- ☐ B They keep victory central and avoid substitution language
- ☐ C They keep substitution central while welcoming the other biblical pictures
- ☐ D They treat all pictures as useful but unrelated

5. What do the evangelical traditions agree about in this session?

A Every tradition teaches the same extent of the atonement

B The cross matters chiefly as a display of courage

C Christ's death is a real atoning sacrifice for sin

D Only one tradition preserves cross-centred preaching

06

Session 6 of 12

The Resurrection

He is risen

Key verse

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4 (LSB)

The big idea

God raised Jesus from the dead bodily and exalted Him as Lord. His resurrection vindicates the cross, begins the new creation, and empowers obedience now.

Overview

The gospel does not end at the cross. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. The apostles preached a bodily resurrection, witnessed by many, and they staked everything on it. If Christ has not been raised, faith is worthless. But Christ has been raised.

Resurrection means more than life after death. Jesus is the firstfruits of the coming harvest. His risen body is the beginning of the new creation, and His people will share His future. The tomb is empty, the risen Lord reigns, and death has lost its final claim.

The resurrection also changes Monday morning. The Spirit who raised Jesus dwells in believers. Resurrection power enables new obedience, steady hope, and mission with courage. The risen and ascended Christ intercedes for us and reigns until every enemy is under His feet.

At a glance

The earliest creed and its witnesses

Paul hands on a summary of the gospel he received, with a list of named witnesses, most of whom were still alive to be asked (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

THE GOSPEL

- **Christ died for our sins**
according to the Scriptures · v. 3
- **He was buried**
v. 4
- **He was raised on the third day**
according to the Scriptures · v. 4

THE WITNESSES

- **He appeared to Cephas**
v. 5
- **then to the Twelve**
v. 5
- **to more than five hundred at once**
most still alive when Paul wrote · v. 6
- **to James**
v. 7
- **to all the apostles**
v. 7
- **last of all, to Paul**
v. 8

Christ the firstfruits

the first of a harvest: all who are His (1 Cor 15:20, 23)

The word in the original language

Greek

ἀπαρχή

aparchē

Meaning

firstfruits

1 Corinthians 15:20

Word	ἀπαρχή
-------------	--------

Say it	aparchē
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Meaning	firstfruits
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Where	1 Corinthians 15:20
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Firstfruits were the first part of the harvest given to God. Paul calls Jesus the firstfruits because His resurrection begins the harvest that will include all who belong to Him.

Three Scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. After that, He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

Paul passes on a received gospel summary with death, burial, resurrection, and witnesses. The resurrection is public apostolic testimony.

Acts 2:32-36

This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which you both see and hear... Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ

Peter joins resurrection, ascension, the gift of the Spirit, and the reign of Jesus as Lord and Christ.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

The resurrection is not only future hope. Union with the risen Christ means newness of life now.

Why it unites us

Every evangelical tradition confesses the bodily resurrection of Christ, His ascension, His present reign, and the future resurrection of the dead. Without this, the cross is not vindicated, the gospel is not apostolic, and Christian hope dissolves.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. IV

Christ truly rose again from death, took again His body, ascended into heaven, and sits there until He returns to judge all people at the last day.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 8.4

On the third day Christ rose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered, ascended into heaven, and intercedes at the Father's right hand.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 8

Christ was crucified, died, was buried, remained under death briefly, and rose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. III

Christ truly rose again, took His body again, ascended into heaven, and remains there until He returns to judge all people.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS, 3

Pentecostals confess Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead, exaltation to the right hand of God, and personal future return.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS, STATEMENT OF FAITH

Global evangelicals confess the bodily resurrection of Jesus, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.

Where Christians differ

Resurrection body

Evangelicals agree that Jesus rose bodily and that believers will be raised bodily. They differ on details of continuity and transformation in the resurrection body.

Why it does not divide us. Paul gives both continuity and transformation. The exact mechanics can remain humble while the bodily hope stays firm.

Ascension language

Some traditions emphasise the ascension through creeds and liturgy. Others speak more often of the resurrection and return. Pentecostals often connect ascension with the outpouring of the Spirit.

Why it does not divide us. Acts 2 and Hebrews 7 keep these truths together. The risen Christ is exalted, reigning, interceding, and pouring out the Spirit.

Apologetic method

Some Christians focus on historical evidence for the empty tomb and witnesses. Others begin with the biblical storyline and apostolic proclamation.

Why it does not divide us. Both can serve faith when Scripture governs the message. The shared confession is that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Where the line is. Denial of the bodily resurrection places someone outside evangelical faith. A purely spiritual or symbolic reading cannot account for the empty tomb, the apostolic witness, or Paul's claim that our faith depends on Christ being raised.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life. We confess the bodily resurrection and present reign of Jesus. The Spirit who raised Him gives life to us now. What Christ commands, He empowers. Baptism publicly pictures union with His death and resurrection, and obedience flows from resurrection life.

† Christ connection

The risen Christ is the same Jesus who was crucified, now vindicated, exalted, and reigning. His ascension means He is not absent. He is enthroned, interceding, pouring out the Spirit, and leading His church until He comes again.

🕒 From church history

c. AD 30s

From church history

The early resurrection creed

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 Paul says he delivered what he had received: Christ died, was buried, was raised, and appeared. Many scholars date this summary to within a few years of the crucifixion, because Paul received it early and passes it on as recognised tradition. That does not prove faith by itself, but it shows that resurrection proclamation belongs to the earliest Christian message.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'

Abraham Kuyper

Inaugural address, Free University of Amsterdam (1880)

The risen and ascended Christ reigns over all of life.

“Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither.

C.S. Lewis

Mere Christianity (1952)

Resurrection hope reorders earthly life.

Wright argues that the early Christian claim was bodily resurrection and new creation, not a vague hope of souls escaping the world.

N.T. Wright

The Resurrection of the Son of God; Surprised by Hope

Helpful for correcting thin ideas of heaven.

Köstenberger and Kruger present the early apostolic message as centred on the risen Christ and faithfully transmitted in the church's earliest witness.

Andreas Köstenberger and Michael Kruger

The Heresy of Orthodoxy

Useful for the early creed and reliability discussion.

Stott treats the resurrection as God's decisive vindication of Jesus and the foundation of Christian assurance and mission.

John Stott

Basic Christianity; The Cross of Christ

This connects doctrine with personal trust.

✨ Living it out

- ◆ **Hope:** face death as an enemy already defeated by Christ.
- ◆ **Obedience:** walk in newness of life through union with the risen Lord.
- ◆ **Mission:** speak with courage because Jesus is Lord and Christ.
- ◆ **Endurance:** labour in the Lord knowing your work is not empty.

💡 Memory verse

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 and 15:17-20 aloud twice.
- ☐ Memorise 1 Corinthians 15:20 and thank God for the harvest to come.
- ☐ Choose one command of Jesus and pray for resurrection power to obey it today.

Discussion questions

- 1 Why does Paul say Christian faith is worthless if Christ has not been raised?
- 2 How does firstfruits language change the way you think about death?
- 3 Where do you need resurrection power for obedience this week?
- 4 How should the ascended reign of Jesus shape our courage in mission?

My notes

Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What does aparchē, firstfruits, teach in 1 Corinthians 15:20?

- ☐ A Christ's resurrection replaces the need for future bodily hope
- ☐ B Christ's resurrection begins the harvest that will include His people
- ☐ C Christ's resurrection is only the first inspiring Easter sermon
- ☐ D Christ's resurrection belongs only to Israel's festival calendar

2. Which passage links resurrection, ascension, the Spirit, and Jesus being made Lord and Christ?

- ☐ A Acts 2:32-36
- ☐ B Romans 6:4
- ☐ C Luke 24:39
- ☐ D 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

3. What boundary does this session name?

- ☐ A Disagreement about details of the resurrection body
- ☐ B Different ways of explaining the ascension
- ☐ C Different emphases on apologetics and biblical theology
- ☐ D Denial of the bodily resurrection

4. What does Romans 6:4 connect to resurrection?

- ☐ **A** Walking in newness of life
- ☐ **B** The timing of the Feast of Firstfruits
- ☐ **C** The end of every struggle with temptation in this life
- ☐ **D** The proof that Rome misjudged Jesus

5. What historical gem belongs to 1 Corinthians 15:3-7?

- ☐ **A** A Reformation confession about justification
- ☐ **B** A modern evangelical statement of faith
- ☐ **C** A fourth-century council definition
- ☐ **D** An early received creed or summary

07

Session 7 of 12

Justification by Faith

Right with God by grace through faith

Key verse

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, so that no one may boast.

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (LSB)

The big idea

God justifies the ungodly by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, so the believer rests in Christ's righteousness and walks in grateful obedience.

Overview

Justification answers the courtroom question every sinner faces: how can I stand before a holy God and be counted right with Him? Scripture's answer is wonderfully clear. God justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. He does this by grace, through faith, on the basis of Christ's saving work.

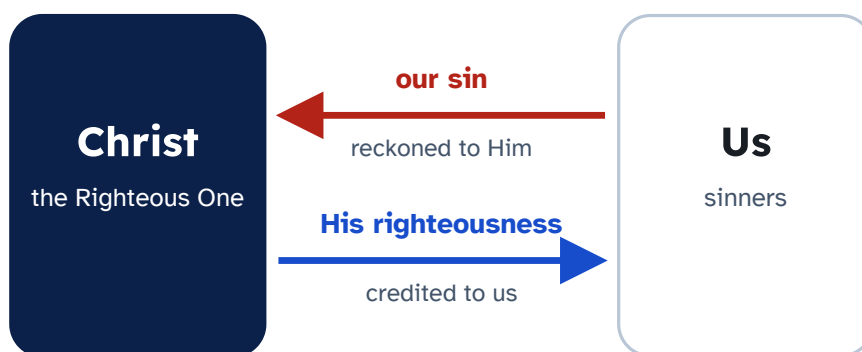
Faith is the empty hand receiving Christ. It does not earn the verdict. Good works have their proper place as fruit, witness and grateful obedience. They are never the ground of our acceptance before God. This is why evangelicals across traditions have treasured Romans, Galatians and Ephesians.

This truth creates humility and assurance. Humility, because boasting is shut out. Assurance, because the verdict rests on Jesus. The justified believer can confess sin honestly, serve gladly and face death with peace, because there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

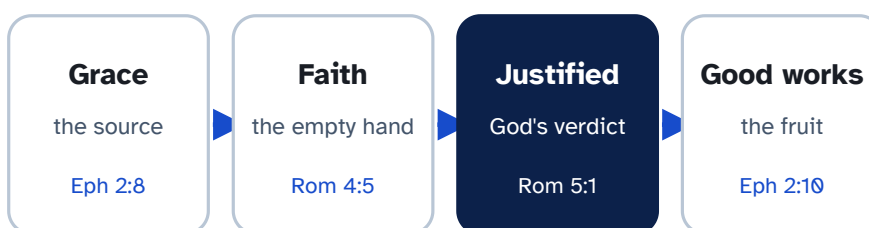
At a glance

The great exchange

At the cross our sin was reckoned to Christ, and in Him His righteousness is credited to everyone who believes. Good works follow as fruit.



2 Corinthians 5:21 · Romans 4:5 · Philippians 3:9



Faith alone saves.

Saving faith is never alone (James 2:24).

The word in the original language

Greek

δικαιόω

dikaioō

Meaning

declare righteous

Romans 4:5

Word δικαιόω

Say it dikaioō

Meaning	declare righteous
Where	Romans 4:5

The word has a courtroom feel. God declares a sinner righteous because that person is joined to Christ by faith. Paul also uses λογίζομαι, logizomai, meaning count or credit, when he explains Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3.

Three Scriptures

Genesis 15:6

Then he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.

Abraham was counted righteous through faith before Sinai and before circumcision. Paul uses this verse as a foundation for justification by faith.

Romans 4:4-5

Now to the one who works, his wage is not counted according to grace, but according to what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Paul contrasts wages with grace. The shock is that God justifies the ungodly who believe.

Philippians 3:8-9

More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith,

Paul gladly lets go of religious credentials because Christ Himself is his righteousness before God.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals confess together that sinners are accepted by God through Christ and received by faith. They may explain imputation, assurance and the relation of faith and works with different accents, but they agree that salvation is by grace and that boasting in human merit is excluded.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. XI

"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings"

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 11

Westminster teaches that God justifies freely by pardoning sins and accepting believers as righteous because of Christ, received by faith.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 11

The 1689 confession follows the Reformation pattern: justification is God's gracious act in Christ, received by faith, with obedience flowing afterward.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. IX

Methodism confesses justification through the merit of Christ by faith and links it with a living faith that produces holiness.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS, 5

Pentecostal statements place salvation in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with regeneration and renewal by the Spirit.

LAUSANNE COVENANT / GLOBAL EVANGELICAL STATEMENTS

Global evangelicals proclaim that Christ's atoning work is the only ground of salvation and that the gospel summons all people to repent and believe.

Where Christians differ

Imputation language

Reformed traditions often stress the imputed righteousness of Christ as the heart of the verdict. Wesleyan and some contemporary evangelicals may speak more in terms of pardon, union with Christ and covenant membership, while still grounding acceptance in Christ.

Why it does not divide us. The evangelical centre remains the same: God accepts sinners through Christ by faith and excludes human merit as the basis of the verdict.

New Perspective on Paul

N.T. Wright reads justification strongly within God's covenant purposes for Jew and Gentile and reads works of the law as boundary markers of the Mosaic covenant. John Piper's response defends the classic Reformation emphasis on the counted righteousness of Christ.

Why it does not divide us. These debates can be noted while resting in the shared claim that Christ saves by grace and that faith receives God's verdict.

Assurance and fruit

Wesleyan traditions often speak of the Spirit's witness with our spirit. Reformed traditions often stress God's promises and the evidences of grace. James 2:24 reminds us that saving faith is living faith.

Why it does not divide us. Faith alone saves, and saving faith bears fruit. Evangelicals can affirm both the free verdict and the transformed life.

Where the line is. A gospel that makes human merit the ground of acceptance before God falls outside evangelical faith. A gospel that detaches justification from Christ's saving work also loses the apostolic centre.

Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, and Spirit-filled in life. We receive justification as sheer grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. We call people to a real response enabled by grace, and we expect good works as the fruit God prepared for His people to walk in.

† Christ connection

Jesus is the righteous One who stands in the place of the unrighteous. In Him, God remains just and justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. Our peace rests on His blood, His resurrection and His present life before the Father.

🕒 From church history

1738

From church history

Aldersgate assurance

On 24 May 1738 John Wesley attended a meeting in Aldersgate Street while someone read Luther's preface to Romans. Wesley had been religious, disciplined and active, yet restless in conscience. That evening he came to fresh assurance that Christ had taken away his sins. The moment links Lutheran, Anglican and Methodist streams and shows how justification by faith warms doctrine into personal peace.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.”

Martin Luther

Ninety-five Theses (1517)

Luther's protest was finally about the gospel treasure God gives in Christ.

“the main hinge on which religion turns”

John Calvin

Institutes 3.11.1 (1559)

Calvin saw justification as a hinge because it shapes assurance, worship and holiness.

“I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

John Wesley

Journal, 24 May 1738

Wesley helps the class see justification as warm assurance in Christ.

Moo argues that Paul excludes works as the basis of justification and places faith in Christ at the centre of the verdict.

Douglas Moo

Romans and Galatians commentaries

A careful contemporary Pauline scholar helps keep the exegesis close to Romans and Galatians.

“I have a great need for Christ; I have a great Christ for my need.”

C.H. Spurgeon

Attributed

The line turns justification into simple dependence on a sufficient Saviour.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Assurance:** preach Romans 5:1 to your anxious conscience.
- ◆ **Humility:** let grace end the habit of comparing your righteousness with someone else's.
- ◆ **Confession:** come into the light quickly because the verdict rests on Christ.
- ◆ **Fruit:** do good works as grateful obedience, never as a wage claim before God.

Memory verse

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 5:1 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read Romans 4 slowly and underline every use of counted, faith and grace.
- ☐ Memorise Romans 5:1 and pray it over one area where shame still speaks loudly.
- ☐ Do one hidden act of service as fruit from grace, then thank God that it did not earn your standing.

Discussion questions

- 1 Where do you most feel tempted to base your peace with God on performance?
- 2 How does Romans 5:1 speak to guilt, shame or fear of judgement?
- 3 What kind of fruit should a justified life begin to show?
- 4 How can we honour both Paul and James without confusing faith and works?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. In Romans and Galatians, what does *dikaioō* mainly describe in justification texts?

- ☐ A The church publicly recognising a person's ministry
- ☐ B A believer giving evidence of faith through works
- ☐ C God declaring a sinner righteous in Christ
- ☐ D God gradually making a believer more mature

2. Which Old Testament verse does Paul use as a foundation for faith counted as righteousness?

- ☐ A Habakkuk 2:4
- ☐ B Genesis 15:6
- ☐ C Deuteronomy 6:5
- ☐ D Psalm 32:1

3. What happened to John Wesley at Aldersgate in 1738?

- ☐ A He drafted the Westminster chapter on justification
- ☐ B He received fresh assurance that Christ had taken away his sins
- ☐ C He translated Romans into English for public reading
- ☐ D He nailed theses against indulgences to a church door

4. What do the evangelical traditions in this session agree on?

- ☐ A They all settle the New Perspective debate the same way
- ☐ B They all teach the same view of eternal security
- ☐ C They confess acceptance with God through Christ by grace and received by faith
- ☐ D They all use identical wording about imputed righteousness

5. How should James 2:24 be held with Paul on justification?

- ☐ A James and Paul use the same example to teach unrelated doctrines
- ☐ B James exposes dead profession while Paul explains the ground of acceptance before God
- ☐ C James corrects Paul's overemphasis on grace by adding works as the basis
- ☐ D James speaks only about ceremonial works while Paul speaks only about moral works

08

Session 8 of 12

The New Birth

You must be born again

Key verse

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

JOHN 3:3 (LSB)

The big idea

God gives new birth by the Holy Spirit, so sinners become new creations who repent, believe and begin to grow in holiness.

Overview

Jesus tells a respected religious leader that he must be born again. Nicodemus has Scripture, status and seriousness, yet Jesus says he needs life from above. The new birth is the Spirit's direct work. It is deeper than improvement, affiliation or religious interest.

The Old Testament promised a new heart and the Spirit within God's people. John 3 shows that promise arriving in Jesus. Titus 3 says God saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. New birth begins a new creation, and sanctification grows from that new life.

Evangelicals are conversionist people. We believe lives need to be changed by God. That change may be sudden or gradual in experience, but the source is the same: the Spirit brings the sinner to life, joins us to Christ and sets us walking in repentance and faith.

At a glance

What God gives in the new birth

The new birth is the Spirit's work. Six gifts arrive together. We respond in repentance and faith, and baptism is the public sign.



The word in the original language

Greek

ἀνωθεν

anōthen

Meaning

again, from above

John 3:3, 7

Word

ἀνωθεν

Say it	anōthen
Meaning	again, from above
Where	John 3:3, 7

Jesus uses a word that can mean again and from above. Nicodemus hears it as a second physical birth, but Jesus points him to birth from the Spirit. Repentance, metanoia, is the turning of mind and life that belongs with this new life.

Three Scriptures

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to do My judgments.

God promises cleansing, a new heart and His Spirit. Jesus expects Nicodemus to know this background.

John 3:3-8

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus *said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who has been born of the Spirit.”

Jesus teaches that the new birth is necessary, heavenly and Spirit-given.

Titus 3:4-7

But when the kindness and affection of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

New birth is mercy, renewal by the Spirit and life in hope through Jesus Christ.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals agree that people need more than instruction or moral repair. They need regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Traditions differ over the order of grace and faith, baptism's relation to regeneration, and the shape of conversion experience, yet they confess the necessity of new life from God.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. XXVII AND THE HOMILIES

Anglican formularies speak of baptism as a sign of regeneration and call hearers to true repentance and lively faith. Handle the sign language carefully and do not turn it into automatic regeneration.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 10 AND 13

Westminster teaches effectual calling and sanctification by the Spirit, with new life producing growth in grace.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 10

The 1689 confession speaks of God's gracious calling by Word and Spirit, bringing sinners to life and enabling them to answer the gospel call.

METHODIST ARTICLES, ART. XVII AND WESLEY'S SERMON THE NEW BIRTH

Wesleyan teaching stresses the necessity of the new birth and the Spirit's work that leads into holiness and assurance.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS, 5

Pentecostal statements connect salvation with regeneration, renewing by the Holy Spirit and the believer's witness of new life.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS, STATEMENT OF FAITH

"We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential."

Where Christians differ

Order of regeneration and faith

Reformed evangelicals commonly teach that regeneration precedes faith. Arminian evangelicals teach prevenient grace that enables a genuine response, with regeneration given to those who believe.

Why it does not divide us. Both confess that salvation begins with God's grace and that no sinner creates new life by personal effort.

Baptism and new birth

Paedobaptist traditions may speak of baptism as sign and seal, while Baptists practise believer's baptism by immersion as the public sign of a changed heart. Some language can sound stronger than intended.

Why it does not divide us. Evangelicals reject mechanical baptismal regeneration and confess that the Spirit gives new life.

Sudden and gradual conversion

Some believers can name a day and hour. Others see a dawning awareness of faith over time. Revival traditions often highlight crisis conversion, while covenantal settings may highlight nurture.

Why it does not divide us. The evidence is Christ trusted, sin repented of and new life begun, even when the timeline is less clear.

Where the line is. A view that treats moral improvement, church background or baptism as a substitute for the Spirit's new birth falls outside the evangelical centre. Jesus says new birth is necessary for seeing the kingdom.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, and Spirit-filled in life. We proclaim the necessity of the new birth, call people to repent and believe, and practise baptism by immersion as the public sign of new life. We expect sanctification to begin where the Spirit gives life.

† Christ connection

The new birth comes through Jesus Christ our Saviour. The Spirit unites us to the crucified and risen Christ, makes us children of God and begins the new creation now. The resurrection gives living hope to everyone born again by God's mercy.

🕒 From church history

1730s-1740s

From church history

Whitefield and the new birth

George Whitefield preached the new birth across Britain and the American colonies during the Great Awakening. His hearers included churchgoers, sceptics, miners and public crowds. Whitefield pressed home that religion, morality and church connection could never replace the Spirit's life-giving work. The Great Awakening helped fix conversionism near the centre of evangelical identity.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“”I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

John Wesley

Journal, 24 May 1738

Wesley's assurance pairs naturally with the new birth and Methodist evangelical history.

“”We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.”

National Association of Evangelicals

Statement of Faith (1942)

This is a concise global evangelical summary of the session.

“conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.”

David Bebbington

Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (1989)

Conversionism explains why the new birth belongs in an essentials course.

Stott presents evangelical faith with a trinitarian shape: the Father reveals, the Son redeems, and the Spirit gives new birth and new life.

John Stott

Evangelical Truth (1999)

This keeps the session from becoming merely individual experience.

“When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The Cost of Discipleship

New birth begins a life of costly repentance and following Jesus.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Examine:** distinguish living faith from mere religious familiarity.
- ◆ **Repent:** turn toward Christ with your mind, desires and habits.
- ◆ **Grow:** treat holiness as the life of the Spirit beginning to mature.
- ◆ **Witness:** speak of new birth with warmth, patience and courage.

Memory verse

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read John 2:23-3:8 and ask God to show the difference between sign-faith and living faith.
- ☐ Memorise 2 Corinthians 5:17 and name one old pattern Christ is changing.
- ☐ Share your conversion story with one trusted Christian, including the parts that feel gradual or unfinished.

Discussion questions

- 1 Why might Nicodemus have been surprised by Jesus' words?
- 2 How would you explain the new birth to a churchgoer who thinks morality is enough?
- 3 What signs of new life have you seen in yourself or others?
- 4 How can we speak of conversion without forcing everyone's story into the same pattern?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. In John 3, what does anōthen help us hear in Jesus' words?

- ☐ A New birth that is again and from above
- ☐ B A reference only to later church baptism
- ☐ C A title for Nicodemus as Israel's senior rabbi
- ☐ D A command to repeat physical birth through ritual

2. Which Old Testament passage gives the background of cleansing, new heart and Spirit within?

- ☐ A Ezekiel 36:25-27
- ☐ B Isaiah 44:3-5
- ☐ C Joel 2:28-29
- ☐ D Jeremiah 31:31-34

3. Which figure is linked with preaching the new birth during the Great Awakening?

- ☐ **A** William J. Seymour at Azusa Street
- ☐ **B** Billy Graham at Lausanne 1974
- ☐ **C** George Whitefield across Britain and the American colonies
- ☐ **D** John Calvin in Geneva

4. What do evangelical traditions agree on in this session?

- ☐ **A** Regeneration is mainly a name for moral education
- ☐ **B** Sinners need regeneration by the Holy Spirit, not mere religious improvement
- ☐ **C** Baptism always regenerates the person who receives it
- ☐ **D** Every conversion must happen in a public crisis moment

5. What does our church emphasise about baptism and regeneration?

- ☐ **A** New birth is mainly a gradual process of moral training
- ☐ **B** Regeneration is the Spirit's work, and believer's baptism is the public sign of new life
- ☐ **C** Baptism by any church automatically gives the new birth
- ☐ **D** Baptism is only a cultural symbol with no connection to discipleship

The Holy Spirit

The Lord, the giver of life

Key verse

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

JOHN 14:16-17 (LSB)

The big idea

God gives the Holy Spirit to indwell every believer, glorify Jesus, form holiness and empower ordered witness to the ends of the earth.

Overview

The Holy Spirit is the Lord, the giver of life, the Spirit of truth whom Jesus sends from the Father. He is personal and present. Every believer belongs to Christ because the Spirit dwells in them.

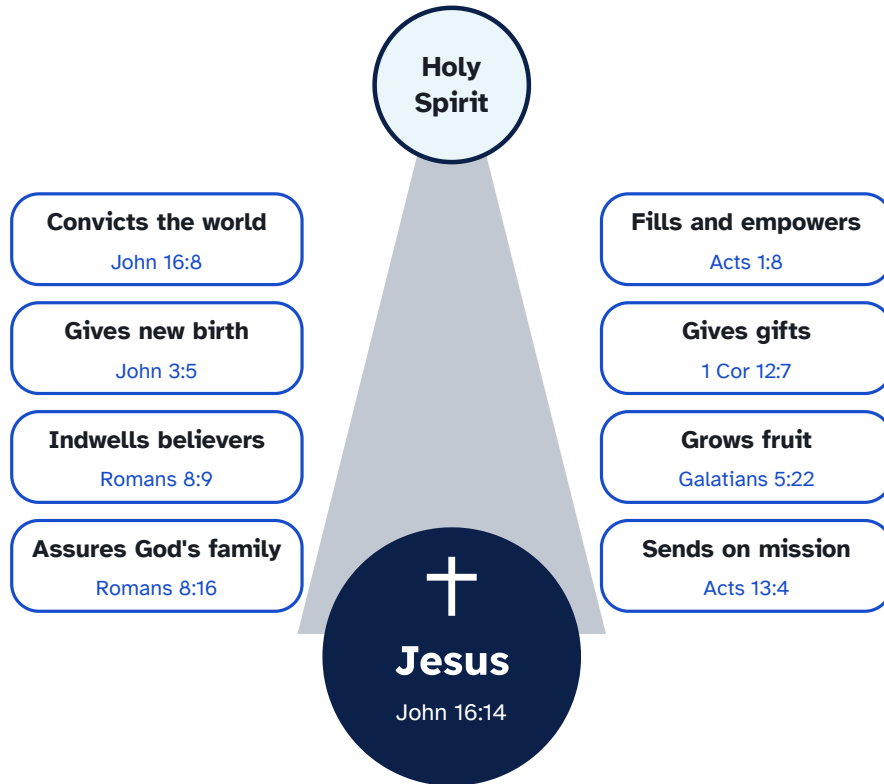
Jesus calls the Spirit another Advocate, one called alongside His people. The Spirit teaches, convicts, comforts, empowers, gives gifts and points the spotlight to Jesus. Pentecost marks the beginning of the age of the Spirit, and the church lives in that age now.

Evangelicals differ over the gifts, Spirit baptism and tongues, but they stand together on the Spirit's deity, personhood and present ministry. Our desire is Spirit-filled life without showmanship: Scripture-tested, Christ-exalting, ordered in love and bold in mission.

At a glance

The floodlight on Jesus

The Spirit does many works, and each one shines the light on Jesus (John 16:14). J.I. Packer pictured the Spirit as a floodlight trained on Christ (Keep in Step with the Spirit).



Every work of the Spirit makes much of Jesus.

"He will glorify Me" (John 16:14)

The word in the original language

Greek

παράκλητος
paraklētos

Meaning

Advocate, Helper, one
called alongside

John 14:16

Word παράκλητος

Say it paraklētos

Meaning	Advocate, Helper, one called alongside
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Where	John 14:16
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Jesus promises another Advocate. The word another is allos, another of the same kind, so the Spirit continues Jesus' ministry with His people. He is personal, present and Christ-honouring.

Three Scriptures

John 14:16-17

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

Jesus promises the Spirit's abiding presence with and in His disciples.

Acts 2:17-18

‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; Even on My male slaves and female slaves, I will in those days pour out My Spirit And they shall prophesy.’

Pentecost announces that the promised Spirit is poured out widely on God's people.

Romans 8:9-11

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit, and the Spirit's resurrection life reaches even our mortal bodies.

Why it unites us

Evangelicals confess the Holy Spirit as fully God, personal and active in salvation and holy living. Differences remain over the gifts and some Pentecostal distinctives, but the shared centre is strong: the Spirit indwells believers, points to Christ, empowers witness and forms holiness.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. V

Article V confesses the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son, of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 2.3 AND CH. 13

Westminster confesses the Spirit as fully God and teaches sanctification by His work in believers.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, CH. 2 AND CH. 13

The 1689 confession stands with trinitarian orthodoxy and teaches sanctification through the Word and Spirit dwelling in believers.

METHODIST ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. IV

Methodist doctrine confesses the deity of the Holy Spirit and strongly emphasises the Spirit's sanctifying work and witness of assurance.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS 7 AND 8

Assemblies of God teaching stresses Spirit baptism, empowerment for service and tongues as initial physical evidence, while affirming the Spirit's saving and sanctifying work.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS, STATEMENT OF FAITH

"We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life."

Where Christians differ

Continuation and cessation

Continuationists believe gifts such as prophecy, healing and tongues continue today. Cessationists believe some revelatory or sign gifts belonged to the apostolic foundation in a unique way.

Why it does not divide us. Both can honour Scripture, depend on the Spirit and seek the building up of the church in love.

Spirit baptism and tongues

Classical Pentecostals often teach Spirit baptism as a distinct experience after conversion, with tongues as initial evidence. Many evangelicals teach that all believers are baptised in the Spirit at conversion, while still seeking fresh fillings.

Why it does not divide us. Subsequence and initial evidence remain open questions here. The shared confession is that every believer needs the Spirit's power and belongs to Christ through the Spirit.

Charismatic practice

Churches differ in public prophecy, tongues, healing prayer, discernment processes and service order. Some are expressive, some restrained.

Why it does not divide us. First Corinthians 14:40, love and Scripture testing give a common pathway for ordered practice.

Where the line is. Denying the personhood or deity of the Holy Spirit places a teaching outside trinitarian evangelical faith. Treating showmanship, prosperity claims or spiritual elitism as the Spirit's work also distorts His Christ-honouring ministry.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, and Spirit-filled in life. We believe every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit from conversion, and we seek fresh fillings for holy life and bold witness. We welcome the Spirit's gifts under Scripture, in order and in love, with Jesus at the centre.

✝ Christ connection

The Spirit glorifies Jesus. He applies Christ's work, unites us to Christ, forms Christlike fruit and empowers witness to Christ. A Spirit-filled church becomes brighter in worship of Jesus, deeper in holiness and bolder in mission.

🕒 From church history

1906

From church history

Azusa Street revival

In 1906 meetings at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, led by William J. Seymour, became a catalytic moment for modern Pentecostalism. People from different ethnic and social backgrounds gathered in prayer, testimony and expectation of the Spirit's power. The revival had human weakness and uneven practice, yet it helped spread Pentecostal and charismatic movements across the world, now numbering hundreds of millions.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified”

Nicene Creed

381

The creed anchors the session in trinitarian orthodoxy.

“We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.”

National Association of Evangelicals

Statement of Faith (1942)

A concise summary of shared evangelical conviction.

Packer pictures the Spirit's ministry like a floodlight that shines attention on Jesus and keeps the focus on Him.

J.I. Packer

Keep in Step with the Spirit

This helps test claims about the Spirit by asking whether Jesus is glorified.

Chan argues that many churches function as though the Spirit were neglected, and he calls believers back to dependent life in the Spirit.

Francis Chan

Forgotten God

A useful prompt for honest self-examination.

Fee shows that for Paul, the Spirit is central to Christian existence, ethics, worship and mission.

Gordon Fee

God's Empowering Presence

A Pentecostal scholar helps the class see how deeply Pauline the Spirit-filled life is.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Dependence:** begin each day asking the Spirit to glorify Jesus in you.
- ◆ **Holiness:** keep in step with the Spirit through repentance and obedience.
- ◆ **Gifts:** seek to build others up in love under Scripture's order.
- ◆ **Witness:** ask for Acts 1:8 boldness with one person this week.

💡 Memory verse

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read John 14-16 and note every action of the Spirit.
- ☐ Memorise Acts 1:8 and pray by name for one local witness opportunity.

- ☐ Ask a trusted Christian where they see the fruit of the Spirit growing in you and where growth is needed.

Discussion questions

- 1 When you think of the Holy Spirit, what comes first to mind and why?
- 2 How does Romans 8:9 protect ordinary believers from feeling like second-class Christians?
- 3 What would it look like for our group to seek gifts in love and order?
- 4 Where do you need Acts 1:8 boldness this week?

My notes

Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What does paraklētos mean in John 14?

- ☐ A A wind that proves the Spirit is impersonal
- ☐ B A title used only for church leaders
- ☐ C Advocate or Helper, one called alongside
- ☐ D A sign gift limited to public tongues

2. According to Romans 8:9, who belongs to Christ?

- ☐ A Only believers who have spoken in tongues
- ☐ B Only apostles who witnessed the resurrection
- ☐ C Those who can explain every gift in 1 Corinthians 12
- ☐ D Those who have the Spirit of Christ

3. What happened at Azusa Street in 1906?

- ☐ A The Nicene Creed was expanded to confess the Spirit
- ☐ B A Pentecostal revival led by William J. Seymour helped spread global Pentecostalism
- ☐ C The Lausanne Covenant defined global evangelical mission
- ☐ D The Methodist revival began under Wesley's preaching

4. What do evangelical traditions agree on about the Holy Spirit?

- ☐ **A** The Spirit is fully God, indwells believers, enables holiness and empowers witness
- ☐ **B** Tongues are the required evidence that someone belongs to Christ
- ☐ **C** Spirit baptism must always be a second experience after conversion
- ☐ **D** All gifts ceased at the close of the apostolic age

5. Which practice best fits Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life?

- ☐ **A** Avoid praying for fresh filling because every believer already has the Spirit
- ☐ **B** Measure spiritual maturity by one public gift
- ☐ **C** Treat every strong impression as equal to Scripture
- ☐ **D** Seek the Spirit's gifts under Scripture, in order and in love

10

Session 10 of 12

The Church

One body in Christ

Key verse

But you are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 PETER 2:9-10 (LSB)

The big idea

God creates the church by joining sinners to Christ through the Spirit. He then gathers His people in real local congregations for worship, fellowship, ministry and witness.

Overview

The church is not a religious club or a Sunday event. The church is the people Christ has made His own. Peter says believers are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people for God's own possession. Those names were once spoken over Israel. In Christ, they are spoken over all who have received mercy.

That unity becomes visible. Paul says we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body. Acts shows that body gathering around the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. The universal church is real, and so is the local gathering. We belong to Christ together.

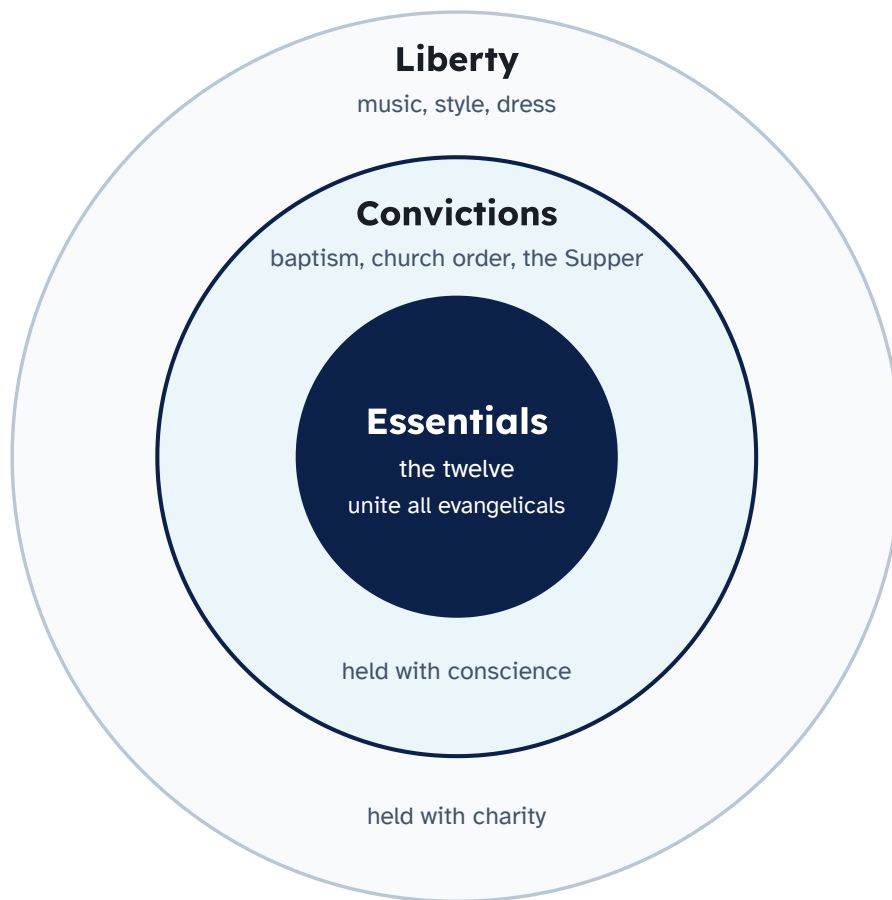
Evangelicals differ on baptism, church government, the Lord's Supper and women in ministry. Those questions need careful handling. Yet our shared centre is strong:

Christ builds His church, gives His Word, pours out His Spirit and makes every believer a servant in His New Covenant people.

At a glance

Essentials, convictions and liberty

Some beliefs weigh more than others. The essentials unite every evangelical family. Convictions shape how a particular church gathers. Many other matters are left to liberty. (After Albert Mohler's "theological triage", 2005.)



In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty,
in all things charity.

The word in the original language

Greek

κοινωνία

koinōnia

Meaning

fellowship, shared life,
participation

Acts 2:42

Word	κοινωνία
Say it	koinōnia
Meaning	fellowship, shared life, participation
Where	Acts 2:42

Koinōnia is more than friendliness after church. It means a shared life created by the gospel: shared teaching, shared table, shared prayer, shared needs and shared mission. Another Greek word, *ekklēsia*, means assembly. We should not build theology on the popular "called-out ones" etymology.

Three Scriptures

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

God gives His people a priestly identity and a proclaiming purpose. Mercy creates worship and witness.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For also by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The Spirit joins different people into one body. Diversity becomes a gift inside union with Christ.

Acts 2:41-47

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were dividing them up with all, as anyone might have need. And daily devoting themselves with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number daily those who were being saved.

The first church gives a living picture of Word, ordinances, prayer, generosity, joy and gospel growth.

Why it unites us

Every evangelical tradition confesses that Christ has a people, that this people gathers around Word and sacrament or ordinance, and that the visible church exists for worship, nurture, discipline and mission. The language differs, yet the centre is recognisable: Christ builds His church and His Spirit makes believers one.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. XIX

The visible church is a congregation of faithful people where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments are duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 25

Westminster speaks of the catholic or universal church as all the elect gathered under Christ the head, and of visible churches where the gospel is professed and ordinances are administered.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION (1689), CH. 26

The Baptist confession describes local churches as gathered congregations of saints who profess faith, obey Christ and walk together under His appointed order.

METHODIST ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. XIII

Methodist doctrine describes the visible church as a congregation of faithful people where God's pure Word is preached and the sacraments are duly administered.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS 6 AND 10

Pentecostal teaching confesses the church as the body of Christ and names its mission as evangelism, worship, discipleship and service in the power of the Spirit.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Where Christians differ

Baptism

Evangelicals practise infant baptism or believer's baptism. Some sprinkle or pour; Baptists normally immerse professing believers.

Why it does not divide us. All treat baptism as commanded by Christ and linked with public identification with Him. The disagreement concerns covenant signs, subjects and mode.

Church government

Anglicans have bishops, Presbyterians govern through elders and assemblies, and many Baptists and independent churches practise congregational government with elders.

Why it does not divide us. Each seeks to order the church under Christ and His Word. The structures differ, while the Lordship of Christ and the ministry of the Word remain shared.

The Lord's Supper and ministry questions

Some emphasise memorial remembrance, others spiritual presence. Evangelicals also differ over women in ministry.

Why it does not divide us. These are serious questions for careful Bible work. They do not cancel shared confession of Christ, the gospel, Scripture and the church's mission.

Where the line is. A denial that Christ has one church, or that believers are spiritually united in Him, breaks with evangelical faith. A church that replaces Christ's rule through Scripture with mere institution has lost the centre.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life. We rejoice in the one body of Christ across denominations, and we gather as a local church of baptised believers. We practise believer's baptism by immersion as the public sign of new life, prize the priesthood of all believers, and expect every believer to serve as a minister of the New Covenant.

† Christ connection

Jesus does not merely organise the church. He creates it by His death, resurrection and Spirit. He is the cornerstone, the head of the body and the shepherd of the flock. The church belongs to Him before it belongs to any tradition, building, roster or leader.

🕒 From church history

1846

From church history

Evangelical Alliance in London

In 1846, evangelicals from many denominations gathered in London to confess their shared faith and cooperate across church lines. They did not erase Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist or independent convictions. They recognised a deeper fellowship in the gospel. The alliance became a landmark for evangelical unity: believers could disagree on church order and baptism while standing together for Scripture, the Trinity, the gospel of grace and mission.

» Voices from the evangelical tradition

“Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? ... If it be, give me thy hand.

John Wesley

Sermon 39, "Catholic Spirit" (1750)

Wesley gives warm language for evangelical unity without pretending every difference has disappeared.

“We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

National Association of Evangelicals

Statement of Faith (1942)

This short confession names the shared evangelical centre on the church.

“The church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.

Emil Brunner

The Word and the World (1931)

The church's fellowship and the church's witness belong together.

Chan urges modern churches to recover simple devotion, shared life and awe before God, with less dependence on religious performance.

Francis Chan

Letters to the Church (2018)

His challenge helps the church examine whether its structures serve living fellowship.

Stott describes the church as a learning, worshipping, caring and evangelising community formed by the gospel.

John Stott

The Living Church (2007)

That balance helps a local church avoid becoming a lecture room, a social club or a mission agency only.

* Living it out

- ◆ **Committed belonging:** gather with real people, with patience, prayer and love.

- ◆ **Shared ministry:** ask where Christ is calling you to serve the body this month.
- ◆ **Priestly identity:** pray for others, speak the gospel and bring mercy into ordinary places.
- ◆ **Humble unity:** honour believers from other traditions while knowing your own convictions clearly.

💡 Memory verse

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Read Acts 2:41-47 and list the marks of church life you see there.
- ☐ Encourage one person in the church with a specific word, prayer or practical help.
- ☐ Have one gracious conversation with a Christian from another tradition and ask what they treasure about the church.

💬 Discussion questions

- 1 What images for the church most shape your own understanding: family, body, temple, flock or priesthood?
- 2 Where do you find committed church belonging joyful, and where do you find it costly?

3 How can our church honour other evangelical traditions without losing Baptist convictions?

4 What would change if every believer saw themselves as a minister of the New Covenant?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. In Acts 2:42, what does *koinōnia* most clearly describe?

☐ A A public preaching office held by apostles only

☐ B A private spiritual experience between the believer and God

☐ C A shared gospel life expressed in teaching, table, prayer and practical care

☐ D A formal church roll that every believer must sign

2. Which Scripture gives the body image for the church in this session?

☐ A Acts 2:41-47

☐ B 1 Peter 2:9-10

☐ C 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

☐ D Hebrews 10:24-25

3. What did the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in London in 1846 demonstrate?

☐ A That baptismal differences had disappeared among evangelicals

☐ B That all evangelical churches adopted episcopal government

☐ C That evangelicals could cooperate across denominations around shared gospel convictions

☐ D That local congregations were replaced by a single international church

4. Which statement best fits our Baptist emphasis in this session?

☐ A The church is only the worldwide body, so local gatherings are optional

☐ B Infant baptism and believer's baptism are treated as identical practices

☐ C Believer's baptism by immersion is the public sign of new life

☐ D Leadership creates the church's authority apart from Scripture

5. How do evangelical traditions agree about the church?

- ☐ **A** The Lord's Supper has the same meaning in every evangelical confession
- ☐ **B** Every tradition administers baptism to the same people in the same way
- ☐ **C** Every tradition has the same form of church government
- ☐ **D** Christ has a visible people gathered around Word, worship, ordinances or sacraments, and mission

11

Session 11 of 12

The Mission

The gospel to all nations

Key verse

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20 (LSB)

The big idea

The risen Jesus sends His church because all authority belongs to Him. Mission is the church's identity: making disciples who learn Christ, obey Christ and worship Christ among all nations.

Overview

Mission begins with God. Yahweh promised Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. That promise runs through Israel, reaches its centre in Christ, and moves outward through the church by the Spirit. Evangelicals are gospel people because the gospel is news for the world.

The Great Commission rests on Jesus' authority. He commands His people to make disciples, baptising them into the triune name and teaching them to keep all He commanded. Mission is evangelism and discipleship together. It includes first proclamation, patient teaching, and forming mature churches that obey Jesus.

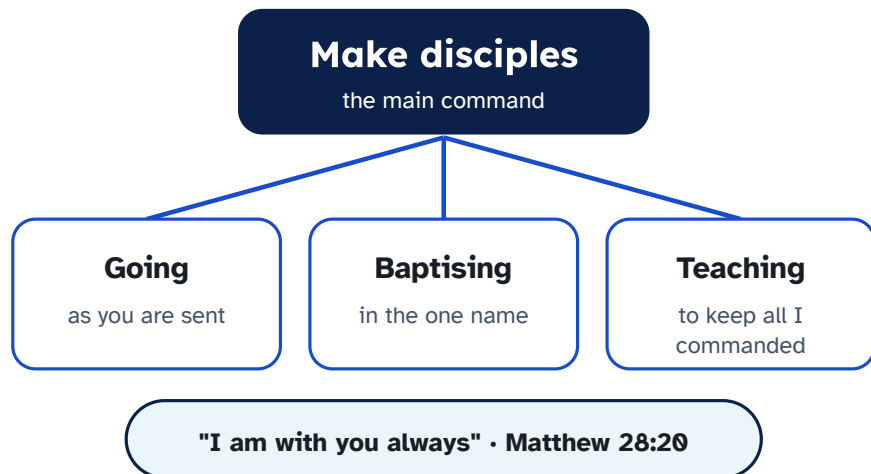
Evangelicals differ over methods and the relationship between evangelism and social action. We should care about justice and mercy because the gospel changes people

and communities. We must also keep evangelism clear, because people call on the Lord only when they hear the good news of Christ.

At a glance

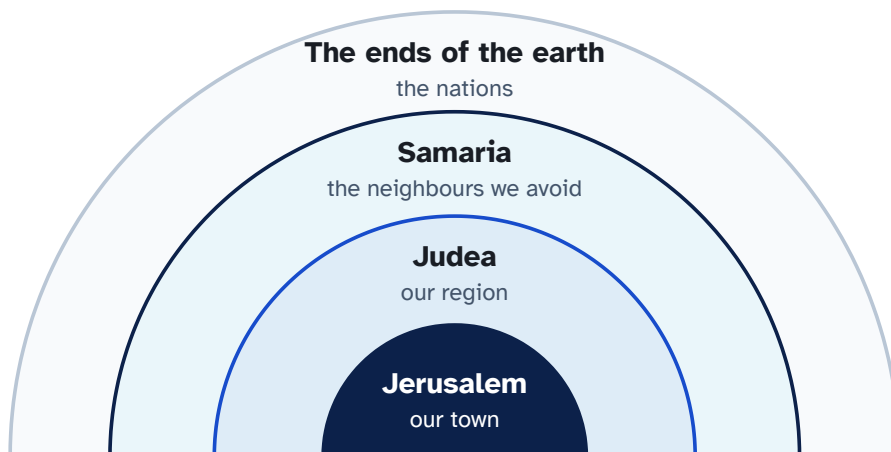
The mission at a glance

Jesus gives one main command with three supporting actions, and promises His presence (Matthew 28:18-20). The Spirit sends His witnesses outward in widening circles (Acts 1:8).



Witnesses in widening circles

Acts 1:8



The word in the original language

Greek

μαθητεύσατε

mathēteusate

Meaning

make disciples

Matthew 28:19

Word	μαθητεύσατε
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Say it	mathēteusate
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Meaning	make disciples
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Where	Matthew 28:19
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This is the main command in the Great Commission. "Go" has command force in the sentence, but the central task is making disciples: baptising and teaching people to obey Jesus. The same verb appears in Acts 14:21, where Paul and Barnabas made many disciples.

Three Scriptures

Genesis 12:1-3

And Yahweh said to Abram, "Go forth from your land, And from your kin And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Mission is rooted in promise. God blesses Abraham with the nations already in view.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The risen Christ sends His church under His authority and with His presence.

Romans 10:13-15

for “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news of good things!”

Paul shows the gospel chain: sending, preaching, hearing, believing and calling on the Lord.

Why it unites us

Across evangelical traditions, mission flows from Christ's command, the Spirit's power and the world's need. Churches describe it through ordinals, confessions, mission agencies and statements, but the shared conviction is clear: the gospel must be announced, disciples must be made, and the church must be sent.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER ORDINAL AND CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY HISTORY

Anglican evangelical mission has long linked faithful preaching, pastoral ministry and global witness, visible in the Church Missionary Society founded in 1799.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CH. 25.3

Westminster teaches that Christ gives ministry, oracles and ordinances for gathering and perfecting the saints in this life, which supports the church's outward witness.

BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE (2000), ART. XI

Baptist confession states that every Christian and church should seek to make disciples of all nations by verbal witness and Christian living.

WESLEYAN MISSION AND FIELD PREACHING

Wesleyan history links gospel preaching with movement toward ordinary people, including Wesley's field preaching and his conviction that the world was his parish.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH 10

Pentecostal doctrine names evangelisation of the world as an essential reason for the church's existence, empowered by the Spirit.

LAUSANNE COVENANT, §6

World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

Where Christians differ

Evangelism and social action

Some evangelicals emphasise proclamation as primary. Others stress justice and mercy as inseparable fruits of the gospel. Lausanne holds both together and gives evangelism a primary place.

Why it does not divide us. Both concerns arise from Scripture. The church must speak Christ clearly and love neighbours concretely.

Mission methods

Evangelicals differ over crusades, church planting, friendship evangelism, apologetics, mercy ministries, contextualisation and digital witness.

Why it does not divide us. Methods can change with context while the message remains Christ crucified and risen.

Local and global focus

Some churches emphasise unreached peoples overseas. Others focus on de-churched, gospel-inoculated and secular neighbours nearby.

Why it does not divide us. Acts 1:8 gives a widening horizon. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth all matter.

Where the line is. A church that refuses the call to make Christ known has denied part of its identity. A message that replaces repentance and faith in Christ with mere moral improvement is no evangelical mission.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life. We move toward people because Jesus moved toward us. We speak the gospel plainly, baptise believers, teach obedience to Christ and expect the Spirit to empower witness in our own town, our region and the nations.

✝ Christ connection

Mission begins in the sending love of God. The Father sent the Son, the Son sends the church, and the Spirit gives power for witness. Jesus came close enough to sinners to be misread, died for enemies, rose with all authority and now sends His people with His presence.

🕒 From church history

1792

From church history

William Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society

In 1792 William Carey preached from Isaiah 54 and helped form the Baptist Missionary Society. In 1793 he sailed for India. Carey was a Baptist with deep doctrine and stubborn obedience. His life reminds evangelicals that theology should move outward. If the risen Christ has authority over all nations, the church cannot be content with local comfort.

” Voices from the evangelical tradition

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't.

John Piper

Let the Nations Be Glad! (1993)

Piper keeps mission tied to the glory of God.

“World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

Lausanne Covenant

Lausanne Covenant (1974), §6

This is a compact global evangelical mission statement.

“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.

William Carey

Nottingham sermon (1792), traditional summary

Carey joins confidence in God with costly action.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

Jim Elliot

Journal, 28 October 1949

Elliot reminds the church that mission is worth sacrifice.

Green shows that early Christian witness spread through ordinary believers, homes, travel, courage, hospitality and persuasive proclamation.

Michael Green

Evangelism in the Early Church (rev. 2004)

Mission is not reserved for specialists.

✧ Living it out

- ◆ **Move toward people:** build real friendships with the de-churched, sceptical and gospel-inoculated.
- ◆ **Speak up:** learn a simple gospel outline and practise saying it naturally.
- ◆ **Disciple patiently:** help someone take the next step of obedience to Jesus.
- ◆ **Pray globally:** ask God to bless the nations through ordinary churches.

💡 Memory verse

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20 (LSB)

✓ This week

☐ Write down three people you are praying will call on the Lord. Pray for them daily.

☐ Read Matthew 28:18-20 aloud and underline the command, the actions and the promise.

☐ Have one intentional gospel-shaped conversation, with gentleness and courage.

💬 Discussion questions

- 1 Who first moved toward you with the gospel?
- 2 Which part of making disciples feels hardest: going, speaking, baptising, teaching or persevering?
- 3 How can we love people practically while keeping the gospel message clear?
- 4 Who are the de-churched or gospel-inoculated people around us in our own town?

My notes

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What is the main command in Matthew 28:18-20?

- ☐ A Make disciples of all the nations
- ☐ B Focus on baptism while leaving teaching to later generations
- ☐ C Begin mission only after cultural conditions improve
- ☐ D Wait in Jerusalem without moving outward

2. What does poreuthentes, “go”, contribute to the Great Commission?

- ☐ A It replaces the command to make disciples
- ☐ B It has command force in context as part of Jesus? sending commission
- ☐ C It limits mission to the apostles who first heard Jesus
- ☐ D It means mission happens only during ordinary routines

3. What did William Carey help form in 1792 before sailing to India in 1793?

☐ A The Church Missionary Society

☐ B The Lausanne Movement

☐ C The Baptist Missionary Society

☐ D The Evangelical Alliance

4. Which statement best reflects Lausanne's shared evangelical mission emphasis?

☐ A Mission belongs only to ordained ministers and overseas workers

☐ B Evangelism should avoid teaching obedience after conversion

☐ C The whole Church should take the whole gospel to the whole world

☐ D Social action should replace evangelism in modern settings

5. According to Romans 10:13-15, why is verbal gospel witness necessary?

☐ A People call on the Lord as they hear, believe and respond to the proclaimed good news

☐ B The nations already know enough without hearing of Christ

☐ C Only professional missionaries can be sent by the church

☐ D Good works have no place in Christian mission

12

Session 12 of 12

The Return of Christ

He is coming again

Key verse

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ

TITUS 2:13 (LSB)

The big idea

Jesus Christ will return in glory. God gives His people hope, holiness and mission as we wait for new creation.

Overview

The Christian story does not end with souls escaping earth. It ends with Jesus returning, the dead raised, evil judged, creation renewed and God dwelling with His people. The same Jesus who ascended will come again. His appearing is our blessed hope.

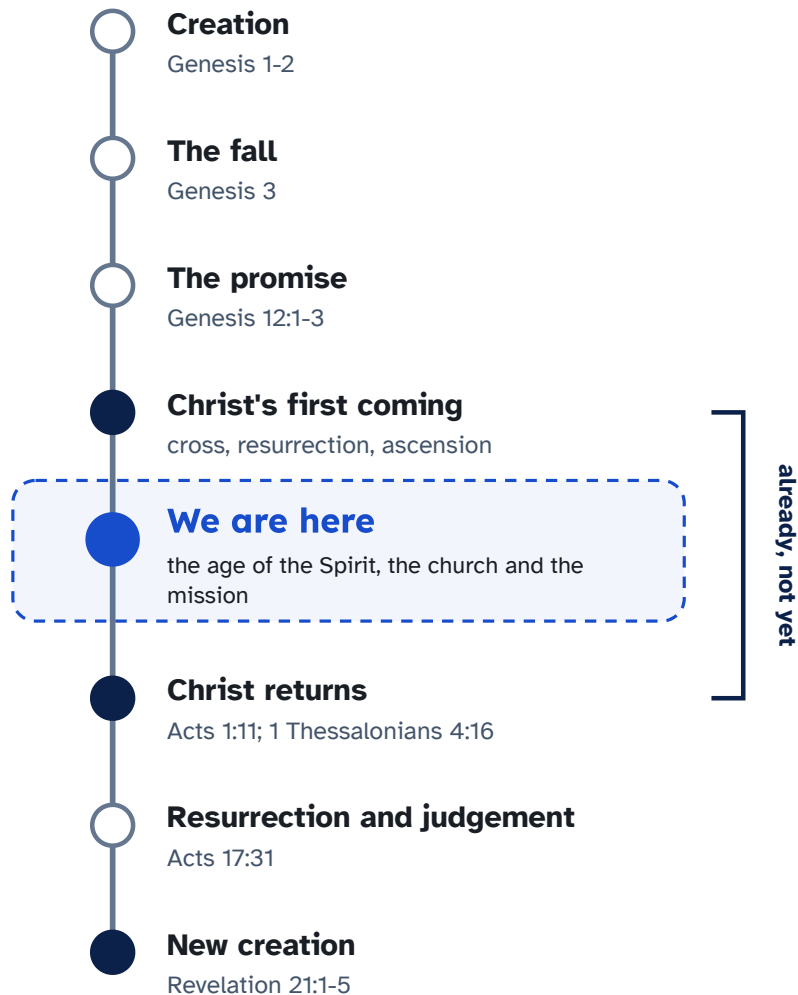
Evangelicals share the centre: Christ will return personally, visibly and gloriously. There will be resurrection, judgement, eternal life with God for the saved and eternal judgement for the lost. These truths must be taught with tears, sobriety and worship.

Evangelicals differ over the millennium, the timing of the rapture and details of the final state. Those questions should be handled with charity. Date-setting is rejected because Jesus says the day and hour belong to the Father alone. The church waits with holiness, comfort, endurance and mission.

At a glance

Where we are in the story

We live between Christ's first coming and His return: already redeemed, not yet made whole. The story ends in new creation (Revelation 21:1-5).



The word in the original language

Greek

παρουσία and
ἐπιφάνεια

parousia and epiphaneia

Meaning

arrival or royal visit;
appearing or manifestation

1 Thessalonians 4:15 and Titus 2:13

Word	παρουσία and ἐπιφάνεια
Say it	parousia and epiphaneia
Meaning	arrival or royal visit; appearing or manifestation
Where	1 Thessalonians 4:15 and Titus 2:13

Parousia can speak of the arrival of a ruler. Epiphaneia means appearing. Together they remind us that Christian hope is not an idea but a Person who will be seen: Jesus Christ our great God and Saviour.

Three Scriptures

Acts 1:9-11

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

The return is personal and visible. The ascended Jesus will come again.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Paul teaches resurrection hope to comfort grieving believers. The future of the dead in Christ is secure.

Revelation 21:1-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain. The first things passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

Christian hope ends in renewed creation and the dwelling of God with His people.

Why it unites us

Evangelical traditions share the blessed hope of Christ's return, bodily resurrection, judgement and eternal life. They differ on the order of some events, but they confess that history is moving toward the appearing of Jesus and the renewal of all things under His rule.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES, ART. IV

Anglican doctrine confesses that Christ ascended into heaven and will return to judge all people at the last day.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH, CHS. 32-33

Westminster teaches resurrection after death, final judgement by Christ, everlasting life for the righteous and judgement for the wicked.

SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION (1689), CHS. 31-32

The Baptist confession teaches the resurrection of the dead and the final judgement, with eternal destinies according to God's righteous sentence in Christ.

METHODIST ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ART. III

Methodist doctrine confesses Christ's resurrection, ascension and future return to judge all people.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS 13-16

Pentecostal doctrine emphasises the blessed hope, Christ's millennial reign, final judgement and new heavens and new earth.

LAUSANNE COVENANT, §15

Global evangelical confession looks for the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ in power and glory, which completes salvation and judgement.

Where Christians differ

The millennium

Premillennial, amillennial and postmillennial evangelicals read Revelation 20 and the kingdom storyline differently.

Why it does not divide us. All confess Christ's reign, His return and the final victory of God. The order and nature of the millennium can be discussed inside shared evangelical hope.

The rapture

Evangelicals differ over whether the catching up of believers occurs before, during or after tribulation, and how 1 Thessalonians 4 relates to other end-times passages.

Why it does not divide us. All look for Christ, resurrection hope and comfort for believers. Date-setting and fear-driven speculation should be rejected.

The final state

Evangelicals differ over some details of continuity and discontinuity between this creation and the new creation.

Why it does not divide us. All confess bodily resurrection, judgement, eternal life and God's renewed dwelling with His people.

Where the line is. Denying Christ's personal, visible return places a person outside evangelical confession. So does denying final judgement, resurrection hope or the eternal seriousness of rejecting Christ.

♥ Our emphasis

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life

Evangelical in conviction, Baptist in practice, Spirit-filled in life. We wait for Jesus with Scripture open, hope alive and hands busy. We reject date-setting, refuse panic, pursue holiness and keep speaking the gospel until the King appears.

† Christ connection

The returning One is the crucified and risen Jesus. He gave Himself to redeem a people, rose as firstfruits, ascended in glory and will appear as our great God and Saviour. Our hope is not an event chart. Our hope is Christ Himself.

🕒 From church history

First century

From church history

Maranatha prayer

The earliest Christians prayed "Maranatha", an Aramaic prayer meaning "Our Lord, come." Paul preserves it in 1 Corinthians 16:22, and the Didache uses the same hope in worship. Before the church had buildings, influence or cultural safety, it had this cry: Jesus is Lord, and He is coming.

» Voices from the evangelical tradition

“Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak.

C.S. Lewis

The Weight of Glory (1941)

Lewis helps expose small hopes that cannot satisfy the heart made for glory.

“Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither.

C.S. Lewis

Mere Christianity (1952)

The coming kingdom strengthens earthly faithfulness.

“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

John Piper

Desiring God (1986)

Final hope is the full enjoyment of God Himself.

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'

Abraham Kuyper

Inaugural address, Free University of Amsterdam (1880)

The returning Christ claims creation, culture and the future.

Wright argues that biblical hope is resurrection and new creation, which makes present obedience, justice and worship meaningful.

N.T. Wright

Surprised by Hope (2008)

This helps correct thin ideas of heaven as escape.

* Living it out

- ◆ **Hope in grief:** comfort one another with resurrection, not vague sentiment.

- ◆ **Holiness now:** everyone with this hope fixed on Him purifies himself.
- ◆ **Mission urgency:** the coming judgement makes gospel witness loving and necessary.
- ◆ **Worshipful waiting:** pray "Come, Lord Jesus" with clean hands and steady hearts.

💡 Memory verse

He who bears witness to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:20 (LSB)

✓ This week

- ☐ Memorise Revelation 22:20 and pray it each morning.
- ☐ Read Titus 2:11-14 and list what grace trains you to renounce and pursue.
- ☐ Encourage one grieving or weary believer with the hope of resurrection and new creation.

💬 Discussion questions

- 1 How does the return of Christ comfort grief without denying grief?
- 2 What fears or speculations have shaped your view of the end times?
- 3 How does new creation hope change ordinary work, holiness and mission?
- 4 What would it mean to pray "Come, Lord Jesus" honestly this week?

☆ Pop quiz

Pop quiz

Circle one letter for each question. Answers are at the back of this workbook.

1. What does Acts 1:11 teach about Jesus' return?

- ☐ A The return removes the need for present witness
- ☐ B The disciples received a date for the return
- ☐ C Jesus' return is only a symbol for the church's growth
- ☐ D The same Jesus who ascended will return personally and visibly

2. What do parousia and epiphaneia help us understand?

- ☐ A The church should set dates with care
- ☐ B The millennium must be read in only one way
- ☐ C Christ's return is His royal arrival and appearing in glory
- ☐ D The final state is only a spiritual condition

3. What does the early prayer "Maranatha" show?

- ☐ A Hope for the Lord's coming belonged to early Christian worship
- ☐ B End-times teaching began with modern prophecy conferences
- ☐ C The return of Christ was first taught only in the Reformation
- ☐ D The earliest Christians avoided praying about the future

4. Where do evangelical traditions agree on this essential?

- ☐ A All agree on the same rapture timing
- ☐ B All confess Christ's personal return, resurrection, judgement and eternal hope
- ☐ C All agree on one millennial position
- ☐ D All agree every detail of Revelation is already fulfilled

5. What does Titus 2 connect with the blessed hope?

- ☐ **A** A command to withdraw from ordinary life
- ☐ **B** A denial of bodily new creation
- ☐ **C** Grace training believers for godly living and good works
- ☐ **D** Permission to speculate about dates

Quiz answer key

Session 1: The Word of God

1. **A** 2. **D** 3. **D** 4. **C** 5. **A**

Session 2: The Triune God

1. **B** 2. **C** 3. **A** 4. **A** 5. **D**

Session 3: Humanity and Sin

1. **C** 2. **A** 3. **A** 4. **C** 5. **B**

Session 4: The Person of Christ

1. **A** 2. **C** 3. **A** 4. **A** 5. **B**

Session 5: The Cross

1. **B** 2. **B** 3. **A** 4. **C** 5. **C**

Session 6: The Resurrection

1. **B** 2. **A** 3. **D** 4. **A** 5. **D**

Session 7: Justification by Faith

1. **C** 2. **B** 3. **B** 4. **C** 5. **B**

Session 8: The New Birth

1. **A** 2. **A** 3. **C** 4. **B** 5. **B**

Session 9: The Holy Spirit

1. **C** 2. **D** 3. **B** 4. **A** 5. **D**

Session 10: The Church

1. **C** 2. **C** 3. **C** 4. **C** 5. **D**

Session 11: The Mission

1. **A** 2. **B** 3. **C** 4. **C** 5. **A**

Session 12: The Return of Christ

1. **D** 2. **C** 3. **A** 4. **B** 5. **C**