

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH
BIBLE STUDY – CHRISTIANITY 101
TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025

Stan Campbell, *Bible to Go: Genesis to Revelation in One Hour*, (New York: Faith Words, 2006)

Jesus's Relationships

Jesus' nontraditional yet authoritative teaching style quickly attracts followers (Matthew 7:29). He spends a night in prayer (Luke 6:12-16) and then chooses twelve of His followers to be apostles (specially commissioned disciples). Among the twelve are some who had been disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:40-42). Jesus then begins to reiterate John's message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heave is near" (Matthew 4:17).

The twelve apostles are Simon (whom Jesus named Peter); Andrew; James; John; Phillip; Bartholomew (Nathaniel); Matthew (Levi); Thomas; James (the son of Alphaeus); Simon the Zealot; Thaddaeus (also identified as Judas, son of James); and Judas Iscariot (Matthew 10:1-4; Luke 6:13-16).

Over His three-year ministry, Jesus develops a bond with this circle of friends. He is especially close to Peter, James, and John, who accompany Jesus at times when the others aren't around – such as Jesus' Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36) and in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest (Matt.26:36-46). But what the Bible reveals about Jesus' relationship is frequently surprising. He is usually at odds with the religious leaders of His day (particularly the Pharisees and Sadducees – Matthew 22:23-46; chapter 23). But when a Pharisee named Nicodemus comes to see Him one night, he and Jesus have a fascinating conversation (about "being born again" which is salvation – John chapter 3).

Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector, changes his cheating ways after a single dinner with Jesus (Luke 19:1-10). Jews and Gentiles alike are amazed at Jesus' willingness to help and heal them (Matthew 10:5-6; 8:5-13). Jesus has great respect for women. Several follow Him in His travels (Luke 8:1-3). Mary and Martha are close friends (Luke 10:3-42). The Samaritan woman at the well (John chapter 4) is stunned that any man would even speak to her, yet her conversation with Jesus initiates a spiritual revival in her village. A woman caught in the act of adultery is brought to Jesus, primarily to force Him to pass judgement on her. Jesus refuses to condemn her, yet He cautions her to "go now and sin no more" (John 8:1-11).

Even little children receive the comfort and compassion of Jesus. The disciples try to keep the kids out of the way, but Jesus scolds the adults and says, "The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"

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(Matthew 19:13-14). The self-proclaimed “experts” don’t get much respect from Jesus, but those with childlike faith are always welcome.

Jesus’ Emotions

The humanity of Jesus is also reflected in His wide range of emotions. He weeps at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35). He gets angry and distressed when people use religious law to trap Him and disregard humanity as they do (Mark 3:1-6). His anger grows into righteous indignation on at least one occasion: He makes a whip and drives animals and money changers from the temple (John 2:12-17).

But mostly, Jesus seems to enjoy life and appreciate people. Numerous times we read of His compassion going out to a person or group. And apparently Jesus attends so many parties with “sinners” that the religious authorities accuse Him of being “a glutton and a drunkard” (Matthew 11:18-19).

According to the Bible, Jesus’ humanity serves many purposes. Because He shared every human weakness and temptation that we do, He is well qualified to serve as our “High Priest” and give us access to God (Hebrews 4:14-16). He understands our pain when we suffer (Philippians 3:7-10). But most of all, Jesus is not just a list of rules and laws. He isn’t a condemning and vengeful thunderbolt thrower. The love and compassion Christ shows to people reflect God’s feelings for us. Because of Jesus’ humanity, “anyone who has seen me and seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Jesus: His Teachings

People have a vast number of opinions about Jesus: whether or not He is God (I Timothy 3:16), whether or not He actually died and came back to life (I Corinthians 15:12-20), and to what degree He was superior to other prophets and religious leaders (Hebrews 1:1-3). But almost everyone agrees that Jesus was an exceptional teacher. So, let’s look briefly at a few things He taught.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapter 5-7)

Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount presents a remarkably different way to approach life. Jesus affirms: “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but*

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to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). Yet His interpretation of the Scriptures and the challenges He puts forth are different from anything people have ever heard.

Jesus begins with the Beatitudes – statements of “blessedness.” He teaches that people are blessed who are poor in spirit...mournful...meek...merciful...pure in heart...peacemakers...who hunger and thirst after righteousness...and who are persecuted because of that righteousness (Matthew 5:3-10). Followers of God, He said, are like the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and they should be a positive influence on those around them (Matthew 5:13-16).

Jesus teaches that murder begins with anger, and adultery with lust (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). And He discourages any further hatred of enemies, calling on His listeners to love their enemies instead (Matthew 5:43-46). It is in the Sermon on the Mount that we find the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). In addition, our faith should undo much worry (Matthew 6:27), and our concern should be more for storing “treasures in heaven” than for the accumulation of possessions (Matthew 6:20).

Jesus instructs us not to judge others, yet He also says watch out for false prophets who “come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” (Matthew 7:15). And He says that those who are wise will listen to what He says and be like one who builds his house (life) on rock rather than sand (Matthew 7:24-27).

By The Grace of God, Next Week’s Focus:

- **Jesus’ Parables**
- **Jesus Versus the Religious Authorities**

Note: Your thoughts and feedback are very important and help to develop group understanding of the material covered. Please feel free to ask questions, send follow up emails, and text for further discussion.