



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
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Listening to God Hebrews 2:1-4

How seriously do you take your _____? Did you know it's God's Word and can _____ you to eternal life? Today we're going to see the _____ to listen to God. We search the Scriptures, because the Scriptures _____ for us the heart and mind of God. God _____ Himself through the Bible. Paul said, "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it _____ God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). The Lord God chose to reveal Himself through the Scriptures, so that we might know the _____.

A man went to the doctor convinced that he was losing his _____. The doctor pulled out a gold pocket watch and asked, "Can you hear this ticking?" The man replied, "Of course!" The specialist moved several feet and held up the watch again, "Can you hear it now?" "Yes." The specialist moved farther away and held up the watch, "What about now?" The man again said, "Yes." The doctor returned to his patient and said, "Sir, there is nothing _____ with your hearing. You just don't _____."

While the Bible is still the number one _____ of all time, and while 82 percent of Americans revere the Bible as sacred literature, they simply don't _____ it and don't _____ what it actually teaches. In a recent report by the American Bible Society, 79 percent _____ they are knowledgeable about the Bible, but only 45 percent could _____ the four gospel accounts: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We have plenty of Bibles available, but people know _____ and _____ what they say. We _____ listen to God.

Our reading today comes from the epistle to the Hebrews 2:1-4.

Ancient Israel looked to the nations surrounding them and began to _____ the Lord God. They brought many _____ upon themselves. Many don't realize what they have _____ until they no longer possess their blessings. **Read the warning to Israel in Amos 8:11-12.** Have you considered how _____ God's Word truly is? What would you do if you couldn't _____ God's Word anywhere? What if every available _____ of Divine truth was missing? The person who ignores the Bible is no better off than the person who has _____ Bible.

God expects His people to listen to _____. **Read the compelling warning about our need to hear the Lord Jesus in Matthew 17:1-5.** God wanted them to _____ the Lord Jesus even over Moses and Elijah. The Lord Jesus is God's Son and speaks with _____ authority. We must listen to Him! Recently a highly respected religious leader, who claims he speaks for God, said people who don't believe in God can still go to _____. But, read what the Lord

Jesus said in Mark 16:15-16. Again, Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to _____ Him, for he who comes to God must _____ that He is and that He’s a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Should I _____ to a man who makes such outlandish statements, and _____ what the Lord Jesus said?

Another religious leader said the apostles were _____ and _____ about certain sins and he rebuked the inspired apostles Peter, Paul, and John for speaking out against _____. He implied that God would accept anyone, even if they had not _____. But, Paul said, “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you, are the Lord’s _____” (1 Corinthians 14:37). When this leader says the apostles were wrong and outdated about sin, he’s actually _____ the Lord Jesus. He isn’t listening to Christ; and he thinks he needs to _____ Christ, that Christ needs to be changed.

He’s not the first one who thought he had a _____ plan than God. Many listen to Jesus but think they have a better way, so they do their _____ thing. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27.** Both of these men _____ houses. Both _____ what the Lord said, but only one did what the Lord said to do. The other listened but disagreed and thought he could _____ on the Lord’s teaching. He foolishly built his house on _____. When people _____ they have a better way religiously than doing what Jesus says to do, they too build their houses on sand. In the end they’ll _____ that their “better way” wasn’t better at all.

The Lord Jesus said, “All _____ has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 2:18). Jesus’ word is _____; there is no higher authority; He has _____ of it. The Lord Jesus said, “The one who _____ me and does not receive my words has a judge; the _____ that I have spoken will judge him on the last day” (John 12:48). Jesus will judge you by His words _____. **Read the description of the judgment scene in Revelation 20:12.** Those books are the _____ criteria of our judgment; they contain the _____ of Jesus, and they are found in the _____, specifically the New Testament. You will not be judged by the thinking of religious leaders who _____ with Jesus or _____ to what the Lord Jesus says. You won’t be _____ by councils, creeds, opinion polls, or talk show hosts. You will be judged by what’s written in the books that contain Jesus’ own words that are _____ to us and found in the New Testament.

Why don't people hear? Some people have simply placed their _____ somewhere else and have neglected or forgotten the most important things. Many have lost _____ of God and forgotten the _____ of Christ and have become distracted by the _____. God’s Word reminds us, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). When we lose sight of _____, we lose sight of God Himself.

Others stopped listening when they heard something they didn't _____. They didn't _____ to hear about sin, or about judgment, or about needing salvation. Some, frankly, would rather have their _____ tickled than listen to the _____ that they need. Like the Stoics and the Epicureans of Acts 17:21, they spend their "time in nothing except telling or hearing something _____." How much better it would be if they were like the Bereans of Acts 17:11, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they _____ the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." The Bereans wanted to know the _____. Do you?

The Word of God can _____ your life if you'll let it. **Read Psalm 19:7-11 that describes what the Scriptures can do for us.** If you wish to have _____ faith, read the Bible. "So _____ comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

If you wish to _____ God, if you wish to be _____ from sin, and if you wish to _____ with God eternally, _____ to God's Word. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the _____ of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). This book has the words of _____ life. Read it, treasure it, love it, memorize it, and share it with those that you _____. Not only will the word bring salvation to you, it will also _____ you. David wrote, "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You." God's Word will _____ you from stumbling in sin (Psalm 119:11).

God's Word is profitable for four significant tasks as seen in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

First, the Bible is valuable for _____ or doctrine. It teaches us what we must _____ and what to _____. Doctrine is valuable, because what we believe determines _____ we are and _____ we live. Doctrine gives us the basic instructions about why we are here, why there is so much _____ in the world, how we should _____, and what will happen to us when we _____. It teaches us how to be _____ from sin and how to inherit eternal life. It teaches us about the _____, God's family and kingdom. It teaches us about _____ holiness, His justice, and most wonderfully His grace. Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our _____, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." We've got to be grateful for God's Word.

Second, the Bible is profitable for _____. That is, it convicts us of sin and it refutes _____ teaching. I'm thankful that we have an unchangeable standard of truth and an unchangeable standard of morality that _____ against lies and sin. To overcome any sin, we must know what sin is and realize it _____ God's will.

Third, the Bible is valuable for _____. It shows the right _____ and brings healing by setting things right. **Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26.** When we _____ error and we _____ of sin, the Lord _____ and _____ us. Correction and repentance are _____. They start us on a new and better _____. Correction brings _____ and _____! We should _____ God every day for a new start in life.

Fourth, the Bible is profitable for _____ in righteousness. It helps Christians to mature and to be equipped for doing _____. God's word trains us in _____ to do and _____ to do it. It provides the _____ of godliness and righteousness that we need. It _____ the life of Jesus Christ, who is the great _____ of righteousness and service.

I sometimes wonder if God doesn't get _____ with us as He did with Israel. God is _____ to us through His word, but we aren't always listening. **Read what God said in Isaiah 65:1-2.** People today are much like this; they follow their _____ thoughts rather than listen to _____.

The person who neglects to listen to God is no _____ off than the person who says there is _____ God. He's lost sight of what a _____ Scripture is. God's Word is here in this book; and we must take the _____ to read it. Are you _____ to God? Do you _____ what the Bible teaches? If you _____ Him, you'll listen to Him, you'll _____ His voice on every matter. Remember, "For this reason we must pay much closer _____ to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just _____, how will we escape if we _____ so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:1-3). Don't gamble with your _____ by assuming that you know what is in the Bible. Study it for _____. Be noble like the Bereans; _____ the Scriptures. Don't accept what some preacher says and not _____ it out for yourself. Your soul is too important to listen to the _____ sources. Listen to the Lord.

The more you know God, the more you'll want to _____ a Christian and _____ Him. To become a Christian you must _____ the gospel and _____ with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Out of love, _____ of your sins and turn your life over to God. Confess the Lord Jesus as the Christ, and be _____. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of your sins. When you are baptized, the Lord will _____ your sins (Acts 22:16), make you His child (Galatians 3:26-27), and raise you up to walk in _____ of life (Romans 6:3-4). Oh, I hope and pray you'll believe and obey the Lord today.

The Origin of Life

Romans 1:18-23

Dr. Jeff Miller's new book, *Science Vs. Evolution*, explores how science _____ far short of being able to _____ the origin of life. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:3, "By _____ we understand the universe was _____ by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of the things that are visible." Some think that because we as Christians have faith that we've stopped _____ and have no evidence for our faith; but there is an abundance of evidence for believing in God. The starry heavens above, the complexity of our bodies, and the moral lives that live within, proclaim loudly that God _____ us and designed us in His _____. We are more than _____ who evolved; we are God's creation.

Dr. Miller's book, uses the laws of science themselves to show that evolution's description of the origin of life is more speculation than _____ science. He reveals that no scientist actually _____ how life came to be and that to be alive is much more complicated organically than most folks realize. Dr. Miller says no scientist has ever _____ life from non-living matter, though they have tried often.

Our reading today comes from the book of Romans 1:18-23.

Many evolutionists _____ that naturalism has been proven to be true. Naturalism is the idea that everything in existence in the Universe came about naturally—without any _____ from God, who isn't natural, but supernatural. Cosmic evolution—which is made up of Darwinian evolution, plus some form of the Big Bang Theory—is how they _____ the Universe got here. Those who don't _____ evolution are, in the words of the atheist proponent of evolution Richard Dawkins, "ignorant, stupid, or insane." According to naturalists, due to the discoveries in science over the past century or so, God is no longer _____ in the equation to explain the origin of the Universe. They think they've figured out how it all happened _____ Him, and if you continue to believe in Him, then you are considered ignorant and unenlightened.

Based on modern definitions of science, God has been _____ from the science classroom. According to the National Academy of Sciences (the NAS), "The statements of science must invoke _____ natural things and processes. The statements of science are those that emerge from the application of _____ intelligence to data obtained from observation and experiment." Based on this _____ of science, God is unscientific, since He's not natural, but supernatural, and can't be _____ observed or experimented on.

There are many issues with these claims, but the one significant _____ is that in order for something to be _____, it has to have _____ that proves it. If a person arrives at a conclusion that's _____ the evidence, he's being irrational. If a person _____ to believe in God or the Bible without evidence, he is being irrational. The same goes for a person who claims to _____ that naturalism is true. Philosophy doesn't support the idea of naturalism; science doesn't support such a claim; and neither does _____. The Bible says, "but _____ everything; and _____ fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The problem is that naturalism or atheism is based on several fundamental requirements that have absolutely _____ evidence to substantiate them.

For example, scientific laws exist—the Law of Biogenesis, the Laws of Thermodynamics, and the Law of Cause and Effect, among others. But there is absolutely no evidence from observational science that would indicate that a law could _____ itself. On the contrary, all evidence indicates that a law is always, without exception, the _____ of a law writer. So the observational evidence points to a Universal Law Writer well beyond the capabilities of _____—who have no such ability to write laws that govern the Cosmos. But notice: naturalism _____ no Universal Law Writer, since that would be supernatural. Naturalism lacks evidence to _____ that a law could write itself, so to believe in naturalism is irrational. Naturalism requires a _____ faith to believe it could be supported, but rather it is an unsupported _____ of God. Based on the NAS definition of science, if science only involves "natural things and processes"—and the existence of a non-existent Law Writer would be definitely unnatural—then naturalism is itself unscientific and should be _____ from the science classroom. Another example: the Universe _____ and had to come from somewhere. Even if you believe in the Big Bang Theory, what was the _____ of the cosmic egg that supposedly exploded? We ask _____ did that egg come from?

Second, this universe couldn't have created _____. It couldn't just pop into existence on its own. If there were no energy or mass in the universe to begin with, it could not create itself into something that is as _____ and as _____ as what we see today. So again, the actual _____ points to a Creator. Since there's no evidence that the Universe could create itself naturally or that it exists forever, then _____ in naturalism is irrational. And since there is no observable evidence to support the idea of these things happening, the Big Bang Theory is unscientific and should be _____ from discussion in science classrooms.

Here is another example, _____ exists and had to come from somewhere. Naturalism _____ that life came from non-life. But all available evidence indicates that in _____, life comes only from life. This truth is so substantiated that it has historically been known as the "Law of Biogenesis." There are no _____ to this law. If all of the evidence indicates that life comes from life in nature, then in order to explain the origin of life,

we have to go _____ of nature—that is, to super-nature. Again, the scientific evidence points to _____, even though He can't be directly observed or experimented on. But naturalism requires belief in an _____ that has no evidence. So, naturalism is irrational and unscientific.

The same can be said of macro-evolution or Darwinian evolution. No rational person _____ that evolution occurs. Things do _____. The word evolution _____ change. A species can develop _____ variations over time. My mother used to raise African violets and she was an expert at it. She learned to make _____ in the color of the bloom and even the texture of the leaves; but they were all _____ African violets. They did not _____ something else. The World Canine Organization says there are 339 breeds of dog, but all of these breeds are _____ dogs. These changes in size and color _____ micro-evolution. But all available evidence indicates that while small variations can occur, the idea that a _____ of creature can change, that there is such a thing as macro-evolution, or Darwinian evolution, has _____ been substantiated. Those things require change that brings about a completely _____ kind of creature. Dogs don't give rise to _____, and _____ don't give rise to amphibians. The actual, observable evidence indicates that evolutionary development is always _____ the strict narrow limits, never crossing set, phylogenic boundaries. God said, "Let the earth bring forth creatures after their _____: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their _____; and it was so" (Genesis 1:24). Every living thing resembles its _____, and there are no exceptions to this law. Macro-evolution is a _____ that demands blind faith and lacks evidence.

Information doesn't just happen; a _____ creates it. The DNA molecule inside every cell in your body _____ an incredible amount of information. The human body can contain up to 100 trillion cells. The DNA molecule in your cells is by far the densest information _____ mechanism known in the universe. Only an intelligent mind stores _____. It would take a very high intelligence to _____ a way to store this much information. Naturalism requires that a Mind does not _____. So again think about this: naturalism—evolution—is irrational and unscientific.

The evidence _____ creation, a creation by a supremely intelligent, powerful Being. That being can _____ be God. Although God can't be directly observed or experimented on—you can't see, smell, taste, touch or hear Him—still, we can _____ He exists by indirect evidence. In the _____ way the forensic scientist can draw conclusions about an event by examining the evidence left from the event—without actually having witnessed what happened—we can know a _____ exists. The laws of science testify to that _____. And if He exists and has engaged in supernatural activity that affected the Universe in the past—activity which most

certainly could have affected the interpretation of scientific evidence—then wouldn't it make sense to _____ science in such a way that includes Him in the discussion?

On the other hand, naturalistic evolution _____ itself. It says only _____ events occur; but it requires _____ events. According to evolutionists, life had to come from non-life; but no scientist has ever _____ this to occur in nature. Time and again, life coming from non-life has been _____ to be impossible. Furthermore, there is no evidence anywhere that one kind of animal evolved into a completely _____ kind of animal. Here's the bottom line: naturalistic evolution is _____. It requires a blind faith and has absolutely no scientific _____ to support it. On the other hand, Biblical Creation is, and always has been, _____ in line with the scientific evidence.

The Law of Biogenesis says that only life can produce life. Paul Davies of Arizona State University wrote in 2006 in the *New Scientist*, "One of the great outstanding scientific mysteries is the _____ of life. How did it happen? The truth is nobody has a _____." When you realize living cells are incredibly complex, the idea that life could have just _____ means that you have to deny this law and place your faith in the belief that life came from non-life. It just makes _____ to believe in the living, all-powerful, all-knowing God, who gave us life.

Acts 17:28 says, "In him (that is God) we _____ and _____ and have our being." Why does all this matter? Because we each have a _____ to make between believing in an all-knowing, all powerful God who created us in His image and loves us, or believing in an irrational, unproven, unscientific, human theory that robs us of hope and purpose in life. You are _____ than flesh and blood. You and I have an eternal _____ within us, and that's why we have a consciousness and a _____ nature. These facts _____ to God, who clearly tells us where we came from, why we are here, and what will happen in the future.

Have you _____ God? What you _____ about the origin of life and the origin of man matters. Without God we end up in misery and without _____. We _____ God in our lives. That's why we need to come to the Lord Jesus and _____ Him. To become a Christian place your _____ in the Lord Jesus, believe in Him and believe in His Word. Turn away from the sin of the world and follow the _____ of the Lord. Confess Christ as the Son of God and be _____ into Christ. Do it for the forgiveness of your _____, just as Acts 2:38 teaches. When you are baptized God will _____ your sins. He'll add you to His _____, and you will become His child. Today is the best day for you to believe in God, believe in the Lord Jesus, and come to Him.

This Mind in You Hebrews 1:1-2

What we think about _____ matters. Many people _____ come to know the Lord Jesus because they've set their minds on other things. What is on your _____? What are you thinking about God? Searching for the Lord's _____ is not a trivial matter or a hobby. It's critical to our _____ life, and we can think of nothing more important than to know the will of the Lord and to _____ Him. First Timothy 2:4 says that God our Savior "desires all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Everything God has ever done has been to point humanity to what is _____ and _____. God loves us and gave us His Son to _____ for our sins and His Word to _____ us. We have no greater need today than to _____ in the way of the Lord. That's why we take time to _____ God's Word.

Read what Hebrews 1:1-2 says. God speaks to us _____ through Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus gave this Divine Message to His _____ through the Spirit. He promised them, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the _____" (John 16:13). According to Matthew 23:34, the Lord Jesus sent out inspired men not only to _____ the gospel but also to _____ His words for all time. I'm so thankful the Lord gave us the truth, so that we might know His will for our lives and might learn how to _____ Him.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Philippians 2:5-8.

God created us in His own _____ and after His likeness. He gave us _____ that reason and _____ that feel. He _____ us a free will, a conscience, and a sense of right and wrong. He wanted us to love and follow Him by our own _____. **Read Joshua's challenge to Israel in Joshua 24:15.** People are still choosing whether they will _____ the Lord or _____ to the popular voices of our day. There will always be a spiritual _____ for the minds of people, because the devil or the "god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (2 Corinthians 4:4). A physically blind person _____ he or she is blind, but the spiritually blind person may not realize when he's been deceived. The commandment, "Be not deceived," appears _____ times in the New Testament. Why? Because people tend to fall for _____ that allow them to believe what they want to do or want to believe. In the apostle John's day, people thought they were _____ with God when they actually were out of fellowship with God. **Read 1 John 1:6-10.** Ignorance of God's truth is not _____; it's a disaster.

Many years ago, Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, said, "If you tell a lie _____ enough, _____ enough, and _____ enough, the people will believe it. The secret to get someone to _____ a lie is that constant repetition. Just tell it over, and over, and over again." Hitler led a nation to do unspeakable _____ by lying to them. The Lord God _____

a lying tongue. A lie that is handed down from one generation to another is _____ a lie. Hearing it from someone you think is a good person doesn't _____ a lie into the truth. Just because the _____ of people believe something doesn't mean that it's the truth.

Many people have never taken the time to study their _____ for themselves. This explains why people believe outlandish lies and ideas about God that are completely _____ to the Bible. Many people turn to their _____ for their faith rather than listen to a "thus saith the Lord." Others listen to people that they consider religious _____ rather than study the Word for themselves. They simply _____ whatever they hear without thinking, and not thinking about whether it's true or not true.

Jesus once told the Sadducees, "You are mistaken, not _____ the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). Many folks simply _____ the traditions of those who came before rather than researching the Word of God. Acts 17:11 says of the Bereans, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, _____ the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." Human traditions and practices, denominational doctrines, feelings, and emotions can hold people in spiritual _____ for years, because they've never questioned what they've heard or compared the teachings they've heard to Scripture.

People say they are saved by faith _____, and when they are saved they say the Sinners' Prayer, and then they're right with God. But where does the Bible ever _____ the Sinners' Prayer? People say one denomination is as good as another, but where does the Bible ever give _____ to the whole concept of denominationalism? People obey some man-made doctrine and say in their heart they know they're right with God, but where does the Bible grant us the right to obey Him according to what we _____ or _____? People say, "Just _____ Jesus into your heart, and you'll be saved"; but where does the Bible say that? Shouldn't we _____ to what God says in His Word?

The Jews were sure they were religiously right, but they _____ Jesus and wanted to establish their own righteousness through keeping the Law of Moses. **Read what Paul explains in Romans 10:1-4.**

Men, through the centuries, have caused so much evil on others through their _____ of God's Word; through accepting half-truths; and through believing lies. When Paul persecuted the church, he said he had _____ ignorantly in unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13); and when Jesus was crucified, He prayed for His executioners, "Father, forgive them, for they do not _____ what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). False religions use the name of God to justify their _____ and justify punishing people with _____, but true Christianity calls for _____. True Christianity leaves vengeance and judgment to _____.

When the Lord calls us through the _____, He expects us to use our minds. The Lord Jesus said, “_____ from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find _____ for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). When we come to Jesus, we come to Him _____ we’ve learned from Him. We use our minds and our hearts as well as our ears to _____ His words. First and foremost, the gospel _____ tells of the good news about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This message has a point to it. It demands a _____.

Gospel preachers seek to _____ people to take up their crosses and to follow Jesus. Paul said, “Therefore, knowing the _____ of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Many churches, frankly, have forgotten _____ we must hear God’s Word. The purpose of preaching is not to have a pep rally, or to entertain, or to tickle somebody’s ears by telling people what they _____ to hear. The purpose of preaching is to _____ the mind and the heart to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul entered the synagogue in Thessalonica, he went there “explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ’” (Acts 17:3). We _____ the Scriptures, from week to week, so that we might know God and might live so that we may _____ Him and _____ Him.

God expects every one of us to _____ in our faith and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). God expects us to _____ to our faith, virtue, and to our virtue knowledge, because these things are fundamental to our relationship with Him. If you haven’t learned the _____ of God, how do you know whether or not you’re pleasing to Him? **Read Romans 12:2.** You can’t _____ what the will of God is, if you don’t _____ what the will of God is. The only way you can be _____ that you understand God’s will is to study (2 Timothy 2:15).

Sadly, many Christians never grow in their _____ of God’s will. They depend on _____ to study for them and accept whatever they’ve been _____. Many people _____ accept whatever their denomination tells them, whether it’s Biblical or not. Many people think a group of people in their denomination can actually _____ on what to believe, as if God hadn’t spoken on the matter. Or, they listen to the popular thinking of our _____ and they come to believe the popular lies of our time. One popular preacher said he believed that people who’d never _____ of Jesus or never _____ a Bible were nonetheless going to heaven.

This is certainly _____ from the teaching of the apostle Paul to the pagans in Athens. Paul told the Stoics and Epicureans who didn’t know anything about God that they were very religious, but _____ (Acts 17:23). He called on them, first and foremost, to _____ (Acts 17:30-31). He didn’t _____ the pagans; he didn’t say they were okay; he called them to repent and _____ them about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ignorance, even by people who call themselves Christians, is nothing _____. **Read what the writer of the book of Hebrews said in Hebrews 5:12-14.** These Christians _____ the basics of their faith and had remained like little children who needed to be _____ all over again. Like children, they believe whatever they're told and cannot distinguish right from wrong or truth from error. They're vulnerable to lies, because they don't know the Word of God!

When you haven't closely studied what God says, a deceiver can easily _____ you and lead you into _____. **Read Paul's warning to the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:29.** There are _____ false prophets and savage wolves speaking perverse things today and leading people _____. **Read what the Lord Jesus said of the Pharisees in Matthew 15:13-14.** When people make their own traditions and call them God's, they're _____ something that God never planted. Those plants won't bear fruit; they'll be _____ by God Himself. Stay away from _____ guides who lead others into the pit. They _____ themselves and those who hear them. **Read what Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:16.** Some say, "It doesn't _____ what you believe as long as you love Jesus", but that's simply not true.

Why does this matter? Because your _____ matters! Get your thinking in _____ with the Lord's teaching. Because the Lord who _____ you is holy, you are to _____ holy (1 Peter 1:16). Because the truth sets us _____ (John 8:32), we must know the truth. Because the gospel is God's _____ to save, we need to hear and obey the gospel (Romans 1:16).

Read what God's prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 1:18-20. God has chosen to _____ with us; we are not mindless robots, but people made in His own image with freewill and a conscience.

Each day you're choosing whether you'll set your mind on the path that follows _____ or on a path that follows the _____. **Read what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14.** The devil is trying to _____ your mind, making you think you're on the narrow way when you actually may be following a man-made path to destruction. Decide now to _____ your Bible and to find the truth. Only the truth can set you _____ and give you _____.

What is God's will for us to do to be _____? Upon hearing the gospel of Jesus, we must _____ Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We must _____ of our sins and turn to righteousness. We must _____ our faith in Christ and be baptized. John 3:7 teaches that we must be _____ again, and baptism is the time when we are born again. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ so that our sins will be _____. When we're baptized, God washes away our _____ (Acts 22:16).

Because of Jesus

John 1:14-18

If Jesus had not come into this world, life would certainly be _____. The brightest spot in _____ of history is the day Jesus came into this world. The Lord Jesus is our _____ and our _____. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The greatest _____ ever given to mankind was our Lord Jesus Christ. All our hopes and dreams, all our _____ and joys come from Him. He created us, provides for our needs, forgives sin, and gives us _____ life. We must _____ all we can about Him. We must love and follow Him, so we _____ the Bible each day and _____ His words. Only Jesus has the _____ to eternal life. He is the _____ and the _____ Lord of all. Can you imagine how _____ this world would be if Jesus had not come? Our lives would be much _____ and _____ without Christ. Jesus utterly _____ individual hearts and lives, but also touched entire nations. Western culture _____ the fragrance of His purity and kindness. Many _____ in society have come from the mindset and heart of Christ. Christians through the ages took a stand against _____ practices, and their Christian _____ ended the bloody games of the gladiators, stopped much slavery, ended the exposure and death of unwanted babies that was popular in ancient times, lifted women to a higher status, proclaimed respect for the elderly, and protected the sanctity of life. Christian love _____ us to love our enemies, to feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and to care for those who are sick. The New Testament teaches us to _____ for our keep and not steal from others. Our world became richer, kinder, purer, and more loving _____ of Jesus.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to John 1:14-18.

No event in all of history _____ with the coming of Jesus into this world. He is God's _____ of hope and blessing to every person. When the wise men entered Jerusalem and asked Herod where the child was to be born, the priests _____ that it was Bethlehem. They knew the _____ written in the eighth century B.C. and found in Micah 5:2. Jesus was indeed born in Bethlehem, just as God _____ through His prophet. **Read what an angel told shepherds that day who were watching their flocks by night in Luke 2:10-14.** Indeed the Lord has _____ peace and favor, or goodwill, to mankind. No one in all history has done so much to bring _____ and _____ to you and me. We don't know the specific year or even the month of His coming with _____. We do know that His coming was a fulfillment of God's _____ from the beginning and has made all the difference.

Because of Jesus, we can know God and His _____. When Jesus came into this world, Matthew 1:22-23 says, "Now all this took place to _____ what was spoken by the Lord

through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God _____ ____.'" Jesus is indeed God with us. He was and is always God. John chapter 1:1-3 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And all things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." Jesus has existed from all eternity as God and was involved in _____ everything that has been created.

Because Jesus became flesh and was found in fashion as a man, we could _____ to Him. Jesus makes the _____ of God known to us (Hebrews 1:3). The Lord Jesus said, "If you had known Me, you would have known My _____ also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him" (John 14:7). We know about God's love, His kindness, His goodness, and His grace _____ of Jesus. When we get to know Jesus, we understand what kind of God we _____ and learn what He desires from us.

Because of Jesus, we can have _____ from sin. The angel Gabriel told Joseph that Mary "will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus came into this world, because He knew how terrible and how _____ sin truly is. He knew people needed _____ and the opportunity to live righteously rather than wickedly. He gave people the opportunity to be _____ as children of God and to leave an old way of sin and death. First Peter 2:24 says that Jesus bore our _____ in His body on the _____ so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

When John the Baptist introduced Jesus to his disciples, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who _____ the sins of the world!" (John 1:29). Sin leaves its stain and ugliness on our _____. Though we may not think sin is any big deal, it's still a very big deal to God. God doesn't think like we do. Time and culture don't _____ the mind and the heart of God. Romans 6:23 says that "the _____ of sin is death." Sin is our greatest _____ and it will rob us of a life with God for an eternity. Because Jesus loves us and knew the great _____ that sin poses to our souls, He was willing to die for us. The Lord Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to _____ and to _____ that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus wanted to make a difference in our lives.

By touching individuals, the Lord Jesus could make a difference for the _____ world. Two thousand years have passed, and He is _____ changing lives. Everyone who allows the cross of Christ to touch their hearts and is willing to serve the Lord becomes a _____ person. Paul

wrote that Jesus “gave himself for our sins to _____ us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Galatians 1:4). The world of the first century was filled with _____ wickedness and selfishness. Paul explained, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly _____ according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1-3). He says, “Among them we too all (that’s you and me) formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of _____, even as the rest.”

Our world needed saving from sin and needed a higher moral _____ than it ever had before. When Jesus came to earth, He gave us God’s moral standard that touches our hearts as well as our _____. Nothing compares to the standard that Jesus _____ in the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters five through seven. The Lord knew we had to control our hearts to overcome hate and to keep from harming others – read Matthew 5:21-22. Again, the Lord knew man would never overcome his lust until he determined in his heart to _____ his eyes – read Matthew 5:27-28. Jesus _____ that “out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders” (Matthew 15:19). Jesus loved us and He gave us _____ to love what is good rather than what’s evil, to love what is right rather than what is wrong. By changing hearts, He was changing lives; by changing lives, He was changing communities; and by changing communities, He was changing nations; and by changing nations, He _____ us from the present evil age.

Because of Jesus, we know _____. “We love, because He _____ loved us” (1 John 4:19). He’s the _____ for all the love that we possess. He gave us love and _____ us how to love. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in John 13:34-35.** Our love is to be _____ His love, love that is willing to give everything in order to _____ others. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his _____” (John 15:13). Jesus didn’t merely _____ love; He demonstrated it. He gave _____ so that we could be saved. Loving others means we must learn to _____. People often want to take vengeance and get _____. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, “forgive us our debts, as we _____ have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). Because we know the _____ of being forgiven, we forgive others who sin against us. **Read what Paul explained in Ephesians 4:31-32.** If you know what it means to be forgiven, you can find the _____ and the love to forgive.

Beyond all this, Jesus came to this world to _____ us the truth. Our culture hasn’t given much value to the truth; some even _____ there is any absolute truth. But the Lord Jesus as

the Son of God provides for us an unchangeable and absolute _____ for our faith, so that we can distinguish what is true from what's false. Jesus was indeed _____ of grace and truth (John 1:14). His words are utterly trustworthy and contain the standard by which every idea and doctrine is _____ (John 14:6). If the Lord Jesus said it or delivered it to his apostles to say, then we can _____ it as the truth. Jesus promised, "If you _____ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32). Oh, we need the truth!

We can see _____ the coming of Jesus into this world matters. He's brought life and light; He's brought love and forgiveness; and He's brought morality and truth to _____ mankind. He's _____ hearts out of wickedness and selfishness to make them noble and virtuous. He's _____ anger and hatred into love and kindness. He died upon a cruel cross so that we may _____ the kind of people that God desired from the beginning. He gave us _____ for life beyond the grave when God raised Him from the dead. Because of Jesus, we have the _____ of eternal life with God. Without Jesus, we are _____. If you want Jesus as your _____, you must also take Him as your _____. You must trust Him and believe everything He says is _____. You can't re-write Jesus' teaching, even on one point, and then _____ in Him on another point. When you won't _____ Jesus on some point that you don't like, you aren't really treating Jesus as Lord. Instead, you believe in _____ and in your own wisdom. God wants us to trust in Jesus Christ in _____ step and decision that we make. When we do, His grace and truth _____ us. Jesus is indeed Lord of all, whether we recognize Him or not.

You're choosing everyday whom you will _____. Some choose _____ and some choose _____. These choices _____ destructive and empty. They _____ to chaos and misery. Why not choose the Lord? No one can _____ you with eternal life but the Lord Jesus.

God loves each of us and He wants to be in our _____. To become a Christian, love and _____ in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Turn from all _____ and start pleasing the Lord. Then, confessing your faith, be _____ into Christ. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water for the _____ of sins. When you're baptized, the Lord will _____ you to His family, the church. According to John 3:5, you must be _____ again in baptism to enter the kingdom of God. According to Acts 22:16, the Lord _____ away our sins in baptism. Oh, my friend, become a Christian today.

We ask that you do get involved with a church of Christ. If you're looking for a Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Churches of Christ love and want guests to come.

HOPE

Psalm 33:18-22

As a fish without water or a man without air, so is the _____ without hope. Today we're going to explore the great hope that we have in Christ. The Lord gave us His _____ so that we might have hope. He gives us the _____ so that we might put our hope in the truth and not be fooled by half-truths or lies. You can't separate hope from the truth, any more than you can separate _____ from the truth. False hope cannot _____ your soul and assure you of eternal life. That's why we need to _____ the truth of God's Word and to believe and obey it. This is why from week to week we can't be satisfied with anything less than the _____ of God's Word.

Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our _____, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." When I consider how morally _____ this world is, I remember Noah was righteous and saved his family. When I have a giant _____, I remember David defeated Goliath. When I think I'm _____, I remember that God told Elijah seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal. When I hear "people can't _____," I recall Nineveh and how they repented at the preaching of Jonah. When I think things can't get _____, I remember the book of Job had an ending. When I walk through a _____, I remember Psalm 23 and the Lord is "with me." When I wonder why I'm here, I remember Joseph; and God had a _____ for his life. I remember Moses both as a baby and as a shepherd; and God had a plan for him. God also has a plan for you and me.

Our reading today comes from Psalm 33:18-22.

Let's examine the word "hope." Hope is the confident expectation or belief in the fulfillment of something that God _____ and we desire. Present hurts and uncertainty over the future create the constant _____ for hope. We long for something _____ than what we have now. In trouble we hope for _____, in war we hope for _____, in sin we hope for _____, in death we hope for eternal _____. Hope is not merely expecting something; it is a confident, _____ expectation in God's promises. Faith and hope intertwine. Because we believe, we hope. We believe, because we have the assurance of God. We have it in black and white in His Word, the _____. **Read what Paul said in Ephesians 1:18-20.** We need to open the eyes of our _____. As Christians, we have _____ to our Father; we can enjoy the surpassing greatness of His power and

His blessing. We can hope in our calling as Christians and confidently _____ to live forever, because our Father in heaven raised Jesus from the dead.

First Timothy 1:1 says, “Christ Jesus is our hope.” In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 Paul speaks of some who were _____ the resurrection. Paul explained in verses 17 and 18, “if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is _____; you’re still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have _____.” Without the hope of Christ in the resurrection, we will perish in our sins and have no hope of life beyond the _____. Peter urges us, “Therefore, gird your minds for _____, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought about to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13). Let being with the Lord and the Father in heaven _____ your heart each day. Let hope _____ you to live as a Christian should live.

Read what the apostle John declared in 1 John 3:1-3. Hope for heaven and eternal life leads us to put away _____ and to _____ the Lord in holiness. If you hope for _____, are you letting sin grow in your life? Purify yourself; get right with God.

When life becomes difficult and painful, we _____ hope. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet. Throughout his life, people opposed and ignored his _____. Israel abandoned the _____ of heaven and became more and more idolatrous. They brought devastation upon themselves by _____ God. God promised through the true prophet Jeremiah to _____ Jerusalem, but the people believed the false prophets who prophesied _____. They thought they could _____ in sin and God wouldn’t care. They were wrong, and God permitted Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon to _____ the city and even the temple. You might ask, where is hope now? How could evil _____ and righteousness _____? Here we need to see two lessons.

First, though Jeremiah watched the destruction of Jerusalem, his relationship with the _____ remained unchanged. The world was _____ down around his shoulders; Babylon had set the city on fire, killed and enslaved his fellow-citizens, and destroyed the house of God. He said his peace and his strength had perished; he felt so hopeless; and he had forgotten happiness. It was at this low point in his life, that he _____ the love and the mercy of God. **Read what Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:21-24.** If we set our hearts on the Lord, we’ll see _____ than physical circumstances. We’ll remember all the _____ that God does for us each and every day.

Second, Jeremiah learned the _____ isn’t all there is; it isn’t the end of the story. When God was about to _____ the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah bought a field in Anathoth that belonged to his cousin and he sealed the deed in an earthenware jar so that it

would last a long time. The Bible says, “For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields and vineyards shall _____ be bought in this land’” (Jeremiah 32:15). Seventy years later, just as the prophecy said in Jeremiah 29:10, the Jews _____ to Jerusalem. God keeps His _____ in His time. The apostle Paul, even with all his suffering, knew too that God would _____ for him in the future. He said, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth _____ with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). God is utterly and ultimately _____ to us; but He acts in His own time.

Read Paul’s question and answer in Romans 8:35-39.

Hard times happen to everybody, and some things we’ll never _____. We shouldn’t imagine, however, that hard times _____ God has forgotten or abandoned us. I treasure a promise of God that I’ve _____ fulfilled frequently. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that God _____ all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Paul says here, “we know!” It’s not “we think,” or “we feel,” or “we imagine”; but “we know.” Not everything, of course, is good; but God is _____ to make our most difficult circumstances “work together for good.”

Tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, and hurricanes aren’t good; but the devastation they bring touches the hearts of people and _____ them to do good to ease the misfortunes of others. We’re called as Christians to “_____ our neighbors.” Galatians 6:10 says, “So then, as we have _____, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Many do loving acts of _____ for people they don’t even know, because their hearts of compassion, trained by the love of God and the cross of Christ, leads them to act. God’s love _____ people to demonstrate their love. “We love, _____ He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

We can have hope, even when we have _____. We have hope because Jesus Christ came to _____ His people from their sins. Sin is real and it’ll _____ you your soul. If you try on your _____ merits to overcome, you won’t succeed; you’ll have no hope because you can’t _____ salvation. The Lord must save us, because we _____ save ourselves. Some, looking at their sin, begin to imagine they are _____ saving. Remember: the Lord _____ to earth to save us. The apostle Paul was once Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the _____. He was “formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.” The blood of the Lord Jesus, however, _____ him from sin because he “acted ignorantly in unbelief.” So Paul said, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus _____ into the world to _____ sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost,

Jesus Christ might display his perfect _____ as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16) Those who _____ their hearts and follow the Lord can have hope, because of the abundant grace of Christ, which is _____ than our sins.

When I consider the brevity of _____, I have hope in the Lord. The Lord’s love is not only for today; it lasts _____. We are more than _____ and _____, and the Lord wants us to live with Him through eternity. Jesus has made the way. **Read what Jesus said in John 14:1-3.** Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we can have _____ hope in eternal life. Hope is a great _____, but we must exercise our hope in the Lord by taking our faith and obedience to Him seriously. Peter said, “Therefore, brothers, be all the more _____ to make your calling and election sure, for if you _____ these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the _____ kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10-11).

We humans are _____ by space, time, and intelligence. We see what’s happening around us and we _____ there is a greater sense of reality. It’s so easy to lose _____ of God. An unchanging and unchangeable God _____ us and made us some unfailing promises. When you think all is dreary and lost, _____ the Father is still on His throne; the Holy Spirit is still speaking through the written word; Jesus is still coming again; the gospel still has power to save; and prayer still reaches the ear of the Father.

No matter how difficult life becomes, don’t _____ on God. Fix your hope _____ on Him! Serve Him! Love Him! Wait for Him! Psalm 43:5 says, “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance, and my God.” Why should we hope in God? Because God is still on the _____ of heaven, and nothing can change that. No army can conquer Him, and no group can vote Him out of office. Jesus is Lord over all!

That’s why we must _____ our hearts and our lives to Him. We must take up our _____ daily and follow Him. We do this by placing our utter trust in Him and in His Word, by _____ of our sins, by _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by being _____ in His name. We’re baptized into Christ and into His _____ according to Romans 6:3. While the disciples baptize people in _____, God at the same time _____ them with the Lord in His death, burial, and resurrection; and that takes place in baptism. When God unites us with Christ in His death, the _____ of Christ does away with our sins according to Romans 6:4-7. Put your trust and your hope in the blood of Christ by being baptized and following Christ for the rest of your life.