

"I Can Know the Answer"

With all the voices speaking out today, we're left in much confusion. Is there an absolute truth that does not fail? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring the answer we have in Christ.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We search the Scriptures because we want answers. We want the truth. God's word is truth (John 17:17). And the more that we read and study it, the more we see the truth in it and believe. John 20:30 to 31 says, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." Well we want that life! Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

Now this month we're focusing on the theme, "When I Have Christ." And this week we're exploring about "When I have Christ, we can know the answer." The world is full of crazy notions and outrageous proposals, but most of human philosophy still has no answer to the basic questions:

How did I get here? Who am I? How did I become conscious? Why am I here? Or, what will happen to me when I die? People can assume all kinds of answers, but without Christ there is nothing but futile guessing.

I believe in God and in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And my faith is no leap in the dark; it's built upon careful study of Christian evidences over the last half century. I have hundreds of books on God's existence and the resurrection and have spent countless hours studying if what the Scripture says is true. I found it to be true, and you can weigh the evidence for yourself as well. There is more available on Christian evidences today than at any time in history.

Now we offer this study "I Can Know the Answer" free! And if you'd like a printed copy and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Colossians 2:1 to 6, and explore how we can find the answer that God left us about life and eternity, in the scriptures.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Colossians chapter 2 verses 1 through 6.

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for (all) those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

And yes we need today to walk in Him. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given us Your word that helps us to know all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And Father help us to continue to walk in Christ and to do Your will out of love. In Jesus name, Amen.

We frequently hear people repeat the idea that, “There are no absolute truths. That all truths are relative!” Well we wonder how they know that. If all truths are relative and there are no absolutes, then the statement “there are no absolute truths” is not absolute either! And of course this is a self-contradictory and a self-contradictory statement. There are some absolute truths. Oh yes. You can’t fly into the sun and not burn up. And your body can’t go without oxygen for a long time and still survive. Yes that’s absolute.

Now others that say we can’t know the truth. They suggest all recorded history is biased by the author and only suggests partially the truth. But history can be tested by numerous means. And one can test the trustworthiness of the author, one can test the trustworthiness of what is recorded by looking at the facts revealed. As for Jesus, we know there was a Jerusalem, we know the Romans crucified people in the first century, we know the way they buried people, and we know about the Jewish Sanhedrin. We know from many sources the disciples believed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. We know the church started on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus.

The religious historian, Gary Habermas in his book, *The Historical Jesus*, said that he had examined 45 ancient sources outside the New Testament for the life of Jesus and found “129 reported facts concerning the life, person, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, plus the disciples’ earliest message” (he says this on page 250). And he explains on page 251, “While some believe that we know almost nothing about Jesus from ancient, non-New Testament sources, this is plainly not the case. Not only are there many such sources, but Jesus is one of the persons of ancient history concerning whom we have a significant amount of quality data. He is one of the most mentioned and most substantiated lives in ancient times”. Historians of the first century almost unanimously recognize Jesus was a real person living at that time.

The four gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, plus the book of Acts all agree that Jesus arose bodily from the dead. Biblical writers Peter and Paul write about this as an indisputable fact substantiated by eyewitnesses. Now these men were in the best place to examine the facts of the matter. They proclaimed their reason for faith in Jesus publicly and suffered for their message. They never took it back. They died for preaching the gospel, which includes God raised up Jesus from the dead.

Now interestingly, the first written record of the resurrection of Jesus came not from the twelve but from a former enemy, Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul. Now if Paul had not truly witnessed the resurrection, he would never have left his zealous commitment to Judaism to become a Christian. He candidly wrote about converting to Christ and preaching the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1 to 4: he says, “Now I would remind you, brothers, (and sisters) of the gospel (that) I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”

Now early Christians believed in Christ and received the gospel they were taught at great cost to themselves. They had to take a stand on their faith against a pagan world that mocked and persecuted them. Many were imprisoned and lost their lives for their faith, because they believed eyewitness testimony.

Lee Strobel, interviewing Gary Habermas, put the number of witnesses to the resurrection appearances into perspective in his book, *The Case for Christ*. And Habermas said, “Without question, the amount of testimony and corroboration of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances is staggering. To

put it into perspective, if you were to call each one of the (more than 500) witnesses into a court of law to be cross-examined for just fifteen minutes each, and you went around the clock without a break, it would take you from breakfast on Monday until dinner on Friday to hear them all. After listening to 129 straight hours of eyewitness testimony, who could possibly walk away unconvinced?"

These eyewitnesses would wonder how anyone could doubt the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 15:6 how Jesus "appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep." Now his statement implies one could ask one of these more than 500 eyewitnesses if Jesus arose. He had no doubt what they witnessed, and what he witnessed, was true. He gladly suffered for a lifetime to preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

Now if Jesus died on the cross, and if God raised Him up from the dead, then Jesus fulfilled not only the Old Testament prophecies but also His own prophecies. Now the fulfillment of these prophecies is another evidence of the deity of Jesus. One doesn't fulfill exactly a prophecy hundreds of years old, unless God makes it happen. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 speak of the suffering servant Jesus, and how He died on the cross for our sins. Acts 2:24 and 2 verse 31 refer to the prophecy found in Psalm 16:10, "For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption." Though dead, Jesus' body did not decay before He came up from the grave. And His Spirit was in the place where departed spirits go, but it did not stay there. God put His spirit into a healed physical body, which would later be glorified.

The Lord Jesus prophesied some amazing things to His disciples before He died. He said in Matthew 20:18 to 19, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up." Jesus knew exactly what would happen to Him when He went to Jerusalem. He also prophesied that He would be raised on the third day! Now apparently, the chief priests and scribes took His prophecy seriously enough to ask Pilate to guard the tomb until the third day. That's found in Matthew 27:62 to 66. They even sealed the stone covering the tomb. Well, that didn't stop Jesus! The empty tomb, the moved stone, the grave clothes inside, the bold confidence of the disciples all point to Jesus' bodily resurrection!

Now if Jesus fulfilled prophecy, died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, then we can believe God's declaration with power by the resurrection that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. He is Christ and Lord. And if He is Lord, then we should believe in Him and believe what He says is true. We can take Him at His word. If what He says is true, then we would do well to listen to Him.

For this reason, we can learn many things from the Lord Himself. He is divine and He knows things that we cannot discover apart from Him. He lived, died, and was resurrected from the grave. And the gospel tells us much about ourselves, where we came from, why we are here and what will happen to us after we pass from this life.

Now we're alive because He created us. John 1 verses 1 to 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. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Colossians 1:15 and 16 tells us even more that, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." I tell you were not made for you yourself, and I wasn't made for me. I was made for Him. We're all created through Jesus and for Him.

And if we ask why we exist and what our purpose is, we can find answers in the words of Christ Jesus. We begin with the challenge to love God. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 to 40 that, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Love is indeed the highest good in life. Paul by inspiration proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 13:1 to 3 that, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." Without love for God and others in our hearts and souls, we are nothing in God's eyes.

Love is a verb and reveals what we were made to do in life. 1 John 3:16 to 18 says, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." Galatians 6:10 reminds us, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Now notice here Paul says "we"; well, this could mean individuals or churches. After all, the book of Galatians was written to the churches of Galatia.

Because Jesus taught us about the afterlife in Luke 16:19 to 31, we know there's a place of comfort and a place of torment. If we have listened to God's word, the angels will take us to a place of comfort. If we have rejected God's word, then we'll find ourselves separated from the place of comfort and find ourselves in torment. Luke 16:19 to 31 is not a parable, though it's often called one. Rather it's a story about the afterlife spoken to those who loved money and justified themselves but did not obey God. You know what only Jesus could have known these matters found in Luke 16:19 to 31. The places of comfort and torment are temporary and will last until the second coming.

When Jesus comes again, He will judge everyone who has lived from the beginning of time. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Revelation 20:11 to 12 describes the scene. "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done."

I tell ya how we live and whether we serve God matters! And those who love and serve the Lord Jesus will enter their reward in heaven, but those who disbelieved and rebelled against Him will face the wrath of God for an eternity. Please deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Him.

Let's pray together. Oh Father we pray that You will help us all to deny ourselves. To take up our cross daily and to follow Your Son Jesus and to do this will out of love and faith in Him. And we can know that He teaches the truth. This is our pray in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen

If you wish to have Jesus as your Savior, you must also acknowledge Him as your Lord. Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." Now salvation comes through Christ. And it comes when we obey Him. Faith without obedience is a dead faith that can accomplish nothing.

Sadly, many imagine Jesus will save them no matter what they believe or how they behave. This, of course, is a fantasy. We can't exalt Jesus as Savior and ignore Him as our Lord. We can't expect His

mercy and then reject His commandments. The Lord Jesus wants our faith and our obedience. He said in John 8 verse 24, "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." Well faith is necessary for our salvation. But the Lord Jesus also said in John 8:51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

Well, Paul said in his last book before he died, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." You see he's confidence of knowing what will happen should urge us to love, believe, and obey the Lord by repenting of our sins and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Let's lovingly do the will of God from our hearts.

We hope today's study, "When I have Christ, I can know the answer," has helped you to build your faith in Jesus Christ. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and there's a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH on YouTube any time! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry". And then when you watch the program be sure to like them. That spreads the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. I tell you you need one, I need one, everybody needs a church family. Now if you can attend, I know some can't, but if you can attend don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.