

HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY ONE

We Call Him Lord

Selected Scriptures

His name is wonderful. When we call Him Lord, we give Him full authority. Have you done that? Have you embraced Him as Savior—as the one who will deliver you from your sinfulness and safely bring you to God?

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THERE is one possession every person owns. It has existed from the very beginning. Although it comes in many varieties, it is one of the few things that everyone shares.

Everyone has a name.

Some families pass down names through generations. Some parents choose names filled with meaning regarding the circumstances of their child's birth. Some names come from people of global influence or personal impact.

Regardless its origin, a name gives a person *dignity*. Addressing a person by his or her own name shows respect, and it creates a personal connection. Names are *essential* to relationships, aren't they? Knowing a person begins by knowing his or her name.

This *Searching the Scriptures* series will focus on the biblical names of Jesus to help you connect with Him more personally and know Him more intimately. You'll learn how these titles fit together like the pieces of a beautiful stained-glass window, and you'll see His character, heart, and power shining through.

Do you long to deepen your relationship with Christ, to love Him more genuinely and serve Him more passionately? As you gaze on the names of Jesus, the wonder of who He is will draw you closer to Him in worship.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

When followers of Jesus pray, they pray *to* God the Father, *in* the name of Jesus Christ the Son, and *by* the power of the Holy Spirit. By engaging with God in the fullness of His personhood, a believer fosters a real relationship with Him.

As you begin this series, offer your own prayer to God. Ask Him to prepare your heart and mind for what He wants to teach you and how He wants to change your life as you encounter Him through His Word. Use the following template below to guide your prayer:

Father,

I ask these things by the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

While the focus of this series centers on the names of Jesus the incarnate Son, it's important to remember that God has always taken His name seriously.

Shortly after God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, the righteous “began to worship the LORD by name,” which was Yahweh ([Genesis 4:26](#)). Later on, when He established the nation of Israel, He set apart a temple, a place of worship where His name would be honored ([Deuteronomy 12:5, 11](#)).

Clearly, God desires for His people to know His name and for them to use His name as a means of worship, so this series on names kicks off by looking at one of Jesus' most important titles: *Lord*.



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Observation: Jesus' Name Then, Now, and Forever

Pastor Chuck Swindoll's ability to understand and apply Scripture may seem impossible to achieve on your own. Yet, every time he opens his Bible, he follows the same four simple steps to make real-life sense of a passage. The *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method answers four essential questions:

1. *What does the passage say?* That's observation.
2. *What does the passage mean?* That's interpretation.
3. *What else does Scripture say about this passage's subject matter?* That's correlation.
4. *How do the truths of this passage apply to my life today?* That's application.¹

This study will engage in observation and correlation at the same time by observing multiple key passages that discuss Jesus' lordship.

Jesus—Matthew 1:18–25

As God prepared to present His Son to the world, He handpicked a name that would reflect the essential ministry of God incarnate. According to [Matthew 1:21](#), what did the angel tell Joseph to name his betrothed's divinely conceived son? Why did God pick this name?



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While Joseph would name his son Jesus, the baby boy would have many additional titles. According to [Matthew 1:23](#), what name did Isaiah prophesy Israel's deliverer would have? What does this name mean?

Man, Prophet, Lord—John 9

About thirty years after Joseph's encounter with the angel, Jesus began His ministry of offering people salvation from their sins. Read the account of Jesus healing the blind man in [John 9:1–38](#). What stands out to you about Jesus' actions, the blind man's words, and the attitudes of those who witnessed the miracle? Record your observations below.

Although the blind man didn't offer a satisfyingly theological explanation for his miraculous healing to the Jewish leaders, his view of Jesus certainly was theologically sound. A careful look at how the blind man addressed Jesus in the narrative reveals how his impression of Jesus developed. What title did the blind man use for Jesus in each of the following verses?

9:11: _____

9:17: _____

9:38: _____



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The Name above All Other Names—Philippians 2:5–11

Only after Jesus' death and resurrection could His followers make sense of the significance of His ministry as a human. What phrase did Paul use in [Philippians 2:6](#) to describe Jesus' essential identity?

According to [2:7](#), what did Jesus do despite this identity? What was the result of this choice according to [2:8](#)?

Though death may have seemed like the end for Jesus, God had greater plans. According to [2:9](#), what high honor did Jesus receive for His act of sacrifice? What will be the ultimate results of this act according to [2:10–11](#)?

“Lord” is far more than a mere title for Jesus. Rather, it is a name saturated with historical, theological, political, and practical significance.



Interpretation: The Lord of the Jews and the Romans

The Lord of the Christian faith was not the first person to have the name Jesus. In fact, little boys named Jesus likely swarmed Judea in the first-century AD.



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“Jesus” is the English transliteration of the Greek name *Iesous*, which in turn is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* (sometimes abbreviated *Yeshua*). *Yehoshua* is the name of the main character of the book of Joshua, and he was the one who led the Israelites into the land God had promised to Abraham.

Look up the names *Jesus* and *Joshua* using a Bible dictionary, and summarize the shared meaning of these names. Why was it significant that God wanted His Son to have the same name as this Old Testament hero of the faith?

Jesus may have been Jewish, but during his life, the Roman Empire occupied Judea. Therefore, His identity as Lord had both religious and political implications. For the Jewish leaders, only Yahweh deserved such a title, and the Romans recognized only Caesar as lord.

What would first-century Jewish people living under Roman rule have communicated by calling Jesus “Lord”? What risk would be incurred by making such a bold declaration? How is their example instructive for those who serve Jesus as Lord today?

The word Lord wasn’t invented by Christians. It was adopted by them. Among the Greeks, it was a noble term often used to refer to one with domestic authority. Aristotle used it to describe men who had moral authority, strength of character. This also is where the rub came, because in those days, Caesar was lord. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Reread [Philippians 2:10–11](#). What did Paul mean when he said *every* knee will bow at the name of Jesus and *every* tongue will confess that He is Lord? Why is this truth important?

Some grand day, everyone who has ever lived will declare, “Jesus is Lord!” Some to spend eternity with Him, some to spend eternity in hell. But there will remain the ringing reminder that He is indeed Lord. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: When We Call Him Lord

To personally apply the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord, Pastor Chuck Swindoll lays out the “ABCs” of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. When we call Him Lord . . .

- We *affirm* our allegiance to Christ alone.
- We *bow* to Christ’s authority.
- We *commit* all we are, all we have, and all we hope to be.
- We *dethrone* our own way and will.

If a non-Christian were to look at your life, in what ways would it be evident to him or her that you serve Jesus Christ as Lord?



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Is something else competing with Jesus to be the lord of your life? A job? A goal? A relationship? Maybe even yourself? How does this false lord tend to steal your allegiance and commitment away from Christ and His authority?

The earliest Christians praised Jesus as Lord as the highest form of worship, and they did not take Jesus' lordship lightly. They knew that such a confession could mean death. Yet they knew that, if Jesus truly is Lord, then sacrificing everything for Him would be worth it.

Join the early Christians in worship of Jesus by calling Him Lord. And if Jesus truly is your Lord, then He can change your life. He can free you from the bonds of sin and offer bright hope that will never fade.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I praise You because Jesus is Lord—Lord over creation and Lord over my life. Help me as I reflect on the significance of this confession. Help me understand what it truly means, so I can continue to worship Him more and more each day. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY TWO

He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

Selected Scriptures

One of the greatest names attributed to Christ in Scripture is, “King of kings and Lord of lords.” This means He is King above all who call themselves king. He is Lord over all who call themselves lord. In simplest form, it simply means the highest of all kings and the greatest of all lords.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IMAGINE how it would feel to be the *best* at something. Like the professional athlete who hoists the championship trophy after defeating even the fiercest competitor. Like the professional musician whose album ends the year at the top of the charts. Like the seasoned scholar who spends decades studying to become the top expert in his or her field.

Being the best is a distinguished honor, but it is rare . . . and often short-lived. It may take time, but eventually someone younger, someone more talented, someone harder-working will come along and will be *better* than even the best. And all the hard-earned glory of being the best will fade away like a lost memory.

Yet, there is one who will never be bested.

Few who knew Jesus of Nazareth would have considered Him “the best” in any sense of the term. But this seemingly unremarkable man had a remarkable identity. Cloaked in modest peasant garb was a King greater than any other king who had ever lived.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study explores Jesus’ identity as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and it stirs our admiration for and inspires our hope in the One who will forever be *the best*.



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

Selected Scriptures



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you prepare your heart to engage His Word today, offer to the Father the prayer Jesus taught His disciples in [Matthew 6:9–13](#).

*“Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need,
and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
And don’t let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.”*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Ancient Israel sat nestled among some of the world’s most formidable empires. These great nations viewed Israel as nothing more than a tiny inkblot on their map of conquest. They thought their kings were stronger and nobler than Israel’s kings. And they believed their gods were mightier and more fearsome than Israel’s God Yahweh.

Yet the people of Israel knew the truth about their God and His purposes. What encouragement did God offer to Israel in [Deuteronomy 10:14–17](#) regarding their place in His plan?

Not only does God the Father deserve this majestic title, Christ the Son deserves this title as well. Turn now to [1 Timothy 6:11–16](#) to see why.



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

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Observation: Await the King’s Arrival

In his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll explains the very first step he takes whenever he opens his Bible to study a passage of Scripture. He simply reads the text and asks, “What does this passage say?”¹

Paul wrote the personal letter of 1 Timothy to his dear spiritual son who needed the apostle’s guidance. Before offering his final instructions in [1 Timothy 6:11–16](#), Paul warned Timothy to flee from “foolish and harmful desires” ([6:9](#)) and “all kinds of evil” ([6:10](#)). According to [6:11](#), what virtues did Paul tell Timothy to pursue instead?

According to [6:12](#), to what blessing had God called Timothy? What (or who) is the source of this gift according to [6:13](#)?

What hopeful event did Paul encourage Timothy to patiently await in [6:15](#)?



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

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By what title did Paul refer to God in [1 Timothy 6:15](#)? How is this title relevant to Paul’s encouragement to Timothy to persevere in his faith and ministry?

God’s arrangement of things is that there be a King who is king over all and a Lord who is a lord above all. And only He has that right. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Embracing Jesus as King and Lord

When interpreting a passage, Pastor Chuck considers what the passage *means*. Having closely read [1 Timothy 6:11–16](#), you may wonder if Paul means that only God the Father is King of kings and Lord of lords. But we must remember that Paul was a trinitarian who believed in one God existing in three persons ([2 Corinthians 13:14](#)).

Around the same time Paul wrote to Timothy, he wrote to another protégé named Titus. What phrase did Paul use to describe Jesus in [Titus 2:13](#)? How does this truth logically show that Jesus, too, is King of kings and Lord of lords?

The notion of a king may feel distant to you. Yet almost every ancient nation was a monarchy. Consequently, those living in the ancient world had to grapple with a dreadful truth: there are kingdoms more powerful than my own seeking to kill my king, to conquer my land, and to capture my people.



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

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Because of this reality, the book of Revelation intended to comfort Jewish Christians living under the oppressive rule of Caesar, emperor of Rome. Read [Revelation 17:11–14](#). Without getting lost in the imagery and symbolism, what do these verses describe?

How would seeing Jesus as the true King and Lord provide encouragement to the earliest Christians? How does seeing Jesus this way continue to provide encouragement to Christians today?

We find four practical effects of His being King of kings and Lord of lords. First, He has no equal. Second, He has never been and never will be outranked, overthrown, or undermined. Third, He knows no limitation and experiences no frustration. Fourth, He remains absolutely invincible. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: An Earthly King Challenges Heaven’s King

Within mere days of Jesus’ birth, earthly kings began to recognize that humankind had welcomed a new King. Some received this news with great rejoicing. Others, however, considered the news of the birth of King Jesus to be anything but good.

Prior to Jesus’ birth, Rome had appointed Herod to rule over the region of Judea. Though Herod considered himself “king” of the Jews, faithful Jews awaited the arrival of their true king: the messiah.



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

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According to [Matthew 2:7–8](#), why did Herod say he wanted the magi to find Jesus? What was his *actual* plan? (For a hint, look ahead to [2:13–16](#).)

According to [2:11–12](#), what did the magi do when they met Jesus? What did they *not* do despite Herod’s command?

In the ancient world, magi weren’t kings themselves (despite what many beloved Christmas carols might suggest). Rather, they *served* kings as counselors. These pagan magicians used astrology and divination to attempt to see the future. They then would offer advice to their kings based on what they could see.

Considering this background, why was it significant that these magi ignored the command of King Herod to report where they had found baby Jesus?



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

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He alone is “King of kings.” He alone is “Lord of lords.” He salutes no one. All salute Him. He bows to no one. All bow to Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: The Practical Effects of Jesus’ Kingship and Lordship

Why does it matter that Jesus’ authority is greater than any other’s? How does this truth practically affect those who follow Him today? Three biblically based principles answer these questions.

First, *although we are proud, Jesus is in charge*. Is there an area of life where you feel you’ve had great success? While there is nothing wrong with feeling a sense of accomplishment, success can lead to pride. And pride often causes one to forget the true King and Lord. How can what you’ve learned in this study help you keep your pride in check?

Second, *although we are weak, Jesus is absolutely reliable*. What difficult challenges do you face today? Do you feel too weak to handle them on your own? What practical steps can you take to hand those challenges to God in faith and to rely on Him to bring you through them?



He Is “King of Kings, Lord of Lords”

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Third, *although we face an insidious enemy, Jesus can handle our adversary.* Whether or not you’ve encountered full-blown spiritual warfare, Satan works hard to pull people away from God. In the space below, write about a time when you’ve seen God overcome the schemes of the enemy.

There is none stronger, none higher, none greater than Jesus Christ. He simply is the *best*. Do you believe that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords? If not, then there is no better time than right now to begin your blessed journey of following the eternal King, who will offer you eternal joy, eternal peace, eternal hope, and eternal life.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I praise You because You are greater than any false god or human ruler. And I thank You for revealing to me that Jesus Christ truly is King of kings and Lord of lords. Continue to remind me of this truth as I seek to live an abundant life as one whose true citizenship is in heaven and not on earth. I pray in Jesus’ great name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).”



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY THREE

The Meaning of Messiah

Selected Scriptures

When we acknowledge Jesus as Messiah, we claim Him to be the Anointed One. There will not be another. He is the redeemer who has come to fulfill God's promises.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

GEORGE Frederic Handel was drowning in debt. He developed several plans that he hoped would allow him to use his musical talents to make some money. Yet plan after plan failed, and people grew more and more critical of Handel's work. He knew that if these circumstances persisted, he would never pay back what he owed, and he would find himself in prison.

Then, one summer day in 1741, a dear friend commissioned Handel to compose an oratorio on the life of Jesus Christ using only phrases from Scripture. Handel readily accepted and proceeded to compose more than 250 manuscript pages of music in a mere twenty-four days—a task that normally would take a composer over a year.

Handel titled his composition, *The Messiah*. His masterpiece—particularly the climactic “Hallelujah Chorus”—has moved hearts in worship for centuries. No Christmas season could be complete without this soaring overture to Christ's glory. Each intensifying refrain fills the heart with praise to Jesus, the modest carpenter, Israel's promised deliverer, the savior of the world . . . the long-awaited Messiah.



The Meaning of Messiah

Selected Scriptures



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Through faith in Jesus the Messiah, believers have unique access to God through prayer. For this reason, Jesus said, “Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” ([John 14:14](#)). As you prepare to search the Scriptures, reflect on the words of [Hebrews 4:14–16](#) below. Then offer your own prayer to the Father in the name of Jesus.

So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

As the creator of the universe, Scripture calls God *El-Elyon*—a Hebrew expression meaning “God Most High.” As Most High, God chose to rule His creation through human vice-regents whom He designated to carry out His plan. For the nation of Israel, God delegated His rule through four main offices: judge, king, priest, and prophet ([Deuteronomy 16:18–18:21](#)).

Custom dictated that those selected for these offices would receive an anointing with oil. The Hebrew verb meaning “to anoint” is *mashach*, and this verb’s noun counterpart is *mashiach*, meaning “anointed one.” In English, this term is “messiah,” and in Greek, it is *christos* (or “Christ”).

Such anointings authorized individuals and set them apart for God’s service. When God chose an anointed one, He offered divine enablement. God commissioned a “messiah” as an agent through whom He carried out His perfect plan.

As time passed, wicked “messiahs” placed themselves in these sacred roles, and they profaned the honor of their anointing. They abused their power, harmed others for their own gain, and led Israel deeper and deeper into the darkness of wickedness as the light of faithfulness faded away.

Yet a faithful remnant in Israel awaited someone greater. A greater judge, who would deal with sin for good. A greater king, who would establish an eternal kingdom. A greater priest, who would draw sinful people back to God. A greater prophet, who would be the very Word of God.

The true Messiah.



The Meaning of Messiah

Selected Scriptures



Observation: Recognizing the Messiah

Observation is the bedrock upon which Christians build an accurate understanding of Scripture and life-changing application.¹ Turn to the following passages, and witness those who had some of the earliest encounters with Israel's promised Messiah.

John the Baptizer's Testimony—John 1:19–34

John the Baptizer was a prophet with a special responsibility. According to [John 1:19–20](#), who did the Jewish leaders wonder John the Baptizer might truly be? What was John's response? According to [1:23](#), what role did John say he had instead?

When John saw Jesus in [1:29–34](#), what did he say?

As John witnessed these things, he recognized this moment as Jesus' anointing—though, not a typical human anointing with oil. No, Jesus received a *divine* anointing with the Holy Spirit. In that moment, John knew that this Messiah would look far different than all of Israel's previous messiahs.



The Meaning of Messiah

Selected Scriptures

Jesus' Declaration—Luke 4:16–21

Jesus wanted the Jews to understand His mission at the outset of His ministry. So He walked into His hometown synagogue, grabbed the scroll of Isaiah, stood in front of the assembly, and started reading aloud. In your own words, summarize what Jesus read in [Luke 4:16–19](#).

After Jesus spoke, every eye in that synagogue locked onto Him. The people likely thought, *What was that all about?* According to [4:20–21](#), how did Jesus respond to their silent stares? What did He imply by this statement?

Peter's Confession—Matthew 16:13–18

The meaning of Jesus' teaching often eluded the disciples, but the truth of His identity became clearer to His friends as they spent more time with Him. Jesus chose to address the topic of His identity by asking them a set of parallel questions.



The Meaning of Messiah
Selected Scriptures

Read *Matthew 16:13–16*, and fill in the chart below.

Scripture Reference	Jesus' Question	Disciples' Response
<i>Matthew 16:13–14</i>		
<i>Matthew 16:15–16</i>		

What did Jesus say in *16:17–18* in response to Peter's confession?

John the Baptizer recognized Jesus as the Messiah even before Jesus began His ministry. Throughout His ministry, Jesus declared His messiahship in His words and His deeds. After following Jesus for years, Peter made the powerful confession, “You are the Messiah” (*Matthew 16:16*). Even so, despite all the evidence, many still rejected Jesus as Israel’s promised Messiah. The next section considers the reasons.



Interpretation: Rejecting and Accepting Jesus as Messiah

During Jesus’ lifetime, Rome ruled the land of Judea, and a corrupt priesthood who was sympathetic to Rome ran the temple. Bound by the chains of political and spiritual oppression, the people of Israel clung to a mixed bag of hopes about how the promised Messiah would deliver them.

Some expected a pious prophet or priest to launch a spiritual revival that would draw Israel back to God. Others expected a mighty judge or a warrior king to lead a political revolution that would bring justice to the evil Roman oppressors. Some even expected two messiahs!

The Meaning of Messiah

Selected Scriptures

Very few, however, expected their Messiah to be both priest *and* judge, both prophet *and* king. In light of this context, why did so many Jews reject Jesus as Messiah? How did their flawed expectations differ from who Jesus truly was?

In what ways did Jesus defy expectation and perfectly fulfill these four God-ordained roles?

Christians have believed for years that many predictions of Jesus the Messiah are woven through the fabric of the Old Testament. The references are far more numerous than you would ever expect, which enhances our faith. That is the beauty of Scripture.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Messiah Then, Now, and Forever

In seasons of need, each person tends to cling to his or her own mixed bag of hopes about how God might offer deliverance. People look for all kinds of “saviors” to fix their problems. However, when we call Jesus our “Messiah,” three realities occur:

1. We claim Him to be *the* Anointed One.
2. We declare our search for all other so-called “messiahs” has ended.
3. We announce that He alone provides us with all we need for lasting satisfaction.



The Meaning of Messiah

Selected Scriptures

As *the* Anointed One, Jesus is the true judge, king, priest, and prophet. Which of these four offices stands out to you? How can seeing Jesus in this way practically affect your daily walk with Him and meet your need today?

Just as many Jews rejected Jesus during His life, many people still reject Him today. In what ways do those around you try to squeeze Jesus into the box of how they expect a “messiah” should look? How does their expectation differ from the way Scripture portrays Him?

Jesus Christ isn’t just a name! Rather, Jesus is *the* Christ, the promised Anointed One whom God sent to shine His light into a world darkened by sin, guilt, shame, fear, and death. The light of life is calling to all today. Run to Him, and rest in the warmth of the presence of the true Messiah.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending the long-awaited Messiah. Thank You for giving us a better judge, a better king, a better priest, and a better prophet than any who came before Him. Help me live each day finding satisfaction in the truth that Jesus is my deliverer, my savior, my Messiah. In His mighty name I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).”



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY FOUR

The Day God Answered, “Amen”

Selected Scriptures

God answered, “Amen” to Jesus’ words, “It is finished.” The penalty has been paid. The sacrifice has been taken care of. No one will ever have to die again for his or her sins. The Lamb has been slain. And now He has been raised.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

SOME of the most wonderful moments of Jesus’ life were His most private moments. Only Peter, James, and John watched Jesus’ earthly body transfigure into its full heavenly glory. Before His death, Jesus shared a final meal with just the twelve disciples. Only a select group saw Him after His resurrection.

Yet much of Jesus’ ministry was very public, such as His teachings, miracles, and other day-to-day activities. Jesus’ identity as God’s promised deliverer was no secret. Anyone could witness this carpenter from Nazareth and walk with Him.

Some of Jesus’ most important and most public moments took place during His final week of life. Many watching the events of these few days either scratched their heads in confusion or shrugged their shoulders in indifference.

Some, however, witnessed these events and came to see Jesus as the Savior of the world. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will go back in time and stand in the crowd of those watching Jesus during His final days to better understand what it means to walk with Jesus in His life, death, and resurrection.



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The Day God Answered, “Amen”

Selected Scriptures



PREPARE YOUR HEART

When Jesus died, the temple’s veil tore. This veil marked the entrance to the “Holy of Holies”—a small room where God’s presence dwelled and where, historically, only the high priest could enter once a year. The tearing of the veil symbolized the release of God’s presence into the world.

Now anyone—not just Israel’s high priests—has access to God’s presence through the Holy Spirit who allows believers in Jesus Christ to “come to the Father” in prayer ([Ephesians 2:18](#)).

Father, thank You for Your Word. As I study the life of Jesus today, help me see Him as He truly is so I can follow Him more closely than ever before. In Jesus’ name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

While God’s name is *Yahweh*, no Israelite called Him by that name because they took the third commandment very seriously: “You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God” ([Exodus 20:7](#)).

But the Israelites needed to call God *something*. So they addressed Him as *Adonai* (or “Lord,” in English)—a term of honor and respect given to those in positions of power, influence, or authority. While this term was common in ancient Israel, their God was their only *true* Lord.

The apostle Paul would later explain that Jesus was, in fact, *Adonai* in the flesh ([Philippians 2:5–11](#)). Jesus demonstrated His divine nature throughout His ministry, during His agonizing final hours of His life on earth, and through His glorious bodily resurrection.





Observation and Interpretation: Witnessing Jesus

Each of the following passages depicts scenes that bystanders in Jerusalem would have witnessed firsthand. As you read each passage, imagine yourself standing in the crowd. Put yourself in the sandals of a Judean—a local shopkeeper, a new mother, a youth playing in the streets—and try to read these familiar accounts with fresh eyes.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study omits correlation because it observes and interprets three passages united by one theme. The final section will develop an application based on all the passages together.¹





The Day God Answered, “Amen”
Selected Scriptures

Witnessing Jesus’ Triumphal Entry Matthew 21:1–11	
It’s time for Passover! Over the next several days, devout Jews from all over Judea will flood to your city, Jerusalem to celebrate the annual festival. During that time, you’ll reconnect with old friends, gather ingredients for the commemorative meal, and prepare your sacrificial lamb. One day, you hear loud shouts of joy and see a large crowd approaching one of the city’s gates.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Read Matthew 21:1–11 . According to 21:4–5 , what prophecy did these events fulfill?	The colt, cloaks, and palms together revealed something about Jesus’ identity. Look at Constable’s Notes at netbible.org . What did these images represent to the bystanders?
According to 21:8 , what did the crowd do when they saw Jesus approaching on the colt?	The Hebrew term <i>hosanna</i> is an expression of praise that largely means, “Save us!” How did the people in that crowd believe Jesus would save them? How would He truly save them?
What did the crowd shout in 21:9 as Jesus entered Jerusalem?	

The crowds are talking more and more about this Nazarene who seems to have taken the city by storm. He goes right through all the religious façade, and He deals with issues that matter. He even tells the people what’s down in their own souls. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Day God Answered, “Amen”



Selected Scriptures

Witnessing Jesus' Crucifixion John 19:17–37	
<p>On the day of the Passover feast, you hear noise in the streets early in the morning—cries of anger and sorrow and pain. A mob follows a group of Roman soldiers, and at the center of the group is the man you saw riding a colt at the city gates a few days earlier. As you approach the mob, you notice the man is carrying a long plank of wood. That means one thing: crucifixion.</p>	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>Read John 19:17–37. According to 19:19, what did the sign Pilate posted on Jesus' cross say?</p> <p>According to 19:21, what did the priests <i>want</i> the sign to say? What's the difference?</p> <p>What final words did Jesus utter in 19:30 as He died?</p>	<p>The Jewish leaders fought hard to persuade the people that Jesus was <i>not</i> their promised Messiah. What would most people have thought about Jesus after his death?</p> <p>What would most bystanders witnessing the crucifixion have thought Jesus meant when he said, “It is finished” in 19:30? What did He really mean?</p>

Lambs' blood was the sacrificial atonement for forgiveness—the substitute for the cost of sin. And Jesus, God's human Lamb, was sacrificed for the sins of the world. He paid the penalty for sin and paid it in full! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



The Day God Answered, “Amen”
Selected Scriptures

Witnessing Jesus’ Resurrection Luke 24:13–34	
Passover has come and gone, and you’ve returned to your day-to-day routine. Though you think you’ve said all your goodbyes, you say hello again to a friend from Emmaus. He unexpectedly arrives at your home, smiling, to tell you about his strange encounter with a man named Jesus. And in an instant, everything you watched this Jesus do over the past week starts to make sense.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Read Luke 24:13–34 . According to 24:16 , why didn’t the travelers recognize Jesus?	What did the travelers likely think had happened to Jesus’ body?
According to 24:25–27 , how did Jesus react to the people’s surprise that His body was gone?	What timeless truth does this passage teach about how someone comes to recognize Jesus for who He truly is?
How did the travelers react in 24:31–33 when they discovered Jesus’ true identity?	

I must warn you. To remain neutral on Jesus’ resurrection is to deny the truth, which rests firmly on the inspired Word of God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Day God Answered, “Amen”

Selected Scriptures



Application: From Watching to Walking

During Jesus' lifetime, thousands heard His teachings and witnessed His miracles. Most, however, observed Him from a distance. Jesus called His disciples to *walk* with Him—not just to *watch* Him—and He invites us to do the same today.

Although walking with Jesus leads to the greatest destination, it is not always an easy journey. When you walk with Jesus . . .

1. *You suffer with Him.* “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first” ([John 15:18](#)).
2. *You die with Him.* “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it” ([Matthew 16:24–25](#)).
3. *You are raised with Him.* “For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives” ([Romans 6:4](#)).
4. *You are honored with Him.* “And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory” ([Romans 8:17](#)).

In what area of your life do you feel tempted to stand with the crowd watching Jesus rather than walking with Him? What would it look like for you to step out in faith and follow His path?



The Day God Answered, “Amen”

Selected Scriptures

Do fears of suffering ever hinder your walk with Jesus? Fear of disapproval? Rejection? Full-blown persecution? How can knowing you are coheir with Christ encourage you in your walk with Him?

Many look at Jesus from the crowd, standing far away due to apprehension, curiosity, or fear. Few have the courage to step forward—even if they are alone—and walk with Him as a true follower. Join Him. Walk with Him in His life, death, and resurrection. Experience all the blessings He has to offer His followers.



A FINAL PRAYER

Close your study with your own prayer. Ask God to continue to transform you from a watcher to one who walks with Jesus by faith.

Father,

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY FIVE

He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13

He is the beginning and the end of all things. He knows the ending from the beginning. He knows how the pattern fits together. He puts it together in perfect fashion, and it makes absolutely perfect sense. Every death. Every birth. Every achievement. Every failure. Everything that surprises you and me. He knows the beginning, the ending, and the reason why in-between.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

NOTHING lasts forever. At least that's what many people believe. Every relationship eventually ends. All people eventually die. Even the earth will eventually pass away.

But it's not true that *nothing* lasts forever. While *human* relationships may end, a relationship with God lasts forever. Everyone eventually will die a *physical* death, but those who place their trust in Jesus are born again into a new, everlasting life with God. One day, God will *resurrect* His children's failing bodies with eternal bodies and *replace* this broken earth with a new one.

It's better, therefore, to say that no *worldly* thing lasts forever (1 [Corinthians 7:31](#)).

Anything of God, however, will last forever because God Himself is eternal. He has always existed. He was present at the beginning of time, before He created anything, and He will be present and actively involved in His creation for eternity, when all things reach their consummation according to His perfect plan.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study explores Jesus Christ's identity as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Discover what it means to follow an *eternal* savior who is the most qualified to guide lost souls on their journey from earth to heaven.



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S05
1

He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13



PREPARE YOUR HEART

God not only is an *eternal* God. He also is a *personal* God. He cares deeply for His people, and He desires to have a personal relationship with all His children—a relationship that will last for eternity. Pray to God as you prepare to engage with Him through His Word today.

Father, thank You for being the Everlasting Father—for being the one who was and is and is to come. Speak to me through Your Word today. Through my study, draw me into a deeper relationship with You that will last forever. In Jesus' eternal name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

To highlight God's eternal nature, the authors of the Old Testament often referred to Him as *El-Olam*. The Hebrew word *olam* was a common term that typically referred to a long *duration* of time. Yet it also referred to a distant *point* in time—either far in the past or far in the future.

After Abraham and Sarah had their promised child Isaac, Abraham built an altar to *El-Olam*. According to *Genesis 21:33*, what does this name mean? _____

Not only is God the Father everlasting, but Jesus Christ the Son is also eternal. And the plan of salvation Jesus offers has been central to God's plan from the very beginning of history.



Observation: The One Who Was and Is and Is to Come

In *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll explains how he develops life-changing application based on Scripture. This process always begins with observing a passage. Understanding the Bible isn't "complicated," he says, "It just takes some intentionality."¹

No book of the Bible feels more complicated than Revelation. An intentional reading, however, will show this prophecy to be like a magnificent opera artistically telling a powerful story that reveals a message of hope to desperate Christians everywhere—a message about Jesus Christ's imminent return to earth.



He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13

In Revelation's overture, in what six ways did God describe Himself in [Revelation 1:8](#) (see the NASB translation)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The first movement of Revelation begins with Jesus appearing to John. How does Jesus introduce Himself in [1:17–18](#)? What overlap do you notice between the Father's self-description and the Son's?

Revelation punctuates the melody of Jesus' impending arrival with the harmony of His identity as the Alpha and the Omega. This theme crescendos until the climax of the book in [21:1–7](#). What did John see in [21:1–2](#)?



He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13

What did John then *hear* in [Revelation 21:3–7](#)? What did the Alpha and the Omega promise He would do?

With the coda in [22:12–13](#), Revelation concludes just as it began. What promise of hope did the Alpha and the Omega offer at the end of this *magnum opus*?

We need a regular reminder that our God is above all. The Alpha and the Omega—the one responsible for the beginning, continuation, and end of it all—is saying, “That is exactly the way I want it. That is precisely as I have planned it.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Eternal Savior

Interpretation moves from intentionally reading Scripture to determining its meaning with care. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega? The answer may not be obvious to modern readers, but it would have been clear to Revelation's original Greek audience. This is because *alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and *omega* is the last.



He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13

What are the English equivalents of *alpha* and *omega*? What does Jesus' identity as the Alpha and the Omega suggest about His nature?

The early church wrestled with a heresy called Arianism which suggested God the Father *created* God the Son. Based on this study, how would you respond to someone who argues for this perspective today? Include some Scripture references in your discussion.

The Greek word translated “end” in Revelation 22:13 is *telos*. This term often refers to the completion of a period of time, but it also can refer to someone's purpose or goal. Based on these definitions, in what sense is Jesus Christ the *telos* of God's creation?

Jesus Christ represents both the source and the goal of all of life. That's why I say, "If you don't have Christ, you don't have direction." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13



Correlation: The All in All

False teachers in city of Colossae had infiltrated the church, and the weeds of their corrupt doctrine threatened to choke out the apostolic tradition. In response, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to warn his readers about these wrong teachings so true believers could cultivate the truth.

The key part of Paul's letter to the Colossians is the beautiful hymn in [Colossians 1:15–20](#). The theme of this hymn can be summarized in one sentence, “Jesus Christ is supreme.” Part of Christ's supremacy is His role as the Alpha and the Omega.

What statements in this passage affirm Jesus as the Alpha?

What statements in this passage affirm Jesus as the Omega?

Jesus Christ Himself crafted creation, and He dictates its ultimate purpose and destination. Paul recognized the importance of this truth, and he built his life upon it. How can faithful Christians follow Paul's example today?



He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13



Application: The Beginning and the End

Jesus being the Alpha and the Omega may feel like an abstract idea, but this truth has very concrete applications regarding four realms of human existence:

1. *The presence of our lives*—from womb to tomb, He directs everyone's destiny.
2. *The purpose of our existence*—from the greatest to the least, He determines a unique plan for everyone.
3. *The circumstances of our surroundings*—from the good to the bad, He will stay with you through it all.
4. *The results of our efforts*—from private to public acts, He deals out rewards according to everyone's deeds.

The purpose of Revelation was to share a message of hope with Christians facing persecution by the Roman Empire. How does seeing Jesus as the Alpha and the Omega offer hope to modern-day Christians struggling in their own cultural circumstances?

Have you ever found yourself in a season of great struggle where you couldn't help but wonder, *Why?* In these times, it can feel difficult to see how God can make something good out of something so bad. How has the Alpha and the Omega brought you through a time like this in the past?



He's the Alpha and the Omega

Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13

What would the non-Christians you know say is their purpose in life based on worldly wisdom? How are these purposes different from the true purpose the Alpha and the Omega has set out for His own people? How is Jesus' purpose better?

The Alpha and the Omega. The beginning and the end. The one who was and is and is to come. The eternal Savior. Jesus Christ wasn't created, and He will never be defeated. In this truth, those who trust Him find their hope—hope that they will forever live with Him in paradise.



A FINAL PRAYER

As you conclude your time in God's Word today, offer this prayer from Pastor Chuck:

Father, I express gratitude for the very presence of life and for the ultimate purpose of my existence. In the myriad of responsibilities that are Yours, You have been pleased to care for me. Thank You for washing me from my sins and cleansing me by Jesus' blood. He is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, and the ending. In His strong name I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 79.



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY SIX

Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels

Why are there four gospels? Why not just one? Why did the Lord lead four people from varied backgrounds to sit down and write of the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, so that we might have four wonderful perspectives of the Savior.
—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IMAGINE walking through an old mansion. As you move from room to room, you notice several elaborate portraits adorning the walls.

One portrait shows a young man with tanned skin and standing in a green field speckled with white sheep. Another image reveals a more modest man sitting beside a large golden harp. A different painting portrays an armored man carrying a large metal sword. Finally, you notice a depiction of a stately man seated on a throne wearing a crown on his head.

You may look at these portraits and say, “What an impressive family!” But to your surprise you learn that each of these four images depict the same person: Israel’s great King David. This hero of the faith’s personality can’t be reduced to one single role. Each of these portraits represent a key element of his identity.

Indeed, it is nearly impossible to capture the fullness of anyone’s personality in just one portrait because each person has his or her own temperament, interests, and roles. Yet there is no person more rich in personality than Jesus Christ Himself.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will walk through the winding corridors of the four gospels to see four unique portraits of Jesus’ life. These portraits will reveal much about His identity, allowing His followers to deepen their relationship with Him and to come to a deeper understanding of themselves.



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S06
1

Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels



PREPARE YOUR HEART

One element of Jesus' personality evident throughout His entire life was compassion. He cares greatly for His people, and He desires to deepen His relationship with them through prayer.

Father, thank You for making the details of Jesus' life known in Your Word. Help me grow closer to Him through my study today. In His compassionate name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Although each evangelist wrote to highlight a unique aspect of Jesus' identity, all four recognized Him to be *Elohim*. In the Old Testament, this term was one of the most common titles used for God, and it highlights His abundant power. If Jesus were not *Elohim*, then He couldn't have performed wonderful miracles, lived a sinless life, and ultimately defeated sin and death.



Observation and Interpretation: Four Portraits of One Lord



Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method carefully studies individual passages of Scripture to determine their theological meaning and practical application.¹ This approach often is called *analytic* Bible study. Some studies, however, require a more *synthetic* approach. This study will look at each gospel as a whole unit to determine each account's central theme.

Synthetic Bible study can feel like an insurmountable task when it comes to longer books like the gospels. Thankfully, Pastor Chuck has provided helpful insights on the gospels at [insight.org/resources/bible](https://www.insight.org/resources/bible). Take some time to peruse each gospel's page, and check out each book's overview chart in the right-side column.



Four Titles—Same Savior



Survey of the Four Gospels

The Mighty King The Gospel according to Matthew	
Few would have expected Jesus to choose someone like Matthew. He worked for the Romans as a tax-collector, likely causing him to be despised by his fellow Jews and a social outcast. But after meeting Jesus, Matthew forsook his profession and spent the rest of his life as an eyewitness proclaiming the truth that Jesus is the Jews' long-awaited King.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Matthew opens his gospel with Jesus' family tree. Around what two figures did Matthew organize Jesus' genealogy? See Matthew 1:1–2, 6 .	Why did Matthew take care to show Jesus' place in the genealogical line of these figures? See Genesis 12:1–3 and 2 Samuel 7:8–16 .
According to 4:17 , what was Jesus' essential message?	Why did Matthew place so much emphasis on Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of heaven?
Matthew 28:19–20 contains Jesus' famous Great Commission. What did Jesus say to His disciples in 28:18 before commissioning them?	What is the connection between Jesus having "all authority" and His commission for the disciples to spread the good news?

Matthew stays with the kingship of Christ. When you finish reading of the resurrection, you see that the King is triumphant. Matthew has exalted the kingship of Christ.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels



The Lowly Servant The Gospel according to Mark	
Mark was a close friend of Peter. Based on what he learned from this close disciple of Jesus, Mark wrote his gospel to an audience in Rome—the center of the known world. Yet Mark didn't tell of the arrival of a king who would deliver Israel from its oppressors. Rather, he wrote of a servant who would suffer with and for His followers.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
What confession did Peter make about Jesus' identity in Mark 8:29 ? How did Jesus respond in 8:30 ?	Mark's gospel contains the least amount of teaching material from Jesus. Why did Mark emphasize Jesus' <i>works</i> over His <i>words</i> ?
Immediately after Peter's confession, what did Jesus predict would happen in 8:31 ?	Why did Jesus tell Peter not to share what he knew about the Messiah? (See 1:41–45 .)
According to 10:42–45 , how was Jesus different from Gentile rulers?	What was Jesus' ultimate act of service for His followers?

Isn't it a pleasure to think of the Lord Jesus not simply as high and exalted but also as one who has come among us to serve? You remember that, as a child of God, you have Jesus, who serves. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Four Titles—Same Savior



Survey of the Four Gospels

The Ideal Human The Gospel according to Luke	
Luke was a Gentile who never met Jesus. Yet he grew hungry to learn as much as he could about his Lord. For that reason, he scoured the world for any written or oral account he could find about Jesus. Then, he compiled everything he learned to show his fellow Gentiles that Jesus Christ is the ideal human.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
According to Luke 3:38 , who were Jesus' earliest ancestors?	Why is Luke's genealogy of Jesus different from Matthew's?
In 4:18–21 , Jesus said that He would fulfill a prophecy from Isaiah. What would He do to fulfill this prophecy?	Why did Luke choose to pay special attention to Jesus' ministry to Gentiles, sinners, outcasts, and the poor?
According to 19:10 , what was the purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry?	Why is it significant that Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man" (Hint: see Daniel 7:13–14)

Luke wrote of Christ as the ideal human. Time and again we're given human-interest stories. And each one of these stories was of interest to Luke. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels

The Divine Son of God The Gospel according to John	
On the first page of John's gospel, you will realize that his account is unique. While each gospel paints a distinct portrait of Jesus, the first three evangelists wrote with an earthly perspective and gazed into heaven. John, however, wrote with a heavenly perspective as though peering down to earth. From the first sentence, John shouts what the other writers imply: <i>Jesus is the Son of God!</i>	
 Observation	 Interpretation
In John 1:1–5 , how did John describe “the Word”?	What (or <i>Who</i>) is “the Word”? How do you know?
After being accused of spreading demonic teachings, what did Jesus say in response to His critics in 8:58 ?	In the Old Testament, God said that His name is <i>Yahweh</i> , which means, “I am.” How does this background clarify Jesus’ words in 8:58 ?
According to 20:30–31 , why did John write his gospel?	“Believe” in 20:31 can also be translated “trust.” What does it mean to trust in Jesus as the Son of God?

John wrote another account because he wanted us to see that Jesus isn't merely a king, not only a servant, not just a human. He is God. He presents miracles and stories and events that cause the reader to say, "That's God! Only God could do that."
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels



Application: Jesus' Identity and Your Identity

A survey of the four gospels should be more than a mental exercise. Seeing Jesus from different perspectives should touch the heart as well. As we reflect on the four portraits of the one true Savior, two applications emerge:

1. Like Jesus, we all fill various roles—all for God's Glory.
2. God wants to use each of our roles to cause others to believe.

What unique roles has God given you? These roles include jobs, relationships, skills, and responsibilities.

In what ways can you use your unique roles, gifts, and experiences to lead Christians into deeper faith in Jesus Christ and non-Christians into newfound faith in Him?

You may look at the portrait of Jesus Christ that each of the four gospels paints and see a contradiction. How can He be both servant and King, both God and human? Despite this supposed paradox, each of these four roles is essential to Jesus' identity. It would be impossible to capture all four of these roles in one account.

When you worship the Lord, picture Him as the four gospels portray Him, and let the wonder of who Jesus is draw you closer to Him as you praise Him from your heart.



Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels



A FINAL PRAYER

Offer your own praise to God for His Son as you conclude your study today.

Father,

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



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S06
8

HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY SEVEN

“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11

We possess nothing in our nature that can save us. For us to produce a kind of fruit that will bring eternal reward, the Father and the Lord Jesus give life to the branches. We are simply a part of the process.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

How beautiful is the colorful mosaic of produce at a farmers’ market! Yet before you could enjoy that delectable fruit, it had to take a long trip.

The journey begins with a tiny seed planted in the ground. With enough water and sunlight, that seed takes root in the soil, and a bright green sprout breaks through the earth. Over the next several days, that sprout grows taller and stronger. Yet these are just the first steps.

On its voyage from a small seed to a strong, fruit-bearing plant, the young sprout receives the assistance of an experienced gardener. The gardener ensures that the plant receives the right amount of water and sunlight—neither too much nor too little. He protects the plant from insects that would infect its branches or small animals that would eat its growing buds. He removes the dead branches and prunes the healthy branches, allowing them to grow even stronger.

After months—or even years—of intentional care, the gardener sees little pale fruits blooming from the plant’s branches. The patience and hard work have finally paid off. The harvest will be here soon.

The life cycle of a plant is like the life cycle of a Christian. Our heavenly Father is the gardener who takes a new believer’s seed of faith and grows it to produce the fruit of good works. How? By keeping us attached to Jesus Christ—the true vine.



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before you open your Bible today, come to the Gardener in prayer.

Father, thank You for providing a way for me to have a relationship with Your Son despite my own sin. Please use this study to draw me closer to You and prune me that I may bear much fruit for Your kingdom. I pray these things in Jesus' life-giving name. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In [John 15:1](#), Jesus told His disciples, “I am the true vine” (NASB). For readers of John’s gospel, this statement sounds familiar because John organized his account around Jesus’ seven “I am” statements.

Elsewhere, Jesus refers to Himself as “the bread of life” ([6:35](#)), “the light of the world” ([8:12](#)), “the gate for the sheep” ([10:7](#)), “the good shepherd” ([10:11](#)), “the resurrection and the life” ([11:25](#)), and “the way, the truth, and the life” ([14:6](#)). By teaching with metaphors, Jesus communicated deep truths about His character and mission through each of these statements.

Yet the meaning of these statements calls back to the story of Israel. Centuries earlier, when Egypt enslaved God’s people, God appeared to Moses offering a plan of liberation. During this encounter, Moses asked God what he and the Israelites should call Him. How did God respond in [Exodus 3:14–15](#)?

God’s name *Yahweh* in Hebrew, means “I am.” And by so regularly saying, “I am,” Jesus communicated that He was more than just a vine or bread or even life itself.

He was—and still is—God.



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11



Observation: Exploring the Metaphor

Before Jesus’ crucifixion, He met with His disciples one last time to enjoy the Passover feast. After Judas departed to betray his teacher, Jesus offered His parting words to His true disciples. Though He would soon depart, He wanted them to know how they could maintain an intimate relationship with Him.

In *John 15:1–11*, Jesus explores a metaphor of a vine and its branches. Through this metaphor, Jesus made an abstract idea concrete by comparing it to something His disciples knew very well.

As you read and observe these verses, focus on the symbolism of the vine, and fill in what each following image represents. The next section will consider what these images *mean*.¹

Vine (15:1): _____

Gardener (15:1): _____

Branches (15:5): _____

Read 15:4 in a few different *Bible translations*. What command did Jesus give His disciples in this verse? According to 15:5, what is the result for those who follow this command?

According to 15:2, what does the gardener do with the branches that produce fruit? What does he do with the branches that do not produce fruit (see also 15:6)?



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11

What was Jesus’ second command in [15:9](#)? According to [15:10](#), how will it be evident that someone is following this command?

When you remain in Christ, it is amazing how your life glorifies God. You’re motivated by love. Jesus’ life flows through you. Just as He kept the Father’s Word and love began to flow, so you keep His Word. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Understanding the Metaphor

In [John 15:1–11](#), Jesus used two illustrations in tandem to describe His relationship with believers: the vine and abiding. At this point, you may feel unsure of what each of these images actually mean for Jesus’ followers—both then and now. Interpretation will reveal what each of these symbols represent.

Jesus explicitly stated what the vine, the gardener, and the branches represent in His metaphor, though not the fruit. What does the fruit represent?

The Greek verb behind Jesus’ command to “remain” (sometimes translated “abide” or even “stay”) in Him is *meno* ([15:4](#)). This term contains imagery that’s easy to miss in a translation. John’s original readers knew that *meno*’s noun counterpart referred to a dwelling place or a home (see [14:2](#)). You can see this connection in the English verb *abide* and its noun counterpart *abode*.



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11

Based on this context, what does it mean to remain in Jesus? Feel free to consult your *Bible Study tools* to explore further the meaning of *meno*.

What’s the difference between a branch who remains in Jesus and one who doesn’t?

Although Jesus offered this teaching to His disciples as a message of joy (*John 15:11*), some read Jesus’ words in *15:6* and feel an overwhelming sense of fear. *What if I’m a branch that doesn’t produce enough fruit? Does that mean I’m in danger of losing my salvation?*

Yet Jesus never intended for His disciples to walk away from this conversation feeling hopeless. Reread *15:1–5*. What encouragement do these verses offer someone struggling with questions about his or her eternal security?

Just as the earthly gardener plants the seed in the ground and patiently tends to it until it produces, so also the Heavenly Gardener places the seed of faith in the hearts of Jesus’ followers. And if He planted the seed, then He will cultivate the branch until it produces beautiful, nourishing fruit.



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11



Correlation: Unpacking the Metaphor

Despite Jesus’ ability as a master teacher, He did not come up with the image of a vine on His own. Instead, He borrowed a metaphor used all throughout the Old Testament. [Ezekiel 15:1–8](#) addresses this theme in great detail.

According to [15:2–5](#), how did God describe a vine that doesn’t produce fruit?

To whom did God compare these vines in [15:6](#)? What consequence awaited them for not producing fruit? According to [15:8](#), why did God extend such a harsh judgment to His own people?

How does the context of this passage from Ezekiel provide a fuller understanding of Jesus’ words in [John 15:1–11](#)?



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11

In the era of the Old Testament, God intended to use the nation of Israel as a vine that would bear fruit God would use to bless the whole world. Yet the Israelites turned away from God toward false idols, so their vine withered. God then sent the *true* vine to bring life to all who would abide in Him—both then and now.



Application: Applying the Metaphor

From Jesus’ metaphor of the vine, Pastor Chuck Swindoll developed two practical applications.

1. The result of remaining in Jesus is fruitfulness. *Don’t miss it!*
2. Refusal to remain in Jesus is barrenness. *Don’t chance it!*

What fruit does your life bear, making it evident to others that you abide in Jesus?

What practical steps can you take this week to draw closer to Jesus than you have before?

You might be wondering about Christians who seem to bear no fruit at all. Thankfully John’s gospel speaks to this topic as well.



“I Am the True Vine”

John 15:1–11

While Jesus was on trial, Peter lingered on the outskirts of the temple and denied knowing his teacher three separate times. This branch appeared to want nothing to do with the true vine. Yet even though Peter appeared not to abide in Jesus, Jesus abided in him. After His resurrection, Jesus approached Peter and offered reconciliation (*John 21:1–19*).

Peter ultimately endured some difficult and painful pruning, but He lived the rest of His life committed to Jesus and the gospel. How does Peter’s example offer you encouragement as you wrestle with the difficult elements of this passage?

Many attach themselves to false vines like power, pleasure, or wealth. Yet these vines eventually produce the fruit of dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Jesus is the true vine, and those who remain in Him will reap a harvest of joy that will last for eternity.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for giving me life through Jesus Christ, the true vine. Give me the strength to remain in Him. Prune me. My heart’s desire is to bear the fruit of love and faithfulness so I might show You to others. In Jesus’ faithful name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, “*How to Study the Bible for Yourself*.”



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY EIGHT

The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures

You cannot hide from the Shepherd. You cannot ignore His voice. There is something irresistible about it. He finds you and draws you back to Him. I am so grateful He doesn't leave us when we wander from Him.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

Of all the animals God could have chosen to represent His people, He chose *sheep*.

Sheep are far from the most remarkable animals on the farm. They tend to gather in groups and move as a unit. Whenever one member of the flock wanders, the rest follow—even if they stray straight into danger. Sheep have no way to defend themselves, so when attacked by predators, they panic and flee on their spindly legs—easy prey for wolves.

Yes, sheep are essentially helpless. Without a shepherd to nourish, guide, and protect them, they wouldn't survive long at all.

The similarities between sheep and human beings are remarkable. People easily lose their way and wander into danger. They often fail to defend themselves from physical, emotional, and even spiritual harm. And they tend to lead one another directly into disaster's ruthless grip.



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S08
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The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures

Like sheep, humans also need a shepherd. Not just another human shepherd, but a *divine* shepherd. This *Searching the Scriptures* study explores Jesus' identity as the shepherd and considers how He seeks to provide nourishment, guidance, and protection to His desperately needy sheep.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

David expressed his trust in God as his shepherd in the moving lines of *Psalms* 23. As you prepare to explore this theme further, join David on the Judean hillside overlooking his flock and pray his words as your own.

*The LORD is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.
You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the LORD
forever.*



The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Despite David's honoring words about the *heavenly* shepherd, people in the ancient world placed *earthly* shepherds on the bottom rung of the social ladder. Shepherds worked and lived alone in the fields, excluded from the business and excitement of city life. They worked with stubborn animals, and they smelled just as bad as their woolly companions.

For these reasons, people only worked as shepherds when they had no other choice. Yet Jesus forfeited all the honor He had as the Son of God and willingly became human, so He could serve His creation as the shepherd it had always needed.





Observation and Interpretation: Knowing the Shepherd

Three passages in the New Testament discuss the significance of Jesus' role as shepherd: [John 10:1–17](#); [Hebrews 13:20–21](#); and [1 Peter 5:1–4](#). As you observe and interpret each of these texts, consider what specific shepherding role Jesus fulfills in each passage.



The Shepherd of the Sheep



Selected Scriptures

The Good Shepherd John 10:1–17	
<i>John 10:1–17</i> contains one of the gospel’s seven “I am” statements. In these sayings, Jesus simultaneously affirmed His identity as God-made-flesh while describing a key part of His earthly ministry. An essential element of this ministry was gathering a flock of sheep to follow the voice of the trustworthy, <i>Good Shepherd</i> .	
 Observation	 Interpretation
According to <i>John 10:3</i> , what relationship does a shepherd have with his sheep?	Based on <i>10:3–5</i> , why might someone have difficulty following Jesus? What steps could this person take to address these issues?
According to <i>10:4–5</i> , why do sheep follow their shepherd’s voice?	
According to <i>10:11–12</i> , what makes the shepherd good? What does he do for his sheep that a hired hand wouldn’t?	How did Jesus fulfill His identity as the Good Shepherd?

The Shepherd not only knows us, He goes before us. And being the Good Shepherd, He never leads us into wrong paths. Isn’t that an interesting and wonderful thought? We all have known people who would have led us astray. But the Shepherd never turns against His sheep. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures

The Great Shepherd Hebrews 13:20–21	
The author of Hebrews penned his letter to his fellow Jewish Christians who were struggling to balance their ethnic identity with their chosen convictions. At the heart of the letter is the simple truth of Jesus' greatness. He is greater than the angels, greater than the prophets, greater than the priests. The letter concludes with a benediction of praise to the <i>Great Shepherd</i> .	
 Observation	 Interpretation
According to Hebrews 13:20 , what two things did God do in the past?	What is the relationship between Jesus' resurrection and His empowerment of those who believe in Him?
According to 13:21 , what two things does God continue to do in the present?	Based on this benediction, what about Jesus makes Him the Great Shepherd for His sheep?
How does God produce good things that are pleasing to Him?	

The Great Shepherd is the One who came back from beyond and has power. In the New Testament, the zenith of power is pictured in the resurrection of Christ. And here He is, coming back from beyond, not a conqueror of all foes but the Shepherd of His sheep.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Shepherd of the Sheep
Selected Scriptures

The Chief Shepherd 1 Peter 5:1–4	
Peter knew firsthand the dangers that awaited his fellow followers of Jesus, and his letter offered exhortation to find hope in Jesus. Using the image of the shepherd, Peter showed how believers can serve one another. Though Jesus is the <i>Chief Shepherd</i> , He delegates some of His own responsibility to His sheep so they might guide, comfort, and nourish others in need.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
What commands did Peter give his fellow elders in 1 Peter 5:2 ? In what manner are the elders to carry out these commands?	How does Peter’s description of a shepherd differ from a typical, worldly depiction of a leader?
According to 5:3 , how are these earthly shepherds to guide their flock?	Why is it important for spiritual shepherds to remember that Jesus is their Chief Shepherd?
According to 5:4 , what will be the result if these shepherds carry out Peter’s exhortations faithfully?	

The flock is to be shepherded. It is not to be driven. You don’t drive sheep. You drive cattle. To get a racehorse to do his best, you strike him with a switch. But you don’t strike a sheep. You shepherd sheep. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures



Application: Trusting the Shepherd

John affirmed Jesus as the *Good* Shepherd. The author of Hebrews acclaimed Jesus as the *Great* Shepherd. Peter acknowledged Jesus as the *Chief* Shepherd. Based on each of these three titles, Pastor Chuck developed three practical applications for Jesus' sheep.

1. The Good Shepherd does not lead down wrong paths. If He's leading you somewhere unknown, *risk* following His guiding voice.
2. The Great Shepherd can't ignore a wandering sheep. If He's calling you because you're wandering, *return* to Him.
3. The Chief Shepherd will not overlook any deed deserving reward. If He's being glorified in your thoughts, words, and deeds, *relax*!

In the space below, discuss a time when you've followed the Good Shepherd down an unknown path despite your own uncertainty. Why did you take the risk in the first place? What were the results of following His guiding hand?

Can you think of a time when you've strayed from the Great Shepherd? This memory may feel painful, but reflecting on the past often allows believers to see more clearly God's goodness in the present. What finally caused you to listen to His voice and return?



The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures

What flock has the Chief Shepherd given you to manage? It could be your congregation, your employees, or even your own family. What steps can you take to resemble Jesus as you seek to shepherd others?

As you wrap up your study, return to the Judean hillside with David and reread [Psalm 23](#). Write down some thoughts about what it means that Jesus is *your* Shepherd who meets all your needs.

The prophet Isaiah once said,

*All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God's paths to follow our own (Isaiah 53:6).*

Yet he tempered this bleak reality with a message of everlasting hope:

*Yet the LORD laid on him
the sins of us all (53:6).*

Isaiah knew that a true shepherd would later come to lay down His own life so that His wandering and needy flock might live.



The Shepherd of the Sheep

Selected Scriptures



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Your Son to be my Shepherd. Give me ears to listen to His voice. Strengthen my faith so that I might follow Him. I trust He will nourish me, protect me, and guide me into eternal pastures of joy, hope, and peace. I ask these things in His good name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY NINE

The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures

While on earth, Jesus had plenty of power, of course. Being God, He had all the strength of heaven. But He never performed or attempted to impress. I'll be frank with you, of all the things about Christ, I think I admire this the most. The One who had the ability to abuse His power never came anywhere near it. He was known for His gentleness and His humility of heart.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EVERYONE loves a hero. Children and adults alike revel in seeing someone use strength, skill, and savvy to overcome impossible odds to save the person in distress or the city facing disaster.

Many people today put their faith in heroes because they desperately long for someone to save a world bracing for devastation—someone like a powerful politician, a prominent artist, or a prosperous entrepreneur. If one were to compare such a human hero to an animal, he or she would look like a ferocious lion or a mighty bear or a magnificent stallion.

The hero of Scripture, however, appears nothing like these figures. While the world celebrates power, prominence, and prosperity, Jesus Christ forsook these things to serve the needy, to extend compassion to the brokenhearted, and to carry Himself with gentleness and humility as the Lamb of God.

Yet understanding Jesus as the Lamb of God reveals just as much about His *personality* as it does about His *purpose*. This *Searching the Scriptures* study journeys through the New Testament to discover both *what* it means that Jesus is the lamb and *why* those in need of hope today can trust in this unlikely hero to save them.



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S09
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The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures



PREPARE YOUR HEART

God is not so proud or distant that He won't reach down to connect with His people. In fact, God desires to know His children through prayer. Say this prayer to prepare your heart for what He wants to say to you today:

Father, come alongside me as I explore your Word today. Lead me to the truth about Your Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Show me who He is so I might embrace Him as my savior and follow His example. In His gentle and humble name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The earliest Israelites needed a hero desperately. For hundreds of years, they were enslaved under the brutal and unyielding hand of the Egyptians. And no amount of careful scheming or fervent revolting would overturn the strongest empire the world had ever known.

At Israel's moment of greatest need, however, God appeared to Moses with a plan of deliverance. Israel's hero introduced Himself to Moses as *El-Shaddai*. According to [Exodus 6:2–3](#), what does this name mean?

Though Egypt seemed an impossibly mighty foe, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was mightier, and He successfully freed Israel from Egypt. Thousands of years later, *El-Shaddai* would come in the flesh to earth to combat the foes of sin and death, though not as a mighty warrior . . . but as a lamb.



The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures



Observation: Discovering the Lamb's Identity

Page after page of the New Testament contains scenes depicting Jesus as the Lamb of God. Read each of the following passages, and as you answer each question, record any additional observations you make about Jesus' role as the lamb.¹

The Lamb's Identity—John 1:29

John the Baptizer came as a prophet whose responsibility was to prepare a way for the arrival of the Lamb of God. According to [John 1:29](#), who was the lamb, and what would the lamb do?

The Lamb's Fate—Acts 8:32–35

Several years after the ministry of John the Baptizer, a man name Philip found an Ethiopian eunuch scratching his head, wondering about the significance of the lamb in the Hebrew Scriptures. According to prophecy quoted in [Acts 8:32–33](#), what ultimately happened to the lamb?



The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures

According to [Acts 8:34–35](#), how did Philip interpret this passage for the Ethiopian?

The Lamb's Payment—1 Peter 1:18–19

Philip explained that the lamb's fate was "good news," but Acts doesn't say much more than that. Thankfully, Peter's explanation of the good news about the lamb is preserved in his first letter. According to [1 Peter 1:18–19](#), what were the results of the lamb's fate?

The Lamb's Glory—Revelation 5:11–14

The revelation God gave to John allowed him to peer through the corridors of time to see creation's consummation. In his vision of heaven, he saw "a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing" among the assembly ([Revelation 5:6](#)). According to [5:11–14](#), what did the heavenly chorus say about the lamb?



The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures

No one could have expected that the very Son of God would be led “like a lamb to the slaughter” (*Isaiah 53:7*). Yet if the Lamb of God hadn’t died, then He wouldn’t be able to offer everlasting life to those who would accept His sacrifice.



Interpretation: Understanding the Lamb’s Importance

The New Testament authors knew that God had promised to send a lamb to deliver His people, and they recognized Jesus as this lamb. But . . . what does it *mean* that Jesus is a lamb? Why does Scripture use this specific metaphor to describe Jesus’ work of salvation? The answers to these questions are embedded within God’s character.

God is both righteous and holy, which means He maintains the perfect standard of what is right and good, and He cannot allow anything that falls short of this standard into His presence. This is why He expelled Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. When they disobeyed Him, sin entered the garden and put paradise under a curse.

How, then, can a sinful person restore broken communion with God? After delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, God gave them the Law that revealed how Israel could maintain a thriving relationship with God. An essential element of the Law was the sacrificial system. The only way the Jews could atone for their sins was through sacrifice.

According to *Leviticus 17:11*, why did God require a sacrifice to pay the penalty for sin?



The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures

In light of the context of Israel's sacrificial system, what would a faithful Jew have thought reading the New Testament's depiction of Jesus as the Lamb of God?

The apostle Paul was a Jewish scholar who knew well the importance of the need for sacrifice to atone for sin. In [Romans 3:21–26](#), he explained why Jesus was this perfect sacrifice. According to [3:24–26](#), how is Christ's sacrifice the perfect substitute for the penalty every sinner ought to receive? Feel free to consult your *Bible study tools*.

According to Paul, how does someone receive this substitutionary atonement for his or her sins?

By offering Himself as an unblemished sacrifice, Jesus—the Lamb of God—paid the full price of humanity's sin. The sin that imperfect earthly lambs covered temporarily, the perfect divine lamb erased permanently.



The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures

These colorful, varied portraits of the lamb reveal symbolic meaning. First, there's a symbol of sacrifice. Second, there's a symbol of dependence, of reliance, as a little lamb would rely on its mother. Third, there's a symbol of innocence. Fourth, there's a symbol of meekness and gentleness and humility, all of which are extremely commendable and rare.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Following the Lamb's Example

Embracing Jesus as the Lamb of God truly is a matter of life and death. Those who trust in Jesus and believe His sacrifice will pay off the insurmountable debt of sin will receive new life and will spend eternity praising the merciful Lamb of God.

Have you made the decision to trust in Jesus? If not, take a moment now to express your faith in Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for your sin. This simple prayer might say what's on your heart.

Father, I confess that I have sinned against You. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins and bear my judgment. I put my whole faith in Him alone as my savior, and I receive Your forgiveness through His blood that was shed for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

As your savior, the Lamb of God is also your example to follow. Jesus models:

1. A life of dependence
2. A presence of approachability
3. A heart of innocence
4. A spirit of sacrifice

How has this study on the Lamb of God broadened your understanding of the weight of your own sin, the cost of Jesus' sacrifice, and the depth of God's mercy? Take a moment to reflect on these all-important matters. How will seeing these truths more clearly affect your daily walk with God?



The Lamb of God

Selected Scriptures

Which of the four lamb-like attributes listed above does your life most clearly reflect? What kinds of practical adjustments can you make to better represent the gentle and humble heart of Jesus?

While the Lamb of God offers an example for full living, He also offers a means by which anyone can receive salvation and new life. As you conclude your study today, reflect on the words of Elvina M. Hall's simple yet theologically rich hymn, "Jesus Paid It All."

*For nothing good have I
Where-by Thy grace to claim;
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.*

*Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.²*



A FINAL PRAYER

Conclude your study by offering your own prayer of thanksgiving for the Lamb of God's example and sacrifice.

Father,

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Elvina. M. Hall, "Jesus Paid It All," 1865, Hymnary.org, https://hymnary.org/text/i_hear_the_savior_say_thy_strength_indee.



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY TEN

The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6

There is nothing like the fear of being lost—of not knowing the way home. You need something to relieve that fear. You need Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, the life. If you have Him, you're never lost. Isn't that a wonderful thought? It's a wonderful relief to troubled hearts.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

NAVIGATING life often feels like wandering through a forest at night. Unknown dangers crouch in the darkness, waiting to attack you when you least suspect. Obstacles hide along your path, causing you to trip and fall. Even when you manage to avoid these threats, you occasionally take a few wrong turns that leave you more lost, more afraid, and more troubled than ever.

Whether you're trekking through the woods or living in this world, you need a map and compass to provide direction to a destination and a light to illuminate the path. Better still, you need a *guide*, a faithful companion who helps you avoid the snares of this world and leads you safely home.

Thankfully, God has provided such a guide in Jesus, the One who leads wandering souls to God and to eternal life. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life who alone can put lost and troubled hearts at ease.



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The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6



PREPARE YOUR HEART

While Jesus is *the* way to true life, God has given humanity Scripture as the primary way to get to know Him better. As you approach God in prayer today, use the words of [Psalm 119:105](#) to ask Him to guide you in your study.

*Your word is a lamp to guide my feet
and a light for my path.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Though God revealed His name as *Yahweh* to Israel, His people have held Him in such reverence that they historically have chosen to worship Him using an alternative name: *Jehovah*. This name is often used today to highlight His various attributes.

Jehovah-Shalom means, “The LORD is peace” ([Judges 6:24](#)). *Jehovah-Rapha* means, “The LORD who heals” ([Exodus 15:26](#)). *Jehovah-Jireh* means, “The LORD will provide” ([Genesis 22:14](#)).

God does indeed provide for the physical needs of His people, but He also meets their deepest spiritual need—the need for Jesus to guide them to salvation. And in [John 14:1–6](#), Jesus explained to His disciples how God the Father provides new, everlasting life.



Observation: Beginning the Journey

As you read [John 14:1–6](#), carefully pay attention to Jesus’ words. Observation is the first step in the journey of arriving at a sound understanding of Scripture. For now, just focus on what the passage says.¹

What exhortation did Jesus offer His disciples at the beginning of this conversation ([14:1](#))?



The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6

Jesus had just warned His dearest friends of His coming demise (see [John 13:33](#)). So why would they *not* be troubled? They had given up everything to follow this modest carpenter-turned-teacher, and now He was going to die and leave them behind. Yet the disciples didn't realize that Jesus' departure was *good* news for them.

According to [14:2–3](#), why did Jesus need to leave them?

Jesus' words reflect a rare glimpse of heaven. Though many envision spending eternity in vast mansions, Jesus depicts a more modest reality. These spaces He prepares are better seen as dwelling places near the temple. By using this image, Jesus affirmed that His believers will live eternally in the very presence of God. What a glorious reality awaits those who follow Jesus!

According to [14:5](#), what question did Thomas ask in response to Jesus' alarming words?



The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6

Thomas may have been thinking Jesus would give him a list of religious duties that he could do to earn his way to heaven. Jesus' answer must have surprised Thomas along with the rest of the disciples. How did Jesus answer the question in [John 14:6](#)? What did He say was the true destination?

“I am the life.” Life is the principle of spiritual vitality. It originates with God. It flows through Christ. And it lifts us out of our sin and places us on a plane of relationship.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Following the Path

In just a few sentences, Jesus packed volumes of theological truth. Interpretation moves from asking what Jesus *said* to considering what His words *mean* for all peoples in all times.

This passage contains one of Jesus' seven “I am” statements in John's gospel. Upon hearing these two little words, Jesus' Jewish listeners' ears would have perked up. By saying, “I am,” Jesus did much more than speak in vivid metaphors. He identified Himself as God incarnate. This is because God's name is derived from a Hebrew expression meaning, “I AM” ([Exodus 3:14–15](#)).

What is the connection between Jesus' divine identity and His role as the way, the truth, and the life? In other words, what does Jesus accomplish that only God can do?



The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6

The respective Greek words for “way,” “truth,” and “life” are *hodos*, *aletheia*, and *zoe*. Using your Bible study tools, look up each of these terms. Check out the free dictionary on Bill Mounce’s [website](#) to find the meaning of Greek words. Another good resource is [Constable’s Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#).

In the space below, summarize what you learned about each of these terms. How does understanding these three ideas together help you understand the fuller meaning of Jesus’ words?

Many people struggle with Jesus being the *only* way to God. Some see this as exclusive—even intolerant, preferring to believe that many “paths” lead to the same “destination” of salvation. But the issue isn’t about *what* religion to follow. It’s about *whom* to trust. The truth this passage teaches is in fact exclusive because there is only one Jesus. Those who do not trust in Him will be excluded from the blessings of new and everlasting life.

How would you respond to someone who sees the exclusivity of Christianity strictly as *bad* news? How would you use this passage to show that Jesus’ words are *good* news? Remember, Jesus began this discussion saying, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled” ([John 14:1](#))!

Education isn’t the secret to finding “the truth.” Rather, it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—the way, the truth, the life. “The search ends with Me.” Jesus is at one and the same time the incarnation of fidelity, the revelation of reality. He is the pattern of goodness and perfection. Stop searching when you come to Him. You’ve found “the truth.”
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6



Correlation: Finding Wisdom for the Way

The book of Proverbs overflows with wisdom that is valuable for anyone. And when Christians engage with Proverbs, they see how wisdom is exemplified in the person of Christ. As you read each of the following proverbs, consider how they contribute to your understanding of Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life.

What does *Proverbs 14:12* teach about the way? What does this proverb reveal about Jesus?

What does *Proverbs 23:23* teach about the truth? What does this proverb reveal about Jesus?

What does *12:28* teach about the life? (This proverb teaches about the way too!) What does this proverb reveal about Jesus?



The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6

Proverbs offers two paths: the path of the foolish and the path of the wise. The fool hears Jesus say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and scoffs. The wise person, however, listens to these words and abandons everything to follow Jesus down the road of new life, of everlasting life, of true life.



Application: Reaching the Destination

Many spend decades journeying down dead-end paths in search of life, yet Jesus is the only way anyone can obtain true life. Based on this truth, Pastor Chuck has three profound and practical applications:

1. Because Jesus is the way, He relieves my fear of being lost.
2. Because Jesus is the truth, He removes my need to continue the search.
3. Because Jesus is the life, He reinforces my hope for a home in heaven.

Have you ever veered away from Jesus and wandered down a path that falsely promised feelings like satisfaction, belonging, happiness, or purpose? What was the ultimate destination of that path? How did Jesus find you and set you back in the right direction?

What lies do the nonbelievers in your cultural context believe? In what way is the truth Jesus offers superior to these lies?



The Way, the Truth, the Life

John 14:1–6

How does knowing that Jesus promised His believers an eternal dwelling place with Him encourage you right now? What is the benefit of viewing your temporary circumstances through this eternal lens?

Jesus Christ came to humanity working like an expedition guide, leading His people on a journey from earth to heaven. Though the road appears dark and dangerous, Jesus is with you to guide your steps, to pick you up when you fall, and to welcome you into the Father's presence with open arms when you finally reach your destination.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your Son, who found me when I was lost and showed me the way to You. Thank You for guiding me from the path of falsehood and for securing for me an eternal home with You even though I deserve death. Remind me of these things so I might glorify You every step of my journey. I pray these things in Jesus' true name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY ELEVEN

Christ, Our Mediator

Selected Scriptures

I think of it as a bridge. Our Lord Jesus, in His death at Calvary and in His resurrection from the tomb, spanned the chasm between God and humanity. He bridged the chasm with a cross. And for humankind to know and fellowship with holy God, we must cross the bridge. We must come through the Mediator.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

How do you resolve a conflict with someone? When siblings squabble, parents step in to help the children calm down. When athletes assault one another, referees enter the fray to break up the fight. When coworkers clash, managers work with them to reach a consensual resolution. Yes, one of the best ways to resolve a persistent conflict is through the help of a third-party *mediator*.

A mediator acts as an intercessor when two parties lock themselves into an ongoing dispute. He or she listens to both sides, considers potential solutions, and recommends how to best resolve the disagreement. Under most circumstances, both parties bear some burden of guilt. And ideally both parties will admit their wrongdoing and follow the suggestions of the mediator.

There is no wider gulf than that which exists between the holy God and sinful humanity since every person has transgressed God's law. What differentiates this divine dispute from any human struggle, however, is that God is perfect and deserves no blame. How, then, can humanity be reconciled to God?

Jesus Christ—God made flesh—is the only one who can mediate between a holy God and an unholy people and bring peace. This *Searching the Scriptures* study examines the meaning of Jesus as our mediator and how He restores sinners to a healthy and thriving relationship with God.



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Christ, Our Mediator

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Without Jesus the mediator, sinful humans can have no communion with the holy God. In the days of the kingdom of Israel, God's presence resided in the temple, and the high priest could only enter the room that contained His presence once per year on the Day of Atonement.

Today, however, the Holy Spirit—the very presence of God—fills the hearts of those who trust in Jesus and His sacrifice for sin. The Spirit serves as a powerful conduit between God the Father and His people. The apostle Paul said, “We don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words” (*Romans 8:26*).

Take a moment to pray before you open your Bible. If you can’t find the right words, ask the Holy Spirit to pray on your behalf. He delights in interceding for you!



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Despite what many believe, God is not some tyrant who reigns with the iron rod of oppression and exploitation. Instead, Scripture consistently depicts God as a *Father*. Because love is central to His character, God oversees His people with a heart of compassion, kindness, and care—the same kind of attitude a dad has when he cradles his newborn baby.

In Old Testament times, many Jews selfishly believed they alone deserved the title of “God’s children” because of their ethnic heritage and national identity. Yet God always intended to reach the whole world with His love. Both Jews and Gentiles are invited to dwell eternally in the household of God as His blessed children.

For these reasons, the apostle Paul said, “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father’” (*Romans 8:15*).

Abba is the Aramaic word for “father,” and “father”—*pater* in Greek—represents the same idea. Paul’s point is clear. *Anyone* can become a child of the living God. Yet sadly, humans rejected this invitation and ran away from God’s open arms. For that reason, God sent His true Son to mediate between Himself—the good Father—and His lost children.



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Observation: The Act of Mediation

The Greek word translated as “mediator” is *mesites*—a term which paints a picture of one individual standing between two others acting as a relational bridge.

There are three essential qualities of a mediator. First, the mediator must perfectly represent both parties that are in dispute. Second, the mediator must establish communication between the two sides. Third, the mediator must cultivate a new relationship between the two. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Central to the argument of the book of Hebrews is Jesus’ role as a mediator. Read [Hebrews 8:1–7](#) and [9:11–15](#), and as you carefully observe the text, take note of what Jesus did in order to mediate between sinful humanity and Holy God.¹

Who Is the Mediator? Hebrews 8:1–7

What title did the author use for Jesus in [Hebrews 8:1](#)? According to [8:2–3](#), what actions did someone with that title typically carry out?

In [8:1](#), the author described Jesus as carrying out His role in heaven. In what ways do earthly priests reflect Jesus’ role?



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According to [Hebrews 8:6](#), why is Jesus' divine priestly ministry in heaven "far superior" to the ministry of human priests on earth?

How Does He Mediate? Hebrews 9:11–15

According to [Hebrews 9:11–12](#), what did Jesus, the great High Priest, secure when He entered the heavenly tabernacle? How did He secure it?

According to [9:13–14](#), why is the sacrificial blood of goats and bulls inferior to the blood Jesus willingly sacrificed?



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According to [Hebrews 9:15](#), what is the ultimate result of Jesus' act of mediation?

In [Hebrews 12:22–24](#), the author concludes his discussion on Jesus' role as mediator by sharing a series of life-altering results. You have come to the city of the living God. You have come to join the assembly of God's children. You have come to God Himself. You have come to belong to the righteous ones who have been perfected. You have come to Jesus, the mediator.



Interpretation: The Significance of Mediation

By calling Jesus a “mediator,” the author of Hebrews used a familiar image to convey the complex idea of Jesus ushering in a new covenant. Theologians often describe the effects of this new covenant by using unfamiliar terms like *redemption*, *reconciliation*, and *propitiation*.

When the blueprints of your Bible study direct you to determine the meaning of a certain term, the best tool for the job is a Bible dictionary. A great free online resource is [Easton's Bible Dictionary](#) available at BibleGateway.com. Using your [Bible study tools](#), look up the following terms, and then discuss how Jesus the mediator accomplishes these things.

Redemption ([Ephesians 1:7–14](#))



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Reconciliation (Colossians 1:19–22)

Propitiation (Romans 3:21–26)

God doesn't need to be reconciled to humanity. Humanity needs to be reconciled to God. We are the ones who have moved away into rebellion. God has not moved.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Prayer for Those in Need of Mediation

The apostle Paul had a firsthand encounter with Jesus the mediator. Even though Paul hated Jesus and His followers before his conversion, Jesus came directly to Paul, brought him to God, and then used him to proclaim the message of salvation. And in *1 Timothy 2:1–5*, Paul discussed the practical effects of Jesus' role as the mediator.

In this passage, Paul moves from discussing what Christians should do to why they should do it: “For, there is one God and one mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus” (*1 Timothy 2:5*).



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According to [1 Timothy 2:1–2](#), what should believers do in response to this truth?

What is the connection between this action and this truth? See [2:4](#).

Someone who experiences peace with God through Christ's act of mediation becomes a minister of peace, bringing a "message of reconciliation" to the world ([2 Corinthians 5:19](#)). Paul encouraged Timothy to pray for unbelievers and to bring them the message that peace with God is available through Jesus' blood.

How can someone who's received the gift of reconciliation respond today? By praising God with gratitude for Jesus the mediator.



Application: The Response to Mediation

Here are three reasons to be thankful.



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First, *we are grateful we have a mediator because He has brought reconciliation where there was once alienation.* What did your life look like when you experienced this alienation from God? How does your life look different now that you have been reconciled to God through Jesus the mediator?

Second, *we are grateful we have a mediator because He has bridged the distance that once separated us from God.* How does seeing Christ as your mediator affect your day-to-day walk with God?

Third, *we are grateful we have a mediator because He has become our peace.* Jesus did not create peace between God and humankind only but also between individual humans and even between entire people groups (*Ephesians 2:14–22*).

Is there a fellow believer (or group of believers) with whom you've experienced conflict lately? How can seeing Christ as your mediator help you restore your relationship with this person?



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Is there someone in your life who needs to experience peace with God? Write down a prayer for him or her in the space below.

At one point in time, you stood impossibly far from God because of your sin. But when you placed your trust in Jesus the mediator, He stood beside you, took you by the hand, and led you into the arms of the Father. Remember this truth today, and thank God for His abundant mercy.



A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, write your own prayer of gratitude to God, thanking Him for Jesus Christ, your mediator.

Father,

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY TWELVE

We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2

Jesus Christ is qualified to enter the eternal throne room of God the Father and represent the child of God. In fact, He is seated in that throne room at the very right hand of the Father. When He paid the payment for sin, He paid the payment in full! Not for a few, but for the whole world.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

LORD God. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Messiah. Alpha and Omega. The mighty King. The lowly servant. The ideal man. Son of God. The true Vine. Good Shepherd. Lamb of God. The way, the truth, the life. Mediator. These titles only begin to capture the full image of the glory of Jesus Christ.

While each title reflects a unique element of Jesus' character and purpose, they all portray the simple truth that Jesus—and Jesus alone—is the savior of humankind who is worthy of praise. Each of these distinct portraits fits together to create a beautiful mosaic displaying Jesus' true identity.

This *Searching the Scriptures* series concludes with a study of a rare title for Jesus Christ. Yet it's one that remains among the most vivid and theologically significant. This title answers an all-important question: how can a holy God forgive unholy people?



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S12
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We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples to use His name when they pray to the Father,
“I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. You haven’t done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy” (John 16:23–24).

Jesus didn’t say He would fulfill every whim, but He does promise joy to those who pray in His name. As you conclude this series, offer your own prayer to the Father in Jesus’ name. Ask Him to continue to strengthen your relationship with Jesus, trusting that He will fill your soul with abundant joy.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The drama of Scripture begins and ends with God giving names. The curtain rises in Genesis with God offering a unique name to each element of His creation—like day and night (*Genesis 1:5*) and sky, land, and sea (*1:8, 10*). He even involved humans in this task by having them name all the animals (*2:19–20*).

But humanity disobeyed God and welcomed the corruption of sin. The rest of Scripture traces God’s plan of redemption as He directs history to restore creation to its designed, perfect state.

The book of Revelation displays the grand finale to God’s plan when Christ makes all things new and gives new names. In *Revelation 2:17*, Jesus said, “To everyone who is victorious . . . I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name.”

The new name Jesus will give each of His followers represents a new identity cleansed from the stain of sin and a new life free from the shackles of death. The only way Jesus is able to renew His people is by standing before the throne of God as their advocate.



We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2



Observation: An Advocate Who Pleads Our Case

The New Testament refers to Jesus as the advocate only once, and though this title is rare, it overflows with theological significance. Before you can understand the depth of this term's theological meaning, you first must consider what Scripture says about Jesus the advocate.¹ Read *1 John 2:1–2* carefully and slowly several times, and keep track of your key observations.

According to *2:1*, for what purpose did John write his letter?

Many who heed the warnings of John's letter will still yield to the sinful desires of their flesh from time to time. So John offered a note of good news for believers struggling with sin. "We have an advocate" (*1 John 2:1*). What does an advocate do? How does Jesus advocate for those who believe in Him?



We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2

It is possible that the Father could hear the advocate's words and reject them, saying that each person's record simply is too stained by sin to receive the stamp of righteousness. Thankfully, He doesn't do this! According to [1 John 2:2a](#), why is Jesus' advocacy successful? In other words, how does Jesus handle the problem of humanity's sin?

According to [2:2b](#), whose sin does Jesus' advocacy address?

Notice, He is our "Advocate with the Father." Our major concern in life is, "How will I be represented before the eternal God of heaven?" As a child of God, you can relax, we have an Advocate, even if we sin. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Advocate and the Accuser

What does it mean that Jesus is our advocate? The Greek word translated "advocate" is *parakletos*. In the ancient Greek world, this term generally referred to someone who aided another. More specifically, though, this term was often used in a legal sense to describe a representative or a character witness. So another good translation for this term is "intercessor."



We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2

Using the Greek dictionary available at billmounce.com, look up the term *parakletos*, and record any additional information you discover. In what ways does Jesus fulfill the roles of the *parakletos* for those who follow Him?

How does seeing Jesus as representing you before God, the holy and righteous judge, affect your understanding of the nature of your salvation, despite your sin?

Present in this scene of the heavenly courtroom is another party—the one who stands opposite the advocate and accuses the defendant of being unworthy to receive pardon. According to [Revelation 12:10–12](#), who is this accuser? How will the clash between the advocate and the accuser finally end? What does this reality mean for the human defendants?



We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2

Why is Jesus' advocacy so essential? First, we need an advocate because we continue to sin. Second, we need an advocate because we are weak, and we need extra strength to press on. Third, we need an advocate because we are continually being accused.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How wonderful it is to know that Jesus has blessed His people by promising to advocate for them! Jesus shared these essential truths with His closest friends at the end of His earthly ministry. But He promised them something more: to send *another* advocate.



Correlation: The Other Advocate

As the shadow of Jesus' coming crucifixion loomed over Him, His disciples began to worry. What would they do without their teacher, savior, and friend? Yet amid these dark fears, Jesus offered bright words of comfort: "But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you" ([John 16:7](#)).

What is the identity of this other advocate according to [John 14:16–17](#)?

According to [14:16–17](#), [26](#) and [15:26](#), what roles would this other advocate have?

How is this different than Jesus' advocacy?



We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as *another* advocate who would empower God's earthly people to carry on His heavenly mission. And though Jesus remains with the Father in heaven, the effects of His advocacy are very real on earth today.



Application: The Lasting Benefits of Christ's Advocacy

Because Jesus offered His own spotless life, He stands in God's courtroom pleading the case for sinners and showing that His blood has erased their guilt. Pastor Chuck Swindoll states that, because we have an advocate, these lasting benefits remain true today:

1. We have been justified before God.
2. We claim forgiveness of our sins.
3. We gain strength amid our own weakness.
4. We live confidently despite the adversary's accusations.

The devil works in crafty ways. And his accusations against you often leave the stinging feelings of guilt, shame, or fear long after you've committed a sin. Yet the forgiveness the advocate provides not only erases the debt of sin. It eliminates the burden of sin as well.

Do you ever still feel accused even after you've asked God for forgiveness? What would it look like for you to embrace and to walk in His forgiveness?



We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1–2

Have you ever felt alone or abandoned—as if no one in this world cares to look out for you or your needs? This sinful world is filled with people aching with these difficult feelings every day. What unmet needs do you face today? How can Jesus the advocate meet these deepest needs?

Without an advocate, sinners would remain guilty forever and never taste the glorious forgiveness Jesus Christ offers. Thankfully, He died and rose again and pleads on behalf of those who trust in Him as they find hope that God will declare them, “Not guilty,” and better yet . . .

“Righteous!”

As you conclude this series, praise your Savior for the hope you find in Him by using these words from Norman J. Clayton’s hymn, “My Hope Is in the Lord.”

*And now for me He stands,
Before the Father’s throne.
He shows His wounded hands,
And names me as His own.²*



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your Son Jesus, whose name is above every other name. Thank You for His willingness to come to earth, to die on the cross, and to advocate for me so You might declare me righteous. Help me remember I have an advocate in Jesus Christ so I might live my life depending on the divine aid only He can provide. I pray In Jesus’ merciful name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).”
2. Norman J. Clayton, “My Hope Is in the Lord,” 1945, Hymnary.org, https://hymnary.org/text/my_hope_is_in_the_lord_who_gave.

