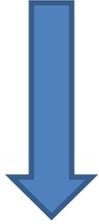


- ✓ **Psalm 34:1-8** *A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.* I Will bless (אֲבָרְכָה) the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear it and rejoice. ³ O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. ⁴ I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces shall never be ashamed. ⁶ This poor man cried and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed (אַשּׁוּרִי) is the man (הַגִּבּוֹר) who takes refuge in Him!

- ✓ **Luke 2:10** And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy (χαρὰν μεγάλην) which shall be for all the people (παντὶ τῷ λαῷ) ; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² "And this *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased (εὐδοκίας)."

Preparation for Bible Class

CHRISTIANITY IS ALL ABOUT OUR CHOICES & GRACE OF GOD



Eternal Choice

John 3:16-21

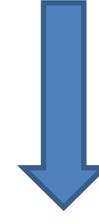
Eternal Hell or Heaven



Daily Choice

1 John 1:5

Daily Darkness or Light



Life's choice

Philip 3:4-8

**Life of σκύβαλα or increasing
personal love for Jesus Christ (CCL)**

Preparation for Bible Class

John 3:16-21 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

- ❖ This text contains some of the most wonderful doctrines in the Word of God: God's love, the mission of the Son, and the security of the believer (the Judge announces His rulings of the Last Day ahead of time).
- ❖ This text also contains some of the saddest words in the Bible, 20-21. Most people indeed will spend all of eternity in everlasting judgment.

Preparation for Bible Class

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD – LIGHT OR DARKNESS?

1 John 1:4-6 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

- ❖ Our God of joy, grace, and +R, and the meaning of fellowship.
- ❖ Darkness and light are diametrically opposed.
- ❖ Salvation through Christ, the Light, does not make fellowship with God automatic for the redeemed.
- ❖ A holy God cannot tolerate sin. To know the blessing of fellowship with God and then step into the darkness and walk alone is to rob yourself of joyful companionship with the Lord.

Preparation for Bible Class

LIFE OF SKUBALA OR LIFE OF GROWTH IN CHRIST (CCL.PLG)

Philippians 3:4-8 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor (διώκων) of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. ⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung (σκύβαλα) in order that I may gain Christ (ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω),

- ✓ **Psalm 34:1-8** *A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.* I Will bless (אֲבָרְכָה) the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear it and rejoice. ³ O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. ⁴ I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces shall never be ashamed. ⁶ This poor man cried and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed (אַשּׁוּרִי) is the man (הַגִּבּוֹר) who takes refuge in Him!

- ✓ **Luke 2:10-14** And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy (χαρὰν μεγάλην) which shall be for all the people (παντὶ τῷ λαῷ) ; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² "And this *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

1. Paul's lack of true personal love for God and lack of divine love for believers before becoming a Christian (before regeneration, παλιγγενεσίας)

- ✓ **Acts 8:1**, And Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem;
- ✓ **Acts 9:1-5**. Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴ and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He *said*, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

1. Paul's lack of true personal love for God and lack of divine love for believers before becoming a Christian (before regeneration, παλιγγενεσίας)

- ✓ **Philippians 3:4-6** although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.
- ✓ **1 Timothy 1:12-14** I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus.

2. The dynamics of Paul's personal love for God and divine love for believers (made possible through regeneration, HS, & BD).

- ✓ **Eph 1:3**, Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,
- ✓ **Romans 1:8-10** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. ⁹ For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the* gospel of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you, ¹⁰ always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.
- ✓ **1 Corinthians 1:4-5** I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,

2. The dynamics of Paul's personal love for God and spiritual/divine love for believers (made possible through regeneration, HS, & BD).

- ✓ **2 Corinthians 1:2-5** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.
- ✓ **Galatians 1:3-6** Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen. ⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

2. The dynamics of Paul's personal love for God and divine love for believers (made possible through regeneration, HS, & BD).

- ✓ **Philippians 1:3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
- ✓ **Colossians 1:3-4** We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;
- ✓ **1 Thessalonians 1:2-4** We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; ³ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, ⁴ knowing, brethren beloved by God, *His* choice of you;

2. The dynamics of Paul's personal love for God and divine love for believers (made possible through regeneration, HS, & BD).

- ✓ **2 Thessalonians 1:2-4** Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater; ⁴ therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.
- ✓ **2 Timothy 1:3-4** I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴ longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.

3. The mandate and dynamics of true love for God,

- ✓ **Matthew 22:37-40** And He said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ 'This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ 'The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 'On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'"
- ✓ **John 13:34** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
- ✓ **1 John 4:19** We love, because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

4. Reflecting on God's incredible love for mankind

- ✓ **God's love for all precedes imputation of divine righteousness, John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- ✓ **God's love for man is connected to the imago Dei. Genesis 1:26-27,** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;. . . ²⁷ And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
- ✓ **God's desire to fellowship with man. Genesis 3:8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים) walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

5. God's love expressed in the 1st Christmas promise of a Redeemer, Gn 3:15.

- ✓ **Genesis 3:15** And I will put enmity Between you [Satan] and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
- Adam left his original King who was a loving, benevolent, Ruler who offered man life, peace, happiness, and fulfillment for a new king who would a hard, selfish taskmaster who offered man death, sickness, conflict, grief, and frustration in return for service to him. Adam is now in hostility towards God as he has gained the OSHGEN, Rom 8:7.
- Adam's rebellion rendered him totally incapable of rescuing himself from Satan's domain. All of man's ingenious devices and programs to improve his lot would boomerang and bring new problems not previously anticipated.

5. **God's love expressed in the 1st Christmas promise of a Redeemer.**

- The earth with all of its inhabitants fell into satanocracy, Eph 2:1-2; 2 Cor 4:4; Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 6:14-15; 1 Jn 5:19.
- This is the protoevangelium---the theme of history, the true meaning of Christmas---God's proclamation of the promise of a Redeemer.
- This is the first glimpse of the person and mission of the One who was going to be the central figure in the unfolding drama of the redemption for all.
- The seed/offspring became the root from which the tree of the OT promise of the Messiah grew. This is the mother prophecy that gave birth to all of the rest of the promises throughout the WOG.
- There would be no Bible as we know it apart from this promise.

5. God's love expressed in the 1st Christmas promise of a Redeemer.

- ✓ We have reference to a present battle and final battle which will lead to a mortal blow to the skull of the Evil One by unnamed or unidentified male descendant of the woman.
- ✓ God promises deliverance but does not yet reveal how this will take place. Questions as to who, where, when, and how will be unfold throughout Old Testament history.
- ✓ Eve's instincts were right about the coming Messiah being the Lord, but her timing was way off:
 - ❖ **Genesis 4:1** Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a man--the LORD." (אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה)

6. Christmas is about God's love and tender mercy, Lk 1:78-79.

- ✓ **Luke 1:76-78** "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; ⁷⁷ To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, Because of the tender (σπλάγχνα) mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise [Messianic title from Mal 4:2] from on high shall visit us, ⁷⁹ To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."
 - Christmas is about the dawn of a new day of God coming into our world and dispelling our dark ignorance of God, His plan, and give us light to know God, to love and adore Him in all things; to dispel the darkness of our own sinfulness and superficiality, to remove our dark sorrows and flood us with His joy.

7. Christmas is about the faithfulness of our God in fulfilling His promises with regard to the Promised Redeemer,

- ✓ Matthew 1:22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."
- ✓ Luke 24:27, And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.
- ✓ Sanh. 99a, "*all the prophets prophesied not but of the days of the Messiah.*" Sanh. 98b, "*the world was not created but only for the Messiah.*"

- ✓ Abrahamic promise: Messiah will come from the Jews, and yet God will provide Himself as the sacrifice, Gen 12:2; 22:5-14; Gal 3:16.
- ✓ The Noahic promise: Genesis 9:26-27, He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. "May God enlarge Japheth, And let Him [God] dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant."
- ✓ The Judaic Prediction: He will reign over all, Gen 49:8-12.
- ✓ The Balaam Prediction: A conquering ruler of Israel, Num 24:15-19.
- ✓ The Mosaic Prediction: Messiah would be like Moses, Dt 18:15, 18 with Jn 6:14; 1:21, 25, 45.
- ✓ The Messiah in Job: mediator, witness in heaven, kinsman-redeemer, and interpreter, Job 9:33; 16:19-21; 19:23-27; 33:23-28.
- ✓ Hannah's understanding of the Messiah: a King who would judge the ends of the earth, 1 Sam 2:10.

- ✓ Messiah prediction in the time of Eli: 1 Samuel 2:35 'But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.
- ✓ The Davidic Predictions: Messiah will come from David's flesh and seed; He will be God's natural Son; He will have a kingdom, rule, and reign that will never end; and He will surely come one day in the future, 2 Sam 7:13-16; Psa 89; 132; Lk 1:32-33.
- ✓ Messiah in the Psalms: rejection of the Messiah (118), betrayal of the Messiah (69, 109), death and resurrection of the Messiah (22; 16), the marriage of the Messiah (40; 45); the triumph of the Messiah (68; 72), the enthroned Messiah (110; 2).
- ✓ Messiah in the 9th century Prophets: a Teacher (Joel 2:23); Second David, Hosea 3:4-5; House of David (Amos 9:11-15); The Breaker (Micah 2:12-13); Coming Ruler (Micah 5:1-4).

- ✓ Messiah in Isaiah: King (Isa 4:2); Virgin Born (7:1-16); Wonderful Ruling Son (9:1-7); will come in the power of the Holy Spirit (11:1-16); will triumph over all (24:21-25); the Foundation Stone (28:16); the Teacher (30:19-26); will have an extraordinary ministry (42:1-7); will have a mission to the whole world (Isa 49:1-6); will suffer (50:4-9); will atone for all sins (52:13-53:12); will bring grace gifts (55:3-5); will bring good news (61:1-3); will conquer (63:1-6)
 - **Isaiah 9:6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
- ✓ The Messiah in Jeremiah: He is called “the Lord our righteousness” (23:5-6); He is a priestly king (30:9, 21).
- ✓ The Messiah in Ezekiel: a tender sprig (17:22-24); rightful King (21:25-27); Good Shepherd (34:23-31); Unifier of the Nation (37:15-28).

- ✓ The Messiah in Daniel: Son of Man (7:13-14); Anointed Ruler (9:24-27);
- ✓ The Messiah in Haggai: the Desire of all nations (2:6-9); God's signet ring (2:21-23);
- ✓ The Messiah in Zechariah: Messiah's work as High Priest (3:8-10); King-Priest Ruler over all nations (6:9-15); King (9:9-10); Cornerstone (10:4); the rejected Good Shepherd (11:4-14); the Pierced One (12:10); Smitten Companion of the Lord (13:7).
- ✓ The Messiah in Malachi: Messenger of the Covenant (3:1); the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2)

8. Christmas is about the fulfillment of God's OT promises, Lk 1:26-38.

- Luke 1:31-33, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

9. Christmas is about God working out His redemptive history sovereignly and faithfully according to his Word, Luke 2:1-3.

- **Luke 2:1-3** Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city.

10. Christmas is not about having perfect outward circumstances, Lk 2:4-7

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (καταλύματι).

- ✓ No room for God in the lives of the majority of people.
- ✓ Bible predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:1.

11. Christmas is about the glorious Son of God's first humble step into our world, Luke 2:7; Philip 2.

- **Luke 2:7** And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
- **Philippians 2:5** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

12. The Christmas message is all about Jesus Christ and all of the great joy and blessedness that He brings, Luke 2:10-15.

- **Luke 2:10-15** And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "And this *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." ¹⁵ And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

13. Christmas is about God's peace upon those with whom He is well please, Luke 2:14.

- **Luke 2:14** "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

14. Three responses to the wonderful truths of Christmas, Lk 2:15-20.

#1) Short lived superficial wonderment by the masses, 18.

Luke 2:18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

#2) Genuine spiritual enthusiasm, 20.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

#3) Reflection, Meditation, and OWC, Lk 2:19, 25-38.

Luke 2:19 But Mary treasured (συνετήρει) up all these things, pondering them in her heart (συμβάλλουσα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς).