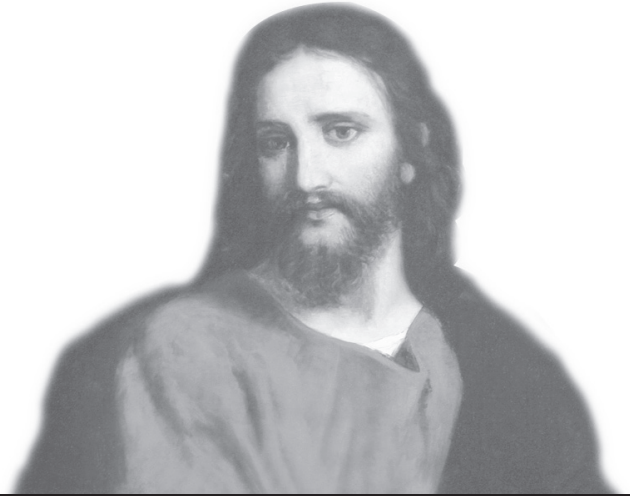


DISCOVER

the Joy of Christ



What's the point of the Bible and why should we be reading it?

The Bible is the revealed Word of God. The main point of the Bible is that God loves each person in a profound and unconditional way. The “proof” of God’s love is shown through Christ Jesus. In other words, God created us to be united with Him in a relationship of love. Even though Adam and Eve - our first parents - rejected God and separated themselves from Him, our sins are forgiven and we are brought back into union with God through the horrific suffering and death on the cross that Jesus willingly endured. Let’s take a closer look.

God and Creation

The Bible is a collection of books from various time periods by various human authors inspired by God to write what He revealed to them. In the Bible God reveals to us that He is a communion of Persons: God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the book of Genesis we understand that, in an act of love, God created us and He created us to be in relationship with Him, to be united with Himself through sanctifying grace. (Genesis 1:26-27) Sanctifying grace is a participation in God’s life; God dwelling within our soul.

Original Sin

In an act of disobedience, Adam and Eve turned away from God, separating themselves from Him and losing His grace. (Genesis 3:1-7) We inherit the transmission of original sin from our first parents and therefore are born without sanctifying grace and in need of redemption. However, from all eternity God knew how we would disobey Him and He had a plan to reunite us with Himself. The Father promised Adam and Eve a Savior. (Genesis 3:15)

The Old Testament relates how God’s plan gradually unfolds. God chose specific persons to be the leaders in the process of gathering a community,

the formation of a Chosen People so that they would receive and accept this Savior.

Abraham

The first of these leaders was Abraham. God called Abraham to leave his father’s house and to take his family and travel to the land that He would show him. (Genesis 12:1-3) Abraham believed God and so took his family, walking twelve hundred miles until he reached the land of Canaan. God made three promises or covenants with Abraham that would be fulfilled later through Moses, David and finally in Jesus. The Covenant fulfilled through Jesus was that through Him “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” It was through the line of Abraham that God would keep His promise and send the Savior to unite all of His children in the family of God, the Catholic Church.

Moses

The Chosen People went down to Egypt because of famines and were there for 400 years. Eventually, the Israelites became slaves and cried out to God for deliverance. After 10 plagues, the Pharaoh finally allowed Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and return to the Promised Land of Israel. (Exodus 7-12) While in the desert, God gave Moses the Ten Words – laws of love to help the people live an ordered life, seeking to protect them from harm and to remain close to Him, the one true God. (Exodus 20:1-17)

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DIocese of LA CROSSE, WI

David

After many years, David, the shepherd boy who knew the Lord and would write Psalms as songs of praise to Him, was made king. It was King David's desire to build a temple in Jerusalem for the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Words and manna from their wanderings in the desert. However, God revealed to David through the prophet Nathan that God will fulfill His promise by sending the Savior through the line of David. (2 Samuel 7:1-17) The throne of the Kingdom of God as established by Jesus Christ will last forever. David realized that God's second promise was being fulfilled through him.

Jesus

The prophets proclaimed the coming of Christ and how the Savior wanted to be completely united with each person, calling the people to prepare for the Messiah. God kept His Promise. Through the cooperation of Mary, the virgin of Nazareth, He sent His Son who took on a human nature, to accomplish our redemption as both God and man. (Luke 1:26-38) Jesus is the center of the Story. Jesus established the Kingdom of God on earth, the Catholic Church, as the means to be united with Him. Jesus instituted the seven Sacraments and the Church gives us the Sacraments by which we receive sanctifying grace – a participation in God's Life – union with Him in a relationship of love. Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead so that our sins could be forgiven, making it possible that we could be reunited with Him.

The Holy Spirit and the Church

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit so that the Church could be publicly manifested, which took place on Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4) The Apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit to go forth and celebrate the Sacraments and to teach the Truth given by Christ. It is through knowing the Truth and receiving sanctifying grace and our cooperation with this grace that we are able to be faithful to Christ and live in union with Him, preparing in this life for our destiny to see God face to face. The Story of the Bible continues, as we await with sure hope for Christ to come again and judge the living and the dead. We long for the perfect joy of union with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our heavenly homeland.

Let us take time each day to read God's love letter to us as written in the Bible and truly encounter Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Word made flesh. As St. Jerome said, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."