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WELCOME TO ALPHA - A SERIES OF INTERACTIVE SESSIONS TO DISCUSS LIFE AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN AN INFORMAL, FUN AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.

This guide outlines the content of the fifteen talks, which each look at a different aspect of the Christian faith. After each talk, there is a time for discussion in small groups—a place where you can ask questions, delve into different issues and find out what others think.

This is your guide, so use it however you like. Write, scribble, note, jot, or doodle. Whatever helps.

wy notes:	

Session 1

Is there more to life than

this

What, if any, has been your experience of Christianity?

- Boring?
- Untrue?
- Irrelevant?

At the heart of the Christian faith is the person of Jesus Christ. Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35)

1. JESUS SAID, "I AM THE WAY."

The first-order questions of life:

- Is there more to life than this?
- What am I doing on earth?
- What is the point of life?
- What is the purpose of my life?
- Where am I heading?

C. S. Lewis: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

Jesus is the lens through which we see God. He is the way to God.

Jesus is also the lens by which we see the world in a totally different

dimension and clarity.

2. JESUS SAID, "I AM THE TRUTH."

- C. S. Lewis: "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important."²
- Truth—understood intellectually (head knowledge)
- Truth—experienced as a relationship (heart knowledge)

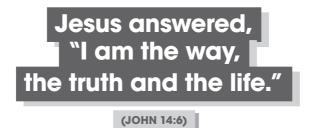
3. JESUS SAID, "I AM THE LIFE."

"I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

Jesus came to deal with:

- The things that spoil our lives
- Our guilt

God loves you and He came, in the person of His Son, Jesus, to set you free to enjoy life to the full.



RECOMMENDED READING

What's So Amazing About Grace? Philip Yancey
The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming Henri J. M. Nouwen
Does Religion Do More Harm Than Good? Nicky Gumbel

Session 2

Who is **Jesus**

Did Jesus exist?

- Evidence outside the New Testament about Jesus includes:
 - Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians
 - Josephus, Jewish historian
- Evidence within the New Testament

How do we know that what was written down in the New Testament has not been changed over the years?

ANCIENT WRITINGS





NEW TESTAMENT

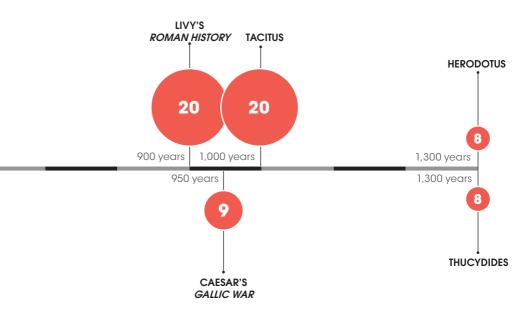
Copies found:

5,000+ Greek

10,000 Latin

9,300 Other languages

WORK	WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME LAPSE	COPIES
HERODOTUS	488-428 BC	AD 900	1,300 years	8
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CAESAR'S GALLIC WAR	58-50 BC	ad 900	950 years	9–10
LIVY'S ROMAN HISTORY	59 BC-AD 17	AD 900	900 years	20
NEW TESTAMENT	AD 40-100	AD 130 (full manuscripts AD 350)	30-310 years	5,000 + Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 others



W	las	Jesus	fully	/ huma	an?
	us	UCSUS	IUIII	, ,,,,,,,,	411:

- He had a human body.
 - tired (John 4:6)
 - hungry (Matthew 4:2)
- He had human emotions.
 - anger (Mark 11:15-17)
 - love (Mark 10:21)
 - sadness (John 11:32-36)
- He had human experiences.
 - temptation (Mark 1:13)
 - learning (Luke 2:46-52)
 - work (Mark 6:3)
 - obedience (Luke 2:51)

Was He more than a man, a great numan, a religious teacher? Matthew 16:13–16)				

1. WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

Teaching centered on himself

- "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35)
- "If the Son sets you free, you are truly free." (John 8:36, NLT)
- "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)
- "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6)
- "Come to me...." (Matthew 11:28-29)
- Receive me-receive God. (Matthew 10:40)
- Welcome me-welcome God. (Mark 9:37)
- "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)

• His indirect claims

- To forgive sins (Mark 2:5)
- To judge the world (Matthew 25:31, 32, 40, 45)

His direct claims

- Messiah (Mark 14:61-62)
- Son of God (Mark 14:61)
- God the Son (John 20:26-29)

- "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

Author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Oxford historian C. S. Lewis wrote:

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be (insane)... or else he would be 'the Devil

of Hell.' You not this man was (insane) or so come up with about his being has not left the intend to."3	and is, the something wo any patroning a great h	Son of God, rse but let zing nonser uman teach	or else us not nse ner. He	

2. WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIMS?

- His teaching (Mark 12:31; Luke 6:31; Matthew 5:44)
- His life/works (John 2:1–11; 10:37–38)
- His character (Luke 23:34)
- His fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy
- · His conquest of death

Evidence for the resurrection:

· His absence from the tomb

- Theories:

Jesus did not die (John 19:33-34)

Disciples stole the body

Authorities stole the body

Robbers stole the body (John 20:1-9)

• His presence with the disciples

- Did they hallucinate?
- Number of appearances over a six-week period
 11+ appearances
 500+ people
- Nature of appearances (Luke 24:36-43)

Immediate effect

- Birth and growth of Christian church

Effect down the ages

- Experience of Christians down the ages
- Over 2,300 million Christians in the world today

RECOMMENDED READING Mere Christianity C. S. Lewis The Case for Christ Lee Strobel Orthodoxy G. K. Chesterton Jesus Is Judah Smith