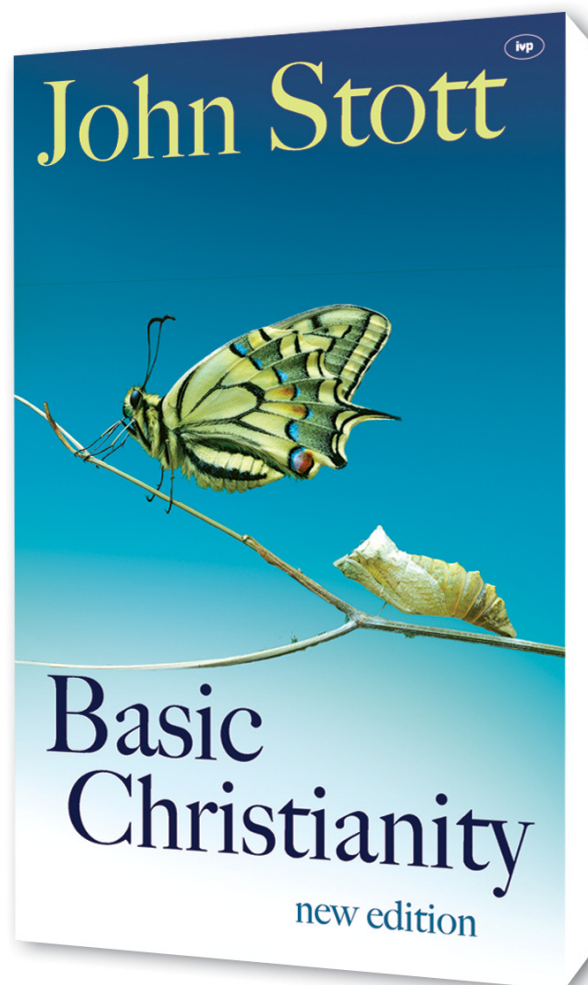


Basic Christianity

Study Questions



Chapter One

The right approach

1. In what ways are the first four words of the Bible 'the key which opens our understanding to the Bible as a whole'?

2. How would you go about putting together 'a summary of the religion of the Bible'?

3. What differences are there between God's 'general' or 'natural' revelation and his 'special' revelation? Why are these distinctions so important?

4. '... it isn't enough for God simply to reveal himself to us in order to dispel our ignorance.' Why not? What more does he need to do?

5. What did Jesus come to do? In what ways does this make Christianity unique?

6. Why is it so important for us to 'seek' God? What does this mean in practice? How do we do it?

Chapter Two

The claims of Christ

1. Why should an investigation into Christianity begin with the person of Jesus Christ?

2. How would you justify the use of the Gospels as reliable sources of information about Jesus?

3. What are the three main strands of evidence which lead to the conclusion that Jesus is 'worthy not just of our admiration, but also of our worship'?

4. What is so remarkable about the self-centredness of Jesus' teaching?

5. In what ways did Jesus claim, both directly and indirectly, to be the Son of God?

6. Why would it be wrong simply to label Jesus as a 'great teacher'?

Chapter Three

The character of Christ

1. Why is it that even to describe Jesus as 'the greatest man who has ever lived' doesn't fully do him justice?

2. How do we know that Jesus considered himself to be without sin?

3. Were the disciples of Jesus biased? Why should we take what they say about his character seriously?

4. What failings did the enemies of Jesus identify in him? Were they right?

5. What strikes you about what the Gospels reveal of the character of Jesus?

6. What is the paradox that surfaces when we set the claims of Christ alongside his character?

Chapter Four

The resurrection of Christ

1. Why is the claim that Jesus was raised from the dead so important? What does it prove?

2. What are the four statements which summarize the evidence for the resurrection?

3. What explanations have been put forward to account for the empty tomb? What do you make of them?

4. What is so remarkable about the fact that the graveclothes were undisturbed?

5. How would you answer someone who said that the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection were inventions or hallucinations?

6. What does the experience of the disciples of Jesus contribute to our ability to believe that he was raised from the dead?

Chapter Five

The fact and nature of sin

1. Why is sin such an unpopular subject?

2. Why does an investigation into basic Christianity need to examine sin so carefully?

3. How does the Bible underline the universality of sin?

4. If you had to define what sin is, what would you say?

5. In what ways are the Ten Commandments useful for us today?

Chapter Six

The consequences of sin

1. How would you respond to the suggestion that sin is not really all that serious?

2. Why does sin have such a catastrophic effect on our relationship with God?

3. Why is slavery such an appropriate image to use when thinking about the effect our sin has on us?

4. How might we justify the assertion that sin is the root cause of all the problems we have in our relationships with other people?

Chapter Seven

The death of Christ

1. How does salvation set us free from the 'three principal consequences' of sin?

2. Why was it necessary for Jesus to die on the cross in order for sins to be forgiven?

3. How does the teaching of the Old Testament help us to understand the significance of the cross?

4. Under what circumstances does the death of Jesus provide us with an example to follow?

5. Why is it so important to see the death of Jesus as so much 'more than an inspiring example'?

6. 'We are not to think of Jesus Christ as a third party wresting salvation for us from a God who is unwilling to save.' Why might people think this? What is it that helps to correct such a view?

7. How does the death of Jesus underline the impossibility of the claim that 'we can end up in God's good books by our own efforts'?

Chapter Eight

The salvation of Christ

1. The forgiveness of sins is wonderful enough – but what more is there to salvation?

2. How would you respond to someone who claimed that it is impossible to change human nature?

3. In what ways can we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in his work of transforming our lives?

4. What is the church? Why is it so important?

Chapter Nine

Counting the cost

1. Why does it cost us something to follow Christ? What are you aware of that it would or does cost you?

2. 'Many people think that we can enjoy the benefits of Christ's salvation without accepting the challenge of his absolute authority.' What is wrong with this?

3. Are you in a position to know the shape of the 'ministry' to which God is calling you? How do you know?

4. What would or does it mean in practice for you to 'acknowledge Christ'?

5. What are the 'compelling reasons' that we are given for becoming fully committed to Christ?

Chapter Ten

Reaching a decision

1. Why is becoming a Christian something we 'must decide for ourselves'? How does Holman Hunt's picture 'The Light of the World' depict this?

2. Why doesn't Christ 'force an entry into anybody's life'?

3. How would you help someone who feels that it is 'unreasonable to submit to Christ in the dark'? How does the illustration of marriage help here?

4. In practical terms, what difference does 'a determination to forsake evil and follow Christ' mean for you?

Chapter Eleven

Being a Christian

1. How does the statement that 'everyone is a child of God' need to be qualified? Why is this?

2. What are the consequences that follow from being able to describe God as our Father?

3. How can we be certain of our relationship with God? How would you help someone who said that they didn't feel sure about this?

4. What do you see as the responsibilities that come with seeking to live as a Christian? What resources does God give to help?

5. Why does every Christian need 'to belong to a local church'? What does this involve?

6. In what ways are Christians to serve those in the world around them?
