

# The Love of Jesus

## The Greatest Love, Part 1

☑ **Target:** *Get closer to Jesus and know His love and salvation*

### Key Verses

*Romans 8:38–39—For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, (39) nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*John 15:14—You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*

### Suggested Bible Reading

☐ Galatians 1–5; John 14 and 15

### Other Recommended Reading

☐ *From Jesus with Love* (Aurora publication)

### Prayer and Praise: “My Soul Thirsts”

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As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, “Where is your God?” When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. (Psalm 42:1–5)

### Meditation—On Getting to Know Jesus in a Personal Way

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God made Jesus to show us what He’s like and what He looks like, you might say. It’s too difficult for people to grasp the idea of God. He’s just spirit and they can’t see Him, they can’t feel Him, they don’t know where He is. He’s everywhere, He’s all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. So God had to show what He was like by making His Son in the form of a man.

It’s so wonderful to know Jesus personally—the very Son of God Himself!

Getting to know someone is a matter of degrees. You hear about them, you are told what they’re like and what they are, and finally who they are, then you become acquainted when you’re introduced and they receive you and you receive them. Once you’ve met them there is a period where you learn to know them personally, and later you can grow into a really intimate relationship that is not dependent on what you’ve heard or learned about them from others. At that stage, you don’t use qualities or titles for their name, but you use their first name that their friends call them. You have a personal relationship with them and they’ve become your personal close friend.

It's that way with getting to know Jesus: We hear about Him, then we meet Him personally, but as time goes on we grow to really know and love Him intimately.

Remember the Samaritans who first heard about Jesus from the woman He met at the well? (John 4:5–42). At first they knew of Him through all the wonderful things she told them about Him. But after they were introduced to Him personally and got to know Him themselves, they told the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

## **Getting to Know the Bible—The Epistles (Letters) Of Paul (Part 1)**

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The apostle Paul (previously known as Saul) was a native of Tarsus, the chief city of the Roman province of Cilicia, in present-day southern Turkey. He belonged to the strictest sect of the Jews, the Pharisees. Because Tarsus was a free city within the Roman Empire, he was also a Roman citizen. Saul studied in Jerusalem under Rabbi Gamaliel.

After the giving of the Holy Spirit, the young Church actively spread the Gospel. Jewish antagonism grew. Saul was at this time possibly a member of the great Sanhedrin, and became an active leader in the furious persecution by which the rulers then sought to exterminate Christianity.

But the object of this persecution failed. “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.” Becoming even more angry, and hearing that Christians had taken refuge in Damascus, he obtained from the chief priest letters authorizing him to go there to arrest them. This was a journey of about 130 miles.

The crisis of his life was at hand. He was within sight of Damascus. As he and his companions rode on, suddenly at mid-day a brilliant light shone round them, and Saul was laid prostrate in terror on the ground, a voice sounding in his ears, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” In answer to the anxious inquiry of the stricken persecutor, “Who are You, Lord?” the voice replied “I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:4–5).

This was the moment of Saul's conversion. “Saul” became “Paul.” The zeal with which he had persecuted the church was now turned into zeal for Jesus, and Paul served the Lord faithfully for the rest of his life. He became one of the most prominent leaders of the Early Church. He was arrested and imprisoned by the Roman authorities, released, and finally arrested again and executed in Rome around 66 A.D.

The story of Paul is a wonderful example of the love of God. Look at the length He went with Paul! He struck him from the horse, temporarily blinded him, appeared to him personally, and spoke to him before he'd believe! Paul knew all about Jesus, and he'd certainly heard all that Jesus taught, but he went around persecuting Christians and hating Jesus!—And yet he got saved and had a dramatic change of life!