

The  
Ultimate  
Price,  
The  
Cross

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## The most valuable C.D. ever published

Who would have enough nerve to write a C.D. called, “The Ultimate Price, the Cross”? A C.D. with a title that powerfully promises an awful lot to its readers, the most valuable C.D. every published would have to deliver page after page of information so extraordinary that it would literally change the lives of everyone who reads it. And it promises to do just that to the readers.

Some of the topics covered:

- Religious but lost
- Adam and Eve
- Messianic prophecy
- Lucifer
- Suffering of Job
- Michael the Archangel
- Jesus Mother and Father
- John the Baptist
- Jesus birth
- Jesus boyhood
- Jesus relatives
- Jesus at Gethsemane
- Jesus trail
- Peter denial
- Jesus crucifixion
- Jesus resurrection
- Repentant
- Armageddon
- White Throne Judgment

Opening the door to understanding great health, success, prosperity and Eternal Life. This C.D. promises a lot, and this C.D. delivers.

Who Was  
**Jesus?**

Who was Jesus of Nazareth?  
Only a man? God in the flesh?  
Myth or fraud? Here's the fas-  
cinating story of the Man almost  
no one understands –yet whose  
message can change your life.

Who or what was Jesus anyway? Was He nothing more than a charismatic religious leader? Could He have been “God in the flesh?” Can we believe Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind? Walked on water, made wine out of water or rose from the dead?

Truth—The absolute; that which according with God as divine principle: that which is, has been, and ever will be; that which eternally is. The truth of God is reality “the same yesterday and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). The verities of being are eternal and always existed. Truth abides in fullness at the core of man’s being. As his consciousness expands, he touches the everlasting truth. What seems new is but the unveiling of that which always has been.

This C. D. will receive criticism, but the word of the Holy writ that will answer the questions on the subject and doctrines treated are beyond criticism and stand against personal opinions, guesses and conclusion on men. Some popular ideas, traditions and man-made doctrines will be shown to be false and unworthy of belief in the course of the following C.D.; but any thinking person should be happy to exchange an error or false belief for the truth and thank God for it at any time.

This study was compiled and written for New Value and Christian information only.

This C.D. was written for any person who desires to study the teaching of God's Words in an orderly manner. In this book the authors do not pretend to have brought out all gems of the Bible about Jesus' death and the people that was gathered around the cross. It has been written for the sole purpose of revealing the pagan teachings that have infiltrated the Christian churches of today, and to encourage God's people to search the scriptures to see if what are being taught can be proven by God's Words. Our desire is that the truth will be brought out about Jesus birth, Death and His Resurrection.

Many people are lost because the General practice today of Church members are to believe what the ministers preach or the churches teach. It is absolutely needful for everyone who loves God and his or her soul to "search the Scriptures for you think you have eternal life."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved" (Acts 16:31), is a popular teaching of today, but false. The reason is that no one is saved by merely believing on Jesus only. At the same time that God applies the blood from the cross to cleanse the heart, you must enthrone Christ to rule your life

Should we believe? Should we really care whether Jesus was God, the Son of God, was a man, or just a myth? Let's be honest. Most people don't really think about Jesus as they go about their daily business. Virtually, the only time Jesus' name is on some of their lips is during a spate of profanity.

Can we be religious but lost? There will be a multitude of religious people who expect to get into God's kingdom when they die. In the Scriptures there are many warnings directed to religious people concerning the possibility of being deceived and lost (Matthew 7:21-23).

This passage leads us to believe that multitudes of religious people who expect to get into God's kingdom when they die will instead be cast into the lake of fire and be burned up. These will be good, moral people, members from all church denominations, including Popes, Priests, Preachers, yes, even Elders, Deacons, and even the Daughters of the Kings.

But remember, the cross is absolutely necessary. It is not a matter of choice-it is a must. One cannot walk acceptably with the living God and not be surrendered to His divine will. True, you can choose not to take up your cross and follow Him, but in doing so, you have cut yourself off from the very source of eternal life.

If a church has a sound ministry, it will **exalt and honor** the Lord Jesus Christ. That ministers will preach **"Christ and Him crucified,"** preach **what happened "at the cross"** and preach just **who was there?**

When Jesus was taken by the Romans and was crucified on the cross between two thieves on that day of His crucifixion, who was there? Christ's disciples and His followers. Were they gathered at the cross when Christ needed them the most? It was the Religious people of His time that were there to mock him (Matthew 27:39-43) as He asked God to forgive them because they knew not what they did.

Oh, yes, the largest religion in the world arose "in His name." Christianity is supposedly based on Jesus' teachings. Religious people use the name of Christ. One Billion people profess to believe in Him. Yet, most people don't read and study and find out just what Jesus really taught.

There's a good reason for this. Not many really study the Bible and very few even read it on a regular basis. Thus, Jesus of Nazareth, the most influential human being who

has ever lived remains a mystery to most people of today, about His death, burial, resurrection and the purpose of His coming.

It is a wonderful fact that God had a definite reason for His creation of the universe and mankind which predates the founding of the earth as is set forth in the book of Genesis. We see God's desire for a family that love Him when He created our first parents, Adam and Eve. God desired to enlarge His family, and He chose the process of human procreation as the means to increase the size of His human race (Genesis 1:28).

The first family that was created sinned against God with their disobedience and brought death to all generations thereafter. God foresaw this disaster of the sins of Adam and Eve, so He made provision before the foundation of the world that His precious Son Himself would have to come and die as a means of salvaging their heavenly family that was foreordained before the "foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Not only was His family foreordained, the very means of securing their salvation and longevity was provided beforehand! His plan was thus sealed with a guarantee, or surety by the sacrifice of His only son He loved on the cross.

We have seen that Jesus was more than an ordinary human. His resurrection and what He did during His lifetime proves that Jesus, born of Mary, her only son, was begotten by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)-thus, He was the Son of God. Through His resurrection He became the ever-living Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

But ironically, it was not God who came in the flesh as some teaches, but it was Michael the arch Angel, (Jesus) who is like God the first created; the Word (John 1:1-4) a spiritual being, came in the flesh, he didn't begin his human existence as a "real big man." In Jesus, God started Him the way we start. He was born. Born of a woman. He acted in history to explain and resolve, "the way things are." God gave humanity the ultimate gift, not Himself but He gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16) in the flesh, becoming one of us, for our salvation.

Some think that Jesus resurrection from the dead is one of a number of myths surrounding His life. Was the resurrection a pious fraud spun into the story of Jesus life? Let's be serious. Would anyone die for something he or she knew to be a lie? What did this man Jesus promise that impelled His followers to give up everything-sometimes even their lives-just to follow Him?

More than 2000 years ago, a man came into the world whose presence was to have a profound influence on humanity. His public life lasted only three and a half years. He was only in His early thirties when He suffered an agonizing death on the cross. His Name has founded the most widespread religion on the earth.

The central person of Christianity is Jesus Christ, and the place where we can learn the most about Jesus is in the four gospels. Without these sources, we would know very little about Jesus' life on earth. The gospels are documentaries, which bear witness to the acts, sayings, miracles, and teachings of Jesus, the Son of God. They are based on the eyewitness accounts of Jesus.

What is remarkable about the eyewitness accounts of these four men is that their records of the life of Jesus are consistent with one another. Jesus is presented in each gospel, Matthew tells us about a handful of shepherds guided by a special star where the infant Jesus was born. Luke tells how an angel appeared to them in the night and told them that a Savior was born in Bethlehem, Mark starts with the ministry of John the Baptist and comes immediately to the public ministry of Christ, ending with His death and resurrection. John was the one who proclaimed Jesus as the word, or spokesman for God, warned the readers against false teachings and to hold fast to the Christian faith.

Who was this man that thousands of followers have loved and given their lives willingly to suffer poverty and even martyrdom for? What manner of His life and teaching so inspired millions of people? It was Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. He did not of Himself leave any written record, as far as we know. Our main source of information is the three Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke. They are known as Synoptic (condensed statement) Gospels because they have a "common aspect," closely resembling one another, and using much of the same material. The fourth Gospel that was written by John gave more evidence of the suffering of Jesus. Also, the Epistle of Paul, including many other writers gave more information as to His suffering and hardship He endured. Many writers of the Old Testament bring out much about Jesus' pain that He suffered for all mankind. These records furnish us with the foundation upon which we have based our account of the agony of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, nailed there by three old rusty nails.

It was inevitable that His teaching would make for Jesus many powerful enemies among those He fearlessly denounced. These enemies began to plot His destruction and to lay traps for Him. The Master sensed that He was already walking in the shadow of the cross. The powerful drama of Jesus' life was brought to a close at a place called Calvary, outside of Jerusalem.

Devoted Jews still expected the Messiah to come, as foretold in the writings of Isaiah, Micah, Ezekiel and the other prophecies. But they were hardly prepared for a Messiah like Jesus. Many of them were expecting a Godlike Warrior who would help them to overthrow the Romans. They were hardly expecting a loving, kind, traveling preacher, who spoke equally with the Pharisees and Samaritans, a friend to the rich and poor alike, prostitutes and beggars. They were not expecting a carpenter's son turned preacher.

Jesus, knowing that His time was drawing close, prepared the Passover Supper, better known in our day as the "Lord's Supper." When Jesus and the others arrived they all sat down together at the table, and Jesus began speaking: "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I will not eat nor drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25).

"Then He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it apart and gave each a piece and said, This is my body that was given for you, take eat: do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying this cup of wine in the New Testament is my blood which is shed for many, for the remission of sins, drink all of it" (Matthew 26:26-29).

It all began when Jesus had gone to Gethsemane to pray after the Passover Supper had ended. He knew that His time was near. While there in Gethsemane He felt in His heart a strength unrelenting, for He heard a voice which He knew was the voice of God. From here on out His course was chartered. There, Judas Iscariot "one of the twelve," betrayed the Son of God with a kiss (Luke 22:47). He (Christ) was brave, courageous, and victorious as He was going out to be beaten, humiliated, struck on the face, stripped of His garments, crowned with thorns, and crucified on the cross of shame. Yet He victoriously faces it all! They could crucify Him, but they could not stop His conquests.

They could bury Him in a man made tomb, but all the demonic forces could not detain Him there. Jesus had won an age-long victory over Satan in the garden of Gethsemane

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all four evangelists, told the sufferings of Christ as His hour approached, and the humiliation of His arrest. He left His disciples and walked away, perhaps a stones throw, and knelt down and prayed this prayer: “Father, if you are willing, please take away this cup (weariness, agony and horror) from me: Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:41-42).

The victory of Jesus in Gethsemane is seen in the fact that He was strengthened. “And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. The angel was sent to give Jesus strength to bear His own burden. For He was in such agony of the spirit that He broke into a sweat of blood, with great drops falling to the ground as He prayed more and more earnestly (Luke 22:44). At last He stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief” (Luke 22:45).

The crime of Judas Iscariot would not have looked so vicious had it been committed against anyone other than the Son of God. Nothing is known of his early life. He may have joined the disciples of Jesus from pure motivation and probably showed evidence of being wise in handling certain business affairs, and was appointed as treasury for the group (John 12:6). Jesus, however, was not deceived, but knew from the beginning, who would betray Him (John 6:64). It was only at the Lord’s Supper that Jesus revealed that, “one of you shall betray Me” (John 6:71).

The thought of betraying Christ for money was in exact line with the nature of Judas Iscariot. It was a violent, suitable temptation and Satan used it effectively. But did Judas fancy so much happiness in a little money that he would sell Christ to get it? Absolutely not!

Again, view His miracles and determine your disposition of Jesus. He healed the nobleman’s son, and Peter’s wife’s mother; yes, Peter was married. Jesus also healed the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda: the impotent man, the woman with the issue of blood, the sick from Judea, demoniacs in the land of Gennesaret; the lame, the blind, the dumb, and the maimed near the Sea of Galilee. He cured the lepers, restored the man’s withered hand, raised the widow’s son, stilled the tempest, brought Jairus’ daughter to life, cast out

devils, fed the five thousand, walked upon the Sea of Galilee, healed the lunatics, raised Lazarus from the dead.

We see that Jesus has authority over evil spirits, illnesses, and people's responses. Jesus said that He had all authority given to Him, both in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), and He not only said it, He proved it. We see that He healed the sick, drove out demons and forgave sins. Jesus had a divine calling, a divine purpose and a divine anointing from God. It was clear that this authority made Him unique, He wasn't just another prophet; He was the Son of God.

Six days before the Passover ceremonies Jesus arrived in Bethany at Lazarus house where they had a banquet prepared in Jesus honor. Lazarus—the man who had come back to life again after he had been dead for four days.

The next day, the news spread, and they knew that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem. The news swept through the city, and a huge crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches (Matthew 21:8-9) and went down the road to meet Him, shouting, "The Saviour!" "God bless the King of the Jews," and all the people followed Him into the city. Also, as Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman Governor, he asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Matthew 27:11) "Yes, Jesus replied."

Judas Iscariot came up with the idea that he could force Jesus to become a King now by turning Him to the Chief Priest and Pharisees. Then Jesus could use His power to destroy Rome who occupied their land.

Judas Iscariot went to the Chief Priest, and asked, "How much will you pay me to get Jesus into your hands?" And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. From that time on, Judas watched for an opportunity to betray Jesus to them (Matthew 26:14-16).

Judas said unto them: "If ye think good give me my price and not forbear." "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zechariah 11:12). Then it was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, "And they took thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the innocent child or a servant killed (Matthew 27:9). If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. He shall be given unto their master thirty pieces of silver" (Exodus 21:30-32). This was a custom and tradition that has been observed for

generations under the Mosaic Law. Judas sold out, dropped into iniquity, while Jesus climbed into immortality.

About this time Judas, who betrayed Him, when he saw that Jesus had been condemned to die, he found his plan had not succeeded; and he changed his mind and deeply regretted what he had done, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priest and other Jewish leaders saying, “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.” The Chief priest stated “that is your problem” (Matthew 27:3-4). “He cast down the silver in the sanctuary, and departed; and went away and hanged himself” (Matthew 27:5).

Many said: Jesus was preparing to take over the government. In fact, at one point a crowd tried to force Jesus to declare Himself King (John 6:15). At Jesus’ trial, the religious community cried out, “we found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King” (Luke 23:2). It was a falsehood, of course. But many in the community thought Jesus’ secret ambition was to take over the government in Jerusalem.

From the days when Jesus refused to allow the Jews to make Him a political ruler to the present time, there have been repeated attempts by different factions to portray Him as anything other than the King, which He was ordained to be.

The men who intended to take Him by force and make Him a king wanted Him to reassert the authority of the time when David and Solomon was King. Like David, Jesus was to deliver them from the oppressive rule of Rome. That was not His mission here on earth. He did not come to restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory! But He came to conquer death.

Many Scriptures verifies that Jesus is called the “Son of God” (Luke 22:70), “the Son of David” (Matthew 22:42), “and the Son of Man” (Matthew 16:13). In doing so, the meanings that Jesus was created by God, born in the lineage of David, born by an earthly mother, and by doing so he became the second Adam. The first Adam brought death to all generations, while the second Adam brought life (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

The disciples now perceived very important reasons for Jesus; life and death; to reconcile humans to God, to enable Him to live in repentant humans through the Holy Spirit and to make possible the resurrection of the dead (Romans 5:9-10).

We have seen that Jesus was more than an ordinary human. His resurrection and what He did during his lifetime prove that. Jesus was born of Mary but begotten by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)-thus; He was the Son of God. Through the resurrection He became the ever-living Son of God.

This eternal Word (John 1:1) became the man Jesus of Nazareth. On earth, Jesus called himself the Son of God (John 10:36), as well as the Son of man. The Word (Jesus) and God (the Father) had a very special relationship of love through out eternity. Jesus said of God, “You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). They were completely one in spirit. “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30). Not the same person but one in spirit and attribute.

According to the Bible, Jesus clearly was the Son of God. But Jesus was also a man. Thus, the unthinkable had happened: The Son of God was born of a woman and was transformed into a perishable human being. Paul wrote of Jesus: “Who, being in the very nature of God...made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death-even death on the cross!” (Philippians 2:8).

Was the mother of Jesus perfect, with out sin? No! Was Jesus a perfect child? Yes! He was the only child of His mother Mary, the only child ever to be born perfect or sinless of a woman. Jesus’ perfection was absolutely necessary if He was to act as mankind’s Saviour. Jesus was born perfect, holy, without sin, not because His mother Mary was without sin, for she was not so. His mother like us was a descendant of the imperfect man, Adam. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Before Jesus was born on earth, He was a heavenly Son, an Angel, not just any Angel, but Michael the Arch Angel, the first born or created, the only-begotten Son of God, called “the Word” (John 1:1-4). Being God’s first creation, He was with His Father in heaven from the beginning of all time, He was the beginning; God used Him in the creation of all things in Heaven and on earth (Colossians 1:15-18; Revelation 3:14).

There is very little said about Jesus’ childhood until He reached the age of twelve when His father Joseph took Him to Jerusalem to attend the Passover celebration. One verse from Luke simply tells us that “the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit and

filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him (Luke 2:40). As a child Jesus grew up in Nazareth with His family and His cousins like any normal boy. When He grew older He learned His trade by helping His father Joseph, who was a carpenter.

With many of His relatives living near by, Jesus enjoyed His perfect boyhood days in Nazareth. When He became a man of thirty years, a whole new life opened to Him. And it is this new life about which we are to read that made Him the greatest man that ever lived (Luke 2:52).

The gospel narrative continues the life of Jesus when He is about thirty years of age going into His baptism by John, the assembling of His twelve disciples, and starting His ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. After an extensive tour of the area He returned to His own country and began to teach the people in the synagogue. The reaction of the people of Jesus' own country is interesting, for they were astonished and said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this carpenter's son, the son of Joseph? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brethren, James, Joses, Simon and Judas (Jude)? And His sisters are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matthew 13:54-56)?

The common assumption has been based on these verses that Jesus was thus the first born of Mary, but certainly not the only child, for here is mentioned at least four brothers, as well as a minimum of two sisters, for the plural form of sisters would have to mean at least two sisters, if not more. To add weight to this contention, the verses from Galatians 1:19 is also used where "James the Lord's brother" is mentioned.

Eleven of the disciples were about the same age as Jesus, except James the least, who was much younger when Jesus started His ministry. Although few theologians hold that "The brethren of our Lord were Joseph's children by a former marriage, others has held that they were the children of Mary, others said that they were cousins of Jesus.

Is the James mentioned in Galatians 1:19, the same James as the one mentioned in Matthew 13:55? Let us not forget that the Bible mentions more than one James in the New Testament, one James was the son of Zebedee and has a brother named John (Matthew 10:2), called a disciple of Jesus (Mark 1:19-20). There was also a disciple known as James the less, or James the least. He was the son of Alphaeus and the brother of Jude (Matthew 10:3 and Matthew 13:55). This James was also referred to as James

the Just, and is the author of the epistle of James, according to the Fausset's Bible Dictionary page 30 under Alphaeus. Let us note here that Alphaeus is the Greek form of this James' father's name. But the Hebrew name is Cleophas, according to Fausset's Bible Dictionary Page 326. The Zondervan Bible Dictionary page 31 under Alphaeus father of this James the apostle (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18) and named the least, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, Cleophas, the husband of Mary who was at the cross (John 19:25; Mark 15:40), and Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses and Salome, notice that Joseph was not the father of James, Joses, or Salome.

Thus we see that the Bible identifies at least two James, one the son of Zebedee, and one the son of Alphaeus, neither being the son of Joseph.

Acts chapter 1 verse 13 mentions two James. "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon a Zealot, and Judas the brother of James. These would be the two sons of Zebedee. Further into this verse we read of James the son of Alphaeus. Finally, this mentions a Judas, "the brother of James." Putting these verses together with Jude verse 1, which speak of "Jude" the servant of Christ, and "the brother of James," we find that James the son of Alphaeus has at least one brother whose name is Judas, or Jude. This James, brother of Jude, is the same James who also has brothers named Joses, and Simon (Matthew 13:55). If this statement is correct, the father of Joses, Simon, and Jude are the sons of Alphaues (Cleophas) whose wife is Mary, the sister of Jesus' mother Mary.

At the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the faithful women who stood by Him through His ordeal included Mary the Mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus cast seven devils. But there was also a third Mary standing by the cross, John 19:25 describing this third Mary as the wife of Cleophas, Jesus' mother's sister, the mother of "James the less, Joses, Simon, and Salome" (Mark 15:40). There also is at least one more unnamed daughter of Mary and Alphaeus.

Because He was the only child is why Jesus felt it was His duty to make sure that His mother was provided for in His closing hours of His life. You will remember the account in John 19:26-27 of how Jesus committed the care of His mother to His beloved disciple

John, “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and His disciple John standing by, whom He loved, He said unto His mother, “woman, behold thy Son!” And from that hour on John took her into his home. Most all scholars agree that Joseph was dead at this time, because nothing has been mentioned of him since Jesus was twelve. Joseph probably died just before Jesus started His ministry at the age of thirty.

As an only child, Jesus wanted His mother provided for. Therefore He called upon the disciple John whom He loved to take on this responsibility. Why? The custom of the Jews was the next of kin, in this case, her other sons, if she had any, now His disciple would take care of her.

The interlinear Greek-English New Testament quote, page 2, Lexicon, “brother-more general relations, a fellow-countryman, a relation between Christ and the believers, are probably to be understood literally.”

Strong’s exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, page 10, quote: “AWKH, a prim word, a brother (used in the widest sense of literal relationship and metaphor, affinity or resemblance). Another, brotherly, kindred, like others, names are beginning with “AH” or “AHI.” In this case, they were cousins.

What has Jesus Christ to do with us, today? To find out let’s travel back to times before the world was. “In the beginning,” wrote John, “was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (part of God’s family), the same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2).

The eternal Word (Jesus) and God (the Father) had a very special relationship of love throughout eternity. Jesus said of God, “You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). They were completely one in spirit. “I (Jesus) and My Father (God) are one (The same attributes) said Jesus (John 10:30).

Lets us start from the very beginning of time before the solar system, with all its planets containing perhaps thousands of systems, even before the angels and man or the world was created. Once upon a time the universe was formless, darkness was universal, not one planet, or stars marked the solar system. The Eternal, Independent and Self existent Being, the Being whose purpose and action sprang from Himself, True and Holy, the cause of all being, the upholder of all things, before the creative acts, all was eternal. This creator was Elohim (God).

Bible Cosmogony, (term applied to the origin of the universe), to theories concerning its origin, is a study of its origin and development. In primitive cosmogonies origin of this some supernatural being, the God of the Bible who was responsible for creating the angels, sun, stars, earth and man from a formless chaos, created universe and all life. In the beginning, God! God (Yahvah) was the only Spiritual Being in the universe, nothing but darkness throughout space.

The Supreme Being (The Almighty and the Most High God) is the Creator through His Son, created “all things.” God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is God of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24; Isaiah 44:24; Revelation 4:10-11). It stands to reason that He (Yahvah) is also the Creator of His Son, a view that is not accepted by many Bible scholars today.

“Who is in the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15; Psalm 89:27; Revelation 3:14)? An image is a copy of another, a likeness, and duplication. A creature is one subject to the will of another, any living being. Creature signifies creation. Logic demands that the first born in any family is the first one brought forth, and this verse shows that Jesus (Yahshua) was the first creation to come into existence, not merely in position or rank but in time the first born had an origin at a point prior to all other acts of creation.

A father exists before a son. A father is a progenitor (parent) of a son. To say that the Son is as old as His Father is an obvious contradiction. The Son is dependent on the Father for the Father gave “The Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26; 6:27). “Have we not all one Father? Hath His Son, and through that power He (Jesus) created all things” (Colossians 1:15-17)?

Thus, for example, the Bible shows that there is only one God, the Most High, the Almighty. Also, that He is “from everlasting to everlasting” and is “greater than His Son” (Psalm 90:2; John 14:28). And that the Son, as the first-born, the only begotten and “the creation by God,” had a beginning. That the Father is greater and older than the Son is reasonable, easy to understand and is what the Bible teaches (Colossians 1:15-18; John 3:16; Revelation 3:14).

“The Lord (God) possessed me (Jesus) in the beginning of His ways, before His works of old, I (Jesus) was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth: when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth. While as yet God (the Father) had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world: when He (God) prepared the heavens, I (Jesus) was there: when He (God) set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountain of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundation of the earth: then I (Jesus) was by Him (God): as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Proverbs 8:22-30). He (Christ) was the firstborn of every creature, the firstborn among many brethren, and the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15-18).

“These things said the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14). He (the Son) is the beginning, not the beginner of the creation of God. “For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). This declares that there was a time when the Son did not have life. Yahvah the Eternal was considered a “Father” long before the “Word was made flesh.” The Pre-Existence of the Messiah was foretold unto us in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Genesis 1:26; John 1:1, John 17:5).

After the Father created the first spiritual being, some think that Michael the Archangel is the Son of God. Certainly the Angel of Jehovah, or the second person of the God Head, in pleading for Joshua the high priest representing the Jewish church, used the same rebuke to Satan as Michael does in Jude 9, Zechariah 3:1-5. Michael will usher in the coming resurrection by standing up for the people of God (Daniel 12:1). The name means, who is like God.

So, we see that Jesus was the word or spokesman (John 1:1-4) for God, “all things were made by Him, and without Him (Christ) was not anything made that was made.” “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or power: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things

consist” (Colossians 1:15-17). The Word was the spokesman for God and through His power that the Father gave His Son, and through that power He “Jesus created all things.”

Yes, this Jesus was the Son of God. God Himself sent the Holy Spirit to Mary and she became pregnant. God Himself was the Father, not Joseph the husband of Mary. Jesus lived in Nazareth with His parents and when He became a man of thirty years, a whole new life opened to Him.

John, known as John the Baptist, a cousin of Jesus was also about the same age of Jesus, six months older to be exact. When John was 30 years old, in the spring of A.D.29, he began to preach and baptize in the river Jordan.

The father and mother of John the Baptist were Zachariah and Elizabeth and they had no children and none would expect his mother could have a child at her age, because she was very old, beyond child bearing. Zachariah, who lived when Herod was king of Judea and Zacharias, was a member of the Abijah division (a descendant of Aaron) the Temple service corps. (His wife Elizabeth was, like her husband, a member of the priest tribe of the Jews, a descended of Aaron). Zacharias and Elizabeth were godly folks, careful to obey all of God’s laws in the spirit as well as to the letter of the law. But they had no children, for Elizabeth was barren, and now they were both beyond child bearing.

One day as Zacharias was going about his work in the temple-for his division was on duty that week-the honor fell to him by lots to enter the inner Sanctuary and burn incense before the Lord. Meanwhile, a great crowd stood outside in the temple court. (Only the high priest was aloud in to the most Holy of Holies) praying as they always did during that part of the service when the incense was being placed on the fire.

Zacharias was in the sanctuary (the inner court where only the high priest could enter), when suddenly an angel appeared, standing just to the right of the altar, where the incense stand stood! Zacharias was startled and terrified.

But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zachariah! For I have come to tell you that God has heard your prayers, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son! And you are to name him John. You will both have great joy and gladness at his birth and many will rejoice with you. For he must never touch wine or hard liquor and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from before his birth! And he will cause many a Jew to turn to the Lord his God.”

He will be a man of rugged spirit and power like Elijah, the prophet of old; and he will precede the coming of the Messiah, preparing the people for His arrival. He will soften hearts to become like little children, and will change disobedient minds to the wisdom of faith in their God.

“Zacharias said to the Angel, “but this is impossible! I am an old man now, and my wife is old also well along in years.”

“Then the Angel said, I am Gabriel, and I stand in the very presence of God. It was He who sent me to you with this good news! And now, because you haven’t believed me, you are stricken silent, unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly come true at the proper time.”

Meanwhile the crowd outside was waiting for Zacharias to appear and wondered why he was taking so long. When he finally came out, he couldn’t speak to them, and they realized from his gestures that he must have seen a vision in the temple. He stayed on at the temple for the remaining days of his Temple duties and then returned home. Soon afterward, Elizabeth his wife became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. “How kind the lord is,” she exclaimed, “to take away my disgrace of having no children.”

In the book written by the prophet Isaiah, God announces that He would send His Son to earth, and that a special messenger would arrive first to prepare the world for His coming.

This messenger will live out in the barren wilderness, “Isaiah” said, and will proclaim that everyone must straighten out his life to be ready for the Lord’s arrival (Isaiah 40:3). This messenger was John the Baptist. He lived in the wilderness and taught that all should be baptized to turn their backs on sin, so that God could forgive them.

John’s ministry was very popular. People from Jerusalem and from all over Judea traveled out into the Judean wasteland to see and hear John preach. His ministry became so popular (Matthew 3:4-6) that some wondered if he was the Messiah. John, when they confessed their sins he baptized them in the Jordan River. His clothes were woven from camel’s hair and he wore a leather belt. Locusts and wild honey were his food.

Many of the Jewish people were expecting their Messiah when John came upon the scene at the river Jordan, because of the prophecy of Jeremiah, Isaiah chapter 53 and

Daniel chapter 9:21-27. They knew that this prophecy was coming to an end, is the reason they asked John if he was the one or if they should expect another.

John the Baptist's ministry was foretold in the Old Testament. Malachi and Isaiah are passages that predict that there would be a forerunner to "prepare the way of the Lord." As the messenger, John's ministry was important because it was the voice of prophecy and is one of the first time the connection is made that One who was to come, Jesus, was the true Lord. In his clothes, his word he lived, and his message of repentance, he identified with Elijah the Prophet (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 4:5-6).

"Someone is coming soon who is far greater than I am, so much greater than I am that I am not even worthy to loose His shoes. I baptize you with water but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 3:16).

As Jesus came up out of the water John saw something very unusual, God's Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove. And at the same time He (Jesus) heard a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Why did Jesus, the Son of God, come to John to be baptized when He had no sin to confess? Because Jesus' baptism would mean something else first, He left us an example, that we should do as He has done (John 13:15). Secondly, that from now on He would be doing the work for which God had sent Him to the earth to do. Jesus' being buried under the water, pictures, that He had to die (just like we must die) to His own former course of life on earth, and His being lifted up out of the water pictured that He had been made alive to do His Father's will (Hebrews 10:9).

Many people of Israel were looking for the coming of the Messiah because of the prophecy of Daniel in Chapter 9:24-27. The prominence of the Messiah in the Old Testament prophecies the mention of Him in both verses 25 and 26 makes the cutting off of the Messiah one of the important events in the prophetic unfoldment of God's plan for Israel and the world. How tragic that, when the promised King came, He was "cut off." His precious ministry was all to no avail. Christ was indeed not only to be "cut off" from man and from life, but His cry on the cross indicated that He was forsaken of God.

According to Gabriel's (Archangel) own statement, he had come to show Daniel what was necessary to understand the entire matter of Israel's program, and specifically, to consider the vision of the seventy weeks described in the version, which follow.

This great prophecy pertains to Daniel's people and the city of Jerusalem is linked with a time of seventy weeks. Bible students recognize that these seventy weeks are symbolic (years-each day representing a year-that is, 490 years).

Daniel, understanding from the prophecies of Jeremiah (25:11-12) that the 70 years captivity was now terminating (Jeremiah 29:10-14) pours out his soul in fervent prayer to God, and earnestly supplicates pardon and restoration for his captive people. When he in the supplication to God in behalf of Israel: the Angel Gabriel is sent to inform him of the 70 prophetic week, or the 490 years which should elapse from the date of the "edict" to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple until the death of the Messiah.

Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of the Babylonian Empire, reigned from 605 B.C. to 562 B.C., it was he who carried away the Jews in the 70-years Babylonian captivity. The date of Jerusalem's captivity: March 16, 597 B.C. was destruction on a wholesale scale; the wall and temple was destroyed, and it is estimated that some 60,000 citizens were carried away to Babylon at this time. Among the captives were Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, Micah and many of the Minor Prophets. The temple was to be restored again in the days of Ezra (2 Kings 24:1-20; 2 Chronicles 36:1-21; Jeremiah chapter 52).

As soon as the Jewish remnant started to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, people living nearby who were not Jews began to complain. They said that the Jews were trying to overthrow the Government of Persia. Of course, that was not true, but they had the temple work stopped anyway. Satan again tried to use these people by stopping God's people from rebuilding His House to dwell in.

For sixteen years after that no work was done on the temple. Then God rose up two prophets: Haggai and Zechariah. These prophets told the Governor Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua to go ahead with the building of the temple and not to listen to what others were saying. They said strongly that the temple was the Father's house and that it must be rebuilt, but "Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" (Zechariah 3:1).

Darius, the King of the Medes and Persia, having routed the Chaldean armies, occupied the city of Babylon, and was made king of Babylon by Cyrus. It was this same

year of Darius, as the 70 years of Babylonian's exile draws to a close that the Angel Gabriel answered Daniel's prayers and confession with revelation of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel (490 years), from the decree for the rebuilding Jerusalem under Ezra (Ezra 7:18, 25; 4:12-16) to the Messiah, His death and the confirming of the Gospel to Israel, from 458 B.C. to A.D.33.

Daniel in chapter 9, having learned from the Sacred Book of Jeremiah's prophecy of the doom of the seventy years of desolation for the Holy City Jerusalem, a term that was now naturally drawing to an end, sets himself to pray for the forgiveness of his people's sins and the promised deliverance. The Angel Gabriel appears to him, and interprets the years as weeks, with details of the distant future and of the "crowning age" of Divine purpose.

Now comes the interpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy regarding the seventy years. Seventy years of captivity was assigned as the time for the ushering in of the new age of peace and consecration of the Holy place from the day when Jeremiah announced the future restoration of Jerusalem. This was the date of the formal closing of the exile by his decree Cyrus the great, the ruler of the Medes-Persia. The seventy times seven is therefore 490 years, with the beginning at the time of the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem found in verse 25 of chapter 9 and the culmination 490 years later is found in verse 27. Before detailing the event to be found in the first 483 years (69 times 7), the event between the sixty-nine and the seventieth week, and the final seven years, Daniel gives in the overall picture in verse 24.

Bible study reveals the fulfilled interpretation as the correct view; that 69 weeks measured "Until Messiah," and in the midst of the 70<sup>th</sup> week-after three and one half years of His Ministry-He was cut off in death; that this sacrifice having been the perfect sacrifice, caused other sacrifices to cease in God's plan. Jesus had to be 30 years of age before he could start His ministry according to the Jewish law. The prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled exactly according to his words (Daniel 9:24-27).

The Jewish people knew the prophecy of Daniel and the time for the arrival of their Messiah to appear was the reason for their interests in John's preaching, asking if he was the one. Also, they were looking for the fulfillment of the words of Isaiah 9:6-7, "This is an illustrious prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, with a list of those characters in

which He stands most nearly related to mankind as their Saviour, and of others by which His infinite majesty and Godhead are shown. He shall appear as a child, born of a woman, born as a Jew under the law, but not in the way of ordinary generation. He is a Son...given-human nature, in which the fullness of the Godhead was to dwell being produced by the created energy of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a Virgin” (Matthew 1:20-21; 23, 25), (Adam Clarke’s Commentary).

The following months (6 month’s to be exact) after Elizabeth’s cousin Mary was with child, God sent the Angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a 16 or 17 year old virgin, Mary, engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. “Gabriel appeared to Mary and said, “Congratulations, you are a favored lady! The Lord is with you.” Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the Angel could mean.

“Don’t be frightened, Mary, the Angel told her, for God has decided to wonderfully bless you! Very soon now, you will become pregnant and have a baby boy, and you are to name him Jesus. He shall be very great and shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:26-32). And the Lord God shall give Him the throne of David. And He shall reign over Israel forever, His kingdom shall never end” (Daniel 7:14).

“Mary asked the Angel, “But how can I have a baby? I have known no man, I am a virgin.” The Angel replied, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you; and the power of God shall overshadow you, so the baby born to you will be utterly Holy-the Son of God. Furthermore, six months ago you’re Aunt Elizabeth-the barren one, they called her-became pregnant in her old age! For every promise from God shall surely come true.” Mary replied, “I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to do whatsoever He asked me to do. And then the Angel just disappeared” (Luke 1:36-38).

The Angel mentioned to Mary about her aunt Elizabeth being with child at her old age, so after a few months she decided to visit her, so she hurried to the highlands of Judea to the town where Zacharias lived.

At the sound of Mary’s voice, Elizabeth’s child leaped within her and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a great cry and exclaimed to Mary, “You are favored by God above all other women, and your child is destined for God’s mightiest praise. What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me! When you came in and

greeted me, the instant I heard your voice, my baby moved in me for joy. You believe that God would do what He said; that is why He has given you this wonderful blessing.

Mary responds, “Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Saviour! For He took notice of this lowly servant girl, and now generations forever shall call me blest of God. For He, the mighty Holy one has done great things to me. His mercy goes on from generation to generation, to all who reverence Him” (Luke 41-48).

Mary stayed with Elizabeth’s waiting about three months, and then went back to her own home. By now Elizabeth’s waiting was over, for the time had come for the baby to be born-and it was boy. The word spread quickly to her neighbors and relatives of how kind the Lord had been to her, and everyone rejoiced.

When the baby was eight days old, all the relatives and friends came for the circumcision ceremony. They all assumed the baby’s name would be Zacharias, after his father. But Elizabeth said, “No! He must be named John! “What?” They exclaimed. “There is no one in all your family by that name.” So they asked the baby’s father, talking to him by gestures. He motioned for a piece of paper and to every one’s surprise as he wrote, “His name is John!” Instantly Zacharias could speak again, and began praising God (Luke 1:57-64).

And you, my little son, shall be called the prophet of the glorious God, for you will prepare the way for the Messiah. You will tell His people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. All this will be because the mercy of our God is very tender, and heaven’s dawn is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and death’s shadow, and to guide us to the path of peace.

John, who was to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, this young man greatly loved God! Nothing is told to us when his mother and father died and about his childhood and youth. We believe that he was in his late teens or early twenties when his parents passed away.

We know only that John lived as a Nazirite in the desert and that he was filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. We know that he was raised by two devoted parents and was faithful in his work. When he grew up after his parents’ death he lived out in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to the house of Israel.

John will be known as a great prophet whose gospel was to prepare the way for Jesus. He will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins, and be prepared for the true Messiah that was soon to come, although Jesus and John were cousins, they never knew each other. He grew up in the wilderness and was a strong and rugged man. He had clothing “of camel’s hair and a leather girdle was around his loins; his food, too, was insects and locusts and wild honey” (Matthew 3:3-4).

For months John preached in the wilderness along the Jordan River. Word about Him spread far and wide. So throughout all Judea and all the country around the Jordan the people made their way to hear him, and he baptized the people in the Jordan River for the remission of their sins. Many came from Jerusalem and John baptized them by putting them under the water, not by sprinkling, as a sign for remission of their sins (Matthew 3:1,5-6).

The Jewish leaders sent priests and assistant priests from Jerusalem to ask John whether he was the Messiah. John denied that he was the chosen one. Then the priest asked him “then who are you?” John replied, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, making straight the way of the Lord,” as prophesized by Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23). This was also prophesized by Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.”

Then one day when John was baptizing in the River Jordan, Jesus came to him to be baptized. But John objected; he did not want to baptize Jesus. John knew that Jesus was sinless but wanted to be baptized by Him, but Jesus said to John: “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it become us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). John baptized Jesus and as Jesus came up out of the water the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus in a form of a dove. And He heard a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

When Jesus came to be baptized He was 30 years of age. This was the age that a Jewish priest had to be before he could be a full time Rabbi to serve in the temple. Jesus had to be 30 years of age before he could begin His priestly duties for His Father in which He was sent. It was exactly the time that the prophecy of Daniel foretold that the Messiah would come (Daniel 9:24-27).

The most devastating major assault against humanity was Satan's attempt to overthrow and prevent Jesus from being our Saviour and to replace Satan as ruler over this world.

Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted there by Satan. For forty days and forty nights He ate nothing and became very hungry. Then Satan, knowing that He was hungry tried to tempt Him by saying, "If you are the son of God," Satan picked up a stone and said, "here are plenty of stones, command these stones to be made bread. It will prove that you are the Son of God." Jesus stated: "It is written, man must live, not on bread alone, but on every word that is spoken from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:3-4).

Then Satan took a different approach quoting Scriptures to gain consent: "Then the devil took Him to Jerusalem to the roof of the Temple. And said to Him, "if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said, it is written again, Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:5-7).

Again, the Devil took Him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed Him the magnificence and glory of the entire world. Christ knew He would not be in a position to inherit rulership of the earth until after He remained absolutely perfect in character for another three and half long years. He was to be beaten, cursed, spat upon and tortured, and then, to be publicly crucified and left to writhe in agony for what would seem like an eternity-one of the most humiliating and painful methods of execution ever devised.

Satan said unto Him: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." You don't need to wait and suffer and bleed and die. Then said Jesus unto him, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:8-11).

After this, Jesus returned to the province of Galilee, where he had been brought up, and began to teach in their synagogues. Then Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been in prison. So now He took up the good news and began to preach, "repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

Repent, Satan says not so fast: even today, Satan continues to work on our vanities, our desires to get rid of responsibility for our actions, our wishes to get what we want right

now without properly preparing or paying the price. And Satan and his ministers will also pervert Scripture-as the devil did with Jesus-to make their case appear plausible to those who really do not know and understand the Bible.

For an example: The methods Satan uses is described in the parable of the sower and the seed found in Mark 4:1-20. Jesus interprets the story in verses 14 through 20. When the “word” is sown, Satan immediately comes and takes it way.

Again, God’s truth often falls on “stony ground.” The hard pathway, where some of the seed fell, represent the hard hearts of some of those who hear God’s message; Satan comes at once and takes it away because Satan’s society has conditioned us to be shallow listeners and to take things for granted, to shift our loyalty quickly and nonchalantly.

Again, God’s truth often falls on thorny ground that represent the hearts of the people who listen to the Good News and receive it, but all too quickly the attractions of the world and the delights of wealth, and the search for success and lure of nice things come in and choke out God’s message from their hearts, and pretty soon God is nearly forgotten and then bring Him out only on Sunday morning, or when they are so deep in trouble that the outcome looks hopeless that no crop is produced.

But the good soil represents the hearts of those who truly accept God’s message and produces a plentiful harvest for God.

This parable shows that Satan can easily overthrow us if we become shallow Christians, and if we are not willing to worship and obey the Great Creator of the universe and put Him totally ahead of everything else. Jesus warned, “so then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

New social movement and world traumas are considered to be simply a part of the human experience. Who, today, believe that demons have a hand in controlling the destiny of nations?

So, depending on which nation we are speaking of, belief in the devil may range from only a small minority of the population.

The Bible-both the Hebrew Scripture and the Christian New Testament-indeed tell us that evil spirits of these era-producing personalities do exist. Led by that old serpent, the

devil, the Bible says God has allowed them to exploit human beings throughout their existence.

Jesus personally encountered the devil and defeated his wiles. He knew and taught that the devil was a real spirit being (Luke 10:17-20).

The early apostles, who led and built the Christian churches in its formative years, knew Satan was a manipulator of human affairs. “The God of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers,” the apostle Paul wrote in one pastoral letter (2 Corinthians 4:4).

He warned in another letter about Satan as “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). Paul said the devil was “the spirit who is now working in those who are disobedient (Ephesians 2:3).

The apostle John said, “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Peter, the apostle, wrote, “the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

The book of Revelation tells us that the “ancient serpent called the Devil or Satan” is the one “who leads the whole world astray” (Revelation 12:9).

Resisting and fighting Satan is one battle we are all commanded to wage. Paul wrote, “Put on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against evil spirits-the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty Satanic beings and great evil Prince of Darkness who rules this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.

So use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will still be standing tall (Ephesians 6:12-13).

Next, Paul describes the “spiritual armor” that we are to put on in order to withstand Satan. But to do this, you will need the strong belt of truth and the breastplate of God’s approval. Wear shoes that are able to speed you on as you preach the Good News of peace with God. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. And you will need the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit-which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:13-17). You cannot avoid the devil. He is

going about “like a roaring lion” trying to upset and devour God’s true servants (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan is constantly trying to destroy God’s people. He will color, magnify, pervert and distort anything he can to upset or overthrow real Christians. He is a murderer, and was “from the beginning,” and he is a liar. “When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). He offered the world to Christ and he will offer you the same if you will bow down and worship him. Satan’s attitude is one of resentment and hatred and of getting even. His goal is to destroy all human beings if you do not follow him. Pretending that the devil doesn’t exist or that he will somehow go away if we just ignore him is no way to overcome this warped, twisted, foul spirit being with which we must fight.

You must know your enemy and resist him. We have already discussed about Satan and how he operates: lying and cheating. You must consciously be aware of this and spiritually and mentally resist the strong pull of Satan. James states, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). “Fight the good fight of Faith” (1 Timothy 6:12).

How come Satan appeared as soon as Jesus came upon the scene? Did God create a Devil? When and how did Satan become Jesus’ adversary? When and how were the angels created? How did they (Satan and his demons) obtain their dominion over the earth? How and when did he get control and become God of this earth (2 Corinthians 4:4). Where did the serpent get the power to speak to Eve (Genesis 3:1-6)? Was it a wicked angel who came speaking as if he was God? Who else could it be but one of the unseen persons or angels that God had created before He created the earth?

Let us go to the Bible and listen to what it tells us to when and how Satan became God of this world as well as the prince of the air (Ephesians 2:2). “The solar system, with all its planets, is but a small part of the great universe, containing perhaps thousands of systems like the solar system, and all keeping order and harmony in their giant circling of the sky” (Junior Britannica). But Satan is the God of this earth only (2 Corinthians 4:4).

This great universe was not caused by some accident but by the hand of God (Yahvah). The Bible tells us in Genesis chapter one, “In the beginning God (Yahvah) created the heavens and earth.”

Once, this universe was formless, darkness was universal, not one planet, or stars marked the solar system. The Eternal, Independent and Self Existent Being, the Being whose purpose and action sprang from Himself, True and Holy, the cause of all being, the upholder of all things, before the creative acts, all was eternity, this creator was God (Elohim). The God of the Bible created the Angels, sun, stars, the earth, and man from a formless chaos. In the beginning God, God was the only Spiritual Being in the universe, nothing existed, nothing but darkness throughout space.

The Supreme Being (The Almighty and the Most High God) is the Creator of “all things.” “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). “O Lord, you are worthy to receive, the glory and honor and the power, for you have created all things. They were created and called into being by your act of will” (Revelation 4:11). “I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself” (Isaiah 44:24). It necessarily follows that He; God is also the Creator of His Son, a view considered heretical by many Bible scholars today. “He (Christ was the firstborn of every creature, the firstborn among many brethren, and the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have preeminence” (Romans 8:29). “Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made any thing at all, and, in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can’t; the spirit world with its kings and kingdoms, its rulers and authorities; all were made by Christ for His own use and glory. He was before all else began and it is His power that holds everything together. He is the Head of the body made up of His people-that is, His Church-which He began; and He is the leader of all those who arise from the dead, so that He is first in everything; for God wanted all of Himself to be in His Son” (Colossians 1:15-18).

“These things said Amen, the faithful and true witnesses, the beginning, of the creation of God’ (Revelation 3:14). He (the Son) is the beginning, not the beginner, of creation of God. “For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to His Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). This declares that there was a time when the Son did not have life. God (Yahvah) the Eternal was considered a “Father” long before the “Word “ became flesh (John 1:1).

The Pre-Existence of the Messiah was foretold unto us in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth”(Genesis 1:26). “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). “And Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

If Jesus is the Son of God, then God is His Father. He referred to God as the Father; “which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:27). Notice His prayers to God: Father, “the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also glorify thee...and this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:1-3). Isn’t this interesting? “I ascend unto my father, and your Father: and to my God and your God’ (John 20:17). Other pre-existence Scriptures can be found in John 8:58; Ephesians 1:2-3; 2 Corinthians 1:2-3.

“And to make all men to see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Farther, of whom are all things, and we in Him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him” (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). “All things were made by Him, and without Him (Christ) was not anything made that was made” (John1:3; Colossians 1:17).

“He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not” (John1:10). In these verses, Christ is said to have created all things.

Is there a contradiction in the Bible when it stated that God created all things? Then it would state that He “who is in the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, principalities, or power; all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:15-17).

No! Jesus said that from the beginning of creation God (Jehovah) was greater than He (John 14:28, John 10:29). That He (Jesus) could do nothing of Himself (John 5:19, 30; 8:28). Jesus was not part of the creation; He was there when no part of creation existed; as all created nature was formed by Him; for “without Him was not anything made (John 1:30). The Word (Jesus) was the spokesman for God and through His power that the Father gave His son, and through that power He (Jesus) created all things.

If our interpretation of the “beginning” or “origin” of the Son of God is correct, how is it possible to confess that He (Jesus) was and is Divine? Being the offspring, or Son of God, He shares the same basic nature as His Father, which is Divine.

Consider also this: “but unto the Son He said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness; therefore God even thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Psalm 45:6-7; Hebrews 1:8-9). The Son inherited His Godhead from His Father: “For it was the Father’s gracious will that the whole of divine perfections should dwell in Him” (Colossian 1:19). “For in Him dwelleth all fullness of the Godhead bodily (of God’s nature), yet, after acknowledging that He to was Divine and had glory with the Father before the world was” (John 17:5). He still maintained that His Father alone is God, and the only true God (John 5:44; 17:3).

Now we have seen by the Bible that Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth; the spirit world with all the angels, including Lucifer (light bringer) the bright and morning star; the first created angel that was the most beautiful, glorious, brilliant spiritual being—an archangel and was full of wisdom, the prince of this world. Before he became an adversary, that old serpent, the devil, he was perfect in his ways. “Thou sealest up the sun (Ezekiel 28:12). There was no need for the sun or moon, because Lucifer (The bright and morning star), with his brightness and beauty lit up the whole universe.

After Michael the Archangel (Jesus), Lucifer a Cherub was created, the most beautiful angel ever created, “Thou art the anointed cherub (angel) that covereth” (Ezekiel 28:14). He (Lucifer) is likened to the Cherub that guarded the gates of Paradise, and kept the way of the tree of life (Genesis 3:24); or to one of the cherubs whose wings spread out,

covered the mercy seat (Exodus 25:18-20). “Thou were perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created; thy brightness (likened unto the sun); the most beautiful angel with the greatest wisdom of all created angels. He walked up and down among the stones of fire; that is, the way has been paved with precious stones that shone and sparkled like fire” (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

After Michael and Lucifer was created, thousands upon thousands, thousands and thousand angels were created many was under the rulership of Lucifer to have authority over the earth (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 5:11). Angels are created spiritual beings (Psalm 148:2-5). Scriptures does not tell us the time of their creation, but it was certainly before the creation of the earth and man. Therefore constitutes a company, not a race developed from one original pair. Scripture describes them as spiritual beings. Though they possess superhuman intelligence, they are not omniscient, although stronger than man (Hebrews 1:1-14). They are not glorified human beings (Colossians 1:16); only Michael and Gabriel are called archangels, this host of angels, both good and bad or highly organized.

The Biblical hierarchies are called Archangels, Cherubims (plural of Cherub), Seraphim also appear in the Bible. The Cherubim’s guard Eden in Genesis chapter 3 and are described as throne bearers of Yahweh (Ezekiel 1:19-28). The Scraph or Seraphim—from a word meaning “fire” or “burning” are found only in Isaiah 6:2, 6, this same aspect is featured in the vision in Revelation chapter 4, attending the throne of God. It has been suggested that they symbolized lighting. Certainly their posture (their face and feet covered by their wings) was one of worship and adoration before God, contributing to the sense of awe and reverence in His presence. The Biblical meaning for Lucifer is “Light Bearer,” and Satan, the chief of the fallen spirits, the grand adversary of God and man.

For the New Testament writers, this was all-important. The exalted, glorified Christ--not the Cherubim or Seraphim--become the vital center of true spirituality. Knowing Jesus Christ is the biblically prescribed path to spiritual power, a power attested by God’s saving acts in history.

The name Gabriel means “Man of God” and Michael “One who is as God” each appears in the Old Testament (Daniel 8:16, 9:21, 10:13, 21). The New Testament says that Gabriel stands in the presence of God (Luke 1:19) and calls Michael an Archangel (Jude 9). The word for Archangel is found only in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9.

Why was Lucifer and the other angels created? “God is love,” and God is Holy. Because love is His predominating characteristic, God desired to surround His throne with creatures that He might love, and by whom He might be loved.

When Lucifer was still a righteous Cherub, God made Him ruler over the earth. But that position did not satisfy him. He wanted more. He became driven by vanity and greed. He wanted to control everything, not just the earth. His desire was to be like God (Ezekiel 28:12-15). According to the Bible, the devil was the Angel Lucifer--the Shining One or Light Bearer (Isaiah 14:12-14). His pride led him to rebel against God and then he became Satan, the prince of Darkness, the same one who tempted Adam and Eve.

Lucifer, the bright and morning Star had become filled with pride because of his beauty and power (1 Timothy 3:6). He had charge over one third of the angels that was created to help him with the caretaker of the earth. He began thinking that he should be a ruler like God and be equal to God. But to become a ruler he needed to overthrow Jehovah God. So Lucifer mounted a rebellion (war) against God’s throne in heaven (Revelation 12:7). There was a great war in the heavens and He fought against Michael and His angels that rebelled with Him (Revelation 12:9). Jesus was there and saw it happen, because He was the one who led His army to fight the rebellious angels. He recalled, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

So Lucifer was no longer (the morning star) “light bringer” but was now an adversary, an aggressor, a competitor, and an enemy. He is called “the old serpent, the great dragon, the devil, and Satan,” which deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9).

Here is the sin of angels mentioned. Since the earth was populated by prehistoric animals, the Angelic beings had dominion over all living things until they sinned, then the earth was in a state of confusion, chaos, and was cast into darkness. The destruction of the earth before Noah was the result of the sins of the angels that occurred before Adam.

And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation before Adam was every created (Jude 6). Lucifer was given a place where they lived and ruled (the earth) a habitation, an estate, and they left it, Lucifer said, “I will exalt my throne (which was on earth) above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation,

in the sides of the north; I will be like the most high” (Isaiah 14:13-14). It was the angels that sinned and brought destruction on the earth for the first time.

A third of the angels (Revelation 12:4), which are called stars, united with Satan in rebelling. That is what causes the chaos and destruction of the earth. The sins of angels reached into the heaven and made the earth “void and without form,” and darkness covered the earth (Genesis 1:2).

When God recreated the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:28), in every way God made the Garden where man would live in pleasure, peace and happiness. This beautiful spot was the paradise God created for man. God installed Adam as the caretaker in this Garden to take care of it. Since Adam took the place of Lucifer as caretaker, made him very angry, and caused him to tempt Adam and Eve to sin, and he was successful.

What does paradise mean to you? For the first man it meant a beautiful garden or a park, a place of peace and pleasure. It was called the “Garden of Eden.” This is what we should picture in our minds when we speak of paradise, for the name “paradise” means “garden” or “park.”

Satan got to our first parents in the Garden of Eden. God had put Adam and Eve in this beautiful paradise and given them every thing they needed. Their Creator had told them they could eat of every tree except one-the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17).

However, Satan immediately put questions into Eve’s mind about God’s instruction: “Has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree in the garden” (Genesis 3:1)?

The implication was that God was unfair, that He was holding back something good from them, which man ought to be free to decide for himself what is right and wrong and not have God telling him what to do.

Eve reminded Satan that God said she and Adam would die if they ate from the forbidden tree, again Satan challenged God and implied that He had a wrong motive in wanting to restrain Adam and Eve from sin-that the forbidden fruit was actually the key to unlocking spiritual mysteries: “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5).

Satan's approach make God seem unjust and appeals to intellectual and spiritual vanity, so our first parent succumbed, and mankind has been under the influence of Satan ever since.

Now, since Adam and Eve had sinned, they could no longer stay in the paradise of Eden. God had planted that beautiful garden for an obedient person, one who would be trustworthy and obedient to follow God's instructions.

Lucifer lost his control of the Earth because of disobedience, and when he saw that God had made Adam the caretaker, he began carrying out his wicked plan by going to the weakest of God's children, to fool Eve into breaking God's law. If he could get her to disobey God, it would give him control of the world again. God gave Adam and Eve a choice just as God gave the angels a choice as He also gives us a choice to be obedient or disobey His laws. They chose to disobey by eating of the forbidden fruit, thus Adam lost for himself, and for the human beings that would come after him, perfection, eternal life and the paradise of Eden, all because Satan had made himself to be "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Thus, he (Adam) lost all of this by disobeying God, and so, according to God laws that say "the soul that sins shall surely die" (Ezekiel 18:20-21). The only hope mankind has of getting back what Adam lost was the hope of regaining paradise through an act of loving kindness by God Almighty.

Satan has tried to dethrone Jesus from the time Jesus defeated him in the war of the heavens and was cast down into outer darkness (Revelation 12:7-9). He was waiting for Adam and Eve whom he causes to sin and He also tried to destroy Israel in the time of Moses when God led them out of Egypt. God told them if they failed to keep His Commandments, His Statutes and Laws that He would make their land desolate and if they followed false religions and worshipped idols, their cities would become desolation, and that happened.

The New Testament Scriptures teaches that Israel was God's Church when He made them a separate people. God called Israel out to make them His own nation. They were to represent God on the earth, and were made the divinely appointed custodians of God's revealing will. They were to give knowledge of the one true God to the world-God's witnesses.

Satan had influenced God's chosen people, so in time the people did forget their God. They would not keep His Commandments, and broke His Statutes and Laws, but God forgave them, though He punished them when Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, came and destroyed their city, Jerusalem and the temple.

Many years the tribes of Israel were ruled by Babylonian, Medes and Persia, then the Grecian Empire, but the most vicious one was the Roman Empire (Daniel 7:1-8). Satan tried to destroy all the Jews and Christians during the time ruled by Rome.

Satan was so angry at the Jews and Christians, he tried to destroy them by persecuting them, but, God intervened "And the church was given two wings like those of a great eagle, to fly into the wilderness to the place prepared for her, where she was cared for and protected from the Serpent, that old Dragon, the Devil for 1260 years. And then, as of now, this made the Devil furious and he set out to attack the rest of God's children—all who were keeping God's commandments and confessing that they belong to "Jesus" (Revelation 12:14-17).

Satan, for many years, has tried to destroy Israel, God's chosen people, but it started back in history to a man named Job who led a righteous life and trusted God. The story does not reveal why the suffering of Job or Israel or any other believers, but it does present the servants of God with a framework for hope.

Paul, as a persecutor of the church was on his way to Damascus, when the transforming crisis in his life occurred, transforming him and commissioning him as Christ's messenger (Acts chapter 22; 26). Paul was told that he would suffer (Acts 9:15-16) much for his preaching and Satan would buffet and bother and prick at his pride. Since Paul knew it was all for Christ's good, he was quite happy about the thorns, and about insults and hardships, persecution and difficulties, for when Paul was weak then he was strong--the less he had, the more Paul depended on God (2 Corinthians 12:10).

The book of Job teaches us that suffering may occur for reasons we don't understand, unless or until God reveals them to us. Trials and suffering provide spiritual enrichment and build a relationship between God and His people, if we are suffering because we are His disciples.

Job, a devout man, who lived thousands of years ago, was buffeted by Satan, went through much suffering. But tragedy hovered over this righteous man. When the book

opens, we notice Job is about to lose everything-children, property, and wealth, his good name and even his health. Job's troubles began when God told Satan that there was no one upon the earth like Job, he was blameless and upright, a man who fears God (Job 1:8).

This all started when there was a meeting in heaven, God and His angels were there and Satan came among them. And the Lord said unto Satan; "hast thou set thy heart on Job?" "Satan replied, take away this hedge of protection from him and he will curse you. For what has happened?" Job lost everything, his sons and daughters, all of his animals, and all of his servants. Then Job realized that in this short space of time he had lost all his great wealth, but he bowed down to the earth and worshiped his God.

Satan was not finished with Job; he was angry (Satan is angry with all Christians) because they still love their maker. "I had nothing of my own when I was born into this world, and I shall have nothing of my own when I die and leave it" said Job.

Satan had a further test for Job's faithfulness to God. Job began to suffer from sickness and pain. He was covered from his head to his feet with painful boils, and he was seated on the ground suffering severely with pain when his wife came and demanded angrily, stop praising God as you do. Look at the trouble he has brought upon you. "Curse God and die!"

Because of the faithfulness of Job, the Lord took away Job's pain and illness. The Lord blessed Job even more fully than before he had suffered, and made Job even richer than ever, even before his sorrows.

Sometimes suffering is used to educate man or to lead him to maturity. Through suffering, man learns things he would not otherwise have learned. Job, for example, gained new insight into life after facing death and God's greatness.

God teaches man that suffering should not produce rebellion, but increase our faith. Just as man cannot understand the entire complex working of nature and must trust God to operate the universe, so Job must trust God in his personal life, even though he could not understand everything that was happening. We, like Job, must put our trust in God.

Job's conflict was with none other but Satan; the same spiritual being which spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden and caused her to sin, (Genesis 3:1-6), tempted Christ in the

wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), afflicted Paul, and who is the deceiver of the world (Revelation 12:9).

Satan has been the problem from the time man was born until the end of time when Satan and his wicked angels will be judge and “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are” (Revelation 20:10-15).

Jesus was the heavenly Son, before He was born on earth; He was called “the Word”, the first born and the only-begotten Son of God. Being God’s first creation, Jesus was with His Father in heaven from the beginning of all creation. God used Him in the creation of all other things that have been created, (John 1-4; Colossians 1:15-18).

To become born of Mary the Son of God had to lay aside all His glory and His position. At God’s due time for His only-begotten Son to become a man, Our Father took the perfect life of His only Son and transferred it from heaven to the egg cell in the womb of the unmarried girl name Mary, by His almighty power, was able to take the personality of His only Son, His life pattern, and put this personality within the powers of the tiny bundle of living energy that He placed into the womb of Mary. Thus God’s Son was conceived or given a start as a human creature. It was a miracle. Under God’s Holy Power the child Jesus, conceived in this way, grew in Mary’s womb to the point of birth. Just as any child is born today.

Satan, being part of God government at one time new the plan that He was going to send His on begotten Son (John 3:16) to die on the cross for the people sins and so he was ready when Jesus was to be born.

On the night of Jesus’ birth, shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks of sheep outside the village. Suddenly an angel appeared among them, and the landscape shown bright with the glory of the Lord they were badly frightened, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” “I bring you the most wonderful news ever announced, and it’s for you and for everyone! The Saviour-yes, the Messiah, the Lord-has been born tonight in Bethlehem! How will you recognize Him? You will find a baby wrapped in a blanket, lying in a manger!”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others-all the armies of angels praising God. When this great army of angels had returned again to heaven, the shepherd

said to each other, “come!” Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this wonderful thing that has happened which the angels has told us about.

They ran to the village and found their way to the stable, and there was the baby, lying in a manger. The shepherds told everyone what has happened and about what the angel had said to them about this child. Then the shepherd went back again to the fields and flocks, praising God for the good news and the visit of the angels, and that they had seen the Child, just as the angel had said (Luke 2:15-20).

Some time in the next two years there were three Magi Kings from the east and their caravans that followed the star to Bethlehem to see the newborn child. Not knowing where Jesus had been born, they first went to King Herod, thinking he should know of this newborn child.

King Herod now became afraid of losing his throne because there had been talk about a new king being born. King Herod cruelly planned to put a stop to all this talking by killing all newborn babies up to the age of two. The three kings from the east left Jerusalem where they spoke to King Herod, led by a star to a “house” in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:10-12) where the child was. There “they saw the young child (not a baby in a crib), with Mary his mother, and knelt down and worshipped Him. They also opened their treasures and presented the child with gifts: gold (a precious metal), and frankincense (material for burning to produce a fragrant odor), and myrrh, (aromatic incense).

When the three Magi Kings failed to return to inform where Jesus was, King Herod was furious when he learned that the three great kings from the east had disobeyed him. Sending soldiers to Bethlehem, he ordered them to kill every baby boy two years old and under, both in town and on the nearby farms, for the kings “astrologers” had told Herod the star first appeared to them two years before.

This brutal action of King Herod was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah in chapter 31:15, “screams of anguish come from Ramah, weeping unrestrained; Rachel weeping for her children, mothers who could not be comforted-for they were all dead.”

Satan used king Herod, who heard that a new King would be born in Bethlehem that would grow up, and claim his throne, therefore he ordered all male babies from two years of age and under to be slain (Matthew 2:16), but an angel came and warned Joseph to

leave Bethlehem (Matthew 2:3-14), and young Jesus was saved when Satan failed to kill the baby Jesus, with Adam Satan was victorious, but with Jesus' birth he failed.

It seemed neither the time nor the place for the birth of a Messiah, who was to preach a doctrine of Love.

When Jesus was born, Palestine was a troublesome Roman province in the backwash of the empire. Poverty, internal strife, cruel high taxes, and a ruthless ruler, Herod, king of the Jews but a puppet of the Romans wore it down. General discontent simmered in the country. The Zealots were talking revolution in the hills. Greek philosophy was infecting the Jewish religion. Greek and Roman cultures were drawing young people away from the faith of their fathers.

Most people in Palestine knew nothing about the birth of Jesus. Some wise men from the east knew, Matthew tells us that they came seeking the infant, guided by a special star in the heavens. And a handful of shepherds knew. Luke tells how an angel appeared to them in the night and told them a Saviour was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, and that they would find the baby lying in a manger. After they had seen the baby, the shepherds ran to tell others what had happened.

Neither Mark nor John records the miraculous birth. The account in Matthew and Luke differ, but they agree that Jesus was born of a Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to imagine the feeling of the young Jewish girl. Mary and Joseph was a poor couple living in a poor country.

Except for the story about His coming to the Temple in Jerusalem when He was twelve years old, the only thing the Gospel tells us about Jesus' boyhood is that He "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." We know that Mary and Joseph raised Jesus to be a good Jew. As an infant He was circumcised and later presented to God at the Temple as the law required. And then at twelve, Luke tells us; He was brought to the temple at the Passover time for the ritual of assuming Jewish manhood (Luke 2:40-49).

Even at this early age He had begun His mission on earth even before consideration for His parents. According to Luke's account, when the Passover ended Joseph and Mary left Jerusalem for home without Jesus, they're only Son, thinking that He was traveling with other members of the family or with friends. But when they didn't find Him after a

day's journey they turned back to Jerusalem. There they found Him in the Temple talking with Rabbis, who were astounded by His sharp questions and clear understanding. When Mary His mother told Jesus how they had worried about Him Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

It seems likely that Jesus' boyhood centered on Joseph's carpentry shop, the farming activities of His neighbors, and the local Synagogue. A carpenter then was not a house builder, but a craftsman who made plows, yokes, farming tools, doors and lattice windows, and household furniture. But carpentry was also manual labor, which involved felling trees, transporting logs, sawing and finishing lumber. As He worked with Joseph, Jesus must have developed a powerful physique that helped Him withstand the beating and suffering on the cross. While a youth He probably also took turns watching the family's sheep and those of His neighbors, and He probably helped gather local grapes and olive harvests with His father Joseph being paid properly for Jesus' work.

When Jesus became a man at the age of 30 years of age he came by the Jordan River where John was baptizing the people who had repented from his preaching. There Jesus came to him to be baptized. But John objected; he did not want to baptize Jesus. He knew Jesus was not a sinner. But John quit objecting and baptized Jesus by putting him completely under the water, and when He came up out of the water John saw the Holy Spirit land upon Jesus in the form of a dove.

Right after His baptism the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness. There for forty days he set his mind on the work that God had placed before him, knowing that he had but three and a half years to finish the work that He was sent here to accomplish. After 40 days of fasting he was weak from hunger, at his weakest moment, Satan was there to tempt Jesus to sin, but again he failed.

"The god of this age," "an angel of light," "the prince of demons"-these are the New Testament descriptions of Satan the devil. He and his rebellious followers possess super power (Mark 5:1-4).

The New Testament teaching is clear: Satan and his demons can disguise themselves as good angels. The Apostle Paul warned about demons; double agents when discussing spiritual deception.

Jesus and Satan was well acquainted with each other, because he was the second spiritual being created before the universe came into existence, known as Lucifer “the bright and morning star, but after his rebellion against God, he was cast out of heaven and he was called in the new testament by a number of names and description, “Adversary” (1 Peter 5:8); “Beelzebub” (Matthew 12:24); “Belial” (2 Corinthians 6:15); “the deceiver of the whole world” (Revelation 12:9); “the great dragon” (Revelation 12:9); “the wicked one” (Matthew 13:19, 38; 1 John 2:13, 5:19); “the father of lies” (John 8:44); “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4); “a murderer” (John 8:44); “the old serpent” (Revelation 12:9); “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30); “the prince of power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2); “the tempter” (Matthew 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 3:5); “Abaddon or Apollyon “ (Revelation 9:11).

These varied designations indicate the dignity and character of Satan, while he is very clever and powerful, he is a rival of God but is only able to go as far as God permits (Job 1:12; 2:6; Luke 22:31). “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

Remember, not long after the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, Satan inspired King Herod to slay all the male children in the surrounding areas, but Mary and Joseph had been warned by God and escaped (Matthew 2:13-18).

Herod’s cruel slaughter of little children was in vain, because the young child Jesus was not killed. In a dream, God’s angel had warned Joseph: “Get up, take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I give you word; for Herod is about to hunt the young child to destroy him” so Joseph and his family fled into Egypt in time (Jeremiah 31:15). Prophecy came true “which was spoken by God through His prophet, saying “Out of Egypt I will call my Son” (Hosea 11:1).

After King Herod’s death, God’s angel said to Joseph: “Get up, take the young child and His mother and be on your way into the land of Israel.” So they returned and settled in a city named Nazareth that it might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophets, “He will be called a Nazarene” (Matthew 2:20,23).

The City of Nazareth did not have a good name or reputation. The Jews expected nothing “good could come from Nazareth (John 1:46). Nazareth where Jesus grew up

had become so abandoned that no good could be expected from any of those who dwell in it, and that its wickedness had passed into a popular saying.

Again remember later, Satan attempted to get Jesus to submit to him and to reject the commandments of God. Had Jesus succumbed, He too, would have been rejected as our Saviour and future ruler of the earth. Again however, the devil was unsuccessful (Matthew 4:1-11).

But did you know that Satan's attempts were not limited to attacks on Jesus as a baby or when He started His ministry? In Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, it was prophesized that the seed of a woman; the person is to come by a woman and by her alone without the concurrence of man. The plan of God was that Jesus Christ was to be born of a virgin; this alone is what is implied in the promise of a Seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent.

Jesus Christ died on the cross to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil. Thus He bruises His head--destroys his power and lordship over mankind by giving man the right to choose to whom he will follow.

It happened many years ago, even before the birth of Christ, when Satan tried to eliminate a whole tribe of Israel to stop God's purpose to send a Saviour. If he had been successful, there could have been no birth.

This all started way back in history, in the book of Genesis, where God promised that through Abraham's seed would come the salvation of all mankind (Genesis 12:1-3). This is when the angel of the Lord told Abraham to get out of the country, and leave the city of Ur of the Chaldeans in order to go to Canaan. By so, Abram (Abraham) had a spiritual view by looking for a better country, and considered the land of promise, that is only typical of the people of God having to leave the life (country) of sin to walk in the way of righteousness to our heavenly inheritance. Abram was told that through him they would become a great nation. The future generation, in the Messiah, who shall spring from thee.

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” This, we understand to obey our blessed Lord, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice (Genesis 22:18).

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham had 12 sons who became known as Israel, because God changed his name from Jacob to Israel, as we know that nation today. One of the sons was named Judah, the great grandson of the patriarch Abraham known today as Jews. To this tribe, Judah, a special message was given: “The scepter (symbolic of rulership) shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh comes” (Genesis 49:10). Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the coming ruler of the world, would descend from Abraham through the tribe of Judah (Galatians 3:8; 16).

Many years before the birth of Christ, Satan had known that the Messiah would be born of the Jewish tribe of Judah, from Abraham’s seed. Satan knew that someday Jesus was to come; after all, there was war in heaven; and Jesus and his angels under His command fought that old dragon and His host of fallen angels.

And the Dragon lost that battle and was cast out of heaven. This great Dragon--the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world--was thrown down into the earth with his army (Revelation 12:7-9).

It seems that Satan will not give up his throne without a fight. Even today, with all the defeats that have come upon him you would think he would stop fighting Christ, the Christians and Jews. Despite the global threats we face today as Christians and Jews we are reminded of the words in the Scriptures.

The psalmist asked and then answered the question of the ages when he wrote: “I lift up my eyes to the hills--where does my help cometh from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1-2). Let us never forget that our ultimate source of help and our salvation is from the Lord who created all things.

Satan has never given up on destroying the Jewish nation, and his hatred for the Jewish people. Remember what happened during the years of Hitler’s rulership, when Satan used him to try to destroy all Jews? This same thing also happened over 500 years before Christ was born, when Satan had a Persian king who tried to eliminate the Jewish people. What horrors and suffering at the hands of their Nazi persecutors during world war two. Six million were killed and thousands survived to tell the story. It is simply beyond words what these people went through during those Holocaust years. Many thousands were killed during the conquest by the Persia king five centuries ago, but Israel still survived.

Now, the Jewish people have returned to their own land and have an independent nation, but there is no peace yet as God promised because of the controversy over Jerusalem and Palestine. God foretold that Israel would be out of their land for many years, but they would return in the latter days (Hosea 3:4-5).

Israel may be the only nation in history that was attacked by five hostile neighbors on the very same day of its birth. The Arab coalition that invaded Israel on that day that she was made an independent state in May 1948, confidently declared their intention to drive the Jewish state into the sea. The 22 Arab nations are committed to her annihilation and have stated that the Jewish nation should be “wiped off the map!” Satan has gathered over 1 billion Muslims that have committed themselves to the destruction of Christians and Jews. Satan is determined to destroy all traces of Christianity and the Jewish heritage by first destroying Israel and any sign of Christ’s birth. Since Israel became a nation in 1948 there have been six wars that Satan has used to kill all Jews, but again the one and only Jesus Christ have defeated him again.

Satan knew that Christ was to be born from a Jewish family and he realized that if there were no Jews, then there would be no Messiah. No one would come and be qualified to rule the earth. No Saviour to open the way for humans to be reconciled back to God because of the sins of Adam, the one that the people of Israel had been waiting for, and are still waiting for His arrival.

This happened back in about 485 B.C. when a Persian King had divorced his wife, and when he sought a new queen from among the maidens of his nation. He chose a young virgin name Esther.

The King’s spokesman persuaded the King to sign a decree that stated all Jews were to be annihilated and killed; none was to be spared. Esther’s uncle heard that one of his staff was about to poison him, so he notified Esther. Her uncle sent word to Esther that she must tell the King of the plot that he was about to be killed, and by that information Esther and her uncle found favor in the heart of the King.

Now when Esther’s uncle Mordecai heard of that decree that the King had signed, he sent word to Esther to go and plead for her people before the King. At the risk of her life she went before the King. The King asked her to state her request and then she revealed the scheme to destroy her people the Jews. The King became very angry and ordered a

new decree to be sent out that they should arm themselves, which enabled the Jews to be saved.

The Jews successfully defended themselves and celebrated with much feasting. Mordecai was placed as the number two man over Persia (the book of Esther). The Jewish nation had been saved. Jesus Christ now could be born according to prophecy.

God's people, however, can use this account of divine intervention at the time of Esther to remind ourselves that God is very much in charge of events and that His purpose for us and for the world will stand. Satan will continue trying to destroy the Jewish people until he brings on world war three. Every year the Jewish people celebrate this event called Purim (Chapter 9).

Israel, as a nation has been occupied by six nations Syria, Egypt, Babylon, Medes and Persians, Greece and Rome because of their disobedience (Daniel 2:31-45). We cannot deny that Israel was a greatly religious people. Nevertheless they were lost. They were lost and did not know it.

Many years before this, the prophet Moses warned the people about forgetting their God once they got into the Promised Land. "If you should at all forget your God and break his Commandments his Statutes and Laws, and walk after other gods and serve them and bow down to them. I do bare witness against you today that your people will absolutely perish. Like the nations that I destroyed from before you, that is the way you will perish, because you will not listen to the voice of Jehovah your God "(Deuteronomy 8:10-20).

Satan could not destroy them so he influenced them to go after others gods, which they did. The people of Judah got so bad that God said He was going to let the pagan Babylonians from the North Country come in and destroy Jerusalem and her beautiful temple on Mount Mariah. He said He was going to upset or overturn the kingdom of Judah because of their false religion. Only for their turning to true religion would God show them mercy and forgive them for their many wrongs they had committed against Him.

Jesus was born during the rulership of Rome, the High Priest and the Pharisees. The Pharisee sect was the most popular, the strictest, and the most zealous religious movement of its day. The Pharisees, even though prideful, arrogant, and legalistic, were

perhaps the most orthodox and sound people of any during their time. They were as straight in their doctrines as could be. It was the Pharisees who attacked our Lord so much during His ministry. They accused Jesus of blasphemy (Luke 5:21), of being a devil (Matthew 9:34), of breaking the law (Matthew 12:2), and frequently they planned and attempted to destroy Him (Matthew 12:14).

It was the Pharisees who played a major part in the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross. These people thought God had made them the custodians of His truth. The Pharisees encouraged the Temple Priests to carry out the crucifixion because they accused Him of saying that He was the Son of God.

The heritage of the Jews was extremely important to them, and Paul cautioned the religious leaders against relying on their Godly heritage to save them. He warns them that they aren't going to get into the kingdom of God because they were the seeds of Abraham. He points out that true repentance is what is necessary. Neither can we rely on the traditions of the Elders, our belonging to a church, or relying on our works, we must be converted!

Even during the time of Paul the Israelites were very religious and Paul had his problem with them just like our Lord did. Hear what Paul said regarding them, "Dear brothers, the longing of my heart and prayers is that the Jewish people might be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for the honor of God, but it is a misdirected zeal. For they don't understand that Christ has died to make them right with their God. Instead they are trying to make themselves good enough to gain God's favor by keeping the old Jewish Law and customs, including keeping the Levitical Priesthood, but that is not God's way of salvation. They don't understand that Christ gives to those who trust Him in everything, (Romans 10:1-4). Religious but lost.

"They have made the Commandments of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their hearts is far from Me" (Isaiah 29:13). "But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:6-9).

Because of the Pharisees and many of the chief priests and elders who were under the influence of Satan brought Jesus to trial and nailed Him to the cross. Two malefactors

were fastened to the cross at the same time. One of these saw Jesus and asked him to remember him when Jesus came into His kingdom. Jesus promised him that when He received His kingdom that he would be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:42-43). The chief priests and elders along with Satan thought for sure that they had won a victory by bringing death to the Son of God.

However, Jesus was not to remain dead. It had been told by the prophets, “God would not leave His soul in Hell” (grave) (Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27). Satan failed again to destroy the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus had told His disciples that He would be resurrected after three days. Still, the disciples were surprised when they came to the tomb after three days and found the tomb empty and the stone rolled away. There were two angels who spoke to them that Jesus had risen and was not there (Luke 24:4-6).

His victorious death on the cross is the greatest expressions of love “the greatest love is shown when a person lays down His life for a friend” (John 15:13). Christ’s death on the cross climaxes and surpasses them all. His death is the highest of all demonstration of love.

His love is so deep that it cannot be understood, so broad that it cannot be measured, so meaningful that it cannot be described, so intense that it cannot be supplemented that he would suffer and die for someone like me, a sinner, who deserves the penalty of death.

As He died He did not make remarks about love; Jesus did not talk too much about love; He demonstrated His love. Love lies at the very heart of Christianity, being essential in man’s relationship to God and man (John 13:34-35; Matthew 22:37-40).

For one thing, Christ’s death on the cross reveals God’s great love to the world “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Through the death of His Son on the cross God crushed the serpent’s head, stripped him of his power so he can only entice us to commit sin. Christ’s death on the cross reveals sin in all its sinfulness.

He (Christ) was human, and He understood hunger and sorrow. He challenged the ones that were teaching to hate others who opposed them by commanding His followers, “Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you.” He also said they should love their “neighbor as themselves.” When a lawyer asked Him, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus responded with the story of the Good Samaritan in which the Samaritan is the hero.

Since most Jews considered the Samaritans so unclean that they would not have any dealing with them, the lawyer had his answer: all men, even Samaritans, were his neighbors (Luke 10:30-36). Again, Christ death on the cruel cross reveals the one and only plan of salvation, “Love,” in which God shows His great love when He gave His son for a ransom for the sins of all mankind. Love is by deed not by words.

Jesus was the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5), “The Fairest Among Ten Thousand” (Song of Salomon 5:10), “The Rose of Sharon” (Song of Salomon 2:1), “The Way” (John 14:6), “The Fountain of Life” (Psalm 36:9), “The Lily of the Valley” (Song of Salomon 2:1), “The Truth” (John 14:6), “The Only Begotten Son of God” (John 3:16), “The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), the Holy One (Acts 3:14), and the Rock (Psalm 95:1).

Before His crucifixion and the betrayal by Judas Iscariot, Jesus knew that He would be taken and killed. It would be on the fourteenth day of Nisan (April), the first month of God’s New Year, the beginning of spring that would become our Lord’s final hours. After the introduction of the Lord’s Supper, the disciples began to argue among themselves as to who would have the highest rank in the coming Kingdom (Luke 22:24), thinking that He was going to overthrow the Roman Government and set up His kingdom immediately.

Peter was the one of the first disciples to be called, (Mark 1:16-18) and the first to be named an Apostle. (Mark 3:14-16). His name heads every list of the twelve in the New Testament, and there is no other man in the New Testament or the Old Testament named Peter that has been called the “Big Fisherman.” He seems to be the spokesman for the twelve.

Even Jesus closest circle of followers didn’t fully grasp why He came into the world. He even told them plainly. “From then on Jesus began to speak to His disciples about going to Jerusalem, and what would happen to Him there, that He would suffer at the hands of the Jewish leaders, that He would be killed, and that three days later He would be raised to life again” (Matthew 16:21). The disciples had no idea what He meant by this statement. “But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him” (Mark 9:32).

Sadly, it is all too common to find people like the disciples who have made the study of God’s Word into a hobby of little importance. It is impossible to “know” much of the

information found in the word of God without knowing God of the Word, and without experiencing any real transformation; seeing but blind, hearing but deaf, ever learning but entirely missing the revelation of divine truth (2 Timothy 3:7).

Why is He talking about being tortured and killed? His disciples wondered. It bothered them greatly. Then Peter took Him...suddenly interrupted Him as if he was calling Him to order. "This is not going to happen to you" (Matthew 16:22). Peter knew that Christ had power sufficient to preserve Himself from all the power and injury of the Jews, and wished Him to exert that for His own behalf, which He had often exerted for others.

"Jesus turned on Peter and said "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: you are thinking merely from a human point of view, and not from God's" (Matthew 16:23). Here, Jesus called Peter a "devil" because he thought that Jesus could use His power to defend Himself and set up His Kingdom instead of fulfilling His obligation to God and avoid suffering and death, which He predicted for Himself.

Peter really didn't understand Jesus true mission, he believed that Jesus was a descendant of David and has come to lead the Jewish nation to their independence and to victory.

That's what all of Jesus disciples thought. Shortly after Jesus execution one of them said, "We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). His unexpected death was a shock and disappointment to them and they became afraid.

Peter seems to be among the disciples that Jesus called upon to be with him on many occasions, such as preparing the Passover at which the Lord's Supper was instituted; the agony in Gethsemane, the arrest, and denial by Peter that stands out conspicuously of those fateful hours.

Even people today who are courageous enough to face the issue still struggle with identity of Jesus Christ. Others dismiss Him completely; Jesus' identity is still the question to be answered on earth.

After Judas Iscariot had left the room to betray Jesus, Peter boasted: "Though all men forsake thee, Yet, I will not." Peter was told that he would deny his Lord. Jesus tried to warn him by saying: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38). "Peter, Peter; before the night is over you will deny me three times, Peter stated, Though

I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Jesus said unto him: Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have you, to sift you like wheat, but I have pleaded in prayer for you that your faith should not completely fail. So after you repent and turn to me again, strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers” (Luke 22:31-34). Peter did not comprehend this saying and what was about to happen.

Accompanied by His disciples, He went as usual up to the Mount of Olive to the Garden of Gethsemane. “Pray to God that you will not be overcome by temptation.”

He walked away, perhaps a stones throw, and knelt down to pray this Prayer: “Father, if you are willing, please take away this cup of horror from me. But I want your will, not mine. Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened Him, for he was in such agony of the spirit that He broke into a sweat of blood, with great drops falling to the ground as He prayed more and more earnestly” (Luke 22:44). At last He stood up again and returned to the disciples-only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. By then Judas was there with a mob to take Jesus to the temple before the High Priest.

Peter, a short time later and one of the other disciples was willing to protect Him when the disciple lifted up his sword to protect Jesus (Mark 14:47), and then, “all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Mark 14:50).

Each of the apostles failed to see the physical and emotional change in Jesus’ countenance in the Gethsemane. And they failed to place proper value on Jesus’ words, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38). In His critical hour it would have meant so much to Jesus if His disciples had shown some understanding and compassion for His suffering. Was it because Jesus disclosed the fact that he was to be betrayed by one of the twelve? Or was it that Peter did not understand what was to happen because later he slept (Mark 14:37-41) along with James and John while Jesus agonized at a place called Gethsemane? Or was he thinking of the chief place in the kingdom with Christ? Or was it self-preservation? What happened to Peter after the Chief Priest and the captain of the temple led Him way to be tried?

These are legitimate criticisms and should be considered carefully. But how do we fit this into this story? Are there any principles that apply to our situations? Likewise, why do we as Christians deny Christ in time of crisis? Is it because we live in a world facing imminent pain, suffering, death of a loved one, under the pressure of public opinion, or

because we want to fit in or get ahead? Then we become cold and indifferent and sometimes say or do things that are unworthy of a Christian. Even while we say and do them, we are aware that this does not represent our best self.

As Jesus was being led by the mob to be judged by the High Priest, Peter was following Him far off (Mark 14:54), not knowing what was going to happen to Him.

Like Peter, when a man is weak in faith and can as yet only follow Christ at a distance, he should avoid all dangerous places and the company of those who are most likely to prove a snare to him. By doing this, he is not only lagging in his interest and courage; he is actually retreating. His love has declined because of fear of the people. The mask that Peter was wearing which represented a Christian became known when in a difficult situation; he failed. He retreated back to his old life style.

We, as Christians, are not to retreat but to go forward and conquer. It was a cold and damp night as Jesus was being led off to a place in the court of the High Priest. The crowd had built a fire to keep themselves warm.

As Peter followed, a large number of people traveled towards the Chief Priest's court. We see Peter shivering from the cold and sat down by the fire (Luke 22:55). Had he been doing his duty that night, he never would have been cold. A lukewarm heart is as dangerous as a cold one and it causes death (Revelation 3:15-17). Loyalty and love for the Messiah would light the flame of fire in his soul that would have kept him warm. Peter's body had grown frigid because his heart had become cold. He had left his first Love. His was an act of chilling carelessness in the hour of challenge when the faithfulness and loyalty would have gleamed like a radiant sun in the dark and a chilly night.

The next glimpse we get of Peter is when he is in the courtyard at the beginning of Jesus' trial. He is in despair and disappointed. His hope has gone out. He is overwhelmed by fear and cold from the lack of faithfulness, "Christ," he reasons, "His life is over." "Therefore, there is no reason for my bursting in there and endangering my life." After three years with Jesus, Peter still could not understand His teaching about His death and resurrection. The denial by Peter may have been the saddest experience of all for Jesus during that night before His death.

It was a cold and chilly night, so the soldiers lit a fire in the courtyard and were sitting around it for warmth, and when Peter came into the courtyard and saw the fire, he sought the warmth of that fire. Throughout the night, while Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin, Peter agonized, his conscience screamed at him. Unable to bear his guilt was the reason he was so cold and needed the heat from the fire. A cold-hearted man is apt to forget his trust, his loyalties, and his faithfulness when his life is in danger. The seat that he thought would be comfortable proved to be the most uncomfortable place he could find around the fire with the unbelievers. Peter sought the warmth of the fire instead of the radiant heat from his Lord. Likewise, many professing Christians warm themselves by the enemies' fire by conformity to the ways of the world.

There was a crowd gathering there, around the fire to warm themselves when a young woman noticed Peter in the firelight and began staring at him. Finally she spoke: "This man was with Jesus, he is one of his followers!" Now Jesus was in full view, looking at Peter with much sorrow in His eyes when Peter begins his cowardly disloyal denial, "woman," he said, "I don't even know this man" (Luke 22:55-57).

Peter left the fireside (the heat from this woman's comments was too hot) and as Peter moved out on the porch, another woman looked at him, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth," Peter said, being upset by such an accusation, "I tell you, I don't know this man" (Mathew 26:71).

Peter moved on from the porch back into the courtyard and about an hour later, some one else looked at him and said, "You must be one of them," Peter said, in a more emphatic way, with a loud voice, "I tell you, I don't know him." This man said, "I know this fellow is one of Jesus' disciples, for both are from Galilee." Peter with a loud shout and cursing, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." And as he said the words, a rooster then crowed" (Matthew 26:72-75).

The denial by Peter may have been the saddest experience of all for Jesus during that night before His death. The question may be asked: "why did Peter do it?" He did not intend too. Under pressure we often do things that we do not intend to do.

Having had the same kind of experience, most of us can identify with Peter. This is done when we become absorbed in the material side of life. "For people will love only themselves, and their money, they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God,

disobedient to their parents, ungrateful to them, and thoroughly evil. They will be hardheaded and never giving to others; they will constantly lie and be troublemakers and will think nothing of being immoral. They will be rough and cruel, and sneer at those that try to be good. They will betray God and their friends; they will be hotheaded, puffed up with pride, and prefer good times rather than worshipping God. They will go to church, yes, but they won't really believe anything they hear. They are faithful in observance of their religious rituals, but their hearts are aflame with fires of evil. Those professed Christians have built a little fire, and now warm themselves by compromising with the lukewarm believers, and by compromising with the unbelievers will be to our distinct loss. By seeking popularity with them we have lost our power over the world" (2 Timothy 3:2-7).

Here, Peter was in a crisis. Note his actions, "I know not this man," Christ opens not His mouth. Peter's spirit was one of chaos; Christ was one of calmness. Peter was fearful; Christ was fearless. Peter was untrue to his task; Christ was true to His trust. Peter's action was sinful; Christ was righteous.

Likewise, Judas betrayed Christ as well as Peter, but Judas ran to the temple court and threw the thirty pieces of silver across the floor (Matthew 27:5). Gasping for breath he confessed with remorse; "I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4). Judas confessed to the wrong person and his repentance to man carried no hope, no faith in God's forgiveness. It brought no peace and it led to Judas suicide.

While Peter was denying that he was a follower of this man whom they had brought before the High Priest, the rooster had just crowed three times just as Jesus told Peter that he would do which Peter denied that would never happen. At that moment Jesus turned and looked at Peter with remorse. Then Peter remembered what He had said "before the cock crows tomorrow morning you will have denied me three times." That sound from the rooster was a blasting of a trumpet that awakened Peter. He looked into Jesus' eyes and saw the look that Jesus gave him with such sadness that Peter ran from the courtyard weeping and sobbing, which was enough evidence in itself by the tears of repentance that flowed plentifully from his eyes that showed his deep sorrow. He knew that he had done a terrible thing by denying his Messiah; he was stricken immediately with overpowering

remorse that brought about by a deep sense of sin. His better self was aroused and he was filled with deep, tender emotions, and true repentance.

The Bible does not say if Peter was at the cross to witness the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, only the disciple John was mentioned.

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and grief's to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer.

The sense of sin and guilt led Peter to repentance, repentance led him to weeping and sobbing with prayer; thus by God's grace, Peter was restored. From the heat of the fire Peter now sees the blessings and privileges that Jesus has given him and is now seen in a new light. Now that flame from the fire in your life will show the real you that will reveal more strength than you thought possible.

Like Peter, Christians are the target of ongoing warfare. With the light of the fire from our adversary the devil, he is to keep us in darkness, but Jesus said, "I come as a light into the world (John 9:5). "That whosoever believes in me should not abide in darkness."

We find Peter, when he removes the mask of pretense, after Pentecost, went forth with such conviction, preaching the forgiveness of sins, that he brought thousands to the foot of the cross. Peter later suffered martyrdom for Christ' sake. He never looked back at the night when the heat of that fire caused him to deny his Saviour and when the cock crew but now looked forward to eternity.

Not only Peter, even Jesus circle of followers didn't grasp why He came into the world. He told them plainly, He must die very shortly. For He taught His disciples..."The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day" (Mark 9:31). The disciples had no idea what He meant by this statement.

Less than two months after the crucifixion Peter himself was a totally changed man fully dedicated to his Lord. Peter was the first of the disciples to recognize the meaning of Jesus' claims, claims that were to become the foundation of a new faith

Simon was an ordinary fisherman; He had his life transformed by Jesus. He was renamed Peter, or Cephas, which means "a little rock." "He was commissioned to catch

men” (Mark 1:16-17) and “feed the flock” (John 21:16-17). In the years following Jesus’ death and resurrection, Peter fearlessly preached Jesus, suffering humiliation, beatings, imprisonment and ultimately death for His name. This was a very different Peter from the one we see during Jesus’ ministry. The former Peter who was quite a bragger and boaster, failed when the chips were down by denying his Lord and Master.

Jesus came on the scene with a very different message. He claimed to be more than just a human being. That’s what made the religious leaders of His day very angry. They tried to kill Jesus because He “said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5:18).

The religious community, made up of the Aaronic Priesthood, Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish tribunal, and the Pharisees, the most influential and strict sect of the Jews. It was these members of the religious community who were repelled by the company He kept: tax collectors, prostitutes, thieves, and the Samaritans to whom the Jews hated.

On one occasion a Pharisee asked Jesus to come to his house for lunch, and Jesus accepted the invitation. As they sat down to eat, a “woman in the city who was a sinner—a prostitute heard that He was there and brought an alabaster box of expensive perfume. Going in, she knelt in front of him at His feet, weeping, with her tears falling down upon His feet, and her tears falling upon His feet became wet, and she wiped them off with her hair and kissed them and poured the perfume upon them.

How appalling it must have seemed, a “sinner” a woman of ill repute grasping the Master and touching Him and kissing His feet. When Jesus’ host, a Pharisee, saw what happened and the reputation of this woman, he said to himself, “this proves that Jesus is no prophet. This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him” {Luke 7:36-39).

Jesus answered by saying: “surely evil men and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom before you do. For John the Baptist told you to repent and turn to God, and you wouldn’t, while the very evil men and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to repent, and so you couldn’t believe” (Matthew 21:31-32; Luke 7:29).

Jesus saw that the common people were like sheep without a shepherd, and so He became their kind, loving and gentle leader. “All ye that labor.” The Jews heavily laden

with the burdensome rites of the Mosaic institution with more added laws added on by the scribes and Pharisees. “Heavy burdens” and laboring by their observance of the law, to make themselves pleasing to God, are here invited to lay down their load, and receive the salvation provided for them by Christ and become His disciples.

“Come to Me” for the work of righteousness is peace; and the effect of righteousness: quietness and assurance for ever” (Isaiah 32:17). “For my yoke is easy;” My gospel imposes nothing that is difficult; it provides for the complete removal of all that which oppresses and renders man miserable (Matthew 11:28-29).

The Pharisees, Sanhedrin, and the Priesthood were furious at Jesus and contemplated His death but were afraid of the people that followed after Jesus, so they began to plot against Him, hoping they could trick Him, that would turn the people against Him.

Jesus was speaking in front of the temple when the Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Him but they were afraid to touch Him for fear of the mob that were listening to Him. So they left Him and went away. But they sent other religious and political leaders to talk with Him and try to trap Him into saying something He could be arrested for.

“Teacher,” these Pharisees said, “we know you tell the truth no matter what! You aren’t influenced by the opinion and desire of men, but sincerely teach the ways of God in truth. Now tell us, is it right to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Jesus knew they were trying to trap Him so Jesus said, “show me a Roman coin and I will tell you.” When they handed Him a coin, He asked, “Whose picture and title is on this coin?” “They replied, “Caesar.” “All right,” He said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they scratched their heads in bafflement at His reply and left (Mark 12:14-17). Satan inspired the Pharisees and Sadducees who failed time and time again, but they never gave up trying.

They were watching when Jesus and His disciples were walking through a corn field on the Sabbath day. “His disciples were hungry; so they began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat, but when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day” (Mathew 12:1-2). Always watching waiting to accuse and condemn Him of breaking the Law of Moses.

When Jesus would travel throughout Judea and Samaria He would draw great crowds to listen to His preaching. His preaching sounded good but they had difficulty in

understanding Him. Some said he was a good man, others swore that He was an impostor and a fraud (John 7:12). Still others thought He had a devil, and was mad, why even listen to Him (John 10:20)? There were others who said that he was a drunkard and a glutton, and a friend to publicans (tax collectors) and sinners (Matthew 11:19). He even called Himself a King.

Some of them thought He was a political revolutionary that could help them overthrow Rome's tyranny, others wondered if He was an enemy, or merely a friend. Most importantly, they asked, did He believe the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and promote them, or was He introducing something contrary to the law and the prophets? Some even came to the conclusion that He was demon-possessed.

Some religious leaders standing by were shocked when they heard Him say to a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing his faith said "son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you" "Blasphemy! This man is saying He is God," exclaimed the scribes within themselves (Luke 5:18-21).

Only God can forgive sins they reasoned. Jesus, however, intended everyone to hear what He said, "so all could know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" (Matthew 9:6).

The religious leaders began to plot His death because of the statements He had made, He had the power to forgive sins, and that He was the Son of God, along with His friendship with sinners to whom He spent a lot of time with. These religious community leaders even accused Him of hanging out with thieves and prostitutes. Jesus spoke strongly to such criticism. To those who asked, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" He said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:16-17).

Jesus of Nazareth has been called the most controversial and influential figure in all history. We need only look at basic Christian belief to see the spectacular power of this man's teaching and His life. The Nicene Creed, for example, includes these words: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Son of God."

Jesus came preaching the good news throughout His ministry. He told His disciples to preach the same gospel of hope throughout the world (Mark 16:15). Jesus did this by

making God's plan for the human race plainly evident. He also lived a sinless life. Then Jesus paid for human sin with His death and finally was resurrected. Much of the good news Jesus brought involves His crucifixion and resurrection, as Paul emphasized (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Remember, that Jesus did not write a single word of the New Testament Scripture or about His life. Every word He spoke represents only what other men, His disciples, claim He said, and these men just a handful, really only eight men. These are the only writers who preserved the facts about Jesus' life, His childhood, His thoughts, His good deeds, His conflict with Satan, His betrayal by Judas, His death, His resurrection and His ascension, along with the time of His crucifixion and burial.

Outside of a collection of twenty-seven documents we call the New Testament, virtually nothing is known or recorded of Jesus except by the four men called Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Some of the followers of Jesus and His disciples were wealthy, but most of them were poor. Rich men did not like Jesus' admonition, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" (Matthew 6:19). Jesus knew that it was easier for a rich man to justify his self-interest rather than to sacrifice everything and follow Him. Jesus said "It is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25). But He added that "with God everything is possible" (Matthew 19:26). At the same time as the story about the parable of the talents in Matthew makes clear Jesus excused no one from personal responsibility (Matthew 25:15-28).

What is remarkable about the eyewitness accounts of these four men is that their records of the parables and miracles of Jesus are consistent with one another. Jesus is presented in each gospel as one who performs many miracles, and teaches using parables. Without the presentation of these parables and miracles, the story they tell of the Lord would be rather hard to understand.

Jesus reputation as a great teacher spread far and wide. And no wonder, He taught in parables; simple stories; that made His teaching clear to all who were ready to learn. The fields and harvest that were so much a part of His youth surged into His words, charged with life. He taught that "all men are sinners, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But that God in His love forgives repentant sinners (1 John 1:9).

True, we did not witness the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But we actually are able to see the resurrection through the eyes of those who witnessed it as if we were there. The writers of the Four Gospels knew that Jesus had lived and died and had been raised from the dead after three days. When one accepts the Bible as the word of God, its testimony becomes the sure proof. The disciples have been our eyes and ears through the ages of time.

If we accept their claim to be our witness of Jesus' life on earth, and if we accept that they were inspired by God to write the material we call the New Testament, then we cannot deny the most important events in history: the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:16).

If we are full of faith and believe the disciples words, we commit ourselves to do His work. When we make that commitment, He is faithful to give us strength and tools necessary to serve Him. When we show that commitment, we prove ourselves to be faithful servants. But without the faithfulness of God, it is impossible for us to be faithful to Him. It is true, His faithfulness towards us makes it possible for us to live a committed life of service to Him, a disciple.

Being faithful stewards is a requirement of God. He has given us grace and His words necessary to serve Him, and He expects our faithful service in return (1 Corinthians 4:2). Faithfulness is one of the qualities by which He judges His servants (Matthew 25:21). Yet, it is a sobering fact that when trials and tests come our way (Peter at Jesus' trial), many of us aren't so faithful. We fail Him utterly and completely.

Jesus knew that He had a great work to do as He chose His twelve apostles. Those apostles were humble and honest, God-fearing and hardworking men. They had little worldly learning or riches (Acts 4:13). Among them were four fishermen, Peter and his brother Andrew, James and his brother John. And one was a lowly tax collector whose name was Mathew. As Jesus went from city to city preaching and teaching the good news and curing people, the twelve was with Him.

Jesus had to teach unlearned and ignorant men, persons without interest, biblical illiterate, not brought up in nor given to literary pursuits; persons brought up in occupations, not acquainted with religion.

It does not mean unlearned in the common occupations of the term, and in no sense of the word could any of the apostles be called ignorant men; for though their spiritual knowledge came from heaven, yet in all other matters they seem to have been men of Good, Sound, and Strong with common sense. They had been with Jesus and had His teachings, the present company would soon have confounded them, but after His resurrection they spoke with much power (Acts 2:22-24).

Paul's preaching to the people of Antioch stood up, "Men of Israel, Brothers--you sons of Abraham, and also all of you Gentiles here who reverence God--this salvation is for all of us! The Jews in Jerusalem and their leaders fulfilled prophecy by killing Jesus; for they didn't recognize Him, or realize that He is the one that the prophets had written about, though they heard the prophets' words read every Sabbath. They found no just cause to execute Him, but asked Pilate to have Him crucified anyway" (Matthew 27:24).

Jesus suffered greatly during His life, and His death paid off humanity's debt of sin to God. How greatly Jesus suffered in accomplishing this feat! Finally, the goal was reached late that Passover afternoon as the Son of Man hung on a cross--tired, bruised, in pain, and bleeding. Christ thus became the perfect Passover lamb sacrificed for the sins of the human race (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave and follow thee:  
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,  
Thou from hence my all shalt be.

Let the world neglect and leave me,  
They have left my Savior, too.  
Human hopes have oft received me,  
Thou art faithful thou are true.

Perish, earthly fame and treasure,  
Come disaster, scorn, and pain,  
In thy service, pain is pleasure,  
With thy favor, death is gain.

Oh! 'Tis not in Joy to charm me,  
While thy bleeding love I see,  
Oh! 'Tis not in joy to charm me,  
When that love is hid from thee.

By Joseph Stennett

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

This story is written as it was found in the King James Bible. The disciples; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote at different times, yet by inspiration of the Holy Spirit each wrote a part of the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, who is the Christ. The four of them wrote the complete story in the exact time order in which it took place.

As we study the four gospels written by the disciples about the life of Jesus, from His childhood to His crucifixion, and if their writing is true, then we must accept the fact that Jesus was not executed on Friday and His resurrection was not on Sunday.

Besides this, the time of Christ’s resurrection determines the duration of His sleep in death in the sepulcher, and that time must be accurately determined in order to show the fulfillment of the sign that Christ gave to the unbelieving Jews.

According to Matthew and John, the one supernatural proof given to that disbelieving generation by Jesus for His Messiahship has greatly bothered the commentators and higher critics. Their attempts to explain this proof for Christ’s Divinity--Deity--are absurd in the extreme. They must explain it this way or their “Good Friday--Easter Sunday” tradition collapses. Did Jesus know how much time there was in one “day” and one “night”? “Are there not 12 hours in a day” (John 11:9-10)? God “Divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day” (Genesis 1:5). So there is 24 hours in one complete period called day.

“The Jews said unto Him, what sign will you show us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews; forty and six years were this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body” (John 2:18:21).

Jesus talking to these Jewish leaders who asked Him for a sign of His Messiahship, Jesus replied, “only an evil, faithless generation would ask for further proof; and none will be given except what happened to Jonah the prophet! For Jonah was in the great fish for three days and three nights, so I, the Messiah, shall be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights,” 72 hours (Matthew 12:39-40). Then was Jesus in the tomb three days (36 hr) and in the tomb three full nights (36 hr), as He plainly stated? Yes! Can you

figure three nights and three days between sunset “Good Friday” and sunrise “Easter Sunday” morning?

Now, the disciples stated, “And what’s more, some of the women among us have greatly astonished us. They went to the tomb at daybreak and, not finding the body of Jesus there, came and told us that they had seen a vision of an angel who told them that He was alive” (Luke 24:22-24).

Now, since Jesus was not in the sepulcher when the women were at the tomb very early in the morning on the first day of the week, when did He arise? If not on the Sabbath (Saturday) afternoon, as positively recorded in Matthew 28:1-7, then when was His resurrection?

Thus, Luke and Mark positively agree with Matthew, and all the seeming contradictions pass away leaving Matthew’s clear statement that Jesus arose on the Sabbath, before sunset, unquestionably true.

The general belief is that Jesus was crucified on Friday and the resurrection was on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday. These suppositions are taken so fully for granted that Christians generally never stop to question the accuracy of this position.

Besides this, the time of Christ’s resurrection determines the duration of His sleep in death in the sepulchre, and that time must be accurate to determine the order to show the fulfillment of the only sign that Christ gave to the unbelieving Jews. The Sign of three full days and three full nights in the sepulchre is a necessary factor to determine the truthfulness of Christ’s words.

The Jewish Priests and Pharisees demanded proof. Jesus offered them evidence, and that evidence was not the fact of the resurrection itself but it was the length of time He would be asleep in His grave. Think what this means! Jesus stakes His claim to being your Saviour and mine upon the remaining three days and three nights in the tomb. If He remained just three days and three nights inside the earth, He would prove Himself to be the Messiah, if He failed in this sign we must reject with that generation that He is an imposter.

Let us check a few Scriptures from Mathew, Mark, Luke and John to see if they agreed upon the time of Jesus’ entombment. These four are the eyes that saw and reported to us about the completion of this terrible deed. “And when the Sabbath was past, (about 6 in

the afternoon), Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him, “He has risen” (Mark 16:1-6).

“In the end of the Sabbath (about 6 in the evening) as it began to dawn (draw near) toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre” (Matthew 28:1-7). Matthew was talking about the same visit that Mark was writing about in the women’s visit. “On the first day of the week (Sunday) cometh Mary Magdalene early when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre” (John 20:1-9). “It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the Apostles” (Luke 24:10-14). Luke was writing about their visit to the graveside early in the morning, their second trip (Luke 24:1-6). It is self-evident that Jesus arose and left the tomb on the Saturday afternoon, and not on the first day of the week or Sunday morning, which is proof of His Messiahship by fulfilling His statement to the Jewish leaders that **after three days** He would rise again (Mark 8:31; Matthew 27:63; John 2:19).

Now as to the day of the month, and the day of the week of the crucifixion, we have to proceed to settle that question beyond any doubt, and have shown as plain as day that Christ was crucified on Wednesday and was resurrected at the end of the Sabbath. You see, in the days of Christ and the Apostles the time was from sundown to sundown (Genesis 1:5). When the women came to the sepulcher it was dawning (begin to appear) towards the first day of the week.

Before Jesus was crucified, we go back to the time of Jesus being accused by the upstanding members of the religious community, they were repelled by what Jesus was teaching and they assumed that He was trying to annul the basic laws that had governed the nation for over 15 centuries; there old constitution, the Laws of Moses.

In fact, Jesus proceeded to tell the crowds that these same laws would, henceforth, become even more binding. Avoiding an evil act would no longer satisfy the Law. A person was guilty if he or she simply desired to do evil.

Jesus began a new section of His sermon to discuss the practicalities of righteous living. He laid down two foundation principles that will apply throughout His teachings.

We see that everything He would teach about righteousness is fully in harmony with the Old Testament. To “fulfill” means to “give perfect obedience to,” containing the opposite idea of abolishing. In stating this, Jesus placed His full acceptance and authority entirely on the Old Testament. Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of the law and the prophets, and we are now complete in Him. In Christ Old Testament truth is established (Matthew 5:17-20).

The Old Testament laws were comprised of three parts: ceremonial, judicial, and moral, and each part require separate consideration. In His death (John 19:28-30), burial (Matthew 27:58-60), and morals (Luke 18:20), Jesus entirely fulfilled the ceremonial laws. We now fulfill it by believing in and fully subjecting ourselves to Christ. The judicial laws were especially for the Nation of Israel, but God’s Divine administration has now passed it to the church (Matthew 21:43; 1 Peter 2:9-10), so the judicial law has likewise been fulfilled. The moral law, as given in the Ten Commandments and magnified by Jesus, is permanent to the end of this age (Matthew 22:37-40). The Judicial (Moses) law then, is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24-25).

It is important to obey all of God’s 10 Commands, not to be saved but because we are saved and because we love Him and wish to please Him. The Sabbath (Saturday) is a day of rest. It was also a day of assembling for worship. And according to Hebrews 4:9-11 it is a symbol of the spiritual rest in which God has called His people to enter: “he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His.” “If you love me,” Jesus said, “Keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

Observing the Sabbath does not secure salvation for anyone, it cannot save anyone anymore than observing the other nine commandments. But the refusal to obey any of God’s commands can be eternally detrimental to one’s salvation. Why? “So speak ye, and so do, as they shall be judged by the law of liberty,” the Ten Commandments.

Jesus told the crowd that they misunderstood why He came--it wasn’t to cancel the Law of Moses and the warning of the prophets, “No, I came to fulfill them, and to make them all come true. With all the earnestness that I have said, every Law in the book will continue until its purpose is achieved. And so if anyone breaks the least commandment,

and teaches others to, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But those who teach God's laws and obey them shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:17-18).

The Old Testament includes numerous laws, which Christians are not expected to follow. With Jesus Christ's sacrifice, the need for the Hebrew priesthood and the ritual sacrifices disappeared, so many of the detailed rules no longer apply. But the basic principles of the Old Testament law remain valid.

Yet, the religious leaders falsely accused Jesus of breaking God's Law. Actually, it was the accused that really broke God's Law. On one occasion Jesus told them, "All too well you reject the Commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Jesus was misjudged during His lifetime. Almost no one grasped whom He was or what He was trying to get across. Not His followers, nor His enemies, nor His relatives, nor His friends, not even the masses.

On one occasion, Jesus shocked the crowd that was gathering together to hear Him. First, "He said, I am the living bread that came down out of heaven. Anyone eating this bread shall live forever; this bread is my flesh given to redeem humanity" (John 6:48-51).

Then the Jews began arguing with each other about what He meant. "How can this man give His flesh to eat?" They asked (verse 52).

So Jesus said it again. "With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this: unless you eat the flesh of the Messiah and drink His blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is the true food, and my blood is the true drink. Everyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood is in Me. And I am in him. I live by the power of the living Father who sent Me, and in the same way those who partake of Me shall live because of Me. I am the living Bread from heaven and anyone who eats this Bread shall live forever, and not die as your father died--though they ate Bread from heaven." (He preached this sermon in the synagogue in Capernaum), (John 6:53-59).

Even some of His disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. Who can tell what He means" (John 6:60). "At this point many of His followers turned away and deserted Him" (verse 66).

The religious leaders began to see that Jesus' popularity was beginning to diminish, and that Jesus now was losing support from many people at Capernaum and throughout Judea and now at Jerusalem. The High Priest started planning that they might find a way to bring Him before Pilate, the Governor in Palestine.

Jesus left Capernaum and went up to Jerusalem, because the Jewish Passover celebration was at hand. In the temple area He saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices, and the moneychangers behind their counters serving the people that were there for the Passover observance.

Jesus made a whip from some ropes that he had found and began turning over tables and chased them all out, and drove out the sheep and oxen, scattered the moneychangers, coins all over the floor and turning over their tables! Then, going over to the men selling doves, He opened up the cages and turned all the doves loose, He then told them, "Get these out of here. Don't make my Father's house a house of merchandise" (Matthew 21:12-13)).

This really upset the Jewish leaders by Jesus stopping the traditions that had been going on for centuries. "What right have you to order them out?" "If you have this authority from God, show us a miracle to prove it."

"All right," Jesus replied, "this is the miracle I will do for you, I will destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "What!" "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" But by "this Temple" He meant His body (John 2:18-21). After He came back to life again the disciples remembered His saying this and only then did they realize that what He quoted from the Scriptures really did refer to Him, and had all come true just as He said (John 2:17).

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, in the feast days, because of the miracles, many people were convinced that he was the Messiah. But Jesus didn't trust them, for He knew mankind to the core. No one needed to tell Him how changeable human nature is! He knew that they soon would turn on Him by the influence of the Temple Priests (John 2:23-24).

When Jesus was born, about 5 B.C., Palestine was a troublesome Roman province in the backwash of the empire. Poverty, internal strife, cruelty, high taxes, and a tyrannical

ruler wore it down: Herod, king of the Jews was a puppet of the Romans. General discontent simmered in the country. The Zealots were talking revolution in the hills. Greek philosophy was infecting the Jewish religion. Greek and Roman cultures were drawing young people away from the faith of their fathers.

The Jewish religion itself, the faith Jesus grew up with was torn by bitter rivalry among various sects. There were the Pharisees who wanted to purify faith by relentless obedience to all the scripture laws; the Sadducees, a more liberal sect consisting largely of priests and some of the rich upper class; and the Essenes, the sect we know today through the dead sea scrolls, a group who withdrew from ordinary life to attain a higher spirituality.

Apart from these were the Samaritans, a mixed breed hated by most Jews. They were descendants by intermarriages between colonists from the Assyrian invasion of the 721 B.C. and Israelites of the Northern Kingdom. Pharisees considered them ceremonially unclean. The Samaritans were the only sects that believed Jesus was the Messiah and was against the crucifixion.

Traditional Judaism saw God as a being wholly separate from the universe, creator of all things, in heaven, and on the earth, visible and invisible: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He was before all things and by Him all things consists. To make claim that He (Jesus) was the Son of God (John 19:7) and that He had created all things and through Him all things consists (John 1:3). To make claims such as Jesus made was ridiculous, comic, and blasphemous--or it was true?

At last the scribes and the chief priests decided that Jesus' unsettling influence could be put up with no longer. Jesus saying, that He was the Son of God was enough to cause the priests and scribes to have Him arrested and tried by the Roman Government. Judas, along with the chief priests and scribes and with a mob armed with clubs and swords came to the garden and led Him away.

Jesus allowed Himself to be captured by a religiously motivated mob. He was taken into custody without a struggle. In plain view, Jesus was spit upon, cursed, shoved, punched, laughed at, and insulted by the priest guards. He was branded a heretic. The religious leadership sentenced Him to death.

Jesus was tried first by the high priest Caiaphas, and then by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, for the high priest the charge against Jesus was religious: the crime of blasphemy, of having claimed to share the throne of God. The high priest found him guilty and the mob demanded His death. But the high priest could not impose the death penalty, so Jesus was taken to Pilate.

For Pilate, the charges were political; reports that Jesus had claimed to be a King. Through the first trial Jesus spoke scarcely at all. Pilate was not a personal enemy of Jesus and three times he tried to remove himself from the responsibility for passing a death sentence. He tried to pass the trial off to Herod; but Herod only sent Jesus back to Pilate, Pilate then proposed flogging Jesus and releasing Him (Luke 23:14-16). But the crowd demanded death.

Finally Pilate offered to release Jesus as an act of mercy, customary at Passover. But the crowd demanded that Pilate instead release Barabbas, a murderer then in prison, and crucify Jesus. Pilate finally gave in, but he took water and washed his hands because of the multitude saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood of this just person." The Jews stated, "That His blood would be upon their hands, and their children" (Matthew 27:25).

The Bible as we know it today, in which we all study, contains the history of the Jews, and it was written by Jews, our Lord and Saviour was a Jew, then the Bible must be Jewish. We cannot deny that.

But Matthew, one of the four gospel authors was the only gospel written by a Jew to the Jews about a Jew after Christ's death. His desire was to present Jesus as the eternal King of the Jews, their long-awaited Messiah. He used a carefully selected series of Old Testament Scriptures to prove Jesus' claims as the one we have been waiting for. Christ fulfilled the prophecy that the prophets of old prophesied about the Lord Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection, His miracles, His message, and even His baptism were prophesied in the Old Testaments.

In the time Of Christ there were devoted Jews still expecting the Messiah to come, as foretold in the writing of prophets. There are many Scriptures in the Old Testament that prophesied about His judgment and death. The Old Testament prophets told how Jesus, the Son of God, would offer Himself in total obedience, knowing that it would bring great suffering upon Him. He knew that when He declared the message that God the

Father gave Him; He was going to suffer abuse. But despite the torture laid upon Him, nothing would dissuade Him from His mission. Even to the end, He was an obedient sacrifice. This was all told by the Prophets such as Isaiah, Micah, Zechariah, Daniel, and Jeremiah, and even in Genesis, Exodus and Psalms, also in the book of Lamentations. They all tell the story of the suffering of Christ.

The first prophecy of the seed of a woman; addressed to Eve; that by her alone, without a relationship with a man, that Jesus Christ would be born of a virgin; this and this alone, is what is implied in the promise of the Seed of a woman bruising the head of the serpent.

Jesus died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Thus, He bruised his head--destroyed his power and lordship over mankind, turning them from the power of Satan unto God, and this is why He came. "To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance by faith that is in Me" (Acts 26:18).

"And thou shall bruise his heel," God so ordered it, that the salvation of man could be brought about by the death of Christ; through His death comes victory over sin that would bruise his heel, or crush Satan's success over man by His death (Genesis 3:15).

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed (Satan) and her seed (Christ). Enmity means that there will be a mutual hatred and hostility between Satan and the Son of God, Jesus Christ until Satan is taken out of the way and destroyed at the end of time.

Even Moses foretold of a promised prophet that would come after him that would be much greater than him. "The Lord God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken." Instead of fortune tellers and observers of times, God here promises to give them an infallible guide, who would tell them all things that makes for their peace (Deuteronomy 18:15).

"I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren like unto me" (Deuteronomy 18:18). "Like unto me," a Prophet, a Legislator, a King, a Mediator, and a Husband of the Bride (Church). This was the very person of whom Moses was the type, and who was a forerunner of the Messiah, or a type of. There has only been one Prophet after Moses

that accomplished all the great purposes of the Divine being of the Divine calling, that prophet was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ came to proclaim His Father to all mankind. He is the one who has stood in the counsel of God, who has God's passion for righteousness, truth and courage to declare to Jacob (Israel), and to the heathens their transgression and to all mankind his sins (Deuteronomy 18:19). "Moses truly said unto the fathers." From this appeal to Moses it is evident that Peter's wish for them was to understand that Jesus Christ was to come, not as an ordinary Prophet, to exhort to repentance and amendment, but as a Legislator, who was to give them a new law that they must obey or be cast into the lake of fire (Acts 3:20-24). This is that Moses which said...Prophet. This very Moses, so highly esteemed and honored by God, announced that very Prophet whom you have lately put to death is the true Messiah (Acts 7:37-39).

You would think that the Scribes, a class of learned men who made their professional occupation in studying and teaching of the law, along with the Pharisees who were a religious party and the Sadducees which recognized the legal interpretation of the Scribes accepted the law as the basis for the regulation of all of life, they made it their primary task to study, interpret, and expound that law, as the rule of life would have believed.

Peter made a statement that "all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days (Acts 3:24). And we wonder why the Scribes, Pharisees and the Sadducees did not know that Jesus was the one that the prophet of old was speaking about.

At the first Passover, the Lord spoke unto Moses that the ordinance was to be kept by taking a Lamb of the first year and sacrificing it and that "neither shall ye break a bone thereof" (Exodus 12:46; John 19:33). Moses and David both proclaimed that, "neither would Christ's legs be broken. "He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken" (Psalms 34:20). "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me" (Psalms 22:17).

It had to be a "lamb of the first year with out blemish as a offering unto the Lord" (Leviticus 23:12). The Passover lamb was a notable type of Christ, or a Passover lamb slain on the altar, such as is required for a sin offering to God; "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "Without blemish in himself and without

spot from the world, being perfect pure in His soul and righteous in His life. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed (slain) for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

We have seen so far that the prophets of old have prophesied of Christ death and there is much more to be revealed about the suffering of Christ. The Old Testament speaks of how Jesus would be taken from among the living and nailed to the cross-impaled by three old rusty nails and hung between two thieves. “For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and feet” (Psalm 22:16).

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left” (Luke 23:33).

The anguish occasioned by crucifixion was so intense that there are no words to express the suffering and torment in general. This punishment was the most dreadful of all others for both the shame and the pain of it. It was the punishment of robbers and murderers and offenses against the government of Rome.

“For dogs have compassed me.” This refers to the Roman soldiers, and others by whom our Lord was surrounded in His trial, and at the cross. They “pierced my hands and my feet.” This did not happen to David, but the piercing of the hands and feet was peculiar to our Lord; therefore this verse passes for a direct revelation of Jesus death (Psalms 22:16; John 20:27).

“I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.” “I may tell all my bones,” this refers to the violent extension of His body when the whole of its weight hung upon the nails, which attached His hands to the top beam of the cross. The body being thus extended, the principle bones became prominent, and easily discernible (Psalms 22:17).

“They part my garment among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” “They parted my garment.” This could not have happened to David. The fact took place at the crucifixion of our Lord. The soldiers divided His upper garment into four parts, each soldier taking a part; but His inward vestment being without seams, woven in one entire piece, they agreed not to divide, but to cast lots to see who would have it (Psalms 22:18).

“Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots” (Luke 23:34). These people knew that they were crucifying an innocent man; but they did not know that by this act of theirs they were bringing down on themselves and their country the heaviest judgment of God. In His

prayer, “Father, forgive them,” that words of prophecy were fulfilled, “He made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the Divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy related to the Messiah.

The Bible teaches by the word of Zechariah that Israel will be saved at the second coming of Christ and the greatest blessing from God will be a “spirit of grace and of supplication (Zechariah 12:10). In repentance for their sin, “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,” a statement referred to in John 19:37 to the Lord Jesus. Zechariah describes the intensity of the people’s mourning (Zechariah 12:11-14). Men and women of all families will join in “a great mourning for Jerusalem.”

“If ye think good give me my price and not forbear so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver” (Zechariah 11:12). “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver and price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value” (Matthew 27:9).

“He sitteth alone, and keep silent. He puts His mouth in the dust, there may be hope, He gives His cheek to them that smitteth Him” (Lamentations 3:28-30; Micah 5:1).

“I was not rebellious, neither turned my back away. I gave my back to be smitten, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair (beard). I hid not my face from shame and spitting upon me”: (Isaiah 50:5-6).

Then did they spit in His face, this was done as a mark of the most profound contempt. Then Herod now delivered Him unto the hands of a mob. And buffed Him, smote Him with their fists. “Beat with the hand, the fingers being clenched. Smote Him with the palms of their hands. Smite the cheek with the open hand” (Matthew 26:67; Mark 15:19; Luke 22:63)

“And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers that stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, answer thou the priest” (John 18:22). This was an outrage to all justice. For a prisoner, before he is condemned, is ever considered to be under the protection of justice; nor has anyone a right to touch Him but according to the direction of the law. But it has been observed before that if justice had been done to Christ He could have neither suffered nor died. .

“Many were astonished at Him: His face was so marred, more than any man, and His body scarred more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14). “But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people” (Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 53:3). They treated Him as nothing, lower than a robber or a thief, like a worm.

“All they that see Me laugh to scorn; they open their lips, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him” (Psalm 22:7-8). “And they that passed by reviled Him wagging their heads. Saying, thou that destroyed the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:39-40). This is applied to the conduct of the Jews toward our Lord when He hung upon the cross

“They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion” (Psalm 22:13). “Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it” (Psalm 35:21). “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels” (Psalm 22:14). “My strength is dried like a potsherd (clay pot); and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and I was brought into the dust of death (Verse 15), for they have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked has enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet” (Luke 23:33; John 20:27). “They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Psalm 22:16-17; Luke 23:34). “But be not far from me, O Lord, O my strength, haste thee to help me” (Psalms 22:18-19).

Now the prophesies of Daniel tell us that Jesus would be cut off in the middle of the week, about the ninth hour, on Wednesday, about three o'clock in the afternoon, not on Friday as the modern churches teach today (Daniel 9:27). Then after 3 days (72 hours) He would be resurrected about the 12<sup>th</sup> hour (6 o'clock) Saturday afternoon (Matthew 28:1), fulfilling Jesus own Prophecy that he would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:39-40).

From the beginning of Jesus' birth to His crucifixion on the cross was prophesied by every detail and was spoken by the prophet of old in the Old Testament, and we know more about Jesus Christ the Son of God by their writing than by His own disciples that He chose during His ministry. But why was Christ born?

During these ancient times, the Word as the Lord God inspired His prophets, priests and holy men to write down those things, which would serve as His instruction to mankind (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Many of these writings related to Jesus suffering and death for humanity's sins (Isaiah 53:10). Others referred to the Word coming in a yet later time as the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-5).

Thus, the Word had many responsibilities to fulfill between creation and His appearance as the Saviour. When all the details were in place and prepared, the most critical event in human history could take place. The Word was made flesh, lived among human beings, died and was resurrected.

Consider how astonishing Jesus' life on earth really was. Here was God's Son (an angel) actually transformed into a man. He walked among human beings. The Supreme Being looked into human eyes, talked to human ears. He worked, ate, and drank with men and women. A Divine, eternal spirit--the creator and ruler of the universe, the infinite mind--touched human hands. All told to us in the Old Testament.

Actual, original story of Jesus' birth is found in only one place--the Bible. And when we look at it there we make a remarkable discovery. The Biblical account of that great event has a significantly different emphasis than we find in the traditional version so popular in the Christian churches today.

When Jesus was born, his birth was not a totally unexpected event. Prophecies that it would happen are scattered throughout the Old Testament. The first one was spoken back at the beginning of human history, after the first sin committed by Adam and Eve. God told them of a coming Seed, a Seed who would defeat evil and bring righteousness (Genesis 3:15).

Through thousands of years this prophecy of a special birth from a woman was revealed through special men throughout the Scriptures over many years. Some seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, Isaiah was inspired to write that Christ would be born of the House of David, from a stump that represented the Davidic line of kingship, would come a new shoot, a new growth. This new King would be empowered with God's spirit. His reign would be just and peaceful. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." The "Root of Jesse" refers to the

Davidic line of kings. Jesse was David's father. The messianic hope centered in a descendant of David (Isaiah 11:1-3).

He also was inspired to write: A young woman known to both of them would conceive and bear a Son whose Name would be Immanuel, which means "God with us." He would be a symbol of the presence of God and the truthfulness of the prophecy. Before He reached young manhood the feared king would be destroyed (Isaiah 7:14-16).

About the same time the prophet Micah was inspired to name the exact town, Bethlehem. Having anticipated the coming kingdom, Micah proceeds to describe a leader "That is to be ruler in Israel. A language is used about the one who will be a shepherd "feed the flock," and a "bringer of peace" (Micah 5:1-3).

Again from Isaiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government will be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of host will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The child is the deliverer. Cast as a king in whom God has placed His strength and power, this one shall begin a reign of peace and plenty. There are four names given to the promised king, the first two, Wonderful, Counselor, and Mighty God (with God's authority), deals with the Character of the King. The second two, Everlasting Father and Prince of peace, refers to the character of His reign (Like His Father). Wisdom, power, concerned care, and peace will mark this promised deliverer.

Just who is this King? In the end it can only be Jesus Christ. He alone fulfills these expectations. In the coming of Jesus Christ we have been given the one who fully meets the characteristic of God's deliverer. His wisdom, power, concern, and peace have been demonstrated to all.

Many Jews understood the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9, the prophecy that the Messiah would come after the fulfillment of the 490 years that began when Darius signed a decree for them to go back to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 6:3-5). That is the

reason that when John came on the scene the Jews asked him if he was the one they have been waiting for.

God sent John the Baptist as a witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is the true light. John himself was not the light; he was only a witness to identify it. Later on, the one who is the true Light arrives to shine on everyone coming into the world. “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). It was he that turns on the switch that brought the light of life.

The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, look: “There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” When the Lord came He had a two-fold mission when He came to earth. First, He had to live a perfect life, a sinless life for humanity, it could only be done in the flesh through the guidance, strength, comfort, and being obedient unto His Father, and by the working of the Holy Spirit coupled to His own spirit and being an example to His followers. Second, He came to fulfill prophecy by dying--the innocent to pay the price for the guilty. “For as much as we, God’s children, are human beings--made flesh and blood--He became flesh and blood by being born in human form; for only as a human being could He die and in dying break the power of the devil who had the power of death. Only in that way could He deliver those who through fear of death have been living all their lives as slaves to something unchangeable with fear.

We all know He did not come as an angel but as a human being--yes, a Jew. “For since He himself has now been through suffering and temptation He knows what it is like when we suffer and are tempted, and He is wonderfully able to help us when we call upon His name” (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Jesus was like all other humans and yet different from every one. He faced the same temptation as every person who ever lived. But He was the only person ever born who lived His entire life without a single sin.

No other human has been able to avoid sin. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). That’s what makes Jesus unique. It was Jesus’ perfection in thought and deed that finally qualified Him to be the Saviour of the human race.

Jesus took on the same kind of flesh and blood and the body like all humans (Hebrews 2:14). Paul wrote, “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of

a woman, born under the law” (Galatians 4:4). We have not yet seen all of this take place, but we do see Jesus--who for a while was made a little lower than an angel--crowned now by God with glory and honor because He suffered death for us. Yes, because of God’s kindness, Jesus tasted death for everyone all over the world. And it was right and proper that God, who made everything for His glory should allow Jesus to suffer, for in doing this He was bringing vast multitudes of God’s people into His Kingdom; for His suffering made Jesus a perfect leader, one capable to bring them into their salvation (Hebrews 2:9-10).

Jesus had another great responsibility beyond dying for the world. He also had to live a perfect, sinless life for all humanity. Jesus proved it was possible for humans with God’s mind to also live in obedience to God’s laws, the Ten Commandments. Paul wrote, “God...sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...condemned sin in the flesh.” What was the reason? “That the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us” (Romans 8:3).

What was Paul saying in this statement? Christ has ended the curse of sin (Romans 8:4). The law was weak because we, with our sinful nature, could not obey it. Christ, coming in the likeness of sinful men, condemned sin. That is, He broke the power of Satan in our human life; He stopped it in its track. As a result of His work, the righteous requirement of the law are fulfilled in the Christian’s life. They are fulfilled because we live by the works of the Holy Spirit rather than depending on human nature.

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Jesus came to show us how and what to love. He showed us that love means giving of ourselves for others. He shows us that the object of love ought to be to human beings, not things.

All human love, whether Godward or manward, has its source in God. Love in its true reality and power is seen only in the light of Calvary (1 John 4:7-10), is created in the believer by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22), prompting him to love both God and man (2 Corinthean 5:14-15; 1 John 4:20-21). The Christian must love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22: 37-39). He must love his enemy as

well as his brother (Matthew 5:43-48; 1 John 3:14). Our love must be “without hypocrisy” (Romans 12:9), and be “in deed and truth” (1 John 3:18). Love is the bond uniting all the Christian virtues (Colossians 3:14). Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I return (Job 1:21) so remember, **“the only thing we will take with us when we die is what we give away.”**

Jesus came in the flesh, “God’s Son,” so that those who believe in Him might be redeemed, reconciled and saved. The act of Jesus becoming man is the greatest gift ever given by God, the ultimate expression of love.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God’s greatest gift was Christ’s birth, His life among sinners and His atoning work on the cross. All of this, Jesus’ birth, His life and sacrificial death help us understand the depth of God’s love.

Based on Scriptures such as, “He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). “His own self bares our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). “Christ died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3). “He was manifested to take away our sins” (1 John 3:5). “No greater love is shown when a person lay down His life for a friend, and you are my friend if you obey Me” (John 15:13-14).

Jesus made it most plain that there is only one authentic way to reach God on the throne, and that is through Himself, Jesus Christ the Lord. “I am the way,” He declared. “No man cometh unto the Father but my Me” (John 14:6).

Of Himself, He had this to say: “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11; 14). “I am the door” (John 10:9). “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). “I am the living bread” (John 6:51). “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:16). “I am the true vine” (John 15:1). “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2). “I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of heaven and death (Revelation 1:18).

We seem not to understand the truth; we seem to have all lost it, being the intimate and personal relationship Christians can have with God. We had this relationship and we lost it in our first parents Adam and Eve. God created them in His own image to sustain His character and His righteousness.

More than four thousand years before Jesus came to earth, man had lost paradise that God had prepared for man in the Garden of Eden. Jesus, by what He taught and what He did, gave us hope that paradise would be restored

The ultimate purpose they and their entire descendants were brought into being was to reflect God's glory forever, and so doing, to partake of God's immeasurable joy. Human beings were made to be in contact with God--in an intimate relationship with Him. Deep and enduring joy comes only from knowing Him personally.

Our first parents had that personal contact with God. He communed daily with Adam and Eve, and their descendants could have maintained that relationship, enjoying all the benefits and delights that were part of it. If they had, how different the human story would have been!

Adam must be given the chance to make a choice. By his own action he must prove his love for God. He must pass a test of obedience. This test of Adam's obedience was not hard. Not to eat from a certain tree in paradise of Eden, but Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Seduced, they fell into a state of sin. They made a bad choice that changed the personal relationship to all of their descendants.

Unfortunately, humanity's stay in paradise was brief. A rebellious lying spirit enters the picture. Satan seduced Adam and Eve, telling them that if they disobeyed God, they would find even greater happiness than they ever had. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Seduced by Satan, they fell into a state of sin. They made a choice that changed the whole world.

Sin forms a wall that separates us from fellowship with God and from the inexhaustible richness of His blessing in Christ. Sin not only separates humans from God in this life, its penalty is eternal death. For us to be reconciled to God, sin had to be taken out of the way. The barrier had to be broken down so we could find the way. So, what constitute sin?

To "sin" is to miss the mark of God's perfect way of thinking and acting. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law:" the Ten Commandments (1 John 3:4). "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). To sin is to engage in thoughts and

activities that by their very nature are imperfect. Since God is perfect, to sin is to come in conflict with God and His laws.

That is why God sent His only begotten Son in human flesh. So greatly did God want us to be reconciled to Him, He provided that penalty of sin to be paid in full in our place.

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, “He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9). Praise to God for His wonderful kindness to us and His favor that He has poured out upon us, because we belong to His dearly loved Son. So overflowing is His kindness towards us that He took away all our sins through the blood of His son, by whom we are saved; and He has showered down upon us the richness of His grace,” for how well He understands us and knows what is best for us at all times (Ephesians 1:6-9).

The plan for life called for the following: A member of the God family who would be worth more than the sum total of all human life. After living a perfect life in the flesh, Jesus would pay the penalty for all sin, thus erasing past human defects that is sin.

The Word (Jesus) volunteered for this vital job as the Saviour and became Jesus the man. In fact, He bound Himself to the task the moment He created Adam and Eve--the first humans. Only the Creator could eliminate the defects in these human beings and they had to be refashioned.

It was the Word (John 1:1) on the decision to put His very existence at risk on this extreme undertaking. Jesus, the Word made flesh, told His listeners, “My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life. No one can kill me without my consent--I lay down My life voluntarily. For I have the right and power to lay it down when I want to and also the right and power to take it up again. For my Father has given me this right” (John 10:17-18).

The wages, penalty or reward for sin was satisfied once Jesus died. As Paul said, “He made Him “Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). One problem still remained. The human soul (body) could acquire new spiritual defects because of their future sin. Jesus as the master spiritual creator had to create minds that strove to keep themselves free from future sin. That’s exactly what He does today. But when we fail, and commit sin, we have an advocate (Jesus) to plead our case before God our Father (1 John 2:1-2).

When we accept and sincerely believe in Jesus and truly repent of our sins, our sins are pardoned. The barrier that kept us from a joyful relationship with God is removed.

What is the end result of the forgiveness of sin and the refashioning of the human mind? “The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). The human minds are then refashioned toward the perfection of God’s way. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God is near. He is next to the bed when we are deathly sick. He is in the cell of the lonely prisoner in jail. He is as accessible to us when we are riding high in life, as He is when we hit bottom. He is there when we are lonely and afraid. He is a friend at all times. Whatever our status or condition, we need only to reach out for Him in repentance, He is never too far away.

How could Jesus comfort the sick and afflicted when He is sitting at the right hand of the Father? Jesus said that He would “never leave us, nor forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus did ascend to the Father’s right hand in heaven as the Scripture teaches, but He did not leave His people alone, or orphans. Another Comforter was promised and given--the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that His obedient followers (the ones who kept the Ten Commandments) would not be left like orphans to fight their own battles alone when He went up into heaven. “I will come unto you” is a definite promise, but how was this to be with Jesus in heaven?

Jesus fulfilled His promise by, “And I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” (John 14:16). What and who is that Comforter? “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye knoweth him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17).

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, The Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). While Jesus was here, He ministered to His followers, but He could only be in one place at a time; the promised Comforter, the Holy Spirit could dwell in the hearts of men “by faith,” guiding and directing our lives according to the teaching of His gospel everywhere and anywhere at the same time with the power (spirit) of God as needed (Galatians 3:15-17). Jesus

directs His followers in full accord with their will, so that, in fact, both the Father and Son are making abode in the hearts of the believers by the Comforter (the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit is the Power that comes from God and His Son Jesus Christ. That power which generated from them can now dwell in the hearts of man wherever they might be.

God had appointed a time to send the Holy Spirit—the power from on high that they needed, and were commanded to wait at Jerusalem. “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.” And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The coming of the Spirit changed that small band of men and women in the upper room from a frightened group, behind closed doors, into a courageous band that threw open the locked doors, and went out into the crowded streets of the city to proclaim the Gospel of a crucified and risen Lord.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His disciples instructions, “And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5). He was referring to the Comforter.

Seven weeks had gone by since Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the day of Pentecost had now arrived. As the believers met together that day, suddenly there was a sound like the roaring of a mighty wind and they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4).

The record does not say the wind was the Holy Spirit, but a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, which was a symbol of the Holy Spirit; not a person, but a symbol of the power, accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit from God. Our Lord described the Spirit in the same way: “The wind bloweth where it will and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh” (John 3:8).

The result of the Holy Spirit coming may be summed up in one word “Power.” That is what Jesus said His (the Comforter) coming would mean, “But Ye shall receive Power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). He told His disciples to wait until that power came: “But tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high”

(Luke 24:49). The coming of the Spirit from God was marked by wonderful power from on high. It was not physical power, but Spiritual Power.

Jesus had a job to do after reaching heaven as our Mediator; but through “The Comforter” (Power) at the same time He could dwell in and direct every believer. Hence it was expedient that He go away and send the Comforter (John 16:8-15). “For there is one God (Father), and one Mediator (Christ) between God and men, the man is Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Just what is a mediator? A Mediator is one who goes between two groups, or a person that helps them work out their differences and come to an agreement. A mediator usually is a neutral party, a go-between, intermediary, or arbitrator who brings about reconciliation in a hostile situation when divided persons are not able to work out their differences.

Jesus is a mediator in the New Testament, and from the New Testament perspective there is ultimately only “One mediator between God and Man. Jesus the Messiah He alone, being the Son of God, can represent God to man, and at the same time, being fully man, can represent man to God. He alone can bring complete reconciliation, because He alone brings about complete payment for man’s sins and satisfaction of God’s wrath. He alone can bring everlasting peace (Acts 15:11; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 1:7).

The Christian never needs to worry about the certainty of His salvation. The mediator “is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through the Son of God, Jesus Christ” (Hebrews 7:15).

But Jesus promised, “I will come to you.” The Holy Spirit comes from the Father, and through His Spirit He dwells in His followers, but what about the Son Jesus Christ? “But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, who the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 16:7).

God made a promise that in the last days “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18). This is what Peter refers to in verse 38, “And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” God promised to pour out, or give His Spirit to all believers. This Comforter, the Holy Spirit is a gift from God for all of His followers after Jesus’ death and after He ascended into heaven.

The primary work of the Holy Spirit in the individual, and the Church, is with the gospel (Romans 1:16-17), to cleanse and sanctify each person from all sins, making new creatures in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 5:25-27). Another vital work of the Comforter is to guide us into all truth, and to give us power to maintain a holy, sanctified life before God (John 16:13).

Let us review the working of the Holy Spirit from the beginning in the New Testament Scriptures. First, we find that in the birth of Jesus, the angel told Mary, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest (God) shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that Holy being which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). What is the Biblical definition of the Holy Spirit? “The power of the Highest.” Again, the word Highest is used. The Holy Spirit is an agency, a power that is used by the Highest--God the Father--to achieve His Purpose.

She was found with child of the Holy Spirit. “For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20). God’s power, His Holy Spirit placed that seed in Mary’s womb. Later, God anointed Jesus “With the Holy Spirit and Power” (Acts 10:38). “For He whom God hath sent speaketh the Word of God: for the Holy Spirit gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands” (John 3:34-35). God gave Jesus His Spirit in unlimited measures.

Jesus loved His Father and was glad to tell the people the truth about His Father Jehovah. He showed that all good things came from God and that He is the only one that is truly good. At all times Jesus honored His Father. He said: “I cannot do a single thing of my own self” (John 5:20). He put His Father’s name first. He knew that the best thing He could do was to bring honor to His Father’s name. At the end of His work on earth He was able to pray to God: “I have glorified you on earth, having finished the work you have given me to do” (John 17:4).

Jesus knew that it was time for His day of judgment was near; He lifted up His eyes to heaven (John 17:1). This is His prayer for His people, His church, even before Calvary and His resurrection. “The hour has come, I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, now O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had before the world was” John 17:2-5).

Jesus had a keen awareness of His mission. He had “finished” his work. It is the same words He utters on the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). It reflected in Him His satisfaction that He had completed His mission. There was no failure or incompleteness of His assigned mission. Jesus called it His “work.”

In apparent anticipation of the event of tomorrow, Jesus remembered His nearness to God in the beginning. One’s mind is immediately taken back to the first verse of John chapter 17. How clearly that John saw the divinity of Jesus. So, it is obvious that the cross was not the end. It was a climax. For one who is the Word (John 1:1), the spokesman, would be returned to that status after His release from the imprisoning flesh. “And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). The cross was the death of criminals, robbers, murderers and crimes against Rome, but Jesus knew no sin. He died the just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18). We were redeemed “With the precious blood of the Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). John reference to Jesus as the Lamb of God calls in mind the Old Testament sacrificial system. In the sacrifice God accepted the blood of animals as the means of atonement for sins. It is likely that John had many Scriptures from the Old Testament in mind when he called Jesus the Lamb of God. These Scriptures probably included the sin offering (Leviticus chapter 4), trespass offering (Leviticus chapter 5), the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), the Passover sacrifice (Exodus 12), and the sins of many (Isaiah 53:12).

Thus, this vivid description of Jesus was pointed announcement of the Atonement He would bring about on man’s behavior. But the strongest image from the Old Testament is the suffering servant who was as a “lamb who was led to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:9). “For even Christ our Passover (Lamb) is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered

Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:12-14).

Right now today, the shed blood of Jesus saves us from sin and the wrath to come (Romans 5:9). By His blood we are sanctified (Hebrews 13:12), cleansed (1 John 1:7), purged (Hebrews 9:22), washed (Revelation 1:5), made white (Revelation 7:14), and healed (Mark 1:34).

Through the power of His blood, shed on the cross we were “reconciled” (Colossians 1:20), “made perfect” (Hebrews 13:21), “redeemed” (Revelation 5:9), “justified” (Romans 5:9), “purchased” (Acts 20:28), “covered” (1 Peter 4:14), my “shield” Psalms 144:2, Proverbs 30:5), “forgiveness” (Colossians 1:14; Ephesians 1:7) and “remission” (Matthew 26:28).

As you know, countless books have been written about the cross, and the many things that the Son of God has accomplished for us. But to my knowledge, not one book, or even one page, has ever been written which shows that by His death Christ bought--purchased--the whole human race from the grave--from their sleep in the dust, by his death on the cross. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is come, in which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice” (John 5:28). “And many of them asleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). “And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

Just why did He shed His blood and die the horrible death on the cross for us? Here are a few terms used by Christians: “Jesus loves us,” “Jesus died for our sins by shedding His blood for us,” unless these three statements are clearly explained, they mean very little to the unsaved person. This is why it is so necessary to explain Who Jesus was, and why He was whipped, why He died, and why He shed His blood that we might be saved from the wrath to come.

Even today, after 2000 years, the blood of Jesus seems to be doing about the same work in the heart of man. That blood from the cross “draws” (Ephesians 2:12), “saves” (Romans 5:9), “heals” (1 Corinthians 12:9), “sanctifies” (Hebrews 10:10), “washes” (Revelation 1:5), “made white” (Revelation 7:14; Isaiah 1:18), “protects” (Romans 5:9; Isaiah 4:6), “seals” (Ephesians 4:30), “overcomes” (Revelation 12:11), “fellowship” (1

John 1:7), and “victory” (1 Corinthians 15:55). The very blood that He shed on Calvary is now flowing to every born-again member of the body of Christ, the church, giving them life. Without His life-giving blood, His saints would die spiritually (John 6:53-57).

The prophets in the Old Testament foretold God’s plan that was foreordained before creation. “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow,” or come after Calvary, but given by promise, with our Salvation before creation (1 Peter 1:9-11).

Jesus said, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” He knew that according to the Father’s plan, His glory was to come after Calvary as the Scriptures teaches (Luke 24:25-26). “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

More than 2000 years ago, a man came into the world whose presence was to have a profound influence on humanity. His public life lasted only three and one half years. He was only in His early thirties when He suffered an agonizing death on the cross. His name has founded the most widespread religion in the earth.

Who was this man that thousands of His followers have loved and given their lives willingly to suffer poverty and even martyrdom for? What is it about His life and teaching that inspired millions of people to follow Him? He did not of Himself leave any written record, as far as we know. Our main source of information is the three gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, closely resembling one another, and using much of the same material. The fourth gospel that was written by John gave more evidence of the suffering of Jesus, also, the Epistle of Paul, including many more writers who gave more information as to His suffering and hardship. Many writers of the Old Testament bring out much about the His birth, His life and His suffering and hardship He would endure. These records furnish me with the foundation upon which I have based my account of the agony of the death of Jesus Christ.

Even before His human birth, He (God) inspired His prophets in the Old Testament to foretell the complete story of His virgin birth, His childhood, His ride into Jerusalem and the brutality that He would suffer. It happened just like the prophets foretold. It all begins with a dream; in a dream an angel told Joseph that Mary's condition was not caused by a man, but through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20). The child Mary carried in her womb was a unique Child, for He would be a Son whom Joseph should name Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. Joseph must have remembered the promises of God to provide salvation through the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-37). The unnamed angel also told Joseph that this was in keeping with God's eternal plan, for the prophet Isaiah had declared 700 years before "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

The first prophecy of a Messiah's coming was at the beginning of this new creation in Genesis 3:15 when the verse stated that the seed of a woman would bruise the head of the serpent that was mentioned early in this C.D., but there is a deeper meaning in this text than this, especially in these words, "it shall bruise thy head," or rather, He, who? The seed of a woman; the Person is to come by a woman, by her alone, without having an eminent relationship with a man. Therefore, God was not speaking to Adam, but Eve alone, the purpose of this statement from God was that Jesus Christ was to be born of a virgin; this, and this alone, is what is implied in the promise of the Seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent. Jesus Christ died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and to destroy him who had the power of death, which is the devil, just like Moses said.

Thus He bruises his head--destroys his power and lordship over mankind, turning them from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18). And Satan's heel was bruised--God so ordered it, that the salvation of man could only be brought about by the death of Jesus Christ; and the heel often bruised by the temptation, persecution and suffering of the Son of God

Again, as stated early in this C.D., there were other hints about the Messiah in Genesis and Zechariah that we must bring out and also the promise in Deuteronomy that the Lord God would raise up unto thee a prophet like Moses, a Prophet, a Legislator, a Divine Being, a Mediator, a King that would be greater than Moses, and who came to declare

Him (God the Father) to all mankind. Every word spoken by Him is a living, infallible oracle from God Himself (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you” (Acts 3:22; 7:37), again it happened just like the prophets said it would happen.

We have seen that the prophecy was foretold in Genesis and Deuteronomy that a prophet would be born who would be greater than Moses and now the prophet Isaiah tells us that an Angel said unto Mary: “have no fear, for you have found favor with God; and You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Immanuel.”

It was about the first of October when Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem. They found the city crowded with people. There was no place for them to stay. All the places in the city were taken. They were obliged to find shelter in a stable that was used for sheep and cattle. Here among the animals of Bethlehem Mary “gave birth to her only Son, and she bound Him with swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:5-7).

For this child to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem and in a stable was no accident. The prophets Isaiah and Micah prophesied about this event over 700 years before. Isaiah the prophet wrote this: “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel He will refuse to do evil, and do only good” (Isaiah 7:14-15). Then Micah told of His birthplace: “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrata, who are little to be among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Again, this was a sign to Israel! So that they could know the Messiah when He came. “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as having spoken have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts 3:24), again, it all came true because God gave these prophets a vision of the future.

Isaiah’s prophecy about of the prince of peace continues when he wrote “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given” (Isaiah 9:6a), that, “He would come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isaiah 11:1).

David, the youngest son of Jesse, would indicate the Rod would have to be the Messiah represented as a slender twig shooting up from the root of an old stump, a tender plant, so He grew up like a sapling before us, extremely weak in its first appearance but would nevertheless become fruitful and mighty. Jesus was called the Son of David in many Scriptures, but in the beginning of the New Testament it started with this verse, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, a Jew” (Matthew 1:1).

“He hath neither form nor comeliness and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isaiah 53:2). He was not a head and shoulders above the average man. He had no form, no beauty that we should desire Him; nor His countenance such that we would follow Him.” Jesus was not one to be desired. He was an ordinary Jew, son of a carpenter name Joseph (Matthew 1:16).

This is the prophecy of the Son of God who came to earth in a bodily form with the character in which He stands most nearly related to mankind as the Saviour, and of others by which at one time was seated on the right Hand of God. Here, He appears as a child, born of a woman, born a Jew, under the law. He is a son--given--the human nature, in which the fullness of the Godhead was to dwell, being produced by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin, and now the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

“The government shall be upon His shoulders, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Better days are coming in the person of an ideal King of Israel and the ruler of this universe, who is described in these verses in such a poetical and beautiful world. In His government as King there will be peace, and the very implements of war will be destroyed (Revelation 21:1-7). This will last 1000 years and it is called the Millennium (Revelation 20:5). During this period, Satan is “Bound with a great chain,” “locked up” and “sealed” so that he cannot deceived the nations, and the resurrected “saints” will live and reign with Christ on earth (Revelation 20:1-3).

As the ruling Government for a thousand years, four descriptive names are given to the promised king. The first two, Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God, deals with the character of the King. He is the Counselor that expounds the law; shows its origin, nature and claims; instructs, pleads for the guilty; and ever appears in the presence of God for men.

The second two, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace, refers to the character of His reign. Wisdom, Power, concerned care, and peace, will mark this promised deliverer, Father Everlasting, not the Heavenly Father but the Father of Eternity, like almighty God. He does not die or cease to care for people, as do mortal kings, essentially and efficiently prevailing against His enemies. The Prince of peace--not only the Author of Peace (Ephesians 2:14), but also He that rules by peace, whose rule tends always to perfection, and produces prosperity.

“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of host will perform this” (Isaiah 9:7).

The people of Judah rested in the promise that a descendant of David would sit some day on the throne forever. This hope was directed to the messianic hope; that God would send the Messiah to rule. This passage is an affirmation of the ideal Davidic King, the Messiah. “And there was given Him (Christ) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14). “And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:33). Wherefore we receive a kingdom, which cannot be moved. Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28).

Two elements of truth in these verses below indicate the presence of a strong church on the earth at the very time of Christ return: first, a reward to those who remain strong until the end: second, the fact that the truth of God’s Kingdom will be preached to the entire world (Matthew 24:13-14).

He is promised a permanent reign of justice and righteousness. It is possible through the zealous active of the Lord. Who is this King? In the end it can only be Jesus Christ and only He alone fulfils these expectations. This could well be an expansion of the suggestion first in Hebrews 7:14. But Christians see its ultimate fulfillment in Christ Jesus the Son.

The people of Judea had known of these prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel and when Jesus arrives on the scene it is one of the reasons that they thought that Christ was to establish His kingship and overthrow the Roman Government.

The people were amazed at the miracles Jesus had done. They realized He was a prophet. But even more than this, they wanted to make Him a King. The people wanted to crown Him and declare Him their King. Jesus knew that His Kingdom wasn't of this world and His time had not yet come.

Many times Jesus reminded His disciples that He would be killed through the religious leaders of His day. The Jews hated Jesus because their own works were bad, but the common people gladly listened to Him. They should have been able to see that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.

This all started about five days before the crucifixion, when the news came that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem riding on a young donkey, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 that said, "Don't be afraid of your King, people of Israel, for He will come to you meekly, sitting on a donkey colt" (Matthew 21:5). Here is the Son of a Jewish carpenter riding like royalty into the streets of Jerusalem, allowing the people to honor Him as a divine prophet and teacher!

His disciples didn't realize at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy of Scriptures from the prophets of the Old Testament; but after Jesus returned to His glory in Heaven, they realized how true that it was there before their very eyes (John 12:13-16).

The very next day when He arrived back in Jerusalem, He went to the temple and began to drive out the merchants and their customers, and He told them, "It is written in the Scriptures, My Temple is to be a place of worship for all nations, but you have turned it into a den of robbers. When the chief priests and other Jewish leaders heard what He had done they began planning how best to eliminate Him. Their problem was their fear of riots, because the people were so enthusiastic about Jesus' teaching" (Mark 11:15-17).

Many times His enemies had tried to get Jesus in trouble by asking Him tricky questions and accusing him of breaking the law, like breaking the law of picking corn on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:1-2); talking to a Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7-9); and when they brought a woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11); healing a man on the Sabbath day, as he was trying to get in the water while it was moving (John 5:5-10);

and when they asked Him, “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? (Mark 12:13-17). Always trying to catch Him breaking the commandments.

One of them, a lawyer, spoke up: “Sir, which is the most important commandment in the Law of Moses?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar: “Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.” All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets stem from these two laws and are fulfilled, if you obey them. Keep only these and you will find that you are obeying all the others” (Matthew 22:36-40).

Then, surrounded by Pharisees, He asked them a question: “What about the Messiah? Whose son is He? The Son of David,” they replied. Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, call Him Lord? Jesus asked. For David said, God said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet. Since David called Him “Lord,” how can He be merely His Son (Psalm 110:1)? They had no answer, after that no one dared to ask him any more questions” (Matthew 22:41-46).

On one of the days when He was teaching and preaching the Good News in the temple, He was confronted by the chief priests and other religious leaders and councilmen, they demanded to know if there was life after death. They even asked Him whether or not there is a resurrection. Each time Jesus had an answer for them, and they said: “Well said sir,” remarked some of the experts in the Jewish law who were standing there. And that ended their questions, for they dared not ask any more” (Luke 20:29-40).

Right after that, Jesus said to the religious leaders who were proud and greedy: “Woe to you Pharisees, and you other religious leaders who are nothing but Hypocrites! For you won’t let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and won’t go in yourselves and you pretend to be holy, with all your long, public prayers in the streets, while you are evicting widows from their homes. Hypocrites! Yes, woe upon you hypocrites. For you go to all lengths to make one convert, and then turn him into twice the son of the devil who you are yourselves.”

“Woe upon you, Pharisees, and you other religious leaders--hypocrites! For you tithe down to the last mint leaf in your garden, but ignore the important things--justice and

mercy and faith.” Again and again He said to them: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites” (Matthew chapter 23 to 25)! “So the religious leaders were furious with Him over these statements and had plans to kill Him.” Jesus even said once that they were of the devil.

The warning to the Scribes and Pharisees was a direct teaching against using the word of God for their own selfish purpose. All three groups of Jesus’ references were well versed in the law. It was their responsibility to know the Scriptures, to preserve them for future generations, to explain them, and interpret them, particularly in the area of God’s salvation. In the days of Jesus they seemed to be doing the opposite: instead of pointing the people towards God, they were leading the people away.

Before Christ created the Adamic people, He planned to come down to become flesh, and to shed His blood to wash away all their sins, also to give His body as a ransom for each person. That is, buy them back from the grave where they are sleeping. And He did!

(On Calvary) “One died for all” 2 Corinthians 5:14; Romans 5:8.

(On Calvary) “He gave Himself a ransom for all” 1 Timothy 2:6.

(On Calvary) “Jesus tasted death for every man” Hebrews 2:9.

(On Calvary) “Jesus Christ (died) once for all” Hebrews 10:10.

(On Calvary) “His death abolished death for all” 2 Timothy 1:10.

(On Calvary) “The result of His death is acquittal for all” Romans 5:18.

Paul wrote, “By the righteousness of Jesus, the free gift (of life) came upon all men” (Romans 5:18). In other words, “All that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth...some to life...some to judgment” (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29). “In Adam all died, even so by Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15).

Here is the reason why the Lord Jesus has made us alive once more. On the cross of Calvary, He paid the penalty for our sins. The punishment for our sins had been paid. However, our death not only gives us the divine right to be raised from the dead, but also to live forever. Jesus’ death has now taken place for our death. His grave has taken the place of our grave. Because of the many things that Jesus accomplished for us on Calvary, we can live through the coming ages. We now have a body that can never die (1

Corinthians 15:53-55). “We will have no more sorrow, crying or pain, for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

We will agree that the Sacrifice on Calvary was many times greater than most Christians realize. The very Creator of all mankind came down here to be made flesh, to teach, to save, to deliver, to suffer, to die, and to shed His blood that the whole human race might come forth from death and the grave unto life.

One writer said that the very spot where our Lord was crucified was the center of the great city of Jerusalem. If that is true, then Jesus was crucified in the center of Jerusalem, which is the center of Palestine-- the center of the earth.

Concerning the many things that our Lord accomplished for us on the cross: the cross is set in the center between law and grace. The cross is set in between the Old and New Testament; that is, between the old and new covenant (Hebrews 8:9-13). The cross is set between sin and death, hell or eternal life (Romans 5:18).

In the Old Testament time, they looked forward to the time when the Lord Himself would come down to earth and fulfill His promise. We look back to the time when the Old Testament Lord came down and did what He promised to do. During the day that He died, 28 Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled. Not only this age, but in the age to come we will praise and glorify Jesus for the things He did for us on the cross.

This CD has had much to say about the cross on which He hung, but we must not honor or reverence the cross. At that time the cross was called a torture stake for robbers and murderers. Should we then worship the cross on which our Lord died? No, of course we should not.

Therefore, we must conclude that it is strictly a pagan custom to respect, adore, or worship His cross, or any cross in any form. It is a shame to regard a small cross around our neck as a good luck charm. Is not this the same as one worn by a witch doctor, which he believes gives him magical power?

After the Lord from heaven was made flesh, He foretold the kind of death that He would die. He said, “And I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto Me” (John 12:32). Again, Jesus implied that He would be crucified. Note: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (Numbers 21:9; John 3:14), and why did the Jews demand that Jesus be crucified on the cross (Matthew 27:21-

23)? They hated Him, with an undying hatred because of His actions and statements (John 15:25; Psalm 35:19). At the time, the very worse of suffering and death known was thirty-nine lashes from a cat-o-nine tails with a metal attached at the end and being nailed to a cross and left to die. The horrible, excruciating pain lasted for many hours, which was the price He paid for each one of us. By His suffering and death, He actually bought and paid the price for every man, woman and child that every lived.

Our Lord was Holy, harmless and undefiled (Hebrew 7:26). “He knew no sin,” yet He was made sin for us for our sakes. He suffered far worse than any sinner that ever lived. This Holy One took upon Himself the guilt and the condemnation of all the vile, filthy, shameful sins of all the people, who ever lived, from Adam to this day, also those not yet born. He not only counted Himself guilty of all the sins of mankind, but by His suffering and death He paid the penalty of all the sins ever committed in the past, also in the future (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Paul wrote, “Christ was made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree” (Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:3), that is to say, when a man was put to death on a cross that man was accursed of God and by God (Deuteronomy 21:23).

However, for the joy that was set before Him, our Lord endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:2). “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8).

Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother Mary, His aunt, Jesus’ mothers’ sister, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene whom Jesus had cast out seven devils also, John the less, whom Jesus said unto him, “this is my mother, take care of her,” and from then on John took her into his own home.

At noon, darkness came over all the land and it lasted for three hours. Jesus knew that everything was now complete, and to fulfill the Scripture, Jesus called to His Heavenly Father with a loud voice, saying. “It is finished” and bowed His head, and the spirit (breath) left Him and He died. At that time the large curtain in the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom and the earth did quake. Thus fulfilled Daniel 9:24-27 about the Messiah’s being cut off in the middle of the seventieth week.

Afterwards Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jewish leaders, boldly asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus’ body down; and Pilate told him to go ahead. So he and others came and took Him away. Nicodemus, the man

who had come to Jesus at night came to bringing a hundred pounds of embalming ointment made from myrrh and aloe. Together, they wrapped Jesus' body in a long linen cloth saturated with the spices, as is the Jewish custom of burial. The place of crucifixion was near a grove of trees, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because of the need for haste before the Sabbath (not Saturday, but God's Holy Sabbath the Passover), and because the tomb was close at hand, they laid Him there and closed it with a large stone. The religious leaders then had the tomb sealed and also had a guard of soldiers put there. Why? They said they were afraid that Jesus' disciples would steal His body and say He was raised from the dead (Matthew 27:63-66).

When the woman came at the end of the weekly Sabbath, about 6 in the evening while it was getting dark, she came to the tomb and found that the stone was rolled aside from the entrance, and He was not there (Matthew 28:1).

However, Jesus was not to remain dead. It had been foretold that God would not leave Jesus' body in the grave (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27). And so, even as Jesus had told His disciples, God raised Him from the dead after three days. Still, the disciples were surprised when they came on the morning after the third day had passed and found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. They also saw two angels, who told them that Jesus "Is not here, but has been raised up" (Luke 24:4-6).

In the next few days Jesus appeared to many disciples, so their faith might be strong that He really had been raised from the dead. He appeared to His followers again and again during the next forty days, once to more than "five hundred" (1 Corinthians 15:4-7). At the end of the forty days Jesus led His disciples to Bethany, just outside of Jerusalem. There, after giving them parting instructions, "He was lifted up and a cloud caught Him up from their vision." As they were looking up, two angels appeared; who assured them that Jesus would come again (Acts 1:9-11).

This is the true story of the death in the New Testament that that was prophesied. Jesus was taken to Pilate by the religious leaders that hated Him because He called them blind guides that would fall into the ditch, together with those that were leading (Matthew 15:14). He foretold the end of Jerusalem and this wicked system of things, and that He would soon die, but He does not tell of the beating and the extreme pain and anguish that would be afflicted upon Him

When Jesus gathered the twelve around Him He told them, “As you know, we are going to Jerusalem. And when we get there, all the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning Me will come true. I will be handed over to the Gentiles to be mocked and treated shamefully spat upon, lashed and killed. And after the third day I will rise again” (Luke 18:31-33). Now let us search again the Old Testament and the Prophets that wrote about the crucifixion that took place in the New Testament. It is not a pleasant reading.

This all started when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt into the Promised Land. They were to sacrifice a young bull, goat or lamb, without a blemish for a sin offering, according to the Law of Moses (Leviticus 1:1-3). These sacrifices pointed forward to something in the future. They pictured something that was to happen later on. These sacrifices were a part of God’s law to Israel, and it is because of those sacrifices that many centuries later, Paul wrote: “The law (Leviticus priesthood law) was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ as a shadow of good things to come (Galatians 3:24), and not the very image of the things can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make perfect. But even so they could never save those who live under their rules. If they could have, one offering would have been enough; the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and their feeling of guilt would be gone. “For it is not possible for the blood of bulls, goats and lambs really to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4).

This means that the sacrifice told about in the law were shadows of some good things that would come later. This sacrifice to come would really make men able to be cleansed from their sins against God but the opposite happened: those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their disobedience and guilt instead of relieving their minds. For it is not possible for the blood of clean animals to take away sins.

“He cancels the first system in favor of a far better one. Under this new plan we have been forgiven and made clean by Christ dying for us once and for all, but under the old agreement the priests stood before the altar day after day offering sacrifices that could never take away our sins” (Hebrews 10:1-10).

The sacrifice according to the Leviticus priesthood and the Law of Moses, “a Lamb without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats” (Exodus 12:5). “At the first Passover the Lord spoke unto Moses that the

ordinance was to be kept by taking a Lamb of the first year. It had to be perfect, without spot or blemish and neither shall ye break a bone thereof” (Exodus 12:46). Moses and David both proclaimed that neither would Christ’s legs be broken (John 19:6). “He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken” (Psalms 34:20).

“Then came the soldiers, and break the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs” (John 19:31-33), just as Moses and David had prophesied.

He accepted it all willingly, the emphasis is not placed on death and burial, but He went to the slaughter as compared with the gentle innocence of a lamb, the meekest of all domesticated animals. “He was like a lamb that is brought to the slaughter as a sheep” (Jeremiah 11:19).

We are getting ahead of our self about the prophecy from the prophets in the Old Testament concerning His birth and His suffering and agonizing death on the cross. The prophets were given the vision that the people of Israel would know the time and place of the Messiah’s appearance.

So Isaiah gave us a sign, “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good” (Isaiah 7:14-15).

In confirmation of the truth of his revelation of God, Isaiah offers a sign that a virgin would conceive and a child would be born. He shall have butter and honey, the best food of the land, and will not know poverty. Both the divine and human nature of our Lord, as well as the miraculous conception, appears to be pointed out in this prophecy quoted here by the evangelist: He shall be called Immanuel, “God with us.” Similar to those in the New Testament” “The Word (spokesman) was with God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14).

Christians recognize that this sign finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Christians have been convinced that this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus; its ultimate fulfillment was the birth of the Saviour. “Behold, a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted as, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

Micah the prophet, proceeds to describe a wonderful child whom Isaiah had also announced would be born in “Bethlehem Ephratah, through thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). “Now this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet” (Matthew 1:22).

King Herod asked his advisers “did the prophets tell us where the new King of Israel would be born? Yes, in Bethlehem they said, for that is what the prophet Micah wrote: O little town of Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel” (Matthew 2:5-6).

Again, we have to go back to Isaiah where he announces the birth of a child, and the future king. He is promised a permanent reign of Justice and Righteousness. It is possible through the zealous active of God.

“The child is a deliverer. Cast as a king in whom God has placed His trust “and the Government shall be upon His shoulders and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Of the increase of His Government and Peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever. This zeal of the Lord of host will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Many of the people of Israel understood the prophecy and expected Christ to become King and set upon the throne of David at that time. But this describes the coming kingdom called the “thousand year reign or, the Millennium period” (Revelation 20:1-5). Paul wrote, “that this created earth will realize its hope” (1 Corinthians 15:23), and will be delivered from the corruption of the curse (Genesis 3:17-18). “Unto the glorious liberty of the children of God,” and that this period of blessedness for the created earth will come after “the second coming of Christ.” The latter event takes place at the Lord’s return, according to 1John 3:2 and Colossians 3:4. Peter explains that Christ, as to His visible presence, “will remain in heaven until the time of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:20-21).

Isaiah continues with his message of the coming servant of God. Here is a picture of a Servant whom Jehovah has chosen and in whom He takes delight. He is to have a great work to do, and for it is prepared by having the divine spirit put upon him (Isaiah 61:1-2). So also were the prophets prepared, and so be it noted was the Messiah. His missions are to carry judgment to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:1-4).

Devout Jews expected the Messiah to come as foretold in the writing of Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, and others. But they were hardly prepared for a Messiah like Jesus. Many of them were expecting a Godlike warrior like David, who would lead and help them throw off Roman rule.

Jesus was not a revolutionary political leader. He was not a Messiah who would lead the Jews into a new day of glory, outshining even David's kingdom. True enough, His words taken seriously have revolutionary implication. He was human, and He understood hunger and sorrow. He challenged the teaching of the Pharisees who wanted to purify faith by relentless obedience to all Scriptural laws; the Sadducees, a more liberal sect consisted largely of priests and some of the rich upper class; the Essenes, a group who withdrew from ordinary life to attain a higher spirituality. Apart from these were the Samaritans, a mixed breed hated by most Jews. Pharisees considered them ceremonially unclean.

He challenged their teaching to hate the opposition by commanding His followers to, "Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you" (Luke 6:27). He also said they should love their neighbors as themselves (Mark 12:31; Leviticus 19:18; James 2:8). And in this simple and all-embracing double commandment of love, they recognized the essence of all Ten Commandments. In awe and amazement they still redoubled their plot to kill Him.

When a lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responded, with the story of the Good Samaritan in which the Samaritan is the hero (Luke 10:27-37). Since most Jews considered the Samaritans so unclean that they would have no dealing with them, the Messiah had His answer; all men, even Samaritans, were his neighbors.

So now you can see it was inevitable that His teaching would make for Jesus many powerful enemies among those He fearlessly denounced. These enemies began to plot His destruction and to lay traps for Him. The Master sensed that He was already walking

in the shadow of the cross. The mutual hatred He had aroused among the rulers meant but one thing for Him--certain death.

This was the last straw with harsh words which Jesus indicted the religious leaders are so severe, because they were remarkably scrupulous in their performance of all the rites and ceremonies of religion, but totally neglected the soul, spirit, and practice of godliness (Matthew 23:13-33).

There are Seven Great Woes in chapter 11 of Luke, Six woes, three against the Pharisees and three against the Scribes. The seventh woe is dealing with the spirit of self-righteousness (verses 42-52).

The Pharisee had assumed an authority not granted to them by God, and Jesus spoke against them because they were shutting up the kingdom of God by teaching their own tradition, and taking advantage of the widows.

Besides condemning the religious leaders of their falsehood, Jesus taught the truth. "For this purpose I have been born and for this purpose I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. And He taught that this "truth will set you free" (John 17:17).

One important truth runs through these passages: The greatest danger of the religious leaders and institution is hypocrisy. They appear white on the outside, like tombs, but inside are rotting bones. They discuss great questions, like the resurrection and the supreme commandments, not to learn truth, but to use as a club over someone's head.

Matthew 23, also Luke in chapter 11:37-52 says the plainest words of Jesus, to make clear the warning to them and to all of us who follow our Lord, we must not neglect justice, mercy, and faith, which the religious leaders failed to show, and because of their action they have shown that they had no religion, and knew nothing of its nature.

Legalists are sticklers for tiny details and blind to great principles. Faithfulness, justice, and mercy, are the character quality to be developed, but the Pharisees had overlooked them. A religion void of the living God becomes an empty, superficial thing. Despite their religious effort, they were lost.

It is difficult for a man with any spark of humanity even to read a detailed account of what crucifixion means. This is what Jesus was facing, and He opened not His mouth. Be sufficient to say that the unhappy victims of this torture were spared no circumstance

of pain or shame, and that a more awful death it would hardly be possible to imagine. We are not surprised to read that the crucified used to curse and spit at their executioners. All this must be remembered when we judge Peter for denying Jesus and the others for deserting Him. As at the trial, as on the cross, Jesus for the most part, preserved an unbroken silence. The cry from the cross that has most deeply impressed the church is given in all of the first three gospels: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” They were the opening words of Psalms 22, which begins as a despairing cry of abandonment. At three o’clock, unexpectedly, the end came.

This was the end, death, but at the beginning of His punishment Jesus had to go through with beatings and extreme pain and anguish that were afflicted upon Him. Many scriptures in the Old Testament prophesied about His judgment and death. .

Even with all the miracles Jesus performed, they were given for this very purpose that they might believe in Christ, and escape the coming wrath. Evidence was given that Jesus was the Messiah, yet they did not believe. They were blinded by their passions and stubbornness that hardened their hearts against the truth.

“Thus the word of Isaiah was fulfilled.” The testimony of the prophets concerning the person, office, suffering, death, and sacrifice of the Messiah came about because they would not believe his report (Isaiah 53:1) of the prophet concerning Christ; therefore they credit not the miracles which He performed as proof that He was the Person foretold by the prophets, and the promise to their fathers. The prophecy of Isaiah was neither the cause nor motive of their unbelief; it was a simple prediction, which imposed no necessity on them to resist the offers of mercy. And God, having foreseen their bad will, foretold it by the prophet (John 12:37-39).

Now, as we look back on the prophecies of Isaiah, we understand what He saw in a vision of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals the innocence and submissiveness of the servant. Isaiah compares Him to a sheep, both in the aspect of proclaiming no defense of being the sacrificial lamb. He paints a disturbing portrait of that triumph of victory over death, which fulfilled the Scripture of Genesis 3:15. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested (made clear), that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

Isaiah used words such as "stricken," "wounded," "despised," "rejected," "oppressed," and "afflicted" in what our Messiah must go through. He was just a humble and ordinary carpenter of His days. The prophecy of Isaiah and other writers presents a picture of sadness, suffering, and overwhelming grief, not one of joy.

It was Jehovah who raised up the Servant, and who made Him, His work, and His destiny known by the prophets. This verse is used in the New Testament to express the rejections of the gospel by the Jews, "who hath believed out report" (John 12:38), and partly also in Romans 10:16. Verse two of chapter 53 of Isaiah gives a short history of His young life. He came in just like any other child, born of a woman, growing up like a young tree and he had no form, nor beauty that we should regard Him from any other Jew (Mark 9:11-13).

Isaiah goes on to write, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3). It was a custom for the Jews to cover their heads and faces in the time of sorrows and weeping, with only their eyes uncovered over above the chin (2 Samuel 15:30; Jeremiah 14:3; Esther 6:12), just like the law commanded lepers. This picture thus far represents one so fearfully stricken of God that men could not endure the sight of Him because of their pity, but others were mocking Him during His suffering (Matthew 27:39-43).

"Surely He hath born our grief, and carried our sorrows: and was afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned to our own ways; and God has laid on Him the iniquities of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He open not His mouth, He was cut off from the land of the living, and He was taken from prison and from judgment, and for His people was He stricken. He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. He made His soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:4-10).

Jesus accepted it all willingly, and the emphasis is not placed on His death and burial, but He went to the slaughter as compared with the gentle innocence of a lamb, the meekest of all domesticated animals. "He was like a lamb that is brought to the slaughter

as a sheep” (Jeremiah 11:19). “And He opened not His mouth because they did this” (Psalms 39:9; Acts 8:32). The Prophets portrayed the Servant as suffering deeply for the sins of His people. It was the cruelest, most awful and awe-inspiring of human affliction, and is here used to intensify the picture.

After being sent from one place to another during the night to be judged, first by the Sanhedrin court, then to Pilate the Roman Governor, who sent Him to king Herod, then back to Pilate, before He was led off to the place called “The Skull” (Mark 15:22). There He was nailed to a cross. Two evildoers were fastened to a cross at the same time.

All of this was foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament in which we have already seen the prophecies of His Birth, His suffering, His entrance into Jerusalem, His trial; now let see what is said about the suffering of God’s Son.

Besides the punishment that Jesus had to go through with the beating and the extreme pain and anguish that were afflicted upon Him, David told this vision: “They gaped (Yelled) upon me with their mouth (Psalms 22:13); Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:29), as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried like a potsherd (clay pot); and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and I was brought into the dust of death” (Psalms 22:14-15).

The Bible speaks of How Jesus would be taken among the living and nailed to the cross, impaled by three nails and hung between two thieves. “For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet.” (Psalms 22:16; Luke 24:40). “And they look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son” (Zechariah 12:10). “And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left” (Luke 23:33).

“They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Matthew 27:35). “But be not far from me, O Lord, O my strength, haste thee to help me” (Psalms 22:18-19).

The Psalm is Messianic, in that David by inspiration of God saw the prophecies of the suffering of the Messiah. The first division of the Psalm is the cry of painful agony to God from one who was being scorned, despised, and mocked. His enemies have

surrounded Him like animals. They stand about and gloat as they wait for Him to die. He cries to God to come to His aid and save Him.

The prophets in the Old Testament had told the story about Christ's suffering and death, also in the first three Gospels of the New Testament John goes in more fully into the trial before Pilate, since only the Roman Governor could impose the death sentence.

He was a man who wanted to do what was right, but didn't have character enough to decide to set Jesus free. Clearly this was the way the governor was at first. The Jews asked him for the death penalty with no further trail. He promptly refused that. Next they accused Jesus of political crime. Jesus did him courtesy of telling Pilate what kind of King He really was. The only possible conclusion was "I find no fault in Him" (John 18:28-38).

John in chapter 19 also provides some of the events of the cross, which we would not otherwise know. He tells us that Jesus carried the cross by himself at the beginning (Verse 17), before Simon of Cyrene. He gives a full account of the casting lots for Jesus' garments (verses 23-24). He recites how the title above the cross was written in verse 19. He mentions the conversation about Mary and himself (verses 25-27). He tells of the cry, "It is finished" (verse 30), and of the spear thrust in His side (verse 34). We know that John was there to witness the crucifixion (John 19:1-34).

It was Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus (John 6:71). During the last Passover Supper, Satan entered into him; Jesus dismissed him; and he went out to do the malicious act, which he had already planned (Mark 14:10).

He sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed him with a kiss, then in remorse threw down the money before the chief priest and elders (Matthew 27:3-10), and went out and committed suicide, Matthew 27:5 says that falling headlong, he burst asunder.

There are many other Scriptures in the Old Testament that prophesied about His judgment and death. "I was not rebellious, neither turned my back away. I gave my back to be smitten (Isaiah 50:5), and my cheek to them that plucked off the hair "Beard" (Lamentations 3:30). I hid not my face from shame and spitting upon me" (Isaiah 50:6; Matthew 26:67). "All things that are **written by the prophets** concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished, for He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be

meek, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on (Luke 18:31-32), which in fact fulfilled: “And some begin to spit on Him” (Mark 14:65; 15:19).

Many were astonished at Him; His face was so marred, more than any man, and His body scarred more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14). “Marred,” means that the suffering were so great that men looked astonished. “He sitteth alone, and keeps silent. He puts His mouth in the dust, there may be hope, He gives His cheek to them that smitteth Him” (Lamentations 3:28-30; Micah 5:1).

The Roman soldiers scourged Jesus (beating Him by striking Him repeatedly), and they delivered Him to be crucified. The soldiers then took Him into a common hall where all the band of soldiers was gathering together. And they stripped Him, and put on a scarlet robe. They then put a crown of thorns upon His head and a reed in His hand, and they bowed before Him and mocked Him saying, “Hail, King of the Jews” (Matthew 28:29)! It was prophesied that the people of Jerusalem would despise Him. “He was despised and rejected by men” (Isaiah 53:3). “But I am a worm (humiliated and despised), and no man, a reproach of men (gestures of contempt), and despised of the people” (Psalm 22:6). They utterly despised Me, set Me at naught, treated me with utmost contempt, they shoot out the lip, they shake their heads” (Psalm 22:7). (This is applied by Matthew chapter 27:39, to the conduct of the Jews toward the Lord when they look as He hung upon the cross). “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not” (John 1:10).

Now the Prophecies of Daniel tells us that Jesus would be cut off among the living in the middle of the week, about the ninth hour, on Wednesday, about three o’clock in the afternoon; not on Friday as the modern churches teaches today (Daniel 9:27). Then after 3 days (72 hour) He would be resurrected about the 12<sup>th</sup> hour (6 o’clock) on Saturday afternoon (Matthew 28:1), fulfilling Jesus’ own prophecy that He would be in the “heart of the earth three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:39-40). About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34).

“And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land” (Mark 16:33). “Then Jesus called to His Heavenly Father with a loud voice (verse 34), and gave up the ghost (spirit) (verse 37).” “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two

from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (Matthew 27:51). Thus was fulfilled in Daniel 9:24-27 about the Messiah’s being cut of in the middle of the week on Wednesday about three o’clock.

Now let us review the crucifixion at the place called Golgotha (Matthew 27:33). In those days, each day began and ended at 6 P.M. On Passover Wednesday, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Abib (April) at 9 A.M. they nailed His hands and feet to a wooden cross. At 12 P.M. it grew very dark and cold. At 3 P.M. our Lord died. He was laid in a tomb just before 6 P.M. Wednesday. He remained dead in the tomb for three full days and nights (Matthew 12:39-40). Just before 6 P.M. on Saturday (Matthew 28:1), He rose from the dead. Stop and think about this: The Son of God who had spoken the world into existence was asleep in death for three full days and three full nights, 72 hours (Matthew 27:60-64).

Many argue that during those three days that our Lord was supposed to be dead, that He did three things: (1) He went down into hell: He went to preach to disobedient spirits in prison (1 Peter 3:19) and He went to paradise with one of the thieves (Luke 23: 43).

1 Peter 3:19 has to do with Christ’s Spirit, His own divine energy and authority. He went and preached to the people by and through Noah, a righteous man for 120 years, to the people who was held prisoners by Satan (verse 20). The inhabitants of the world had become disobedient against God’s law: the Ten Commandments. But their punishment was delayed to see if they would repent; and “the longsuffering of God waited” for 120 years, which was granted to them for that purpose. And it was by the Spirit that Noah became a “preacher of righteousness and condemned that ungodly world” (Hebrews 11:7).

Luke 23:43 doesn’t say that this man on the cross next to Him would begin the habitation in paradise with Him that day, but this is what was said: “I say unto you today, you will be with Me in paradise.” Jesus was in the tomb, dead.

“No man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven (John 3:13), for even “David has not ascended up into heaven (Acts 2:34). Concerning Jesus being in hell for three days (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27) means only that He would be in the grave (dead) for three days.

You see, therefore, that if Jesus did not die, if He just pretended that He was dead, if He was alive and active, if His so-called death and so-called resurrection was just a

“hoax,” “make believe,” then we have been deceived. If the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has turned out to be untrue then our “faith is in vain: we are yet in our sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep (dead) in Christ are perished. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:19). All of us are still in sin, lost and unsaved. And all who have died have perished with no hope of being resurrected from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12-21).

The centurion in charge of the crucifixion also declared that Jesus was innocent. “Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying: Certainly this man was the Son of God” (Luke 23:47).

“Later that afternoon, about three o’clock, Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, took Jesus’ body down off the cross and placed it in a new tomb that had been carved out of a hill side. The religious leader then had the large stone before the tomb sealed and also had a guard of soldiers put there to guard it”. Why? They said they were afraid that Jesus’ disciples would come and steal the body and say that He was raised from the dead (Matthew 27:62-66).

However, Jesus wasn’t to remain dead. It had been foretold that God would not leave Jesus in the tomb (Acts 2:27). Jesus had told His disciples over and over that He would rise after three days. Still the disciples were surprised when Mary told them, and then when they came to the tomb after three days and found it empty and the stone rolled away (John 20:1-9).

That same day of Jesus resurrection He appeared to many of His followers that their faith might be strong and that He was alive. It was true, He died and was buried and then three days afterwards He rose from the grave just as the prophets foretold. He was seen first by Mary, then by Peter, and later the “rest of the twelve,” and after that He was seen by more than five hundred Christian brothers at one time (1 Corinthians 15:4-7).

After the resurrection, there was much joy from the disciples when seeing Him, but Thomas refused to believe that Jesus was alive until he could put his fingers in the nail holes in His hands; then Jesus said to Thomas: “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believe” (John 20:26-29). “Behold, My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39).

He told His disciples, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-47). This is now the third time that Jesus shewed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead” (John 21:14).

In one of His meetings He told them not to leave Jerusalem until The Holy Spirit came upon them in fulfillment of the Father’s promise, a matter He had previously discussed with them (Acts 1:4). “And now I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don’t begin telling others yet--stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from above” (Luke 24:49). “But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection” (Acts 1:8).

Seven weeks (49 days) had gone by since Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the day of Pentecost had now arrived. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, 120 followers of Jesus were gathered in upper rooms where they were sitting, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1-4).

“Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit: and teach these new disciples to obey all the Commands I have given you; and be sure of this--I am with you always, even to the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20). God had commissioned His disciples to take this wonderful message of the gospel to others--to take it into the entire world. Jesus Christ is the central figure of the message, which was all about the reality of Jesus’ human life, being the Son of God: His sacrificial death for the sins of mankind, His resurrection to glory, His presence in the lives of true Christians through the Spirit, His present role as intercessor and High Priest for the saints, and His second coming as King of Kings to rule over all nations (Zechariah 14:9).

At the end of forty days Jesus “led His disciples to Bethany,” just outside of Jerusalem (Luke 24:50). There, after giving them parting instructions, “He was lifted up and a cloud caught Him up from their vision.” As they were looking up, suddenly two angels appeared, and said, “men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has gone away to heaven, and some day, just as He went, He will return!” (Acts 1:10-11).

The time finally came for Jesus’ sacrifice, preordained before mankind even existed. Paul wrote, “Now, once at the end of the ages, He had appeared to put away sin of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). Jesus offered Himself outside the city of Jerusalem over two thousand years ago. Thus was poured out “The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-20). Jesus, who never sinned, was made sin for the human race (2 Corinthians 5:21).

No man could have suffered more. But Jesus was willing. He told His disciples, “The greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for a friend” (John 15:13). On another occasion Jesus told His listener, “I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15).

In that context, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Jesus’ sacrifice made possible a connection between God and man. Paul told the church of Colossians: It was through what His Son did that God cleared a path for everything to come to Him--all things in heaven and on earth--for Christ’s death on the cross has made peace with God for all by His blood. This includes you who were once so far away from God, you who were his enemies and hated Him and were separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions, yet now He has brought you back as His friends (Colossians 1:20-21). Nothing could stop it; neither grief, nor pain, nor even horrible death, even while in agony during His life, Jesus put the fate of the human race before His own needs.

With His death, Jesus wiped out the spiritual note of debt--the penalty of sin--all humans had incurred. Jesus’ sacrifice made possible a connection between God and man. “Having made peace through the blood of the cross, you, who once were alienated (Lost, Separated), and enemies in your mind by wicked works, now He has reconciled (Brought Back) us by His death” (Colossians 1:22-23).

“The cross was not something that just happened--He came knowingly that He was to die; the cross was His purpose in coming. Christ, the Son of God had to come in bodily form or substance and die on the cross or it would have no meaning. The purpose of Christ coming with flesh and blood was redemption. Christ, God’s Son came in the flesh to take sin away, not to accomplish something for Himself, but to die on the cross--that is the central event in time and eternity, and the answer to our entire problems.

Jesus was in Galilee when some of His disciples and a few Greeks came to see Him, and He answered them, saying, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” Jesus likens His life, and the lives of all who would follow Him as seed that must fall into the ground alone and die. Only in this way--from death to life--would the Kingdom of God be established. The way is being set for His crucifixion (John 12:20-25).

The heart of salvation is the cross of Christ. The reason salvation is so easy to obtain is that it cost so much. The cross was placed where God and sinful man merged with tremendous collision, absorbed by the heart of God.

If we are not careful, we can fail to focus on why Jesus Christ came to this earth in the first place. What really happened at the cross? Jesus birth, His life and His sacrificial death help us to understand the depth of God’s love.

The ground and support for the entirety of salvation is the finished work of Christ on the cross. Our trust and assurance, indeed, the very faith by which we stand, must ever be driven back to Calvary. The perfect and complete sacrifice for sin had been made. The sin problem had been defeated. This finality of Christ’ death is a once-for-all-event. It can never be repeated or improved upon. It is just as true that the Bible emphasized the life, resurrection, ascension, and return of Christ, as is also vital with respects to our eternal salvation.

What happened at the cross was that the personal suffering of Jesus, and His humiliation, was finished. For nearly 3 and ½ years Christ had been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as spoken of by Isaiah, the prophet. He was worn out in strength, He wept and He bled--refusing even the option, which would have blunted the

agony of the crucifixion. It could be said of Him that He learned obedience by the things He suffered (Hebrews 5:8).

When the last stab of pain wrote its agony into His mind and body just before He lapsed into unconsciousness and merciful death, Jesus knew He would never suffer again. For there would be no more sorrow or crying or pain, those things were passing away. Only rejoicing awaited our Saviour. His humiliation and anguish were finished.

Jesus came and died to save man's soul. He carried our pain of punishment, was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised for our guilt and iniquities.

Do we really understand and know what happened at the cross? Jesus died to save man's soul. The torture that Jesus received at the cross allows us to be free from sorrow, feelings of rejection, or from being despised by men. He also paid the price for us to be healed of past emotional and psychological scars. Jesus came to take away the pain of our past. Peter tells us to receive the word, which is able to save our souls. Our souls were saved when we received Christ. As we walk with God and renew our minds to the word our past sins are being healed.

God the Father honored the unfathomable sacrifice, in that He designated Jesus to be the Chief Executive of all things pertaining to human salvation. "For it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself."

Under the old Covenant, priests offered animal sacrifices continually for the sins of the people. But in the book of Hebrews we are told that "neither the sacrifice nor blood of those sacrifices could take away sins, which is the transgression of the Law" (1 John 3:4). Why, then were they offered?

First, the great symbolism in those old sacrifices provided a vivid picture of just how awful sin is. No number of sacrifices, no amount of blood was sufficient to satisfy the penalty for sin, because the sacrifices had to be offered over and over.

Secondly, on behalf of His chosen people the Jews God accepted those sacrifices as postponement of Judgment for sin. He accepted them for what they symbolized. They were shadows of the perfect sacrifice to come, not only on their behalf, but also for all mankind.

The Apostle John called Jesus the “Propitiation,” atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 2:2). The Apostle Paul also spoke of Jesus in the terms, “We also exalt in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). In other words the death of Jesus made things right between God and man.

The resurrection of the Lord was a sign He Himself gave to prove His identity as the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind. He talked of faith and forgiveness of sin during His ministry. He discussed His being the Lord of life, even as darkness is the absence of light, the absence of the living Messiah would cause a deep darkness, “but he that followeth Jesus shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12; John 12:34-50), and “the Way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). His resurrection made all His claims and promises come alive for those who believe.

However, Christ’s death did not stop with humiliation and suffering, it did not stop with the giving of His life on the cross; neither did it find completion in His resurrection. Christ’s resurrection from the dead sealed the promise of victory over the grave. His death provided the forgiveness for sin, His resurrection made it our hope, because He lives; we live.

The Lord’s Ascension combined His Glorification with a new phase of ministry. God not only raised Christ from the dead, but also seated Him in His presence, giving Him authority over all powers and people forever. The restoration of Christ to His heavenly abode carried with it a responsibility. As Christ now sits in the presence of the Almighty God, He serves as an advocate, a mediator, between God and man.

Should sin rear its ugly head in our walk with Christ as Lord of our lives? Jesus sits, not condemning, but pleading our case before God. Christ brought forgiveness in death, testified to His deity by the resurrection from the dead, and now is bringing forgiveness in our lives as our mediator before God in heaven

Paul urged all Christians that they should be “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the Joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 12:2). For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest “you become weary and

discouraged in your soul” (Galatians 6:9). “You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (Hebrews 12:4).

So here we have another important point to consider. The death on the cross of Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sins. Could we then be saved if He had not risen from the grave? He was “cut off from the land of the living” (Isaiah 53:8). All life and conscious thought had stopped, for “the dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). For, if being saved is merely a one-time acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins, could we not be saved regardless of whether or not He was resurrected?

The answer is no. The Apostle Paul wrote: “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:14)! Then also those who have fallen asleep (dead) in Christ have perished” (verse 18).

Jesus, however, is not a dead Saviour still hanging on a cross. He lives and stands ready to assist those who ask Him to do so. His death paid the penalty, so we can be saved or rescued from the penalty of sin and reconciled to God. But, as far as ultimate salvation is concerned, “We shall be saved by His life.” Jesus is very much alive and willing to help us. Jesus’ present role is a High Priest. Jesus is available at all times for any who will turn to Him for help. He will be our Shepherd, our Redeemer, our Counselor, our Rock, our Salvation and Defense, our Lord, strong and mighty, to mention just a few of the many facets of what He is now doing.

Then came the Calvary Cross atop Golgotha. There was nailed the perfect lamb. There He bled; sacrificed His all upon the tree, suffered, cried out in anguish, writhed beneath the awful blow of a slow death. There, Christ became sin for us. There, the lamb became likewise a goat of humanity-the scapegoat carrying into the tomb our sins upon His Holy Head (Leviticus 16:18-22). From that cross points in human history, all other history books look back upon that Jerusalem tree. And from the beginning of creation all human history looked forward to the Jerusalem cross. The cross is the crossroad of all human history.

There, God designed us to experience the satisfaction of an ever-increasing knowledge of Him. But, without the Holy Spirit, a person feels incomplete. He or she feels an inner emptiness, a longing for fulfillment. We all need a lasting relationship with the one who

hung upon that cross, and once we find God, we begin to find fulfillment in life. And we set out on the most important of all quest—to know God.

We come to know God in two ways, both essential. One is to become familiar with the Bible, which describes God's actions, desires and emotions. The other is to learn to trust Him by doing His will.

This was how Jesus lived. He denied Himself, He bore His cross daily, and when He came to face the literal cross He was willing and waiting to go. He hasn't asked us to die on a wooden cross, but He does demand that we take up our cross daily and follow Him. In much of our time this is not a pleasant experience; it does not bring extreme and joyous celebration in one's heart, but it is most necessary. And once a person determines that he/she will take up his/her cross and die there upon it, then comes the joy and blessing of the Holy Spirit upon that soul's being.

But remember, the cross is absolutely necessary. **It is not a matter of choice--it is a must.** One cannot walk acceptably with the living God and not be surrendered to His divine will. True, we can choose not to take up our cross and follow Him, but in so doing we cut ourselves off from the very source of eternal life.

The fact of His crucifixion stands as an undeniable, absolute proof of God's everlasting love for His wayward creation. It serves also as an immortal declaration of the truth, completeness and faithfulness of God's word; that He, Himself, is true to His word and will uphold it and defend it, and will sacrifice the Son He loves to bear witness of this truth.

The cross then, is the guarantee to us who believe His words, which God's eternal plan will not fail nor come to naught. Jesus' death was a powerful statement that the Father had made sufficient provision for the finishing of His plan through the vicarious death of His glorious Son, Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:51-58).

Immortality "life everlasting" is God's intended and promised final reward to those who have made Him King and Lord of their lives while they walked the dusty road of life, "for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Jesus offered pardon, full and free, to everyone. Are you desolate? There is pardon for you. Are you hopeless in your feelings? Are you in the bonds of iniquity? Though

your sins are as scarlet (Isaiah 1:18). There is pardon for you. Are you miserable and undone? Are you a castaway of sin? There is pardon for you. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon: (Isaiah 55:7).

We find ourselves in a time now when sin in its accumulated force has blackened the whole earth. Has not God’s Sabbath, His holy day, become too much of a holiday? Are we not about to forget the voice of God that declares, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34)?

God’s greatest desire is for us to find our way back to Him--to find Him. To an audience of unbelievers, Paul spoke about God’s desire that people “would seek Him and reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27). So greatly does God want us to find Him that in Jesus Christ He paid the ultimate price to make it possible.

The last words that Jesus said as He hung upon the cross were for the ones who were there, the thief, His mother, and to God. The words: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

The first words from the cross is not about the pain of the nails and the suffering nor about the humiliation of an accursed death, nor of the injustice which He has suffered, but it is a prayer for those who have crucified Him, the very Son of God, the one who had no sin. “Truly they know not what they do.”

The second words to the one thief; “Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus came to seek and to save those who were lost. He had spent His life seeking those who were without hope. Even now, at the hour of His death He answers the appeal of the thief on the cross who cries, “Lord, remember me!” Jesus did not render relief from the cross, but with something far greater: Paradise, Eternal life when Christ returns.

The third words were: to His mother, “Woman, behold thy Son, behold thy mother” (John 19:26-27). This was a son’s relationship to His mother, and when Jesus saw His mother Mary at the foot of the cross with John, He made provision for her. Turning to John, He instructed him to care for her.

The fourth words were to God, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). Eternal death is eternal, when we are judged, either to inherit eternal life or be cast into the lake of fire. The agonies of judgment and facing hell’s fire were suffered by our substitute, when He (Christ) was forsaken by God, died a slow death, so we would never stand trial. This suffering no person has ever endured. All physical and mental suffering fades in comparison to the suffering of Christ. Those who refuse Him shall stand trial on the Day of Judgment and bear their own punishment.

The fifth words! “I thirst” (John 19:28). The suffering Savior was human as well as divine. Truly human, He had assumed our human nature at His birth in order that the penalty due to the human race might be borne by a member of it. The intense agony of being thirsty indicated the reality of the suffering of His body. That God should send His only begotten Son to become man is not a mystery. It is not a mystery that our sins and guilt can be laid on Him (John 3:16). Because of His love, we believe and are saved!

The sixth words: “It is finished” (John 19:30). God’s anger for the sins of the human race had been laid upon Jesus throughout His entire life, but especially during the closing hours. Now this fearful suffering was finished. The price has been paid. Man’s salvation had been earned. Sin is blotted out. Reconciliation is complete. Everlasting righteousness is bought.

The seventh words: “Father, into thy hands I commend My Spirit” (Luke 23:46). Death did not take Jesus’ life. Rather, the Savior offered His life. The wages of sin is death, and the wages must be paid, because our sin-bearer had come and died on the cross for the disobedience.

Many passed by while Jesus hung on the cross and ridiculed Him. Now millions have since heard these words, but have passed by in unbelief, could you be one of them? Your salvation is possible only if the Son of God hung on the cross for you, and in your heart you have accepted Christ who died in your place as your personal Savior.

On becoming a Christian, a person enters into an intimate relationship. One becomes a child of God, a new creature, and a new person. Christians who have entered this relationship truly have found God.

You may know about God, but your assurance of eternal life comes from knowing Him. And you begin by finding Him. Finding Him through a living Faith--the kind of

faith described in the Bible can transform your life, enable you to enjoy a close, personal relationship with God. Faith can offer freedom from the shackles of worry, doubt and fear. It can bring strength, hope and wisdom in the face of problems and challenges.

As we walk through this life, we trust in our great caring “Shepherd” to lead us safely. At times the path may wind through green pastures and beside still waters. At other times it may extend across the valley of the shadow of death. At all times though, God is with His people today as He was with the saints of old (Psalm 23:4).

Jesus has now ascended into Heaven and is now sitting on the right hand of God. It is about time for His return to judge the nations. Just how near are we to the second coming of Christ? “Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done” (Mark 13:30). This is the generation that is living now that Jesus is speaking to. Again, our Lord points to His return. Since there is no time schedule given, we are to gauge our time “taking heed, watching and praying” (Mark 13:33-37). The positive assurance of our Lord’s return is based upon the total fulfillment of His prophecy concerning the world, Jerusalem, and Armageddon.

The Bible teaches that one day Jesus Christ will return. When Jesus ascended into heaven at the end of His life on earth, His disciples were reminded, “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The coming of Jesus is the central teaching of some of Paul’s letters, and the last book of the Bible, Revelation, ends with Christ’s words, “Surely I come quickly,” and John’s response, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

When will this happen no one knows, but the New Testament repeatedly reminds us to live the kind of life that would prepare us to meet Jesus at any moment without shame. The New Testament tells us that if our lives are committed fully to God, we need not be afraid, but should look forward to such a meeting with joy.

The Bible has left us signs of the times that will come from heaven. There are many perplexing, if not indescribable, happenings taking place throughout the world that are occurring more and more as the end time draws closer. On every hand, there are disturbing events taking place, some of which are described in the Scriptures as “last days” activities. As the population of every nation on the Earth has increased the problems of supporting these great hordes of people have increased.

Then the prophecy of earthquakes on the increase around the world with many quakes with a magnitude greater than 4.0 occurred in many nations. Then there are cyclones, volcanic eruption, tornadoes, drought, floods, famine, pestilence, wars and rumors of wars; all of these prophecies are being fulfilled, that has been spoken of and prophesied by Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:4-8).

More desperation and troubled times are on the way, and we need to be prepared for it. It is now time for everyone who loves God and His word to get right with Him, search the Scriptures, and to practice obedience to the words of Jesus Christ. He has the words of eternal life, and unless we follow and obey Him, we have no right to expect Him to bless us and take care of us during this time, which is just ahead. This all must happen before Christ returns.

“If my people which are called by my name (Christians), shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then they will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sins, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be opened, and mine ears attend unto the prayers that is made in this place” (2 Chronicles 7:14-15).

In the future Christ Kingdom will be fully established. In the book of Revelation which present a vision of these coming events, heavenly voices announce the time when “The kingdom of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). Eden lost, Eden restored.

“The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His Holy habitation (heaven); He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth” (Jeremiah 25:30). Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehosaphat: for there will I set to judge all the heathen round about. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down, for the press is full. The fats overflow; for their wickedness is great” (Joel 3:12-13). The “Day of the Lord” in terms of judgment is a call to war that bring the armies of wickedness to the valley of decision where God will set in motion the sickle of divine judgment (Revelation 14:18-20).

After Armageddon, Christ will rule for one thousand years called the “Millennium.” This is the period of Christ’s coming reign with His saints over this earth. Thus, we see that it is called the special period of the time restitution (Acts 3:21). And we note from

the text that this special period is a time, which begins at the second advent of Christ. He (Christ) has already appeared upon the earth (Baby Jesus), and has accomplished the end of His appearing; He has ascended unto heaven (Acts 1:11), to administer the concerns of His Kingdom (Hebrews 8:1), and there He continues until He comes again to judge the quick and the dead. When He comes He will restore all things, destroying the bad state, and establishing the good--taking the kingdom out of the hands of sin and Satan, and putting it into those of righteousness and truth. All things are restored to their primitive order.

After the Millennium period comes Judgment day. “Marvel not at this; for the hour is come in which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). That each may receive to himself his own reward and his own wages, payday!

“For it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11; Isaiah 45:23; Philippians 2:10-11). We are accountable to God for our own conduct, and shall be judged at His court; and let us consider that whatever measure we mete; the same shall be measured unto us again. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God (His own family): and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).

“Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels” (Matthew 25:41). You are cursed because you have sinned, and would not come unto Me that you might have life. This is the punishment for sins. You shall not only be separated from Me (Jesus), but you shall be burned up along with the fallen angels. It never was designed for human beings; but as the wicked are partakers with the devil and his angels in their iniquities, in their rebellion against God (Revelation 12:7-9), so it is right that they should be sharers with them in their punishment.

“And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

The last judgment; a great white throne is set, in the light from which the secrets of all hearts are revealed, called, “The Great white Throne Judgment.” “And I saw a great White Throne and the one who sits upon it, from whose face the earth and sky fled away, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, great and small standing before God; and The Books were Opened, each judged according to the deeds he had done. The oceans surrendered the bodies buried in them; and the earth and the grave gave up the dead in them. Each was judged according to his deeds. And death and the grave were thrown into the Lake of Fire. And if anyone’s name was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is the second death” (Revelation 20:10-15).

“For God shall bring every work into Judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction” (Philippians 3:18-19). You will be there!

The first death consists in the separation of the spirit (breath) from the body; the second death is the separation of the spirit and body from God forever. The first death is that from which there may be a resurrection; the second death is that from which there can be no recovery.

So much of our modern experience echoes the Scriptures: “Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road he thinks is right, but it ends in death” (Proverbs 16:25).

There are many big Mega churches and big name evangelists with hippie quartets or song leaders who are constantly counting numbers and Pastors, who are preaching that Christ “died for you,” and all you have to do is “accept Him.” Blue jeans, Mini-skirt dressed girls and fuzzy-faced, longhaired boys see a new “kick” and join this easy Christianity. The modern Christ is acceptable to the world today. This is the Mod-Gospel. It requires no repentance, no forsaking of sin, no dying to self, and it has produced a bunch of useless, worthless group of people sitting around, that won’t fit in with true Christianity. Every minute of precious time that we are gathered together

should be used to preach, instruct, teach, exhort, and to worship God (2 Timothy 4:2-4). “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:28).

When we read the examples of the Biblical servants of God, we will notice that they freely acknowledged their own sins and shortcomings. It takes a deeply sincere person to say, “Search me, O Lord, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

To escape the lake of fire in which a sinner will be cast into, there is only one way; through Jesus Christ, as Peter stated “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Repent of what? Remember, each one is born with all evil works of the flesh trying to gain control of our thoughts, words and actions. Those evil works are “fornication, uncleanness, unholiness, lust, sex perversion, idolatry, witchcraft, heresies, jealousy, bitterness, rebellion, and drunkenness” (Galatians 5:19-21), “evil thoughts, evil eyes, pride, deceit and foolishness” (Mark 7:21-23). Until a person is truly converted and has faith in Jesus Christ, he will continue to be guilty of some of the above faults, iniquities and sins, which is the transgression of the law: the Ten Commandments (1 John 3:4).

Any time we break or disobey any one of the Holy Righteous Commandments of God, we have sinned and need to repent of that sin. Therefore, everyone must face the need to repent deeply, and sometime bitterly. To be a genuine Christian we each must ask the Father in heaven for Christ’s shed blood to cover our sins, so that the sacrifice of His life was not in vain. It is God who helps us to see our own wretchedness and shortcomings. He opens our minds and starts us on the way toward repentance.

If we are earnestly seeking God and His ways, this is the attitude we will be reflecting. We will freely admit our own sins and shortcomings and earnestly urge God to show us the right way, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing” (Jeremiah 10:23-24).

Those who turn to the Lord Jesus, and confess their sins to Him are saved at once and they know it. How wonderful! Our Lord delivers new converts from all their troubles, and gives them peace and joy, and desires for them to live a right life. That, my friends

are the glorious results of our God's plan, the very creator of men who washed away the sins of the world with His own blood and died on the cross at Calvary for you and me.

Therefore, to know the cross of Jesus, one must be aware that everything attached to one's life must be placed upon the altar of sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2). Likewise, it is of utmost significance that each believer reckons with the fact the Christian experience centers upon the cross. Yet, this very truth is the concept most ignored by the Christian community. This is the start of the cross journey as we find no greater height than the hill upon which Christ was nailed to a piece of wood. We must climb the hill to Calvary; stake out our existence there. It was by faith we start the journey. It is by faith we continue the journey, and it by faith we will end the journey. The most difficult part of the journey is when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death; is not to fear.

Of course, we can't just drum up the deep feeling of hate for our sins by ourselves. It has to come from God, for "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). Yet, the Bible is quite plain about this issue, from Genesis to Revelation. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Notice how Jesus sets an example for us, "In the days of flesh (Jesus) offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears" (Hebrews 5:7). Jesus Himself said that, "You must be born again" (John 3:7).

Do this: Pray every day until you receive the new birth. And when you do, it will be the most thrilling experience you have ever received. When you enter, as it were, into the presence of the Lord, you will have heavenly peace, and a joy that cannot be explained. You will have a feeling of ecstasy. You will seem to be as light as a feather. From that day forth you will be able to raise your hands and shout the praise of the Lord. You will have a holy boldness to talk about Jesus to one person, or to a thousand,

Who crucified our Lord? Was it the Romans, Jews, Judas, God, or who? The Romans? Yes, in a sense, "Then Pilate ordered Jesus to be flogged with a leather whip, and handed Him over to be crucified" (Mark 15:15). The Jews? Yes, in a sense, "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death" (Matthew 27:25). Judas, yes in a sense, "And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priest, to betray Him unto them" (Mark 14:10).

Was it God? Yes, in a sense, “He that spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things” (Romans 8:32). Or was it you and I? Yes, this is the ultimate answer! “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). “This is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Yes, I am guilty of His suffering and death, and so are you! Our own wicked ways and our evil hearts have made us accessories to the most heinous crime ever committed by mortal men. Falsely accused, this loving, totally innocent man was unmercifully brutalized by His captives, and rejoiced over His untimely death.

Even though we were not there, we killed Him. Our own personal sins helped drive those spikes through His flesh; our sins gave strength to the lashes that successfully drew blood from His back; our iniquities helped to place the crown of thorns upon His head; our unbelief, our doubts of His Sonship were a part of the deadly spears which pierced His side. We are all accomplices, because He died there in our place; He took upon Himself that which we all deserved.

Four things God cannot do: God cannot tolerate evil, God cannot accept any solution except the saving work of His son, God cannot reject anyone who comes in the name of Jesus, and God cannot take second place in our life. He cannot deny Himself. Therefore, these glorious truths are absolutely certain. Make certain that they apply to you.

Four things God wants you to know: You need to be saved, you cannot save yourself, Jesus has already provided for your salvation, and Jesus will enable you to overcome temptations. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

After the Judgment day comes the reward for the saints of God arrives: John sees the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven as a bride (Isaiah 61:10; 62:5; Matthew 22:9; 25:10; Revelation 21:2, 9). God is to dwell with man, and the inhabitants of the city are to be His people (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). By the presence of God Himself all sorrows

and even death are banished. He Himself proclaims that He makes all things new. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no death, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”.

God created a new physical setting. It befits the life of the new kind of man who will live in full fellowship with God. No more will man be shut off from God by the great divider; sin.

In symbols John describes the city as a perfect dwelling place of men who lives in obedient fellowship with God. Every need of man is provided: safety, light, worship, beauty, food, drink, and healing (Revelation 21:1-7).

Jesus means exactly what He said! He will come in through His spirit and live His life of true righteousness in you, if only you will surrender all of self and let Him in. Then and only then shall you receive Eternal life in the City of God? Paradise lost, Paradise regained!

As we near the end of this C.D. we want to find out how you can benefit from what has been brought out here. But what have we learned?

If you want to receive God’s blessing you must study the Bible. You must obey it and make it your guide. The Bible is so important because it tells you what God has done. It tells you what He has said about religion, the truth and what is false. It shows how you can inherit eternal life. Paul said that the Bible’s holy writing “Is able to make you wise for salvation through faith in connection with Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). Nothing that you could learn is as important to you as the knowledge of the Bible that, “God so Loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Once you apprehend this dynamic revelation, you will never be the same. You’ll never go back to what once only passed as religious profession. And, it simply begins with an attitude of total surrender. It can be nothing less.

Let’s summarize the Messianic Prophecy of Christ’s death in the Old Testament quickly before we close, look with me, if you will, at the following Scriptures in which we have been reading. Very little is said about the suffering of Christ in the New Testament but when you compare the New Testament with the Scriptures of the Old Testament we receive the complete story of the “Ultimate Price”.

Jesus Christ would be “seed of the woman” and would bruise Satan’s head (Gen.3:15).

Our Lord would be of the seed of David and Abraham (Psalm 132:11; Gen. 22:18).

Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah, a Jew (Gen.49:10).

Jesus would come at a specified time (Gen.49:10; Dan. 9:24-25).

Jesus would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14).

Baby Jesus would be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Mic. 5:2).

Our Lord would be preceded by a forerunner John the Baptist, before entering His public ministry (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1).

Jesus would be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:18)

The Messiah’s ministry would begin in Galilee (Isa. 9:1-2).

Jesus would have a ministry of miracles (Isa 35:5-6).

Jesus the King cometh riding upon a donkey (Zechariah (9:9).

Our Lord would be rejected by His brethren (Psalms. 69:8; Isa. 53:3).

Jesus would be betrayed by a friend (Psa. 41:9; 55:12, 14).

Messiah would be forsaken by His disciples (Zech. 13:7).

Jesus would be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12).

He was tormented for our transgressions (Isa.53:5).

Messiah would have His hands and feet pierced (Psa. 22:16; Zech. 12:10).

Jesus would not have a bone broken (Ex. 12:46; Psa. 34:20).

Our Lord would be given vinegar to drink (Psa.69:21).

Jesus’ body would be buried with the rich at His death (Isa 53:9).

Messiah would be raised from the dead (Psa. 2:7; 16:10).

Messiah would ascend to the right hand of God (Psa. 68:18; Psa.110:1).

You would have thought that Israel, the very nation that had been chosen through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of whom the bloodline of Jesus Christ would descend, the tribe of Judah (Jews), would be the people who would have accepted Him as their Messiah, but even the Israelite prophets had prophesied that this would not be so.

Moreover, Peter makes clear that Jesus’ reign has already been inaugurated in His resurrection and ascension to the throne of God (Acts 2:30-34). The apostle Paul affirmed the message to his fellow Jews (Acts 13:32-34). Life on earth is preparation for

eternity. And God allows man on earth to decide whether he wants to spend eternity with God or apart from Him. Man's free-will decision here has eternal repercussion.

In the book of Revelation which presents a vision of these coming events, heavenly voices announces the time when "The kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

There seems to exist a great deal of confusion about Jesus Christ, His mission, His longevity, His divinity, and His role in the affairs of mankind. It is not difficult to ascertain that the vast majority of the people not only have an inadequate understanding of whom Christ is, but they haven't even begun to understand His continuing purpose in their lives. Yet the Bible is quite plain about each of these issues, from Genesis to Revelation. This C.D, has reveled His mission and His divinity, so it is no longer a mystery or an excuse to be ignorant, because those things God before had shown by the mouth of all His prophets: "that Christ should suffer, He had so fulfilled" (Acts 3:17-18).

So let us take refuge under the most powerful force ever, the cross. Many are bypassing the most sacred and essential doctrine of the Christian faith. The cross stands as the insignia of God's love for all mankind. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

These are serious times in which we live. We are fast approaching a time of trouble and tribulation that the world has not yet seen up to this time. If ever we need to know God more personally, it is now while we yet have the opportunity. The day will soon come when our liberties will be swept away by the government and the cruel hand of our political system, making it nearly impossible to meet in open, clearly proclamation of the gospel message. God have mercy on our souls.

As you have read this C.D., allow your mind to be stretched by the God behind these words. Let Him reach out to your thoughts, your emotions, and your will. Then, as He fills you with Himself, reach out to others with the fantastic good news!

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