

# LET'S ASK THE BIBLE

Volume 1

*A Bible Study Help for the Christian*

*written by*

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*Distributed by*

***World Bible Missions***

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Volume I  
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*Acknowledgements...*

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Thanks to my many untiring Christian friends at our home church, Freedom Baptist Church in Athens, Tennessee, who helped in the compilation and distribution of this book. Without their help, it would not have been possible. May God bless them for their labor in advancing the Gospel. They are true champions for the cause of Christ.

My father, the late Pastor G. D. Hogan, spent countless hours teaching and preaching God's Word to me. For this I am both indebted and grateful. I feel it is required of me to pass to others the knowledge God has so graciously shared with me.

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## Preface

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### *About this book...*

Through the years folk have asked me: “Brother Hogan, what is your opinion about this or that?” I’ve learned to respond to them in this fashion: “My opinion does not matter. Let’s ask the Bible.” The Bible is and always will be the final say in all matters.

We continually receive many requests for information regarding Bible knowledge. Folk in foreign lands write routinely asking for Christian literature. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to provide a training tool for the Christian. It is hoped that the reader will glean Bible knowledge from that which is written herein. Let us not be ignorant of his Word at his appearing lest we should be ashamed to face our Lord.

### *Distribution...*

Most who have requested help in increasing their knowledge of the Bible are from impoverished lands. They are not able to afford any costs for this book. Those who can contribute, please do so to help bear the costs of sending the material to those who cannot afford to contribute.

### *About World Bible Missions...*

World Bible Missions was founded in 1976 by the late Pastor G. D. Hogan. The mission is now directed by Pastor Roy Hogan. The purpose for founding this ministry was to send the Gospel to the poor. Thousands of Bibles, millions of Gospel tracts, thousands of Bible Study Courses and Bible study books, and audio tapes and CDs, and Gospel radio programs have gone unto the world since our beginning. No charge has ever been levied for any Gospel sent out. Praise His name.

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## SALVATION PLAN

Psalms 3:8 says *“Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.”* So good it is that salvation belongs to God and not man. Man would not let some people have it. God allows all men to be saved. 2 Pet 3:9 says *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* John 6:37 *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* All can be saved and those who teach otherwise have lied. The rich, the poor, the black, the white, the American, the African and ALL can be saved.

*How is salvation possible?*

Jesus gave His life to provide for man’s salvation. John 10:10 reads *“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* The great verse John 3:16 says *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Thank God for sending His Son to earth to die for the sins of all mankind. Jesus shed His precious blood on the cross of Calvary to atone for the sins of all mankind.

*What is the cost of salvation?*

There is no charge. Eph 2:8 says *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”* No charge. Free. No good deeds required. No church membership required. No baptism needed. No tithes and offerings must be given. Jesus paid it all on Calvary.

*What does a sinner do to be saved?*

Romans 10:13 says *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Luke 13:3 reads *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* A sinner humbles before

God in sorrow for their sin and *asks* His forgiveness. Then, sinner, *invite* Jesus into your heart as your Savior. Receive Him as your Savior by faith. Rom 10:17 says “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Thank Him

for saving you.

*When can a sinner be saved?*

If a sinner opens their ear and heart to hear the words of the Bible, the Holy Spirit will speak to their heart and invite them to be saved. The sinner should come at the invitation. There is no reason anyone should die without Christ and go to hell. All sinners should be warned not to wait for the Bible says II Corinthians 6:2 “*...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*” Sinner, trust Christ today.

## SALVATION MAKES NEW CREATURES

So, you got saved and nothing about you changed? Well, you did not get saved. Still run with the same vile friends after salvation? Still like to gamble, curse, and drink after you “got saved?” You did not get saved. Can’t find your way to God’s house of worship on the Lord’s Day? You are not saved. You are deceived or pretending.

II Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* According to God’s eternal Word, folk change when they get saved. Thieves stop stealing. Drunkards sober up. Whoremongers go home to their wife and family. When you get saved you will know it, and so will others around you.

Let us look at some Bible characters who met Christ and see the change they made. First, the maniac of Gadaranes. Read Mark 5:1-20 to see the story of his change. We meet him as a man naked, dwelling in the tombs, untamable, and cutting himself with stones. After he met Jesus, we see him clothed and in his right mind seeking to travel wherever Jesus traveled. What a change he made!

Have you ever heard about Zacchaeus the tax collector? Read about him in Luke 19. He was the tax collector, and he charged folk extra on their taxes and kept the money. He was a crook! Then he met Jesus. After meeting Jesus, he told the Lord he would restore four-fold to anyone he had stolen from (Luke 19:8). Do you see a change in Zacchaeus life?

Saul of Tarsus was one of the meanest men in the Bible. Listen to Acts 8:3 describe his life as a sinner: *“As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”* He hated the church, and he hated God’s

people. Why, he gladly put them in prison! However, he changed when he met Christ on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter 9.

It is not possible to list all the examples of changed lives in the Bible. What changed these folk? A meeting with Christ. He is the difference maker.

Romans 5:20 *“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:”* In Romans 6:1 seems Paul anticipated the newly saved folk would ask him “if grace abounds above all sin, can we sin to test grace?” This was a question a babe in Christ might ask. Paul answered the anticipated question in Romans 6:2 *“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”* The reason you become a new creature when you get saved is that the old sinner you were dies. Some folk put off getting saved for they do not believe they can live for God after they are saved. They have missed a major point. The sinner nature of a person dies at salvation.

Look at Romans 6:6-7 *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.”* Let me share an illustration that may help you. Suppose I die today and my death is announced throughout the community. I would immediately be placed in the care of the funeral director. Suppose you were my friend and often visited me at my home. Would you come to my home to visit me? No, you would not for you know I died and that I have moved. I am no longer at home. I passed away. The same is true with a sinner. Upon salvation a *death* takes place. The old, sinful self dies. Therefore, Mr. Sin will not come knocking on your door the next day. You are *not* at home. You have *died*. Now, if you think you are saved and sin keeps on paying you a visit, something is wrong! If you get saved you die to sin and sin will not knock on your door inviting you to go sinning! Therefore, when someone says they got saved and never changed, they are deceived or lying. How can you die a death to sin and not be a different person? How can something as big as God come into your life and you are no different? Impossible!

SALVATION IS BY GRACE  
THROUGH FAITH

How much did you pay for your salvation? How many hours did you work to earn it? Name for me the deeds you performed in order to be saved. How many years did it take you to achieve “saved” status? What church did you join to be saved? Where were you baptized for salvation?

*Will works save?*

Are you saved? If so, you are saved by grace through faith. May I add further, you stay saved by the grace of God, not by your *performance*. You got “saved” by grace and you stay “saved” by grace. If salvation depends on the works and deeds of the person, no one is saved and no one will be in heaven for the Scripture hath said in Isaiah 64:6 “*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*” In other words, your best effort is not acceptable. I know that deflates the ego of man. However, I am going with the Word of God which abideth forever.

Adam tried works to gain God’s favor. First Eve then Adam ate the fruit forbidden by God and both became sinners. That is what sin is—“doing what God said not to do and not doing what God says to do.” Adam and Eve sinned and became sinners separated from God and in need of being *saved*. When God came looking for Adam, he was doing what any sinner would do, that is, hiding from God. God called his name. When Adam responded, the scripture tells us he and his wife had made fig leaf garments, Genesis 3:7, to cover their nakedness. They worked hard, I suppose, constructing a garment of fig leaves and likely believed in their heart that this garment hid them as sinners from a holy God. God rejected the fig leaf garment and proceeded to make “coats of skins,” Genesis 3:21, for Adam and his wife Eve. God rejected man’s works!

“Like father like son” the old saying goes. Adam’s son Cain brought God the work of his hands, fruit of the ground, as an offering in Genesis 4:3. His brother Abel brought the firstlings of his flock. Genesis 4:5 tells us God rejected Cain’s works and “had not respect” for his offering. God accepted the animal of the field. Works won’t work!

The tower of Babel was built by a group who decided to use their own hands to get to God. In Genesis they decided to build a city and a tower that would reach to heaven. This was a great act of works. It was an amazing act of works perhaps never before or since exceeded by mankind. Yet, God rejected their work. Works won’t work!

There is a seemingly endless accounting in the Word of God of the failure of works to please God. Works won’t work! Do you think the thief on the cross made it to paradise as the Lord said he would? What works did he do? What works did the maniac of Gadara, Mark 5, do in order to get saved? Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christians as an occupation and had his pocket filled with warrants to arrest more Christians when God saved him on the road to Damascus. He had no works to offer God.

### *Religion won’t save*

Many folk truly believe their affiliation in a certain organization(s) will get them saved. In John 3 Christ met a man named Nicodemus who was a “man of the Pharisees.” Christ looked “religious” Nicodemus in the eye and said not once but twice “ye must be born again,” John 3:3,7. Saul of Tarsus, later to be known as Apostle Paul, was as we are told in Philippians 3:5 “*as touching the law a Pharisee.*” Nicodemus and Saul of Tarsus affiliation with religion was not sufficient to save them. What religion are you banking on? Your trust must be in Jesus- not the Baptist, Methodists, Church of God, or any religious organization.

### *Heritage won’t save*

Have you met someone who had more heritage than Apostle Paul? Take a look at Philippians 3:5 “*Circumcised the eighth day, of the*

*stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*” Paul had elite heritage. Few were the “thoroughbred” he was. If who we were could save us, Paul would not have had to have the encounter with the Lord he had on the road to Damascus in Acts 9.

The Samaritan woman met the lord at the well in John 4. She told the Lord the well water was ok for her because her father Jacob gave her and her people the well. However, the Lord told her she needed the “living water.” Mohammed is dead. Buda is dead. Popes die. But, praise be to God, Jesus Christ is alive and liveth forever more, Revelation 1:18. If you want to be saved, you need Christ- not heritage.

In Luke 3 John the Baptist was preaching repentance. One group came to him claiming kinship to Abraham. They believed such heritage would gain for them salvation. However, John the Baptist informed them in Luke 3:8 *“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”* Even kinship to Abraham will not save!

### *Salvation is of the Lord*

Ephesians 2:8 says *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”* Grace is something for nothing. Grace is a gift. Grace is receiving though you are unworthy to receive. Grace does not ask a price. Grace does not ask a favor be returned. Grace is not logical. Don’t try to figure it out. If someone gave you the gift of an eternity in heaven, it is logical to try to return some payment to them. If someone forgave your every sin and loosed you from the grip of Satan, it is logical to try and repay them. Yes, it is grace that saves us!

What is required of the believer? Faith is required of the believer. And the Lord gives the believer the required faith for it is written in Romans 10:17 *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* God wants you to place faith in Him to be saved and

He gives the sinner the faith. What a deal! Now, my friend, that is grace. *Every inhabitant of heaven in the eternal ages will be there by the same method; God granted saving grace and the sinner placed faith in Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost saved him.*

Reference Scriptures:

Romans 4:1-6 *“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works”*

Rom 11:6 *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”*

Eph 2:8-10 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

Gal 3:10-11 *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”*

Titus 3:5-7 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

## SALVATION IS ETERNAL

Saved today and lost tomorrow? Or, when a person is saved are they saved forever? Do we need to get “resaved” once in a while? A multitude of folk have experienced salvation only to believe they occasionally lose their salvation by bad behavior. For sure it would be a good way to force a Christian to behave by threatening to take away their salvation. For example, a Christian might tithe faithfully if they thought they would lose their salvation for not tithing.

*Salvation is eternal for the same grace that saved us keeps us saved.* A sinner does not deserve to be saved nor does a sinner deserve to stay saved. Damnable is the teaching that God can do for a sinner such a great deed as saving them by *grace* free of charge only to have God later lose them back to Satan. God rescues a sinner from sin and then allows Satan to snatch him back? The very thought is a great injustice to an all-powerful God. Saving grace is also keeping grace. A sinner never saved their self- it was an act of grace. A sinner cannot keep themselves saved- it is grace that keeps us saved. If it is good behavior that keeps one saved, it is good behavior that saved us in the beginning. However, the Scripture says in Titus 3:5 “*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...*” Eph 2:8-9 reads “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.*”

Some teach you must “live it.” Some teach you must “overcome on the altar.” In other words, keep yourself saved by continually asking forgiveness. This is not correct. Again, a sinner does not have the power to save themselves and does not have the power to keep themselves saved. Salvation is not an act of “deserving” but an act of grace.

*Salvation is eternal because it is a birth.*

Have you heard the term “born again?” One of the most oft used terms for getting saved is “born again.” You were born physically

into the world from your mother's womb. Likewise, salvation is a birth. Salvation is a greater birth than is a physical birth for it is entirely of God exclusive of man. The Holy Ghost births you into the body of Christ. Can you undo your physical birth? Give it a try. If, suppose, you are 40 years old, can you become 39, 38, 37...3,2,1 and go back into your mother's womb? Do it- I want to see it! Impossible! Likewise, it is impossible to be lost after you are saved.

*Salvation is eternal for it is a gift.*

How many gifts have you ever given back? You may receive a gift and recognize it is of no value. Yet, it cost you nothing and you keep it. If you buy something the wrong size, return it for exchange. But a gift we keep. Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"* If you don't make payments on your car, it will be repossessed. Salvation, though, is a gift. God gave it and will not come and take it back.

*Salvation is eternal for at salvation we are placed in Christ.*

Upon salvation a person is placed in Christ. I Corinthians 12:13 says *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* If at salvation we are baptized into Christ, we have life for *He is life*. If I am in Him as a Christian, I am safe as long as He lives. John 11:25 reads *"...I am the resurrection, and the life..."* Again I say, if I am in Christ as a Christian I am safe as long as He lives. Revelation 1:18 tells us *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."* Christian, you are safe for He will never die! He is life itself! No one ever in Christ will come out of Christ.

*Salvation is eternal for the saved are placed under the blood of Christ*

I Peter 1:18-19 says *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with*

*the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*” Christ could have been stoned to death. Then, His death would be to no avail. He could have been suffocated, and His death would be to no avail. On the cross when all His blood had exited His body He bowed His head and cried “it is finished.” The blood in Christ was God. When all the blood was shed, God had given Himself just as He promised. Had one drop of blood remained in Him, death could not have claimed Him.

In Egypt, Israel waited in bondage as nine plagues passed over the land. Pharaoh did not budge. Finally, the Passover lamb died and the blood of that lamb was placed on the door lintel and the doorposts. Then, the children of Israel were set free never again to be held hostage to the Egyptians. One application of the blood was sufficient forever.

When Christ died on Calvary, the blood He shed was presented to God in heaven. The blood is still there today! When a Christian sins, God still sees the blood that forgave that sinner at salvation. As long as the blood is before God, there is no fear. The blood prevails. Hebrews 9:12-14 *“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. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 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?”*

*What if I sin after I am saved?*

A Christian may ask “what if I sin after I am saved? Will I be lost again?” It is not a matter of “if” a person will sin after they are saved—you will! I John 1:8 *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* No person can live above sin. Your flesh did not get saved. Your soul is what got saved. Your soul has a shield of blood protecting it. I John 3:9 says *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he*

*cannot sin, because he is born of God.” Thus, your soul is sealed and your flesh does sin. When your flesh sins, what are we to do? I John 2:1-2 reads “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. 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.” I John 1:9 promises that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Quit living in misery thinking you are going to lose your salvation and start enjoying being a Christian. Saved yesterday, today, tomorrow, and forever!

Reference Scripture:

John 3:15 *“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*

John 6:54 *“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 10:28 *“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

John 17:2 *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”*

Rom 5:21 *“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Rom 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Titus 1:2 *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”*

Titus 3:7 *“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

I Jn 5:11 *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”*

## CREATION

### *The Book of Beginnings*

The first book in the Bible is called Genesis. The meaning of the word Genesis is “beginning.” In the Greek, the word Genesis means “origin.” Thus, the book of Genesis is the *book of beginnings*, that is, the *book of origins*.

The book of Genesis is hated by the secular world. Why? The reason is simple- Genesis gives God credit for all things and *no credit to man*. For example, Genesis credits God, not evolution, with man’s origin. Genesis records wondrous things God did and many *failures* man made. This is bothersome to those who oppose God. Genesis gives credit to God for all that exist. By him all things exist and by man nothing exists and this is verified in the Book of Genesis. For this reason, along with many more, Satan and his forces hate the book of Genesis.

### *What is begun in Genesis?*

As stated, Genesis is the book of beginnings. All things except God and Satan originate in Genesis. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have no beginning. Satan was created by God long before the time of the Genesis record. Satan surely existed prior to Genesis for he shows up just after the creation so that he may tempt man. Earth, heavens, light, creatures, man and woman, several covenants between God and man and many other things begin in Genesis. Unfortunately, SIN came to man in Genesis. However, fortunately, a solution to sin came in Genesis! See Genesis 3:15

All things are exclusively the handiwork of God. No wonder Satan hates the book of Genesis and has spent untold years of effort trying to disprove and discredit this precious book.

### *The Genesis Record of Creation*

I am going with the Bible concerning the origin of all things. For centuries men have argued against the Bible record of creation. I am a Christian, and I must go with the Bible.

Genesis 1:1-2 reads “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*”

Oh how amazing! A single verse, Genesis 1:1, suffices to tell of the creation of heaven and earth. Verse 2 tells of chaos and ruin. The next 29 verses tell of the act of God in restoring the creation in six days. All that you and I or any man have ever seen or known about is compiled in *one* single chapter of the Bible for in Genesis 2:1 we read “*Thus the heavens and the earth were **finished** and all the host of them.*” Don’t miss the word *finished*. This is stunning! If we could combine the talents of every historian, author, poet, and philosopher who ever lived, they could not produce a masterpiece such as Genesis Chapter 1. Every line, every word of this Chapter has stamped across it the autograph of Deity.

In Genesis chapter 1 “*and God said, let*” appears 8 times (vs. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). We know seven is the number of completeness in the Bible. Seven times in this great chapter 1 “good” occurs. Surely, God’s creation is completely good. The wonderful name “God” occurs thirty-two times in chapter 1.

In Genesis 1:1 of this eternal Word, *atheism* is disproved for here it is written “*God.*” May I say to this world “*there is a God!*” God is *infinite* for this verse confirms he was before the beginning. God is omnipotent for only the greatest of all powers could bring forth *all* from *nothing*.

If this Genesis 1:1 could be disproved, all of the Word of God, the entire Bible, is vain. How can we accept a book that begins with an error? This first verse is the litmus test- you are either a believer or an infidel. The first verse of the Bible sets forth the Bible as a book

of FAITH. If a man can believe “*in the beginning God*” he can believe “*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” Salvation does not begin with John 3:16 or Romans 10:13 or Eph 2:8-9- it begins with Genesis 1:1!

I accept Genesis 1:1 and say emphatically God is the originator, initiator, creator, and foundation of all that is, was, or shall be. Further, Genesis 1:1 is the foundation of the Bible, and the Bible is the foundation of all history.

*Created* means “to call into existence something from nothing.” I have never created. We say he or she is creative but not in the sense of Genesis 1:1 for no man has the ability to “call into existence something from nothing.” Only God can call into existence something from nothing.

The word *made* appearing in Genesis chapter 1 means “to fashion something out of material already existing.” Your home is likely built from lumber. The lumber is *made* from trees. Who made the trees? They were *created* by God. Do you see the important meaning of “created” and “made” regarding Genesis chapter 1?

I believe this heaven and earth as created by God was worthy of Him. That is, it was greater than magnificent, vast, and wondrous. It could only have reflected the perfection of the maker. Unequaled in freshness and beauty, it came from God’s hands. There were no groans of suffering to mar the harmony of the song of “the morning stars” as they sang together at creation (Job 38:7). There was no worm of corruption to defile. No rebel was present to challenge the supremacy of God. No shadows of death to taint the landscape. God reigned supreme without a rival and everything was good. Truly “*God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good,*” Genesis 1:31.

#### *Reference Verses*

Psalms 33:6 “*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*”

Isaiah 45:18 *“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.”*

Jer 10:12 *“He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.”*

John 1:3 *“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”*

1 Corinthians 8:6 *“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”*

Ephesians 3:9 *“And to make all men 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:”*

Col 1:16 *“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 powers: all things were created by him, and for him:”*

### *Other theories*

*Atheistic evolution-* all things evolved from *something*. There has always been matter so no one needed to be present to initiate the process of creation. This is a lie.

*Theistic evolution-* all things evolved, but there was some “intelligence” that guided things through the process of evolution. Mind you, no credit to true God but some intelligent power existed to guide the earth in its evolution. This is a lie.

*Big bang-* the universe began 15 billion years ago as a particle perhaps as small as an atom. The ball swelled, expanding rapidly, so rapidly heat and light were made. Rapid expansion resulted in breaking away so that the galaxies and planets broke away from the ball. This is a lie.

*Day-age theory-* holds that a day, as in the six days, is not a 24 hour day. It is rather a period of time or a geological age in which the earth and man developed. This is a lie.

*Literary Approach to Creation-* accepts the 7 days of Genesis account of creation as just good reading and the universe and man exist but not because of Genesis 1. This is a lie.

## R A P T U R E

Rapture means “gathering out” or “carried away.” Simply go to your dictionary to see this meaning. It is true that the literal word “rapture” does not appear in the Bible. Neither does the word “demon” but you believe in demons don’t you? The word “missionary” does not appear in the Bible, but we believe in missionaries. Perhaps you would prefer another word for the event of the gathering out of the saints and that is okay. The word “rapture” has been used a long time to describe this event of “gathering out.”

If “rapture” means gathering out, who is to be gathered out and when? In a nutshell, the event of the rapture is the gathering away of the *living saints and the bodies of the dead saints* from the earth. Jesus will come in a cloud above the earth and call for the saints, living and dead, to join Him. Christ will not touch the earth in the rapture but will call the saints to come join him in the clouds above the earth.

### *Old Testament Types of the Rapture*

Is the subject of the rapture simply a New Testament idea? Though the church was hid in the Old Testament there are two magnificent types of the church’s rapture found in the Old Testament. Two men in the Old Testament were carried away *without* experiencing *death*. The first was Enoch and later Elijah. One day these men arose in the normal course of life as if it were any other day, and on that day gravity lost hold of them. They were called up into heaven from their earthly walk. Their feet left the ground. In Elijah’s case 50 men searched for him for 3 days after his rapture and never found him. Read about these two men being raptured in the Bible as follows: *Enoch* (Gen 5:21-24 Heb 11:5) *Elijah* (II Kings 2:9-18). The rapture of these two men give us a picture of the rapture of the church.

### *New Testament Picture of the Rapture- Jesus*

Acts 1:3 speaks concerning Jesus *“To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:”* At the end of the forty days, Acts 1:9 says *“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”*

Like the blasting of a rocket into space, Jesus vertically ascended back to the Father in Acts 1. He disappeared into a cloud which shielded Him from the men who stood by watching his ascension.

So, the Old Testament and the New Testament have given us three wonderful pictures of the rapture. When the rapture takes place, it will not be a new experience for God!

#### *The Rapture of the Dead Saints*

Let us take a look first at the rapture of the dead saints, that is, folk saved who have died in the Lord. Let us go to that oft-read passage of I Thes 4:13-14 that so beautifully describes the rapture of the dead saints:

*13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (dead), that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

*14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

Asleep and sleep refer to the state of a Saint being dead and buried. When Stephen was stoned in Acts 7:60, the Scripture says he fell asleep. Why can this term “asleep” be used to describe the death of a saint? Because, one day the body will awake. II Corinthians 5:8 says *“to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”* When a saint dies, the soul and spirit separates from the body. The body goes to the grave and returns to dust. The soul and spirit go into God’s presence.

As God uses Apostle Paul to write to the church at Thessalonica in chapter 4, some are grieving because their loved ones have died. Paul writes to them in verse 13 “sorrow not.” In other words there

is hope! When Jesus comes in the clouds at the rapture, soul and spirit of the dead saints are coming with Him, verse 14, to collect the body left behind at death. If I am dead in the grave at the time of the rapture, I will get to see myself get up from the grave! Amen!

Now, concerning the rapture of the dead saints, let us look secondly at I Corinthians 15:35-50:

*35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*

*36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:*

*37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:*

*38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*

*39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.*

*40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.*

*41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.*

*42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:*

*43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:*

*44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

*45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

*46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.*

*47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

*48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

*49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

*50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

One does not plant a pod of okra in the ground expecting to get more pods of okra. One does not plant an ear of corn expecting to get an ear of corn. Instead, we plant the seed of the okra pod and the seed of an ear of corn. Likewise, what we plant in the cemetery when we place a dead saint there is not what shall come forth! From the grave shall come a changed, glorified body. No pain, nor sickness, nor dimmed vision shall be a part of the resurrected body! Praise the Lord!

### *The Rapture of the Living Saints*

Now, let us look back at the same two passages of I Thessalonians and I Corinthians and read of the rapture of the living saints. Look first at I Thes 4:15-18:

*15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep (dead).*

*16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

*18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Living saints will join those bodies of departed saints and go up into the clouds to meet Jesus together. “The dead in Christ shall rise first” I believe to mean the dead saints in the grave need to come from a few feet beneath the earth’s surface to get to the place of the living saints.

The Lord himself comes to get the saints in the rapture. He does not send an angel. He himself will come. Why? He is coming to get His bride that He purchased on Calvary. This mission He will not entrust to another!

Now let us go to another passage which gives us more detail of the dead and living being changed at the rapture. Let us take a look at the great Scripture of I Corinthians 15:51-58 regarding the rapture:

*51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (be dead), but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

*56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

*57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

I do not know how fast an eye twinkles, do you? That is how quickly the body of the living will be changed in the moment of the rapture. Corruption will give way to incorruption and mortal will put on immortality.

I enjoy verse 55. Let us take a closer look. “*O, death where is thy sting?*” In the rapture, the living changed in the twinkling of an eye will speak these words to death. They will have avoided death as did Enoch and Elijah!

“*O grave where is thy victory?*” These words will be spoken to the grave by those dead saints who have gotten up from the grave. You see, the grave will have lost its’ grip on their body. Praise the Lamb of God!

*When will the rapture take place?*

Even the sinners of this day have an interest in knowing when the rapture will take place. I think some sinners want to live for Satan

until the day before the rapture and then get saved. This is a foolish notion. Matthew 24:36 says *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”* It is a fact- no one knows the day or hour when the rapture will occur. It may happen today and if not today, tomorrow. Are you ready? You need to be ready for there will be no warning for you to get ready for He is coming as a thief in the night. Please read Matthew 24:43.

There remains only one event preceding the rapture. The final soul that makes up the bride of Christ needs to be saved. When that final sinner is saved, the trump of God will sound, and the saved will leave this world! I hope today is the day! The next landmark event on God’s calendar is the rapture.

*What does the rapture mean to the saint?*

First, it is for our delight. Do you get sad, Christian friend, while on this earthly walk? Be cheered by the rapture for any moment God’s children will be out of this mess!

Second, the rapture challenges the saint to live a godly life. I John 3:2-3 *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* What will be the state of your Christian life when Jesus comes? How will the bridegroom find you at his coming? Is the bride making herself ready for a great wedding feast?

Third, saints should urgently be getting their lost loved ones saved. When the rapture takes place, it will be eternally too late for countless millions of sinners. Will your loved ones be left behind?

*Are you ready?*

Are you saved? If so, you will be a part of this glorious event that is soon to take place. If you are not saved, bow your head and ask Christ into your heart as Savior. How can I be saved? The Word of God assures us in Romans 10:13 *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Sinner, call on the Lord today. Do not wait.

## SECOND COMING OF CHRIST TO EARTH

As we look to the subject of the Second Coming, a good starting place is with the disciples question to Christ in Matthew 24:3 “*Lord, what shall be the sign of thy coming?*” In other words, the disciples believed the Lord was coming back to the earth and they wished to know when He would come. Do you believe Jesus is coming? Some of those same disciples of Matthew 24 asked a similar question in Acts 1:6 “*wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*” Their question was answered by the angel in Acts 1:11 “*...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*”

Indeed, Jesus is coming back to the earth again. Some great Bible scholars say the second coming of Christ to the earth is the *second* most written about subject in the Bible. Yet, many do not believe He will come to the earth again. Let us look at what thus saith the Word of God. The Bible is the truth.

### *Why a Second Coming?*

Christ is coming a second time to accomplish many things. For the sake of time and space, I will dwell on three. *First*, he will come to lead the army in the final battle Armageddon where the last enemies of God on earth will be slaughtered. *Second*, He will come to the earth to arrest the Antichrist trinity- beast, false prophet and devil. *Third*, he will establish a promised kingdom on earth. For part three, see the topic “The Millennium.”

### *“Second Coming” in the Bible*

One note before we proceed further. Do not search the Bible for the exact phrase “second coming.” Those two words coupled together do not appear. Yet, many passages speak of Christ *return* to the

earth. In the New Testament alone, it is referred to over 300 times. I, as do many others, just prefer to use the term “second coming.”

### *A debated issue*

To say that Jesus is coming to the earth again is certainly a debated issue and oft denied issue. Entire denominations scoff at the very notion Jesus will ever set foot on this earth again. I am a Baptist. You will find the Baptist don't all agree. Some saved, blood-bought, born again Baptist do not preach the Second Coming of Jesus. Some ignore or, shall I say, avoid the subject. Some have been taught to stay away from the book of the Revelation. In other words, pretend the Bible has only 65 books, not 66. How can a God-fearing Christian ignore an entire book of the Bible? How can we ignore or deny the second most written about subject in the Bible?

The first Coming of the Lord was as a babe in the manger and seems most of the world celebrates Christmas. However, there is not widespread agreement in regard to His Second Coming. Various opinions exist about what is meant by the Second Coming. Some regard it as the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of PENTECOST. Others regard it as the coming of Christ into the heart of a sinner at conversion. Christ's coming for the believer at the time of death is still another view. Careful examination of the New Testament, however, makes it clear that the Second Coming will be a climactic historical event. The Lord will return *to this earth* in the same manner in which He left. His coming will be personal, bodily, and visible.

### *Scriptural proof*

In the introduction, two passages were given regarding His coming. They are Matthew 24 and Acts 1:6,11. Allow me to reference other scriptures. In the Lord's Prayer the disciples were instructed by the Lord to pray “*Thy kingdom come*” (Mt 6:10, Luke 11:2). The disciples were under the Roman kingdom and truly desired Jesus to establish *His* kingdom. They wanted relief from the Romans. Yet, what happened to Jesus? He was nailed to a cross- not placed on a throne.

Let us examine another scripture. The angel said to virgin Mary regarding the conception of Christ in Luke 1:32 *“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”* If you know a place in the scripture that tells where and when Mary’s baby ruled on the throne of David, please let others know! There is no such account in the scripture! Jesus never has ruled on David’s throne, but He *will* for he is *coming again* to do just that. The angel never lied to Mary.

Take another look at Acts 1:11 which says *“...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”* The disciples were with Christ on the Mount Olivet and suddenly a cloud received Jesus out of their sight. Stunned and saddened, the two angels assured them he would be back **“in like manner.”**

### *The Revelation appearance*

The Revelation gives the account of His Second Coming. In Revelation 19:11 (read) heaven opens. In Revelation 4:1 heaven opened to let John inside. This gives us a picture of the saints stepping into heaven when raptured. Now, in Revelation 19:11 heaven opens to let Christ out. The 7 years of Great Tribulation are nearing end. What a sight! Christ, called Faithful and True, is on a white horse. Do you remember when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey during His first visit to earth? Be assured this second visit is going to be different!

### *Final battle Armageddon*

Read Revelation 19:12-16 which gives us a description of the Lord in His Second Coming. Does he sound to you to be more a lamb or a lion? He has a sword. He is come to *slaughter*. In the introduction to this topic, the first purpose given for the Lord’s Second Coming was to destroy enemies. Let us look at the destruction. Revelation 19:17-19, 21 (read). The last battle of the ages is battle Armageddon. Read Revelation 16:14b-16 where this great battle Armageddon is prophesied. The enemies are gathered for the slaughter. With His sword, millions of the enemy are destroyed in this final battle. This

is an awful time for the sinful, but the saved can rejoice at the destruction of Christ's enemies.

The little book of Jude, though only one chapter, wrote of Christ's second coming and the destruction of His enemies. Jude 14 and 15 tell us "*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*"

#### *Destruction of the Antichrist trinity*

A second reason for his second coming is the destruction of the Antichrist trinity- the Devil, Beast and False Prophet. Read Revelation 19:20 where two of the three are taken down. Two down and one to go- the Devil. There is a reason the Devil is not destroyed along with Beast and False Prophet. God has a use for him. After the 1000 year reign (see topic The Millennium), he will be loosed a little season. After God finishes with him, we see his demise in Revelation 20:10. Halleluiah! I am so thankful for the book of Revelation. I am thankful Jesus is coming a second time for who else can seal the fate of the Devil forever?

#### *When?*

When will He come a second time? The time of the Second Coming is known only to God. Disregard any and all computer programs that calculate the end. In fact, Jesus stated that only the Father knew the time. Read Mark 13:32 and Acts 1:7. Therefore, the return of the Lord should be a matter of constant expectancy. As He came the first time, in the "fullness of time" in Galatians 4:4, so will the Second Coming be. The believer's task is not to try to determine the time of the Second Coming. We should share the gospel message diligently until He returns. Let us as saved folk never forget the Rapture takes place 7 years before His Second Coming. Any day now! Are you saved?

## JUDGMENT

### Part I- The Judgment of the Believer

Saved folk are commonly referred to as believers. So, let us look first at the judgment of the believers. The believer needs to be concerned with three judgments. Take a look:

*Believer's Sin Prior to Salvation:* When a sinner gets saved, what happens to their sins for the period of time lived before asking Christ into their heart as Savior? Have you ever asked yourself this question? This is a good question. Before we look at the answer, let us pause to be reminded "God hates sin and all sin must be addressed."

When a sinner receives Christ as Savior, they immediately stand in the sight of the Lord as having never sinned. How were their sins disposed of? How were those sins judged? The sins of a believer before they accepted Christ were judged in the death of Christ on the cross. No sin has ever gone unaccounted for. Christ took the judgment of my sin in His suffering and death at Calvary. I Peter 2:24 tells us "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*" John 5:24 reads "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life.*" Isaiah 53:6 says "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*"

Yes, your sin and my sin while we walked as unbelievers was judged at Christ's death on Calvary. I am so thankful for this great truth. Thus we may rejoice in Isaiah 38:17 which says in part "*...for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.*" Thus we rejoice in II Corinthians 5:17 "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become*

*new.*” If someone ever brings up your sin before you were saved ask them “what sins are you talking about?” Praise the Lord.

*Believers Sin during Christian Walk:* As one lives their life after salvation, mistakes are made. Sin is committed. A believer does things displeasing to God as well as fails to do things God requires. We call this “sins of commission” and “sins of omission.” Our failures, mistakes, and shortcomings as a believer do not please God. We are accountable to Him for these sins, and rest assured He knows what they are.

How are the sins of a Christian judged? All sin must be dealt with before God. I John 1:9 tells us to simply take our sins to the Lord and ask forgiveness “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” We have the assurance that the sin we commit after we are saved is placed beneath the same blood of the Cross that took care of our sins before we were saved. Praise the Lord.

But, wait a minute- what about the sin we fail to confess as Christians? For sin we fail to confess and repent of as Christians, we enter into judgment called *chastisement*. Listen to I Cor 11:31,32 “*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*” We are challenged by the Bible to self-examine ourselves. With the aid of the Holy Ghost which lives inside us, a Christian can know where they have failed God. When this failure is known, repent immediately. A Christian should be careful to daily examine their walk and resolve the shortcoming in prayer before the Lord. Caution- do not allow sin to build up in your life. Repent daily! If you do not repent before God, God will then administer chastisement to you. This is not pleasant! Before you close your eyes in sleep at the end of the day, judge yourself and repent accordingly.

*Believers Service for God (Judgment Seat of Christ):* This brings us to the third judgment of the believer. This judgment occurs before Christ. This is not a judgment to determine salvation. This is a

judgment for those who are saved. This is not a judgment for sin. This is a judgment to evaluate the Christian service God expected of a Christian during their walk on earth.

Listen to II Corinthians 5:10 *“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.”* Romans 14:10 says *“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”* The name of this judgment, as seen in these verses, is *Judgment Seat of Christ*. What is to be judged? *“Things done in his body,”* not soul. In other words, since your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost you will stand before God to give account of how you served Him. Again, let it be clear this is not a judgment to determine salvation and this is not a judgment for *sin* but for *service*.

This judgment is future. This judgment occurs in the “air” and not on earth. I Corinthians 4:5 *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”* At a point after the rapture, which is the gathering up of the saints to meet the Lord in the air (I Thes 4:13-17), this judgment will take place. Only the *saved* are present. The *unbeliever’s* judgment will come later. The “works” of the saved will be examined. How did you use the talent God gave you to use for Him? Were you faithful to God in your assignments? Was Christ first, second or last in your life while you walked on earth?

The following passage gives a wonderful description of this judgment:

*I Cor 3:11-15*

*11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

*12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

*13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

*14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

*15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

Rewards will be handed out at this judgment. Crowns will be handed out at this judgment. Likely, some will walk away having all their Christian life disappear as stubble in a fire. They will be ashamed they did not do something for the Lord as a Christian. I will not, Lord willing. Please accept your calling today to be a tract worker, Christian worker, church builder, preacher, or whatever God has impressed your heart to do for Him. Time is short.

## Part II- The Judgment of the Unbeliever

Let us begin our view of this judgment with the passage of Revelation 20:11-15:

*11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

*12 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.*

*13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

*14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Like the Judgment Seat of Christ, this judgment is *future*. This judgment occurs at the close of the millennium which ends in Revelation 20:7. This judgment occurs at “the great White Throne.”

This judgment is a judgment of the lost, that is, the sinner who died without Christ as his savior. I somehow believe the saved will witness this judgment. It is, in all eternity, one of the most solemn events recorded in the Scripture. It shakes me as a Christian. Oh, it is indeed so very sad!

How will the wicked dead appear before this Great White Throne? Verse 13 says both “death and hell” deliver up the dead. In other words, the wicked dead are set free from the grave. Death sets their body free. They are resurrected up to this judgment. Hell releases their soul for when a sinner dies that is where their soul goes. So, the wicked dead stand before this great White Throne as a person with body and soul reunited.

The subject of the judgment of the wicked dead is their “works.” A sinner often may go through life with seemingly no repercussions for their evil deeds. Some sell drugs. Some are habitual thieves and are never caught. They drive fine cars and live in fine homes. However, they have not gotten by though sometimes it seems they have. Christ keeps “books” and their deeds in this life are logged in the “books.”

There is also another book besides the books containing the deeds of the sinner. It is the “book of life.” Christ does not have to show the sinner their name is not there. However, Christ is so fair and merciful he opens the book of life for them to look therein and see the empty space *where their name could have been*. This, to me, is what makes this judgment so heart-breaking. Men go to hell of their own accord.

Who lives with Christ in eternity and who goes to everlasting destruction? The sole determining factor is whose name *is* and whose name *is not* included in the “book of life.” Sinner, trust Christ today and be saved. Get your name included in the book of life for that is all that matters!

Now, *eternity* (starts in Revelation 21:1) can begin for human destiny is forever settled! All have stood in judgment before the

Supreme Court with *Supreme Court Chief Justice Jesus Christ* presiding. Every knee has now bowed and every tongue has confessed.

## MILLENNIAL REIGN

### *Christ's Kingdom Promised*

The idea of Christ coming to the earth a second time to establish a kingdom is scoffed at by the multitudes. There are saved folk who have never accepted the Scripture regarding Christ coming to the earth a second time to establish a kingdom. I am a Baptist and not all Baptist accept this portion of God's Word. It is hard for me personally to understand why learned people will not accept the second most written about topic in the Bible, and that topic is Christ's second coming to earth.

Time and space do not allow us to investigate all the Bible has to say regarding the promise of Christ's second coming to establish a kingdom on earth. Let us take a look at some scriptures so that we have no doubt about this event.

I start by taking you back to the Old Testament. The Second Coming is certainly not just a New Testament idea. Isaiah recorded in Isaiah 9:7 "*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 hosts will perform this.*" Isaiah 9:6 (read) is written of the birth of Christ and the world gladly accepts this verse 6. Unbelievers read about baby Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 at Christmas time. Yet, verse 7 is also speaking of Christ. In verse 7 He is no longer a baby but has grown into a KING. If we accept the *child* in verse 6, we must accept the *king* in verse 7. Yes, Christ will sit on the throne of David in His earthly kingdom. Though rejected and crucified at His birth, Isaiah did not lie. Christ is not finished. His kingdom lies ahead!

Just as Isaiah *prophesied* of Christ kingdom on earth, it was *promised* to David. II Samuel 7:16 records the promise "*And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*"

In the New Testament, I take you to the announcement of the angel to virgin Mary given in Luke 1:32-33 “*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*” The house of Jacob is nation Israel. Tell me when Jesus ruled over Israel? Israel, with the gentiles’ assistance and approval, crucified Christ on a rugged cross! Do kings die on crosses? Is a cross a king’s throne? Do kings get called an illegitimate by their subjects? Do kings get stones cast at them? Do kings borrow donkeys to ride in a parade into the capital city? Those who deny Christ’s coming to the earth to reign over Israel apparently believe the angel lied to Mary. I believe the angel. Israel did not accept Christ at His first coming choosing rather to crucify Him. Israel does not accept Him today. They are still looking for the Messiah to come! When he comes the SECOND time, Israel will then recognize and accept Him. He will then rule and reign 1000 years over Israel on the earth. This is the *millennium*.

### *The term “Millennium”*

Millennium is another word that is not found in the Bible just as the words “rapture,” “demon” and “missionary” do not appear in the Bible. Common dictionaries define millennium as “a 1000 year period.” So, in this study we are interested in a very special 1000 year period. I prefer to use the word *millennium* to refer to this special 1000 year period. Would you prefer another word for this period? Well, that would be okay, but I will use *millennial* (*adjective*) and *millennium* (*noun*) in this study.

### *Doctrinal views on the Millennium*

Not much time will be spent on this sub-topic. I do think, though, that it is important for you to know there are three prevailing views regarding the millennium:

*Amillennial view* When the “a” is placed in front of millennial, it means “no.” Thus, the amillennial view says there is no 1000 reign of Christ on the earth. The amillennial view avoids the book of the Revelation. If you have an amillennialist’s view, your Bible has 65 books, not 66. I recently read the official position of one major,

worldwide denomination with a strong presence in our city and state. They not only denied the millennium but made light of the very notion anyone would even think such a thought as believing Christ would have a Kingdom on earth! Well, based on what they believe is necessary in order to be saved, they will never have to worry about their view on this subject. Some who hold the amillennial view believe Christ's kingdom is not literal, but is a kingdom in the "hearts of the believers." This is simply not the truth.

*Postmillennial view* This is a confusing view and harder to figure than is the amillennial view. "Post" means *after*. Thus, this view says the preaching and teaching of the Gospel will usher in a period of peace and righteousness on earth likely 1000 years in length. After this period, thus "post," Christ will come to get the church. What a confused view! This view says the world will get better and better through the advancement of the Gospel and, in fact, we may very well be in the millennium now! If we are, I'd just rather be an amillennialist! The world I live in is getting worse and worse going further downward into wickedness day-by-day. Also, during the millennium the Devil will be bound during the thousand years. If we are in the millennium now and Satan is bound, I'd hate to see him loosed! The bottom line is that the postmillennial view, like the amillennial view, does not accept the book of the Revelation.

*Premillennial view* I am a premillennialist. The prefix "pre" means *before*. The premillennial view states Jesus is coming for the saved in the rapture before (thus "pre") the tribulation (see the Great Tribulation). Christ will return with the saved for a 1000 year reign on this earth at the end of the great tribulation.

Are you clear on the three views?

### *The Millennium in the Scripture*

The best group of Scripture on the wonderful millennium is Revelation 20:1-7:

*1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

*2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,*

3 *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

5 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

7 *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

Six times in these 7 verses a period of 1000 years is mentioned. You may not ever understand what happens during this 1000 year period. However, if you believe the Bible you have to agree there is to God Almighty a special 1000 year period. Nothing is more clear in the Bible. It is this 1000 year period we refer to as the *millennium*. Choose another word instead of millennium if you wish.

### *Description of the Millennium*

*Satan* The millennium happens on the *earth*. It does not happen in heaven nor another place. Before there can be a millennium on this earth, there is one trouble-maker who must be removed. Enemies of Christ on earth have already been removed in the great Battle Armageddon led by Christ at the beginning of His second coming. The angel in Rev 20:1 comes down to the *earth* to rid the earth of “dragon, serpent, the Devil and Satan.” This is four names for the same person. The angel has a place in mind that would just suit this fellow, i. e., “bottomless pit.” The angel has the keys to hell given to him by Christ for Christ had these keys in Revelation 1:18. He has not only keys to the pit but power to lay hold on and bind Satan. In Revelation 20:3 he tosses him into the pit, closes and locks the door of the pit, and places a seal on Satan. Even though chained up and locked in hell, Satan could still torment earth’s inhabitants by his demon

spirit. However, the seal placed on him by the angel closes his evil spirit.

How long is he chained up, locked up and sealed up? A thousand years, verse 2. This sounds wonderful to me. Thank you angel. Amen!

*Throne* Look next at Revelation 20:4. With Satan exiled off into hell, Christ kingdom on earth can now become a reality. Remember the prophesy of a kingdom in Isaiah 9:7? Remember the promise of a kingdom to David in II Samuel 7:16? Remember the “kingdom” Christ instructed the disciples to pray would come to pass in Matthew 6:10? Revelation 20:4 speaks of thrones and contains that important phrase “reigned with Christ a thousand years.” The kingdom has come! This is a *literal* kingdom and it happens on *earth*. By human birth, born of a virgin, Christ is the rightful heir to David’s throne. The throne will be in the city of Jerusalem and the influence of the kingdom will be over the entire earth (read Isaiah 2:1-3). Zech 14:9 says “*And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.*”

Who will reign with Christ in His kingdom? Revelation 20:6 (read) tells us we the redeemed shall reign with him during this 1000 year kingdom.

*Subjects* Who are the subjects in the Kingdom? We have already answered this question several times. The subjects of the Kingdom are the people of the “house of Jacob.” In other words, Israel. Oh yes, the King Jesus they rejected the first time he came to earth to visit them, they will now receive. Zech 12:9-10 says “*And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*” Zech 13:6 says “*And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*”

*The Earth* Are you saved? You will rule on this earth with Christ in the Millennium Kingdom. However, I sure hope earth will be

something different than it is now. I don't like things as they are now. By the authority of God's Word, it will be much different! Praise the Lord.

Let us take a look at numerous Scripture describing the rejuvenated earth during the millennium. Read and enjoy them:

Isaiah 11:6-9

*6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*

*7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*

*9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

Isaiah 35:1-10

*1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

*2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.*

*3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.*

*4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*

*5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*

*7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*

*8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

*9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:*

*10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

**Isaiah 65:17-25**

*17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

*18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.*

*19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*

*20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

*21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.*

*22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

*23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.*

*24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

*25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.*

**Zeph 3:11-13**

*11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.*

*12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.*

*13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*

**Zech 9:9-10**

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Zech 14:16-21

16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Heb 8:10-11

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

## THE GREAT TRIBULATION

As we examine the events of Matthew 24, verse 21 says *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”* Let us examine the Bible concerning this event known as the “great tribulation.” You may also have heard this event described as “the tribulation period.”

Let us begin with a short look back to the prophecy of the Old Testament regarding this event. Daniel wrote in 9:27 of a week in which the Antichrist would appear in the middle of the week. This week is a *week of years*, in other words, 7 years. The great tribulation is 7 years in length and is the week Daniel spoke of often.

Zeph 1:15 describes the period by saying *“That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”* Matthew 24:22 reads *“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”* There is no period in history as awful as the great tribulation period. No period of affliction, even war, has ever rivaled this period which lies ahead. IT IS GOD’S FINAL JUDGMENT ON THIS WORLD FOR SIN.

Before we look at the events of the period, when does this period come? This period of 7 years is ushered in by the rapture. The Rapture is discussed in article 6. The rapture is the gathering out of the saints. The Lord will come in the clouds just above the earth and call both dead and living saints to heaven. The Lord’s coming in the rapture will be as a thief in the night and thus unseen by the lost world. Millions will be missing. The rapture will occur when the last soul that makes up Christ’s bride is saved. So, sinner take heed. This world could be in the tribulation period 5 minutes from now. Saint, you can rejoice at the nearness of His coming.

If you are saved you will be safe with Jesus in heaven during this awful period of 7 years we call the tribulation. So, you may ask “why should I be concerned with the tribulation period?” The answer is three-fold. First, we need to get the lost saved as soon as possible. Secondly, the saved are coming back to the earth at the end of the tribulation period to reign 1000 years with the Lord on the earth (see article 9). The tribulation period is God preparing the earth for the millennial reign. The Lord cannot reign on the earth with His people so long as the earth is in the sinful shape it is in at present. In the tribulation he will purge the world of all sin and purify it for a righteous time of ruling and reigning with the saints. Third, as Christians we are interested in all subjects covered in the Bible. Of course, sinner, you are concerned with this period for you certainly want to miss this awful time by getting saved now!

In Revelation 4:1 the Apostle John, the man God used to pen down the Revelation, was called up to heaven. This is a picture of the Rapture, the gathering of the saved from the earth into heaven. John looked heaven over and gave a brief description of the mighty throne, etc, in Revelation 4:2-11. John’s view of heaven was interrupted in Chapter 5. A book is brought forth. In verse 1 this book is sealed with seven seals. What book is this? This book is the book containing the plan of almighty God for *redeeming this earth!* Jesus himself, verse 7, takes the book from the hand of almighty God for He and He alone is worthy to open it.

Revelation chapter 6 begins the opening of the book and thus the *beginning of the tribulation period*. Revelation chapter 6 and chapter 7 takes us through the opening of 6 of the 7 seals that are on the book of redemption. Look at these chapters and see what happens when each seal is opened. The opening of the *first* seal in verse 1 and 2 of chapter 6 brings a white horse. This is the appearing of kingdom of the antichrist to establish his rule over the earth. The antichrist begins to appeal to man by using propaganda for he has a bow but no arrows. In other words, he has a gun and no bullets, only a lot of smooth talk. As a side note, in Revelation 19:11 when Christ appears to the earth He appears riding a white horse. The antichrist also rides a white horse to mock the Lord.

Now, let us go to the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> and final seal on the book of redemption in Revelation 8:1. When this seal is opened, the judgment of God that awaits from this opened seal is so harsh heaven became silent for 1/2 hour. Horror awaits. Imagine an event that is so stunning it silences heaven's host!

The opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal brings not a single event, but multiple events. Seven angels each with a trumpet appear. Six sound their trumpet in 8:7 through 11:14. Look at the scripture and see the events at the sounding of each trumpet. Space does not allow me to recount all that happens.

Just as the opening of the seventh seal brought a break in the sequence of events, so does the sounding of the seventh angel's trumpet in 11:15. The Bible goes into a description of the great red dragon, the beast, and the false prophet in chapter 12 and 13. Go to chapter 16. Here God authorizes 7 angels to pour out 7 vials on the earth. Read of the wrath of God poured out as each vial is poured out on the earth in chapter 16.

Then, the end to the 7 years of great tribulation comes with the coming of the Lord in Revelation 19:11. The great captain Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, comes to finalize the battle of the forces of good and evil in the great battle Armageddon. Yes, Jesus himself comes to clean up the earth and rid it of all sin and sinners. Not until this is accomplished can we have a reign of righteousness of 1000 years with Christ on the earth. What a glorious day that will be. Let us get all our loved ones saved so they avoid the great and terrible day of the tribulation.



## PASTORS AND DEACONS

### **Pastor**

The qualifications of a *Pastor*, that is, a *bishop*, are given in I Timothy 3:1-7 as follows:

*1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*

*2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*

*3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*

*4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;*

*5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*

*6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

*7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

All positions in the work of the Lord are important, even the person who sweeps the floor of the House of God. Yet, no position has more responsibility than does the position of Pastor. This is because a Pastor must be all things: a God called preacher, a teacher (I Timothy 3:2 and II Timothy 2:24), and a pastor (undershepherd).

Look at each qualification of a pastor, called bishop, in I Timothy 3:1-7 given above:

*A man:* God calls men, not women, to preach the Gospel. Re-read verse 1. It is very simple.

*Blameless:* not perfect for no one is perfect. Blameless is to live a Godly life such that the pastor does not open the door to fellow man to bring blame, scour and ridicule on the church and work of the Lord.

*The husband of one wife:* Not to be interpreted as “one wife at a time.”

If you are a divorcee, you are disqualified from being a Pastor. If you are single, you cannot Pastor for you are not a husband. A Pastor must be a family man. Further, a husband is a man- not a woman.

*Vigilant:* sober

*Sober:* Self-controlled, not under the control of another as a drunk man under the control of alcohol. You cannot be a Pastor and report to your wife or anyone other than God.

*Of good behavior:* modest and humble, not proud and high-minded

*Given to hospitality:* fond of guest and a lover of people. If you don't love people, you can't be a pastor.

*Apt to teach:* Be an instructor of the Bible. If a preacher cannot teach the Bible he cannot pastor.

*Not given to wine:* Strong drink is of the Devil and is not intended for any man, much less a preacher of the Gospel

*No striker:* Quarrelsome. Contentious. Always wanting to fight and argue.

*Not guilty of filthy lucre:* Filthy lucre is money or material gain obtained in the wrong fashion such as stealing or embezzlement or lying and misrepresenting the truth.

*Patient:* No other virtue is as important to a Pastor as patience. If you are a Pastor you will need to spend much time praying for God to give you patience.

*Not a brawler:* Must be a peace-lover. The devil is the author of confusion and strife

*Not covetous:* You must have your desires under control. You cannot covet material, money, or the possessions of others but be content and thankful with what God gives you

*Ruleth your own house well having his own house in subjection:* Verse 5 says how can you rule the church of God if you cannot rule your own house? Your children and your wife be must under your rule in the home and in the church you Pastor. Single men and divorcees cannot pastor.

*Not a novice:* Pastoring is not for beginners. You need experience in God's vineyard before Pastoring. God does not save a man one day and send him into the pulpit to Pastor the next day. Experience in the Christian walk and vineyard comes first. Many young preachers have started Pastoring without necessary seasoning in the Word of God and

in the walk with God and have been overwhelmed and become discouraged. A worse fear for the novice trying to Pastor is that he will get lifted up in pride and have a tragic fall.

*Have a good report:* Fellow man must have confidence in you or you cannot Pastor. Not all men will like you and agree with you and

that is not the meaning of this qualification. When your reputation and testimony are ruined among men, you are finished as a Pastor.

### ***Deacons***

Do you know the meaning and therefore the position of a deacon? Deacon means “errand-boy” or “servant.” A Pastor (Bishop) is an overseer and a deacon is a servant. To understand this, let us go back to the place in the Bible where deacons were originally appointed. Acts 6:1-4 says “*And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*”

The widows in the early church needed help and the Pastors were busy preaching the Gospel. Pastors should be busy spreading the Gospel. Who was to help the needy widows? The office of deacon was set up to handle this job so the Pastors could stay focused on the Gospel. Hence, it is clearly seen the base role of the deacon is to serve the church and the Pastor. A deacon’s role in the church is to see to the material needs of the congregation and the pastor. A deacon sits up at night with a sick member. A deacon makes sure the needs of the pastor and his family are met. A deacon makes sure the church building where the congregation meets is ok- no leaks, heated and cooled, and in good state of repair. A deacon does not tend to the spiritual matters of the church for this is the Pastor’s role. A deacon is not “in charge” of the church for the governing of the church is by the pastor and Christ Jesus.

The qualifications of a *Deacon* are given in I Timothy 3:8-13 as follows:

- 8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;*
- 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*
- 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*

*11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

*12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.*

*13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Look at each qualification of a **deacon** in I Timothy 3:8-13 given above:

*Grave:* honest and honorable

*Not doubletongued:* tell one person one thing about a matter and tell another person another thing about the same issue

*Not given to much wine:* wine is of Satan and will destroy any man

*Not greedy of filthy lucre:* Filthy lucre is money or material gain obtained in the wrong fashion such as stealing or embezzlement or lying and misrepresenting the truth.

*Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience:* A lover of the faith, the Word of God, truth and right

*First proved:* A man must be “set aside” by the church for a period of time. His life is observed to see how he conducts himself before the world. A deacon must be an example Christian unto others. If a man cannot walk as a Christian before the world by paying his debts, talking like a Christian, and treating fellowman in a Christian way he is not qualified to be a deacon.

*Wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things:* Grave means honest and honorable. Sober means under control by self and not worldly pleasure or material. Not slanderous means a controlled tongue. Faithful in all things. A man may be qualified to be a deacon, but his wife can quickly and easily disqualify him!

*Husbands of one wife:* If you are a divorcee, you cannot serve as a deacon. If you are single you cannot serve as a deacon.

*Ruling their children and own houses well:* If a man seeking to be a deacon cannot rule his own house, he cannot serve the church. Again, let it be stated- a single man or divorcee cannot hold the position of deacon.

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

### *Introduction*

***Exodus 20:1-2 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.***

God never ceased to remind Israel what he had done for them in liberating them from the Egyptian bondage. It would be pleasing to know how many times in the Scripture God spoke such a reminder. Why did God do so? God did so for He was reminding Israel that since He set them free He had the right to impose rules and regulations on them. If one buys something they can do pretty much do as they wish with the purchased item. Let us be reminded redeemed means “to buy back.” God redeemed Israel. God purchased Israel on the slave block in Egypt. Israel belongs to God by purchase. He thus has the right to impose on them commandments. So, here we see in verse 1 and 2 God reminding Israel what He has done for them just as He is about to give them the commandments. Israel is under deep obligation to fear, obey, and serve God.

Likewise, Christians should be careful to never forget God redeemed them. He purchased them. One becomes redeemed by the purchasing power of the blood of Christ. Therefore, yes, God can impose rules on what He rightfully owns.

The test as to whether or not a person loves God is simple- do you keep his commandments? Do you abide by His rules? John 14:21 *“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.”* Further, the measure as to whether or not man loves his fellow man is found in the keeping of God’s commandments as spoken in I John 5:1 *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”*

As we approach the first of the Ten Commandments, bear in mind that this is not the first commandment God ever imposed on mankind. Adam had a commandment from God- don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Cain and Abel had a commandment from God- bring an offering of the fruit of the ground. However, man has not seen to this point in history such an extensive set of commandments as we will see in the Law of Moses. As concerning Israel, until now the law they lived by was in the mind of Moses. The people brought their disagreements before Moses as spoken in Exodus 18:13. Moses ruled. In Exodus 18:25-26 judges were installed to hear the peoples' issues. I suppose each judge had his own opinion for there was no written law all the judges had to uphold. What man thinks is about to come to an end! God is about to send a law. Mankind will then know what God expects of him.

*#1 and #2 No Other gods and No Graven Images*

***Exodus 20:3-6 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.***

The first two commandments are very much related. We will discuss them together. They are, simply stated, "you can have no other gods ahead of me" and "you cannot create any images that you bow down to."

The first commandment makes God FIRST! The first commandment says God is number ONE! If a person cannot first accept God as number one, he doesn't need any more commandments. The rest are futile. By the way, if not for God Israel would still be in slavery in Egypt. Shouldn't this make God number one? If not for God, you and I and all mankind would be in hell or

on hell's doorstep. Why can't God be number one? God created all things and without Him was nothing made that was made. Does that not make God number one? In him we live, we move, we have our being. What problem is there with God being number one? Your heart is beating right now thanks to God. Can He not be first in your life? Again, there need be no further commandments unless we can accept the first commandment. Put another way, if you accept the first commandment, you will have no problems accepting the rest of the commandments.

No other gods allowed. No graven images allowed. What is a graven image? It is a carved idol. An idol is a person, place or thing that comes between a Christian and God. An idol is whatever captures our heart, our interest, and our time. It may be that General Motors carved your idol. Some folk worship cars and trucks. Maybe your idol was carved by one of the boat manufacturers or by a manufacturer of campers. The point is we have idols today just as Israel did, but they are shaped a little differently. They are carved into a form that looks a little differently than did the idols of Israel.

Why does God prohibit "gods" and "graven images?" The answer is found in this passage, and there is more than one reason. First, God is a jealous God. God says to the reader "I am your God and I am jealous. I do not want to share you with anyone else." It does not hurt my feelings that God is jealous over me. That makes me proud and makes me feel good. He must be real jealous for He gave His only begotten son to ensure I became His!

Second, there are to be no other gods and no images because God is revengeful. In other words, worship God and God only or you will wish you had. Hate God and He will visit the sins of the fathers upon their descendents down to the third and fourth generations. This fact should make us know the value of serving God. There should be no doubt or hesitation that we should serve Him. Serve Him or our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren suffer. Why would any person wish to punish the innocent?

Thirdly, no other gods and no images because God is merciful, verse 6. No other God can come close to meeting your needs as can the true and living God. Why? God is merciful. When men cease to understand you and reason with you, God will reach out for He is merciful. No other god can love you nearly as much as God loves you. Forty times in the Bible we find the words “*His mercy endureth forever.*” God sure has the ability to judge for He has all power, but His mercy mitigates His judgment. While men pray for the gods to smile on them, I am pleased with Jehovah and His promise of mercy in verse 6. I choose to serve Him.

Finally, the God of whom we speak in this passage happens to be Jehovah. He was not anointed. He was not appointed. He was not elected. He was not created or formed. There is no one above Him. No power exceeds His power. He does not report to any government or any religious organization. He is Jehovah. He is above all. Who would want to have another god?

### *#3 God's Name in Vain*

***Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.***

God's name is holy because His character is represented by His name. Your name may be a word of, say, five letters and is just a word. But not the name of God. His name is all that He is. It would be okay to take my name in vain. Go ahead, use my name for it is just a word. God's name is what He is, that is, His character. And friend, rest assured His character is not vain. His name must remain holy for thus is His character. He knows no sin. The lone time reverend occurs in the Bible is in reference to God Ps 111:9 “*He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.*”

Men tend to bolster a lie by adding God's name. Men express anger at fellow man and add God's name to reinforce the anger. Vain means false and frivolous.

Let us be careful lest we take God's name in vain not intending to. How is this possible? Folk swear to tell the truth in court then lie. Folk are sworn into public office and then fail to uphold the principles of the office. Marriage vows are taken in the name of God and then broken by divorce.

Profanity preys on the name of God. A common college dictionary contains more than 100,000 words. Yet, men can't carry on a conversation without taking God's name in vain! In the shops, on the street, in the schools, in the businesses, and in the office God's name is abused. Again, you are welcome to use my name. It is not sacred and does not stand for my character.

Profanity is cowardice. If you are so tough, swear by your name!

Profanity is senseless for it neither proves nor provides anything.

Profanity is useless. Contracts can be executed, delays can be overcome, and mistakes can be corrected without using the Lord's name in vain. During and after the Welch Revival it was said that the mules in the mines had to learn a new language because their master had been saved and no longer swore as before. I wish we could have revival again. I'd be willing to re-teach the mules!

Profanity is hypocritical. It attaches the name of the holy God to a lie. A saved person who swears is acting in hypocrisy for they are speaking in a way they know they shouldn't.

#### *#4 Remember the Sabbath*

***Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.***

Sabbath- this word means “intermission.” Have you ever been to an event where someone about midway in the event stood and said “it is time for intermission?” This is a recess from the program.

God six days created and then rested on the seventh day as we are reminded in verse 11. He took a break. See also Genesis 2:2. He observed intermission. Be assured God was not nor has he ever been tired. This day of God resting was, by the way, the seventh day in time as we know it. In other words God did not even let a week go by until he rested.

God never commanded the Sabbath day for God’s benefit. God never commanded the seventh day of rest for man’s spiritual needs. It was commanded of mankind due to mankind’s physical nature. Man needs a day of rest and God in his wisdom knew a day of rest was needed every seventh day. God knows mans abilities and limitations better than man knows them, better than Doctors know them. God made man. The next time the atheist takes a day off, let him remember it was God who established that man needed a day off. So, God set the example for man when He rested on the seventh day after 6 days of creation.

The Greeks at one time had a 10 day cycle. The Romans at one time had an 8 day cycle. Both, without seeking the wisdom of God or even acknowledging God decided that a 7 day cycle was best for the citizens! Man has in fact proven to himself through much study that when a man rest every seventh day, the batteries of both his mind and his physical being are recharged. It doesn’t matter who you are, if you are tired physically you are weakened spiritually and mentality.

I have a saying- “if you don’t put it in neutral once in a while, you will burn up the engine.” I know no man that has an “S” on his chest. The “S,” of course, stands for Superman. Furthermore, God is not going to make an exception for any person. You and I and all men require a day of rest and that day is to come every seventh day. Go ahead and skip that day of rest and watch the warning signs appear. Why is there so much sickness, fatigue, divorce, stress and many

broken hearts? Folk will not believe God and take that day-long intermission every seventh day.

Industry and the commercial world today know more than God. Seven days on and three days off. Ten on and five off. We know more than God. Sure, the factory may do well, but what is it doing to the individual, to the home, to the children, and to the church? I see no sign we are returning to God, but rest assured God has not changed His policy regarding the needs of men and women of this age. We still need to rest every seventh day. God constructed man in this fashion.

To Israel, God made this day of rest also a Holy Day. In Exodus 20:8 God told Israel to keep this day of rest holy. In Exodus 20:11 Israel was told this day of rest was hallowed by God. Hallowed means purified and consecrated. Israel was told “not only are you to rest on this seventh day, but keep this day consecrated.” The rules set forth to Israel to guide them in keeping this day holy were rigid. For example, in Numbers 15:32 a man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath was placed in the ward and then killed. There were limitations on how far an Israelite could travel on the Sabbath. Many restrictions were applied to the Sabbath.

Not only did Israel have a seventh day of rest known as the Sabbath, but they had a Sabbatic year every seventh year. Furthermore, Israel had a Sabbatic Jubilee recurring each cycle of seven sevens, or upon the fiftieth year.

Today the Sabbath is ignored in Israel. Commerce rules along with pleasure. The Sabbath is in large part ignored. Yet the words of Isaiah 58:13-14 remain.

Now, let us look at what I shall call the American Sabbath. God never gave America as a nation a Sabbath day as he did the nation Israel. Sure, the command to rest the seventh day is to all men of all generations and nationalities. God did not set forth to America a day sanctified unto Him. However, we acknowledge a time when American by the civil law of the land observed Sunday as a day

which was sanctified unto God. The commercial world was not open for business. Many government municipalities had a “blue law” in force on Sunday and only essentials like food and medicine could be sold. Can you imagine that now? Government had a respect unto God, and God honored man for that respect.

Today, Sunday is recognized in no regard as a day sanctified unto God by civil law. Businesses are busy. The recreational establishments have their busiest day. The Super Bowl is Sunday. The final round of golf championships is held on Sunday. Sunday is race day. When American ceased to observe the first day of the week as a day of rest in honor of God setting aside such a day, the moral demise of this nation has accelerated! All nations that forget God shall be turned into hell.

Now I shall address the Christian Sabbath as we have addressed the Jewish Sabbath and the American Sabbath. Let us be reminded again, all men of all nationalities and ages have been commanded by God to rest every seventh day. If you want to make that seventh day of rest be Tuesday, so be it. My hardest day is Sunday and like my father, I most often rest on Monday. Monday is my seventh day of rest.

Let me first clarify that in a search of the New Testament scriptures nowhere is it found that a Christian is to observe the Jewish Sabbath. So, the Christian Sabbath is not Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Some religions are sadly misguided.

Again, your day of rest can be any day. Never forget the value of that seventh day of rest. It is not only valuable, but necessary. Now is a good time to be reminded that the Sabbath day as given in the Ten Commandments is twofold- a day of rest and a day of sanctification unto God. Did God set forth unto the New Testament Christian a day to be esteemed more holy than another day? The answer is found in Colossians 2:16 *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day.”* We do not have a day of the week in which we are commanded on that day to be more holy than the other 6 days.

We do not have a day of the week in which we are commanded to be more sanctified unto God. As regarding our relationship unto God, everyday is to be the same and to make Sunday the only day we devote ourselves unto God is to play the hypocrite. Millions do just that!

God did set forth for the New Testament Christian a “Lord’s day.” It is the first day of the week. It is not Saturday. The first day of the week is the day we celebrate the empty tomb of our risen Savior. The Holy Ghost descended to mankind to dwell in the believer’s heart on the first day of the week. In I Corinthians 16:1 we are commanded to do something on the first day of the week. What is it? We are commanded to bring our offerings unto the Lord. While we are come together to give our offerings unto Him, why not sing a little praise unto Him? While we are together, why not pray together unto Him? Why not preach a little in His name from His wonderful Word!

Again, for your enlightenment, Hebrews 10:25 says “*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.*” Sunday is not the only day it is legal to assemble in church. The Hebrews simply says as often as the congregation assembles, you be sure you are there!

*#5 Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother*

***Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.***

The commandments preceding this commandment establish the relationship of man to God. This commandment and the five that follow govern the relationship of man to man.

Read Ephesians 6:1-3.

Genesis gives us the first father and mother, Adam and Eve. The first institution God founded is the home. The home is built around mother and father. Single parent homes are the work of sin. Homosexual partnerships that pretend to be a home are the work of

sin. God sets up homes based upon a father and mother. Examine the Bible and see all the fathers and mothers such as Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel and Isaac and Rebekah.

The attack on the family today is frightening. Divorce, pornography, gays, child abuse, and adultery are all attacks on the home. Why does Satan hate the family?

- It was established by God
- It is the only thing on earth God likened Jesus' bride to
- The Bible is about families
- Families make up churches

The attack on the home in today's world is not only frightening to those of us who know the Word of God, but it will lead to the downfall of our civilization. The foundation of civilization is the home!

Honor: It is an honor that is timeless, right through an honorable funeral for the parents. It is an honor not built on materialism, but respecting mother and father's commands and wishes. It is an honor that is earned- not automatic. Some mothers and fathers do not earn their children's respect. Read Eph 6:4.

It is an honor that is rewarded by God. As we look at the Ten Commandments, we find that this commandment is, as stated in Ephesians 6, the first commandment with promise. In other words, God pledges something to those who will obey this commandment. If you will keep this commandment, God says he will do something for you. He pledges two things: one, it will be well with you and secondly, you will live long. If you do not heed this commandment, God may choose that your life not be well. He may choose to end your life early.

*#6 Thou Shalt Not Kill*

***Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.***

This is the second commandment that establishes the relationship of man to man. The previous commandment, honor thou father and thou mother, was the first.

Genesis 2:7 says “*and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” The beginning of life on this planet came from the breath of God. All life thereafter has come from God. You have life because God gave you life. Satan has never nor ever will give life. Life is God’s gift. I do not say this to give this commandment more importance than the others, but I say this to make it perfectly clear that when life is taken, it strikes at the supreme prerogative of God. To murder and destroy life interferes with the sovereignty of God. A murderer dares God’s eternal authority.

Yet, death is in the world. The scripture states that “sin entered the world and death through sin.” Sin originated with Satan. He came to Adam and Eve and introduced them to disobedience toward sovereign God. If Satan could, there is no doubt he would usurp God and take his throne. His intentions are clear. Yet, he cannot. However, he surely undertakes in the heart of men to dethrone God. By no other means does he strike so deliberately at the sovereignty, power, and authority of God as in the destruction of human life by human beings. Therefore, every murder from Cain to present hour has been a part of the devil’s effort to take from God His highest and holiest prerogative.

It is a good point in this study to mention the first murder. Genesis is the book of beginnings. We see the beginning of vegetation, the beginning of the animal kingdom, the beginning of land and sea, and the beginning of the creatures of the air and water. Then suddenly, like a car applying the brakes, we come to a screeching halt in Genesis 4:8 where we read “*Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.*” The first murder had occurred. The epitome of God’s creative act, mankind, has had his life removed. God is sorely displeased. God’s punishment to Cain for this heinous act was multiplied:

- The earth lost part of its’ power to yield fruit for it was now tainted by the blood of Abel

- Cain took on the life of a fugitive living in constant fear that all men were out to take his life
- He had to live the life of a vagabond, never being able to settle down and call a place home making him the first recorded homeless person
- He lived a miserable life trying to hide from God

The sentence on Cain was harsh as we hear him cry out in Genesis 4:13 “...*my punishment is greater than I can bear.*” Today when the tally is final, there will be thousands of lives wrongfully taken by fellow man, every one an intrusion onto the sovereignty of God.

Let us look at the various circumstances connected with the taking of life in the Bible. Though we have spoken only of human life, the Bible gives liberty for the killing of animals for the purpose of sacrifice and food. The first eating of meat is granted in Genesis 9:3 when the ark landed. Until the time of the landing of the ark, mankind ate vegetables.

Under the Law of Moses, God set forth certain laws which, if violated, were punishable by death. Violation of the Sabbath as well as commission of idolatry and adultery were punishable by death. Under the Law of Moses, a housebreaker may be killed for forcing entry into one’s home. God forbid any one of us find ourself in this situation, but God would permit one to defend his home even if it meant taking the intruder’s life.

The law does not prohibit the taking of life in war. More than once God commanded Israel to go to war. There have been wars that were unjust and those in command will answer to God for the lives taken. I, for one, do not believe FREEDOM is free. History has shown us freedom is wrestled for on the battlefield. Lives are sacrificed.

There is also the case of life taken by accident. This we call involuntary or accidental manslaughter. Provisions were made in the law for Cities of Refuge. If a man chopping wood had his ax handle come off and it accidentally killed his neighbor, he could flee to a city of refuge and find safety.

Murder is yet another issue. There is no excuse nor city of refuge for the deliberate taking of human life. Careless disregard for human life must carry a steep penalty for God hath said “Thou shalt not kill.” The taking of a life whether by premeditation or by carelessness is disapproved by God in the same fashion. Under the law, a man who knowingly allowed a vicious ox or bull to roam and the animal gored someone to death was guilty of murder in place of the animal. In places in this world, people are worked as animals in unsanitary conditions that lead to their death. That is murder for which someone must answer to God. The liquor industry will answer for every victim of a smashed automobile. Murder is accountable to God for he said “Thou shalt not kill.”

In the time of murder, man is never to avenge for God said “vengeance is mine.” Governments may have their laws stating whatever they wish but God set the penalty for murder. “Thou shalt not kill” is His law! Go back to the landing of the ark in Genesis 9. All civilization had vanished except Noah and his family. God set forth to re-establish civilization. Do you know the first law God enacted in the post-flood civilization? The law of capital punishment as presented in Genesis 9:5-6. If a man willfully sheds a man’s blood, men are commanded of God to take that man’s life. This is called *capital punishment*. So, if you don’t believe in capital punishment or the so-called “death” penalty, then you don’t believe the Bible!

Yes, the backbone of God’s idea of a civilized society is the death penalty. A nation that does not have this law is a nation of lawlessness. Again, God’s first law enacted in the re-establishment of civilization when Noah’s ark landed was the enactment of the death penalty. It was reinforced in the law of Moses in Exodus 20:13 and has not been rescinded. If my life is taken by a murderer, my sons do not have to avenge the act. God has empowered government to take the murderer’s life.

In closing, murder strikes at the sovereignty of God. He gave life. Murder strikes at the deity of Christ for he is our Life through

salvation. While all sin is serious, murder must rank at the top in getting God's attention.

### *#7 Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery*

#### ***Exodus 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.***

We come to yet another commandment that regulates the behavior of man toward man. In conjunction with our text verse, please read Lev 20:10, Deut 5:18, and Proverbs 6:32. Seventeen times in the Old Testament adultery is written. Yet, adultery is not just an Old Testament topic for it is written 23 times in the New Testament.

To understand adultery, we must return to the beginning, i.e., Genesis. In the beginning, God set forth the only sexual relationship that he would ever bless- one man in union with one woman. Genesis 1:27 "*male and female created he them.*" God put the first man and the first woman together in a relationship on this planet. They lived together, they ate together, they loved one another, and they bore children. They were so "together," it is no mystery they both ate the forbidden fruit of the tree. You're welcome to look, but I can assure you God blesses no relationship in the Bible other than "one man, one woman." Thus, we can define adultery as any relationship outside "one man, one woman" brought together in the blessed union of what is called marriage.

This commandment, "*thou shalt not commit adultery,*" condemns homosexuality. Adultery is relationship other than "one man, one woman." What testimony do we need other than Sodom and Gomorrah to know God's thoughts on homosexuality?

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" condemns polygamy, i.e., having more than one mate. The patriarchs tried multiple wives, but God was not pleased. Sarah gave Hagar the Egyptian handmaid unto her husband Abraham to be his wife, and we see the tragic result of multiple wives. Solomon had multiple wives which led to his demise.

Pornography is a multi-billion dollar business around the world and is clearly condemned by "thou shalt not commit adultery."

Pornography is sexuality and nudity that fuels the lust of men and women. Matthew 5:27, 28 says *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Again, pornography is a conduit by which the adulterous lust of men and women are fueled.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” is marriage’s best friend. This commandment protects marriage. Few divorces would ever occur if this commandment were adhered to. Government would not have to intervene with amendments and statutes to protect marriage if we would adhere to the Bible.

It is nearly impossible to talk about adultery and not divorce (see article 21). Let us call Christ forth and hear him speak on the subject in Mark 10:2-12. The Pharisees began the conversation by asking the Lord *“Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? Tempting him.”* They asked this question as a manner of tempting the Lord for they knew the answer but were seeking a different answer. Have you ever tempted God? If you know the answer from the Bible don’t ask God a question hoping for a different answer for this is blatant temptation of God.

The Lord answered them in verse 3 *“What did Moses command you?”* To those who say the Old Testament is void, it must not have been void to the Lord for he preached a lot from it. The Lord is saying to them if a question has already been answered, don’t seek another answer lest ye be guilty of tempting me.

They responded to the Lord that Moses had in fact included in Deuteronomy 24:1 a provision for a “bill of divorcement” which could be written by which a man could put away his wife. The only reason for which a “bill of divorcement” could be written was if the husband had found the wife in a state of “uncleanness” or indecency. He could not get the “bill of divorcement” just because she was lazy or hateful or so-called “no count.” He could not get a “bill of divorcement” because he found himself another woman. The only reason for divorce was for indecency which is infidelity.

The inclusion of a bill of divorcement in the law of Moses was *not* to the delight of Almighty God. It was included by a merciful God because of the “hardness of mankind’s heart” as stated in Mark 10:5. God has never condoned divorce, but only tolerated it in the one condition of *infidelity*, i.e., one mate untrue to the other.

Then the Lord went on to explain in verse 7-9 of Mark 10 how Almighty God intended it to be. His intent is not divorce, homosexuality, pornography, or polygamy. His intent for all men and women in all ages has not changed, and that intent is “one man, one woman” as designed in the Garden of Eden at the onset of creation. If we pattern our teaching after the Lord’s teaching, we cannot discuss “thou shalt not commit adultery” without going back to God’s model which is Adam and Eve. That is why this lesson was begun by taking us back to the garden of Eden.

Let us look further at the Lord’s teaching on this subject in verses 11 and 12 of Mark 10 (read). What else do we need to know from our Lord to know His thoughts on divorce? Let us look also in Matthew 5:31-32. In verse 31 we find the prevailing view of today’s society, i.e., “just get a divorce if you’re unhappy.” But, in verse 32 the Lord put the stick in the bicycle wheel when he said “no, you can’t just get a divorce. It has to be because of infidelity.” Someone said “they divorced over money.” They may have, but that is unacceptable in God’s eyes.

So, there is one justification for divorce, and it is infidelity. The one justification is not to God’s delight, but due to hardness of man’s heart, Moses permitted a “bill of divorcement” for infidelity. By the way, God issues marriage licenses and man issues bills of divorcement.

What about remarriage? Let us go to Romans 7:1-4. Verse 1 tells us how to get free from the civil law of the government- death! As long as you are alive you are bound to the law of the land. When you die you are no longer obligated to pay taxes required by the law, for example. Verse 4 tells us how to get free from the law of Moses-

death! In this case it was the death of Jesus that set us free from the Law of Moses. Verse 2 and 3 tell us how to get free from the law of marriage- death! If your mate dies, you are free from marriage. Doesn't the marriage ceremony say "til death do us part?" Wonder why?

So, there is one ground for divorce, and it is infidelity. By the way, infidelity need not involve another person but can be pornography. Likewise, there is one ground for remarriage, and it is being set free by death of a mate. Oh yes, you can remarry where death does not occur, but you carry the title "adulterer" or "adulteress." Now, do you think marriage is a serious issue with God?

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" is the backbone of social virtue. Without this commandment, we are a society resembling all too much the animal kingdom.

What about forgiveness for adultery? If the other commandments are broken, do you not agree God will forgive? If a man were to kill and call on God's name for forgiveness, God would in mercy hear and forgive. God surely forgave the thief on the cross for stealing. We go to the adulteress woman by the well in John 4. Surely she was forgiven. No sooner had Christ dealt with her than yet another adulterous woman was brought by the Pharisees in John 8. Jesus said unto her "*Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.*" King David was forgiven for the adulterous affair with the neighbor's wife. Yet, none of those forgiven for adultery ever had their virtue restored in the eyes of man. Forgiven- yes. Yet, the scar of sin lingers.

*#8 Thou Shalt Not Steal*

***Exodus 20:15 Thou shalt not steal.***

This is the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment. This is yet another commandment that sets forth the relationship of man-to-man.

It is not necessary to struggle to know the meaning of the term "steal." We all know it by the simple dictionary definition, i.e., to take that which belongeth unto another. Yet, this is a modern-day

definition. In days of old, the definition for stealing read “to take that which does not belong to you.” There is a difference. Let me explain. In my youth, if I had walked down the street with my mom and dad and saw a nickel lying on the street, they would have said “leave that there. It does not belong to you.” So, this rogue society will take for themselves whatever is not labeled with ownership.

I believe that God sanctions the right of private ownership of property. Unless there was rightful ownership of property sanctioned by God, there could be no theft. I do not believe Adam and Eve “owned” the Garden of Eden. It belonged to God, and God placed them in the garden and it was for their use. None of the garden had Adam’s name on it nor was his name on a mailbox at the entrance of the garden. Yet, early in the beginning of man’s history God sanctioned ownership of property.

Early in the Bible, stealing took place. It may be the oldest sin, for I submit to you that the fruit God placed off-limits to Adam and Eve was God’s property. Thus, when Eve took it she stole. The first mention of stealing specifically that I could find is in Genesis 44:8 where Joseph’s brethren denied having taken Joseph’s silver cup for they said “...*how than should we steal out of thy lord’s house silver or gold?*”

Stealing can exist in many forms. A child who takes money from their parents for school and does not apply themselves in their studies has stolen. A person who takes an item on credit knowing they do not intend or have not the means to pay for it have stolen it. Much is stolen through the influence of the law through legal shenanigans. Much is stolen by powerful influence. A Biblical example of such theft is nowhere clearer than we see in Zacchaeus. He, in his position of power, set folk taxes. He made up whatever number he desired- right or wrong- and collected that amount. Folk were powerless to overrule him. Much is stolen by the advantage the wealthy have over those who are less fortunate financially. The parable of Nathan unto King David concerned a man who by his wealth took a poor man’s only lamb, slew it and dressed it for his

guest. As the ol' saying goes "the rich get richer," and many do so in a sinful manner.

Selling a man a good that is knowingly misrepresented is stealing. How many people have purchased products that will not perform as claimed? How many yards of cloth have been sold that were advertised as wool, for example, and yet were not? This is thievery.

There is one form of common thievery which many overlook. It happens daily in all classes of society. An employee who "deadbeats" while on the employer's payroll is guilty of stealing. How many are paid for a job as agreed to with an employer, and they only partially perform the job. I do not care who claims to be a Christian where you work. Christians provide labor as agreed with the employer. In the time of Spurgeon, a young girl needed evidence of true conversion before being permitted to join the church. Mr. Spurgeon one day asked "is there nothing in your life, daughter, that points to a real change in your heart?" Her reply was "yes, there is one thing. In the house where I am employed as a housekeeper, I no longer sweep around the mats and rugs but I move them and sweep under them as I was instructed." She was permitted to join the church.

Daily, billions of dollars are stolen from companies. Folk think they can steal from a company because a company is not a person! Rest assured, if you take it and it is not yours, it is stealing.

Every Sunday morning all over the land, stealing takes place in churches. Folk steal from God because they do not give into the storehouse (the church) a tithe as commanded by God. God calls failure to give "tithes and offerings" robbery in Malachi 3:8-10. Gambling is stealing. The lottery is stealing. Why? It seeks to obtain gain without due investment of time, labor, or capital. The lottery is sin because of the commandment "thou shalt not steal."

The final form of stealing that will be mentioned is overlooked but serious. We steal time and talent from God. How often does a day pass by swiftly and we stole the entire 24 hours from God? How

many have a talent given of God and we fail to use it for His glory? We have stolen. The man in the Bible, who buried his talent, stole from his lord.

Thievery was hated in the Bible and sorely punished. Read Exodus 22:1-8. In most offenses of the law punishable by death, the death was carried out by stoning. There was another form of taking the life of a law-breaker and it was horrible. It was crucifixion. A thief got crucifixion for he was not considered worthy of stoning. I am thankful God forgives even the worst sin- the sin of thievery- for on the cross he forgave the penitent thief.

The Lord said *“Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor working with his hands...”* Eph 4:28

*#9 Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness*

***Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.***

This is the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment. This is another commandment that sets forth the relationship of man-to-man. The Ten Commandments are still valid in this age of the micro chip.

In our language we refer to “bearing false witness” as lying. The more politically correct term is failure to tell the truth. God calls it *lying*.

Where did lying come from? Speaking of Satan in John 8:44, the Lord in His own words told us *“for he is a liar, and the father of it.”* Satan invented lying. He introduced mankind to lying in the Garden of Eden when he refuted what God had said concerning the forbidden fruit. I doubt that the devil is capable of telling the truth. He may tell a half-truth from time-to-time.

What does God think of lying? Proverbs chapter 6 lists seven things God hates. Adultery did not make the list not that God approves of adultery. Stealing did not make the list but rest assured God disapproves of stealing. “Lying” made the list- twice. Proverbs 6:17

speaks of a “lying tongue” and Proverbs 6:19 speaks of “a false witness that speaketh lies.” God hates lies and lying.

What do men think of liars? Not even a liar likes a liar. Proverbs 25:18 *“A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.”* Through the ages men have declared that a thief is at the bottom of the ladder, but on the rung just above him sits the liar.

All social relationships, such as marriage, depend on truth between the involved parties. Business relationships, such as contracts and agreements, are based on the truth. Government of the people depends on truth. All other human institutions depend ultimately on truth in the relations between people. Most importantly, our relationship with God depends on truth. We must know He is truthful, and we must be truthful unto Him.

Why can't men and women just tell the truth? Everyone has on more than one occasion told a lie. However, there are those you and I have met who just can't seem to tell the truth. The Bible talks about folk who have a “lying spirit.” Thank God I do not have a “lying spirit.” Those who have a lying spirit have surely never met Christ. They are the “liars” spoken of in Revelation 21:8 who shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

It is not only possible to speak a lie, but to live a lie. You can lie with your tongue and with your actions. Those who live in hypocrisy are living a lie. If you claim to be a Christian and do not the deeds of a Christian you are living a lie. If you live an unrighteous life in your daily affairs and represent yourself as a saint when you get to church you are living a lie. Don't talk the devil's talk, walk the devil's walk, and watch the devil's affairs on TV, then come to church and sing the songs of Zion. You are living a lie for you are misrepresenting what you really are. Examine your heart before you walk into the choir and to the podium for special singing and into the classroom to teach. Don't act out a lie in the house of God. If you do, God will judge you. Every participant in the worship from

teacher to musician to singer to usher should participate in the church service only after an examined heart.

I John 1:6 says *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”* If we do no practice keeping his commands and profess to be a Christian, we are living a lie. I John 2:4 says *“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”*

What about withholding the truth? Is this lying? Abraham said of Sarah when he arrived in Egypt “she is my Sister.” She was also his wife. He was afraid to report her as his wife lest the men of Egypt take her from him for she was beautiful. Abraham was living the life of a coward for he was out of God’s will. He withheld a portion of the truth for self gain. When truth is intentionally withheld for self advantage it is a form of lying!

Lying has become acceptable in today’s society. This is sad. Why can’t men just tell the truth? Our courts are filled with sharp-tongue lawyers who manipulate the truth. Merchants lie to get sales. Politicians lie to get votes. Parents teach their children the acceptability of lying at an early age through Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

No need to tell the truth- society no longer expects it. You tell the truth and you’re likely to shock someone. In so many matters we will never know the whole truth- Watergate, Whitewater, Iran-contra affairs, and the list goes on. Society today expects lies. The smallest disputes today are destined for court. Why? Neither party is expected to tell the truth. This is sad. In court both parties will tell their story, and then the judge or jury can make a ruling. The ruling may be correct or it may be wrong. Wouldn’t the truth have been better?

What about “little white lies?” You have been listening to wives fables. The scripture admonishes us to make our speech to the point of “yea yea and nay nay.” If we had to know everything that we spoke was factual, we would have little to say. We would be silent people for the most part. How often does our conversation go like

this: “now here is what I heard, but don’t repeat it.” If what you say can’t be repeated, don’t say it.

What is the penalty for lying? I take you to what most would acknowledge as the most famous instance of lying in the Bible. What do you think? Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost in Acts 5. God’s judgment fell on them that very day and death swallowed them up at God’s command. Proverbs 19:5 *“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.”* Revelation 21:8 places liars in the “lake of fire” for eternity.

I am glad, like any sin, God forgives the sin of lying. *“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* I John 1:9.

The truth will stand. Truth is always the right thing though for the moment it may not seem expedient. A small lad when asked about lying said “a lie is an abomination unto God, but a very present help in the time of trouble.” A lie is a ball tossed on the floor bouncing and rolling to and fro. Truth is like a cube tossed on the floor. It quickly settles in position. Proverbs 12:19 says *“The lip of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.”*

I close this topic with the prayer of Psalmist David psalms 120:2 *“Deliver my soul O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.”*

*#10 Thou Shalt Not Covet*

***Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's***

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> and last of the Ten Commandments. This is another commandment that sets forth the relationship of man-to-man.

Like the first 9 commandments, this commandment is still valid in this age. God wrote through Paul in Romans 7:7 *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”* Hundreds of years after Moses penned down the 10 commandments Paul credited the commandments with showing him

his sin of lusting. Yes, the Ten Commandments are still valid in this age of the micro chip.

What does it mean to covet? Paul in Romans 7:7 called coveting “lusting.” A look at the dictionary gives the simple definition “to desire that which belongs to another.” So, coveting is based on desiring. Is desiring wrong? Absolutely not. There is nothing wrong with desire. In fact, I wish desire could be instilled in some folk who have none. Some do not desire to make a living for themselves and their families. They have no desire or initiative that makes them want to be a contributor in society. They need some desire. Desire is what causes the poor to dream of a better life and work hard to get there. Desire is what causes the inventor to make a better mouse trap. So, desire is a good thing, and some who don’t have desire sure need it.

However, when desire begins to rule your life it is unlawful and is known as coveting. The command of God is “thou shalt not covet.” Again, coveting is desiring that which is unlawful. So we have to ask the question “What desire is lawful and what desire is unlawful?” When desire is toward the property of another it becomes unlawful desire. When desire becomes greed, it is unlawful desire. When desire is for something not in the plan of God for your life it is unlawful desire. When you desire something more than you desire God, it is unlawful. You may say “why, you have ruled out all desire.” In fact, if God had his way in our lives we would have few desires. This is clear in I Timothy 6:8 which says “*having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*”

Let us look at desiring the neighbor’s property. This is wrong. Have you ever desired the neighbor’s property? If you have, you have coveted. Exodus 20:17 says not to desire “thy neighbor’s house.” It is his and not yours. God gave it to him and not to you.

The tenth commandment tells us we cannot desire the neighbor’s love, i.e., his wife. She belongs to him. We cannot desire the neighbor’s estate, i.e., his manservant, his maidservant, or his cattle. These things belong to the neighbor, and for you to look upon them and desire to have them as yours is wrong. The old proverb is so true—“the grass is greener on the other side.” It is Satan who causes the neighbor’s house to look better than yours, the neighbor’s wife or husband to look better than yours, and his estate to seem more to be desired than what God has given you.

Coveting comes early in life. It is a part of the fallen nature of Adam. We come into this world in a state of covetousness. A child is happy with its' toy until the child sees the toy of another child!

Coveting is an old sin. Coveting may be the oldest sin. The first occurrence of sin that I am aware of is recorded in Isaiah 14. Satan coveted the throne of God which led to God expelling him from heaven. Eve, the first woman, coveted the fruit of the very tree she was forbidden to eat from. She could have had the fruit of any one of hundreds of trees. But, which tree did she choose? She chose the very one she could not have. Thus, coveting was introduced to mankind.

Coveting strikes across the entire spectrum of humanity. A king by the name of David coveted his neighbor's wife and took her. A rich man in II Samuel 12 coveted and took his neighbor's lamb and dressed it for a meal for his visitors. A man of God, Achan, in Joshua 7 coveted and took without authorization a Babylonish garment, 200 shekels of silver, and 50 shekels of gold. No one is exempt from coveting.

No one is exempt from coveting. Everyone indulges at some time in coveting. However, coveting is dangerous if not corrected for when it becomes a routine in one's life, it has become idolatry. Colossians 3:5 says "*...and covetousness, which is idolatry.*" Has "wanting," i.e., coveting, become your God? I want this and I want this and I want this and on and on and on.

"Wanting" is modern America's God. Take a look around and see the vast multitudes who are bowing down to "want." They worship "want." Folk work 7 days a week so they can buy a boat for the sake of having it parked in the garage. They don't have the time to use it, but they have it locked up safe in their garage. At least it is theirs! "Want" is America's idol. What Communism could not do to America, materialism has. As Jeremiah found Israel in wanting in Jeremiah 6:13, America as a nation is in wanting. "*From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness...*"

Covetousness has emptied the churches. The average church member would forsake God's house for the chance to earn a few dollars they otherwise don't have.

Covetousness had broken countless homes. Husbands and wives are hopelessly in debt because they cannot control desire for “things.” Soon the financial pressure causes the marriage to crumble. The almighty dollar alone can and does break up homes.

Covetousness if not corrected leads to greed. Greed will cause good men and women to trample over others without reservation in order to get what they want for themselves.

Covetousness has cost many lives. People will kill to satisfy the passion they have for other folk’s property. Covetousness has cost many a person their sanity. A person can lose his mind if he remains in a state of uncontrolled want. Spiritual bankruptcy, divorce, loss of sanity and even murder are the fruit of covetousness. Covetousness is a loaded weapon.

Where will covetousness lead you? The end of coveting is given so well in Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 *“And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour and this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked at all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit and there was no profit under the sun.”* Solomon knew well there is no lasting pleasure in coveting. It is vanity.

Let us not forget the warning of Jesus as he spoke these words in Luke 12:15 *“And he said unto them, take heed and beware of covetousness for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”*

Is it possible to keep the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment? Paul said in Acts 20:33 *“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.”* It was Paul who said *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content”* I Timothy 6:8. The secret to keeping the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment, i. e., “no other gods before me.” God can give satisfaction and peace in one’s heart such that it is possible to be satisfied if God chooses to only give them bread, water, and clothes to wear.

“Thou shalt not covet.”

# SIN

### *Sin is Real*

Entire religious sects deny sin. Many do not believe in the notion sin exist. Is sin real? Does sin exist? Many prefer to ignore evil, sin, bad things, and seek that which is good.

Sin is very real. There is no force, excepting for God, that has more influence and control over world events and conditions like sin does. No, not a single force influences the world like sin does. All evil, bad, danger, calamity, misconduct, and despair are the direct result of sin.

### *What is sin?*

Sin is violating the commands and principles of God. If there is no God, then there is no sin. Perhaps this is the reason many deny sin for they deny God exist. Sin is doing what God said not to do. For example, murder is sin for God said not to take another person's life. Also, sin is failing to do what God said to do. We sin when we fail to love for God said to love one another.

Without the Bible there would be no sin for in the Bible we are told what God's desires and commands are for mankind. Many have asked through time "Is this deed sin?" or "Is what I am involved in sinful?" Well, look in the Bible for in it we have the desires of God for man.

### *Where did sin come from?*

Where did sin come from? Where and when did it originate? The very first sin was committed by Satan. Isaiah 14:12-14 records Satan committing the first sin in rising up against God long before the creation: "*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I*

*will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*” So, Satan, or Lucifer as he was known in heaven, rose up against God seeking to overthrow Him. Thereby he sinned. When he sinned God tossed Lucifer out of Heaven for his uprising. This is the first sin in all history.

### *When did sin enter mankind?*

It is not known how long after Lucifer sinned against God that God created man and woman. Genesis 1:27 says *“male and female created he them.”* God placed man and woman in the Garden of Eden in a sinless environment. In the garden God gave man only one command found in Genesis 2:16-17: *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* Sin is doing what God said not to do. Again, Adam and Eve’s only command from God was “do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

Bad news comes and the greatest tragedy known to mankind takes place in the next chapter, Genesis 3. The originator of sin, that is, Satan, slithered into the garden by entering into a serpent. Listen to Genesis 3:1 *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”* Satan, still angry at God, entered the garden disguised in an animal and enticed man to disobey God. In Genesis 3:4 Satan lied to man for he misstated God by inserting the word “not” into the command of God: *“Ye shall not surely die.”* In verse 6 of Genesis 3 Eve took a bite of the fruit God said not to eat. This verse also says Adam ate of the fruit. Immediately, catastrophe had stricken civilization. Immediately, calamity had come to God’s creation. Immediately, SIN occurred! Friend, our question “when did sin enter mankind?” has been answered!

### *Sin is universal*

Does sin only affect certain people? Does sin only involve certain religious beliefs? If I behave to the best of my ability can I go

through life and not be associated with sin? Any man or woman who knows the consequence of sin would surely wish to avoid sin. However, the stark reality is *no person can avoid sin*. Thus, we say sin is universal, that is, it impacts all people. Yes, the rich, the poor, the black, the white, the educated, the uneducated, Americans, African, and all people.

Listen to the Word of God as it classifies all people sinners:

Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”*

Eccl 7:20 *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”*

Psalms 39:5 *“Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.”*

Isaiah 64:6 *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*

Psalms 143:2 *“And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”*

There are many more scriptures that classify all men and women and boys and girls sinners. Let no one argue with the Word of God. It is the authority.

*What is the consequence of sin?*

God punished Adam severely for his sin. Genesis 3:23-24 tells us God drove man from the Garden of Eden for his sin. Further, God administered the following punishment on the man Adam, the woman Eve, and Satan:

Upon the serpent Satan- Genesis 3:14-15 God cursed him above all the beasts of the field, removed his legs so that he would forever crawl in the dust on his belly, and promised to put enmity (hatred) between him and the seed of the woman.

Upon the woman Eve- Genesis 3:16 God pronounced on her sorrow in conception and in child bearing. God also pronounced on her that she would desire to live under the rule of a man, that is, her husband..

Upon the man Adam- Genesis 3:17 God cursed the ground because of Adam’s sin and promised him it would be in sorrow that he would be able to eat of the ground. God pronounced that the ground would

bear thorns and thistles and by the sweat of the face man would earn his food. But greatest of all, God pronounced death on Adam for his sin when he told him in Genesis 3:19b *“for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.”*

There has never been a sin committed that will not be answered for before God. There are two ways sin can be answered: forgiven by being placed under the Blood of Christ or un-forgiven and placed under the judgment of God. What category is your sin under?

### *Sin has a remedy*

Before the consequence for sin was even placed on man, God promised a remedy for sin. That remedy is first given in the promise of Genesis 3:15. God promised the woman that her seed would bring forth one whose heel would bruise the head of the troublemaker Satan.

Four thousand years after the sin of Adam and Eve, God delivered the promise of a remedy for sin. An angel made a visit to a virgin. Listen to the record of the visit given on Luke 1:26-33:

*26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,*

*27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.*

*28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

*29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.*

*30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.*

*31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.*

*32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:*

*33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

The remedy for sin comes entirely through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

**JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY  
BEGOTTEN VIRGIN-BORN  
SON OF GOD**

Who is this personality Jesus Christ? Do you know him? Have you heard of Him? Is he a prophet only? Is He a good person only? Is He an inspired teacher only? Is He just a miracle worker?

Let us ask not only who he is but where did this Jesus Christ come from. Is he from heaven? Is he from earth? Is he from another planet?

Who is this personality and where did He come from? Most of the world recognizes Jesus Christ in some way. Yet, the majority of the world's inhabitants do not recognize Him as the only begotten virgin born Son of God. If you believe him to be the only begotten virgin born Son of God, you are in the minority.

Let us look at some of the folk in the Bible and how they viewed him. Starting with Nicodemus, he said Jesus was a Rabbi, teacher, and miracle worker come from God, John 3:2. Nicodemus was respectful of the Jesus. Others were not so respectful. In Matthew 11:19 he was called a gluttonous man and a winebibber. In Luke 9:19 Jesus asked the disciples who people thought he was. The disciples replied the people think you to be John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the old prophets risen from the dead. Pilate asked the Lord in John 18:33 "...art thou King of the Jews?" Few that Christ confronted in his earthly walk truly knew who he was and where he was from.

*Virgin Born*

The prophecy of Jesus Christ coming to the earth is given early in the Bible. In Genesis 3:15 we read "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" Man and woman

were in a world of trouble because of their sin in the garden. They ate the forbidden fruit and God punished them. God promised Satan *enmity* was to come his way for his role in sin. Enmity is hostility and hatred. The hostility, according to Genesis 3:15, was to be between the seed of the woman and Satan's seed. Seed is "fruit," that is, the result of sowing.

This verse in Genesis gives us much about who this Jesus is. Jesus is the seed of the woman. Jesus is not the seed of the man. Therefore, this makes Jesus Christ *virgin* born. Again, he is *not* the seed of man. He is not, as you and I, the product of man and woman in union. Jesus Christ is virgin born. Man had no role in his coming to this earth. Isaiah 7:14 tells us "*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*" Luke 1:27 says "*To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.*"

The virgin birth signifies the divine *purity* of Jesus Christ. He was not born of man, that is, of corruptible seed. Therefore, he did not come into this world stained with the pollutions common to human nature. Luke 1:35 speaks "*And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that **holy thing** which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*" Note he is the "holy thing." How can this be? Because he was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, not by sinful man. Man had no role in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ or else he would have arrived on earth a sinner. 1 Peter 2:22 says of Christ "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*"

### *God's Only Begotten Son*

The virgin birth signifies not only the divine *purity* of Jesus Christ but also the divine *power* of Jesus Christ. Man has limitations. If man is eliminated from the equation, the limitations can be eliminated. Christ is virgin born and did not come from man. If he did not come from man, from whence came he? Let John 3:16 speak "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,*

*that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” The only begotten Son of God was given by God. If therefore he was given by God, he must be from heaven for the last I heard that is the abode of Jehovah God. Christ is from heaven. He is not from earth. He is not from another planet. The virgin birth is a miracle. It is, in fact, a one-time happening. Never before Christ’s birth and never after Christ’s birth has such a birth taken place. Mankind cannot accept the virgin birth for it is too difficult to believe possible. Yet, our own birth is a miracle. Explain your own birth- you cannot.

### *God Himself*

Jesus is his earthly name. Jesus means Savior. Have you met someone whose name is Jesus? There are many whose name is Jesus. Some even claim to be “the Jesus.” Matthew 16:15-16 says *“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Jesus of whom we speak is the Jesus that was the *Christ*. Peter answered the Lord in this passage and said you are the *Christ*. Christ is his divine name for Christ means *anointed one*. In other words, the one sent from heaven.

John 14:9 Jesus spoke *“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”* Jesus said further in John 10:30 *“I and my Father are one.”* He was not just a prophet. He was not just a good man. He was not just a miracle worker. He was not just a good teacher. **JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN VIRGIN BORN SON OF GOD.** Any teaching otherwise is a cult.



## RESURRECTION

The dictionary defines resurrection as “coming to life.” In the occurrence of resurrection that which is dead is loosed from death. Where there was absence of life, life is restored.

### *Denial of the Resurrection*

Do you believe in resurrection? The resurrection of which we speak is the resurrection of the *body* of Christ and the *bodies* of the saints which have died. In other words, *bodily* resurrection- not resurrection of the soul or the spirit for the soul and spirit never die.

Do you know someone who denies the literal resurrection of the body? Perhaps you do. Even in the Bible in the days of Christ there was a major religion that did not believe in resurrection of the body. Matthew 22:23 reads “*The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection...*” The Sadducees did not believe once a body is dead it could again see life.

Some may say “what is the importance of believing in resurrection?” “What harm is there in *not* believing the resurrection?” Some believe the bodily resurrection of Christ but deny the resurrection of the people. It would certainly be a tragedy to believe Christ is still in the tomb. If Christ is still in the tomb all of mankind is eternally doomed for hell. It is also vital to believe the resurrection of the people for it is by His power the body is resurrected. Therefore, to fail to believe the resurrection of the people is to deny the power of God!

### *Old Testament prophecy*

Read the following verses from the Old Testament which speak of the resurrection of the body:

Job 14:14-15 “*If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*”

Job 19:25-27 *“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”*

Psalms 16:9-10 *“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”*

Isaiah 26:19 *“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”*

Daniel 12:2 *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”*

Hosea 13:14 *“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.”*

While many may not believe in the resurrection, God nevertheless gave the Old Testament writers a clear picture of it. They believed and wrote words from God assuring us of the resurrection.

### *Christ foretells resurrection*

Not only the Old Testament writers, but Christ foretold of the resurrection of both the saints and the wicked. Note the following scriptures:

John 5:28-29 *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 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 6:39-40 *“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

Do you believe what Christ taught?

### *The Apostle Paul preached the resurrection*

The greatest preacher of the New Testament Age, the Apostle Paul, had much to say in regard to the subject of the resurrection. Read the following scriptures:

Acts 17:18 *“Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.”*

Acts 17:32 *“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.”*

Acts 24:15 *“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”*

Dare we not believe these words given to Apostle Paul by God? He told us plainly, as did Christ, that both the just and the unjust would be resurrected.

### *Apostles Peter and John taught the Resurrection*

Before Apostle Paul preached the resurrection, Apostle Peter and Apostle John taught the resurrection: Acts 4:2 *“Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”* Because of the teaching of the resurrection, Peter and John were arrested in Acts 4:3! Why? Satan hates the subject of the resurrection for it is just too great a testimony to the power of Christ!

The prophets, then Christ, then the Apostles...all taught the bodily resurrection.

### *Christ's resurrection*

Christ foretold that His own body would be torn down by death but that it would be build back, i.e., resurrected. John 2:19-21 reads *“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore*

*he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.”* Jesus knew when he subjected his body to the power of death that death would not hold his body.

Christ body was taken from the cross of Calvary and placed in the borrowed tomb of Joseph. A large stone was placed over the mouth of the tomb to seal Christ’s body inside. Furthermore, the soldiers sealed the stone over the mouth of the tomb. Read Matthew 27:59-60, 65-66 *“And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.” 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”*

Yet on the third and appointed day Jesus Christ came forth just as he had promised he would: Mark 16:5-6 *“And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.”*

If Christ is still in the tomb all mankind is without hope. However, we rejoice that he resurrected as he said he would. Take a look at this passage: I Corinthians 15:13-20 *“But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”*

### *The saints' resurrection*

Every saint of God planted in the earth, tossed in the river, burned at stake or otherwise disposed shall have a resurrection. The body in which we live our life returns to the dust of the earth at death. The soul and spirit exit the body at death and go into the presence of God in heaven for it is written in II Corinthians 5:8 *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."*

Why is Christ's resurrection so hated and denied? It is because he is the example and proof of the saints' resurrection. I Corinthians 15:20-23 tells us *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."* His resurrection is the firstfruits and is therefore the proof and pattern for the saint's resurrection. If Christ did not resurrect on the third and appointed day, the saints death is the end of this body as stated in I Corinthians 15:18 *"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."*

Some future day, perhaps today, the graves of the saints shall burst open. I Thes 4:16 tells us *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"*

### *The sinner's resurrection*

Not only will the saints' bodies taken by death be restored to life, the sinners' bodies will someday be resurrected. John records the words of Christ in John 5:28-29 *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 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."*

The account of this resurrection of the wicked dead is given in Revelation 20:12-13: *"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. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”* When a sinner stands before God in the “great white throne” judgment (Revelation 20:11), they stand there complete with body, soul and spirit!

### *Conclusion*

Yes, the Bible teaches the literal resurrection of the dead, both the saved and the sinner.

## S A T A N

Satan means “adversary” or “opponent.” Do you have an opponent? Satan is the chief opposition to God, God’s people, and all that is good.

### *His Many Names*

Satan has several names in the Bible. The following is some but not all of his names:

The devil, the dragon, the evil one, the angel of the abyss, the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), the god of this world (II Cor 2:2), Apollyon, Abaddon, Belial (II Cor 6:15), Beelzebub (Mt 12:24), the great dragon (Rev 12:9), and the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10). *Satan* and the *devil* are the names most frequently used for this personality. While Satan means “adversary,” Devil means “accuser.”

### *Where did Satan come from?*

Satan is real. If Satan is not a real personality, then God is not real. Rest assured, Satan is real. If Satan is not a real personality, hell is not real and sin is not real.

Where did Satan originate? Satan originated in heaven. Satan was created by God as an angel. Isaiah 14:12 tells us of Satan’s creation as Lucifer: “... *O Lucifer, son of the morning!*...” Further, Ezekiel 28:15 addresses Satan’s creation “*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*”

Satan was created by God. He was created as Lucifer, the shining one. He was an angel in heaven. He is not a Son of God. He is not a brother to Jesus Christ God’s only begotten son.

### *When did Lucifer become Satan?*

Lucifer became proud and boastful and rose up against God. Isaiah 14:12-15 details the account: “*How art thou fallen from heaven, O*

*Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”*

Looking at this scripture carefully we count five “I wills.” Satan was going to take God’s place! God would not allow this. So, he cast Satan out of heaven. Where did he land? He landed on planet earth. Read Luke 10:18 *“And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”* I sure wish he would have not stopped on this earth but would have pierced the earth to a place called hell. Satan is rightfully called “the prince of the power of the air” in Ephesians 2:2.

*Where does his power come from?*

As stated above, Satan was created by God. Hence, he gets his power from God. If it were possible that God should die today, Satan would die also for he relies on God for his existence. I doubt he prays a prayer of thank-you to God each day, but he should. Any time God wishes, he could end Satan’s power.

*Satan’s power*

God is all-powerful. Satan is second in power. God permits Satan’s power. God has him on a leash and restrains his power. Else, he would destroy the universe. We recall in Job 1 that Satan had to ask God’s permission to afflict Job.

Satan is so powerful his might exceeds the might of Michael the archangel. We read this in Jude 9 *“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”*

Satan can rightfully be called “the god of this world” II Cor 4:4. He can rightfully be called “the prince of the power of the air” Eph 2:2. He can be called “the price of this world” in John 12:31.

Don't mess with Satan! You will lose every time! God is his only match.

### *His first meeting with man*

In Genesis 3:1, Satan first appeared to man. This was their first meeting and it occurred shortly after the creation. Satan could hardly wait to get his destructive hands on God's creation.

Satan won the battle between himself and Adam and Eve. They fell to Satan's enticement.

### *Mode of operation*

Satan has a kingdom of helpers. His helpers are called demons. There were two thousand unclean spirits, devils the Bible calls them, in one man in Mark 5. Imagine the kingdom of helpers Satan has!

He has demons of alcohol, pornography, dope, and anger and many more.

II Corinthians 2:11 says *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”* What is Satan's most powerful tool? It is deception. He never shows the reality of sin. He paints a false picture. For example, he tells a soul a little liquor is okay. Then, later that soul has become an alcohol, a victim of deception. II Corinthians 11:14 *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*

### *His goal*

Though Satan tries diligently to disguise his mission, it is no secret. Satan's goal every passing day is to destroy all that is good. All that is of God, Satan is against. No sooner had God created man than Satan was there to tear man down in the garden. He is against all people for all are God's creation. He is against homes and churches. He has a long history of trying to destroy the Bible, God's Word.

### *His final defeat*

Satan's days are numbered. I feel that is the reason Satan is working so hard in this day in which we live. He does not have long. I am thankful there is an end to Satan.

Rev 20:10 reads "*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*" It is praiseworthy that Satan will not be killed. That would be too easy. Rather he will be placed in the lake of fire alive. He will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Are you saved? Are you on the winning side? All the redeemed will rejoice on this wonderful occasion to be able to see Satan exiled to this place of torment.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

Has today's church "missed the mark?" Is the church pursuing the command given in the Bible for the church? A careful look at this subject may reveal to us that the church is very busy and involved in many activities but has little regard for the Great Commission.

Many companies have a mission statement. Probably the company you work for has such a statement. The mission statement is simple. It states the passion of the company. It states the primary interest of the company. Commission is defined in the dictionary as "an authorization or command to act in a prescribed way or to perform various acts or duties." As an example, a member of the armed forces is commissioned to serve and protect this country.

The church has a Great commission. No other commission ever bestowed upon mankind for any purpose comes close to measuring up to the church's commission, the Great Commission. It could properly be called The Greatest Commission.

*What is the Commission of the church?*

Mark 16:15 *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* The Great Commission of the church is simple- tell everybody the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is amazing that an organization two thousand years old with millions of members can operate on a commission as simple as one sentence! There is never a reason for the church to lose focus of our commission. It is too simple. The list contains one item. Granted there is more the church must do, but this is the number one commission.

*What is the Gospel?*

Let the Word of God answer this question: I Corinthians 15:1-4 *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of*

*all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”*

Gospel means “good news.” Gospel means “a good message.” Do you know of a better message than two thousand years ago a sinless Christ died to pay the sin debt for every sinner that they may escape sin and condemnation?

### *Accomplished by preaching*

A church playing a ballgame is not preaching. A church at a baseball game is not preaching. A church at a camp is not preaching. We are not preaching when we are engaged in Bible study in our home.

What is preaching? The dictionary says preaching “is to herald as a public crier.” Do you know what the devil has done today? The devil has turned the preachers of God into *teachers*. Some even think they can spread the Gospel by singing. The Gospel is spread through preaching. Study the scriptures concerning Christ and likewise Apostle Paul and you will see they each taught *and* preached. Colossians 1:28 and other scriptures prove the distinction between teaching and preaching... “*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*” Preaching is “a public cry.” Teaching is to listen and learn. What shall we teach the sinner? We must *preach* to the sinner!

### *Accomplished through the church*

There is no institution on this earth as precious as the New Testament church. Not the government, not the United Nations, nor the organizations of mankind such as fraternities and clubs. Christ died to birth the church. The local church exists because it originated from the side of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. It is a living organism for it came from the living blood of the Savior.

On Paul’s first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas departed from the local church at Antioch to “preach the Gospel to the world.” They were not sent out by a club. They were not sent out by the government.

Through the ages the work of fulfilling the Great Commission has been accomplished by the church. The Great Commission rests squarely on the shoulders of the church. It is not the duty of the Gideon's, for example, to spread the Gospel. What they do is wonderful and the church should thank them for doing what the church is responsible for doing.

Today, the church has gotten slack. Clubs are more important than telling sinners about the saving grace of Jesus Christ. An elaborate meeting place for those already saved and in the fold is more important than telling a sinner about Jesus and winning that sinner to Christ. All of the church's attention today is directed toward those already in the fold rather than those who need to hear and receive. The church will stand before God and give account of their behavior. A church that does not have a missionary spirit is an embarrassment to the cause of Christ. A Pastor who does not have a missionary spirit should walk behind the pulpit this coming Sunday and resign. "*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel.*" The church exists today because of the missionary spirit of the first churches such as the church at Antioch.

Why is the church the bearer of the Great Commission? One, the church has experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ. A sinner has no saving experience to tell. Second, the church has the power. No individual can do what the church can do for it is a collective body with many resources including the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit.

*Who is the Gospel preached to?*

John 3:16 says God's "only begotten Son" died for the *world*. If then he died for the whole world, He meant for the *whole world* to be told the Gospel. Men selectively tell the story. Have we told the story of Saving Grace to every person on earth? If someone never hears the Gospel, who will God hold accountable?

My motto is "every man, woman, boy, and girl deserves to hear the story of grace and glory." Not just the poor, not just the rich, not just the sick, nor only the well, but *all* must be told. God forbid, how do today's churches justify their activities? What do some activities of churches have to do with telling the world about Christ?

The church does not spend all its' time preaching. We must spend some time *training* the saved so they can spread the Gospel to the lost. The purpose of this lesson is to train. Christians must be taught to get busy telling the whole world about Christ. Who have you told today? I never want to be a member of a church that does not have a missionary spirit.

*Is there a vision today?*

Proverbs 29:18 “*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*” Where there is no vision, the Great Commission is neglected. The church’s Great Commission today is mistakenly to entertain and do whatever is needed to arrest the attention of the assembly. Today is a terrible day for a sinner to be lost. Few care about the sinner.

God was the first missionary for when Adam sinned, God went looking for him. God had only one son, and he wanted him to be a missionary.

Phillip went to the Ethiopian eunuch. Christ went to the woman-at-the-well. Paul went throughout Asia. Peter went to the house of Cornelius...and on and on and on. Someone went to you and someone went to me.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

God is a trinity- God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Through the ages men have sought to give ratings and rank to the three. However, the three are equal for all are God. Each has a fulfilling work to do to advance the Kingdom of God. Yet, many folk today seek to give special attention to the Holy Spirit and neglect reverence to the Father and Son. Likewise, there are those who neglect the work of the Holy Spirit giving all their attention to the Father and Son.

### *Where did the Holy Spirit Originate?*

Genesis 1:1 says “*In the beginning God...*” In the beginning of the time of man and this earth as God’s creation, the Holy Spirit existed. Genesis 1:2 says “*...and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” Being God, the Holy Spirit has always existed. Just as God and the Son, the Holy Spirit has no beginning of days. When God decreed man should be made, He spoke in Genesis 1:26 “*let us make man in our image...*” Man has body, soul, and spirit. Why? Because God is a trinity and man is made in God’s image.

### *Where was the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?*

Some mistakenly believe the Holy Spirit originated at Pentecost. Christ as he walked on the earth promised to his disciples He would *send* another. That “another” is the Holy Spirit and Christ did not create this “another” but sent the Holy Spirit which already existed. Again, the Holy Spirit is as eternal as God for the Holy Spirit is God.

Where was the Holy Spirit in “the days of old?” Where was the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? Where was the Holy Spirit in the days of the prophets? We can answer that question by asking the same questions of Jesus Christ. Where was Jesus in “the days of old?” Jesus has always existed for he is God. In the days of the Old Testament Jesus resided in heaven but manifest himself on earth on specific occasions. For example, in Daniel 3:25 King Nebuchadnezzar upon looking into the furnace wherein he had

placed the three Hebrew boys said “...Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Who was the fourth man? Jesus! He paid a visit to earth for three of his friends were in trouble. Did he leave heaven to come to their rescue? No. Jesus is God and He is everywhere at the same time. He came to the earth without leaving Heaven. He didn’t have to say to the Father “I will be back in a few minutes. I need to help three friends who are in trouble.” It was Jesus in the talking bush that Moses encountered in the wilderness!

Like Jesus, the Holy Spirit resided in heaven forever, but revealed himself on the earth on special occasions. Let us look at some examples of the Holy Spirit appearing on earth in the Old Testament:

Judges 6:34 speak of Gideon “*But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.*”

Judges 14:6 speaks of Samson “*And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.*”

II Samuel 23:2 says concerning David “*The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*”

There are many instances recorded in the Word of God that address the work of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times. No, the Holy Spirit was not born at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is God and has always been. He came to this earth on missions as did Christ in the Old Testament all the while being in heaven and all other places at the same time! God is powerful and is everywhere.

*What happened at Pentecost?*

Jesus came to earth two thousand years ago. Though many hated him, some loved him. To those who loved him, the talk of his leaving them and returning to the Father made them very sad. So, to dispel their sorrow, Christ spoke several times about sending them

another to comfort them when he left them to return to glory. Listen to the following verses:

John 14:16-17 *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”*

John 15:26 *“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”*

John 16:13 *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”*

Therein lies the most magnificent promise ever made to man. Jesus spoke of his leaving the earth. It saddened the disciples. If you had given up all things to follow Christ and had spent about three years of your life following him, you would be sad too! However, Christ spoke those words of comfort “I will send you another.”

Now, let us go to Pentecost. Pentecost means “fifty.” Pentecost is a Jewish festivity God ordered Israel to observe. Pentecost came fifty days after the Jewish feast called Passover. Pentecost was an annual feast.

In Acts 1 Christ took a few disciples to the Mount called Olivet. From there he would ascend back to the Father. Just before he ascended he told the disciples in Acts 1:4 *“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.”* What was this promise? This promise was that the Comforter Jesus had promised, that is, the Holy Spirit, would appear.

Looking at Acts 2, we find the promise delivered. Read Acts 2:1-4. Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came to those assembled in the upper room. On this occasion, though, the Holy Spirit was not on special assignment. He did not manifest himself and return to glory. The Holy Spirit from Pentecost onward resides in the heart of believers on earth. Praise the name of the Lord!

*The work of the Holy Spirit today*

Thank God for giving to mankind the Holy Spirit to abide with us. God the father is seated in heaven. God the Son is seated in heaven. God the Holy Spirit lives in my heart. That, my friend, is awesome.

There is no way to write down all that the Holy Spirit does for the believer. The list is long. Let me address one vital work the Holy Spirit is engaged in. That work is summoning sinners to be saved. The drawing power of the Holy Ghost is what convinced me to become a Christian. Salvation is not possible unless first there be an invitation extended by the Holy Spirit to the heart of the sinner. When the sinner says “yes” to the drawing power of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit baptizes that soul into the body of Christ. I Corinthians 12:13 says *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles..”*

To the saint, the work of the Holy Spirit is beyond description. The Holy Spirit...

- interprets the saint’s prayers...Romans 8:26
- is the saint’s earnest payment toward our eternal promise of heaven...Ephesians 1:13, 14
- is the saint’s seal, or mark of identification...Ephesians 4:30
- is the saint’s teacher...John 14:26
- is the saint’s comforter...John 14:26

And on and on. Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to the earth to dwell in the hearts of the believers.

## PENTECOST

Pentecost means “fiftieth.” The word “Pentecost” is found in only three places in the scripture as follows though there are many other scriptures relating to Pentecost:

Acts 2:1 *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”*

Acts 20:16 *“For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.”*

1 Corinthians 16:8 *“But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.”*

Pentecost bears other names in the Bible. These names we see in the following scriptures:

Exodus 34:22 *“And thou shalt observe the **feast of weeks**, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.”* Here Pentecost bears the name “feast of weeks” for it was celebrated seven complete weeks, or fifty days, after Passover.

Exodus 23:16 *“And the **feast of harvest**, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.”* Here Pentecost bears the name “feast of harvest” because it concluded the harvest of the latter grains.

Numbers 28:26 *“Also in the **day of the firstfruits**, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work:”* Here Pentecost bears the name “day of the firstfruits” because the first loaves made from the new grain were then offered on the altar (Lev 23:17).

Pentecost is *one* thing in the Bible- a Jewish festivity. Are you Jewish? If so, do you observe this festival set up by God for the nation Israel?

In regard to understanding more about Pentecost, let us go to the Old Testament. God gave the nation Israel *seven* great feasts to help

them remember how God had delivered them safely from Egyptian bondage and to teach them how to worship Him. In the Book of Exodus Chapters 5-12 the Scripture tells us how God used Moses to go before the Pharaoh to tell him that he must let the children of Israel go. God sent 9 plagues upon the Egyptians, but Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not let them go. Finally, God said I will cause one more plague, the tenth plague, and he will surely let my people go. In Exodus 12 God gave Moses specific instructions as to what Israel should do. A special lamb was to be slain, and the lamb's blood was placed on the lintel of the door and on the side post of the door. That night the death angel passed through, and those who had not applied the blood awoke to find that the first born of both people and cattle had died. This included the Pharaoh's own son. After the 10<sup>th</sup> plague, Pharaoh let the people go.

To cause His people to remember what God had done for them in freeing them from the Egyptians, God set up the feast called the *Passover*. Are you a Jewish person who observes Passover? Passover is still observed by many Jewish people today. Fifty days after the Passover feast, God instituted another feast, and many Jewish people as well as proselytes would go to Jerusalem to observe this feast. This feast is called Pentecost. Pentecost means "fifty" and the feast was so named for it followed the Passover feast by fifty days. Pentecost was a time to offer God the firstfruits of the harvest in a gesture of thanksgiving. Pentecost was to celebrate the giving of the Ten Commandments for many believe from Exodus 19 the law was given fifty days after the exodus of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Now, we go to the New Testament in the Book of Acts to look further at this *Jewish festivity* called Pentecost. Are you a Jewish person and do you still observe this Jewish festivity called Pentecost? Jesus had recently been taken up into Heaven on a cloud, see Acts 1:11. Before he left on the cloud he told the disciples in Acts 1:8 "*But ye shall receive power; after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the Earth.*" The disciples must have wondered what Jesus meant

by that statement. Jesus has also commanded them that they should wait at Jerusalem for the “promise of the Father,” Acts 1:4. What was this “promise?” What was this “power?”

*They were about to find out as we take a look at Acts 2:1-8: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it set upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave utterance and there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under Heaven. And now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled saying one to another, behold are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”*

What a marvelous day this Pentecost was! Several things happened, and we cannot speak of all of them. First, and most importantly, the Holy Spirit came down not to visit man for a special mission and return to heaven, but to take up residence in the heart of believers. Whow- God in us! Think of this! The “promise” of Acts 1:4 was the giving of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost to dwell, to reside, in the believer’s heart. Please refer to the article entitled “Holy Spirit.” The giving of the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believer’s heart was the fulfillment of Christ promise to send a Comforter in John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 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.” The giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2 was the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to send “the Spirit of truth” John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

The giving of the Holy Ghost to dwell in the heart of the believer at Pentecost in Acts 2 was a monumental moment in time. Yet, there is another great benefit of the giving of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost and that is the people were able to hear about Jesus Christ! Up until this time, only those who spoke the same language of Jesus knew why he had come and that he was paying their sin debt. As we approach Acts 2 few had heard the great story of Jesus dying on Calvary for the sin of humanity. So, what an opportune time it was on this great festival day called Pentecost to preach Jesus for there were gathered there people *“out of every nation under heaven”* Acts 2:5. Only God could arrange such a meeting! Leave it to God to assemble the greatest convention ever gathered!

Peter preached to those gathered at Pentecost in Acts 2. Read Peter’s message of Acts 2:14-36. It will set you on fire unless your wood is wet. He preached Jesus and this was the first time most of this audience had ever heard the truth of Jesus. After he ended his sermon, the people asked Peter and the other apostles in Acts 2:37 *“Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, **men and brethren what shall we do?**”* What a good question. If your heart was *pricked* by the Word of God you would want answers too. Nothing hurts worse than the two-edged Sword, the Bible.

How did Peter answer them? *“Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* Acts 2:38. All those at Pentecost of Acts 2 were believers in God and worshipped in the manner of Judaism. Why else would they have traveled from such far away places for this Jewish festivity called Pentecost. They were devoted, would you agree? They now, though, needed to believe in Jesus who Peter by his preaching just introduced to them. Pentecost of Acts 2 or any other Pentecost was not a gathering of “whosoever wills.” Thus, we do not preach today Acts 2:38 to “whosoever wills.” You will send people to hell preaching that message. We preach John 3:16 to “whosoever wills.” Peter directed these Jewish and proselyte Judaism worshippers who already believed on God to “repent and be baptized.” Don’t try that

today to get saved. You will go to hell. You are not a worshipper of God in the fashion of Judaism who just heard for the first time about a Savior named Jesus and you want to receive him. We are not living in Acts 2 today. Acts 2 was 2000 years ago.

What did the people do? Acts 2:41 reads *“Then they that gladly received His word and were baptized: and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls.”* God chose this day to start His church. Today the Holy Spirit still draws sinners by pricking their hearts, and gives saved people the power and boldness of Peter to tell others about the love of Jesus.

There is much confusion regarding the Scriptures in Acts 2. Magnificent things happened at Pentecost of Acts 2. Yet, these magnificent things are overshadowed by confusion regarding: one, speaking in tongues; two, being baptized to be saved; and thirdly, folk trying to seek and receive the Holy Ghost. What actually happened that was so astonishing was the coming of the Holy Ghost to dwell in the heart of the believer and the preaching of the message of Christ and Him crucified to many folk for the first time! Many returned to their country and spread the Word about a crucified Savior! Whow- what a day!

#### *Reference scriptures on Pentecost*

The following scripture give some detail of how this festival was observed:

#### Lev 23:15-19

*15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: 16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. 17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. 18 And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the LORD, with their meat offering,*

*and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD. 19 Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.*

Num 28:27-29

*27 But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year; 28 And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram, 29 A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs;*

Deut 16:9-10

*9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. 10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:*

*Present day observance*

Some observance of Pentecost still takes place among the Jewish people. The observance today is surely nothing of the magnitude of the Bible times.

## THE REALITY OF FALSE RELIGION

Is every building with a steeple a true house of worship worshipping the true and living God? Is every organization led by a priest, preacher, pastor or rabbi a true organization sanctioned of God? Is every organization labeled with a title of one of the world's many religions sanctioned of God? The answer is *no*. In fact, the majority of the organizations, assemblies, congregations, and "churches" on planet earth have no connection with God. This may shock you. Just as the majority of folk walking on earth today is on the broad path to destruction, so are many religious organizations. They have no connection with the true and living God. They are appropriately labeled "false" religion.

### *The beginning of false Religion*

Adam and wife Eve were created by God. They communed with God. God blessed their union with two sons and later a third son. We all know Cain and Able from the book of Genesis. Cain and Abel were commanded by the true God to bring a sacrifice to God, Genesis 4. There is no logic that substantiates that God told Cain to bring fruit as an offering but told Abel to bring a firstling of the flock for an offering. God does not have dual standards. So, at the time of the offering Cain brought fruit of the ground. Wham!- false religion was born!

Who determines what is right and wrong? God does. He is the one that inspected the offerings of Cain and Abel. It really doesn't matter what man thinks and I don't mean this harshly. God has the final say. Have you ever heard someone say "it does not matter what you believe as long as you are serious?" The devil is serious. If there is no such thing as "false religion" what did God mean when He gave the first commandment "*Thou shalt have no other gods before thee?*" You had better believe that which God approves of or you will perish into an everlasting fire.

Cain defied God's instructions and started his own religion. Any religion contrary to the commands of God is *false religion*. Soon after Cain, we see the fruits of his invention. Take a look at Genesis chapter 11. There we see the familiar Tower of Babel. What was the Tower of Babel? It was false religion at work. It was the fruit of Cain. A people decided they would get to God by their own way and not God's way. God cursed their effort confounding their language and construction of the tower stopped. False religion, hated by God, was thwarted. Yet, false religion has never been totally stamped out. One day it will be destroyed by the hand of a righteous God!

Cain started a runaway locomotive that day when he invented his own religion. False religion has flourished since his time. Today, false religion outnumbers true religion.

### *Israel and false Religion*

Israel engaged many people of differing religion in their history. In the Old Testament we observe Israel as the apple of God's eye. God by a hand of mercy brought them out of Egypt after 400 years of slavery. God is merciful. They began a forty year trek through the wilderness. Not so long into their journey, they turned to a false god. In Exodus 32 when Moses tarried on the Mount Sinai where he met with God, the people of Israel under Aaron's supervision built a calf of gold. They bowed down to worship that calf. They had turned from the true God to false religion.

Thereafter, Israel was often found entangled in false religion. Another example comes from Numbers 25. At the invitation of Balak, Israel went to the worship services of false worshippers. In Numbers 25:2 we find them bowing down to the gods of the heathen. God was sorely displeased. That day, Numbers 25:9, God killed twenty-four thousand children of Israel. Why?- as judgment for engaging in false religion. The Bible has many more instances recorded wherein Israel turned from the true God to false gods. God was displeased on every occasion. Any and all religion may be okay with you as long as it is sincere, but not with God. He hates false religion!

False religion is not helter-skelter. False religion has all the ingredients of true religion. Take a look.....

### *False spirits and false prophets*

I John 4:1 *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* False religion does not grow on a tree. False religion is cultivated by a man or men that are agents of the devil. This verse in I John clearly states there are many false prophets. False prophets are agents of the devil. They work for and report to the devil. They indoctrinate followers to build their religion. So, you think all prophets are true as long as they are sincere? Why, then, does God’s word speak of false prophets? Do you think all *spirits* are true as long, of course, as they are sincere? Why then are we commanded to “try the spirits?” The unclean spirit that came out of the maniac in Mark 5 and went into 2000 swine was a sincere spirit.

Watch out! False religion is everywhere. You and I rub shoulders with it daily. Further, many *false religionist* are more sincere than those who worship the true way.

### *False christs*

Matthew 24:24-26 *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.”* Just as there is false religion, false prophets, and false spirits, there are false christs. God had only one begotten Son and his name is Jesus Christ. Yet, as Matthew warned us, a false Christ may spring up at any time.

### *False teachers*

II Peter 2:1 *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall*

*bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*” The devil has “Bible study” and “Sunday School” too! He must for he has his own teachers! False religion has a full compliment of workers.

### *False Brethren*

II Corinthians 11:26 *“In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;”* It takes followers, or “brethren,” to have a religion. In this verse in II Corinthians Paul says for sure there are false brethren. You may call them false “Christians,” or false parishioners or false church members.

### *How to know false religion*

Romans 16:17 *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”* To avoid false religion we first are commanded to learn true doctrine. Do you study the Bible? How can a person know false religion, that is, false doctrine? We know in the same fashion the experts know false money. The experts study the “real” thing until they have it memorized and know every intricate detail of real money. They know its’ weight, its’ feel, its’ color. We as true worshippers know false religion by knowing TRUE doctrine. Now, do you see the benefit of studying the Bible? The Bible is our source of truth. By the Bible, we know false doctrine for the Bible is truth. If you do not study the Bible, you risk being swept away by false religion. Many sincere people have been led away by false religion.

Jude 11 says *“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”* This verse gives three distinct marks of false religion. One, “they have gone in the way of Cain.” That is, false religion is religious. Cain had “religion.”

Yet, he slew his own brother and is in hell. His religion was his *own* religion- not a religion based on God's commands. Second, "they ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." False religion is marked by greed. They require and have great riches, millions of dollars. They know nothing of the words of Apostle Paul "having food and raiment." Third, they "perished in the gainsaying of Core." False religion is marked by rebellion against the principles of God's Word, the Bible. They shamelessly make their own rules with no regard for the Bible.

### *How to treat false religion*

We all confront false religion in our daily walk. All regions of the earth have been exposed. In fact, as was mentioned at the beginning of this writing, the "false" outnumber the "true." The Word of God tells us how to treat them. Look one more time at Romans 16:17 which tells us "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*" Those who walk in the truth are warned to stay away from those who walk in false doctrine.

As mentioned above, in Numbers 25 false religion invited Israel to their church. Israel accepted the invitation and went to their worship. In an instant the children of Israel were bowing down to false religion! **STAY AWAY FROM FALSE RELIGION!** Find a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, Bible-preaching religion and surround yourself in the truth! The *truth* is the only defense against false religion. Ephesians 4:14 "*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*"



## DIVORCE

There is a provision for divorce in the Bible. We will look at it. There is a provision for remarrying in the Bible, and that provision is death of your mate. If a married person divorces and chooses to remarry before their mate dies, that person must bear the title “adulteress” or “adulterer.”

### *The provision for divorce*

The Bible recognizes only one condition for divorce and that is *infidelity*, in other words, *fornication*. Matthew 5:32 says “*But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery*” We read further in Mark 10: 4-5 “*And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*” In other words, God did not grant the right of divorce in accordance with his will, but because of the hardness of man’s heart he did so. God is against divorce, but he does allow it for reasons of infidelity.

### *The provision for remarriage*

There is only one provision for remarriage after divorce and that is the *death* of the spouse. Many choose to divorce and remarry before their original mate dies. This is not legal with God. If it is done, God is so displeased the divorcee is strapped with the title “adulterer” or “adulteress.” Marriage is eternal with God. So, he put this penalty upon those who break the marriage vow. Marriage is the taking of a *vow* and no vow is temporary with God but is eternal. Marriage is eternal.

Romans 7:2-3 “*For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from*

*that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”*

Mark 10:11-12 *“And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”*

Divorce, except for infidelity, and remarriage, though not pleasing in God’s eyes, need not be the end of the road for a Christian. God’s love is still there. God is abundant in mercy. God often chooses to use a divorced/remarried person in his work. That is the business of God. However, divorce is the end of the road for a *Bishop* (pastor) and for a *deacon*. Neither a single person nor a divorced person can serve as deacon or Bishop (pastor). See topic “Pastors and deacons”

## THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD

### *General*

What is the *Bible*? Who wrote the *Bible*? How was it preserved? How does it relate to the life of men? Many are the questions that could be asked and that have been asked about this book called the Bible.

The word Bible comes from the Latin form of the Greek word *biblia* which means “little books.” The Bible is then a “book of books.” It is, in fact, THE *book of books*. It contains 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. More will be written later about the features of this amazing book.

Is the Bible the word of God? Or, the word of men? Or, the word of Satan? The Bible is the Word of God. If you do not believe the scripture came out of the mouth of God, the Bible is “just another book” to you. The Bible does not contain the Word of God; it *is* the Word of God!

If you have a Bible you are among the most blessed of mankind on the earth. More than one-third of the world's population is believed to not have access to a Bible. It is estimated 80 million Americans do not have a Bible because they do not want one.

### *God's Word*

To say the Bible is God's Word is to say God spoke it. And that is exactly what the Bible is. It is the spoken Word of God penned down by men. It is commonly believed by Bible scholars that God used more than 40 men of Israel to pen down the Bible. The devil hates the very notion that God spoke the Bible. Thus, he hates the Bible. In the Garden of Eden, it was Satan who came to Eve and defiled the spoken word of God. God told man not to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree, and if he did “*thou shalt surely die.*” No sooner had God spoken than Satan altered God's spoken word like this: “*And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall **not** surely die:*” Genesis

3:4. Because of hatred, Satan added one word “not” to defile what God had spoken.

The Bible tells us the Bible is the *word of God*. It is the only source that records this fact. No encyclopedia or dictionary is likely to tell you the Bible is *God’s word*. The Bible is believed and accepted by *faith*. Men aren’t required to believe the Bible but may choose by faith to receive and believe it. The Bible, God’s Word, is the best-selling-book of all time. The Psalmist made sure in one chapter, Psalms 119, that we knew the Bible was God’s word. The phrase “*thy word*” is recorded 35 times in this one chapter! Glory to His Name!

How did God get the word of God, the Bible, from his lips to man? II Timothy 3:16 reads “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*” The word inspiration means divinely breathed. Who then did God breathe his words to? The answer is II Peter 1:21 “*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” God used some forty men to breathe his word to, and then have them write it down. All these forty men were men of Israel. None were Gentiles. Moses, for example, is a man of Israel. God used Moses to receive and write down the first five books of the Bible. God gave the Bible over a span of 1600 years.

### *Inerrant*

Does the Bible contain errors? Webster dictionary defines *inerrant* as “free from error.” The Bible contains no errors, no mistakes. Do you believe the Bible is error-free? Proverbs 30:5 says “*Every word of God is pure...*” The Psalmist told us that if we put the word in our heart that we could stay pure. Psalms 119:11 reads “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*” Only that which is pure can keep a man pure. The pure Bible contains no errors.

The dean of religious studies at the local college told one of his students that only portions of the Bible were true, accurate and correct. The student, a member where I pastor, asked the dean which

part of the Bible was true. The dean's reply was "I do not know and have spent many hours trying to discern what portion is true and what portion is not." If there is one lie in the Bible, the entire Bible stands in question! If there is one misspoken word, what is to say there are not hundreds or thousands of misspoken words? If one promise in the Bible is not true, how do we know "*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" is true? Have we believed a lie?

### *Infallible*

Can the Bible ever be wrong? Webster defines infallible as "incapable of error." In other words, the Bible is not wrong at present (inerrant) and cannot ever be wrong (infallible). Being infallible, if it was true yesterday, it is true today. If it is true today, it will be true tomorrow. The Bible in all ages has been under attack. Yet, it can be denied by the hounds of hell but never disproved. If my great grandfather preached it as the truth, I can preach it as the truth!

Have you ever heard someone say of a matter "that is no longer the case" or "that is no longer true?" This can never be said of the Bible—true yesterday, true today, true tomorrow and true for eternity.

### *Everlasting*

Matthew 24:35 "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*" There is coming a day when the heavens themselves shall melt with fervent heat. However, the Bible will be doing fine. Why? It is God and God cannot pass away or even get sick. Psalms 119:89 reads "*For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*" When there are no mountains or valleys, when there are no oceans, lakes or streams, there will be a Bible. When the shy disappears there will still be a Bible. When hell itself has been cast into the lake of fire, the Bible will still exist. Glory to God for the Bible.

### *The final say*

Romans 3:4 says "...yea, let God be true, but every man a liar..." Society and religion are confused around the world because the Bible is not the accepted authority. However, let it be true and every man a liar. Do you need help clarifying the confusing issues of life? Then,

read the Bible and accept it. Do you need help in your marriage and in your home? Read and accept what the Bible has to say. Would you like to be saved? Then, let the Bible tell you how.

### *Manifested in the Flesh through Christ*

John 1:1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* John 1:14 *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”* Do you believe Jesus is the Bible? You should after reading this passage.

One day Jesus is coming back to the earth again. We see His coming in Revelation 19:13 *“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called **The Word of God.**”*

### *Hated*

The Bible is a hated book. Men in one age sought to burn every Bible in existence. The Devil would burn all copies today if he could. Yet, he will never have that pleasure for the Bible is forever recorded and preserved in Heaven.

### *Can save your life*

As sinners we are begotten by the Word of God, the Bible. Romans 10:17 reads *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Sinner, trust the Bible. Call on Jesus and be saved today.

### *Interesting facts about the Bible*

1189 chapters and 31,173 verses

66 books (39 OT and 27 NT)

God used over 40 men of Israel to pen down the words of the Bible

Psalms 119 longest chapter

Psalms 118:8 middle verse

The best selling book of all time

Translated into over 1200 languages

John 11:35 shortest verse

The Bible was the first book printed (1454 A.D. Gutenberg)

## THE CHRISTIAN WALK

*Hebrews 12:1-4 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 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 the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”*

Have you heard of the Christian “walk?” What about the Christian “life?” Let me introduce you to the Christian “race.” These verses in Hebrews present the Christian life or walk as a *race, or competition*. Have you ever been involved in a foot race? Likely in your youth you did just that. What kid at some point didn’t boast that they could outrun someone? We all did. Most Bible scholars believe Paul to be the man used of God to pen down the Hebrews. Not only did Paul liken the Christian life or walk to a *race* here in the Hebrews, but also in other of his writings. In I Cor 9:24 we read “*Know ye not that they which run in a **race** run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*”

### *The competition*

A race is not a race unless there is competition. Imagine the Olympics with only one contestant in each event. Why have the Olympics? Why have a baseball game with only one team on the field, that is, no opponent? Again, a race is not a race unless there is competition, that is, a conflict.

Every Christian has competition in the Christian walk. If you don’t have hindrances or competitors or conflict in your Christian walk it is because you are not walking a Christian walk. You have sold out

and surrendered to the Devil. You have tossed in the towel, waved the white flag, and many have done just that.

But, the true Christian who is trying to walk for God faces opposition. Again, a race is not a race without an opponent. A walk for Christ is not a walk unless there is opposition. Hebrews 12:1, in fact, tells us of two competitors. One would be enough, but we have two!

Let us meet the first competitor that is against every Christian. In verse 1, this competitor is called “weight.” Place a ten pound weight on your back and challenge your friend to a footrace. You will likely lose. Christians today can’t run a pleasing race for God because of unnecessary weight they have on them. This weight is “*unnecessary cares of this life.*” Do you have any of these weights on your back? I’d say you do. Let’s meet some of the *weights* Christians carry:

*Desire to conform to the world.* Some church members would come to church naked if it became fashionable to wear no clothes in public. They can’t bear the thought of not conforming to the world. They conform to the world in dress. They conform to the world in speech. They have the weight of wanting to conform on their back, and it is a competitor to them.

*Desire to be accepted by the world.* This is a weight that is in competition to your Christian walk. You are not going to speak up for truth and right. It is too important to you to be accepted by society. You are not going to publish your church in public. That would be embarrassing. It is too important to you to be accepted by the world! This is the weight that is your competitor.

*Keeping up with the Joneses.* What a heavy weight! The neighbor or an acquaintance or a relative buys an SUV and you have to have one even though you can’t pay for the sedan you drive now. This is a heavy weight and a competitor to your Christian life. Covetousness is killing Christians and therefore, our churches.

*Worry about the future.* This is a heavy weight. You will never tithe. You will die a “God-robber.” Financial worries keep you bent over. What is going to happen next? No one knows tomorrow- it is God’s problem. The last time I checked he was the manager of heaven and doing okay! I am sure he can handle your puny problems. He numbers the hairs on our head and attends the funeral of every sparrow. You and your worries are no problem for God.

*Jobs and careers.* What a heavy weight. Try running around the block with this load on your back! Are all your thoughts and passions consumed by your career plans?

Now, do you feel you know your first competitor in the race? His name is “weight,” and his name means the *unnecessary cares of this life*. Don’t forget him.

Meet the second competitor in your Christian race. His name is “besetting sin.” Verse 1 says “*lay aside...the sin which doth so easily beset us.*” Every Christian has this competitor. Your “besetting sin” and my “besetting sin” may not be the same. The Greek language explains the besetting sin as “a competitor which commonly beats you in a race and seems always to be standing around to challenge.” Remember the kid who could always outrun you as a child? You thought you were fast. Every time company came to visit and you wanted to show off your speed, the bully down the street who could outrun you rode up on his bicycle. You could never win for he seemed always standing around waiting to enter the race and beat you!

Such is the besetting sin we all have. We all have a sin that is a competitor to our Christian walk and is always standing by to ruin the race. Just when you promise God one more time you are not going to miss a church service, your besetting sin appears to stop you. Just when you promise God you will absolutely reverence the Word of God in daily study, up jumps that besetting sin. Sure enough, that besetting sin always has his shoes laced up and ready to go!

What is your besetting sin...

It may be lust.

It may be a temper.

It may be anger.

It may be a dirty mind.

It may be a tongue you have not asked God to tame.

It may be a hateful attitude or disposition.

It may be doubt or lack of faith.

Every Christian has a besetting sin.

### *The observers*

In a race or competition, we need observers. Few competitions are without observers. We call them *fans* or *spectators*. In golf the spectators are spoken of as *the gallery*. Most sports simply refer to the spectators as “those in the stands” or “those in the arena.” In your Christian walk, i.e., your race, you have spectators. Not one Christian regardless of how hard they try can live a private, isolated life void of observers. The folk on your street know your spiritual state. Your co-workers know your spiritual state. Don’t kid yourself— you have observers.

Hebrews 12:1 calls these observers *clouds*. Living beneath the sky in the open air, the people of the East in Bible times would naturally make clouds figurative of many things. Thus, clouds are the symbol of armies and multitudes of people. Isaiah says 60:8 “*Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?*” The clouds represent people and in verse 1 are called witnesses. “*Clouds without water*” we read in Jude 12 are people who do not perform up to their capabilities. Jude probably had in mind Proverbs 25:14 which says “*Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.*”

Next time you go outside in daylight, look up at the sky. What will you likely see? More often than not you will see clouds. We have very few days in a year’s time where the sky is entirely free of clouds. You remember that when you go outside. The Bible told you that as the clouds in the sky stand over you, such are the people who

witness your Christian life. You see, multitudes are watching your Christian race. You have spectators! You have a gallery! Think of that the next time you pull your clothes off in public- the clouds are watching. Think of that the next time you go out into the public dressed inappropriately.

In part, the clouds, your spectators, are the saints that went before you in Chapter 11 of Hebrews. Note Hebrews 12:1 begins with “wherefore” and thus ties this chapter to the previous chapter 11. Are you going to fail God with Abraham sitting in the stands? Are you going to fail God with Isaac and Jacob in the stands? Why, there sits Brother Noah! Over there is Brother Abel, verse 4, who was slain despite his excellent sacrifice.

I remember my sons playing in kid’s sports. When they became men, they stopped. But as children, I know it made a difference when dad was in the stands. I have seen them peak around to see if I was there. July 13, 1997 my father went to glory. However, I see him sitting there on the 50 yard line while I try to serve the Lord and walk as a Christian today. I must stay true! He is a powerful witness to me.

Not only the saints who have gone before, but in those clouds are the saints that remain. You mean something to that man or woman or boy or girl on that pew beside you. You mean something to that child that stands on the porch of the church and watches for your car to arrive. You mean something to that Pastor who looks out over the assembly as he stands behind the podium and remembers that you were on his heart as he prayed and prepared the message for the service.

In those clouds, there is the *sinner* as a spectator! Yes, the sinner is a spectator to your Christian walk. Oh God, let us run the race well if only the sinner is watching! Paul said of his Christian walk I Cor 9:27 *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”*

So, we are talking about the Christian walk as a race, as a competition. We have established that there are spectators represented as clouds in verse 1. We have also established in verse 1 that there are two competitors in our Christian race!

*The encourager*

So, we have met the spectators in this race. We have met the competition in this race. We have one more important person to meet. When you were a child, did you have someone you looked up to? Did you have someone you wanted to be like? Maybe there is someone in your life presently that you look up to. Well, we have someone to look up to in this Christian race. His name is Jesus. He is our example and our encourager. Verse 2 says “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*” God did not say for us to look unto Moses or Noah or Abel, but unto Jesus. We stand without excuse. Jesus has already walked every step of the journey we are being asked to walk. Because of Him, we can run the Christian race and be successful. You can run and you can win and you can finish this race! Please, Christian friend, don’t quit!

## HELL

Hell is a real place. It was not prepared for humans, but we go there by our own choice. Hell was prepared for the Devil and his angels. *“Then shall he say, also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”* Matthew 25:41.

Jesus spoke more about hell than He did about Heaven. Let us look at the great record Christ spoke in Luke 16:19-25: *“There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar dies and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of this finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”* Notice that this man could see, hear, feel, taste. What a terrible place to spend eternity, in a pit of fire!

Hell is a real place. *“And it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this is the judgment,”* Hebrews 9:27. *“And whosoever was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,”* Revelation 20:15. *“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night...”* Revelation 14:11.

Jesus tells us how serious hell is in Mark 9:43-48 *“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into fire that never shall be*

*quenched. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. An if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”*

Our Father in Heaven, the Almighty God, doesn't want anyone to go to hell. *“For 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.

*“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Romans 5:8.

*“Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God hat prepared for them that love Him.”*  
1 Corinthians 2:9.

What can you do to avoid hell? *“...and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thou house.”* Acts 16:30-31. Please read Article 1 “Salvation Plan.”

## SICKNESS AND HEALING

### *The reality of sickness*

I know no one who does not want to have good health. No one wants to be sick. It is simply human nature to desire to be well. However, reality of life is that sickness comes to the vast majority of people at some point in life.

Since sickness is such a reality in our lives, it is no surprise that the Bible has much to say about sickness. Added together, the words “sick” and “sickness” appear in the Bible 109 times. “Disease” appears sixteen times. Other words relating to sickness such as “infirmity” appear many times in the Bible. Diseases such as leprosy and palsy are addressed in the Bible. As we begin to read the Bible in Genesis 1 and move forward, we don’t have to go very far until we find a sick man in Genesis 48. In this scripture Joseph is notified that his beloved father Israel is “sick.”

Yes, the Bible is filled with sickness. So, in this article let us examine what the Word of God has to say to you and I in regard to what we will most assuredly face in our lifetime...sickness.

### *Why does sickness happen*

The flesh of man is mortal. Mortals get sick. The flesh of man is sinful and not yet redeemed by the blood of Christ as is the soul of the Christian. Read Romans 8:23. Thus, being subject to sin, sickness of the body is possible. You can be sick simply because you live in a sinful body on a sinful planet called earth and for no other reason.

Understand also that sickness can be imposed on a person by the Lord because of one’s sin. It is entirely within the realm of almighty God to judge for sin by administering sickness. The Egyptians suffered sickness in the great plagues, and this was because of their sin of worshipping false gods.

Furthermore, it is God's prerogative to place sickness on one of His children as a trial of their faith. I Peter 1:7 says "*the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold.*" The trial of sickness has made many a Christian a better Christian.

Yet, it is a damnable teaching that says all sickness is because of sin in the life of the sick one. This is, in fact, a "sick" teaching. So often we hear the familiar phrase "*with His stripes we are healed,*" Isaiah 53:5. That is correct. His stripes healed my sin-sick soul and diverted me from hell. And yes, one day His stripes will heal this body. I shall one day have a glorified, disease-free body thanks to the stripes of my Lord. I Corinthians 15:53 "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*" As of this day, this mortal is still mortal, this corruptible is still corruptible, and therefore subject to sickness even before the sun sets this day.

Let us expose further this damnable teaching that sickness is never God's will but the fault of the sick person. We will look at some Bible characters who fell sick. In II Kings 13:14 we read: "*Elisha was fallen sick of the sickness whereof he died.*" Elisha was in God's will. What wrong had he done? He was in communion with God and even on his dying bed was a mouthpiece of God. In II Timothy 4:20 Paul says "*Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.*" Why didn't the righteous Paul heal sick Trophimus? In Philippians 2:27 we read Epaphroditus "*was sick nigh unto death.*" In Philippians 2:30 we read Epaphroditus was sick and nigh unto death because he had worn himself out nearly killing himself in serving Christ! Who can argue that the *Apostle Paul* had no physical infirmities? And this is what he had to say about them: II Corinthians 12:9-10 "*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*" Apostle Paul did not even seek to be healed, though we can be sure it was his desire. He simply desired God's grace to sustain him through his sickness.

What sin had *Job* committed? The *blind boy* of John chapter 9 did no sin, nor his parents. It was for the glory of God that *Lazarus*, John 11, was sick and died. Sickness is not necessarily because the sick person has disobeyed God!

*Do we make ourselves sick*

Do we bring sickness on ourselves? Should God heal us when we overeat, do not exercise and do not rest properly? Folk ask me to pray for their healing when they have no regard for what or how much they eat. One set of knees is not made to carry two bodies. I know a diabetic who eats seemingly every food the doctor says not to eat, yet wants to be prayed for that they may be healed. Folk ask for prayer for healing from sickness they brought on themselves from working many days without a day off to rest properly. Yes, we do bring sickness on ourselves. Should God then heal us in this circumstance?

*It is not always God's will to heal*

This is a hard statement for so many. Why did God not heal Elisha? Instead, God allowed his sickness to take his life. Why did God not touch Job sooner? Why did God not remove Paul's affliction and allow him to labor without infirmity? Why did God not heal Stephen's broken bones and stop his bleeding inflicted by his enemies and allow him to live to further preach the Word? It is not always God's will to heal. Why did God not heal my father of cancer and allow him to continue to preach the Word? One person who claims the "by His stripes we are healed" promise as a "wellness guarantee" told me of my father that this promise did not apply past age threescore and ten! He passed away at age 79 of cancer.

It is not always God's will to heal. Timothy served God faithfully and did so with stomach problems. Why did God allow this? God promised in Romans 8:28 "*all things work together for good to them that love God*" and he included sickness in "all things."

*It is usually God's will to heal in answer to prayer*

I believe that when we pray for healing we should pray as Matthew 26:39 "*Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" When you pray

for healing do so with a surrendered heart prepared to accept sickness should it be God's will not to heal you. Be prepared for death as well. However, and thanks be to God, it is usually God's will to heal the sick who come to him in prayer believing. A large percentage of sickness is healed without a physician or medicine. God put healing forces in nature (I guess he knew we would be sick) and the body has a magnificent ability to combat disease. So, can we not reason that it is God's primary plan that we be well?

Often in sickness as in many of our Christian needs, "ye have not because ye ask not." Yes, it is usually God's will to heal us, and therefore he invites us to pray for healing in James 5:13 *"Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray."* Affliction in James 5:13 means hardship. Hardship can be financial, career, and, yes, hardship of health. James 5:14 will address sickness which is different from affliction. If you are afflicted in your health, *"let him pray,"* according to James 5:13. Pray for yourself when you have minor inconveniences of health. Folk ask me to pray for an upset stomach. I want to say two things to them: one, that is an affliction so pray for yourself as James 5:13 instructs, and secondly, I want to say to them your prayer has already been answered in the form of Pepto-Bismol. Our forefathers prayed for medicine and God answered. We are blessed today with medicine our fathers prayed for.

In James 5:14, *sick* means diseased. There is a difference in affliction and sickness. When you are sick, verse 14 instructs you to call for the elders. On the other hand, if you are afflicted pray for yourself. I believe in James chapter 5 for healing. I have seen results. James 5:15 says *"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick..."* Not the elders, not the oil, but prayer brings healing. I appreciate elders praying for me when I am sick. No elder alive today is Apostle Paul or Apostle Peter and neither are you or your Pastor or your favorite evangelist. It is not the man, not even those who profess to be able to touch and heal someone. It is prayer and the hand of Almighty God which heals!

*Why do you want to be well?*

No one wants to be sick. Yet, sickness comes. When you are sick, why do you want to be well? This is important. So you can go to the store? So you can go fishing? So you can visit the relatives? Or, so you can serve God. Often we prolong our sickness for we do not desire to be

healed for reasons pleasing to God. James 4:3 reads *“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss...”* Prayers for healing can go unanswered because we are asking to be healed for the wrong reasons.

*Doctors and medicine*

The so called “faith healers,” which I prefer to call “fake” healers, may have told you it is a sin to go to the doctor or to use medicine. They say it displeases God because it shows lack of faith in him. Why don’t you stop breathing and put your faith in God to keep you alive?

James 1:17 *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...”* Our forefathers prayed for medicine and doctors and hospitals for our communities. God answered their prayers. God has given man amazing knowledge to develop medicine and to learn the body and diseases. Medicine is from God. Doctors are from God.

Hezekiah’s sickness is given in II Kings 20:1-6. Read this passage. Hezekiah prayed and got well. However, in II Kings 20:7 it is revealed that a means was used in the healing: *“And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.”* Prayer was offered to God for his healing and prayer should always be offered. God said okay, I have heard your prayer and you will live and not die. However, use this remedy to bring your healing to a conclusion! We should pray for healing when sick, and tell God if he wishes to use medicine and doctors in the healing, God still gets the credit!

Jesus used spittle mixed with clay in the healing of a blind man in John 9. He placed the mixture on the blind man’s eyes. In other cases, Jesus healed by his spoken word. In other cases he healed by

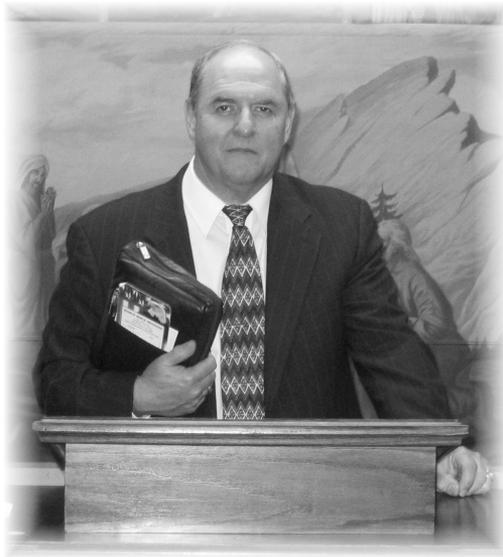
a simple touch. In one case, a woman with an issue of blood simply touched Him! In using the spittle in John 9, Christ was picturing for us the use of medicine in healing sickness. Paul told Timothy to use *wine* for his stomach. This was grape juice used as a medicine. It is an aid to healing, a gift from God like today's medicine.

God uses men to lead sinners to Christ. God didn't have to do so, but chose to allow men to lead others to Christ. If God can use a man in winning a soul for Christ, can he not use a physician, nurse, or pharmacist in healing the sick body?

Colossians 4:14 refers to Luke as the "beloved physician." Luke was with Apostle Paul during his last hours of life, and I have often wondered if God didn't simply arrange for Paul to have a private physician in this dark time. That would be just like our good God!

No sick person, saved or lost, has ever been healed without God's intervention. If medicine, doctors, and hospitals are involved, it is still God for all good things come from him and "*without him was not anything made that was made,*" John 1:3.

## **A b o u t t h e A u t h o r**



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Saved at age 11 in 1965, Pastor Hogan has filled many positions in the Lord's work while serving Him these many years. Pastor Hogan is a graduate and licensed Civil Engineer who practiced engineering twenty-three years. Preaching the Gospel since 1998, Pastor Hogan's desire today is to point folk to Christ who can engineer their souls in a fashion pleasing to Him.

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Pastor Hogan and wife Jamia have two sons, Cary and Andrew. Son Cary is also a preacher of the Gospel. To God be the glory for every good and perfect gift cometh from him.

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