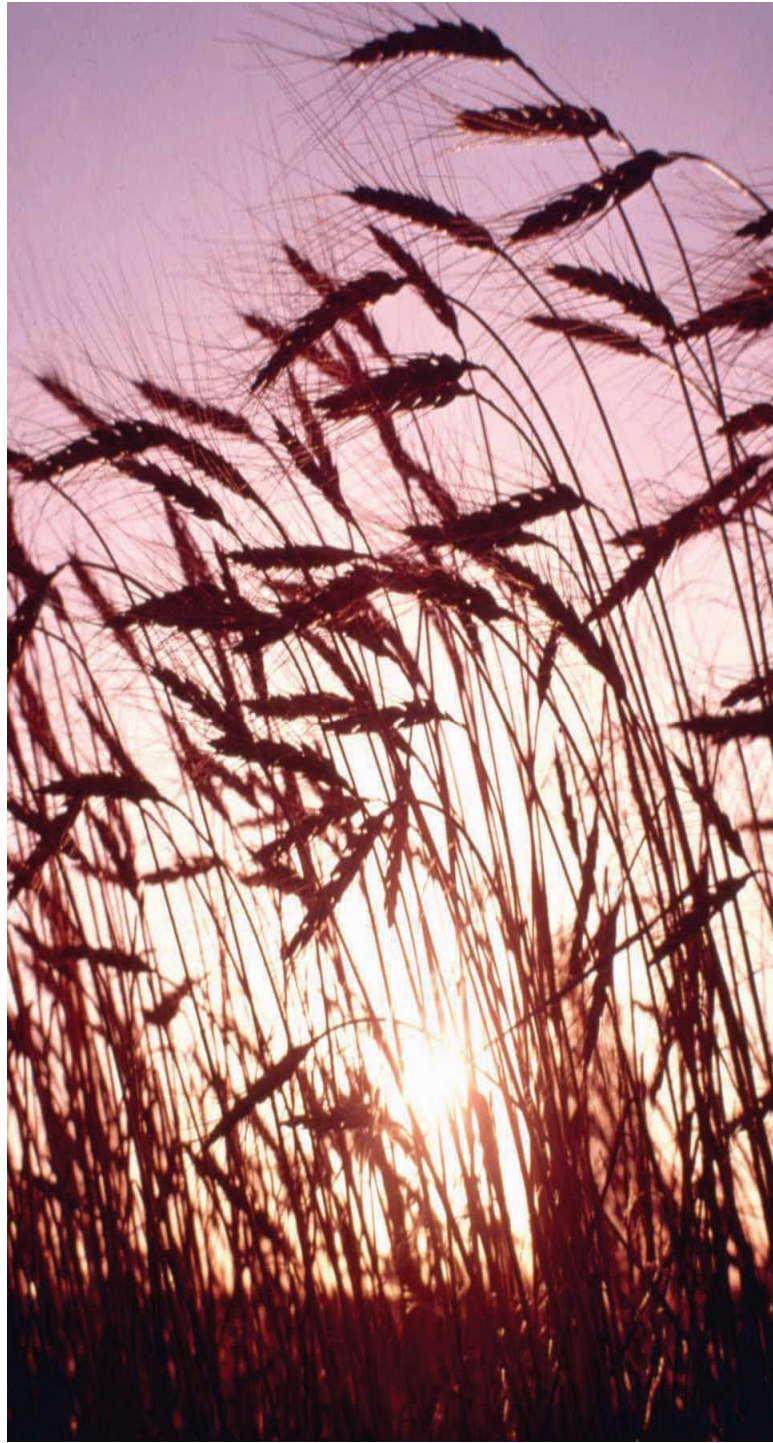


*What Does The Bible
Say About That?*

This is part four.
Devotions 231-301



231 Be a Wheat not a Weed

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

“Here is another story Jesus told:

‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew.

The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’

‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed.

‘Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked.

‘No’, he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’” Then leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, ‘Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.’

Jesus replied, ‘The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels.

Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will remove from His Kingdom everything that causes sin, and all who do evil. And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.’”

You are allowed to believe whatever you want concerning the *“fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”*

My suggestion?

Be a wheat baby. Be a wheat.

232 Come Close To God

James 4:8

"Come close to God, and God will come close to you."

Zechariah 1:3

"...Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord...."

Psalms 73: 28

*"But as for me, how good it is to be near God!
I have made the Sovereign Lord my shelter.."*

+++++

If you are a thousand steps away from God,
To close the distance God will take all but one,
The last one He leaves for you.

It only makes sense to return to God.
To come close to God.
In the storms of life, we need to run to the Shelter!!

But there is another thought to ponder.
"Come close to God, and God will come close to you."

This is a two-way street.
God wants to be close to you!

This is why we were made in the first place!
For fellowship.

God loves you, and wants to stay close to you.
Why would you want to leave?
Why would you want to turn Him down on such an offer?

Come back.
"...Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord...."

This is His promise.

Take Him up on it.
God is right here, right now.
He is listening to your thoughts and prayers, and watching over you.
When you quiet yourself, and acknowledge His presence, God
touches your heart, and restores your spirit.

So why not let Him do that right now?

Come close to God , and God WILL come close to you.



233 God's Word

John 12: 28-30

Jesus said: “***Father, bring glory to your name’***.”

Then a voice spoke from Heaven saying,

‘I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do it again.’

*When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder,
while others declared an angel had spoken to Him.*

Then Jesus told them, ‘The voice was for your benefit, not mine.’”

2 Peter 1: 16-19 (Concerning the Transfiguration of Jesus)

*“We saw His majestic splendor with our own eyes when Jesus
received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the
majestic glory of God said to Him:*

‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’

*We ourselves heard that voice from Heaven when we were with Him
on the holy mountain. We have also a more sure word of prophecy
unto which you would do well to take heed....”*

God the Father spoke from Heaven to Jesus, the Son of God, on three occasions:

1) the Baptism of Jesus, 2) at the Transfiguration of Jesus in front of James, Peter, and John, and 3) the above mentioned John 12 event in front of a crowd.

A) Concerning the event in John 12, read what happened:

“When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to Him. “

Isn't it interesting how these people reacted to the voice of God.
John obviously understood what the voice said, but others did not.
Not everyone can recognize the words of God.
Not everyone sees Jesus for who He is. God in human form.
Not everyone can see and understand the Glory of God.

‘I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do it again.’
In the incarnation, ministry, obedience, and miracles of Christ;
And again, in the soon to come suffering, death,
and resurrection of Jesus.

So the voice of God spoke of His glory,
but some in the crowd only heard thunder.

The same thing is happening today.
Some may see the glory of God all around them,
and attribute it only to nature.
Or some may be willing to say it is supernatural,
but won't attribute it to God.
They want to see and believe in angels or spirits,
but will not bend a knee to God.

Non-believers view Jesus in the same way.
Some say Jesus Christ was only a man. Just a natural man.
Or some say Jesus Christ is supernatural, but not God.

“For God, who said, ‘Let there be light!’, has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthian 4:6

This verse says, that as a believer, when you see Jesus,
you see the Glory of God.
But all won't recognize this, because some will not believe.

B) Now look at the passage in 2 Peter.

Look at what Peter wrote after talking about hearing the voice of God speaking from Heaven at the Transfiguration of Jesus.

*“We have also a more sure word of prophecy
unto which you would do well to take heed....”*

Now there are different opinions about what this verse means.
Over the past years commentaries have given several view points.
I happen to agree with the following.

This passage is saying that the written Word of God is a more sure word of prophecy.
There is nothing more powerful. Nothing more sure.
God Himself can not break one promise, or alter one prophecy, that is written in the Bible.

The Word of God is more persuasive
than any other kind witness or event. Galatians 1:8
(Devotion # 155, ‘The Most Powerful Witness On Planet Earth’)

Even if the ghost of your Uncle Bob tells you something that’s
different than what the Bible says,
or if an angel preaches some other message,
or if a voice from Heaven shouts out a contrary Biblical message,
WE STAND ON THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

*“Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words shall not pass away.”* Matthew 24:35

*“The grass withers and the flowers fade,
but the word of our God stands forever.”* Isaiah 40:8

“Your eternal word, O Lord, stands firm in Heaven.” Psalms 119:89

Oral teachings and traditions of ministers
are to be tested by the written word. Acts 17:11

The written Word of God is very important *“unto which you would do well to take heed....”*

I close this devotion with a quoted section from C.I. Scofield 1917 notes on the Bible.

Fulfilled prophecy is a proof of inspiration because the Scriptural predictions of future events were uttered so long before the events transpired that no mere human sagacity or foresight could have anticipated them, and these predictions are so detailed, minute, and specific, as to exclude the possibility that they were mere fortunate guesses.

Hundreds of predictions concerning Israel, the land of Canaan, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and numerous personages--so ancient, so singular, so seemingly improbable, as well as so detailed and definite that no mortal could have anticipated them--have been fulfilled by the elements, and by men who were ignorant of them, or who utterly disbelieved them, or who struggled with frantic desperation to avoid their fulfillment.

It is certain, therefore, that the Scriptures which contain them are inspired. *"Prophecy came not in olden time by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"*

2 Peter 1: 21

STAND ON

GOD'S WRITTEN WORD

234 The LORD is our GOD, the LORD is one

Deuteronomy 6:4

“Hear, O Israel, The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.”

+++++

This is part of the Jewish mantra.

They say it in the Temple.

They read it. They repeat it. They repeat the word, ‘one..., one..., one...’

Let us look up the definition of the word ‘mantra’ in the dictionary.

Mantra: ‘A religious chant that is repeated during meditation, an expression or idea that is repeated, often without thinking about it.’

Alright, let’s take a moment and actually think about the above scripture verse. Written in Hebrew, and read from right to left, it goes like this:

echad Yahovah elohiym Yahovah Yisra’el Shama.

one Jehovah Elohim Jehovah Israel Hear.

Did you catch this?

Moses wrote this under inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Moses basically said the name(s) of God three times.

(Think about it.)

What was written goes like this:

Listen up Israel, Lord God Lord is one.

And if that wasn’t enough, the word used for God, ‘Elohim’ is plural. ‘Elohim’ is a plural noun in form, but singular in meaning according to Scofield notes.

Also, the word used for one is ‘echad’

which means ‘compound unity’.

Moses did not use the word ‘yacheed’,

which means ‘only one’ or ‘absolute one’.

Actually, if God wanted to say this the way the Jews hear it,

He should have had Moses write it this way: ‘Jehovah is yacheed.’

Then the Jews could have nipped the whole ‘Trinity’ idea in the bud.

Of course, we still would have had to deal with Moses writing the verse in Genesis 1:26 :

“And God said, let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness”

What’s wrong with this Moses guy?

I’m with the Jews on this.

I hate it when a good plan gets messed up. Don’t you?

One God..... One name..... ONE.

No idols.....Only one God to worship.....Got it!

So why did this Moses fellow mess it all up by writing this?

Why make this confusing?

Well..... maybe because God really is a ‘Three in One’ God?

And that’s kind of hard to understand.

A Triune God or Tri-personal Being. Hmm.....

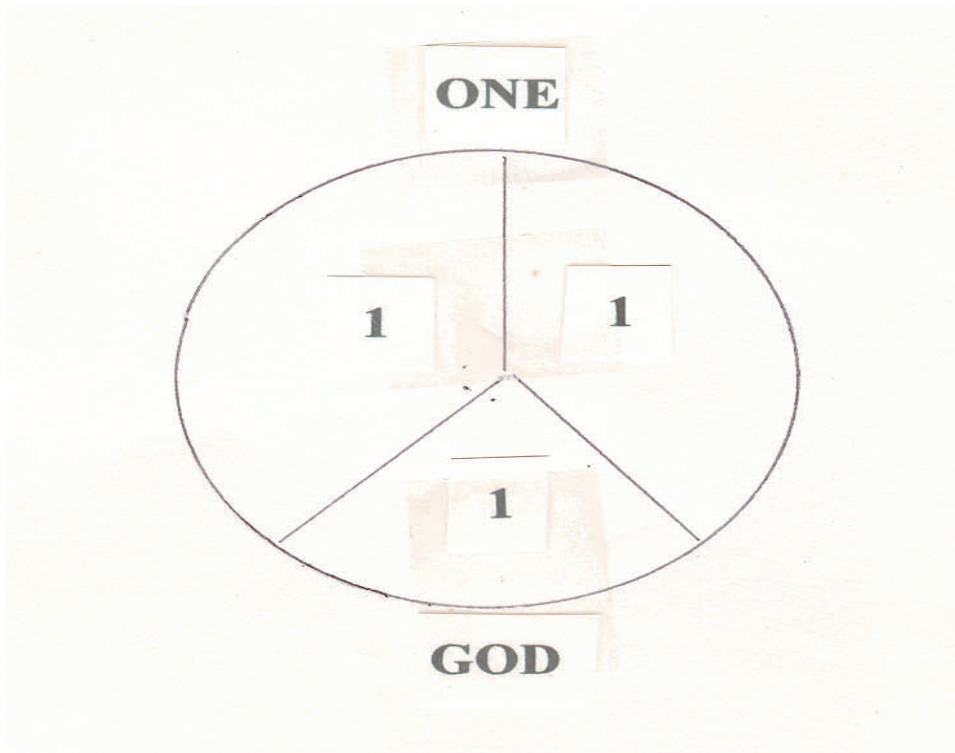
Our brains can’t even grasp the concept?

And why?

Because we are created finite beings

trying to understand our infinite Creator God.

Maybe that’s the answer.



How about we just accept what GOD SAID.
And quit trying to change, or ignore the Scripture.
Since I'm on a roll,
I have to give you one more thing from the passage in Deuteronomy.
It's from the following verse after 'the Lord is one' verse.
And it goes with the whole Jewish mantra thing.

The next verse, Deut 6:5, goes like this:
"And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all your HEART, and with all your SOUL, and with all your MIGHT."

Isn't that an interesting verse in light of what is written in I Thess 5:23
"Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole SPIRIT, and SOUL, and BODY be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again."

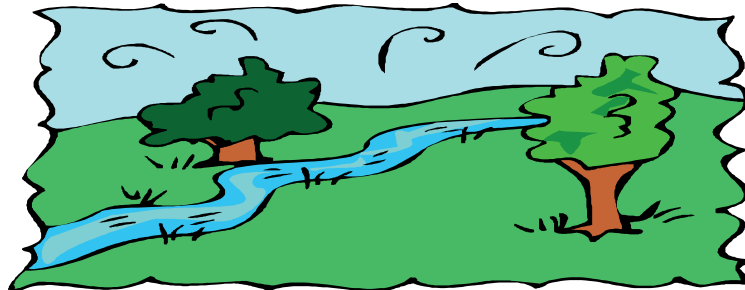
So our Triune God made us as a Tri-unity of spirit, soul, and body.
Since you were made in His image,
you are made as a three-in-one being.
Just like Him.

The Jewish mantra passage from Deuteronomy
speaks of this ONE Lord, and therefore excludes all idolatry.
That message is not just for the Jews.
It's for all of us.

Of the Ten Commandments, the first one says:
"Thou shalt have no other gods." Ex 20:3

There is only one Lord,
consequently there are no other gods permitted to divide the heart.

Therefore,
we should love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and might.



235 Biblical Numerology: God's Numbers

Isaiah 40:12 , 48:12-13

“Who else has held the oceans in His hand? Who has measured off the heavens with His fingers? Who else knows the weight of the earth, or has weighed the mountains and hills on a scale?.....

I alone am God, the First and the Last. It was my hand that laid the foundations of the earth, my right hand that spread out the heavens above. When I call out the stars, they all appear in order. ”

Psalms 147:4

“He counts the number of the stars, and calls them all by name.”

+++++

“I alone am God... It was my hand that laid the foundations of the earth.....measured off the heavens... weighed the mountains and hills.....(I count) the number of the stars they all appear in order...”

Are you getting any of this?

God made it. Measured it. Weighed it. And numbered it.
In the works of God, all is in perfect harmony, order, and symmetry, both in the design, and in the numbers.
And the one corresponds with the other in a magnificent manner.

God has made the world,
and His written Word,
with a perfect numerical law.

God invented numbers.
He is the One who First made Perfect math.

And everything
from the atom’s electrons spinning around the proton packed nucleus,
to the planets spinning around the sun,
operates on this numerical law. God’s law.

From a honey bee to a human brain,
all built by perfect design by a perfect designer.
Even within God’s written Word, the Bible,
the numerical law continues.

From the Old Testament,
with its Hebrew '*El-Shaddai*' (God Almighty) written (7) times,
to the New Testament,
with its Greek '*kurieuo*' (Lord) written (7) times.

And hundreds of other examples
that show that this law is at work in the Bible.

Every word of the Bible is in its right place,
and used exactly the right number of times.
The created universe is exactly the same way.
Everything made shows mathematical perfection.

Example:

The heavens show the number (12).
The 12 signs of the Zodiac
and the division which gives us the 12 months of the year.
The great circle of the heavens divided into 360 degrees (12 x 3).

Example:

The bee which has been built by God on the number (3).
In 3 days the egg of the queen is hatched.
It is fed for nine days (3x3)
It reaches maturity in fifteen days (3x5)
The worker grub reaches maturity in twenty one days (3x7)
And is at work 3 days after leaving its cell.
The two eyes are made up of 3,000 small eyes,
each having six sides (3x2), just like the cells of the comb.
Underneath the body are six (3x2) wax scales
with which the comb is made.
It has six legs (3x2) and each leg is composed of 3 sections.
The foot is formed of 3 triangular sections.
The antennae consist of nine sections (3x3).
And the stinger has nine (3x3) barbs on each side.

Example: The various periods of gestation are commonly a multiple
of the number (7).

Here's a few examples:

The mouse at 21 days (7x3)
The rabbit at 24 days (7x4)
The rat at 24 days (7x4)
The cat at 56 days (7x8)
The dog at 63 days (7x9)
The lion at 98 days (7x14)
The sheep at 147 days (7x21)
The Human at 280 days (7x40).

Example: (Do,Re,Mi,Fa,Sol,La,Ti,Do)

The frequency number of each of the main musical notes all have a frequency made of multiples of **(11)**.

Sound is the vibration of air, so we measure frequency of musical notes by the number of vibrations per second.

Each note has a frequency number,

Do(11x24) Re(11x27) Mi(11x30) Fa(11x32) Sol(11x36) La(11x40)

Ti(11x45) Do(11x48),

and the difference between each note is a number which is also a multiple of 11.

Example: The grains in Indian corn are set in rows, generally straight, but in some cases spirally. These rows are always arranged in order in an even number. Never odd.

You can not find an ear of corn with an odd number of rows.

They all have an even number of rows of corn kernels.

Why?

Because Jesus wants it that way!

If you ever want to study the way each number is used in the Bible, buy the following book on Biblical Numerology.

It's entitled, 'Number in Scripture', by Ethelbert Bullinger written in 1894. That's right.... 1894.

Every word of the Bible has been counted.

We know how many times each Hebrew or Greek word is used.

The study is fascinating.

The only way the results could happen with such perfection would be if Moses did a conference call into the future, and got the other 39 Bible authors on the cell phone.

Moses would have to make sure they knew how many times to use each word so that the Bible would come out with certain significant words used **(2)** times, which show things which are divided, certain words showing completion used **(3)** times, showing divine perfections, certain words used **(10)** times, denoting ordinal perfection, certain words used **(12)** times, giving governmental perfection, and on, and on, and on, and on.....

Are you getting a grasp of what I am saying?

God Himself created the world,

and moved men to write the written Word of God.

Everything is perfectly planned using a perfect complete design.

David was right when he wrote Psalms 19:1
“The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display His craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make Him known.”

And Jesus said : *“The Scriptures point to me!”* John 5:39
The Bible certainly does.....in words, and in numbers.



**God made it.
Measured it.
Weighed it.

And numbered it.
God’s numbers.**

236 Living An Obedience-Based Life

Daniel 3:28
*“They trusted in Him and defied the king’s command,
and were willing to give up their lives, rather than serve or worship
any god, except their own God.”*

+++++

Have you ever known someone
who lived an outcome-based Christian experience?
This means that their decisions are made based on
the positive or negative outcome,not on absolute obedience.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three men who lived an
obedience-based life. When King Nebuchadnezzar passed a law that
said all were to worship his idol, these young men determined they
would not worship anything other than God.

You can be sure
these men did not make this decision at the time of the decree.

Their decision actually had been made years earlier.
Their convictions were already in their hearts.

Each of us must come to a place
of knowing what our boundaries are in given situations.

What will you tolerate from your employer?
What situation crosses the line for you?

Where are the boundaries for questionable practices in your life?
If these are not worked out ahead, you will live a life of situational
ethics, determining what decision to make based on the merits of the
situation.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to die for what they
believed. In this case, they were delivered from the fiery furnace.
God used their faithfulness to impact a king, and they were promoted
to higher positions.

Are you an obedience-based Christian?
Or are there situations that can move you based on the outcome?

God wants to know that we will stand firm on the issues that are
important to Him, no matter what the outcome may be.

God is looking for those who are radical in their obedience.

Does this describe your commitment to Christ?
If not, pray for this kind of conviction.
The Lord will honor you for this.

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Obedience-based life

237 Jesus Knows The Future, Because He IS God

Psalm 41:9 *“Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely,
the one who shared my food, has turned against me.”*

John 13: 18-19, 21-22, 25-26

*“...I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that
says, ‘The one who shared my food, has turned against me.’*

I tell you this beforehand,

so that when it happens you will believe that ‘I AM’....

Jesus was troubled and said,

‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!’

*The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom He could mean
.... ‘Lord, who is it?’*

Jesus responded,

‘It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl.’

And when He had dipped it,

He gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.”

+++++

Under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, King David wrote Psalm 41
a thousand years before Jesus quoted it to His disciples.

Jesus wanted them to know that He is God.

And, as God, He is in charge of predicting, and fulfilling prophecy.

Jesus knows the future.

Jesus moved David to write that past Psalm a 1000 years before.

And now, as Jesus ate with His disciples, He says to them,

“I tell you this beforehand”.

In other words, Jesus is prophesying at that moment.

Jesus knew the 1000 year old prophecy was about to be fulfilled.

Before He identified Judas, Jesus told them that this 1000 year old
prophetic Psalm was about to be fulfilled.

And immediately following His words, the prophecy was fulfilled.

No one knew that there was a betrayer in their midst.

But Jesus knew.

Jesus, as God, knows everything.

Jesus then indicated that Judas was about to betray Him.

*“I tell you this beforehand,
so that when it happens you will believe that ‘I AM’*

Devotion #17, ‘I AM Yahweh’, described the personal name of God.

*“God said to Moses,
‘I AM WHO I AM.
Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.’
God also said to Moses,
‘Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has
sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all
generations.’” Exodus 3:14-15*

*“Jesus said to them,
‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.’”
John 8:58*

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”
Hebrews 13:8*

238 Seeking (or Not Seeking) the Lord is Serious Business

Psalm 53: 2
*“God looks down from Heaven on the entire human race;
He looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God.”*

2 Chronicles 15: 2-4, 12-13, 15
*“...The Lord will stay with you as long as you stay with Him.
Whenever you seek Him, you will find Him.
But if you abandon Him, He will abandon you. For a long time Israel
was without the true God, without a priest to teach them, and without
the Law to instruct them.
But whenever they were in trouble and turned to the Lord, the God of
Israel, and sought Him out, they found Him....*

*Then they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their
ancestors, with all their heart and soul. They agreed that anyone who
refused to seek the Lord, the God of Israel, would be put to death—
whether young or old, man or woman.....All in Judah were happy
about this covenant, for they had entered into it with all their heart.
They earnestly sought after God, and they found Him.
And the Lord gave them rest from their enemies on every side.”*

This is a weird message, isn't it?
I know this is a strange passage.
"He will abandon you"
Abandon me?....Huh?
I thought Jesus was with me always even until the end of the age?
(Matthew 28:20)

I also was more than slightly taken back
when I read the above scripture.
Seek God,.. or we'll kill ya.
Whew.....kind of strong, don't you think?

Now I know this passage was written about the nation of Israel.
But there is a principle at work here that we need to understand.

Yes, as a believer in Christ, Jesus is with you always.
But, the reverse is also true.
If you reject the Lord God,
and die in your sins.....you're in big trouble.

The message is clear: ...Seek God now, ...or risk death.
Yes, it's a tough message,
but the more I thought about it, the more I realized something.

Whether you like it or not,...The same message is still true today.
Seek and find Jesus,... and you will live.
Ignore and reject His offer,... and you will die.
Revelation 20:14 calls it "*the second death*".

It's a strong message.
Because He's a Holy God.

The last book of the Old Testament has an interesting verse.
Malachi 3:6 says "*I am the Lord, and I do not change.*"
The God of the Old Testament has not changed..... Not at all.

In other words, the God of this passage in 2 Chronicles is still God.
The Old Testament ended, and the New Testament began.
The ultimate loving gift of a crucified Christ was revealed.
Jesus died and rose from the dead.
But, the Old Testament God didn't go anywhere.
He did not cease to exist.

"*I am the One who is, who always was,*
and who is still to come—the Almighty One." Revelation 1:8

Think about this for a second.

We will ALL answer to this same God
who accepted this covenant mentioned in Chronicles.
It may be the 21st century, but God hasn't changed.
Jehovah and Jesus are One.

The age of grace is here,
but the time of judgment approaches.

What makes you think
that the Old Testament God has changed somehow?
Or that you somehow won't answer to Him?

What makes us think today that God won't judge human kind?

"The Lord will judge the ends of the earth" 1 Samuel 2:10

"The Lord will judge His people" Hebrews 10:30

*"Power, O God, belongs to you; unfailing love, O Lord, is yours.
Surely you will judge all people according to what they have done."*
Psalm 62:11-12

Again and again in the Old Testament God is shown
as a God of Holiness and Power.

Yes, He loves us.
Yes, He is full of mercy.
He has given us salvation **IF** we seek HIM.
Why wouldn't we do that?

If you were in a burning building,
wouldn't you look for THE WAY out?

Jesus is THE WAY. (John 14:6)

As God, Jesus has provided salvation with His death and resurrection.
We must accept this gift.
We must accept Him.
For to do so shows that we still seek the God
of the Old and New Testament.

We must enter into a covenant to seek Him with our whole heart.

What happens when you seek God?

“they had entered into it with all their heart. They earnestly sought after God, and they found Him.

And the Lord gave them rest from their enemies on every side.”

Do you get it?

Scripture tell us again and again that if we seek Him,

WE WILL FIND HIM.

Jesus told us: “...*Seek and you will find...*” Matthew 7:7

And when we find Him, He gives us rest. He gives us life.

He gives His promise of eternal life in Heaven.

And whips every enemy that fights against us.

I for one want to show myself wise, as someone who seeks God.

God “*looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God.*”

Are you wise?

Are you seeking God?

Old Testament God

New Testament God

Same God.

239 How Did Jesus View The Bible?

1)It is imperishable.

“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.” Matthew 5:18

2)It is inspired.

“Jesus responded, ‘Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, call the Messiah ‘my Lord’? Matthew 22:43

3)It is without error.

“Make them holy by your truth; teach them your Word, thy Word is truth.” John 17:17

4)It holds ultimate supremacy.

“Jesus replied, ‘Why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God? ...So you cancel the Word of God for the sake of your own traditions?’ Matthew 15:3,6

5)It is historically reliable.

*“When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in **Noah**’s day.”
Matthew 24:37*

*“For as **Jonah** was in the belly of the great fish....”Matthew 12:40*

*“Many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east to west—and sit down with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 8:11*

*“The day is coming when you will see what **Daniel** the prophet spoke about..”Matt 24:15*

*“Now someone greater than **Solomon** is here—but you refuse to listen.”
Matthew 12:42*

+++++

These are all comments by our Lord Jesus.

They show that Jesus expressed a high view of Scripture.
Again and again Jesus used the phrase “*It is written*” to deal with Satan.....We should do the same.
Learn the Scriptures to fight the Devil.

Listen to Jesus again when He says:

“You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures...”

Matthew 22:29

Jesus is very clear.
The Bible is God’s Word,
and we should be reading it, studying it, and memorizing it.

King David wrote:

*“I have hidden your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.”* Psalms 119:11

The Bible. God’s written Word. Make it your foundation.
STAND ON IT.

If you believe in Jesus, then follow His example.
Jesus knew and lived the Scriptures. Follow Him.



**Imperishable.
Inspired.
Without error.
Supreme.
Reliable.**

240 Be Still and Listen To God

Psalms 100: 3

*“Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He made us, and we are His.
We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.”*

John 10: 27 *“My sheep listen to my voice...”*

Psalms 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God.”*

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The Bible teaches that a wonderful way to get to know God is to be still,and listen to Him.

How many of us find it hard to slow down, and listen.

As the demands of everyday life kick you into overdrive, you may be tempted to ignore God's presence or—worse yet—to rebel against His commandments.

But, when you make the decision to quiet yourself, and acknowledge His presence, God touches your heart, and restores your spirit.

Why not let Him do that right now?

If you really want to know Him better, silence is a wonderful place to start.

"I always begin my prayers in silence, for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks" Mother Teresa

You should try this daily.
After you read this devotion, close your eyes.
Take a slow long breath, and quiet your mind.
And ask the Lord God if He is there.

Now, try to listen for His response.

God loves you, and wants to fellowship with you....He will answer.

"And we are confident that He hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases Him." 1 John 5:14

241 Sola Scriptura verses Prima Scriptura

You may not know it, but this has been a debate since the 16th century. It's time for you to weigh in on the discussion, because it is an important one. How we view the Bible is the beginning point for everything else we believe. I admit that I do have a strong opinion on which side of this debate that I agree with. But I'll give it my best shot to present both sides of the argument. ...Here we go:

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Sola Scriptura

- 1) Sola scriptura is the assertion that the Bible is the only infallible Word of God.
- 2) The Bible is the only source for Christian doctrine.

- 3) All things needed for salvation are taught in the Bible clearly enough for the ordinary believer to find the Lord Jesus. You do not need another person to interpret the Bible for you so that you can find salvation in Christ.
- 4) This view does not accept added-on tradition as a source of original authority in addition to the Bible. Church ideas which do not have any Biblical basis and/or contradict with Scripture are rejected.
- 5) Interpretations of how to understand and apply the Scriptures do not have the same authority as the Scriptures themselves; hence, the ecclesiastical authority is subject to correction by the Scriptures
- 6) As John Wesley stated in the 18th century, "In all cases, the Church is to be judged by the Scripture, not the Scripture by the Church."
- 7) The individual may read and study what others have written in explanation of difficult scriptural passages, and may accept church creed, if it agrees with the doctrines that the Bible clearly teaches; but, non-Biblical church dogma may force the individual to rely on his own understanding of Scripture, even if all of tradition speaks against him.
- 8) Everything is subject and judged by Scripture; even Scripture is interpreted by the whole of Scripture.
- 9) Isaiah 8:20: *"To the law and to the testimony: if they contradict this word, it is because there is no light in them."*
- 10) Jesus is also typically understood as expressly nullifying unscriptural traditions in the (Jewish) church, when He says: *"thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."* Mark 7:13
- 11) *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses the Scripture to completely equip us to do every good work"* 2 Tim 3:16
- 12) *"We have a greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place...."* 2 Peter 1:20

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Prima Scriptura

1) **Prima scriptura** which holds that even though the Bible is the first source of doctrine it can be improved by reference to other sources, and can be added to by the living teaching office of the Church alone.

2) The Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Coptic, Anglican, and Roman Catholic faiths say that the Bible can interpreted only by certain men in the church in a line of priestly succession, by what these men have said and written over the years, by a book called the Apostolic Tradition, (which is an early manual of Christian church life and discipline), and by the ecumenical church councils over the centuries.

3) This view considers that the “Word of God” is formed by Scripture and Tradition.

4) The Bible must be interpreted by church teaching, and by considering the Bible in the context of sacred tradition.

5) II Thessalonians 2:15:
"So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."

6) In addition to the Old Testament, traditional Jews also base their religious views of Orthodox Judaism as much if not more on the teachings of the Rabbis over the years. These Rabbinical books are called the Talmud, Midrash, and the Mishna.

7) This view rejects sola scriptura because both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.
This view holds that Tradition is in total equality with Scripture.

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Alright, there it is.
So where do you stand?
Which approach do you think is most appropriate?
Or do you think it matters?

The answers to these questions are important, for they determine how you will view the Bible, and therefore what you believe.

I believe the Bible is the very foundation for my faith.

Without the Bible, I am a ship in a storm, without an anchor.
Without the Bible, every puff of heresy could push my ship towards
the rocks.

The Devil wants to ship wreck your faith.
He wants you weak, doubting, and confused.
Only by knowing and standing on the Word of God can we prevail
against Him.

When the Devil attacked Jesus, what did Jesus do?
Jesus turned again and again and again to the Scriptures.
"It is written.....It is written..."

And when the Devil quoted the Scripture,
Jesus did not turn to some other authority.
Rather Jesus said, *"It is also written.."*

When the evil one, or his representatives misuse the Bible,
Jesus teaches us that we must look more deeply into the written Word,
.....not away from it.

As we move into what has been described as post-Christian America,
it is increasingly important for Christians to know what they believe,
as well as why they believe it.

The apostle Peter put it this way: *"Always be prepared to give an
answer [apologia] to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the
hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and with respect."*
1 Peter 3:15

What we are talking about is called: **Apologetics**.

The word apologetics is derived from the Greek word: "apologia",
which means "a reasoned defense".

It is the defense of the faith by providing an answer,
not an apology in the contemporary sense of the word.

I invite you to join me.
Learn to defend your faith. Become an expert in apologetics.
To do this you will need to continue to study your Bible to know what
and why you believe as you do.

"Let God be true, and every man a liar." Romans 3:4

242 The Spirit Within

1 John 4:4

*“...The Spirit who lives in you is greater
than the spirit who lives in the world.”*

Acts 19:13-20

“A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!’ Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this.

But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, ‘I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?’ Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked, and battered.

The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored. Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.”

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As a believer you have the Holy Spirit within you.

“God has sealed us with a mark of ownership by giving us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee that we belong to Him”
2 Corinthians 1:22

God the Holy Spirit is stronger than any demonic spirit. 1 John 4:4

*“...The Spirit who lives in you is greater
than the spirit who lives in the world.”*

The seven sons of Sceva were making money doing exorcisms.
They were not believers in the Lord Jesus.
And they did not have the Holy Spirit within them.
That is why the evil spirit kicked their butts.

That same evil spirit is still alive today some where in the world.
He still knows who Jesus is.
Does he know who you are?

Notice what happened after this event.

“Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.”

What sinful practices?Sorcery.

The folks who were practicing sorcery burned their incantation books.
Harry Potter would not be amused.

Yea, yea.....I know. Harry Potter. Just a story.

Just a few good movies.

I even like watching them. Great action flicks.

But do we have the courage to speak the truth?

If a young Harry Potter fan asked you to buy them a real incantation book, would you?.....Yes?....No?....., well why not?

The answer should be pretty clear.

Satan is real. His demon friends are too.

Satan wants your children to think it's cool to talk to “good ghosts” and learn to cast cool spells.

To see this as their ‘gift’.

Something they can learn.

Satan wants you to look at your horoscope,



or visit a psychic fortune teller.
He wants you to ask a medium for help to contact your deceased Uncle Bob.

But what does the Bible say about all of this?

I'm going to close with some scripture for you to ponder.

Deuteronomy 18:10-11

“Do not practice fortune-telling , or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as a medium or psychic, or call forth the spirits of the dead.

Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord.”

Leviticus 19:26, 31

“.....Do not practice fortune-telling or witchcraft.Do not defile yourselves by turning to mediums, or to those who consult the spirits of the dead. I am the Lord your God....

I will turn against those who commit spiritual prostitution by putting their trust in mediums, or in those who consult the spirits of the dead.

Any questions?

243 Dieting For God

1 Corinthians 6:19

“What? Don't you know that YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, and was given to you by God?”

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1) The Temple.

Currently on this planet, your body is the temple of God.

It is not an option whether or not you should take care of it;

.....it is a duty.

You are the official caretaker of the temple. So do your job!

When we allow our bodies to get soft and unfit, then it might be said that we are unappreciative of God's gift of life.

Poor physical condition that is due to our own negligence or laziness could be seen as an insult to our Creator.

2) Be Holy.

“.....it is written, Be holy, for I am Holy.” 1 Peter 1:16

Holiness requires that we tend to our physical, mental, and spiritual health. We are made in the image of God.

We are a three-in-one being—body, soul, spirit.

(Just like our God is a triune being—Father, Son, Holy Spirit.)

It is important—

what you feed your spirit

what you feed your mind

what you feed your body.

1 Thessalonians 4:7 says God has called us to holiness.

Dieting is not just turning from what we shouldn't do,

dieting is doing what God has called us to do.



3) Diet for God.

*“For you were bought with a price:
therefore GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY,
and in your spirit, which belong to God.” 1Corinthians 6:20*

We are to glorify God in our bodies because they belong to God. Let everything we do honor and glorify God, for that is what truly pleases Him. Therefore, we should commit our diets to God. If we see dieting as a sacrifice we make to God, then we can find a deeper power to remain committed to our efforts to lose weight.

1 Peter 2:5 speaks of our “*spiritual sacrifices*” which we give to God. Excluding direct sin, ANY ACT we do AS UNTO GOD could be seen as an act of worship IF WE MEAN IT AS SO. Including the sacrifices we make during our diet.

4) We need the Lord.

There is no reason to feel guilty for being overweight, for God forgives us our weaknesses, and offers His own strength as our own. We can start our diets with a clear conscience, and with an assurance that God is with us every step of the way.

Although being overweight is not a sin,
few people would say it is good.
We are to strive to be holy.
Strive for that which is perfect, or “the best”.
Being overweight and unhealthy is “not the best”.
God will help us whenever
we turn from anything that is “not the best”, and turn to Him.

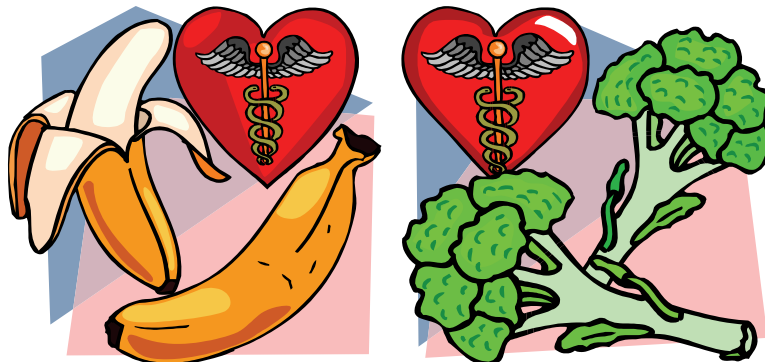
Once we make that decision to turn from being overweight, then it is vital that we put ourselves in God's hands. Because the Lord God wants in on every detail of our lives, ...and we need Him.

The first step in any AA twelve step process makes you state your understanding that you are powerless against the addiction of alcohol without the help of your 'higher power'.



Jesus Christ is our 'higher power'. He's our 'Higher Person', our Savior, and Lord. We need His help with our struggles in this life....Including dieting. Our '12 step' process concerning dieting begins with our realizing our need for the Lord.

We need to seek His face in prayer as we attempt to lose weight. We can trust God to bless all of our efforts to do what we know is right. May God help you and bless you as you diet for God.



Taken in portion from "Devotions For Dieters" by Dan R. Dick.

244 Messianic Judaism

Acts 21:18-24, 26

“The next day Paul went with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present. After greeting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry.

After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, ‘You know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously. But the Jewish believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They’ve heard that you teach them not to circumcise their children, or follow other Jewish customs. What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come.

Here’s what we want you to do. We have four men here who have completed their vow. Go with them to the Temple, and join them in the purification ceremony, paying for them to have their heads ritually shaved. Then everyone will know that the rumors are all false, and that you yourself observe the Jewish laws.’

....So Paul went to the Temple the next day with the other men.”

Acts 15:1, 6, 11,19

“While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers, ‘Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed themWe believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus..... And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”

Galatians 3: 6-7, 11, 14

*“In the same way, ‘Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.’ (from Genesis 15:6) The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.....
So it is clear that
no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law.*

For the Scriptures say (in Habakkuk 2:4), ‘It is through faith that a righteous person has life.’.....Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing He promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith..”

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Messianic Judaism?... What’s that?
If you answered, ‘Jews who believe in Jesus’,
you’re right.... ..(good guess)
But do you know what this truly means?



The passage above says:“many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously.”

So this was the way it was
with Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus) in the 1st century.
Many Jews believed in Jesus,..... and remained Jewish.

As our passage for today shows,
Paul kept the Jewish custom and went with the men to the Temple.
He was a believer in Yeshua as Messiah, and remained a dutiful Jew.

But something happened. Something changed between the 1st century church and the 20th century church.
A wall was built between Jews and Christians.
And we all helped in laying the bricks.

History has shown that Jews that accepted Yeshua as Messiah have:

- 1) Been kicked out of the orthodox Jewish community by their Jewish families, and told that they are no longer Jewish.
- 2) Been accepted into Christian churches to follow new Christian customs, and told that they are no longer Jewish.

Neither idea holds true.

Jews who believe in a Messiah are still Jewish.
There is no biblical reason for Jews to stop being Jews
...when they find Messiah.
Jews continue to be Jews,
whether they believe, or don't believe in Yeshua as Messiah.

Jews who currently believe that Yeshua has fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies to be the promised "anointed one", are still Jewish by every definition.



The Bible is clear that a unique Jewish nation will survive for Jesus to return to during His Second Coming. No matter what Satan's plan is to try and eliminate the Jewish people, the Jews will survive into the Millennium Kingdom when Jesus will fulfill God's original promise to Abraham. (CFA devotion #163- "The Millennium")

God has been dismantling the wall between Jews and Christians.
Something wonderful has been happening for years now.
Jews are coming back to faith in God,
...and belief in Messiah Yeshua, ... and are remaining Jewish.
Many are attending Messianic Jewish synagogues. (What a concept!)

What this means is that Messianic Jews are Jews, who believe in Yeshua as Messiah, and keep their distinctive Jewish heritage.

They observe Jewish festivals, keep Jewish customs, and may follow Mosaic Law. They do not think that keeping the law will save them. Faith in God saves them.

Christians may celebrate Christmas, Easter,
and a bunch of other holidays.
Messianic Jews may celebrate Hanukkah, Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot,
and other holidays.

It's all good.

Many Jews are realizing that they don't have to become 'Gentiles' in
order to believe in Yeshua.
This is the time to emphasize the Jewishness of these concepts.

It should be explained that it is not the Jew who converts to Christian-
ity when he accepts this Jewish promise.
In a real sense, it is the Gentile who converts to true complete Judaism
when he accepts Jesus-the Jewish Savior, the King of the Jews.

One cannot fully understand the Christian faith, apart from its Jewish
foundations. This idea alone should destroy the mistaken concept that
true Judaism and true Christianity are opposed to one another.
Christian faith depends upon the Jewish Bible.

Even the New Covenant (New Testament) was written by Jews.
Yeshua Himself is a Jew; so were His twelve disciples.

The first Christian community was all-Jewish, and the first great
teacher of the Gentiles, Paul, was Jewish.

Today's Messianic Jews are simply picking up where their 1st century
ancestors left off.

*"In the same way, 'Abraham believed God, and God counted him as
righteous because of his faith.' The real children of Abraham, then,
are those who put their faith in God... Through Christ Jesus, God has
blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing He promised to
Abraham" (Galatians 3: 6-7, 14)*

Messianic Judaism.
Jew, or Gentile.

You may not observe all the festivals and customs, but you are part of
this if you claim faith in God through Yeshua the Messiah.

*"Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding
yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit,
just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.
There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father,
who is over all, and in all, and living through all." Ephesians 4:3-6*

Some material taken from “The Fig Tree Blossoms”:
Messianic Judaism Emerges, by Paul Liberman.



245 Beheaded For Christ

Revelation 20:4

“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus, and for proclaiming the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their forehead or their hands..”

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If you are currently a non-believer in Jesus; and the rapture occurs (which means Jesus coming back for the church) (possibly during Rosh Hashanah this coming fall), I am sure you will notice over a billion Christians missing on that day.

(I plan to be with those who are gone....)

All I can say is : Welcome to the Tribulation!

A new world dictator (the antichrist) will step up into power (Rev 17:12-15) ,make a peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27), and will allow Israel to rebuild their Jewish Temple on the hill where the Dome of the Rock sits.

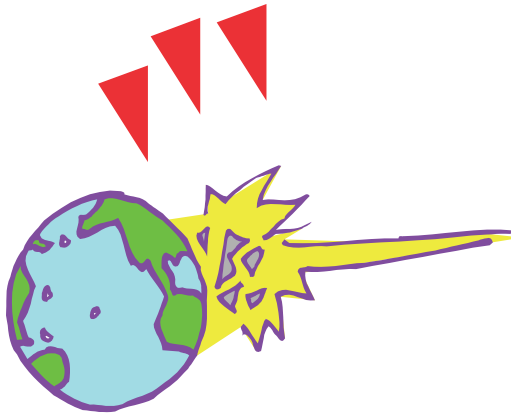
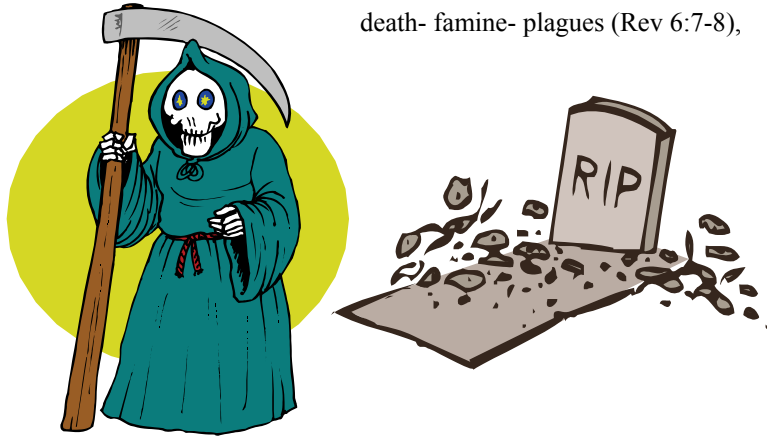
Everything will be cool for a short while.
You may even believe the answer given for all the missing people.

Then things are going to change..... big time.

War (Rev 6:4),



death- famine- plagues (Rev 6:7-8),



meteors hitting the earth
(Rev 6:13, 8:8, 10),

scorching heat from the sun (Rev 16:8-9),

75 pound hail
(Rev 16:21),

the worst earthquake in human history (Rev 16:18),



locusts that sting like scorpions (Rev 9:3),



a third of the world burned with fire (Rev 8:7),



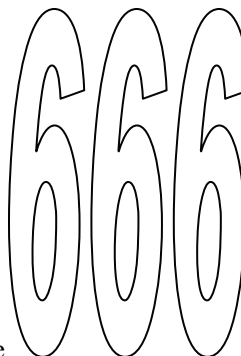
poisoned water (Rev 8:11),
and many other terrible things.

The new world dictator will apparently be killed,
and Satan will indwell him to raise that physical body from the dead
(Rev 13:3,12,14, 17:8)

“He” is going to demand that you worship “him”. (2 Thess 2:4)
(Satan can hardly wait to perform this counterfeit resurrection.)
If you don’t worship “him”,
.... you will pay with your life.

You will have to decide whether or not to take
the number of this antichrist on your hand
or forehead in order to buy or sell anything.
(Rev 13:16-18)

If you remember back to this devotion, it will
dawn on you that the prophecies concerning the
Antichrist, and the coming of Armageddon have
come true.



If you live long enough to finally accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you may be in the above group who will get the opportunity to be beheaded for Christ.

By the way, what current worldwide religion hates Christians and Jews, and will behead you in a quick minute for being an infidel?hmmm... let me think.



The antichrist will lead a worldwide religion (Rev 17, Daniel 11:36-39, 2 Thess 2:1-12) and will be able to negotiate the agreement to either move the Dome of the Rock to Mecca, or allow the Jews to build their Temple right next to it.

So... I am writing this devotion so that you will remember all of this. Every prophecy concerning the end times will come true just as the Bible says.

So cheer up!
You may get the chance to be beheaded for Christ!
All you need to do is wait until the Tribulation starts before you get saved. And then pray as you dodge the hail and meteors.

Say hi for me to the antichrist, if you meet him.

If you are reading this and the rapture hasn't happened yet, then my humble suggestion is that you pray to receive Jesus today, miss the Tribulation period by being in the rapture, and then join us when Jesus comes back to set up the 1000 year Kingdom.

Just a suggestion.

246 Salvation Is A Gift

Ephesians 2:8-9

“God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”

Romans 3:27-28

“Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.”

1 Timothy 1:9

“For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was His plan from before the beginning of time—to show us His grace through Christ Jesus.”

Titus 3:5

“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy”

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People are still trying to get into Heaven by their good works,
“Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done”

Ephesians 2:9

or by thinking that they are a good person.

*“For everyone has sinned;
we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.”* Romans 3:23

If you ask them about going to Heaven, they’ll commonly say:
‘I’m not a bad person,
I’m sure God will let me in since I’ve done good things.’

But why should He,
if you totally disregard His clear instructions on this matter?

The Bible says that acceptance of Jesus as Savior is the only answer,
not how good you are,
and not what you do to try to be rewarded with Heaven.

God’s written Word says salvation is a gift.
You can not earn salvation by being good.
You can not work your way to Heaven.



Instead, you must accept the gift from God to be saved.
You must accept 'The Way' to get there.
"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.'" John 14:6

Do you hear what He is telling you?
You can't get to Heaven unless you believe in Jesus.
He's not one of the ways, He's The Way.

Without Jesus, you will never do enough good things, you will never keep enough of the Law, and you will never be good enough to get into Heaven. You can not get into Heaven, without Jesus.

This means you must bend your knees, and bend your heart,
.....to ask for forgiveness.
You must ask Jesus for salvation based on what He did on the cross.

This means you can't do anything to help in the process.
Because salvation is a one time event.
It's a one time eternal gift that you ask for,
....and receive from the Lord Jesus.

Without this gift, you are a sinner on your way to Hell.
It doesn't matter how good you think you are.
You're not good enough.

We don't like to hear that, do we? That we're not good enough.
It flies in the face of our humanism.

But it is the fact according to the scriptures.
And when you finally come to accept this fact,
.....then Jesus can make ALL the difference.

If we will simply ask Him for His gift of salvation, Jesus will save us.

Then you can start getting His continual help to show your faith by
your works. "*I will show you my faith by my good deeds.*"

James 2:18

Remember, salvation is a gift.

247 Beware Of The Yeast

Matthew 16:5-12

*"Later, after they crossed to the other side of the lake, the disciples
discovered they had forgotten to bring any bread.*

'Watch out!' Jesus warned them.

'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'

*At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't
brought any bread.*

Jesus knew what they were saying so He said,

'You have so little faith!

Why are you arguing with each other about having no bread?

Don't you understand even yet?

*Don't you remember the 5,000 I fed with five loaves,
and the baskets of leftovers you picked up?*

*Or the 4,000 I fed with seven loaves,
and the large baskets of leftovers you picked up?*

Why can't you understand that I'm not talking about bread?

So again, I say, 'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'

Then at last they understood

that He wasn't speaking about the yeast in bread,

but about the deceptive teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

So what is “*the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees*”?

Luke 12:1

“...*Jesus turned to His disciples and warned them:
‘Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy.’*”

The yeast of the Pharisees was externalism in religion.
Trying to appear holy when one’s heart is far from God.
Hypocrisy is outward conformity without inner reality.
It reduces faith to a set of rigid rules where people end up worshiping
their own works, instead of worshiping God Himself.

Pharisees were attracted to religion, not to God.
They got caught up in the details of their additional laws and
regulations, and completely missed God, to whom the laws pointed.
It was a religion of works emphasizing outward obedience
...at the expense of inner renewal.

So what is Jesus warning us about?
What is the deceptive teaching we should watch out for?

*“I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God,
who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ.
You are following a different way that pretends to be the Gospel but is
not the Gospel at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately
twist the truth concerning Christ.” Galatians 1:6-7*

*“...so called Christians there—false ones, really—who were secretly
brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom
we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to
follow their Jewish regulations.....Yet we know that a person is
made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law.”
Galatians 2:4,16*

*“I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted
arguments... You are complete through your union with Christ.....
So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not
celebrating certain holy days, or new moon ceremonies, or Sabbaths”
Colossians 2: 4, 10, 16*



A little bit of yeast will affect a whole batch of dough.
A small amount of evil can affect a large group of people.

This yeast still exists.
People who use clever arguments to try to get you to ADD WORKS
to what is REQUIRED TO BE SAVED.

This is a continuation from last week's devotion,
'Salvation Is A Gift'.
When you add anything to the gift of salvation,
you have the beginning of heresy.

“‘Watch out!’ Jesus warned them. ‘Beware of the yeast.....’”

248 Dead or Alive, You're coming with me.

Ephesians 2:1, 5
*“Once you were dead because of your disobedience
and your many sins....Even though we were dead because of our sins,
He gave you life when He raised Christ from the dead.
It is only by God's grace that you have been saved.”*

Colossians 2:13
*“You were dead because of your sins..... Then God made you alive
with Christ, for He forgave all our sins.”*

Ephesians 5:14
*“For the Light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,
'Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light.”*

+++++

Imagine with me what “Death” might say
.....when he finally comes for you.

Hear him say: ‘Dead or Alive, You're coming with me.’

What does he mean?

Find out in this devotion.

When you accept the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ, things happen.

- 1) You are sealed by the Holy Spirit indwelling you until the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, 2 Corinthians 1:22)
- 2) Your name is written down in the Lamb's Book of life. (Revelation 20:12,15; 21:27, Philippians 4:3)
- 3) Your spirit becomes alive. (Ephesians 2:1, 5, Colossians 2:13)

Even though you were made in God's image as a three-part being, as a lost person you function with only two parts that are alive, your body and soul.

Your spirit is dead according to the Bible.
That's why you can't understand spiritual things.
(1 Corinthians 2: 10,14)

It would be just like sending a corpse to college.
You wouldn't learn anything dead.

Without Jesus Christ, you do not have life, because He is "The Life".
(John 14:6)

So, if Death comes for you today, he is coming to someone spiritually alive, or dead.



Think about what the Bible says:
"...Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell."
Matthew 10:28

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23

"...so everyone who believes in Him will not perish,
but will have eternal life." John 3:16

When you get saved by accepting Jesus as Savior,
.....your spirit becomes alive.

Christ gives you **life**.
“*eternal life through Jesus Christ*” John 3:16
Christ gives you **light**.
“*Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light.*” Ephesians 5:14

God places the Light of Life inside of you.
(Devotion #185, ‘Father of Lights’)
“*Then Jesus said, ‘I am the Light of the world, he who follows Me
will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’*” Jn 8:12

We talked about this in a previous devotion. (#185)
We wore our special goggles to be able to ‘spiritually see’ the people
around us, remember?
With the goggles on, we saw people walk by and we only could see
an area of darkness, but with others who walked by, we saw they had
a bright light shining out of them!

Jesus gives us life and light.
Jesus makes us whole.
Body, soul, and spirit.

Now one final idea:
If you read the parables in Luke 15, Jesus indicates what happens
when we get saved.
“*We have to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and
has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!*” Luke 15:32

Remember, you can be lost, and still be a very nice person.
Just because you get lost going down the wrong road,
doesn’t mean you are the most wicked person on planet earth.
You’re just lost.
And you need help to
find your way home.

Jesus Christ—
the way to heaven,
the truth of God,
the life eternal,
the light of the world.

KEEP 
FAITH
IN THE
LORD

249 Unfailing Love

Psalms 6:4 "Save me because of your unfailing love."

Psalms 13:5 "I trust in your unfailing love."

Psalms 17:7 "Show me your unfailing love in wonderful ways."

Psalms 25:6 "Remember, O Lord, your compassion and unfailing love which you have shown from long ages past."

.....
Psalms 31: 14-16
"I am trusting you, O Lord, saying, 'You are my God!' My future is in your hands... Let your favor shine on your servant. In your unfailing love, rescue me."
.....

Psalms 32:10 "...unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord."

Psalms 33:22 "Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone."

Psalms 36:7 "How precious is your unfailing love, O God!"

Psalms 48:9 "O God, we meditate on your unfailing love..."
.....

Psalms 57:10 "For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds."
(Can you hear the words of this song?)

Psalms 119:76 "Now let your unfailing love comfort me; just as you promised me.."

+++++

Unfailing love..... Love that will not fail..... Ever.
Are you getting any of this?
It seems God is trying to tell us something.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:39)
There is nothing you have done,
and nothing you can do to mess this up,
because it's HIS unfailing love.

Get a hold of this..... HIS unfailing love.
“Remember, O Lord, your compassion and unfailing love....”

Trust me when I tell you,
it’s not the Lord who forgets about His unfailing love.

It’s us.

That’s why we need to *“meditate on your unfailing love...”*

And when we do, His unfailing love will comfort us.
We are comforted by His love.
“Now let your unfailing love comfort me; just as you promised me..”

*“I am trusting you, O Lord, saying, ‘You are my God!’
My future is in your hands...”*

“...for our hope is in you alone.”

Hang on to Him, because He is hanging on to you!

God loves you with an unfailing love!



250 Near-Death Experiences

2 Corinthians 5:8 (for believers)

“Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

Luke 16:22-23 (for non-believers)

“...The rich man died and was buried, and his soul went to Hades. There in torment...”

James 2:26 (definition of death)

“Just as the body is dead without the soul,”

Genesis 35:18

“Rachel’s soul was departing the body, but with her last breath she named the baby....”

Genesis 2:7 (man given life by God)

“And the Lord God made man from the dust of the ground, and He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living soul.”

+++++

Near-Death Experiences (NDEs).

What are they?

How do we explain what is seen and heard by people who were “clinically dead” for a period of time, and “come back” to tell us about their Near-Death Experiences?

How do we clarify what is happening to people who say they “came out of their bodies” and watched from the ceiling as the doctors worked on their bodies in surgery?

How do we explain when others say that they “traveled” to another place, or say they saw Jesus when in these so-called NDEs?

Does the Bible give us any answers?

I’ve been reading up on this phenomenon, and I want to present this detailed devotion.

First I present the scriptures above for your review. The Bible says that we are alive because God made us a “*living soul*”.

It doesn't say that we are merely a living human body with a beating heart. We are definitely more than that.
According to the Bible, when our soul leaves the body behind, we are dead. Our bodies are "scripturally dead".

As Christians, when we are absent from our bodies, we are present with the Lord. We're not floating around the operating room.

The Bible says (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)
that when Jesus comes back at the rapture of the church;
those believers alive at that point in time will have their bodies
changed from mortal to immortal "*in a twinkling of an eye*".
In other words, really fast!

Matthew 24:27 says that at the Second Coming of Christ,
Jesus will come really fast!
"Just as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes."

So when the Bible says,
"Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor 5:8,
I don't think it's a long trip down a long tunnel,
I think it's fast! In fact, instantaneous!

Now back to the so-called Near-Death Experience.
One of the most common characteristics from those who have had a
NDE is an encounter with a "being of light" that many think is Jesus.

The Bible does say that Jesus is the light of the world.
"Then Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the world, he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'" Jn 8:12

And the Bible says that as believers, we are the light of the world.
"You are the light of the world.. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:14,16

I Thessalonians 5:5 "*For you are children of the Light...*"

So maybe we shouldn't be surprised
to see a "being of light" when we die?

But this "being of light" typically says and does things contrary to the
Christ of the Bible.
Since Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8),
it is impossible that this "being of light" is the Jesus of Scripture.

The Bible says that “*Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*”
(2 Corinthians 11:14)

His goal, of course, is to lead people astray.
And he is happy to mimic a “being of light” if the end result is that he can lead people away from the true Christ of Scripture.

This “being of light” typically encountered in Near-Death Experiences teaches the following:

- 1) There is no hell to worry about.
- 2) All people are welcome to heaven,
regardless of whether one has placed faith in Christ.
- 3) All religions are equally valid.
- 4) Death is good, and is not to be feared.
- 5) Reincarnation was taught by Jesus.
- 6) Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek, and Jesus
are the reincarnation of the same soul.
- 7) The Second Coming of Christ
will be another reincarnation of Jesus.
- 8) The concept of the resurrection actually means reincarnation.
- 9) Jesus spirit rose from the dead, not his body.
- 10) Satan does not exist.
- 11) Evil is best described as ignorance, and sin is just a mistake.
- 12) God permits us to make these mistakes for the purpose of
enlightenment.
- 13) You should not read the Bible with literal interpretation.

Consistent with the above is the fact that many who have had Near-Death Experiences come out of the experience with a lower view of Scripture.

But we should remember what Jesus said,
"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

Now, other individuals -- particularly individuals affiliated with non-Christian religions -- claim that the being of light was Buddha, or Krishna, or some other leader of a particular world religion.

Certainly this should raise "red flags" in the minds of Christians.

Satan, the great counterfeiter, is seeking to keep people of ALL religions away from the true Christ of the Bible.

So how do we explain the doctrines brought to us from NDErs.

1 Timothy 4:1 *“The Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last days some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.”*

Not only does the Near-Death Experience remove the fear of death, it also simultaneously inhibits biblical repentance (turning from sin) and salvation (turning to Jesus Christ).

The biblical concept of sin has little or no relevance to this counterfeit “Light”.

And when a person becomes convinced of complete acceptance by this counterfeit Light, receiving Christ as his or her savior from sin becomes almost irrelevant.

The warmth of the “being of light” and the feeling of all-accepting love strongly conveys the message that one is accepted and forgiven wholly apart from personal faith in Christ.

Thus, people who have NDEs, whether in childhood or adulthood, universally lose the fear of death, even though they remain non-Christians.

What the NDE does is powerfully reinforce a common, if mistaken, theme in modern culture— that since God loves everybody, He will grant everyone entrance into heaven on the basis of their being “good” people.

The NDE communicates that God is more concerned with a person’s good deeds, than He is with their particular religious beliefs.

But this is wrong biblically.

While it is Biblically true
that we show our faith in Christ by our good works. (James 2:18)
God is very concerned with what a person believes religiously.

In fact, apart from personal belief in the true Christ,
no one will enter heaven.

So don't be deceived.

*"Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal
life. Anyone who doesn't believe in the Son will
not see life but remains under God's angry
judgment."* John 3:36



Jesus Christ tells us in John 14:6,
that He is the only way to heaven.
Jesus makes it crystal clear that no one will get
there, unless they believe in Him.

We must believe Jesus,not the lying "being of light".

The Bible also teaches that death leads to judgment (Heb. 9:27).

We will all stand before God and
give an answer for what we did in
this physical body.



We must answer for what we did
with the gift of salvation offered
to us by Jesus Christ.

Sin demands a payment.

Either you offer the payment Jesus gave at the cross,
or you pay the price yourself in Hell.

As Christians, we will also be judged and rewarded for what we did
for Christ while here on earth (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

Below is an interesting story.

I want you to read and think about what's really going on.

Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) said his out-of-body hypnosis trips were
just like Near-Death Experiences. He did these trips daily. He said he
would leave his body and go into afterlife realms. The information he
gained from these journeys has astounded people all over the world.
President Woodrow Wilson sought the services of Edgar Cayce for

healing and guidance while he was President. So did a US Senator, a Vice President, and many other powerful and important people.

Cayce was a wonder to the medical community because of his ability to diagnose and specify a treatment for gravely ill people often hundreds of miles away through his out-of-body journeys.

Cayce was able to gain a tremendous amount of information through his "trips". He claimed that his out-of-body journeys were identical to Near-Death Experiences with the exception that he was not clinically dead. Indeed, Cayce claimed one does not need to be dead to have a Near-Death Experience.

During a hypnotic trance, Cayce was able to speak in an authoritative voice on subjects far beyond the range of his normal knowledge.

While in a deep trance, all he needed was to be given the subject to be discussed, or the inquiring person's name, address, and whereabouts, by a conductor to make suggestions and ask the questions, and a stenographer to take it all down.

Almost every day for forty-two years he had out-of-body journeys in order to answer questions covering an immense range of subject matter. To help someone with a medical condition hundreds of miles away, Cayce only needed the full name of the person, his address, and where he would be at the appointed time of the reading.

Lying on the couch with his necktie and shoelaces loosened - for better circulation, the readings said - he could answer any question put to him.

After a while, the sleeping Cayce would start to mumble, as though searching for something. Then he would clear his throat and speak in a firm, authoritative voice. "Yes, we have the body," he would begin, and then go into a half-hour discussion of the physical condition of the person who was ill.

In 1923 a startling new kind of reading was discovered. Under trance, if Cayce was asked questions about the meaning of life he would answer. This began a long list of 2,500 "life" readings.

"What is the meaning of life?" he would be asked.

"What is the real nature of man?"

"What is the meaning of birth and death?"

"Why are we here?" These answers are some of the same revelations that people get now when they have a Near-Death Experience (NDE).

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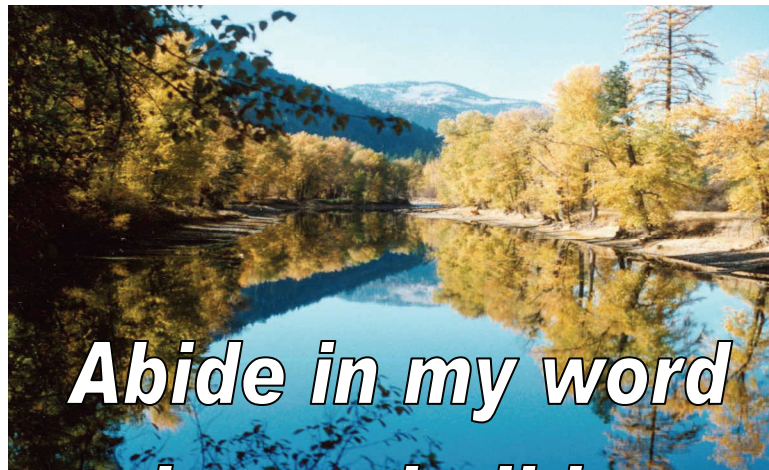
I included this long story here in this devotion on NDE to get you to think about what is going on behind the scenes.
This man was obviously under demonic control.
His mind was not traveling a hundred miles away to visit a sick person and make a medical diagnosis.
The 'authoritative voice' that spoke was evidently a demon.

Now we have dealt on demonic issues in previous devotions.
(#59- "The Spirit World"), (#69- "Jesus and Demons"),
(#155- "The Most Powerful Witness On Planet Earth")

The Bible is clear that Satan is very real,
and is at work in these last days deceiving us.
The Bible makes it apparent in 1 Timothy 4:1, that "*in the last days*"
there will be those who
"*will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits*"
and learn "*teachings that come from demons.*"

The teachings that have come from NDE definitely qualify as
teachings from demons.

I don't know exactly what the Devil is doing when people seem to be
"clinically dead", and have one of these "Near-Death Experiences",
but I do know what the Bible teaches,
and I choose to believe the written Word of God.



Abide in my word
and you shall know
the truth

251 Your Purpose In Life

2 Corinthians 5: 15

“Christ died for everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and rose again for them.”

Colossians 1:16

“For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible.... everything was created by Christ and finds its purpose in Him.”

Romans 14:7-8

“For we don’t live for ourselves or die for ourselves. If we live, it’s to honor the Lord. And if we die, it’s to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

Romans 11:36

“For everything comes from God, everything exists by His power, and everything is intended for His glory....”

+++++

If you want to know why you were placed on this planet,
...you must begin with God.

You were born by His purpose, and for His purpose.

- 1) We are to worship God. (Psalms 147:11, John 4:23)
- 2) We are to love fellow believers. (Romans 15:7)
- 3) We are to become like Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- 4) We are to serve others with our individual gifts.
(1 Peter 4: 10-11, 2 Corinthians 8:19)
- 5) We are to tell others about Jesus. (Matthew 28: 19-20)
- 6) We are to serve God. (Ephesians 2:10)
- 7) We are chosen for a special assignment of Holy work.
(Jeremiah 1:5, 2 Timothy 1:9)

1 Corinthians 12:27

*“All of you together are Christ’s body,
and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.”*

What happens when one part of your body fails to function?

.....You get sick.

The rest of your body suffers.

Imagine if your liver decided to start living for itself:

“I’m tired! I don’t want to serve the body anymore!

I want to take a year off. I’ve got to do what is best for me alone!”

What would happen?

Your body would die.

You have been given a spiritual gift to serve God.

“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.”

1 Corinthians 12:7

When Christians are unwilling to serve,the Body suffers.

There are Christians all around you who need your “service” today.
Open your eyes.

There are also thousands and thousands of people every day who die
without Christ, while Christians sit on the sidelines as spectators.

It’s time to fulfill your purpose.

“Now you belong to Him....

in order that we might be useful in the service of God.” Romans 7:4

+++++

(Quotes are taken from “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren.
If you haven’t yet read this book, I encourage you to pick up a copy.)



252 Order Your New Life

2 Corinthians 5: 17

“Therefore anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

Romans 6:4

“...And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”

Romans 12:2

“...let God transform you into a new person...”

Galatians 6:15

*“What counts is whether we have been transformed
into a new creation.”*

+++++

Imagine standing in line at the return desk at a large department store. You are returning your broken slow-cooking crock-pot.

The guy at the desk asks how he can help you.

You say, “I want to return this broken slow-cooking crock-pot.”

He says that’s ok,
and wants to know if there is anything else you want.

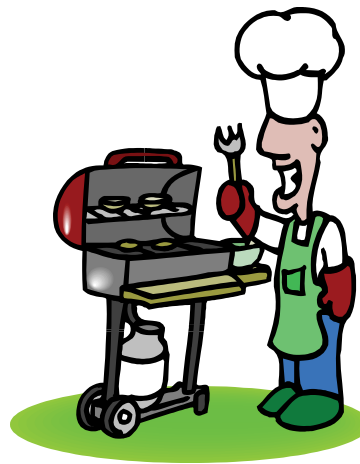
And you answer,
“Yes, I want to order a new flame-shooting gas broiler!”

He says ok, and immediately
places your order.

Soon you are home with a large
steak on the new grill!

The days of the slow cooked
cabbage are over.

It’s hot and juicy steak time!



Paul wrote Timothy a letter, and told him something important.
“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity,
.....but of power, love, and a sound mind.” (2 Tim1:7)

It’s time for you to understand that you have a new life.
No longer full of fear.....but full of power.
No longer timid.....but full of love.
You are no longer crazy.....but have a sound mind.

“...Forgetting the past, and looking forward to what lies ahead.”
Philippians 3:13

It’s time that you order your new life.

This is a choice we make. A decision.
It involves asking Jesus to save us to give us a new life.
And involves picking up our order!

“The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

253 *Quieted By His Love*

Zephaniah 3:17
“The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take
great delight in you, He will quiet you with his love, He will rejoice
over you with singing.”

+++++

Lord, I get loud sometimes.

Sometimes I get verbally loud,
sometimes my spirit gets loud,
or my mind gets loud.

The world around me seems to get loud,
and the loudness overwhelms me.

Unless You quiet me with Your love, my life will surely be filled with
noises that may drown out your voice from my ears.

In times when my spirit is under attack by the Enemy,
I need to be quieted by Your love.

In times of sadness when my heart has been broken,
I need to be quieted by your love.

In times of discouragement when I have failed to live like You have
asked me to live, I need to be quieted by Your love.

In times of disappointment over dreams that have faded,
quiet me by Your love.

Help me Lord to understand your truth,
“*He will quiet you with his love.*” Amen.

+++++

Since our sovereign God is in control of our universe,
we have nothing to fear.

Since we know He loves us more than anything,
we can relax in His care.

We can lie down in green pastures, and drink from still waters
because our Shepherd knows us, protects us, and loves us. (Ps 23)
We can be quieted by His love.

If you only see the Old Testament God who judges sin,
then you might be nervous.

But if you understand that we are currently under the New Testament
age of grace bought by the shed blood of Jesus,
then you can calm down.

The penalty of sin has been paid by Jesus.
And God is satisfied.
As a believer in Jesus, you can focus on His love,
for He is focused on this love for you.

God’s love for us is not new.
Even today’s scripture is found in the Old Testament.

Think about it.
God has loved us from the beginning.
From the Garden of Eden,
God placed into motion a plan to redeem us back to Himself.

From the shedding of the first blood to cover Adam and Eve,
God has been involved.

His love is shown from day one of creation,
through the sacrifice at the Cross,
and continues with His promises of Heaven.
We can be quieted by His love.

When sad and crying,
we can look back to the garden,
and be quieted by His love.

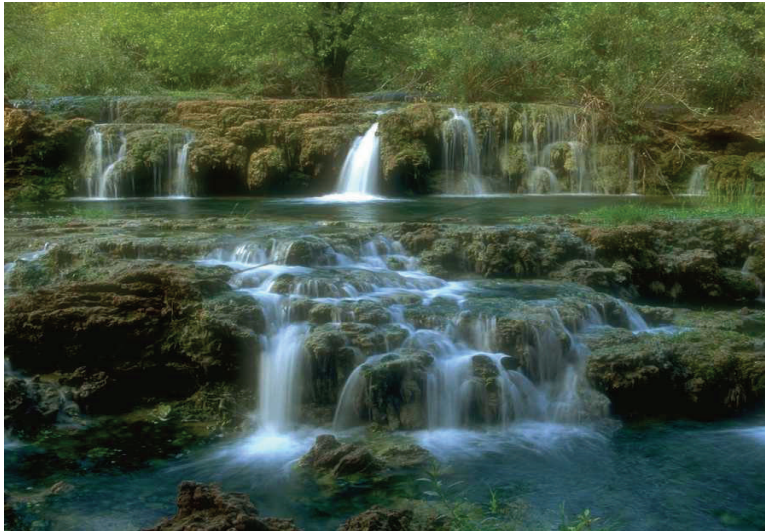
When anxious and worried,
we can look back to the cross,
and be quieted by His love.

When distressed and upset,
we can look forward to Heaven,
and be quieted by His love.

As a believer in the Lord, you need not worry.
Everything is under control.
Our sovereign God loves you with an eternal love.
With His love, He will calm all your fears, if you let Him.

Let Him quiet you with His love.

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Beginning prayer is from Tom Norvell. A Norvell Note (c) Copyright
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Norvell



254 Whatever Is Of Good Report

Philippians 4:8

“Whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

+++++

For several months I was having chest pains every time I did anything physical. Whether I was walking, climbing stairs, or mowing the lawn, the pain was terrible.

Last year I suffered pulmonary embolisms that almost killed me. (those are blood clots in my lungs that came up from my legs) So I was in the hospital for awhile, and later, while at home, I slowly recovered.

Needless to say, that when I am having physical pain I am now careful to take note. So I went in for some tests. First my lungs which were fine, and then my heart.

Many people began praying for me that the Lord would heal me of whatever was wrong.

On one particular day, everything changed, and I felt better. The heart test results came back, and confirmed that I was ok. I was able to exercise, play tennis, and practically run while mowing the lawn. Good news, right?

Yet, I found myself repeatedly asking questions about my symptoms. I was looking for explainable answers. Why had I been having pain? Why were there symptoms before? What was the medical cause?..... and on, and on.

In the middle of all of this questioning, someone sent me the above verse. And God spoke to my heart with His written word. *“ whatever is of good report, think about these things.”*

So I did, and God’s peace came over me. God calmed me.

This is a message to all of us.

In a world full of bad news and pessimistic headlines,
we need to think on good things.

In a world full of pornography, we need to think on pure things.

With all the negative things that permeate us visually everyday,
we need to think on something *“of good report”*.

It’s why you study the Bible.
It’s hopefully why you read these devotions.

We do this because it fulfills God’s Biblical command.
To think about good things, and things of *“virtue”*.
To focus on good reports.
Because the God of peace ministers to us through them.

And remember,
“if there be anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Of course this includes thinking about, and praising, our Lord God
and Savior! Dwell on Him, and watch Him calm your soul.



255 You Are The Temple Of God Today

I Corinthians 6:19

“Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you.....?”

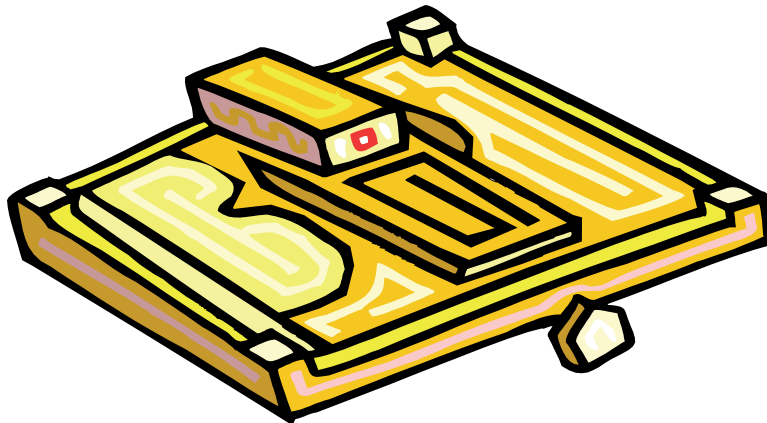
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I was reading 1st Kings chapters 5-8

about King Solomon building the Temple, and I remembered the verse above about how we are now the temple of God today.

I started thinking about the details of the temple in relation to how we are to live.

TEMPLE MOUNT



The temple was, (and is,) a place of:

- 1) Witness
- 2) Sacrifice
- 3) Praise
- 4) Prayer
- 5) Forgiveness

You can see where I’m heading with this message, can’t you?
Everything on this list is what we should be doing!



The temple was the place where people could find God.
We also should be Christians who demonstrate God in action!

When we walk into a room, people should see “God with us”/Jesus.
Like the Holy of Holies,
we should be people who are filled with the presence of God.

When people are around us, they should feel God is near, and that
God can be found, because we are more than just His representatives,
we are His temple.
“your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you...”

If you look at any diagram of the Temple, you would see a huge altar
in the front. This is where they would burn the sacrifices to God.
The fire and smoke from these sacrifices could be seen by everyone
for miles around. Let me ask you something.....
Does your life show any sacrifices for God?
Do people see the fire in you?

We should be people of constant prayer and praise.
We should be people where God’s voice is heard within our temple,
and His words are spoken from this temple.

Let me encourage you...Don’t be afraid to speak God’s word.
It is your purpose as His temple.

The Temple was also easily recognizable as the Holy Place of God.
There was no doubt that it was God’s Temple.
It was different than any other building in the city.

We also should be easily recognizable as God’s temple here today.
So don’t try so hard to blend in with this world.
You’re supposed to be different!

We should strive to be people
who are filled with God's power and presence.

And finally, getting forgiven was one of the main things that
happened at the Temple.
We should also be people who are able to receive,
.....and give forgiveness.

God wants you to accept His forgiveness,
and to dispense forgiveness, as His temple.

How about it?
What kind of temple are you today?
....Is your temple open for business?



256 Examinations, Tests, and Surgery

2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Test yourselves”

Psalms 139: 23-24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”

Psalms 26:2

“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Test my mind and my heart.”

Hebrews 4:12

“For the Word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”

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Examinations, tests, and surgery.... Sounds scary, doesn't it?



But we're talking about spiritual examinations, godly tests, and biblical surgery. Necessary procedures for a Christian.

Examine yourself.

“Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith”

This is the ultimate starting place. You can't get more basic.
Are you in the faith? Are you a believer in Jesus Christ?

So if you are a believer, now what?
Well, how are you living? What do you think and believe?
How do you act?
*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my
anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you..."*

It means to ask God for a full examination, and a battery of His tests.
"Test my mind and my heart."

Why?....So that what 'isn't right' will be found.

And then the biblical scalpel can cut
"between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow"
To get to and remove what isn't right.
This scalpel *"is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword"*.

It doesn't say that this course of action is fun.
And you don't have to like it.

The image of not wanting to go to the doctor still holds true.
But you still go to the doctor so that he can make you well again.

Think about it.
You have a tumor growing on your left forearm.
You examine it.
You know it's there, and it hurts.
You go to the doctor, and he examines it.
He runs a blood test, a cancer cell skin test, and a biopsy.
He tells you that he can safely remove it.
.....But you leave.

You walk out without the treatment.
So the tumor continues to grow.
It gets so big that you can't even lift your arm.

Yes, it's kind of scary to get the surgery on it.
But, why would you continue to carry it around day after day?
Especially when the doctor is ready to take care of this problem?

Spiritually speaking, we do the same outlandish thing.

We are quite aware of a problem, yet we walk away from the scalpel.
We don't allow God to heal us.

This devotion is to encourage you to come back.
Allow God to do the work He needs to do on you.
The end result will be perfection.

257 Jewish History Is Your History

If you are a believer in the Messiah, and in the scriptures,
then Jewish history is your history.

Everything is tied to the Jews.
History flows through the Jews.
Future events center on the Jews.
WE SERVE THE KING OF THE JEWS.

If you think you are not connected to the Jews,
then you show that you do not know your Bible.
The Bible that you carry around
and sometimes read is a Jewish history book.

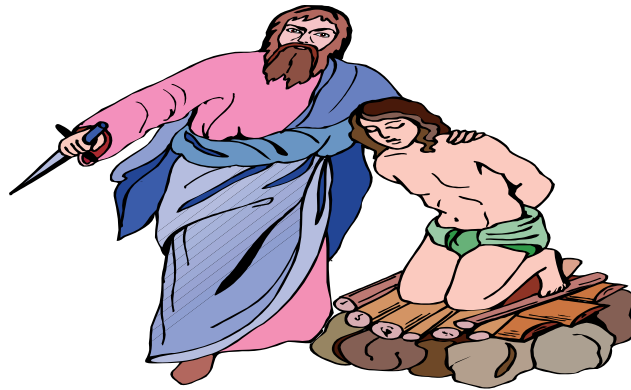
60% is about the Jewish Old Testament history
and about the PROMISED MESSIAH.

40% is about the Jewish/Christian New Testament
and the MESSIAH REVEALED.

So, how well do you know Jewish history?
Abraham and Sarah,



Abraham
and
Isaac,
.....



Jacob, the twelve tribes of Israel, Joseph...



Moses and the Red Sea, ...



the tabernacle, King Saul, David and Goliath, ...



David and Bathsheba,...



King David and his Psalms

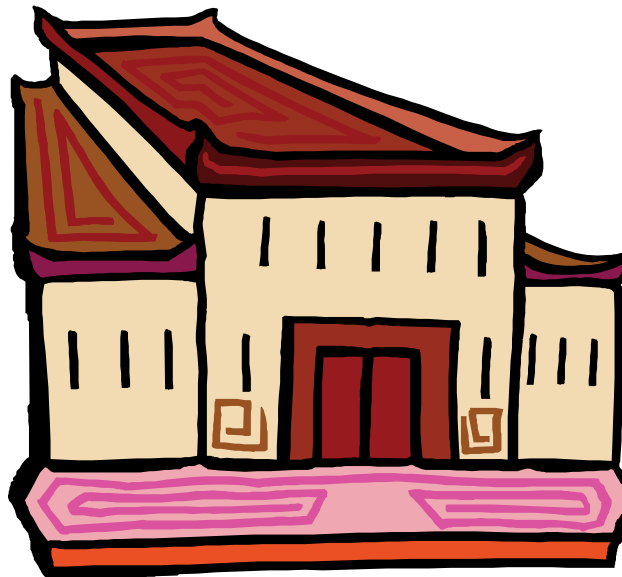


King Solomon,

the Temple,

the divided
kingdom,
Israel,
Judah...

Does any
of this ring
a bell?



If not, then you really need to put down the TV remote,
and start your Bible study.

The Bible is the story of God's plan to create the Jewish people to bring forth a Savior through which all mankind could be redeemed.

This includes you. So you should study Jewish history.Why? Because one way or another you will come to terms with the King of the Jews.

You will not, and can not avoid meeting Jesus.
“...at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.” Philippians 2:10-11

So if you've got a knee or a tongue, you're going to be there!

I don't know about you,
but I want to know all the details of Jewish history.

I want to know all about Abraham and Sarah,
how the Arabs got started in Ishmael,
how the Abrahamic covenant promise was passed to Isaac,

how long Jacob had to work for Rachel,
the names of all of his sons,
how Joseph was sold into slavery,

how the Israelites were led by Moses out of Egypt,
how Moses was given the Ten Commandments,
how he was told to build the Tabernacle, how big it was,
what was in it, and what each item represented,

why God gave them the sacrificial system and what it all meant,
how David beat Goliath and then fell with Bathsheba,
how King Solomon built the first glorious Temple, and what it looked like, why the Temple was destroyed and rebuilt, then remodeled, and finally destroyed in 70 AD just like Jesus predicted,

what did the Old Testament prophets say to predict the coming Anointed One, what were the details of Jesus life while here on earth, how did Jesus fulfill the prophecies, how did the early Christian church function, and what things will happen when Jesus comes back.

I want to know it all!
I want to look forward to it all!
I want to read it, study it, and discover God and His promises in it!

Don't you?

258 Increase Your Knowledge

2 Peter 1:2-4

“May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.

We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the One who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence. And because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises.....”

Colossians 2:2-3

“I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ Himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

2 Peter 3:17-18

“I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends. Be on guard so that you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people, and lose your own secure footing. Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to Him, both now and forever. Amen.”

+++++

“God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.”
This includes His written Word for us to read.

Question number 1 concerns the following statement:

“He has given us great and precious promises”

Q: How can you know these promises, if you never read your Bible?

A: You can’t, unless some one else reads the Bible to you.

Q: But what if someone lies to you concerning the doctrines of God?

A: *“Be on guard so that you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people, and lose your own secure footing.”*

Q: How would you know when someone is lying, unless you study God’s Word yourself?

A: You wouldn’t, because *“you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord”*

In other words, after coming to know Jesus as your Savior, you must increase your knowledge of Him by studying the Bible.

Getting to know the Lord involves a two-way communication between you and Him.

1) You pray.

2) And He answers as you study His written Word.

“May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord”

So if you wish to add to your salvation experience a life of multiplied grace and peace, you must grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. You must read His Word. You must pray.

Let's say that again.

If you want to have peace in your life,

you must grow in knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord, through studying His written Word,... and praying to Him.

If you want your life filled with God's many gifts of grace,

you must grow in knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord, through studying His written Word,... and praying to Him.

Do you *“have complete confidence that (you) understand God's mysterious plan(?)”*

You should, if you know Jesus as Lord, and are studying the Bible. For *“in Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”*

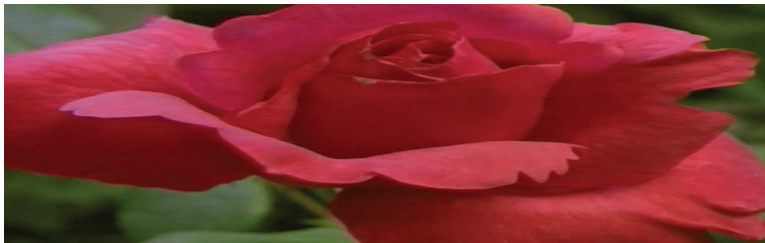
It is Christ who opens up your mind and heart to spiritual truth.

You can figure out this thing we call life, if you come to Christ for your answers.

You can live a life of more and more grace and peace, if you come to Christ.

But to do this, you must make daily contact with your Lord, if you want to continue to *“grow in your knowledge of God”*

So talk to Him in prayer daily,and listen to Him as you read His Word.



**259 Be Careful With Your Vows, Oaths,
and Promises**

Matthew 5: 33-37 (Jesus is speaking)

“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.’

But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘I swear a promise by heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. And do not say, ‘I swear a promise by the earth!’ because the earth is His footstool.

And do not say, ‘I swear a promise by Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. Do not even say, ‘I swear a promise by my own head!, for you can’t turn one hair white or black.

*Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will’, or ‘No, I won’t’.
Anything beyond this is from the evil one.”*

Deuteronomy 23:21-23

“When you make a vow to the Lord your God, be prompt in fulfilling whatever you promised Him. For the Lord your God demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows, or you will be guilty of sin. However, it is not a sin to refrain from making a vow. But once you have voluntarily made a vow, be careful to fulfill your promise to the Lord your God.”

NOW FOLLOW THIS NEXT LONG PASSAGE CAREFULLY;

Judges 11: 30-32, 34-40

“And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord. He said, ‘If you give me victory over the Ammonites, I will give to the Lord whatever comes out of my house to meet me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.’ So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave him victory.

When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing for joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters. When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anguish, ‘Oh, my daughter!’ he cried out. ‘You have completely destroyed me! You’ve bought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the Lord, and I cannot take it back.’

And she said, ‘Father, if you have made a vow to the Lord, you must do to me what you have vowed, for the Lord has given you a great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites.

*But first let me do this one thing:
Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with my friends for two months, because I will remain a virgin.'*

'You may go', Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never have children. When she returned home, her father kept the vow he had made, and she was never married. So it has become a custom in Israel for young Israelite women to go away for four days each year to lament the fate of Jephthah's daughter.'

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Yes, the story of Jephthah is a strange portion of scripture.
Have you ever read this story before?

If the answer is no, then this is why I present it for our devotion,
because we need to know what the Bible says.

We need to study the Bible, and not be ignorant of its stories and of its teachings. We need to read the written Word of God.... All of it.
What we like,and what disturbs us.
For God has a reason for what is written.

Now some think that Jephthah actually killed his daughter,
and offered her as a burnt offering since he had vowed:
"I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering".
The Bible does say that he *"kept the vow he had made"*.

But many others do not think Jephthah sacrificed his daughter.
Certainly a Holy God would not have honored a vow based on a wicked practice.

Jephthah was a righteous leader and Judge of Israel for six years.
He would know the Law of God which forbids human sacrifice.

(Lev 18:21)

He could carry out his vow: *"I will give to the Lord whatever comes out of my house to meet me"* by consecrating his daughter to the Lord, so that she would remain a virgin.

If she never married and had children, it would also mean that Jephthah would have no descendants, and his family lineage would end.

The normal message preached on this passage concerning Jephthah deals with being careful about what vows, oaths, and promises that you make with God.

It's not wise to make quick promises, then not keep your word.
Jesus says it's better to make no vows.
For it is improper to make deals with God.

Since God is in charge of everything, our response should be
1)to simply look to Him for direction,
2)ask for what we need,
3)follow His leadership by trusting Him with the results,
4)and obey His commands.

Now think about this.
Certainly a Sovereign God, who knows and controls everything about
our lives, would have known what was going to come out of
Jephthah's house.

God could have allowed a small goat or sheep to come out to meet
Jephthah, so that Jephthah could offer the sacrifice of praise that he
obviously intended.

So why would God
.....allow Jephthah's daughter to get out the door first?

Why would God allow this difficult predicament to develop?

Maybe its because God is in the business of teaching us life lessons.
Maybe God is still in the business of bringing us into situations where
we fall at His feet.

It's certainly in our worse predicaments
where we finally and truly lean on God.

Maybe we all need to be reminded that everything belongs to God.
The goats, and the kids.
Your job, and your health.
Today, and your future.

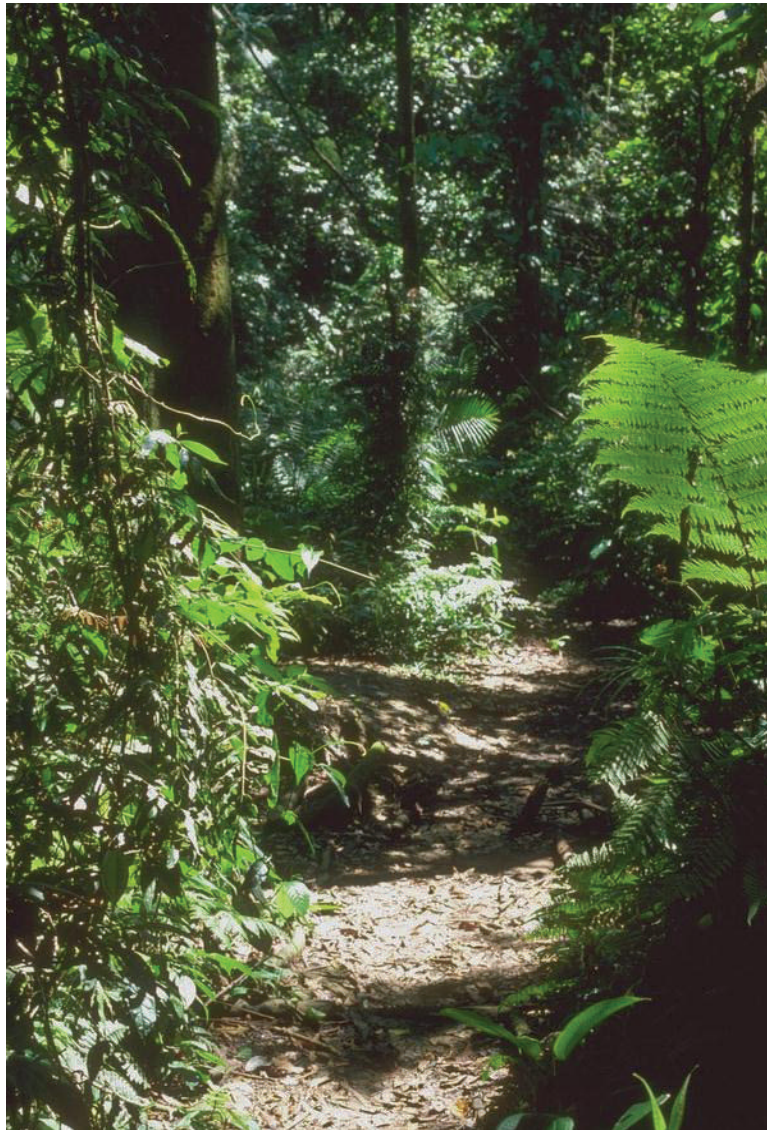
So remember, no vow is needed.
Just answer yes or no, or simply ask God for what you need.

Don't try to make a deal.
Trust and obey your Sovereign God, who is in control of your life.

*"Do not even say, 'I swear a promise by my own head!,
for you can't turn one hair white or black.'"*

Remember, you are not in charge.
To make promises or vows means your pride is involved in thinking
you can control some aspect of your life.

Lucifer fell from Heaven because of his pride.
Perhaps that is what Jesus meant when He said to only answer yes or
no, because "*Anything beyond this is from the evil one*"



260 Strength and Sanity

Isaiah 40:31

*“Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.
They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow
weary. They will walk and not faint.”*

2 Timothy 1:7

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power, love, and a sound mind.”*

Daniel 4:31-34, 36-37

*“O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You are no longer
ruler of this kingdom. You will be driven from human society. You will
live in the fields with the wild animals, and you will eat grass like a
cow. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you
learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and
gives them to anyone He chooses.*

*That same hour the judgment was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was
driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was
drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was
a long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.*

*After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven.
My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and
honored the One who lives forever..... He does as He pleases among
the angels of heaven, and among the people of the earth...*

*When my sanity returned to me,
so did my honor, glory, and my kingdom....*

*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of
heaven. All His acts are just and true, and He is able to humble the
proud.”*

+++++

The Lord can give you strength, if you trust in Him.
The Lord can give you sanity, if you look to Him.

*“The Lord will keep you in perfect peace if your mind is centered on
Him because you trust completely in Him.”* Isaiah 26:3

Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way to remain humble, and praise
and worship God. But he finally did honor our Sovereign God.

Maybe you're the same way?
Maybe spending a little time on your hands and knees eating grass in
a field like a crazy person would do you some good.

The question is:
What is it going to take to bring you to your knees before your God?

Hear the Word of God through the prophet Isaiah:
*"I will comfort those who mourn, bringing words of praise to their
lips. May they have abundant peace, both near and far," says the
Lord, who heals them. 'But those who still reject me are like the rest-
less sea, which is never still, but continually churns up mud and dirt.
There is no peace for the wicked,' says my God."* Isaiah 57:18-21

It is our Sovereign God who is in complete control,
....and in charge of everything.

*"He does as He pleases among the angels of heaven,
.....and among the people of the earth"*

We must fit into His plans.
And when we do, He gives us *"new strength" "and a sound mind."*



261 Faith In Jesus Christ

Romans 3: 21-25, 26; 4:4-5, 22

“God has shown us a way to be made right with Him without keeping the requirements of the Law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are....

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood.....

For God Himself is fair and just, and He declares sinners to be right in His sight when they believe in Jesus..... When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners....

God will count us as righteous if we believe in Him, the One who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised to life to make us right with God.”

+++++

We need to be forgiven.
Because *“everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard”*
And the Bible is clear about God’s requirement that sin be judged.
So that is why we need to seek God.
That is why we need to seek an answer.
And the answer is: Faith.

But not just blind faith.
It matters in whom your faith is placed.
Faith in Jesus is what will make the difference.

Jesus is the only One who can settle your sin debt with God.
Believing Jesus died for our sins, and rose from the dead.
And by accepting Christ, we receive the gift of eternal life.

You know it can’t be explained any simpler.
This is the Gospel.

There are several wonderful passages within the Bible that seem to 'say it in English'.
And this is one of those passages.

You don't have to cross reference with 12 other verses in order to figure what is said.
"We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ"

It is faith in *"Jesus as the sacrifice for sin."*
"People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood"
".. He was raised to life to make us right with God."

How can anyone miss this?
Just place your faith in what Jesus did at the cross,... and the tomb.
He died, and He rose from the dead.

It is what God's Word says happened.
So believe God and have a little faith.....in Him.

He is telling you the truth.
My hope is that in placing this here for you to read,
it will cause you to finally say yes to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is God who saves us for eternity when we place our faith in Him.
We make a daily decision to stay on that path to seek to follow Him.

Remember you live today
by faith in Jesus Christ.



262 Money—When Is Enough, Enough?

I Timothy 6: 6-10

“True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”

Hebrews 13: 5

“Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, ‘I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.’”

Proverbs 23: 4-5

“Don’t wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle.”

And last but not least,

a proverb from Agur the son of Jakeh: (who the heck is he?)

Proverbs 30: 7-9

“O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die.

First, help me never to tell a lie.

Second, give me neither poverty, nor riches!

Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ And if I am too poor, I may steal, and thus insult God’s holy name.”

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What’s wrong with this Agur guy?

“Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you.,” What kind of favor is that to ask God?

I know you’ve asked for the opposite.

‘Hey Lord, how about giving me the MegaMillions this week,and I promise to be good!’

Come on, you know you’ve prayed that prayer under your breath.

You know what, there's nothing wrong with wanting God to bless you. Perhaps He will give you the MegaMillions, and more.



The Bible does say that:

“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him.” Matthew 7: 9-11

So your heavenly Father wants to “give good gifts to those who ask Him.” God wants to bless you with good gifts. Perhaps even money.

It's not money that's the problem,
it's the “*the love of money*” which is the problem.
It's a problem when you “*long to be rich*”.

God tells us we should have a different view on money.
If you ‘*have enough food and clothing, ... be content*’
“*be satisfied with what you have*”.

In this materialistic world in which we live, this is a real challenge.
Everything you see on the TV, and at the mall, goes against this.
The philosophy of the world wants you to ‘grab a hold of all you can’.

But God is clear on His message about money, so we should listen.
“*Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich.*”
“*For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil*”.

God also gives us a warning that we should heed.
“*.. people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction.some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith, and pierced themselves with many sorrows.*”

I don't know about you, but I don't want "ruin and destruction", or "many sorrows".

And I certainly don't want anything "pierced...with many sorrows."

So the Bible says
"True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth."

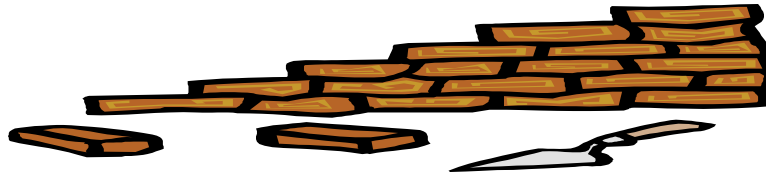
When we are talking about money,
and we ask, 'When is enough, enough?'
The answer is:
When the amount of money is secondary to true godliness.

Whether we have a 100 bucks, or a 100 million,
.....we should find our contentment in the Lord.

Our life, and our security, revolve around our Sovereign God.

So whether you have a bunch of money, or not, remember....
"God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.'"

Put your faith in Him. Trust and rely on Him, ...and be content.



263 A Solid Scriptural Foundation

Luke 6: 46-49 (Jesus speaking)
"So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it.

It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock.

When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm because it is well built.

But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins."

So let's take a look at the three point outline of Jesus' sermon.

- 1) *someone comes to me*
- 2) *listens to my teaching*
- 3) *and then follows it*

And then He follows up with some examples.
Seem straight forward enough, right?

So let me ask you a question:
How can you follow teachings that you never study,
.....and do not know?

You need to be someone
*"who digs deep and lays the
foundation on solid rock"*.

This begins with accepting
Jesus, the Rock of Ages,
as your Savior.

And continues with reading
and studying the written Word.

When you have a deep
foundation in Biblical truth,
you will stand firm in your faith
in your Sovereign God.

Strong scriptural teaching
which is solidly believed will
keep you steadfast even in the midst of the chaotic wind,
circumstantial rain, situational lightening, and a worldly flood.

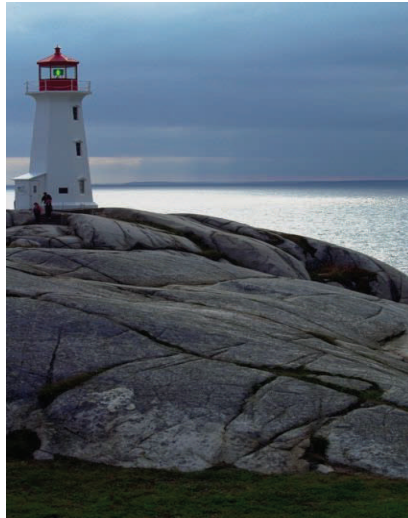
If you believe what you've learned in scripture,
it will show during your times of crisis.

You will remember:
*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,
because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the
Lord God is everlasting strength. Isaiah 26:3-4*

*"Thy Word have I hidden in my heart,
that I might not sin against thee." Ps 119:11*

"All things work together for good to those who love God...."

Romans 8:28



And when will you remember all the things you've learned?
"When the floodwaters rise and break against the house"

Q: What is one sure way to truly identify you as a Biblically grounded believer in Jesus?

A: By how you react to a major life crisis.

Translation: Bad things happen to good people to show them as believers in the Lord, and in the scriptures.

The reaction to the crisis will point others to Jesus, and the Word.

If you don't know the Word, you might, even as a Christian,
"collapse into a heap of ruins...when the floods sweep down".

So study, know, and obey the Word of the Lord.

264 I am Possessed....Are You?

1 John 4:4 "...The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world."

Romans 8: 9, 11, 16 ".....You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you... For His Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children"

2 Corinthians 1:22
"God has sealed us with a mark of ownership by giving us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee that we belong to Him"

1 Corinthians 6:19 "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you..."

1 John 3: 24 "...And we know God lives in us because the Spirit He gave us lives in us."

+++++

News flash: ..I am possessed.
No, my head isn't spinning around, I can't levitate off the ground, and I don't speak a Semitic language of the ancient Near East.
But by any definition that you want to use,
I am possessed by a Spirit living within me.

I have purposely given control of myself to what some may call an outside 'Personal Force'
I have allowed myself to be possessed by a living Spirit Being.
Don't stone me. Don't exorcise me.
Instead.....Join me.

I am possessed by the Holy Spirit of God.
He is a Person. He is a Spirit. He lives within me.
When you are possessed by the Holy Spirit you are given supernatural abilities, strength, and wisdom.
"The Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses..." Romans 8: 26

He also confirms our eternal life in Christ
with *"with a mark of ownership."*

If you are a Christian, I encourage you to seek to expand the control of this Spirit over you. To give yourself over to Him completely.
To listen for His internal voice within you.
To hear His whisper inside.
And pay close attention to the visual images He can give.

Learn to follow His direction,
and you will always be exactly where you need to be.
You will know what to do,
and you will have whatever you need to be successful.

To be possessed like this is a powerful condition to be in.
When you become possessed with this Spirit, you will experience all the gifts He can give to you. You will sense the change.
You will feel the difference daily.

This possession takes place to all who accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

Join me in this most wonderful experience.

Get possessed today!



265 The Eastern Gate

Zechariah 9: 9 (prophecy written 480 years before Christ)
*“Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!
Look, your King is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet
He is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey’s colt.”*

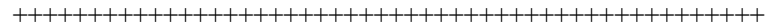
Matthew 21: 1-12
*“As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the
town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives.
Jesus sent two of them on ahead.
“Go into the village over there,” He said.
“As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt
beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you
are doing, just say, “The Lord needs them,” and he will immediately
let you take them.”*

*This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,
‘Tell the people of Israel, Look, your King is coming to you.
He is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey’s colt.’*

*The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. They brought the donkey
and the colt to Him and threw their garments over the colt, and He sat
on it. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of
Him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the
road. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all
around Him were shouting,
Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the One
who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest
heaven! (a quote from Psalms 118:25)*

*The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as He entered. ‘
Who is this?’ they asked. And the crowd replied, ‘It’s Jesus, the
prophet from Nazareth in Galilee’.*

Jesus entered the Temple.....”



It was prophesied that the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy when He came from the Mount of Olives on a donkey.

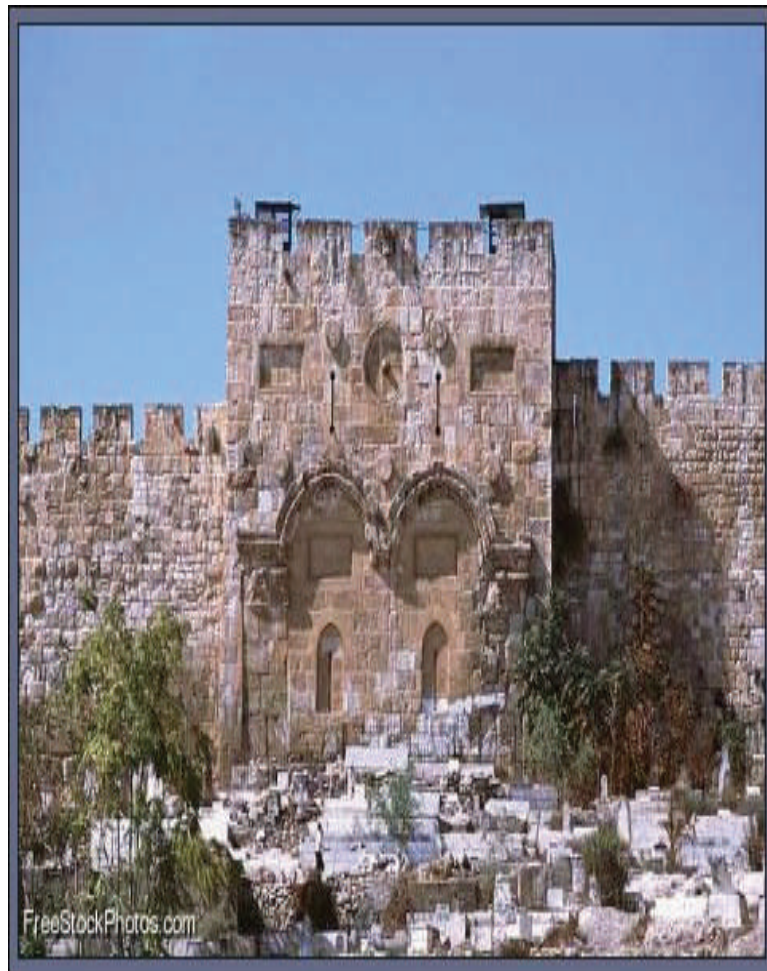
Jesus entered Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate on Palm Sunday.
That coming Friday Jesus would be crucified.
And on Easter Sunday, be resurrected.

In the book of Ezekiel, the Lord gives a fascinating prophecy concerning the closing of the Eastern Gate, which is part of the wall surrounding the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 40: 1,2,5,6, 44: 1-2, (written 571 years before Christ)

“...The Lord took hold of me. In a vision from God He took me to the land of Israel...I could see a wall completely surrounding the Temple area.....He went over to the Eastern Gate in the outer wall of the Temple area, but it was closed.

And the Lord said to me, ‘This gate will be closed; it will not be opened, for no man shall enter in by it, therefore it shall be shut, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered here.’



What you need to know is that the Lord Jesus Christ entered through the Eastern Gate, and this Eastern Gate was walled up in 810 AD,and has been sealed for 12 centuries.



Since Jews expect a Messiah to enter this gate one day, the Arabs sealed the gate to negate anyone from being able to pass through it.

It has been claimed that a graveyard was also constructed in front of this gate, by Muslims, to prevent the prophecy from ever being fulfilled.

Apparently, their belief was that a holy man would never walk across a graveyard to get to the gate, and therefore this prophecy involving a Jewish Messiah would never be fulfilled. The Muslims built this cemetery in front of the gate, in the belief that Elijah, the predicted precursor to the Messiah, would not be able to pass through, since he is a Kohen. This belief is erroneous because a Kohen is permitted to enter a cemetery in which primarily non-Jews are buried.



The Old Testament prophecy that the Jews read is in Malachi 4:5 which says: *“Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives.”*

These words in Malachi are the last words of the Old Testament. This is the last Old Testament promise to the Jews of a coming Messiah. 400 years of prophetic silence pass before the time of Jesus, and the New Testament.

[Side note:]

We have to take a short moment to give you a little bit more information that is significant. I’m just going to give you two extra Bible passages, and let the scriptures speak on this subject.

Luke 1: 13,15,17

*“The angel said..... Your wife, Elizabeth, will have a son, and you are to name him **John**...He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah.”*

Matthew 17: 10-13 (after **John the Baptist** was beheaded)

*“Then the disciples of Jesus asked Him,
‘Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?’
Jesus replied,
‘Elijah shall first come to prepare the way for the Messiah.
But I tell you, Elijah has already come, but he wasn’t recognized, and they chose to abuse him. And in the same way they will also make the Son of Man suffer.’
Then the disciples realized He was talking about John the Baptist.”*

So, in other words, to put a Muslim graveyard in front of the Eastern Gate, to somehow stop Elijah, ...and therefore stop the Messiah, just shows how confused they are about Elijah, John the Baptist, ...and Jesus.

This cemetery certainly isn’t going to stop Jesus one little bit from entering the Eastern Gate as King.

Now, on with our devotion.

The Eastern Gate

(sometimes called the Golden Gate, or Beautiful Gate),
has been closed since 810 AD.

It’s been walled up for many centuries. (as the photos show)

The Eastern Gate was the one gate not opened and repaired in 1543 by Sultan Suleiman, who was rebuilding the walls, and repairing the other gates into Jerusalem.

Twice in the past century someone has tried to open the Eastern Gate, and each time a war started on that same day which prevented the opening.

First time: December 9th, 1917

Second time: June 5th, 1967

First time:

On December 9th, 1917, while Arab men started to work on breaking out the blocks, an old Bi-plane with an open cockpit flew over to alert them of the coming war.



It was British General Allenby yelling at them, and telling them to leave the area.

They dropped their tools and ran.

Britain took Jerusalem from the Muslims that day.

The previous month Britain had promised the Jews the right to re-establish sovereignty over their ancient homeland, via the famous Balfour Declaration.

Second time:

Concerning June 5th, 1967, (we need a little history first):

In 1948, the Jews declared sovereignty over a portion of their ancient homeland. On that day Israel once again became a nation which did fulfill prophecy.

In retaliation, King Hussein of Jordan, who had control over the ancient city of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, forbade the Jews from worshipping at their sacred Western Wall.

Years later King Hussein decided to build a hotel for Arab pilgrims on a section of the Western Wall, closing off this area to Jewish worship forever. The planned hotel was to be built over the Magreb Gate, which Muslims used to enter the Temple Mount to go to the El Aksa Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock.

So, the King needed to open another gate so that Muslims could get to the site of the Jewish Temple Mount.

In violation of the prophecy, he ordered his workmen to open the sealed Eastern Gate. As the workmen prepared their air-hammers to shatter the huge stones sealing the Eastern Gate, an intimidating array of Israeli aircraft flew overhead.



The Six Day War had just begun,
.....and the workmen put down their tools and ran.

(By George Konig, Christian Internet Forum)

So on June 5th, 1967, even though Arabs again had plans to open the Eastern Gate, the Six Day War started that day instead,and Israel took back that part of the city.

The Eastern Gate remains walled up.

It is quite clear. **YOU MAY NOT OPEN THE EASTERN GATE.**

Why?

Because God says so.



At the end of the seven year Tribulation period with the Anti-Christ, Jesus will return and defeat the forces that are getting ready to war against Israel at battle of Armageddon.

Jesus is then going to come through the Eastern Gate
.....to start the Millennium Kingdom.

Listen to the Word of God. (Zechariah 14: 3,4,5,9,11)

*“The Lord will go out to fight against those nations.....On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.....
The Lord my God will come, and all His saints with Him.....
And the Lord will be King over all the earth. On that day there will be One Lord—His name alone will be worshiped....And Jerusalem will be filled, safe at last, never again to be cursed and destroyed.”*

Ezekiel 43: 1,2,3,4,7

*“...the Spirit brought me back around to the Eastern Gate.
Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel appeared from the east.
The sound of His coming was like the roar of rushing waters, and the whole landscape shone with His glory....
I fell face down on the ground. And the glory of the Lord came into the Temple through the Eastern Gate.....*

The Lord said to me, ‘son of man, this is the place of my throne, and the place where I will rest my feet. I will live here forever among the people of Israel.’

Jews (who do not believe in Jesus), say the coming Messiah is to enter Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate when He comes to be King.
(They’re right! Only it will be Jesus... again!)

Believers in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles, believe the Lord Jesus is going to come back to set up a His Kingdom during the 1000 year Millennium. (devotion #163)

Jesus will come back as the Bible says,riding a white horse.
(Revelation 19:11)

Those of us who are believers in Christ, will come with Him.
The Lord’s feet will step on the Mount of Olives.
He will then replay His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

With angels hovering above,
and millions of the Redeemed filling the Kidron Valley,
Jesus will ride up to the Eastern Gate on His white horse.
As Jesus approaches the Eastern Gate, the gate will blow open.
The blocks in that gate are going to come flying out of there!

Jesus will then enter the City of David,
and to the triumphant shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David,"
He will be crowned the Kings of kings, and the Lord of lords.

The Eastern Gate is proof positive that the Bible is the Word of God.
Its sealing is clear evidence that we are living in the end times.
The Gate awaits the return of the Messiah.
Then, and only then, will it be opened.

So, if you do not believe in any of this, may I challenge you?
Book a flight tomorrow to Jerusalem.
Go to the closest ACE hardware,
and buy the biggest sledge hammer you can find.
Go to the Eastern Gate, and see how many blocks you can knock out.
Let me know how well you do.

266 You Know The Way

John 14: 1-9 (Jesus speaking)

*“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in Me.
There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not
so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?
When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will
always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am
going.”*

*‘No, we don't know Lord,’ Thomas said. ‘We have no idea where you
are going, so how can we know the way?’*

*Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come
to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you
would know who my Father is.
From now on, you do know Him, and have seen Him.’*

*Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’
Jesus replied, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you
still don't know who I am?
Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!’*

So Jesus said: **“you know the way** to where I am going”

Jesus is speaking to you today.
He is saying something very important, so listen up.
He says: You do know the way to Heaven.

Don't say that you are clueless.
That answer will not be acceptable.

You do know the only way is Jesus.
You do know it's not about how good you are.
You do know it's not about Buddha, or Mohammed, or Krishna.

You do know **Jesus** is the only way to Heaven.

Jesus politely says: ...Quit playing stupid.

Don't try to be like the millions of those today who say:
*"No, we don't know Lord,
.....We have no idea..... how can we know the way?"*

Jesus has made it crystal clear.
Acting ignorant now, ...or on Judgment Day,.. won't work.

Accept Jesus today as Lord, Savior,and the only way to eternal
life in Heaven. You do know how, ...because you do know the way.



267 Do You Want Your Prayers Heard?

John 9: 31

"We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but He is ready to hear those who worship Him, and do His will."

Psalms 66: 16-20

"Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what He did for me. For I cried out to Him for help, praising Him as I spoke. If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer. Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer...."

Proverbs 15: 29 *"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayers of the righteous."*

+++++

"He hears the prayers of the righteous"

How do you become righteous?

Well, there is only one answer.... Jesus.

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10: 13

"For God hath made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sins, so that we could be made righteous in God through Christ."

2 Corinthians 5: 21

God will not hear you

until you *"call on the name of the Lord"* to be saved.



Jesus said

"I am the way, no one comes to the Father but through Me." Jn 14: 6

No one gets to the Father for salvation,or communication,
unless you come to Christ.

You are not getting through to God the Father, until you talk to Jesus.

You must make Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior.

Then you get access to the throne of God, and God will hear you.

*"For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and man,
the Man, Christ Jesus."* 1 Timothy 2: 5

Hebrews 7: 23-25

*"There were many priests under the old system, for death prevented
them from remaining in office. But because Jesus lives forever, His
priesthood lasts forever. Therefore He is able, once and forever, to
save those who come to God through Him.
He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf."*

A final thought:

David said,

*"If I had not confessed the sin in my heart,
.....the Lord would not have listened."*

As the Lord brings things to your mind, and convicts your heart,
be sure to confess your sins to keep the "pipeline open".
"God doesn't listen to sinners", lost and/or unconfessed.

May God hear and answer your prayers!

"He is ready to hear those who worship Him, and do His will."



268 When God Speaks

John 10: 27 Jesus said “*My sheep recognize my voice.....*”

John 10: 3-4

“...the sheep hear His voice and come to Him, and He calls His own sheep by name, and leads them out. He walks ahead of them, and they follow Him, for they recognize His voice.”

+++++

I have an uncle named “Uncle Bob” in Erie PA.
He’s quite the character.
I don’t remember ever speaking to him on the phone prior to a few weeks ago. And it’s been many years since I’ve seen him.

Yet, the other day he called me on the phone,
and I immediately recognized his voice.
Uncle Bob has a voice which is very distinctive and individualized.
I knew his voice right away.

We’re all that way.
People who know us, ...know our voice.
We don’t have to introduce ourselves each time we call,...
we just start talking.
They know who it is.
And when they call us,.....we know their voice.

The same is true when you hear God’s voice.
You know it.

Of all the Christian evidences of God,
His written Word is number one.

And His “verbal voice” is just as clear and recognizable in our hearts.

It is the difference between Christianity, and all other religions.
Because there is only one God.
And when our living God speaks to you,you definitely know it.

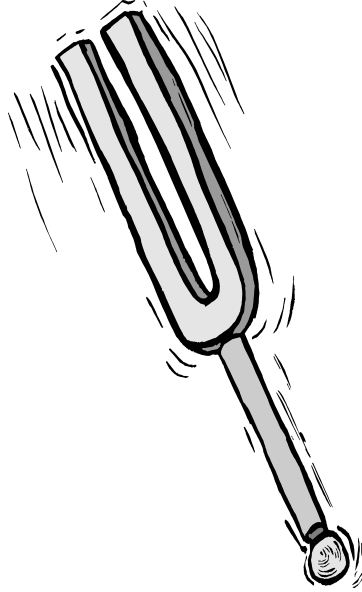
You may not be able to fully explain it to another person to convince them, But you need no further proof.

My faith is “anchored” in the rock of God’s written promises of Scripture, and I feel connected by the “chain” of certainty from hearing His voice inside.

I'm connected to God by His Spirit indwelling within me.
The connection is like a tuning fork,
which will hum a matching note to a
sound outside.

Not just any confusing or loud noise
will cause a reaction to the tuning
fork. But send the tuning fork a
specific frequency.....
And the tuning fork will react.

Our hearts are tuned in the same
manner to the voice of God.
When He speaks, we react.
We hear Him inside.
And we know it's Him.
If you are a believer in Jesus,
then your heart is automatically
tuned by the Holy Spirit to hear the
voice of God. Jesus said
"My sheep recognize my voice....."



269 No One Like Jesus in History

Matthew 7:28 "When Jesus had finished speaking, the crowds were
amazed at His teaching.."

1 Timothy 2: 5 "For there is one God, and one mediator between God
and men, the man Christ Jesus."

2 Peter 1:16-18

"We saw His majestic splendor with our own eyes when Jesus re-
ceived honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the ma-
jestic glory of God said to Him:

'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.'

We ourselves heard that voice from Heaven when we were with Him
on the holy mountain."

+++++

No other man, no religious leader, and no other teacher since the
beginning of the world has ever made the claims, or said the things
that Jesus said.

You can check all literature, and all history records on every living person that has ever lived on this planet, and you will not find anyone who said the things Jesus said.

No one else has ever said that he saw Satan fall from Heaven.

No one else has ever said that he existed before Abraham was born, which at that point was over 2000 years before the time of Jesus. Today, Abraham was born four thousand one hundred and seventy four years ago. No one has ever repeated the statementthat he existed before Abraham.

No one else has ever said that now that you've see him, ...you've seen the Father.
No one else has ever said he and the Father are one.
No one else has ever said that he was God.

As C.S Lewis once said, Jesus was either a Lunatic, Liar, or Lord.

No one else has ever said he is the same "I AM" Yahweh God, that spoke to Moses from the burning bush.

No one else has ever said he would go and prepare a place for you in my Father's house.And come back for you.

No one else has ever said that if you destroy his body, that in three days he would raise it.
And then,.... DO exactly that.

No one else has ever said he was the way to God and no man comes to God except by him.

No one else has ever said that at the end of time (as we know it), he would sit upon his throne judging the nations of the earth.

No one has ever made these statements.
These were astounding claims.
Theses were lofty words.
Spoken by the true Son of God. God in the flesh.

The Holy Spirit came to give immediate confirmation of Christ's word. It is the penetrating presence of the Holy Spirit that gives power to the Word. (Jn 16: 5-15)
Listen to His words.Listen to Him.
For no one is like Jesus Christ in history.



270 Conformed.....You Choose

Romans 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans 8:29

“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

+++++

You get to choose.
Heaven, or Hell.
Life, or death.
Salvation in Christ, or staying lost in your sins.

So you make a choice to accept Jesus.
What happens after you get saved?
Do you stop having any further choices to make?

The Bible says you must make a daily choice.

Allow yourself to be conformed to the world...
Or daily give yourself to God to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

Can it get any clearer?

What will you choose?
Whether you are conscious of the “conformity choice” you make,
you still do make a choice.

We wrote on this once before in devotion #29 “Bath Regularly”.
We showed how your mind is renewed,
and washed by the water of the word. (Eph:526)

It is the reason you should take a daily bath in scripture.
To wash off the dirt you pick up from living in a dirty world.
This is a choice.
To bath, or not to bath.
That is the question.

Do you take a “word bath”
only once a year
on Easter Sunday,



or daily shower off?

Will you put the effort into reading and
studying the Bible daily, to renew your mind,
be transformed, and be conformed to Christ?

Or will you just go along with the world, and be conformed to it?
This is a very easy thing to do.
Simply do nothing, ...and you will conform to the world.

As a believer, God has plans for you.
To be transformed.
To be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

So how does this happen?
How do you get conformed to the image of Christ?
How do you get transformed?
Answer: The Word.

The written word introducing the Word who became flesh.
It is He who conforms and transforms.
He uses the written word to renew your mind, and change your heart.
And through the Holy Spirit conform you to Christ.
It is the penetrating presence of the Holy Spirit
that gives power to the word.

Right now it's up to you.

Accept the Lord.
Read the word
Renew your mind.
Be transformed.
And be conformed.
To Christ.

271 God Said It. God Will Do It.

Isaiah 46:9-11 ; 42:8-9

*“Remember the things I have done in the past.
For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me.
Only I can tell you the future before it happens. Everything I plan will
come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.
I have said what I would do, and I will do it.
...I AM (Yahweh) [JeHoVaH]; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise with
carved idols. Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will
prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens.”*

+++++

“Only I can tell you the future before it happens ...”
This is more than just knowing about the future.
For God plans and makes the future happen.

When God makes a prediction,
or gives a promise,...you can count on it.

He wants you to remember this.
Because He is in complete control.
God is in charge.

What He says, ...will happen.
*“Everything I plan will come to pass,
I have said what I would do, and I will do it”*

He has done this before, and will do it again.
That's why He says, *“Remember the things I have done in the past.
For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me...”*

He wants you to trust Him. For He alone is God.

Only God can tell you the future.
That's why we know the Bible is God's written Word.
Because only the Bible has predictive prophesy.
Proven again and again.
The only prophesies that haven't come true yet,
are the ones about the Second Coming of Jesus.

There is no other book on planet earth like the Bible.
You hold solid evidence of God,
when you are holding a Bible in your hands.

Jesus

*"I AM (YaHWeH) [JeHoVaH];
that is my name!"*
(see Devotion #17, "I AM Yahweh".)

I AM

*"Jesus said to them,
'Truly, truly, I say to you,
before Abraham was born, I AM."*

YHWH

Once you understand who Jesus is,
your life changes forever.

Jesus is God.
And He is in charge of your future.
What He promises, He will do. Trust in Him.

JHVH

272 John the Baptist Did No Miracle

John 10:39-41

*"Once again they tried to arrest Jesus, but He got away and left them.
He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first
baptizing and stayed there awhile. And many followed Jesus.
'John didn't perform any miracles', they remarked to one another,
'but everything John said about this man has come true'.
And many who were there believed in Jesus."*

Matthew 11:11 (Jesus speaking)

*"I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than
John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven
is greater than he is."*

Matthew 3:4

*"John wore clothes made of coarse camel hair and a leather belt
around his waist; and he ate grasshoppers and honey."*

John the Baptist.

This dude was extreme.
Preaching that the Messiah was coming.
Shouting for people to repent.
With honey dripping from his camel hair clothes,
and grasshopper legs hanging from his lips.
He was Radical.



He is described in Luke 1:15 as being filled with the Holy Spirit,
and the promise to his mother is that “*he will be great in the sight of
the Lord.*”

Yet ‘*John didn’t perform any miracles*’
He didn’t raise anyone from the dead.
Didn’t restore sight to the blind.
Or repair the non-hearing ears for the deaf.
No fire from the sky, or wine from water.

Apparently all he did was point people to the coming Lamb of God.

How about you?

Are you worried that you're not making a difference for Christ because you haven't raised anybody from the dead yet?

Maybe you should just do what God has told you to do.

And leave the rest up to God.

Matthew 11:11 (Jesus speaking)

"I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is."

Just as John was the greatest of the prophets because of his proximity to Christ, the apostles, and indeed all Christians, are greater than John because they are even closer, being "in Christ" as a result of the new birth.

Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament on Mt 11:11

I invite you to see yourself for who you are in Christ.



273 One Payment. One Time. For All.

1) Jesus is the Only Way to Heaven.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

2) You’re saved by grace, not by your works.

Ephesians 2:8-9, 13

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast . But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to Him because of the blood of Christ.”

Hebrews 10:10-14

“By this you have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time for all. Under the old covenant, the priest stood before the altar day after day offering sacrifices that could never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time, then He sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”

3) Jesus paid the ransom once for all time. One payment for all.

The price has been paid already by Christ.

It is His payment that you accept to get saved.

It is He whom you accept as Savior.

And it is He, and He alone, that we come to, and come through to get to Heaven.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all..”

4) Once you die your choices are set in stone forever.

Hebrews 9:27

“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment”

5) You can't buy your way out of the flames.

And you can't pay the price for anyone else.
Only God can redeem us.
Only Jesus could pay the ransom that is required.

Psalms 49:7-8, 15

*"No man can by any means redeem his brother
or give to God a ransom for him—
For the redemption of his soul is costly,
And he should cease trying forever—
But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave,
for He will receive me."*

One payment.One time..... For all.

Jesus is sufficient to save all from all sin.
Accept Jesus today while you have the chance.
And He will give you Life.



274 Breath On Loan

Genesis 2:7 *“And the LORD God formed a man's body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.”*

Psalms 104:33 *“I will sing to the LORD as long as I live. I will praise my God to my last breath!”*

Deuteronomy 10:21
“He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen.”

1 Chronicles 29:13 *“Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.”*

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God in His mercy has given you the air that you breathe.
God loaned you the breath you are taking right now.
That breath is a loan.....to praise Him.
Use it well.
Use it wisely.

For God does not have to give you another breath.

We assume our next breath, don't we?
We think it's automatic.
We're taught that in our biology classes.
But it is God who gave us breath,and life.

If we choose to curse God, and ignore God, why should God give us another breath?

Do you live your life as if you're somehow in control?
You forget who gave you life.
You forget who gives you breath.

Let's change that mind set.
Are you ready to praise God?
It is God who deserves all glory!

Ready. ..Set....Breath in....Praise out.....Praise God!

275 I Never Knew You

Matthew 7:22-23

*“On Judgment day many will say to me,
‘ Lord, Lord. We prophesied in your name, and cast out demons in
your name, and performed many wonderful works in your name.’*

*But I will reply,
‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you who break God’s law.’*

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There is you knowing Jesus,and then there is Him knowing you.

Apparently Jesus is talking to a “religious”, yet unsaved crowd.
Folks that today seem to look like Christians, and who are busy in the
work for the Lord. but they don’t know the Lord Jesus as Savior.

They are trying to work their way into Heaven by “being good”.
It is scary to think that there are “many” of them mentioned here.

This goes along with the parable of the wheat and weeds from
Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43.

*“...Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the
harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them,
and to put the wheat in the barn.”*

So many people are still missing the point that we “*are saved by
grace through faith and that not of works least anyone boast.*”
(Eph 3:8-9)

THEN you show your faith by your good works. (James 2:17-19)

Salvation involves establishing a relationship with the Savior.
You should know whether you are in this relationship, ...or not.
A true relationship with Jesus, in true faith, produces true fruit.

This all begins....
when you realize you can’t work your way into Heaven.

You come to understand that you are a sinner,
...and you need the Savior.

You need forgiveness.

So many focus on the activities of the Christian religion, but they don't connect with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in a relationship.

' Lord, Lord. We ..performed many wonderful works in your name.'

Many say, 'Lord, look at what we have done in your name.'

Instead of saying

"Thank you Lord for what you did for me at the cross".

Ask Jesus to forgive you. Make Him your Lord.

I pray that you know Jesus, ...and He knows you.

That you will come into a relationship with Him.

And that you will have daily communication with Him.

So in that judgment day He won't have to say,

"I never knew you, Depart from me".

When Jesus knows you, and you know Him in a relationship,
you will walk the path with Jesus your Lord.... Focus on Him.



276 Aliens Will Explain The Rapture

This will be the craziest devotion I could ever possibly write.
I'm sure that you will think that I've gone completely off my rocker.
But that's Ok. I assure you I haven't lost my mind.
At least not completely.

I am trying to write a devotion to get you to think about the reality of what the Bible says concerning the second coming of Jesus Christ.
It is going to happen.
Jesus will come back,
...just like the Bible predicts. (1 Thess 4-5, 1 Corinthians 15)

All the Old Testament prophecies concerning the first coming of Jesus Christ came true. All of them.
The prophecies of the Second Coming of Jesus will also come true.

I want you to think about the reality of what the Bible says concerning the Anti-Christ, and the coming seven year Tribulation period.
It's not just a fanciful story.
These details are stated as Biblical facts.

If you die before all this happens,
then your death should be on your mind today.
Are you ready to meet God?
Have you accepted Christ's forgiveness of your sins?

This devotion is just another step in thinking about the end of things.
To start thinking about the reality of the end of the world.
To start living like Jesus is alive, and is coming back for real.
And to start thinking about the Kingdom of Christ on earth, as the Bible teaches. Do you believe Jesus is really coming back?

Some say they believe in Jesus,
but don't believe in a literal earthly Kingdom.

Some debate the reality of the Tribulation period concerning the Anti-Christ, Armageddon, etc.

Many people debate the concept of the rapture of the church.
Does the Bible teach that it occurs, or not?
And when does it occur?
Before, during, or after the seven year Tribulation period?

And how about the “strong delusion” of 1 Thess 2 that God will send. What is it?
The Bible does not answer this particular question.
But there is a “far out” answer that is being kicked around in some circles. I want you to think about it, even if it sounds crazy.
Let’s read a passage to get us started.

1 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (concerning the Anti-Christ)
*“This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.
So God will cause them to have a strong delusion and be greatly deceived, and they will believe the lie. Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.”*

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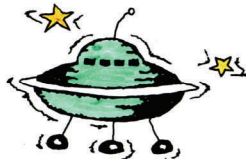
Unless you’ve been living underground, you have seen the increase in the UFO sightings.
Everything is pointing towards an “alien disclosure” of some type.

Millions of Americans say they’ve been abducted by aliens.
Our movies and TV shows focus on aliens.
Indiana Jones is even into it.
In his last movie about the crystal skulls they called the aliens inter-dimensional beings that exist between our space, and outer space..

Even the Vatican has opened up to the possibility of aliens from outer space. What’s does it all mean?

Is everybody just nuts?
Or is there “some type of reality” to these sightings and abductions?

The Bible speaks of the reality of Satan, and of demonic beings.
If you doubt the Word of God on this point then you either believe in UFO’s and aliens, or you will never believe in this whole UFO alien subject until “they” land on the White House lawn.



If you are already leaning towards believing in “real” aliens from outer space, then you are well on your way to being prepared to believe in the coming great Lie.

That coming Lie is that there really are aliens from space who “planted” us here millions of years ago, and are now back to teach us the mysteries of the universe.
Of course their first order of business, following the disappearance of a billion Christians from the earth at the rapture, will be to explain that major abduction.

How will these “aliens” explain the rapture? Maybe they’ll say the Christians were “removed” to reeducate them since they were hindering “true” peace. Remember... one religion, one world government. And of course one leader who is going to make everyone have a “mark” on the hand or forehead to be scanned in order to buy or sell anything.

The scripture is clear on this mark:

“He required everyone- small and great, rich and poor, free and slave- to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast, or the number representing his name

Anyone who worships the beast and his statue, or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand must drink the wine of God’s anger. It has been poured full strength into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue, and have accepted the mark of his name.” Revelation 13:16-17; 14:9-11

Well let’s get something straight concerning aliens.
(at least my opinion being clear on the matter)

Aliens are demonic spirits presenting themselves as little gray dudes with big eyes.

Why are they presenting this way?

To lie to us.Now, and in the future tribulation time.

Satan has always been a liar.

“.....the Devil.....He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.” Jn 8:44

277 Why the Trinity?

I am going to admit something that goes through my mind at times.
I'm sorry if it sounds blasphemous or sacrilegious.
Here it is:
I wish Jesus had explained "God" in a more simple way.
I wish He had explained God in an way we could understand.
I think to myself,
"Maybe more people would be saved if they could understand".

But God is who He is.
Anyone who is going to believe and get saved will do so by believing
in Jesus. They will be saved based on faith in what the written Word
of God says. The Sovereignty of God will prevail.
The Gospel is as simple as it gets.
1) You're a sinner who can't get to Heaven, no matter how good you
try to live.
2) Jesus paid your sin penalty and is offering the free gift of salvation
to all who believe.
3) Repent of your sin, and accept Jesus' free gift, ... and live.
Seems rather simple doesn't it. One way to Heaven. One God.

But then here comes the idea of the Trinity.
And we find ourselves trying to understand an infinite God.
The idea of the Trinity is so difficult.
Trying to understand it is hard.
And trying to explain it, or defend it, to a non-believer is completely
impossible.

So my silent thought remains.
Why the Trinity?
One God. Three Persons.
What's up with that? Why make it so impossible to understand God?

Why not just one God?
If you're talking to Him, you're talking to Him.
Yet while Jesus was here on the planet, He kept talking to the Father.
He made it quite clear that He was God,
yet talked about His Father being God.
Was He trying to confuse us?
For me, He was completely successful.
I'm totally confused.

And the Devil has been having a great time making things worse for
others. Satan has been behind every cult known to man.
He is behind every lie and deception.

And even though man chooses to believe the Devil's lies instead of the truth, I still think to myself, "No wonder people are confused". Yes, they're sinners. Confused sinners.

And to make things worse, the Bible makes it clear that you will never understand anything about God until you open your heart to Christ. THEN the Holy Spirit opens your mind to spiritual truth. 1 Cor 2:14

So it all comes down to faith, doesn't it?

One God. Three Persons.
That is how God is.
That's what makes this so hard.
God has revealed Himself to us in the best way that our small finite minds can handle.
There is no other answer.
Not one God playing three roles.
Not three Gods.

You just have to believe Him.
Yes there are many evidences of God, of the validity of the Bible, and on, and on.
But things start with faith.
"Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see." Hebrews 11:1

Jesus says we are to *"Go and make disciples in the NAME (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"* Matt 28:19

Man, He didn't make it easy, did He?

Thank God, He didn't say "you must understand to get saved".
What He did say is;
"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that your salvation is confirmed. For everyone who calls on the NAME of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10: 9-10, 13

So just believe Him.

Why the Trinity?
Because it's Him.

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278 We'll Leave The Light On

We'll leave the light on, ...and the gates open!
Sounds like a great invitation, doesn't it?

Revelation 21:10-11, 21, 23, 25, 27

"So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone ... The twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single pearl. And the main street was pure gold, as clear as glass....

*And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light...
...Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there....Nothing evil will be allowed to enter,....but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."*

+++++

Wow. I can't wait to be there. How about you?
Talk about the ultimate commercial, "We'll leave the light on".
But the world really doesn't have a clue, does it?
Most can't even comprehend such a place.
A city where there will never be darkness.
A city where Jesus lives who is the "*the Light of the World*" Jn 8:12

And where the gates will never be closed.
Nothing to fear.
No evil.
No bumps in the night.
Only light... and life.

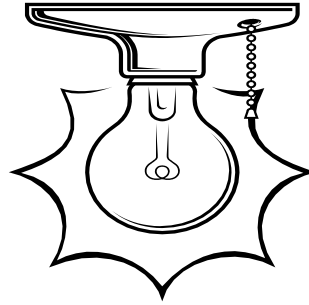
A happiness that we can't even imagine.
First Corinthians 2: 9 says "*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.*"

I can't wait to get there.

By the way, is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?
Are you one of the ones who love Him?
Who has asked Him for forgiveness?
Who has believed on Him?
And accepted Him as Lord and Savior?

It's not too late.

Today can be the day that you “call in”
your reservation for a room in this city.
Then for you.....
.....He’ll leave the light on.



279 Dinosaurs

Genesis 1:25, 27, 31 (Sixth day of creation)
*“God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals,
each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it
was good.....God created human beings in His own image....
And God looked over all He had made, and He saw that it was very
good. And the evening passed and the morning came, marking the
sixth day.”*

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If you’ve been reading all these devotions you’re quickly becoming a
Bible “expert”. (and that’s kind of scary isn’t it?).

Sooner or later someone is going to ask you about dinosaurs.
Are you ready with your Bible answer?
If not, here’s help.

God made ALL animals, and human beings, on the sixth day of
creation. He made them all on the same day, or during the same time
period.... Think about it.

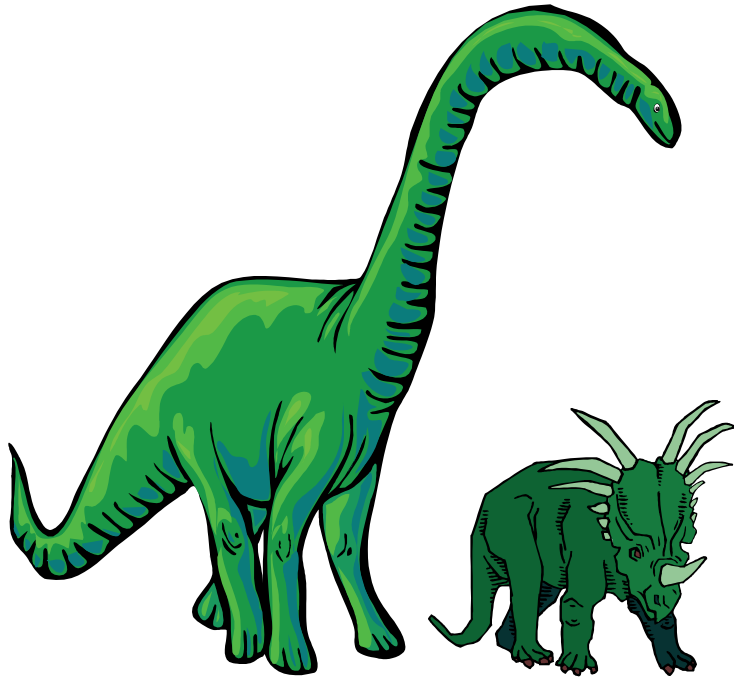
Dinosaurs did not evolve 25 million years before man
.... evolved from a monkey.

There’s absolutely no scientific evidence to support any of that.

It’s not about evolution.

God created all life.

Including men and dinosaurs.



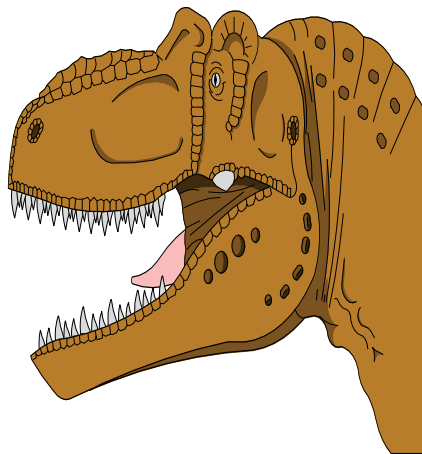
God said AFTER He made ALL animals, and human beings, that everything was “*very good*”. Therefore there was no killing.No death at that point.

God created the dinosaurs. And since everything was “*very good*” they did not kill and eat each other at first. In the beginning all dinosaurs must have been herbivores (grass eating) because there was no death on planet earth until Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God.

The Bible is very clear on this. When sin entered, THEN death entered the world.

And then everything changed. Animals starting killing each other. Men started killing and eating animals. And on, and on, and on.

So do you believe the written Word of God, or not?
I believe the Bible.
I hope you do too.



God made the dinosaurs, and they were around during the same time as men. The layers of rock on our planet show the results of this, as well as a worldwide flood.

No evolutionary missing links being shown in the fossils, just rocks showing a lot of dead things that died all at once and were apparently buried by water and sediment.

Many think that there was a water “canopy” over the earth, or in other words, the sky was filled with water vapor, that encircled the earth up until the days of Noah.

When the water in this “canopy” broke loose it caused the first rain since the creation of the world. And therefore it caused Noah’s flood. (among other things like “*the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky*” Gen 7:11) Once this protective canopy was gone many animals including most of the dinosaurs apparently died off due to the drastic change in the climate.

The Bible says that in the beginning the whole earth was covered with water until God separated the water from the dry land.

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear’. And that is what happened. God called the dry ground ‘land’, and the waters He called, ‘seas’. And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:9-10

Even today scientists say that if the ocean bottom was raised, and the mountains lowered, there is currently enough water on the earth to cover it two miles deep.

So, in other words,
there has always been plenty enough water for Noah’s flood.
There still is.

The Bible is telling us the truth concerning Noah’s flood.
It happened just like the Word of God says.
And there is enough information
to understand all about the dinosaurs as well.

There is so much more we could discuss, but you get the point.
You can believe anything you want concerning all of this, but in my opinion, we should believe the Bible.
We should believe what God has said.

And, we should use the Bible to help us explain our world.
Not abandon the Bible in favor of humanistic ideas.

Our starting point should always be the written Word of God.
Learn to use the Bible to help you explain that which you don't understand. Start with God's truth, not the lies of the evil one.

One final note.

There is a fellow by the name of Ken Ham who has built a Creation Museum in KY. You can find him on the internet.
In that exhibit he apparently shows dinosaur eggs or small baby dinosaurs on Noah's ark.
It's an interesting thought that surely will drive the atheistic scientists crazy. And I love driving them crazy.
Look this up, it's interesting.
Cheers.

280 Open My Mind Lord Jesus

Luke 24:44-48 (This is after the resurrection)

"Then Jesus said, 'When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and in the Psalms must be fulfilled'.

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And He said, 'Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of His name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent'. You are witnesses of all these things.'"

1 Corinthians 2: 10, 14

*"But it was to us that God revealed these things by His Spirit. For His Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets....
But people who aren't Christians can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are Christians can understand what the Spirit means."*

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It says Jesus "*opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*".

These were His followers. His believers.

So the correct order of things is: 1)Belief 2)Understanding.

This is the whole nature of faith.

It's not the other way around--

You won't understand everything, and then believe God.

Later after Jesus went back to Heaven,
the Holy Spirit came as promised. (Jn 14:16)
*“the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth...When the Father sends the
Advocate as my representative--that is, the Holy Spirit—He will teach
you everything..”* Jn 14:16,26

If you are not a Christian,
don't expect to understand Biblical and spiritual things.
As an unbeliever, it will all seem like foolishness to you.
Without God's help, you will not understand the Bible.
It's impossible.
You will see the Bible as only an old book of fables written by men.

But when you open your heart to Jesus Christ,
you will see the God of the Bible.
The Bible will suddenly become a
supernatural book showing divine revelation.

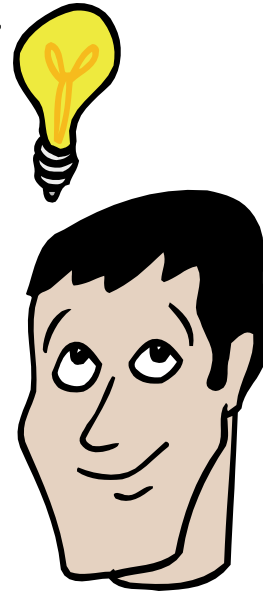
When you ask Jesus to save you, something
spiritually happens inside you.
The Bible says that the Holy Spirit of God
comes to live within you. (2 Cor 1:22)
And AFTER that happens, THEN you will be
able to understand the Bible.
As a Spirit filled Christian, you can now hear
what God says to you through HIS BOOK.

If you have never experienced this, may I
invite to accept the Lord Jesus as Savior,
and then ask the Lord to open your mind as
His did for His followers in Luke 24.

Specifically, you are allowed to ask the Holy
Spirit to help you understand the Bible.
*“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to
you.”* James 1:5

When you do this--when you ask God to open your mind--then the
Holy Spirit will perform a wonderful miracle inside of you.
He will explain it all to you. Listen.
I know it sounds spooky or mystical, but it's just the way our God,
who is Spirit, has ordained all of this to happen.

So take Him up on His offer.
Ask God, and watch HIM open your mind.



281 Old Testament Prophecies Of The Messiah

Luke 24:25-27

(After the resurrection, Jesus is walking with two men to Emmaus)

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘You foolish men! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering His glory?’

Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

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Question: What Scriptures did Jesus use to explain Himself?

Answer: The Old Testament.

(the New Testament hadn’t been written yet)

It says,

“Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets”

When was the last time you tried to win someone to Christ using only the Old Testament?

To me it doesn’t seem that easy.

Moses didn’t write,

‘Believe on Jesus from Nazareth when He comes in AD 30’.

Yet Jesus says that the Old Testament Scriptures are clear concerning who will be the Messiah, and what the Messiah will go through while here on earth. *“Wasn’t it clearly predicted.....?”*

Are you getting this? Jesus says we should know this stuff.

That we should know that He is the Messiah.

Especially today since we have the entire Bible.

Last week we showed how Jesus opened the minds of His followers to the Scriptures. He made it clear when He said:

‘When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Luke 24:44

So what specific Scriptures, or what verses did Jesus most likely use?

Well He told us plainly:

1)The first five books of Moses. (the law of Moses)

2)The Prophets.

3)The Psalms.

So what Old Testament verses
give a prophetic look forward to the Messiah?
Here are some of them with their New Testament fulfillment:

- 1)Genesis 3:15—Galatians 4:4 (**Seed of a woman**)
- 2)Genesis 12:3—Matthew 1:1 (**Descendant of Abraham**)
- 3)Genesis 17:19—Luke 3:34 (**Descendant of Isaac**)
- 4)Numbers 24:17—Matthew 1:2 (**Descendant of Jacob**)
- 5)Genesis 49:10—Luke 3:33 (**From the tribe of Judah**)

- 6)Isaiah 9:7—Luke 1:32-33 (**Heir to the throne of David**)
- 7)Psalms 45:6-7; 102:25-27—Hebrews 1:8-12
(**Anointed and Eternal**)
- 8)Micah 5:2—Luke 2:4-5,7 (**Born in Bethlehem**)
- 9)Daniel 9:25—Luke 2:-2 (**Time for His birth**)
- 10)Isaiah 7:14—Luke 1:26-27, 30-31 (**To be born of a virgin**)

- 11)Jeremiah 31:15—Matthew 2:16-18 (**Slaughter of children**)
- 12)Hosea 11:1—Matthew 2:14-15 (**Flight to Egypt**)
- 13)Isaiah 40:3-5—Luke 3:3-6 (**the way prepared**)
- 14)Malachi 3:1—Luke 7:24,27 (**Preceded by a forerunner**)
- 15)Malachi 4:5-6—Matthew 11:13-14 (**Preceded by Elijah**)

- 16)Psalms 2:7—Matthew 3:17 (**Declared the Son of God**)
- 17)Isaiah 9:1-2—Matthew 4:13-16 (**Galilean ministry**)
- 18)Psalms 78:2-4—Matthew 13:34-35 (**Speaks in parables**)
- 19)Deuteronomy 18:15—Acts 3:20,22 (**a prophet**)
- 20)Isaiah 61:1-2—Luke 4:18-19 (**to bind up the brokenhearted**)

- 21)Isaiah 53:3—John 1:11, Luke 23:18
(**Rejected by His own people, the Jews**)
- 22)Psalms 110:4—Hebrews 5:5-6
(**Priest after order of Melchizedek**)
- 23)Zechariah 9:9—Mark 11:7,9,11 (**Triumphal entry**)
- 24)Psalms 8:2—Matthew 21:15-16 (**Adored by infants**)
- 25)Isaiah 53:1—John 12:37-38 (**Not believed**)

- 26)Psalms 41:9—Luke 22:47-48 (**Betrayed by a close friend**)
- 27)Zechariah 11:12—Matthew 26:14-15
(**Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver**)
- 28)Psalms 35:11—Mark 14:57-58 (**Accused by false witnesses**)
- 29)Isaiah 53:7—Mark 15:4-5 (**Silent to accusations**)
- 30)Isaiah 50:6—Matthew 26:67 (**Spat on and struck**)

- 31)Psalms 35:19—John 15:24-25 (**Hated without reason**)
- 32)Isaiah 53:5—Romans 5:6,8 (**Vicarious sacrifice**)

- 33) Isaiah 53:12—Mark 15:27-28 (**Crucified with malefactors**)
 34) Zechariah 12:10—John 20:27 (**Pierced through hands and feet**)
 35) Psalms 22:7-8—Luke 23:35 (**Sneered and mocked**)
- 36) Psalms 69:9—Romans 15:3 (**was reproached**)
 37) Psalms 109:4—Luke 23:34 (**Prayer for His enemies**)
 38) Psalms 22:17-18—Matthew 27:35-36
 (**Soldiers gambled for His clothing**)
 39) Psalms 22:1—Matthew 27:46 (**Forsaken by God**)
 40) Psalms 34:20—John 19:32-33,36 (**No bones broken**)
 41) Zechariah 12:10—John 19:34 (**His side pierced**)
 42) Isaiah 53:9—Matthew 27:57-60 (**Buried with the rich**)
 43) Psalms 16:10;49:15—Mark 16:6-7 (**to be resurrected**)
 44) Psalms 68:18—Mark 16:19; ICor 15:4; Ephesians 4:8
 (**His ascension to God's right hand**)



So Jesus gave this kind of Scriptural proof to the two men walking to Emmaus to explain that He is the fulfillment of Scriptural prophecy concerning the Messiah.

DO YOU THINK JESUS PROVED HIS POINT!?

The answer is YES.

Is it not amazing that people still reject Him?
(including many Old Testament believing Jews)

Makes you wonder what the Lord has do to convince them.
.....What does the Lord have to do to convince you?

God is a God of planning, design, and purpose.
He gives us information for a reason.
"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord...." Isaiah 1:18

Jesus wants you to think about all of this.
It is why He had this conversation with the two men walking to Emmaus, and why He opened the minds of His followers, so they could understand these Old Testament prophecies, especially in the light of the New Testament revealed truth.....Jesus.

It is why these proofs are given to us in the Bible.
They're here so that you will find the Messiah,
who is Jesus Christ our Lord.



282 The Last Lord's Supper

I Corinthians 11: 23-26

*"For this is what the Lord himself said,
and I pass it on to you just as I received it.
On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took a loaf of
bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,
"This is my body, which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."*

*In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant between God and you,
sealed by the shedding of my blood.
Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it."*

*For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are
announcing the Lord's death until He comes again."*

Jeremiah 31:31-34

*"The day will come," says the LORD, "when I will make a new
covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not
be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the
hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt.
They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his
wife," says the LORD.*

*"But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on
that day," says the LORD. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I
will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be
my people.*

*And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to
teach their family, saying, 'You should know the LORD.'
For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know
me," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness and will
never again remember their sins."*

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Old Testament.
Old Covenant.
People come to God through the priest,
and the blood of an animal sacrifice.

The Passover meal is celebrated remembering the date of **Nisan 14th** on the Jewish calendar, when in Egypt, Moses had them kill a lamb, and place the blood on the door posts, (like an invisible cross) so that God would “pass over them” when judgment came in the death of the Egyptian first born. God’s people were freed from slavery.

New Testament.
New Covenant.
People now can come directly to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The Lord’s supper/Eucharist/ Communion is celebrated remembering the **death of Jesus on Nisan 14th** as our Passover Lamb.

We are set free from sin
.....forever.

What wonderful history.
What a powerful connection.
Jesus is our Passover Lamb.



So what do I mean by the Last Lord’s Supper?
Well it could be Jesus’ last supper before He goes to the cross.
Or it might be a message about your last supper before dying.

But what I want to point out is this:
*“For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death **until He comes again.**”*

So you’re doing the Lord’s Supper until when?
“until He comes again”The Last Lord’s Supper.

You’ve got to read scripture carefully,
and think about what God is saying.

Once Jesus comes back, everything is going to change.
Including the Lord’s Supper.
If we celebrate it in some format during the Kingdom,
Or while we’re in Heaven, it will be different.
Because Jesus will be right there!

Think about this.

When you celebrate Communion, or whatever you call it, you look forward to the DAY of Jesus Christ's return.
Christians are looking for this DAY.

This day is a real thing to look forward to.
This isn't just fantasy, while we drudge on in religious ritual.
This day is coming.
Christ will return.
For real.
It will happen.
So remember this, and look forward to it,
when "you eat this bread and drink this cup".

I want to be part of the Last Lord's Supper, ...
...and then meet Jesus face to face.

How about you?

283 God of Peace

Hebrews 13:20-21

"And now, may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, equip you with all you need for doing His will. May He produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, all that is pleasing to Him. Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep by an everlasting covenant, signed with His blood. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen."

1 Thessalonians 5:23

"Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again."

1 Corinthians 14:33 *"For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all the other churches."*

2 Corinthians 13:11

"Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Rejoice. Change your ways. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you."

Normally we think of God giving us peace.

"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us." Romans 5:1

But I want you to think about our God of peace for a moment.

God is not fretting over all the apparent chaos in the world.
He is not worried about the Devil, and the problems he is causing.
God is not biting His nails, and sweating it out.
God is not wondering how it all is going to work out in the end.
He is not just hoping that it will all turn out ok.

No, our Sovereign God is in complete control.
God is in total peace.
He is our God of peace.
And if we come to Him, and rely on Him, we will be filled with
peace, just like Him.

Look at this next verse:

*“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”* Romans 16:20

This is a strange verse, don't you think?

I mean, it's talking about this loving, kind, gentle God of peace,
who will soon crush Satan under your feet. (In relation to Gen 3:15)

What I want you notice is that God is not bothered at all by Satan.
And while in the middle of performing His plans,
God is still the God of peace.

May you do likewise.

May you fight the good fight of faith, and be in complete peace as you
depend on Christ.

Philippians 4:9

*“Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from
me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you.”*



284 Failure verses Faithful

Matthew 25: 16-17, 19-23

“The servant who received the five bags of gold began immediately to invest the money and soon doubled it. The servant with two bags of gold also went right to work and doubled the money...

After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of gold said, 'Sir, you gave me five bags of gold to invest, and I have doubled the amount.'

The master was full of praise.

'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

Next came the servant who had received the two bags of gold, with the report, 'Sir, you gave me two bags of gold to invest, and I have doubled the amount.

'The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

+++++

So how do you judge yourself or others as a spiritual success,
...or failure?

If you build a 5 million dollar church, and win 5,000 souls to Jesus,
are you a success?

What if you were poor during your life and didn't have the money to
give 5 cents? Or what if you personally only won five people to Christ
during your lifetime?

Were you a failure?

Come on now, think about this.
How do you judge success or failure in the spiritual realm?

Paul writes in 1st Corinthians 3:6-8 about how he planted,
...and Apollos watered.

Apparently it was some one else who got to do the harvesting.
Did that make “Paul the planter” out to be a failure?

What is the spiritual principle that Jesus gave us in the parable above?
He said,
*'Well done, my good and **faithful** servant. You have been **faithful**.....'*

Spiritual success is measured by faithfulness,
.....not by statistical quantity.

It's not how many (blank) you've accomplished,.....
It's whether or not you were faithful with the job
....given to you by God.

Do you understand what God is saying here?

The man with five-bags of gold was applauded and approved,
not because he had gained five other bags of gold,
but upon the basis of his faithfulness.

Significantly,
the man with two-bags of gold received the identical commendation,
indicating that it is not the quantity of one's achievement that is vital,
but the quality of it.

Does your life show a quality of faithfulness?

That's what is most important.
If God has told you to do something, then be faithful at that task,
.... and you will be a total success..

Be Faithful

and you will be a

success!



285 Stand Up and Be Counted

Imagine being at a ballgame with your coworkers, friends, and family.
Someone gets a microphone and starts to address the huge crowd.
Everyone sits down to listen.
The person says that if you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior,
that you may now stand up, and remain standing to be identified.

So you stand up.

Others stand also,.... but many do not.
The division is clearly seen.
Soon it is obvious
that there are some in your group who are not standing.

You can already feel the tension in the air.
.....

Now you're ready to read our Bible passage for today.

Read this carefully.

Luke 12: 2, 4-9, 51-53, and then 35-40
Jesus said: "*The time is coming when everything will be revealed;
all that is secret will be made public....*

*Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill you.
They can only kill the body; they cannot do any more to you.
But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill
people and then throw them into hell.*

*What is the price of five sparrows? A couple of pennies?
Yet God does not forget a single one of them.
And the very hairs on your head are all numbered.
So don't be afraid;
you are more valuable to him than a whole flock of sparrows.*

*I assure you of this:
If anyone acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I, the Son of Man,
will openly acknowledge that person in the presence of God's angels.*

*But if anyone denies me here on earth,
I will deny that person before God's angels.....*

*Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth?
No, I have come to bring strife and division!*

*From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two
against—or the other way around.
There will be a division between father and son, mother and daughter,
mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.*

*Be dressed for service and well prepared, as though you were waiting
for your master to return from the wedding feast.
Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he
arrives and knocks.*

*There will be special favor for those who are ready and waiting for
his return. I tell you, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and
serve them as they sit and eat!*

*He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn.
But whenever he comes, there will be special favor for his servants
who are ready!*

*Know this: A homeowner who knew exactly when a burglar was
coming would not permit the house to be broken into. You must be
ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.”*

+++++

Did you catch any of this?
Jesus is speaking to all of us, and telling it straight.

Be ready for His return, by knowing Him as Savior.
Stand up, and be counted as a believer.
And be prepared for the division that this stand will cause.

If you don't know Him, and don't stand for Him,
you have something to fear.
Or more specifically, you have some One to fear.

But if you know Jesus, then you have nothing to fear,
for He will take care of you.

It's time to make your decision,
and **STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!**



286 The Lights Go Out Towards Hell

People who reject the Light will walk in darkness.

If you are lost and walking in the night towards an abyss, a flash of lightening would help you to see the edge of the cliff.



That is what God gives to every person on earth.

Through creation God has given us light of His eternal power.

And our conscience inside tells us God exists. (Romans 1:18-21)

What you do with that light, and the decision that you make to seek God, will determine whether you are given more light.

Those who seek God, will find Him in the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And they can keep the light shining on their path by reading the Bible. (Devotion #145, "Use Your Flashlight")

Those who reject God, by rejecting the light given by God, may end up with the lights being turned off forever. (2 Cor 4:3-4) (Devotion #139, "Lost and Blind")

To those who seek the light and accept the Lord, they will be given light for their path, and will live forever in a place where the light is always on. (Rev 21) (Devotion #278, "We'll Leave The Light On")

I hope you are not someone who has rejected God. I hope you have not rejected the Light He has given you. If so, God may not be inclined to give you anymore light for your path. God may allow you to walk on without any light.

I pray that will not happen to you.
I pray that you are not Hell bound.
Doomed to darkness, because the lights have been turned off by your rejection. This may be your last chance to see what lies ahead, and to turn from disaster.

God may not give you any more light, if you reject Him again.
He has given you so much light for you to respond to.
He has given you the completed Word to read and understand.
And you will understand everything if you would just accept Christ.
(Devotion #3, "Want To Understand?")

God does not have to give you another sign.
Jesus said this generation will be given only the sign of His death and resurrection. (Luke 11: 29-36)

Open your eyes to the Light.
Please, I beg you to see the edge of the cliff ahead, and turn to Christ.
Accept Jesus while the light still shines on your path.

Title is from a sermon by the same name by Rolfe Barnard
(1904-1969)

287 The Word Of God

John 1: 1-3
*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."*

+++++

1) "All things came into being through Him.. the Word"

God cleared His throat, opened His mouth,
...and spoke everything into existence.

All matter was spoken into being. Every atom, and every molecule.
Out of nothing, God spoke everything into existence,
...because He is God.

And He upholds and sustains
all things by
the power of His Word.

*“God's Son reflects God's own
glory, and everything about
Him represents God exactly.
By His own mighty word, He
holds the universe together.”*
(Hebrews 1: 3)

His Word created everything.
His Word holds everything
together.

The same power that holds the
sun up in the sky, holds you up.



**2) When God wants to change
something, He speaks to it.**

Jesus spoke, and the wind and
waves recognized His voice,
and laid down at His feet.
Even His disciples said:
*“Who is this, that He commands
even the winds and the water,
and they obey Him?”*

Luke 8:24-25

*“They came to Jesus and woke
Him up, saying, “Master, Master,
we are perishing!”*

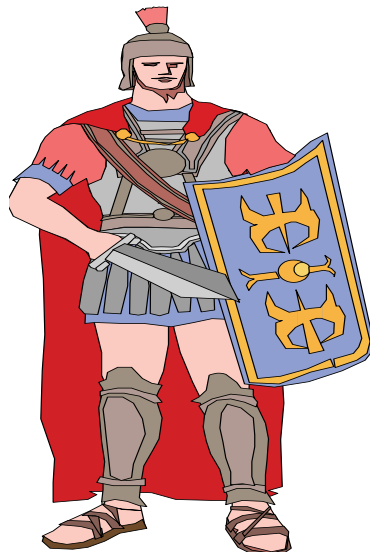
*And He got up and rebuked the
wind and the surging waves, and
they stopped, and it became calm.*

*And He said to them,
“Where is your faith?”*
*They were fearful and amazed,
saying to one another,
“Who is this, that He commands
even the winds and the water,
and they obey Him?”*

3) When they rolled the stone away from the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus did not go in and give him CPR. **He sent in His word.**

When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11: 43)

If Jesus hadn't specifically called Lazarus by name and instead just said "Come forth", every dead person buried on planet earth would have gotten up out of their graves.



4) The Centurion understood and believed in the power of the Word of God.

Matthew 8; 5-8

"And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."

Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed."

That is exactly what happened.
Jesus spoke,and the servant was healed.

It's God Word that can come into your life, and change everything.

5) **By His Word you are given faith.**

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
(Romans 10:17)

6) **You are born again as a child of God by His Word.** *"In accordance with His will He made us His children by the word of truth",*
James 1: 18

7) **And in His Word you continue to grow.**

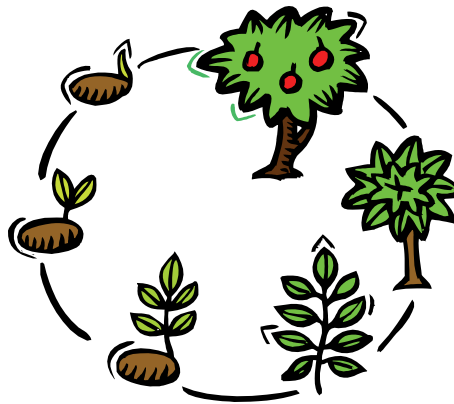
Luke 8: 11-12, 15. (from Jesus telling the parable of the sower)

“This is what the story means: The seed is God's word, and the seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the word, but the devil comes and snatches the word out of their hearts, so that they will not believe and be saved. But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

God's word in your life is like seed that has been sown and planted.

You listened and allowed it in. Now it takes time to grow. So be patient.

Continue to study God's Word, and you will see spiritual results every time.



You have God's promise on that.
“My Word will not come back void” (Isaiah 55:11)

The power of Word of God.
It gives life.

Remember, the God who spoke the universe into being, knows your name. Learn to listen to Him, as He speaks His Word to you.



Devotion was taken in part from a sermon by TD Jakes.

288 The Rapture

I Thessalonians 4: 16-18, 5:1-2

“For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a mighty shout and with the soul-stirring cry of the archangel and the great trumpet-call of God. And the believers who are dead will be the first to rise to meet the Lord.

*Then we who are still alive on the earth will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord **in the air** and remain with Him forever. So comfort and encourage each other with this message. I really don't need to write to you about how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters. For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night.”*

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The word "rapture" comes from the Latin word "rapturo," which in turn was a translation of the Greek verb “arpaghsomeqa” in 1 Thess 4:17 for “caught up”.

The Bible says this day *“will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night.”*

The only time frame I can think of when we believers would not be expecting Jesus to return would have to be before the tribulation.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

The rapture of the church obviously comes first, then seven years later, Jesus is set to come back at the end of the Tribulation period, and His feet will touch down at the Mount of Olives. (Zech 14:3-4)

He will go into the Temple to start His 1000 year earthly reign. (Zech 14: 9-11, Ezekiel 43:1-7, Rev 20: 2-7)

Now as far as the Christ’s “second coming to earth”, (when Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives), the Bible couldn't be plainer. It clearly states that Jesus will return 1260 days from the moment the Antichrist sits in the Temple of God and declares himself to be God. You'll be able to count the days. (Dan 9:27, 12:11, Matt 24:15,29-30, 2 Thess 2:3-4, Rev 11:2-3, 13:5)

So no Bible believer will be surprised at the “second coming” of Jesus Christ, like the world was for the rapture 7 years earlier.

We'll know exactly when Jesus is predicted to arrive and stand on the Mount of Olives.

The passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is therefore obviously a different event. 1 Thess 4: 17 is talking about the Rapture.
When we as Christians will meet "*the Lord in the air and remain with Him forever*" And it all starts we get caught up in the clouds!
This can happen any day. (Devotion #114, "Any Day Now")



I don't know about you, but I really want to experience that.

And also because the whole dying idea doesn't really appeal to me.

I'd rather be caught up to be with Jesus, and miss the whole 'being dead' .

For those of you who think the church is going to go through the horrible Tribulation, I have just one thing to say.....

Knock yourselves out.

Good thing Jesus knows better.
The word of God clearly states
that believers will escape the tribulation bloodbath.

"For God hath not destined us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Thessalonians 5:9

"Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world." Revelation 3:10

So Christian look up!
Jesus is coming back soon for all who believe in Him.
"So comfort and encourage each other with this message"

289 The Secret to Living in every situation

Philippians 4: 10-14

"...I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.

I know how to live on almost nothing, or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach, or empty, with plenty, or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty."

2 Corinthians 12: 9-10

"The Lord said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

+++++

So what is "the secret of living in every situation"?

Answer: "I have learned how to be content with whatever I have."

So how do you do that? What's the secret of the secret?

Answer: "I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength"

It should be no surprise that the answer that gives us the secret to **life** will center on Jesus who is.."*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*"

John 14:6

You can not be content without Jesus in the center of your life, whether you're poor and in jail, or rich on your own yacht.

Without Christ, you would always be missing and searching for something.

Let's go further.

What about this concept of "the secret of living in **every** situation"?

I don't know about you, but I understand this concept when I am down and out. I need the Lord, especially in "my weaknesses".

But do we think the same way when we “*live with everything with a full stomach, with plenty*”?

Are you still “*content with whatever (you) have?*”

You have everything you need;... money, health, car, clothes, food, friends, family.....even salvation in Jesus...
You’re sailing along beautifully.... Of course you’re content, right?

But let me ask you a question?

Do you “*know how to live ... with everything*” ?

Seems like a stupid question, doesn’t it?.....But it’s not.

If you have a problem being content,.... money will not solve it.

If you are not content in Christ who is your strength,money wouldn’t change that. It would only make things worse.

Can you truthfully say you need the Lord as much when you have everything,as when you have nothing?

I hope you answered yes. The answer should be yes, especially if you are serving Christ in any capacity.....Why?

Because whether you have “everything”, or not; you can not do the Lord’s work in your own power, no matter how many abilities God has given you.

No matter how much material wealth you’ve gained, or how full your stomach is, or how much God has given to you, you still need the Lord every day, and in every way.

Jesus is our Sovereign God, and it is HE who is loaning you your next breath to serve and praise Him..

It is He who gives you strength. It is He who gives you contentment.

You must come to terms daily with Him.

Because you can not survive for five seconds on your own.

Without God’s mercy and grace, you would surely drive your life right off the proverbial cliff.

It is Jesus who places you on the path.

It is He who keeps you there.

Thank God that He has given you so much.

Isn’t it true that God has blessed you beyond reason or cause?

Dumped so many blessings on you that you’re floating on them?

And yet, if you are insightfully truthful, you know you are also weak, and that you live daily under the motto :

God’s “*power works best in (my) weakness*”

We truly need to stop.....and thank the Lord for Everything.

In Christ we can be content.
For whether we have plenty, or whether we have nothing,
we need Christ who is everything.

And in Christ,... we have the secret to living in every situation.

290 The Way cleared the way

Mark 15:37-38

*“Then Jesus cried with a loud voice, and died.
When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces.
The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom”.*

Hebrews 10:19-23

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. This is the new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us through the sacred curtain, by means of his death for us.

And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's people, let us go right into the presence of God, with true hearts fully trusting him. For our evil consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Without wavering, let us hold tightly to the hope we say we have, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.”

+++++

Within the tabernacle (and later the temple) there was a thick curtain separating the two main rooms (the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies) Exodus 26:31-33.



Once a year, the High Priest would have to go around this curtain, or more likely under the curtain on his stomach, as he would come into God's presence in a prostrate position.



The High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant.



When Jesus died on the cross this curtain was torn apart to signify that we as believers now have direct access to God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

“Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me’” John 14:6

It couldn't be any clearer.

The Way cleared the way for us to come to God.

The meaning of this event and its symbolism are powerful.
The Cross of Christ opens up the way for us to go straight to the Mercy Seat of God which is the place of ultimate forgiveness in the very presence of God.

Jesus is the sacrifice for our sins that completely cleanses us and makes us right with God.
Barriers no longer stand in our way to God's grace and mercy.

Jesus opened up for us the way to the very heart of God.

As horrible as the humiliation of the Cross was for Jesus, it was even more glorious for us because it ushered in a new way (called the New Covenant) for God to deal with his people.

What Satan, through evil men, had intended for harm, God used to bring great good. Jesus becomes our Savior and his sacrifice becomes the basis of our salvation. (From "What Jesus Did", <http://www.heartlight.org>)

You don't have to use your scissors
..to try and cut through from the bottom.
God did all the work.
"The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom".

All you have to do is come *"with true hearts fully trusting him"*
"for God can be trusted to keep his promise."



291 Want to grab a bite to eat?

*"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."* Matt 4:4

+++++

**If you ate food like you read the Bible,
we would have buried you long ago.**

Nibble on this:

The Bible tells us about Christ.

Jesus said, *"The Scriptures tell of me"* (John 5:39)

Without the Bible, you don't find Jesus and salvation.

Here's another bite:

Jesus Christ is *"the Life"* (John 14:6)

Without Jesus Christ, you shall not live.

All that awaits the unbeliever is death. (Revelation 20:14)

You must "partake" of the Bible,or you die.

For in the Bible, you find *"the Life"*.

You shall live

"by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Life is found within the pages of the Bible.

The written Word of God gives life.

Ok, slow down.

Make sure you chew your food well.

Ready to continue with this meal?

Ok, here we go.

John 20:30-31

"Jesus' disciples saw him do many other miraculous signs besides the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you will have life".

Get this last point *"these are **written** so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you will have life".*

God gave you HIS BOOK so that you can believe, and have life.

Belief focused on Jesus Christ.

You learn this by reading God's **written** Word.

Your faith in Jesus is given to you when you read the Bible.
“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” Rm10:17

Make sure you get this:
The **written** Word is how Jesus reveals Himself to you.

Luke 24:27
“Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, Jesus explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”

I suggest that you plan your daily intake of “spiritual food”,
like you seek out your physical food.

- 1) Large breakfast devotion
in the morning.



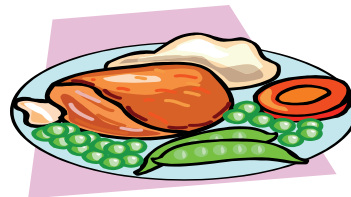
- 2) A quick bite of Proverbs
at lunch.



- 3) A nibble of a memorized verse in the afternoon.



- 4) Dinner with family or
friends, and the Apostle Paul.



- 5) And a snack of New Testament before bed.



Sounds good doesn't it?

292 Just Do What God Said

Deuteronomy 4:2

“Do not add to or subtract from these commands I am giving you from the LORD your God. Just obey them.”

Deuteronomy 12:32

“Carefully obey all the commands I give you. Do not add to them or subtract from them.”

Proverbs 30:5-6

“Every word of God proves true. He defends all who come to him for protection. Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you, and you will be found a liar.”

Revelation 22:18-19

“And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. And if anyone removes any of the words of this prophetic book, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.”

+++++

For the last several weeks

I've been studied the cults and “isms” of religion.

It seems to me that they all do the same thing.

They either add to what God said,

Or they take away from what God said.

God has given to us clear information on:

1)How to live a successful life.

2)What happens after death.

3)How to get saved, how to avoid Hell, and how to go to Heaven.

4)Who Jesus Christ is.

5)How we all got here.

And what the future holds for those who believe in what God has said,

And what is going to happen to those who choose not to obey God.

Cults, shisms, isms,they all try to do the same thing.

They try to change what God said.

They add to what He said. ..They take away from what He said.

It seems that it always comes down to one main thing.
“Just do what God has clearly said”.

Believe Him. Accept Him. Obey Him.

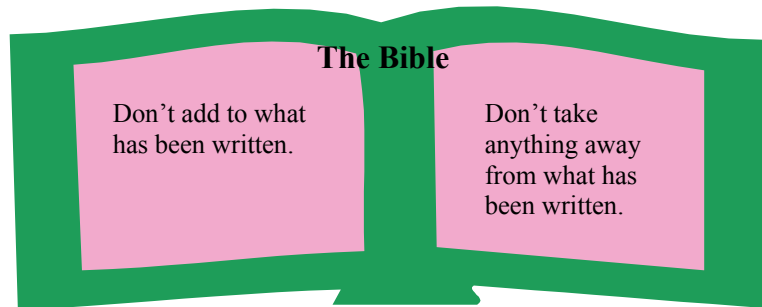
Psalms 12:6 “*The LORD's promises are pure, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over.*”

God’s promises to us are pure. His promises are not partial truth.

We’re dealing with the Great “I Am” of the Bible....
God.... The One and Only.
We’re dealing with the One who said “I am the Truth”.

To accept His Word is to accept His Truth,
...and therefore to accept Him.

To accept Him means you accept what He has said,
without trying to change it. I suggest you just do what God says.



293 You Will Be Blessed

Psalms 84:11

“For the LORD God is our light and protector. He gives us grace and glory. No good thing will the LORD withhold from those who do what is right.”

Matthew 7: 9-11

*“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead?
Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not!*

So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him.”

The Lord God is your protector,
therefore who are you afraid of?

The Lord God gives you grace,
which means He gives you gifts that you don't deserve.

The Lord God gives you glory, and you ain't seen nothing yet.
Wait until you see Heaven!

"No good thing will the LORD withhold from those who do what is right."

You will be blessed.
You have been blessed.

Take a long look at your life.
Hasn't God already blessed you beyond belief?

And that is a correct play on words, because the point is that God has given you blessings upon blessings, and gifts piled on top of gifts, in spite of your lack of belief.

God has still blessed you,
even though your faith at times has been weak.
Think about what would happen if you truly sought after God.

"So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that there is a God and that God rewards those who sincerely seek Him." Hebrews 11:6

So seek Him!
And prove it by your obedience.

Luke 6: 46 (Jesus speaking)
"So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?"

The scripture is clear. We are to trust,... and obey.

*"Faith without works is useless...
I will show you my faith by my good deeds.
So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith.
Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all –
it is dead and useless." (James 2:20, 18, 17)*

David said in Psalms 25:21,
"I obey you with all my heart, and I trust you, knowing that you will save me."

So, trust Him. Obey Him.
And watch God meet your every need,
.....just like He has already been doing!
Put Him first and watch Him bless you again!

Matthew 6:31-33

*"Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat?
Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?"*

Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well."



294 Doctrines from the commandments of men

Matthew 15: 1-9

“Some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to interview Jesus. “Why do your disciples disobey our age-old traditions?” they demanded. “They ignore our tradition of ceremonial hand washing before they eat.”

Jesus replied, “And why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God? For instance, God says, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘Anyone who speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.’

But you say, ‘You don’t need to honor your parents by caring for their needs if you give the money to God instead.’

And so, by your own tradition, you nullify the direct commandment of God. You hypocrites! Isaiah was prophesying about you when he said, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away. Their worship is a farce, for they replace God’s commands with their own man-made teachings.’”

+++++

So like I said two weeks ago, I’ve been studying cults.
And out of all the details given, it all seems so clear to me.
When you add to God’s Word,
or take away from His Word,
...you get in trouble.

This kind of problem has been with us since before the first century.
Men have always been making up things for you to obey.
Men telling you things which are different than what God has said.
Extra rules.
A different way to be saved.
Guidelines for life that God never gave.
“Sins” that men just made up, that God never forbade.
And sins that God clearly said no to, where men now condone.
On and on we go

It’s a mixed up world of confusion. And the Devil is having a ball.

*“for they replace God’s commands
with their own man-made teachings.”*

Another version says:

“they make doctrines out of the commandments of men”

Now let's discuss something for a minute.
Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, men wrote the Bible,
and gave us God's doctrines. Right?

(the answer is clearly "Right" based on the scripture)

2 Peter 1:16, 20

*"For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about
the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. We have
seen his majestic splendor with our own eyes.
....Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever
came from the prophets themselves or from human initiative.
It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God."*

So get this straight, ok? It makes a big difference.
If you think the Bible is just a man made book written by men, made
from the ideas of men, and full of errors and mistakes, then you may
not understand what the problem is with men today giving "updated"
ideas that they say are "from God".

As the verses above say,
the Bible did NOT come "*from the prophets themselves*",
"It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God."

God gave us HIS Word in written form in the Bible.
We can trust it, because we can trust Him.

The Written Word of God (the Bible) is a closed text.
You may not add to it, and you may not take anything away from it.
GOD has clearly stated this
through His disciple John in Revelation 22:18-19.

The real questions are:

- 1) Do you know the Bible well enough to recognize when someone is
adding or subtracting from it?
- 2) Would you know when someone is making a doctrine
from a commandment of men?

If you answered no, then it's time to "study up"!!
So you can stand fast on the solid foundation of the Bible.

295 Have You Read The Bible Through?

Psalms 119:47-48, 52, 72, 13-16, 103

*“How I delight in your commands! How I love them!
I honor and love your commands.
I meditate on your principles...I meditate on your age-old laws;
O Lord, they comfort me.
Your law is more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver!*

*I have recited aloud all the laws you have given us. ..
I have rejoiced in your decrees as much as in riches.
I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways.
I will delight in your principles and not forget your word. ...
How sweet are your words to my taste; they are sweeter than honey.”*

+++++

If you use 15 minutes daily to read the Bible,
you would read it through YEARLY.

Reading a newer translation that flows might make all the difference.
You should try it.

If you can't do it that way, then here's another idea.
Sunday is supposed to be the day we give to the Lord, right?
If you set aside 90 minutes on that day to read the scripture,
then in 52 Sundays you would read the entire Bible.

Have you ever read the Bible through completely?
Cover to cover?

If you say you are a Christian who loves God, then why wouldn't you
want to read the words that He has written to you?

You read the newspaper don't you?
Spend untold hours reading your emails, right?

Think about it.

You can do this. You can read the Bible through.
The question is: Do you want to?

If it is important to you, then find a way to do it!

Listen again to the Psalmist:

“How sweet are your words to my taste; they are sweeter than honey”

“How I love them!”

“more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver”

It this true for you?

Is God’s Word sweeter than honey to you?

Do you love the Bible, God’s word?

If the answer is yes, then prove it,.... read it through!



296 After Its Own Kind

Genesis 1:11,21,25

"Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, {and} fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so.

God created the great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good."

+++++

God created life.

God created everything "after its kind".

God built in the ability for variation within a "kind",
but the rule was set by God.

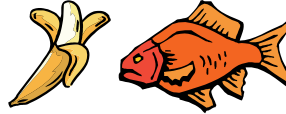
And the rule is--: Things don't change from kind to kind.

In other words, bananas don't become fish.

Fish don't become birds.

Dogs don't become cows.

Monkeys don't become men.



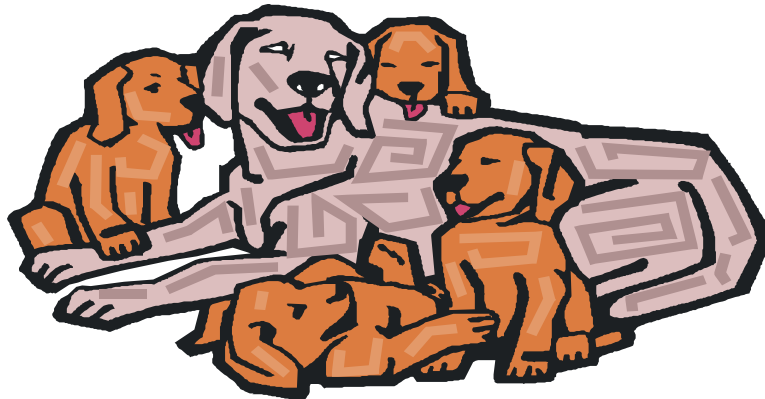
We can have a plethora of variation within a "kind".

Look at the world of dogs for example:

We now have a lot of different dogs, ...but they're all still dogs.

Over the years there has been wonderful variations produced

But a dog is still a dog.



Change does happen.
Natural selection does occur.
Which means the original dogs that God made had DNA to make
short hair dogs, and long hair dogs in subsequent generations.
Over time short haired dogs survived the heat of the desert.
And long haired dogs survived the cold northern forests.

Evolutionists say that this shows natural selection. Ok. It does.
But natural selection shows the conservation of life, ...not its creation.
It may demonstrate survival of life, but not the arrival of the "kind".

I've changed a lot over the last 50 years,
...but I haven't evolved at all.
I still haven't grown any wings.
(as much as I might want to)

The unscientific theory or 'religion' of evolution says that random
chemicals came together to create the miracle of DNA by chance.

Evolution says the first living cell just happened by chaotic accident.
And from that one cell through reproduction and mutation, all life
came into being. From that one cell came all the diversity of all life.
They say life evolved from kind to kind.

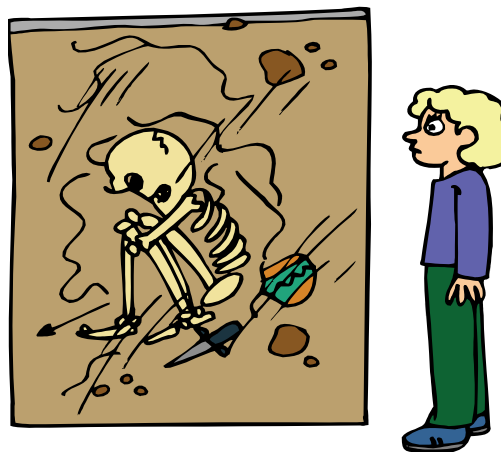
But the fossil record of this planet does not show that at all.
The rocks show separate "kinds" of life buried over the years.

The rocks do NOT show thousands and thousands of missing links.
The rocks do NOT show things changing from kind to kind.
The rocks do NOT show fossils of half reptile/half bird,
or 40%reptile/60%bird, etc.

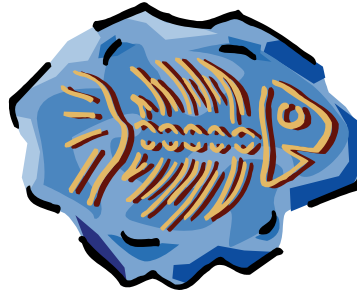
In fact the rocks
show the opposite.

The fossils show
what is expected
if you are a
creationist.

The rocks simply
show a lot of dead
things that got buried
in a flood.



Did you know that there are some creatures buried at the bottom of the evolutionist's "geological column of rock" that are still alive today.Think about it.



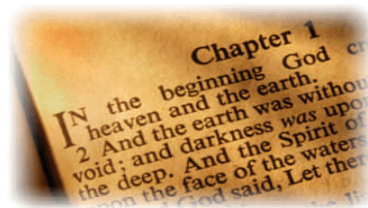
Why haven't they changed over the millions of years that evolutionists say occurred?

There are trees buried upright straight through the evolutionist's million year rock column. Plenty of proof that the whole million year rock column idea is incorrect.

Yet the evolutionists deny the facts, and hold on to their unproven fantasies. Their religion takes more faith than ours. There is a blind faith without any evidence.

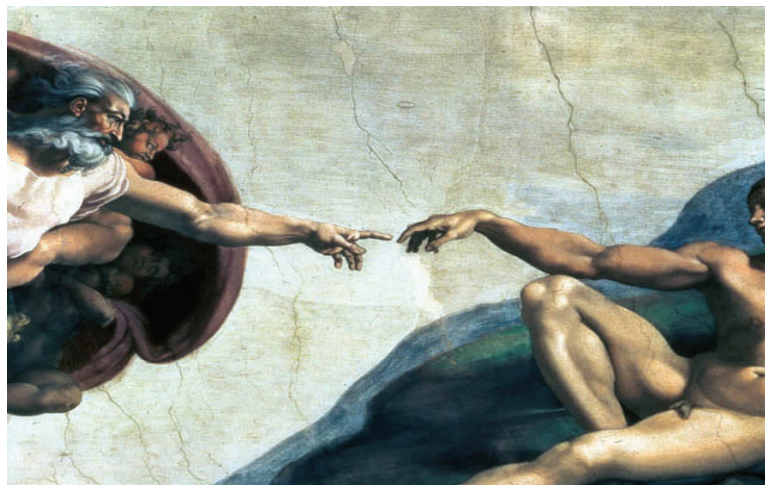
We have the Bible, as well as the visible creation, as proof.

You don't need to go looking for answers any where else.



Learn to start with the Bible and work outward to understand your world

The truth is God made everything on earth **after its own kind**.



297 Suppressing The Clear Truth

Romans 1:18-21

“God's anger is revealed from heaven against every ungodly and immoral thing that people do as they try to suppress the truth. For the truth about God is clear.”

God has made His truth known to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Yes, they knew God was there alright, but they wouldn't worship him as God, or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused.”

+++++

Sinners are not short of knowledge about God.
That's not the problem. Never has been.
From the city streets, to the rain forest on the farthest island,
God is known.

- 1) *God's invisible attributes,*
- 2) *His eternal power,*
- 3) *and divine nature,*

have been clearly seen,

being understood through what has been made,

so that they are without excuse.

In other words,
it is clear that we should humble ourselves before our Sovereign God.

There is no doubt that God exists
and that God is all powerful, majestic, and wise.

We see His fingerprints all over the created universe.
From a honeybee to the human brain, God made everything.
From a snow flake to a bolt of lightning,
God is in control.

Anyone on the face of the planet can learn of The Way to Heaven.
When anyone wants to find God, all they have to do is seek Him.
Jesus will answer.
The Biblical plan of salvation will be explained.
All you have to do is ask, and God will answer plainly.

The problem is that sinners don't want to bend their knees to God.
They spend tremendous amounts of energy
suppressing the clear truth.

It's like someone in a swimming pool
trying to keep a large beach ball under the water.
They struggle. They fight.
They hold the ball with their feet and knees.
They push and push.
Trying to keep the ball from popping up to the surface.

That's what is going on within the hearts of the lost.
They do not want to face the clear truth that God is who He is.

Remember all of this when you witness for Jesus Christ.
You don't have to try and explain the existence of God.
They already know.



298 Don't Make The Stones Cry Out

Luke 19:36-40 (Jesus is riding a donkey into Jerusalem)
"As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.
As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of
Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully
with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting:
"BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE
LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
(from Psalms 118:26)

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him,
"Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."
But Jesus answered,
"I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" "

+++++

If you don't praise the Lord, the stones will!!
What a message.

Obviously we need to praise the Lord.
The Bible is full of instruction for us to do this.
It should be a natural thing to do, "Praise the Lord!"

What a great God we have!
Praise Him for who He is.
Thank Him for all He's done.
He was given us everything.
Forgiveness and Mercy.
Salvation and Grace.
The promise of eternal life with Him in Heaven.

How can we not praise God?
Yet the world looks down on the "holy rollers" who do.

Jesus said a fascinating statement on the way into Jerusalem.

There He was riding along on a donkey
from the Mount of Olives down into the valley,
and the non-believers were right there to jeer Him on.

"How can they praise you as the promised Messiah and King?"
"How can they use the wording from Psalms in connection with
you?" "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

Can't you hear them?

And what did Jesus say?
"I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

Wouldn't that of been a sight?!!

Don't make the stones cry out.
Praise your Lord and Savior.

**Praise
the
LORD**

299 Father of Lies

John 8:44 (Jesus speaking to non-believing Jews
who said Abraham was their father)

*"You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of
your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not
stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.
Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature,}
for he is a liar and the father of lies."*

Genesis 2: 15-17

*"Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of
Eden to cultivate it and keep it. The LORD God commanded the man,
saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the
tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day
that you eat from it you will surely die."*

Genesis 3: 4

"The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!"
But Adam and Eve did die spiritually that same day,
... just as God said.

Adam and Eve were lied to,...and sinned against God.
On that day sin entered the world, and death for all

*"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world,
and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all
have sinned."* Romans 5:12

It all went sideways.....that day.
The first sin was the sin of pride when Lucifer wanted to be God.
And the Devil followed up with the first lie.
Sin got started by the father of lies.

Everything in this universe had a beginning.
The Bible says there was a beginning for lying.
There was a "first lie".
And who said the first lie?
A fallen angel named Lucifer.
The Bible calls him the "father of lies".

Now many today don't believe that this creature exists.
That makes me wonder then how they believe in God.
Because God's written word says Lucifer exists.

How can you say that you believe in God,
when you don't believe what God has said?

The Devil is real alright. And so are his lies.

Thankfully we serve Jesus Christ
who is "*the Way, **the Truth**, and the Life*" Jn 14:6

You can count on the Lord,and what He says is true.



300 Brotherly Kindness

2 Peter 1:5-9 “.....make every effort to add integrity to your faith; and to integrity add knowledge; to knowledge add self-control; to self-control add endurance; to endurance add godliness; to godliness **add brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness add love.

If you have these qualities and they are increasing, it demonstrates that your knowledge about our Lord Jesus Christ is living and productive. If these qualities aren't present in your life, you're shortsighted and have forgotten that you were cleansed from your past sins.”

Luke 6:32-36

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”.

Romans 12:17-20

“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.

Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. (from Deut 32:35)

Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." (from Prov 25:21-22)

**I listened to someone preach on this the other day,
and the message landed on me like a brick house.**

I'm always so focused on trying to win someone to Christ,
that I sometimes overlook this simple message.

Be kind.
Do kind things.
Show brotherly kindness.

What a concept!

So what is brotherly kindness?

Here's a thought.
Seeing your elderly neighbor's
yard needs mowed,
.....and mowing it.

No strings attached.
No Bible verses given.
No comment that you're doing it
for the Lord.
They didn't have to hear your tes-
timony, or listen to the gospel.
You just mowed their yard.



Think about it.
You helped them quietly just to show brotherly
kindness.

You helped carry in their groceries,
raked their leaves,
shoveled their driveway.
Offered to help.....with whatever.

Try it.

You can make the effort
a silent act of worship to the Lord.

He'll notice.
He'll reward.

*"But love your enemies, and do good,
...and your reward will be great..."*

And possibly you will get that opportunity to win them for Christ.



301 Living and Looking

Titus 2:12-13

“And we are instructed to turn from a godless life with its sinful pleasures. We should be living in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God, while looking forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.”

Acts 1:9-11

*“It was not long after Jesus said this that He was taken up into the sky while they were watching, and He disappeared into a cloud. As they were straining their eyes to see Him, two white-robed men suddenly stood there among them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. And someday, just as you saw Him go, **He will return!**”*

+++++

We live in a sinful world while we look for the return of Jesus.
We keep our eyes on the eastern skies looking for our Lord.
This is our hope.
It is this thought which keeps us going.
It is this glorious hope which lifts our hearts.
We currently serve a living Savior.

I wonder how many of you really believe Jesus is coming back.
Do you?
Do you believe what the Bible says about His return?
He will return just like He left...
which means PHYSICALLY AND IN REALITY.

Jesus is alive.
He is real.
And He is coming back.

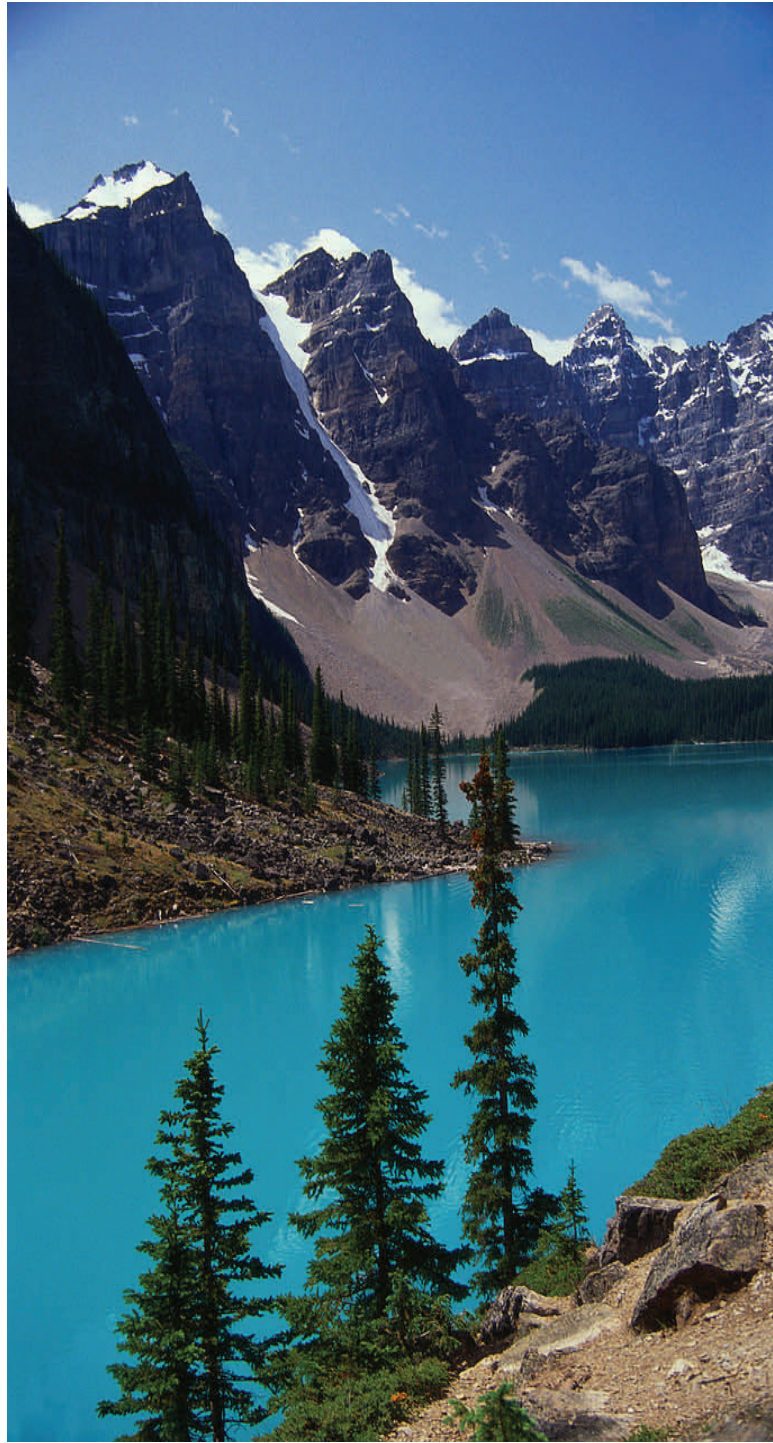
Yes, He knows every detail of your life. (Matt 10:29)
Yes, He is currently involved in your life.
But imagine actually seeing Him in reality.
It's not just a pipe dream.
It is a Biblical promise and a scriptural fact.

So share the good news!
1) Return of Christ . We will be with Jesus.
We look forward to His personal presence.

- 2) Redemption from our sinful natures.
No longer having to fight against the flesh.
- 3) Restoration of all creation.
Everything will be put back perfect and whole.
Our bodies will no longer get sick and die.
There will be no more pain and no more tears, (Rev 21:4)
We will be perfect, as Christ is perfect.

Cheer up! Jesus is coming back soon !





*“Keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ,
THE AUTHOR and finisher of our faith”*
Hebrews 12:2



Dr. Richard Amy is a Chaplain for Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

He was a flight attendant for ASA and organized the Christian Fellowship Association for ASA Employees. He now volunteers his time to this work place ministry as an ordained minister. His present “day job” is within the psychiatric world of managed care insurance. He is a LPC, Licensed Professional Counselor with a 27 year career in the mental health field. He is married and attends Mt Paran Church of God in Atlanta. He also has a ministry as a “color-blind artist for Jesus” with oil paintings hanging all over the world. He has educational degrees of BA, MEd, MS, PhD in psychology, counseling, and social sciences and is a Nationally Certified Counselor. A native of Pennsylvania who moved south to attend Tennessee Temple University and later the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

He loves Jesus!



What Does The Bible Say About That?

A personal publication by Rev. Dr. Richard Amy.
You may use my work to further the Gospel.
The Lord bless you.

So far.....so good.
This book has successfully yelled to get
your attention, jumped off the shelf,
and is now in your hands.
You are actually reading this now.
Wow! It's working!

I am working under a devious plan.
I am trying to get you to learn some Biblical truth.

This book is written in email style with clip art to keep
your attention! The Bible verses are from a modern day
English version for easy comprehension. It's not boring!
Try it! I bet you can't read just one!

I know, if you read the written word of God
within these pages, you will come face to face
with "*the Word who became flesh.*" (John 1:14)

The written truth quoted within these pages
will call you to the One who called Himself-
"*The Truth*" (John 14:6)

The Word, who is The Truth, is a person.
His name is Jesus.

