

Defending God

- 3 God did not create a devil
- 3 God is not the cause
of our sufferings
- 3 God did not destroy
His moral law
- 3 God does not torture people
as soon as they die
- 3 God will not burn people
in hellfire forever

*You can trust God. He is the best
Friend you could have. Let this
book help you find in Him the
peace and happiness you have
sought for years.*



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Defending God

by the Editor of Harvestime Books

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Defending God is a powerful book which directly answers, from the Bible, the three leading charges against the goodness of God:

- The error that He causes the suffering in our world.
- The error that He will burn people as soon as they die, and will continue it forever.
- The error that He has no moral laws governing us, yet holds us responsible for our sins.

Cover: This photo was taken from the space shuttle, Discovery. From 56 km above the earth, you are looking down at the South China Sea and the Malaysian Peninsula.

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"The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

—*Psalm 84:11*

"The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me."

—*Psalm 116:6*

"In God will I praise His Word . . . in God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."

—*Psalm 56:10-11*

Introduction

This book defends the character of God! He is not the mean, hateful Person that so many picture Him to be.

Within these pages you will find an immense amount of encouragement to come to God and find in Him someone in whom you can trust your life! He is the best Friend you will ever have.

He loves you and wants to save you! He is your kind, loving heavenly Father. He is your Creator, Redeemer, and God.

The Bible is full of precious promises, for everything God tells us is a treasure for our benefit. Many of those promises are in this book.

Chapter One: Why God Did Not Immediately Destroy Satan—Many question why God does not get rid of the devil, so he will stop bothering us. This chapter fully explains how sin began, why Satan is working in our world today, how Satan will one day be destroyed, and why it will then be safe to blot him out of existence.

Chapter Two: Bible Facts about Suffering and Sin—Have you noticed in our world, today, that people are blaming God for everything? They blame Him for tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, cold winters, and drought. Whatever happens, God gets the blame. He is blamed for highway accidents, fires, our own

mistakes, and even attacks by criminals. If it is bad, then it is an “act of God” and definitely His fault. If it is good, it is either good luck or something we can praise ourselves for.

Christian leaders and authors generally discuss the subject of suffering by, first, presenting a list of horrors that are happening to people; second, saying that God is doing it for some reason we do not understand; and, third, that we need to trust Him in spite of it all.

What a miserable defense of God!—when the truth is that He is the most wonderful, kindly Person you could possibly know! He is not responsible for the misery in this world! And this book will prove it from the Bible.

As you read this book, many of your fears and worries will vanish; your love for God will deepen, and you will be able to enter into a far deeper relationship with Him than you have ever before experienced. And, oh, my friend, that is what we all need so much!

Chapter Three: Bible Facts about the Law of God—The charge is made that God has destroyed His moral law of Ten Commandments and men no longer need keep them! What would happen if your city abolished its laws? The government would collapse. There can be no government without law.

Every church has its laws which members must obey, but it is said that God has no laws that anyone need obey. Here are important Bible facts, showing that God requires obedience to His moral code; and, through the enabling grace of Jesus Christ, we can fully obey all that God asks of us in His

Inspired Writings.

Chapter Four: Bible Facts about the Other Side of Death—In order to properly understand the nature of hell, we first must learn what the Bible teaches about what happens to men after they die. This is an important chapter.

Chapter Five: Bible Facts about the Final Death of the Wicked—God is not only a God of love, but also of justice. Yet He is not going to burn people in hellfire for millions of years for the wrongdoing of a brief lifetime. That would not be just! Whether or not they admit it, everyone realizes this.

Yet preachers and priests calmly declare that God is burning millions of people right now in hellfire, that He has been doing it for thousands of years, and that this horrible torture will continue on for eternity. Punishment for what? the sins of a few, brief years of existence in our world?

It is totally impossible that any creature could do enough wickedness in sixty or seventy years to merit fearful suffering in flames for ages upon ages upon ages. The very idea is a blasphemy against the just character of God.

In this book, clear evidence from the Bible will be given that not only has hellfire not yet begun, but, when it does, it will be over within a relatively short time. Such a just and fair final punishment will be proven from God's Word.

Chapter Six: Bible Facts about Satan and Spiritualism—There is a terrible danger that a loved one might be entrapped by witchcraft. Because of evil books on the market, it is even being taught

in the public schools. The charge is made that God approves of witchcraft. But the Bible is clear that channeling is of the devil, and we should have nothing to do with it.

Chapter Seven: Bible Facts about How to Come to Christ and Remain with Him—A most beautiful conclusion to a strong defense of the character of God. Here you will learn the *Basic Steps to Christ*, the way to Jesus, and a life of happiness by His side.

Appendix: Thirty-one Days of Bible Promises—Fill your whole heart with the words of God. They are living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are living bread from heaven—just for you.

"Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

—2 Corinthians 13:11

"But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto Him."

—Psalm 4:3

"I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."

—Micah 7:7

Chapter One

Why God Did Not Immediately Destroy Satan

People often blame God for not immediately destroying Satan, when he first brought sin into the universe. This chapter will provide you with a solid answer to this question.

The government of God is founded on His divine law. Only by obedience to it, can His creatures be happy.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.

The Bible says that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). That is the only clear definition of sin in the Bible. God did not cause

This chapter is based on chapter 29 of the best-selling book, *Great Controversy*. Paragraphs in bold print have been added to quotations from that chapter.

sin to exist.

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the Word of God; it is "the transgression of the law"; it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.

Sin, suffering, and death go together. Before sin began, there was no suffering and there was no death.

Before the entrance of evil there was peace and joy throughout the universe. All was in perfect harmony with the Creator's will. Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial. Christ the Word, the Only Begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose,—the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. By Christ the Father wrought in the creation of all heavenly beings. "By Him were all things cre-

ated, that are in heaven . . . whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" (*Col 1:16*); and to Christ, equally with the Father, all heaven gave allegiance.

Satan (originally called Lucifer), by his own decision, chose to sin. He was the first one to do it.

But there was one that chose to pervert this freedom. Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Before his Fall, Lucifer was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."—*Ezekiel 28:12-15*.

It is an amazing fact that, in the midst of such perfection and peace, sin began. Lucifer decided to live for himself. But this was not God's fault. It was Lucifer's own decision which grew into an obstinate, open rebellion.

All heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator's glory and to show forth His praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celes-

tial harmonies. The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator's plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God's glory was supreme. The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined.

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the councils of God, Christ was a participant while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?"

Repeatedly, God tried to help Lucifer and draw him back from the terrible future he was going to bring on himself and others.

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer.

He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in heaven. Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission. Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven.

Just as he does down here on earth, Lucifer used false accusations of God to defend his actions.

Pride forbade Lucifer to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself in the great controversy against his Maker.

All the powers of his master mind were now bent to the work of deception, to secure the sympathy of the angels that had been under his command. Even the fact that Christ had warned and counseled him was perverted to serve his traitorous designs. To those whose loving trust bound them most closely to him, Satan had represented that he was wrongly judged, that his position was not respected, and that his liberty was to be abridged. From misrepresentation of the words of Christ he passed to prevarication and direct falsehood, accusing the Son of God of a design to humiliate him before the inhabitants of heaven. He sought also to make a false issue between himself and the loyal angels. All whom he could not subvert and bring fully to his side he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly

beings. The very work which he himself was doing he charged upon those who remained true to God. And to sustain his charge of God's injustice toward him, he resorted to misrepresentation of the words and acts of the Creator. It was his policy to perplex the angels with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. His high position, in such close connection with the divine administration, gave greater force to his representations; and many were induced to unite with him in rebellion against Heaven's authority.

Why did God not destroy Satan immediately? That is an extremely important question! The answer explains a lot of things we see around us every day.

God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God's government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great, and by disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood he had gained an advantage.

Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading.

It would take time, a lot of time, before all created beings understood the horrible nature of sin.

Satan had been so highly honored, and all his acts were so clothed with mystery, that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, sin would not appear the evil thing it was. Heretofore it had no place in the universe of God, and holy beings had no conception of its nature and malignity. They could not discern the terrible consequences that would result from setting aside the divine law. Satan had, at first, concealed his work under a specious profession of loyalty to God. He claimed to be seeking to promote the honor of God, the stability of His government, and the good of all the inhabitants of heaven. While instilling discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he had artfully made it appear that he was seeking to remove dissatisfaction. When he urged that changes be made in the order and laws of God's government, it was under the pretense that these were necessary in order to preserve harmony in heaven.

Lucifer, the bright angel, had changed himself into Satan. He operates through lies and trickery. But God did not come down to his level.

In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that

God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works.

Satan blamed God for all of sin's problems and misery. He also declared that God's holy, Ten Commandment Law was defective and cannot be obeyed.

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.

God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that He could not immediately blot out Satan. For the good of all God's creatures, time must be given for the principles that Satan operated on and the effects of sin—to be clearly understood by all.

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question.

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin.

The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them

from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin and suffering its punishments.

Satan uses the same methods today to catch men. He gets them to blame God for everything that happens.

The same spirit that prompted rebellion in heaven still inspires rebellion on earth. Satan has continued with men the same policy which he pursued with the angels. His spirit now reigns in the children of disobedience. Like him they seek to break down the restraints of the law of God and promise men liberty through transgression of its precepts. Reproof of sin still arouses the spirit of hatred and resistance. When God's messages of warning are brought home to the conscience, Satan leads men to justify themselves and to seek the sympathy of others in their course of sin. Instead of correcting their errors, they excite indignation against the reprover, as if he were the sole cause of difficulty. From the days of righteous Abel to our own time such is the spirit which has been displayed toward those who dare to condemn sin.

By the same misrepresentation of the character of God as he had practiced in heaven, causing Him to be regarded as severe and tyrannical, Satan induced man to sin. And having succeeded thus far, he declared that God's unjust restrictions had led to man's Fall, as they had led to his own rebellion.

But God has clearly told us in the Bible that He is good, and only good. It is Satan and sin that is the problem, not God.

The Eternal One Himself proclaims His character: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." *Exodus 34:6-7.*

And then God poured out all heaven, in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who came to our world, suffered at the hands of Satan and wicked men, and died to save us from sin. In view of this, how can we ever doubt God's love for us?

In the banishment of Satan from heaven, God declared His justice and maintained the honor of His throne. But when man had sinned through yielding to the deceptions of this apostate spirit, God gave an evidence of His love by yielding up His only begotten Son to die for the fallen race. In the atonement the character of God is revealed. The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in no wise chargeable upon the government of God.

It was Satan that prompted the world's rejection of Christ. The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Saviour's mercy and love, His compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God. Satan contested every claim put forth by the Son of God and employed men as his agents to fill the Saviour's life with suffering and sorrow. The sophistry and falsehood by which he had sought to hinder the work of Jesus, the hatred manifested through the children of disobedience,

his cruel accusations against Him whose life was one of unexampled goodness, all sprang from deep-seated revenge. The pent-up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against the Son of God while all heaven gazed upon the scene in silent horror.

Jesus Christ came to earth to reveal the character of God. While here, He did good and only good. In contrast, the guilt of Satan stood forth without excuse. He had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer.

It was seen that the very same spirit with which he ruled the children of men, who were under his power, he would have manifested had he been permitted to control the inhabitants of heaven. He had claimed that the transgression of God's law would bring liberty and exaltation; but it was seen to result in bondage and degradation.

Satan's lying charges against the divine character and government appeared in their true light. He had accused God of seeking merely the exaltation of Himself in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures and had declared that, while the Creator exacted self-denial from all others, He Himself practiced no self-denial and made no sacrifice. Now it was seen that for the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made the greatest sacrifice which love could make; for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." *2 Corinthians 5:19*. It was seen, also, that, while Lucifer had opened the door for the entrance of sin by his desire for honor and supremacy, Christ had, in order to destroy sin, humbled Himself and

become obedient unto death.

In answer to Satan's charges, God did something amazing: He upheld the justice of His Ten Commandment law while justifying all who should accept Christ as their Saviour.

God had manifested His abhorrence of the principles of rebellion. All heaven saw His justice revealed, both in the condemnation of Satan and in the redemption of man. Lucifer had declared that if the law of God was changeless, and its penalty could not be remitted, every transgressor must be forever debarred from the Creator's favor. He had claimed that the sinful race were placed beyond redemption and were therefore his rightful prey. But the death of Christ was an argument in man's behalf that could not be overthrown. The penalty of the law fell upon Him who was equal with God; man was free to accept the righteousness of Christ and, by a life of penitence and humiliation, to triumph, as the Son of God had triumphed over the power of Satan. Thus God is just and yet the justifier of all who believe in Jesus.

But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to "magnify the law" and to "make it honorable." Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God's law is unchangeable. Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up His life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable. And the sacrifice to which infinite love

impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God.

Judgment day is coming, when all who have chosen to join Satan's side (wall themselves in with his lies and reject salvation through Jesus Christ) will quickly perish. Not until then will Satan and his followers admit the truth that God is not to blame for anything that happened.

In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists. When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, "Why hast thou rebelled against Me and robbed Me of the subjects of My kingdom?" the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless.

The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour's expiring cry, "It is finished," the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." *Hebrews 2:14*. Lucifer's desire for self-exaltation had led him to say: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High." God declares: "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth . . . and never shalt thou be any more." *Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:18-19*.

When “the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven . . . all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” *Malachi 4:1*.

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: “Affliction shall not rise up the second time.” *Nahum 1:9*. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.”

—*Psalm 34:19*

“The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.”

—*Psalm 34:22*

*Chapter Two**Bible Facts
about Suffering and Sin*

One of the charges against God is that He continually wrongs us by causing all our problems. Whether it be accidents, poor health, major medical crises, or even theft by robbers, it matters not. God is blamed for it all.

Have you noticed that few are blaming the devil for much of anything? What is the Bible truth about all this?

WE CAUSE OUR OWN PROBLEMS

There are three charges against the goodness of God that people frequently make:

First, why does God do all these bad things to us? He doesn't. All our problems are the result of our own sins and mistakes or the sins and mistakes of others. All of them.

A few examples from the Bible illustrate this:

Adam and Eve fell into sin by their own act. Abel died because of his brother's angry temper. The Flood came on the world because of its wickedness. Sodom was destroyed because of the sins of its inhabitants. Korah and his associates rebelled against God's authority, so the earth opened up and swallowed them. We could cite similar incidents all

through the Bible.

Whatever problems you may encounter, the cause can always be traced to a problem with people, not with God. The cause may be traced to an accident, bad diet, a genetic flaw, meanness, crime, or something else. But the cause is always people, not God.

Second, even though God does not directly do all those bad things, why does He not keep them from happening?

The fact that He does not interfere is part of the working out of the great 6,000-year crisis of the ages, in which we are involved.

As we learned in the first chapter of this book, for untold ages, there was peace in heaven—until Lucifer sinned. When he did, he charged God with selfishness, deception, and unjustly requiring obedience to the laws of heaven.

What was God to do in this crisis? Because of His massive power, the slightest degree He dealt with Satan would be so overwhelming that the angels would be frightened into submission. Henceforth, they would serve Him from fear.

So, in His infinite wisdom, God decided to let the crisis work its way through to its end. Satan had said his ideas would wonderfully improve life. So God gave him time to demonstrate what happens when creatures rebel against God.

We are part of this terrible experiment in rebellion because we were born into this world. Someone may say, “Well, that’s not fair. We had no say about being born, so why do we have to go through all this suffering because we are in a world filled

with devils tempting men?”

That is a key point, and here is the answer:

As soon as Satan won a large number of angels in heaven and they were cast out, he successfully overcame Adam and Eve. That victory gave the devil the opportunity to tempt and harass all of Adam's descendants. Any detailed history book tells the result: murder, intrigue, and wars. Along with them famine and disease which Satan helped produce.

Yes, it is true that we are all born into this miserable world, without any choice in the matter. Yet God makes up for it in a most wonderful way! He says, “Child, if you will prove faithful to Me and, amid the hardships of this life, patiently remain loyal to Me,—I will reward you with eternal life!”

What a reward is that! In exchange for accepting Christ as our Saviour and obeying Him throughout these few brief decades on earth,—we will live with Him for eternal ages in heaven!

Think about it a minute. There is simply no loss in such an arrangement.

But someone will say, “That's okay for those who accept Christ, but what about the rest of us who don't? We have to suffer and die and miss out on heaven.”

Yet no one need be lost. God's Holy Spirit and the good angels work with everyone who has ever lived on earth, seeking to draw them to God.

It is only by our own decision that any of us will be lost.

Titus 2:11—“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

1 Timothy 2:4—“Who will have all men to be

saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

Third, why does not God protect His own loyal children from the problems of life? Why do they have accidents? Why do they have genetic problems? Why are they robbed and slain?

Stop and think a minute. Any time anyone in the world appears to have an ability a little beyond that of the normal,—everyone is attracted to him. They crave his power, his authority, his money, his influence.

If it became obvious that Christians are given special protection,—everyone, with their hearts and lives unchanged, would become Christians! Instead, down through history, we find that the servants of God are maligned, ridiculed, persecuted, hunted, and slain. Satan works through the wicked to make their lives very difficult.

Why then do the faithful choose to remain loyal to God? Because of principle and no other reason. They serve God, not for what they can get out of Him, but because they love Him—in spite of the treatment they receive in this world. They are devoted to Him in spite of any outward rewards they might receive in this life.

Hebrews 11:9-10—“By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Only in this way, could the genuinely faithful be separated from those who would only serve God for the immediate gratifications He might give them.

THE TRIALS OF LIFE HELP PREPARE US FOR HEAVEN

The difficulties of life actually help us. God uses the trials of life, not only to test our motives and characters, but also to help us prepare for heaven!

Psalm 119:71—"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes."

Here are several Bible passages which show this:

1 Peter 4:12-13—"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

1 Peter 1:7—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 11:24-26—"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

The apostle Paul clearly recognized the purifying power of problems.

Romans 5:3-5—"We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which

is given unto us.”

God even predicted that His people would experience many sufferings.

Daniel 11:33—“And they that understand among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.”

Our sufferings help purify our hearts and prepare us for heaven.

Daniel 11:35—“And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.”

Hebrews 12:10—“For they [parents] verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He [God] for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.”

Count the sufferings you may experience as nothing,—but look at the exceedingly far greater reward that you will receive, if you prove loyal to God:

2 Corinthians 4:17—“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Revelation 2:10-11—“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”

James 1:12—“Blessed is the man that endureth temptations, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.”

So you can see why we are told this:

2 Timothy 3:12—“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Hebrews 11:35-38—"Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy). They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

When we suffer, our God is with us to strengthen us to endure.

Job 34:28—"He heareth the cry of the afflicted."

Isaiah 43:2—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and walkest through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Psalms 46:1—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

2 Corinthians 1:4—"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Romans 8:28—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

John 16:33, 20—"In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful,—but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

1 John 5:4—"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Revelation 12:11—"And they overcame him [Sa-

tan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

Hebrews 12:1-2—“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

James 5:11—“Behold, we count them happy which endure.”

Matthew 10:22—“He that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

Revelation 14:12—“Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

SIN IS THE BIG PROBLEM

Do not let Satan divert your attention from the real danger. Our selfish grumbling and blaming God for every little thing—keeps us from Him. It is sin which is our problem, not God.

Isaiah 59:2—“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.”

The Bible clearly identifies sin. It is the transgression of God’s holy law.

1 John 3:4—“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

The misery in our world is not caused by God. It comes from living outside of obedience to the Ten Commandments. We have all sinned; and when we sin against God, we bring misery to others and trouble to ourselves. Ultimately, those sins lead to death.

Romans 3:23—“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

James 1:15—"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Romans 6:23—"The wages of sin is death."

It is an interesting fact that, as soon as Adam and Eve chose to sin in the Garden of Eden,—they blamed God for what happened (*Gen 3:12-13*)! We cannot solve our difficulties until we stop casting blame on our heavenly Father for our actions and the actions of others.

Instead of complaining, we need to come to Him, in heartfelt repentance, and plead for mercy and forgiveness. He will not turn us away when we do this!

Eternal death is not something that God wants for anyone. He wants to save everyone on earth and help them live better, happier lives. He wants to finally take us to heaven to live with Him throughout eternal ages.

Satan knows that, as long as he can cause us to find fault with God for most everything that happens,—he, the devil, will maintain control over our lives.

Romans 1:21—"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

One of the reasons why people blame God for the misery in this life—is because God does not put an end to it. Yet the very reason it continues is because He is giving us extra time in which to return to Him, so we can be saved! If He suddenly put a stop to what is happening in this sinful world, everyone who had not returned to Him would perish

without having had a full opportunity to do so.

2 Peter 3:9—“The Lord is not slack [slow] concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

By His angels and His Holy Spirit, God is pleading with everyone to find shelter in Him before it is too late.

Ezekiel 18:32—“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”

Revelation 22:17—“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS WERE GREATER THAN OURS

Rather than casting blame on Christ, we should humbly acknowledge that His sufferings were greater than ours.

And He went through all that agony for us! For our sakes, He left heaven and came down to our dark world, so that we could be redeemed and live forever with Him above. Jesus Christ experienced the greatest sorrow of all! The Son of God lived a life of suffering and grief and died on the cross of Calvary, so you and I could return to God.

Isaiah 53:5—“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.”

Christ suffered far more throughout His earthly life than any of us will ever experience. Satan used

every type of persecution and harassment to keep Him from going forward with the plan of atonement. Yet, for our sakes, Jesus steadfastly went all the way to the horrible death on the cross.

Our sins crucified the Son of God! Surely, we have much to repent of. Instead of blaming God, let us blame ourselves for our problems. When we blame God for anything, we please Satan; and he draws his chains the more closely about us.

Instead of faultfinding, let us praise our Redeemer! Christ would have experienced the agonies of Calvary for just one person. You are that person.

Luke 19:10—"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

John 3:16-20—"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

STRENGTH IN THANKFULNESS

It is not in blaming God, but in confessing and forsaking our sins and praising Him, that you and I can find a way out of the dark cave of despair.

Psalm 34:1—"I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Psalm 145:2—"Every day will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy name forever and ever."

Revelation 12:11—"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

It is when we thank God for everything that happens that we receive renewed strength to carry on. We only weaken ourselves when we accuse Him of wrongdoing.

Nehemiah 8:10—"The joy of the Lord is your strength."

I promise you that the more you thank God, the more you will have to thank Him for.

1 Thessalonians 5:18—"In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Ephesians 5:20—"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Philippians 4:6—"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

Psalm 66:16—"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul."

Psalm 34:2-3—"My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."

CHRIST WILL FINALLY DESTROY SATAN

Christ died on Calvary, not only to save us but to destroy Satan and his evil deeds.

1 John 3:5, 8—“And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin . . . He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Hebrews 2:14—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

But when that final day comes that Christ destroys the devil, all those who have sullenly clung to the devil and voiced his accusations against God will also perish.

It is now that we want to begin praising God all the day long! For that is how the saints in heaven will spend eternity. Let us not dally in the devil's camp, encouraging him with our complaining.

Revelation 5:13—“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.”

Sin and sinners will finally come to an end, and their evil deeds will forever perish.

2 Peter 3:10—“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Hellfire will end and everywhere throughout the universe there will be peace and happiness. No eternally burning hell will bring sadness to the hearts

of God's faithful ones.

Revelation 21:4—"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things are passed away."

The wicked will perish and sin will never arise a second time.

Nahum 1:9—"What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end. Affliction shall not rise up the second time."

Revelation 21:4; 22:3—"There shall be no more death." "And there shall be no more curse."

PRECIOUS PROMISES IF YOU WILL COME

Just now, I invite you to come to the best Friend you could ever have. Here are several precious Bible promises written just for you. Claim each and every one. Make them your own.

On your knees, plead them before God. He will comfort, He will strengthen. He will make you His own child.

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

Exodus 34:6-7—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

Matthew 1:21—"He shall save His people from their sins."

Isaiah 53:6—"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Acts 16:31—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

2 Corinthians 6:2—"Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

John 1:12—"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Galatians 2:20—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

John 3:3—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2 Corinthians 5:17—"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Philippians 2:13—"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Hebrews 10:16—"I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

1 John 1:9—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Philippians 4:13—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

—Hebrews 11:26

Chapter Three

Bible Facts about the Other Side of Death

Another charge made against God is that He brings terrible suffering to many people as soon as they die. It is said that their agony continues on, for centuries, for ages, forever!

But the Bible does not teach this horrible error. In order to properly understand the Bible truth about hell, we first need to find what the Scriptures teach about death itself.

As soon as a man dies, what happens to him? Does he fly around in the air? Does he go directly to hell or to heaven?

Let us find out.

A well-known American said to his medical advisers when he was eighty years old, "I'll give you a million dollars for each year you can add to my life."

Louis XIV was the wealthiest king France ever had. One day, when he asked what was in a building he could see from his palace window, one of his courtiers replied, "Sir, that is the Church of Saint

Denis where your royal ancestors lie buried.” The king immediately gave orders to build another palace—the fabulous Versailles—southwest of Paris, so he would no longer see that building.

What is death? What is on the other side of death? The Bible has answers. Here they are:

WHY IS THERE DEATH?

When God made Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, did He plan that this sinless pair, created in His own image, should die? No, it was not His plan. God created man to live. But God did not purpose that man should live if he sinned.

1. Did God warn Adam and Eve ahead of time that they would die if they sinned?

Genesis 2:17—“Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

As soon as man sinned, he would begin aging, dying, and committing more sins.

2. Satan, in the form of a serpent, lied to Eve. What did he tell her?

Genesis 3:4—“Ye shall not surely die.”

Eve believed Satan instead of believing God and ate the fruit. Adam joined her in disobedience. No sin is small; each is quickly followed by more.

3. What did God tell them?

Genesis 3:19—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

God’s sentence on sin is death. To partake of the Tree of Life after that would mean eternal life in sin. But God did not let them do that—because the sentence of disobedience was death.

4. How did God prevent them from becoming immortal sinners?

Genesis 3:22-24—“And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden . . . So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

Because of sin, God has given each person a brief, probationary life of sixty or so years, to test his choices and actions—and then comes death.

Ezekiel 18:4—“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Romans 5:12—“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”

IS MAN IMMORTAL?

Because mankind sins, mankind is mortal, subject to death.

So it is clear that man was originally created with the *possibility* of becoming immortal—and living forever. But he was not created with *inherent* immortality. He was subject to death, if he sinned. He did not have “natural immortality.”

5. Is man immortal?

Job 4:17—“Shall mortal man be more just than God . . . his Maker?”

6. Who only has immortality?

1 Timothy 6:16—“[God] who only hath immortality.”

Only God has immortality; and the word, “immortal,” is found only once in the Bible, and refers to God:

1 Timothy 1:17—“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.”

So we have these Bible facts about mortal and immortal:

1. Man is mortal (*Job 4:17*).
2. God is immortal (*1 Tim 1:17*).
3. God only has immortality (*1 Tim 6:16*).
4. Man must seek for immortality (*Rom 2:7*).
5. Immortality is brought to light through the gospel (*2 Tim 1:10*).
6. Immortality will be bestowed upon those who are redeemed at the second coming of Christ (*1 Cor 15:51-55*).

In view of all this Bible evidence, why is it that some people believe that man has innate, or “natural,” immortality? If that were true, he would not die. Yet people are dying all about us.

HOW WAS MAN CREATED?

7. How was man created?

Genesis 2:7—“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Let us follow the steps:

First, God made Adam's body from the elements in the dust of the ground.

Second, God breathed, into Adam's nostrils, the breath of life. There is no indication here of an “immortal spirit,” and there never was a “spirit Adam.” God simply breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and he became alive—mortally live. Remember Genesis 3:22-24, quoted earlier. It was the Tree of Life that gave continuing immortality, and mankind had been barred from eating of it.

Third, “man became a living soul.” *Body plus breath of life equals a living soul.* Notice that God did not breath a living soul into man, but He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man then *became* a living soul.

By itself, Adam’s body had no life, and no other created being could give it to him. But God could give him life, which He did. Adam’s body, although perfect in every way, was lifeless—until God breathed that life into him.

But the warning had been given him that if he sinned, he would die. All around us, we see that men have life, but then they get old and die.

Before he was made, Adam had no living soul. It came as a result of the union of his body and the breath of the “spirit of life,” for “the body without the spirit is dead” (*James 2:26*).

WHAT ABOUT SOUL AND SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE?

The Hebrew and Greek words from which we translate our English words, *soul* and *spirit*, are found some 1,700 times in the Bible. Actually, the word, *soul*, as used in the Bible, does not always have exactly the same meaning. The same holds true for the word, *spirit*.

But this we know very clearly: Not once in the 1,700 places in the Bible, where the original words for *soul* and *spirit* are used,—are either of them said to be immortal, eternal, never dying, imperishable, indestructible, everlasting, or having immortality. In addition, not once are the dead represented as being capable of a conscious existence apart from the body.

WHAT ABOUT THE ANIMALS?

8. Do animals have “the breath of life?”

Genesis 7:15—“They went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.”

So it is clear that animals also possess the breath of life, “the breath of the spirit of life” (*Gen 7:22*, margin). Neither animals nor man are immortal; they both die (*Gen 7:21-22; Rev 16:3*).

9. Are animals “living souls”?

Genesis 1:30—“To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life.”

The word here for “life” is “living soul” in the original Hebrew (*see Gen 1:30*, margin).

So, according to the Bible, animals have living spirits and souls as man does.

Is man then a mere animal? No, indeed. Adam was the masterpiece of creation. Man is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (*Pss 139:14*), only “a little lower than the angels” (*Pss 8:5*).

CAN WE THEN BE SAVED?

How tragic it is that man, created with such high privileges and opportunities, fell into sin—and became subject to death! But God had a plan to save him.

10. What was God's plan to save man from sin?

John 3:16—“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Thank God for His inexpressible Gift! Through humble, sincere repentance for the sins which cru-

cified Jesus Christ, and faith in Him, we can be accepted by the God of heaven—and enabled by grace to obey all that He asks of us in His Inspired Writings!

2 Timothy 1:10—“[Jesus Christ] hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

1 John 5:12—“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Is not that a most wonderful encouragement! There is hope for us! Through His enabling grace, we can be forgiven our sins and kept from falling back into them.

It takes the body and spirit of life—together—to make man a living soul. But it is not, by nature, an immortal soul. There is no such thing as a separate soul which can live apart from the body. Job refers to the breath of God within him: “The spirit of God is in my nostrils.” *Job 27:3.*

Paul writes, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*1 Thess 5:23*). The body and spirit of life make man a living soul. Christ came to save the entire man. To do this, we must let Him sanctify all there is of us—body, soul, and spirit.

It is the way of the cross which leads to immortality. Let us follow Jesus in His sufferings, wherever it may lead. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” *Revelation 2:10.*

By giving our life and all we have and are to Jesus—we will gain eternal life. “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life

for My sake shall find it." *Matthew 16:25*. Jesus says to us, "Come, follow Me. Choose rather to die—than to sin." Through Christ, follow the narrow path to heaven and immortality.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A MAN DIES?

What happens *after* death? God has given us this information in His Book, the Bible.

11. What happened when man was created?

Genesis 2:7—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

At that moment, man became a living, thinking, active being. Before then, he had not really existed.

During life, that breath remains in him. "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life." *Job 33:4*. "The spirit of God is in my nostrils." *Job 27:3*.

12. What happens when a man dies?

But, when a man dies, the opposite of what happened at creation occurs:

Ecclesiastes 12:7—"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

The breath of life departs and the body returns to the ground.

First, the breath of life departs. The "spirit of life," which God gives to all men, leaves that person.

Psalms 146:4—"His breath goeth forth."

Ecclesiastes 12:7—"The spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Second, when the breath of life leaves it, the body returns to the ground.

Psalm 146:4—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to His earth.”

Ecclesiastes 12:7—“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was.”

Genesis 3:19—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Psalm 104:29—“Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust” (also *Job 34:14-15*).

Job 17:16—“Our rest together is in the dust” (also *Job 3:11-18*).

Isaiah 26:19—They “dwell in the dust.”

Isaiah 38:18-19—“For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee . . . The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day.”

Acts 2:29, 34—“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens.”

A simple illustration will help explain this: The *creation of man* is like making a wooden box. The body is like the boards; the breath of life is like the nails. Put the nails into the boards, and you now have a box—which is like the living soul.

The *death of man* is the opposite: Remove the nails from the boards, and there is no more box.

Here it is from the Bible:

Creation: “God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,” *Genesis 2:7*,

Death: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” *Ecclesiastes 12:7*.

IS MAN CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH?

13. Is a man awake after he dies?

Psalm 146:4—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”

Ecclesiastes 9:5—“The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything.”

Ecclesiastes 9:10—“There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

14. Do his feelings and emotions cease also?

Ecclesiastes 9:6—“Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.”

When a man dies, his thoughts and knowledge cease. His feelings and emotions cease also.

For any given man, his thinking and feelings did not exist until God breathed life into him. When the electric current is turned off, the bulb is still there but the light is gone. At death, everything stops.

WHAT IS DEATH?

Death is like sound sleep. That is what the Bible teaches. The dead are entirely unconscious. Death is called “sleep” fifty-four times in the Scriptures.

Few passages are more obvious than *John 11:11-14*, where Jesus carefully explains to His disciples that death is really a sleep.

15. How did Jesus describe death?

John 11:11, 13-14—“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep . . . Howbeit Jesus spake of his death . . . Then said Jesus unto them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead.’ ”

When Stephen was stoned to death, he “fell asleep” (*Acts 7:60*). Christ is called the firstfruits of them that slept (*1 Cor 15:20*); and in verse 51 Paul says, “We shall not all sleep.” Elsewhere, he writes that he would not have them ignorant concerning them which are asleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13—“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead].”

In verse 14, he speaks of them as asleep in Christ, and explains, in verse 16, that this means “dead in Christ.”

16. Is there no awareness of anything in this sleep of death?

Psalm 6:5—“For in death there is no remembrance of Thee.”

Psalm 115:17—“The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.”

Ecclesiastes 9:5—“The dead know not anything.”

Job 14:21—“His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.”

WHERE DID THE ERROR ORIGINATE?

Where then did mankind get this idea of “natural immortality”? It originated in ancient paganism. The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and gave the idea to the Greeks and Romans, who introduced it into Christianity in the third century A.D.

But, remember, this idea did not originate with the Egyptians, but with Satan. God originally said,

“Thou shalt surely die” if you sin (*Gen 2:17*). But, to contradict it and encourage mankind to sin, Satan said, “Ye shall not surely die” if you sin (*Gen 3:4*). The teaching that sinners will not die came from the devil. Eve sinned because of that lie. Millions since then have feared and worshiped the dead.

But, as we have learned, the truth is that, to prevent sinners from becoming immortal, God barred the way to the Tree of Life as soon as man sinned (*Gen 3:22-24*).

We know, from ancient Christian records, that almost no Christians accepted natural immortality until it was brought from paganism into the Christian church through liberal apostate Christians in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century A.D. In later centuries, many returned to the Bible truth on this subject, including such men as Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, and John Milton.

Is there no solution to the problem of death? Yes, there is! It is acceptance of Christ and the coming resurrection!

WHAT IS THE PROMISE OF THE RESURRECTION?

Christ told His disciples that He would be raised to life (*Matt 16:21*), and afterward He was (*Luke 24:39*). The angel declared, “He is risen!” *Mark 16:6*, a wonderful Bible promise has been given to God’s children that, just as Christ rose from the dead to life, so those who believe in Him shall also rise to life!

“All that are in the graves shall . . . come forth.” *John 5:28-29*. “Christ . . . the firstfruits of them that

slept.” *1 Corinthians 15:20*. “Afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” *Verse 23*.

17. What is the truth about the resurrection?

1 *Thessalonians 4:16-18*—“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

18. Will Paul and all God’s children receive their rewards then?

2 *Timothy 4:8*—“Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

The resurrection from the dead is the real hope of those who, when their beloved die, “sorrow not, even as others” (*1 Thess 4:13*). Christians who live to see the second coming of Christ will go to heaven “together with” the resurrected righteous. They will not prevent [in the Greek, go before] them which are asleep (*1 Thess 4:15*).

The promise is that those who die will not go to heaven before those who live to see Christ return in the clouds of heaven. “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” *Hebrews 11:40*. Even a thousand years after the death of David, Paul said he was still not in heaven:

Acts 2:34—“For David is not ascended into the heavens.”

Indeed, Peter said that if there is not that resurrection,—then no Christians will go to heaven, and that is the end of it all (*1 Cor 15:16-18*)! Thank God that there will be a resurrection of the dead!

1 Corinthians 15:16, 18—“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised . . . Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”

John 5:28-29—“All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.”

An actual bodily resurrection will occur at that time.

Job 19:25-26—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

For the people of God who have died, the sleep of death will end at the resurrection; and, when raised to life, they will be caught up together with the living righteous to meet their Lord in the air—to be forevermore with Him.

19. Will our bodies be changed when Christ returns?

Philippians 3:21—“[Christ] shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

Man originally came from the dust of the earth; and, at the resurrection, he will arise from the dust again.

Man was originally created “a little lower than the angels” (*Psa 8:5*). But, after the second advent, it will be said of the redeemed:

Luke 20:36—“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children

of God, being the children of the resurrection." At the second advent of Christ, He will raise His own from the dead. Oh, glorious promise! Wonderful assurance!

WHAT WILL THE RESURRECTION BE LIKE?

Death is an enemy (*1 Cor 15:26*); but, on behalf of God's faithful ones, it will be conquered at the second coming of Christ when He raises His beloved children from the dead. At that time, they will give a shout of victory over death!

20. When will we have victory over the grave and death?

1 Corinthians 15:51-58—"Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

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

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

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THAT LIFE?

Sin brings death, not life. "The wages of sin is death." *Romans 6:23*. In Christ alone is salvation; in Him alone is life!

Acts 4:12—"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Christ is the pathway to life. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." *John 14:6*. It is only through Christ that we can have that life. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *John 3:16*.

John 10:27-28—"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

21. Who only can give us eternal life?

1 John 5:11—"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

22. What must we do to receive that life?

1 John 5:12—"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

John 5:24—"He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 6:53—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

We receive life by accepting and obeying Christ. *Rejoice in the fact! There is life only in Christ; and, if we accept Christ and obey His Word, we can have that life!*

In view of such a destiny, it is our solemn, but happy, duty to give our lives to God and serve Him

all our earthly days.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL PASSAGES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

There are seventeen Bible passages which appear not to support the great truth that man is mortal and, after death, unconscious—while awaiting the call of the Lifegiver, Jesus Christ, who will call His faithful ones from the grave at His second advent. These seventeen passages are discussed in this present study.

In the process of preparing this material, it is an impressive fact that most of these problems arise from one of two causes: (1) passages which are metaphors or metaphors which are treated as though they were literal. But metaphors should never be used as a basis for doctrine because, first, they are not literal and, second, not every part of the metaphor can be treated as equivalent to reality. (2) Passages, which in the original Hebrew or Greek taught the correct view, have been mistranslated. The obvious solution to both is to translate each passage, so that it agrees with all other verses on the same subject. That is what we have attempted to do in this present study, which is based on analyses by earlier Bible scholars.

[1] “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”—*Matthew 10:28.*

This proves the soul and the body are two different things? The body can be destroyed and soul remain; and therefore, after the body is de-

stroyed, the soul lives on forever?

1. This text teaches that both soul and body can be destroyed in hell. That is correct. Those who believe the immortal-soul doctrine think that the soul is immortal and will live forever. But this passage shows that idea to be false.

2. This text does not teach that the body and soul are two different entities, for this reason: Here, as in every other place in the New Testament, the word, translated “soul,” in the KJV is from the Greek word, *psuche*. But an equal number of times, *psuche* was translated “life.” That is what should be in this verse: “life,” not “soul.” To clarify this, here is *Matthew 16:25-26*:

“For whosoever will save his life [*psuche*] shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life [*psuche*] for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [*psuche*]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [*psuche*]?”

Psuche should have been translated “life” in both verses. When the word, “life,” is substituted for “soul” in *Matthew 10:28*, there is no problem. The day is coming when the wicked will have their entire lives destroyed; they will be annihilated and not live forever.

[2] “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”—2 Corinthians 4:16.

Therefore the soul is the real part of man, is different than the body and improves as the body perishes?

A. Paul is not suggesting a separate, immortal soul. Consider these points:

1. We also believe that there is a difference between the body and the spirit, or the body and the soul.

2. Paul wrote about his being “absent in body but present in spirit” at the Corinthian church (1 Cor 5:3). But no one suggests he meant flying away from his body and going there.

3. Paul speaks elsewhere about the “inward man” (Eph 3:16-17; Col 3:9-10), but there is no hint of an immortal soul.

B. What is this “inward man,” or “inner man”? It is the new nature, the “new man,” the new heart and spirit within us which increases as our old nature is daily crucified with Christ. Galatians 2:20 explains:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

[3] Stephen said: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). Jesus said: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit” (Luke 23:46).

Therefore, the real part of man, his immortal spirit, leaves the body?

1. “Spirit” is translated from *pneuma* in nearly every verse in the New Testament, including these. It means “wind, air,” and “life.” There is nothing in the word to suggest a material, conscious entity.

2. Stephen did not pray, “Receive me.” That is significant; since, surely, the real man, not the bodily shell, is praying. Just before death, he gave his life

back to Christ. He knew his life was a gift from God, as Job said: "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (*Job 33:4*). The great gift was about to leave him, and he wanted it to return to God who gave it. Stephen recognized the great truth, later penned by Paul:

"Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." *Colossians 3:3-4*. On the resurrection day, Stephen knew he would receive back that life—and immortalized forever!

3. The same points would apply to why Christ spoke as He did.

[4] "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." *Hebrews 12:22-24*.

Therefore man has a spirit, which is the real man, and we shall have fellowship with this spirit in heaven. So disembodied spirits are in heaven?

1. The primary objective of the book of Hebrews is to show that the new covenant relationship is better in every way than what the pharisees had to offer. Paul is describing a company of believers here on earth, not in heaven.

"Ye are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." Jesus will not be their Mediator later

when they are in heaven.

We come to the ministry of angels (*Heb 1:14*), to the assembly of believers, and to God the Judge. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." *Hebrews 4:16*. We do that right now. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." *Hebrews 7:25*.

2. While here on earth, attending church, pleading with God for help, and receiving the ministry of angels,—we associate with fellow believers. They are spiritually minded men and women; for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (*John 3:6*). But there is nothing airy or immaterial about these spiritually minded men and women.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." *Romans 8:5-8*.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." *John 3:6-7*.

[5] "I knew a man . . . (whether in the body, I cannot tell or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven." *2 Corinthians 12:2*.

Therefore Paul could be out of the body, and this proves an immaterial spirit, independent of the body?

1. It is generally recognized that Paul is speaking about himself in this passage. According to soul-immortality believers, the departure of the soul occurs at death. That did not occur here. Otherwise, Paul died at that time! But Paul is not saying that he does not know whether he died fourteen years ago.

2. Paul is speaking of receiving “visions and revelations.” What he saw and heard was so vivid, he seemed to have been transported to heaven to receive it. Yet he would not affirm it. What better way to describe the experience of seeming to be in a faraway place, without actually going there.

3. Paul said something similar in *Colossians 2:5*: “For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.” Today, we say something similar, “I’ll be with you in spirit.”

[6] “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

According to this, the righteous go to heaven at death instead of lying in the grave until the second advent?

1. The context of this verse says the opposite: (1) *Verse 13*: They need not sorrow as the pagans which have no hope. (2) *Verse 15*: The living saints would not prevent (go before) them which are asleep. (3) *Verse 16*: How those who are asleep will be awakened. (4) *Verse 17*: As soon as Jesus returns, they will both be caught up together to meet Jesus in the air. (5) *Verse 17*: After that, they will ever be

with the Lord.

The righteous dead are not coming down with Christ at the second advent, for they go up to meet Him at that time.

2. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13, the righteous dead are described in these words: "them which are asleep." In *verse 14*: "them also which sleep in Jesus." And in *verse 16*: "The dead in Christ." It is claimed that, in *verse 14*, Paul is speaking only about the souls of the faithful; whereas, in *verses 13 and 16*, he is speaking only of their bodies! That would not be true. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 is referring only to those who have died in Christ and are raised at the final resurrection when He returns.

3. Throughout this passage, Paul is trying to assure his readers of the certainty of the resurrection—Christ's resurrection and ours, at His second advent (*1 Cor 15:14-23 and onward*).

4. Just as surely as God raised Jesus, so also He will raise His people. And He will do it because He raised Jesus. "Even so them also which sleep in Jesus" in the grave "will God bring with Him"—that is, raise them through His power.

[7] "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." *John 11:26.*

Therefore, those who die in Christ go directly to heaven? In support of this is Paul's statement that Christ "abolished death" (*2 Tim 1:10*)?

1. Both in the Old and New Testaments, those who died in Christ went to the grave to await the resurrection day (*Heb 11:39-40 and 1 Thess 4:15-17*). All await the future resurrection at Christ's second coming. How thankful we can be that He is

coming soon!

2. Paul spoke of how Christians do not have to “sorrow” as “those who have no hope” (*1 Thess 4:13*).

Their hope is in the future resurrection. At that time, the living righteous will not precede to glory “those who are asleep.”

3. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” *Revelation 14:13*.

4. What then does Jesus mean when He says, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die” (*John 11:26*) and “If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death” (*John 8:51*)? Here is the answer:

(a) Before man sinned, he was warned that he would be condemned to death that day. “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” *Genesis 2:17*. Christ declares, “when you accept and obey Me, you are entering into eternal life.” Adam did not die the day he sinned; we do not attain immortality the day we begin our lifelong walk with Christ.

(b) Christ is also referring to avoiding the second death: “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” *Revelation 2:11*. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.” *Revelation 20:6*. The first death does have power over the righteous, but not the eternal death (*Rev 21:8*). Instead, they are to experience eternal life.

(c) To the unbelievers, Christ declared, “Ye will

not come to Me, that ye might have life" (*John 5:40*), but the Christian has it.

[8] "But, as touching the resurrection of the dead . . . I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." *Matthew 22:31-32*.

Therefore the souls of those patriarchs must be in heaven?

1. Jesus is here speaking of the resurrection. He is replying to "the Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection" (*Matt 22:23, cf. Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27*). Christ immediately proceeds to offer proof that the dead will be raised. Mark says it this way: "And as touching the dead, that they rise" (*Mark 12:26*); and Luke puts it thus: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed" (*Luke 20:37*).

2. If Christ simply proved that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then living as immortal souls in bliss, He did not thereby prove that there would be a resurrection. But the question here is: Will there be a resurrection? If Christ meant that the patriarchs are now alive in heaven—He would be denying the point He was making.

3. In the Bible, God sometimes speaks of the future as though it were already present: "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (*Rom 4:17*). That statement was made in relation to Abraham!

Here is a similar statement by Paul: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this

end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living" (*Rom 14:7-9*).

Why are God's children still the Lord's, after they die? Because they "sleep in Jesus" and the "dead in Christ shall rise" in the "resurrection of life" (*1 Thess 4:14, 16; John 5:29*). The Creator is still the God of His people, even while they are dead.

[9] "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." *Ecclesiastes 12:7*.

Therefore that spirit is a conscious entity?

1. If this spirit is a conscious entity when it "returns" to God, then it was a conscious entity when it *came* from God. It would be illogical for the believer in immortal souls to declare that the "spirit" needed to gain access to the body to be conscious. That "spirit" would then lose consciousness upon leaving the body.

2. If the "spirit" which returns to God is a conscious entity, and thus the "real man," then all men, whether good or bad, go to God at death. But the Bible clearly states that the judgment is still a future event (*Matt 25:31-46; Rev 22:12*).

3. Regarding the creation of man, we are told: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (*Job 33:4*). During life: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." *Job 27:3*. At death: "If He [God] set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (*Job 34:14-15*). The spirit returns to God be-

cause it came from God. God gathers it to Himself because it is God's spirit, not man's spirit.

[10] "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" *Ecclesiastes 3:21*.

Therefore man, in contrast with the beast, has an immortal spirit that soars heavenward at death?

1. The preceding points (regarding *Eccl 12:7*) apply to this one.

2. Surely, no one believes that all men go to heaven at death! Yet that is the reasoning here. The soul-immortality advocates teach that the wicked go "downward" to hell, not upward to heaven.

3. It is not true that there is a seeming contrast in this verse between man's mortality and the beast's mortality; for, only a few verses earlier, Solomon said there was no difference regarding their destination:

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as one that dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." *Ecclesiastes 3:19-20*.

"All have one breath [spirit]." "All go to one place." "All turn to dust again."

4. In the *American Revised Version*, verse 21 reads: "Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth?" The question mark here harmonizes this verse with 19 and 20. Solomon is not stating that

the two go to different places, but only asking whether they might, in view of the facts stated in verses 19 and 20. He is challenging anyone to prove that they do not both go to one place.

[11] “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord . . . we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.”
2 Corinthians 5:6, 8-9.

Therefore the righteous dead go to heaven immediately at death and man therefore possesses an immortal spirit?

The complete passage is this:

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present

or absent, we may be accepted of Him." *2 Corinthians 5:1-9*.

1. We have here a series of extended metaphors; it is not wise to try to prove doctrine from metaphors.

2. Using metaphors, Paul here deals with three possible states:

(1) "Our earthly house." "At home in the body." "Absent from the Lord." "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved." "In this we groan."

(2) "Clothed." "Naked."

(3) "A building in the heavens." "House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Our house which is from heaven." "Clothed upon." "Present in the Lord." "Absent from the body."

If the "earthly house" means our present mortal body, then our heavenly house is the immortal body. Then "naked" and "unclothed" would be death.

"The earnest [pleading] of the Spirit" is what will bring God's faithful ones to the desired third state. Verse 5. The resurrection will occur through the Holy Spirit: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." *Romans 8:11*. The resurrection will occur at the second coming of Christ (*2 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-55*).

3. The desired change comes when "that mortality is swallowed up of life" (*2 Cor 5:4*). The *American Revised Version* of this verse puts it this way: "That what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." In other words, "what is mortal" loses its mortality at the resurrection. That is exactly what Paul else-

where teaches (*1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-55*).

When “this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (*1 Cor 15:54*).

4. “Being present with the Lord” occurs when he is “clothed” with the heavenly house. This will occur at the resurrection, when we are “caught up to meet the Lord” and “so shall we ever be with the Lord” (*1 Thess 4:17*).

[12] “Her soul was in departing.” *Genesis 35:18*.

This description of the death of Rachel shows that, at death, her soul flew to heaven?

A parallel passage is this: “O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” *1 Kings 17:21-22*. The same explanation applies to both.

1. It cannot be true that the “soul” that departed from Rachel was the real person that soared away from the body at death, because it does not agree with the child’s death. Elijah did not pray that the child return and reenter the body, but “let this child’s soul come into *him* again.” “And the soul of the child came into *him* again, and *he* revived.” “Elijah took the child, and brought *him* . . .” This is the pattern all through the Bible. Here is a typical passage about the death process:

“In the sweat of *thy* face shalt *thou* eat bread, till *thou* return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust *thou* art, and unto dust shalt

thou return.” Genesis 3:19.

If, when the child died, he *really* departed, why should the prophet pray that his “soul come into *him* again”?

2. In the case of the child, what was this “soul” that departed and came back again? The word, “soul,” here and in the previous text regarding Rachel, is the Hebrew word, *nephesh*. The primary meaning of *nephesh*, according to Gesenius, a leading Hebrew scholar, is “breath.” An example of this would be *Job 27:3*, where *nephesh* is translated “breath.”

Therefore, when Elijah prayed, the breath came back into the child; and, when Rachel died, she had no more breath.

3. *Nephesh* can also be translated “life,” as in *Genesis 1:30*. “To every beast of the earth . . . wherein there is life [*nephesh*].” If *nephesh* within the child proves he is an undying soul, then all the animals are also.

[13] “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God . . . and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Revelation 6:9-10.

Therefore, the souls of the righteous dead are in heaven?

1. If, at death, the souls of the righteous soar away to heaven and eternal happiness, why are these souls imprisoned under an altar and in distress?

Why would they cry for vengeance on the wicked, if the wicked are already burning in hellfire?

We have here another metaphor, and doctrine should not be based on it.

2. Most Bible commentators do not believe this passage should be interpreted literally.

[14] “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” *Philippians 1:21, 23.*

Paul believed he would go to heaven as soon as he died?

1. If that were true, it would make the apostle contradict himself. In other places, Paul clearly spoke of the resurrection at Christ’s second advent and declared that the dead would not rise until then (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-55*). It would be incredible that Paul would say such things, if he himself were going to heaven at death.

Paul was giving his wish list. He would rather be with Christ in heaven. However, it is also true that—as far as he is aware—a brief moment after Paul’s death, he will arise from the dead at Christ’s second coming. So, for Paul and all of God’s faithful ones, death will quickly bring the resurrection, though, in reality, it does not occur until centuries later.

Paul said that Christ would not return to raise the dead until “the last trump” (*1 Cor 15:51-55*). As his own “departure” neared, he said that he would not receive the crown of righteousness until “that day” when God would give it to “all them also that love His appearing” (*2 Tim 4:8*).

2. It is not unusual for the Bible to couple together events which occur far apart. *Isaiah 61:1-2*

contains a compact prophecy of Christ's first and second advents. In *Luke 4:17-19*, Christ only quoted the portion which referred to His first advent ministry, but not His second advent vengeance on the wicked.

Another example would be *2 Peter 3:3-13*, in which is described both the second advent and the destruction of this world by fire.

Therefore, the mere coupling together of the event of Paul's dying with his being with the Lord does not mean one immediately follows the other. From other Bible passages, we learn the two events are widely separated in point of time.

[15] **"Christ also hath once suffered for sins . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." *1 Peter 3:18-20*.**

According to this, there is an immaterial spirit, the real person, which departs from the body at death?

1. We again are confronted with another metaphor. Oddly enough, if we are to treat it as literal, then this means the Bible proves purgatory and a second probation after death! That is what a literal interpretation of this passage requires: Christ going to preach to dead people, to get them to change their ways so they could still go to heaven.

2. If Christ only went to preach to lost dead people, why did He only preach to those who were

“disobedient” in “the days of Noah”?

3. The truth is that the “longsuffering” patience of God “waited in the days of Noah” and gave the wicked time to repent.

4. When did Christ preach to those people? He “preached unto” them “*when* once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” He did it in the days of Noah while they were still alive. He did it through Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). God’s Spirit preached through Noah for a pre-stated probationary period of 120 years (Gen 6:3). It is in such preaching, by the living to the living, that the prison house of bondage to Satan can be opened (Isa 42:7; 61:1; Luke 4:18-21).

5. It is of interest that, in the Dark Ages, Catholic leaders said this passage proved purgatory. But, when the sixteenth-century Reformation began, the Reformers said it did not mean that.

“At the time of the Reformation, the chief authorities expounded them [these words of Peter as meaning] of the preaching of Christ’s Spirit through the ministry of the patriarch [Noah].” *Dr. J. Rawson Lumby, The Expositor’s Bible, 1 Peter 3:17-22.*

[16] “Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” —Luke 23:43.

According to this, Christ told the thief he would be with Christ that same day in Paradise?

It is of interest that we are told that, as soon as He died, Christ went to preach to the spirits in prison; but also that He went immediately to paradise. But both concepts are incorrect.

1. “Paradise” is where God’s throne is (Rev 2:7)

with 22:1-2). Therefore, if Christ went to paradise that day, He went immediately to heaven where God the Father is.

But, on Sunday morning, He told Mary that He had not yet ascended to the Father (*John 20:17*).

In addition, the Bible says He arose from the dead on Sunday morning; and, after He arose, the women said, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (*Matt 28:6*). It is clear that Christ was in the tomb from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning.

2. Note the punctuation of *Luke 23:43*. The early Bible manuscripts did not have the comma; but, instead, words ran together like this:

insteadwordsrantogether. Later translators used their best judgment in deciding where to place the commas, but they were certainly not inspired as were the original writers.

The commas are not over 400 years old; whereas the Inspired Writings themselves are nearly 2,000 years old. The location of the comma can change the meaning of the sentence.

In accordance with other information given about the death and resurrection of Christ, this comma ought to have been placed after "today" instead of before it. This would give the "today" a deep meaning: On the day of Christ's greatest humiliation, He could announce that the thief would be in heaven with Him! Thank the Lord!

[17] "Said Saul . . . Seek me [Saul] a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her . . . Whom shall I bring up unto thee? . . . And he said, Bring me up Samuel . . . I saw gods ascending out of the earth . . . An old

man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle . . . And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" 1 Samuel 28:7, 11, 13-15.

Therefore Samuel was conscious in death?

1. Repeatedly, the point is made that Samuel is to be brought up from below, "out of the earth." How can this be harmonized with a belief that, at death, the immortal soul of the righteous flies to heaven?

In this entire passage, we have a description of satanic sorcery, and we should not expect it to agree with doctrinal truths.

2. It is said that "Samuel" is brought up. But no Christian believes that the devil has power to raise the dead. Certainly, God was not at the bidding of this witch! instead, He had commanded that witches be slain, as utterly evil (*Lev 20:27; Deut 18:10-11*).

3. After this incident, Saul committed suicide (*1 Sam 31:4*). But "Samuel" foretold: "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Where did Samuel dwell, if an evil, unrepentant man who had committed suicide would be living with him the next day?

4. Saul never saw Samuel. He believed the words of the witch and the demon who appeared. Saul said "What sawest thou?" "What form is he of?" The witch gave the name and described his appearance. Then, "Saul perceived that it was Samuel." But the Hebrew word here is different than "saw." Saul was relying on what the woman and the devil said to him.

The problem here is the words of a witch and the demon who appeared at her call. If we do not

believe them, there is no problem here.

5. Notice that the Bible says that Saul was slain because he went to the witch. That in itself should show that Saul did not meet Samuel there.

6. The Bible says that Saul inquired of the “familiar spirit,” not of the Lord. Therefore what was presented to him was from the devil, not from the Lord.

“Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord . . . for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to *inquire of it*; and inquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him.” 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 [*italics ours*].

So that should clarify several puzzling passages in the Bible.

The Word is very clear that the God of heaven is good and just. He would not punish anyone with unending suffering for what was done in a short lifetime on this earth.

In view of such a destiny, it is our solemn, but happy, duty to give our lives to God and serve Him all our earthly days.

“Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” —Proverbs 29:25

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” —Romans 8:32

“There is no want to them that fear Him. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” —Psalm 34:9-10

Chapter Four

Bible Facts about the Final Death of the Wicked

It is not true that sinners will burn forever in hellfire. The Bible teaches that, yes, the wicked will be punished, but only for a relatively short time—and then they will perish and no longer exist. No one sins enough, in this life, to deserve eternal burnings on his body! Think long and hard about that fact, for it is true.

Our God is a good, merciful God and will blot out, from existence, those who, in the final day of judgment, have been shown to not want the purity and harmony of heaven.

“If eternal hell is real, love is eternally frustrated and heaven will be a place of mourning and concern for the lost. Such joy and such grief cannot go together.”—Gerald Kennedy, Reader’s Notebook, 1953, Harper & Row.

Thank God that He is perfectly just and fair in all His dealings with His creatures! “The wages of sin is death,” said Paul (*Rom 6:23*). Death for the wicked will come quickly and will mean the cessation of life—forever. This is the reward of the wicked.

What is the punishment of the wicked? Where will it take place? How long will it last? What will happen after it is ended? The Bible has answers. Here they are:

WHAT WILL BE THE END OF THE WICKED?

1. What will be the end of the wicked?

Romans 6:23—"For the wages of sin is death."

Ezekiel 18:4—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

The original Greek and Hebrew words for "death" and "die" mean to cease to exist, to perish.

That answers the question of Peter:

"What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God" (*1 Peter 4:17*)?—They will be blotted out of existence.

2. How complete will this death be?

2 Thessalonians 1:9—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

The Greek word here is *olethros*, "destruction," and is the same as the English word which means "to ruin, demolish, abolish, annihilate."

3. In what other ways is the death of wicked described?

Luke 13:3—"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

2 Peter 2:12—"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption."

The word, "*perish*," means "to be destroyed, pass away, come to an end, be lost, to die." The Greek word is *apollume*, "be destroyed."

Psalm 37:20—“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall *consume*; into smoke shall they *consume* away.”

The word, “*consume*,” means “to destroy the substance of, especially by fire” or by decomposition.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF HELL?

4. What are the three meanings of “hell” in the Bible?

(1) “Hell” sometimes means “the grave.”

Psalm 16:10—“Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell [*sheol*, Hebrew for the grave]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

This verse is a prediction of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He did not go into hell-fire, but into the grave. In Acts 2:27, this Scripture is quoted by Peter. The Greek word used there is *hades*, which also means the grave. In 1 Corinthians 15:55, *hades* is translated “the grave.”

(2) “Hell” can also mean a “place of burning.” In the New Testament, this word is *Gehenna*, or the “Valley of Hinnom,” and was a deep valley just south of Jerusalem, where the garbage was burned up. *Gehenna* is the burning hell.

(3) “Hell” represents “darkness.” In *2 Peter 2:4*, the Greek word is *Tartarus*, not *Gehenna* or *hades*.

2 Peter 2:4—“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”

This is the darkness that enshrouded Satan and his angels, when they were cast out of the presence

of God. This is the darkness which has come to earth, because of the presence of the prince of darkness (see *Isa 60:2*).

WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?

According to the Bible, all men go to the grave (*sheol, hades*) at death. Four questions will explain it:

5. What is the house that all go to at death?

Job 30:23—"For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."

6. What is this house of death?

Job 17:13—"If I wait, the grave (*sheol*) is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness."

7. At death, what happens?

Ecclesiastes 12:7—"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

This is the opposite of creation, when God breathed into the lifeless body of Adam and he became alive.

Genesis 2:7—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

8. Does everyone go to the grave at death?

Psalms 89:48—"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave [*sheol*]?"

Ecclesiastes 9:2—"There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked."

Everyone goes to the grave at death; no one goes to hellfire. The best and the worst people die and go to the grave.

Yes, death is an “enemy” (1 Cor 15:26), and we sorrow when our loved ones go into the grave; but we can thank God that “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (Rev 14:13). They have the hope of the resurrection. We may also be thankful that the wicked are slumbering in silence and not screaming in continuous torture and agony.

WHEN WILL THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD COME OUT OF THE GRAVE?

9. At the second coming of Christ, God’s faithful ones will have victory over what?

1 Corinthians 15:55—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

The righteous dead come out of the grave, or *hades*, at the sound of the “last trump.”

10. Is that when the righteous gain immortality?

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 54-55—“Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . . So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

Jesus promised us that we would not go to heaven to be with Him until His second coming (John 14:1-3).

Christ’s promise will someday be fulfilled. At the sound of the “trump of God,” His own who have

slept in silence, unconscious of the passing of time, will suddenly be wakened. Some have been in the graves for thousands of years; others for only a few years. But, to all, it will be as a moment—and they will come forth to radiant, immortal life. Paul said that was when he—and all God's people—will be given eternal life.

2 Timothy 4:8—“Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

The promise of the resurrection is very definite and very important.

1 Corinthians 15:16, 18—“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised . . . Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”

WHEN WILL THE WICKED DEAD COME OUT OF THE GRAVE?

11. When are the wicked raised from their graves?

Revelation 20:5—“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

That is what the Bible teaches. The wicked will be raised from their graves a thousand years later. It is not until that time that “hell” (*hades*, or the grave) gives up its dead (*Rev 20:13*).

At the beginning of the millennium, Jesus raises His own from their graves and takes them to heaven. After a thousand years pass, they descend upon the earth with the Holy City, and then enter it. At this time, the wicked dead are raised and Satan is thus

able to again tempt and control the wicked (*Rev 20:1-7*).

At the end of the millennium, untold millions of dead are raised from the grave, or *sheol*. Satan goes out to deceive them and lead them in an attack on the City of God (*Rev 20:5-9*). But then they receive their final sentence from God.

WHERE ARE THE WICKED AND THE GRAVE CAST?

12. After they have been raised at the close of the millennium, where are the wicked and “hell” (the grave) cast?

Revelation 20:14-15—“And death and hell [*hades*, the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

The wicked are cast into a literal lake of fire. Nine times Christ warns us about this “hell” of fire, this burning hell. This is the “place of burning,” the final *Gehenna*. It is mentioned 12 times in the New Testament.

IS EVERY PART OF MAN CAST INTO THIS FIRE?

13. Is the whole man—all of him—cast into this fire?

Matthew 10:28—“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

It is sin and yielding to Satan which we need to fear. The wicked will be completely destroyed in hell-fire. Nothing will remain undestroyed.

Matthew 5:30—“And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (also *Matt 18:8-9*).

There is no fire in the grave. It is the place of quiet and unconsciousness. That is what the Bible teaches about what happens to man when he dies.

Psalms 146:4—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6—“The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything . . . Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.”

Psalms 6:5—“For in death there is no remembrance of Thee.”

Psalms 115:17—“The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.”

HOW LONG WILL THE WICKED BURN?

14. How long do the wicked burn in hellfire?

(1) Until body and soul are destroyed:

Matthew 10:28—“But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

(2) Until neither root nor branch is left:

Malachi 4:1—“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

(3) Until they are devoured—and die the second death:

Revelation 20:9, 14—“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved City: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them . . . And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

(4) The wicked burn “forever”—as long as life lasts.

Revelation 20:10—“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

15. How long is “forever”?

“Forever” may mean only as long as a man lives.

Exodus 21:2, 5-6—“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing . . . And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”

“Forever” could also mean a shorter period of time. Jonah afterward said that, while he was in the great fish, he was shut up in “the earth with her bars about me forever” (*Jonah 2:6*).

Jesus said about the wicked, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment” (*Matt 25:46*). He did not say, “punishing,” but “punishment.” The punishment was death, and it would have everlasting results.

16. What is the meaning of “everlasting” fire?

Everlasting or eternal fire—is fire which God uses to destroy everlastingly.

Matthew 25:41—“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

This fire is called “everlasting” (Greek: *aionion*, “age lasting”) because of its lasting effects.

17. Is there, in the Bible, an example of this kind of fire?

The fire which burned Sodom and Gomorrah was everlasting fire.

Jude 7—“Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*.”

Those cities were burned to ashes about 2000 B.C.

2 Peter 2:6—“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into *ashes* condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.”

That is the kind of “everlasting punishment” the wicked receive. The death of those wicked will forever be a memorial to God’s hatred of sin. It is death with eternal results.

Matthew 25:46—“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

This fire is called “unquenchable fire.”

Mark 9:43-44—“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, then having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

18. Why is it called unquenchable fire?

This fire is called unquenchable (Greek: *asbestos*) because it cannot be *put* out, but not because it will not *go* out. The word simply means that no power will be able to quench this fire until it has consumed everything in the fire.

19. Is there an example, in the Bible, of unquenchable fire?

Jeremiah 17:27—"But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched" (fulfilled in *Jer 52:12-13*; and for this reason: *2 Chron 36:14-21*).

Jerusalem is not burning today. Yet God said it would be destroyed by a fire, "and it shall not be quenched." It was not quenched, but burned everything up and burned out. So shall the wicked be completely destroyed.

The "worm" is a symbol of complete and final destruction. In the Valley of Hinnom, the worms consumed what the fire did not destroy.

20. What is the "second death?"

Revelation 20:14-15—"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

It is quite clear that the wicked are going to be completely destroyed. It is called "death," the "second death." It is death, not life. At the first death the wicked went into the grave. The second death marks the final end of the sinner, the end of death, and the end of the grave. At that moment in time,

God will be completely finished with sin, sinners, death, and the grave.

21. When will the wicked burn in hellfire?

The wicked are not suffering now. Peter tells us they are “reserved” unto the day of judgment, to be punished.

2 Peter 2:9—“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

This happens at the end of the millennium, after the wicked dead are raised.

Revelation 20:5—“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

They are not burning now, but are “reserved” till a later time. But when that time comes, the fire will do its work thoroughly and completely; they will be “devoured.”

Revelation 20:9—“Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

The wicked are *reserved* unto the day of destruction (**2 Peter 3:7** with **Job 21:30**), and “they shall be *brought forth* to the day of wrath” (**Job 21:30**).

Jesus Himself said, “The tares are the children of the wicked one.” And “as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world” (**Matt 13:38, 40**). There is not a single, solitary sinner burning in hell today. Thank God for that! He is totally fair and just. When the punishment is finally meted out, it will be relatively brief.

And it will be thorough. So complete will be the destruction, that the wicked will be as though they had not been. (More on this later in this study.)

22. Where will hellfire burn?

The Bible is quite clear that it will burn on the surface of the earth.

Proverbs 11:31—"Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner."

2 Peter 3:7—"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

The present heavens and earth and sinners await the fire of the last day. The Greek for "perdition" is *apolela*, "destruction."

While hellfire is burning, the earth will temporarily become a fiery hell. Yet the repeated promise is that God's people will inherit the earth.

Psalm 37:11—"The meek shall inherit the earth"
(also *Matt 5:5; Isa 11:4*).

God's children could not inherit the earth if hellfire were forever burning on it. Instead, when the fire goes out, God will remake the world more beautiful than before.

Revelation 21:1—"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."

23. Will this death be so complete that sin and sinners will never again exist?

It will be so complete that, as soon as the fire is ended, there will not be another sinner anywhere. Sin and sinners will be no more—forever. In Matthew 13:41-42, it is called a "furnace of fire." What can be more destructive than a fiery furnace?

Psalm 37:10—"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently con-

sider his place, and it shall not be.”

If the wicked were forever alive in hellfire, they would be continually sinning, hating, cursing. But sin and sinners will be no more. After a relatively short time, the lake of fire will stop burning and there will be no more fire, because the sinners will all be forever perished.

Obadiah 16—“For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and *they shall be as though they had not been.*”

Nahum 1:9—“Affliction shall not rise up the second time.”

Proverbs 10:25—“As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more.”

As soon as the fire is out, God will make a new earth,—and only God’s faithful ones will dwell in it. The wicked will be gone forever.

2 Peter 3:13—“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

24. Why will sin finally be ended?

It is a great mercy of God to finally bring this misery to an end. But when it finally occurs, all will see that God was just and right at each step in the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

God does not want to hurt or slay anyone; but it is His responsibility, as the Creator, to finally eliminate the hateful, rebellious, and wicked. That is why the destruction of the wicked is called “*His strange act.*”

Isaiah 28:21—“For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of

Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.”

Through sin the wicked have forfeited the right to life and an immortal existence with God and the holy angels. Their destruction will be an act of love and mercy on the part of God. To perpetuate their lives would only be to perpetuate sin, sorrow, suffering, and misery.

Even death itself will then be at an end—cast into the lake of fire and destroyed (*Rev 20:14*).

The experience of sin will be over, and God’s original plan of peopling the earth with a race of holy, happy beings will be carried out (*2 Peter 3:13*).

HOW CAN WE AVOID HELLFIRE AND THE SECOND DEATH?

The unquenched flames of hell, *Gehenna*, which do not preserve but consume whatever they feed on, aptly pictures what other Bible texts describe as the utter destruction of the wicked at the time of the final judgment.

25. How can we escape that final “everlasting destruction,”—and, instead, have eternal life with Christ?

2 Peter 3:14—“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

It is now that we must prepare for heaven. It is now that we must return to God, repent of our sins, and surrender our lives to Him. It is now that we must resist sin, through the enabling grace of Jesus Christ, and, through that grace, obey the Ten Commandments.

No one found written in the Book of Life will be destroyed in the lake of fire (*Rev 21:8; 27; 22:15*).

Revelation 20:15—“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

God never intended that any human being suffer in hellfire. Christ tells us it was “prepared for the devil and his angels” (*Matt 25:41*). Christ died that we can have eternal life in and through Him.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL PASSAGES ON THE DEATH OF THE WICKED

There are five passages of Scripture which we need to carefully consider, in order to fully understand the Bible truth about hellfire.

[1] The story of the rich man and Lazarus proves the immortality of the soul (*Luke 16:19-31*)?

There are several points here that should be considered:

1. This story does not teach that immortal souls leave the body at death—yet that is what some people say it teaches.

If the story is to be taken literally, after death the rich man is said to have had eyes and a tongue,—real body parts. He asked that Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water. That would mean the whole body was in heaven or in hellfire. Yet, at death the body goes to the grave.

2. If this story is literal, then heaven and hell are within talking distance of each other. What misery this would bring to the people in heaven!

3. When the rich man pleaded that Lazarus be sent back to earth to warn others against hell, Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29, 31).

Notice here what Christ is actually teaching: (1) If living humans want guidance, they should study the Bible. (2) If they reject the Bible, it would do no good if one rose from the dead and tried to instruct them.

The wording here is exquisite: "Neither will they be persuaded, *though one rose from the dead.*" Christ does not say, "though one came back from the spirit world," but "though one rose from the dead."—For that is where people are after they die: dead.

This parable teaches that some people are alive, others are dead; and the live people had better read and obey the Word of God before they are dead!

4. If the story is to be taken literally, Abraham is the great center of heaven, not God, and those in heaven are leaning on "Abraham's bosom."

5. Doctrines should not be built upon parables or allegories. To base a doctrine on this one leads to spirits with bodies and heaven and hell next to each other.

6. If this parable is to be taken literally, then Christ is contradicting His own statements made elsewhere, where He definitely states the time when the faithful will receive their reward and the wicked are cast into consuming fire:

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory

.. and before Him shall be gathered all nations .. then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom .. Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." *Matthew 25:31-32, 34, 41.*

7. The message is for us today: We, the living, "have Moses and the prophets"; let us "hear them." Yes, let us study God's Word to know the truth of this matter. And, doing so, we learn that everyone is unconscious at death; that the righteous are not immediately taken, after death, to heaven; and the wicked are not judged until a future time.

8. A parable or allegory may be used to teach a lesson, but that does not make every part of the story true. In Judges 9:7-15 is the story of the trees going "forth on a time to anoint a king over them." The story was meant to teach a lesson, but we do not accept that the story is itself true. (Another example would be 2 Kings 14:9, where the thistle sent the cedar the message, "Give thy daughter to my son to wife.") We do not attempt to prove that trees talk and they have kings or that thistles get married. To do so would be trying to make the story prove more than was intended by the speaker. The same would apply to this parable by Christ.

[2] In the Bible, we find such phrases as "everlasting punishment" (Matt 25:46), "everlasting fire" (Matt 25:41), and "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev 20:10).

This proves an eternally burning hell and an immortal soul?

The truth is quite different. The Greek and He-

brew words, sometimes translated “everlasting” or “forever,” only mean a period of time until a certain thing is ended. Consider these points:

1. The New Testament words, translated “everlasting” and “forever,” come from the Greek noun, *aion* (or from the adjective, *aionios*, derived from the noun). Learning how these words are used elsewhere in the Bible, we find their real meaning. Here are several examples:

Matthew 13:39—“The end of the world [*aion*].”—But how could something supposedly “endless” have an end? And, according to this verse, it *did* have an end.

Ephesians 1:21—Christ has been exalted above “every name that is named, not only in this world [*aion*], but also in that which is to come.”

1 Corinthians 2:7—What “God ordained before the world [*aion*].”

Hebrews 5:6—“Thou [Christ] art a priest forever [*aion*].” Yet Christ will only be a priest until sin has been blotted out.

Philemon 15-16—“Thou [Philemon] shouldst receive him [Onesimus] forever [*aionios*] . . . both in the flesh, and in the Lord.” Is Philemon to take back Onesimus as his servant forever?

H.C.G. Moule, the well-known Greek scholar, makes this comment about Philemon 15-16:

“The adjective tends to mark duration as long as the nature of the subject allows.”—*The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*.

Jude 7—“Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them . . . suffering the vengeance of eternal [*aionios*] fire.” But those cities are not still burning. They are today under the south part of the

Dead Sea. God turned "the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes" (also 2 Peter 2:6).

If the *aiionios* fire of Sodom and Gomorrah, sent as a judgment from God to destroy the wicked living there, burned itself out in ashes and is no longer burning, we can conclude that the *aiionios* fire of the final judgment on the wicked will do likewise.

2. *Olam* is the Old Testament equivalent to *aiion* in the New Testament. Here are some examples:

Exodus 12:24—The Passover was to be kept "forever [*olam*]." But it ended at Calvary (*Heb 9:24-26*).

1 Chronicles 23:13—Aaron and his sons were to offer incense "forever [*olam*]," and have an "everlasting *folami* priesthood" (*Ex 40:15*). But that priesthood ended at the cross (*Heb 7:11-14*).

Exodus 21:1-6—A servant who desired to stay with his master must serve him "forever [*olam*]." Must he serve him through all eternity, after both reach heaven?

Jonah 2:6—Later describing his experience in the whale, Jonah said, "the earth with her bars was about me forever [*olam*]." Yet this "forever" was only "three days and three nights" long (*Jonah 1:17*).

2 Kings 5:27—Because Gehazi lied in order to enrich himself, Elisha said, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever [*olam*]." Was Gehazi's family to never end, and that leprosy to be perpetuated for all time to come?

3. The Old Testament word, *olam*, and the New Testament word, *aiion*, are equivalent terms. We know this to be true for two reasons: (1) The Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, always translates *olam* by *aiion*. (2) Whenever an Old Testament passage containing

olam is quoted in the New Testament, *aion* is used (*Heb 1:8; 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21; 13:20; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:11*).

Both words clearly have a very limited time value and do not mean an eternal time length.

[3] Do the Bible passages, in which the word “hell” is used, show that the wicked go there as soon as they die and then remain there?

1. In the Old Testament, the word, “hell,” is always translated from one word. That word is *sheol*. *Sheol* means “the grave,” and never “a place of burning” or “hellfire.” *Sheol* simply means “the unseen state.” Study any analytical concordance, and you will nowhere find the idea of fire or punishment in the usage of *sheol*.

Jonah 2:1-2—This is a good example of how *sheol* is used: “Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly . . . out of the belly of hell [*sheol*] cried I.” There is no hellfire in a whale’s stomach. The marginal reading of this text is “the grave.”

At death, everyone, both good and bad, goes to *sheol*.

Psalms 89:48—“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave [*sheol*]?”

Job 17:13—Regarding godly Job: “If I wait, the grave [*sheol*] is mine house.”

Psalms 9:17—Regarding the wicked: “The wicked shall be turned into hell [*sheol*].”

2. In the New Testament, the word, “hell,” is translated from three different words:

(1) *Tartaros*, which means “a dark abyss.” This

occurs only in **2 Peter 2:4**. Satan and his angels have been cast out of heaven and down into the darkness of this world; and they are being “reserved” unto the day of judgment, a *future time* when they will receive their punishment.

(2) Hades, which means only “the grave,” is translated, “hell,” ten times in the New Testament.

The Septuagint (which is the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) almost always translates *sheol* (the Old Testament Hebrew word for grave) by the word, *hades*. Therefore they have the same meaning.

Psalm 16:10—This is a prophecy of Christ in the grave, and says, “Thou [God] wilt not leave My soul in hell [*sheol*].” It is quoted in the New Testament as “hell [*hades*]” (**Acts 2:27**). It is clear that *sheol* and *hades* mean “the grave.” That is the meaning given to them by all Bible scholars.

Acts 2:27—This text speaks of Christ as being in *hades*. But we all agree that Christ did not go into hellfire! Christ went into the grave.

(3) Gehenna is the third word which, in the New Testament, is translated “hell.” This time “hell” is the correct translation!

This is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, *Hinnom* (the Valley of Hinnom), the name of a valley on the south side of Jerusalem used as the city dump. Garbage was there burned up.

Of the twelve times *Gehenna* is used, two facts stand out:

a. The “body” as well as the soul is said to be “cast into hell.” Twice the phrase, “the whole body,” is used (**Matt 5:29-30; 10:28**).

b. In not one of those twelve instances does the

text tell when the wicked will be “cast into hell.” The fiery judgment is simply described as a future event. Thus it is clear that the Bible never says that anyone who goes into hellfire—goes there at death. Not once does it say that anyone is now suffering in the fire of hell.

Therefore, the fiery hell does not come right after death, but at some later time. The whole body is not cast into hellfire at death, but is placed in the grave.

The *Gehenna* passages indicate that the wicked are “cast into” the fire. The phrase, “cast into hell [*Gehenna*],” is used in six of the twelve times *Gehenna* is found in the New Testament. This is matching the parallel where refuse is cast into the fires of Gehenna Valley.

Is there no place where we are told when this hellfire occurs? Yes, there is: *Revelation 20* explains that, after the millennium, the wicked are raised to life; and, after the final judgment before the great white throne, they are cast into “the lake of fire” (*Rev 20:12-15*). It is at that same time that “death and hell are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (*Rev 20:14*).

Does that lake of fire experience occur eternally? Obviously not; for at the same time that the wicked perish in the flames, “death and hell” are destroyed also! Lastly, we are told what that lake of fire experience actually is: “the second death.” It is not eternal life in misery, but the final obliteration of the wicked. There will be no endless misery to cause concern to God’s redeemed ones. The fire will burn out in a very short time.

Then, the righteous will come out of the City and the wicked will be ashes under their feet.

“For, behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.” *Malachi 4:1-3.*

[4] The Bible says that hellfire will not be quenched and that their worm dieth not (*Mark 9:44; Isa 66:24*). This proves the immortality of the soul?

It is clear, from all we have so far studied, that hellfire is a future event and the final death of the wicked. Prior to that time, the lost ones are resting quietly in the grave.

Christ declared we should “fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*Gehenna*]” (*Matt 10:28*). “Destroy” means “consume” or “annihilate.” It does not mean “not destroy.”

The *Mark 9:43-48* passage refers back to the *Isaiah 66:24* statement: “They [the redeemed] shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched” (*Isa 66:24*).

This passage is clearly speaking of bodies, not

spirits, which the fire and worms work on.

The word, “hell,” in Mark 9:43-48 is from the Greek word, *Gehenna*—which is the equivalent of the Hebrew, *Hinnom*, that garbage dump near Jerusalem, where the carcasses of animals were cast.

Jesus uses that town dump as an illustration of the fate that awaits the wicked. In the Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, the animals are burned up as they are cast there. One animal is burned up, and then another is brought and thrown in the fire, as needed.

But, in the final destruction of the wicked,—they are all placed in the hellfire at the same time and all burn up together, and then are gone forever.

This final fire which will destroy the wicked is, in the Bible, called “*unquenchable*.” Why?

About a hundred years ago, a fire fanned by strong winds roared across the city of Chicago. It was a terrible conflagration. If I told you it was unquenchable, what would that mean to you? Would it mean *that* this fire is still burning? Or would it mean that the fire could not be put out while it was burning? The Chicago fire was unquenchable, yet it only lasted a few days. It was “unquenchable,” because no one could extinguish it; yet it went out by itself when there was nothing more to burn.

Elsewhere in the Bible, we are told that hellfire will be a devouring fire (*Rev 20:9*) and a destroying fire (*Matt 10:28*). As soon as the fuel is gone, the fire will stop.

That is what happened in the fire God predicted would burn down Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 17:27—“If ye will not hearken unto Me . . . then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof [of Jerusalem], and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” [In the Septuagint translation, the very same Greek root is here used for “quenched” as is in *Mark 9*.]

That prophecy was literally fulfilled later, when the Babylonians came and burned down the city (*2 Chron 36:19-21*). But the city is not still burning, even though the fire which destroyed it “shall not be quenched.”

[5] Revelation 14:11 says, “The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.” How do you explain that?

The passage says this: “The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (*Rev 14:11*).

This passage is taken with little change from an Old Testament prophecy about Idumaea (ancient Edom):

“And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever.” *Isaiah 34:9-10*.

Notice the points mentioned here: *First*, about the fire: (1) Shall not be quenched; (2) night nor day; (3) smoke goes up forever. *Second*, about the wasteland which shall afterward result: (1) From generation to generation it shall lie waste; (2) none

shall pass through it forever and ever.

Using the correct meanings of “forever,” which we have discovered, we find that fire predicted by Isaiah to occur in Edom—did just that. It was a thorough fire which could not be quenched while it was burning. It burned night and day as long as it burned. The smoke from the fire went up as long as it burned. When the fire stopped, it would lie waste from generation to generation thereafter and no one would pass through it. (If the fire did not cease, it could not afterward, as predicted, “lie waste.”)

Ancient Idumaea is a desolate wasteland, today, and its cities are in ruins. The prophecy was exactly fulfilled—yet that fire went out thousands of years ago. The smoke of that burning stopped when the fire went out.

With that in mind, we turn our attention to the equivalent prediction in Revelation 14:11; and, using the correct translation of *aionios* (“forever”), we find that this verse agrees with all the others: The fire will burn only until the wicked burn up and are consumed. When the fire goes out, the smoke will cease also—otherwise the redeemed could not live on the earth amid smoke going up forever!

We must let the Bible agree with itself! The meek will inherit the earth (*Matt 5:5; Ps 37:11*), not the wicked! How could the redeemed enjoy the new earth if the wicked were endlessly burning and suffering on its surface?

To conclude this brief study, let me tell you of a man I met about thirty years ago, in Oregon. He was a lay evangelist, and I asked him how he got

started. He told me he once had a friend with whom he shared our historic beliefs. But his friend simply could not grasp the great truth that God does not burn people in hellfire without end. Yet this man was certain his friend was sincere and would accept the truth if it was presented to him clearly enough.

I asked him what happened. He said he studied with his friend for two years; and, during that time, he became a thorough Bible student. Then, one evening, he presented to his friend passages he found which described how hellfire will burn on the surface of the earth. His friend was convinced; for he saw that (1) the fire could not be now burning, and (2) it would have to be brief or the saints could not inherit the earth and live thereon through all eternity.

How thankful we can be that the Bible is so consistent with itself. The apparent problems are caused by the misunderstandings of those who translated the book. The King James translators did not understand that *aion* did not mean forever and that the grave was not hellfire.

The Bible does not say that the judgment fire will burn endlessly; for this blazing fire on the surface of the earth must go out, so God can create "a new earth" (*2 Peter 3:12-13* and *Rev 20-21*). There must therefore be an end to the fire, else this earth could not be recreated—so the meek could inherit it and dwell on it through all eternity.

How wonderful it is to know that our God is a God of deepest love. Yes, it is true that the wicked must die; for they could never be happy in heaven.

But how kind it is of Him to quickly end their miserable lives!

They will be raised after the millennium only long enough to learn the issues in the great controversy between good and evil and to understand how their lost condition was their own responsibility.

Then they will quickly cease to exist. There will be a few, like Hitler (and, of course, Satan and his angels!), who will suffer on for a time; but, for most, death will come very quickly.

The Bible nowhere says that souls are immortal; instead it declares that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (*Eze 18:4*).

SUMMARY

God’s earthly children, whom He deeply loves, keep doing things they should not do. So, throughout their lifetime, He tries in every way possible to draw them to Himself. He wants to forgive their sins and enable them to live cleaner, happier, obedient lives. He offers to enable them, by His grace, to obey His moral Ten Commandment law.

But there are those who ultimately reject all of God’s efforts to save them. They finally die, still holding on to those sins.

Should they be taken to heaven? No, for they would be miserable there and would only bring grief to its inhabitants.

Should they be put on a planet by themselves and left to argue and fight among themselves? No, for that would only perpetuate their unhappy lives.

Should they be given a second chance, after this life is over? No, this present life is their only proba-

tionary period. There is none afterward.

Should they be put into an eternal sleep of death, so they can no longer be miserable? Yes, but first justice should be meted out. For years, the wicked injured and hurt one another and sinned against their Maker. A final punishment must take place.

How long should that punishment last? Although it is fair and right in the final Judgment to punish the wicked for the sins of a lifetime,—that punishment must exactly match the offense. Otherwise it would not be fair and right.

In the final Judgment, if God punished even one person more than he should receive, it would reflect on God's character and the inhabitants of the universe would fear Him throughout all eternity. Deep down in their hearts they would know He was not really good.

So settle this one point in your mind, and everything else will fall into place: God never does wrong. He always does right. Always.

Therefore there will be a final punishment. There will be retribution for those who spent years hurting others. But the punishment will be fair, only the right amount, and will end very soon.

Those who will suffer longest will be the evil monsters of history, such as Adolf Hitler. Those who will suffer even longer will be the evil angels and Satan himself. But, for all, the punishment will last only as long as absolutely necessary and then will come the silence of eternal non-existence.

And is not that the greatest punishment of all—to miss out on the glories of heaven? Yet, as with everything else, the wicked will have missed it by their own determined choice.

Chapter Five

Bible Facts about Satan and Spiritualism

Witchcraft is increasing in power and influence. Sometimes it is called channeling. It is extremely important that we understand the terrible danger in dabbling with this!

There are evil angels who try to destroy our peace and happiness, tempt us to sin, and keep us out of heaven. We must be aware of their devices and be strong in the Lord to resist them. How did sin begin? Is there a devil, and what is he like? How can we resist His advances? And what is his most dangerous method of entrapment?

THE TRUTH ABOUT SATAN

1. Who was the first sinner?

1 John 3:8—“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.”

Ezekiel 18:4—“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Here we have the name of the original sinner. In Revelation, he is referred to as “the great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (*Rev*

12:9). Isaiah refers to him as Lucifer, son of the morning" (*Isa 14:12*). The time of his sin is "in the beginning." This was sometime near the Creation, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis.

Lucifer was created. The prophet, Ezekiel, presenting Satan under the symbol of the king of Tyrus, presents God as speaking to him of "the day that thou was created" (*Eze 28:13*).

Christ is the Creator; for God "created all things by Jesus Christ" (*Eph 3:9*). "For by Him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him" (*Col 1:16*).

Thus Christ created the good angel who later made a devil out of himself.

2. Where was Lucifer created?

Luke 10:18—"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

Undoubtedly, Lucifer was created in heaven.

Ezekiel 28:14—"Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire."

3. What special gifts did Lucifer possess?

Ezekiel 28:12—"Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty."

Lucifer was the wisest of the angels. In addition, he was "perfect in beauty." Apparently, Lucifer was also given an unusually beautiful voice. "The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created" (*Eze 28:13*). "Tabret" means strings or chords. Apparently, Lucifer's vocal chords were remarkable.

4. What position did Lucifer occupy in heaven?

Ezekiel 28:14—"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so."

In the earthly tabernacle, the two covering cherubim were by the ark of the covenant, which symbolized the throne of God. Therefore, in heaven, Lucifer once stood by God's throne.

5. How did sin begin?

Ezekiel 28:15—"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

Sin is without reason or excuse. To excuse it is to defend it. Lucifer chose to sin, and his act will ultimately lead to the destruction of many. God cannot be charged with the origin of sin.

6. How did Satan begin his rebellion in heaven?

Here were the five steps down:

Ezekiel 28:17—"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty. Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness."

Isaiah 14:13-14—"For thou hast said in thine heart . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the most High."

Through pride, selfishness, and jealousy, Lucifer corrupted himself into a devil. Lucifer, the light bearer, became Satan, the adversary. He began to question the government and character of God. Satan had to resort to lying to do this. Like many today, he said God's law cannot be obeyed. Because of pride, he became filled with hatred.

John 8:44—"He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh

of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it."

A third of the angels were fascinated with his talk and united with Satan. Then he and his angels made war in heaven. They were determined to kill and conquer their way to rulership.

Revelation 12:7—"There was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels."

Revelation 12:9—"The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Proverbs 16:18—"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

2 Peter 2:4—"God spared not the angels that sinned."

7. What is Satan doing now, on earth, before he and his followers are finally destroyed?

The devil is determined to tempt, harass, and destroy. He wants to take as many souls as possible down to ruin with him.

Revelation 12:13—"And when the dragon [Satan] saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman [the true church]."

Satan especially wants to destroy those who love God and try to obey Him.

Revelation 12:17—"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

8. What is the future of Satan, the fallen angel?

Isaiah 14:12—"How art thou fallen from heaven,

O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"

Satan, who ruined so many, will himself eventually be destroyed.

Ezekiel 28:16—"Thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

When Satan is finally destroyed, his followers will perish with him.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12—"Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

9. Who alone is able to destroy the devil?

Hebrews 2:14—"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Jesus Christ, who died to redeem those who would come to Him in repentance and putting away of their sins, will be the one who will destroy Satan.

10. How will Satan and his followers finally be destroyed?

Matthew 25:41—"Then shall He [Christ] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

At the end of time, Christ will destroy Satan and his followers.

Malachi 4:1—"And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall

leave them neither root nor branch." Satan is the root; his followers are the branches. That hellfire will consume them, and they will be gone forever.

11. How can we resist Satan's devices?

1 Peter 5:8-9—"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith."

12. When Satan tried to tempt Him, what was Christ's weapon?

"It is written" (*Matt 4:4*). We should study the Bible, obey it, and we will find it a powerful defense against the enemy. In the strength of Christ, we should obey the commands and claim the promises.

THE DEADLY POWER OF SPIRITUALISM

13. What is that great power of evil which we wrestle against?

Ephesians 6:12—"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [margin: wicked spirits] in high places."

14. What is Satan himself called?

"The god of this world" (*2 Cor 4:4*). "The prince of this world" (*John 14:30*). "The prince of the power of the air" (*Eph 2:2*).

15. How numerous are Satan's angels?

Mark 5:9—"And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many."

A Roman legion, at that time, consisted of about 5,000 men.

16. What agency does Satan especially use to entrap and destroy souls?

Leviticus 19:31—“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.”

“Spiritualism: A belief that departed spirits hold communion with mortals by means of physical phenomena, as by rapping or, during abnormal mental states, as in trances or the like, commonly manifested through a medium; spiritism” (*Webster’s Dictionary*). **“Spiritism:** The theory that mediumistic phenomena are caused by spirits of the dead” (*Webster*).

17. God warns us to have nothing to do with spiritualists.

Malachi 3:5—“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers.”

The “channeling” of our own time is essentially the same as modern spiritualism, which is nothing more than ancient necromancy—pretended communication with the dead, but actually contact with, and guidance by, devils.

Jeremiah 27:9-10—“Therefore hearken not ye to . . . your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers . . . for they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land.”

Deuteronomy 18:10-13—“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the

Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God.”

We are to have nothing to do with that which is an abomination to the Lord. The devils give a little truth, mixed with a lot of lies, to catch someone’s attention, so they can then capture and ruin him.

Galatians 5:20-21—“Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance . . . I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

18. What is the basic lie upon which spiritualism is based?

God told Adam and Eve that, if they sinned and disobeyed Him, they would surely die.

Genesis 2:17—“Thou shalt surely die.”

But Satan lied. He told Eve that, if she sinned, she would live forever.

Genesis 3:4—“Ye shall not surely die.”

Spiritualism is based on Satan’s lie, that the dead are still alive, conscious, and able to return and speak to us.

19. What is the true state of the dead?

Ecclesiastes 9:5—“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.”

Psalms 146:4—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; In that very day his thoughts perish.”

Job 14:20-21—“Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.”

Never again do the dead return to earth to take part in our lives.

Ecclesiastes 9:6—“Also their love, and the hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun.”

20. When mediums bring us spirits impersonating our departed loved ones, what should we call them?

Revelation 16:14—“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles.”

21. How can we test the spirits, to know what they really are?

1 John 4:1—“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.”

We are told to test the spirits, but against what standard are we to test them?

The test we are to apply is the Word of God and His law—the Ten Commandments. If they speak not according to this Word, we are not to hear them. Spirit mediums are licentious, and their spirits speak lies. We are to have nothing to do with them.

Isaiah 8:19-20—“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? [instead of] for the living to the dead?

“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”

The mediums and psychics will want you to forsake the God of heaven and His holy Bible—and go after other gods. This will be a sign to you.

Deuteronomy 13:1-4—“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come

to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice.”

22. What warning is given us that this terrible deception will especially exist in the last days?

1 Timothy 4:1—“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

We, who live in the last days, must be especially on guard. It is imperative that we study God’s Word daily, pray, and plead for His guidance and protection.

23. How will Satan deceive men in these last days?

2 Corinthians 11:14-15—“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”

Satan will work great wonders through his special agents. Yet those men will deny basic Bible truths about the plan of redemption and the importance of obedience to God’s Word.

Matthew 24:23-24—“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive

the very elect.”

Satan will also, in the sight of men, bring down fire from the skies.

Revelation 13:13-14—“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

Beware! beware! Satan’s devices captivate those willing to consider them. If any man comes to you with a message, purportedly from God, but which is not in the law or the testimony—flee from him.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10—“Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.”

24. While many will be deceived by these wonders, the faithful will trust in God, obey His Inspired Writings, and look for Christ’s return.

Isaiah 25:9—“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

ADDITIONAL FACTS

Modern spiritualism is disguised under many names: parapsychology, channeling, occult sciences, clairvoyance, spiritism, witchcraft, wizardry, spiritual healing, hypnosis, magnetic healing, yoga, mind dynamics, biofeedback training, psychic phenomena, etc.

Upon first encountering it, people sense that

a superhuman power is present; and, fascinated, they dabble with it—until they are controlled by a will stronger than their own. You do not want anything to do with it!

A young man had lost both his mother and sister by death, and he was encouraged by a friend to visit a spirit medium. She told him his “departed ones” wanted to communicate with him. Soon he was regularly having visits with apparitions, purporting to be his mother and his sister. This continued on for several years.

Then he left for Australia, where he was converted to Christianity. Accepting the clear warnings of the Bible about spiritualism, he rejected it outright.

But he could not disentangle himself from the spirits. He asked for the help of a Christian friend. “I cannot get away from those spirits,” he told him. “They wake me up three or four times in the night.”

So, to provide him with prayerful support, his friend moved in with him; and, each night in separate beds, they slept in the same room.

Soon the strange beings entered the room, as usual, in the middle of the night. First, they would shake his bed, then they would start talking to him. They were usually semi-transparent in appearance. One, he said, looked and sounded exactly like his mother. She would tell him of her affection for him. He would say, “I don’t believe you,” and turn his face the other way. The voice of his sister would come before him, saying that he was hurting his mother’s heart.

Then he would get up, switch on a light, and

start reading in the Bible. After a few minutes of silence, the book would be snatched from his hands and thrown across the room, with the words, "You'll read, will you?"

These were not beloved relatives, but devils,

Then he would go outside, take long walks, and discuss the situation with his friend. Eventually, the spirits stopped coming.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the famous Sherlock Homes mystery writer and one of the world's leading spiritualists said this: "The organized spiritualist does not accept the atonement of Christ or the existence of sin" (*Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, p. 25). He predicted that spiritualism, when it has taken over the world, "will sweep the world and make it a better place in which to live. When it rules over all the world, it will banish the blood of Christ!" (*Cosmopolitan*, January 1918, p. 69).

A young engineering company salesman boarded a ship at Sydney, Australia. He was to spend two weeks in New Zealand on business. But, on the ship, he met Doyle, who was on a worldwide lecture trip, to stir up interest in spiritism.

The young man told his cabin mate, a preacher, that he was going to talk to Doyle the next day. Although warned that, if he did, he would be caught, the young man laughed and resolutely said he would never become a spiritualist.

But, on his return from the interview the next day, the young man seemed like a changed person. The lies of Doyle and his spirits had won over the young man.

"Doyle told me," he said, "all about several an-

cestors I know nothing about. He said, because they were powerful mediums, I will be too—if I will join him. And this I am going to do!”

He remained with Arthur Conan Doyle throughout the five-day trip. Arriving in New Zealand, he telegraphed both a resignation to his company and a good-bye to his family.

It is well-known that Kaiser Wilhelm II, Adolf Hitler, and Benito Mussolini conducted the two world wars through the continual guidance of spirit mediums. It was the advice of devils which resulted in the terribly murderous decisions which were made.

God will protect from the devils if you will yield your life to Him and trust and obey the Bible. But if you go seeking for the devils, you will be caught and captured.

A young Fijian woman living in Winembuka, about sixty miles from Suva, whose grandfather had been a devil priest, decided she would try to contact the power with whom he communed. This was to be just a bit of fun, or so she thought.

Unknown to her parents, she went to the edge of the village and tried to summon the spirits. Soon the villagers realized the woman was regularly doing it. Her parents, which were Christian, tried to dissuade her, but she would not listen to them. She said the being she spoke with appeared in the form of a great green snake. But it spoke as a person would.

Eventually, the meetings became so gruesome that she realized she would be destroyed if she con-

tinued. She was face to face with a terrible power.

One day, she totally turned her back on it—and refused to go out and talk to the snake. A few days later, she fell to the ground, possessed by demons. In desperation, her family sent for their minister. By the time he and two other ministers had arrived, the girl had been laying on the ground for three days without eating or drinking.

When they tried to speak to her, she would scream at them, as though she were a wild animal. The men prayed earnestly. Then they ordered the evil spirits to come out of her.

Immediately, she turned toward them and glared like a cornered animal. Then she dropped to the floor; and, stretching out full length with staring eyes and frothing mouth, she crawled across the room toward them, slithering like a snake. Then she stopped and went limp.

They bathed her face with water and she sat up. “Where am I, and why are you here?” she asked. Then they told her what had happened. Turning to her parents, she asked forgiveness for her defiance of their counsel. Then, all together, they thanked God for casting out the evil spirits.

Never, never have anything to do with any form of spiritualism!

We will conclude with this incident:

During World War II, a mother received word that her son was missing in action. Although warned by Christian friends not to do so, she went to a spirit medium in town where, each week, she spoke with her boy. They would sit on the couch together and both would share with one another stories from

earlier years when they were together. Convinced that it was her dead son, returning to visit with her, soon she gave up Christianity and threw away her Bible.

Then one day, her boy came home! He had not died after all! The lying spirits had only appeared to present him to her in the séances.

Few things are more dangerous than making contact with evil spirits, and there are many ways in which this can be done. Cling to Jesus Christ as your Saviour and obey His Scriptures. There is no other way you can be safe in this life.

How thankful we can be that Christ is more powerful than the demons!

"They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses."

-Psalm 107:19

"Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

-Jude 24

"God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a City."

-Hebrews 11:16

*Chapter Six**Bible Facts
about the Law of God*

One of the charges against God is that He has abolished His moral law of Ten Commandments, and men no longer need to keep them! This attack undercuts the very foundation of God's throne. What would happen if our nation abolished its laws? The government would collapse. There can be no government without law.

Every city, every business, every church has laws which must be obeyed. Yet is said that God has no laws. The claim is made that Christ's death on Calvary freed all men from obedience to God.

Here are important Bible facts, showing that God requires obedience to His moral code; and, through the enabling grace of Jesus Christ, we can fully obey all that God asks of us in His Inspired Writings.

**LEARNING MORE ABOUT
GOD'S PLAN TO REDEEM US**

In order to draw closer to God, we need to understand more of His plan to save us from sin.

We mentioned earlier that the problem in this world is sin, and that sin is transgression of God's law.

God's plan is that, by the enabling grace of

Christ, our past sins can be forgiven and we can be empowered to obey His holy Ten Commandment law.

But, unfortunately, not only is God under attack today, the Ten Commandments are also.

We live in a sinful generation which ignores sin, blames God for everything, and declares that no one need obey God's moral law! Incredible! Yet you and I see and hear it all about us.

Here is what the Bible says about this.

1. God has a government.

Psalm 103:19—"The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all."

There can be no government without law. As with the laws governing nations, we must respect and obey the law of God.

Romans 7:12—"The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Romans 7:14—"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Proverbs 28:9—"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

2. God's law was for men in Bible times. They were required to obey it back then.

Romans 3:31—"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

James 2:10-12—"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be

judged by the law of liberty.”

God’s law is for the remnant in the last day.

Revelation 12:17—“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 14:12—“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (see verses 13-15).

3. Unfortunately, we live at a time when there is general rebellion against God’s law.

Romans 8:7—“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

Psalms 119:126—“It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law.”

There are many wonderful promises for those who will love God and obey His holy law.

Psalms 119:165—“Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”

Isaiah 48:18—“O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”

THE TRUTH ABOUT LAW AND GRACE

Here is a brief Bible study about the relationship of the law of God to the grace of Christ, in the plan to save you from sin. It is important, for it will help you draw closer to God and help you remain more firmly by His side:

1. The law gives a knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:20—“By the law is the knowledge of sin” (see Romans 7:7).

Second, it brings guilt and condemnation.

Romans 3:19—“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

Third, it acts as a spiritual mirror.

James 1:23-25—“If any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (see *James 2:10-12*).

Without the law, the sinner is like a man who is afflicted with a deadly disease that he doesn't know he has. Paul said, “I had not known sin, but by the law” (*Rom 7:7*).

2. But there are certain things the law cannot do for the sinner.

The law cannot forgive. Law does not possess the power to forgive those who transgress its precepts. Only the Lawgiver can do that. Jesus died to redeem us from the curse of the law (*Gal 3:13*). The law cannot keep the sinner from sinning because “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (*Rom 8:7*).

The law only shows the sinner where he needs to change; but the law, itself, cannot change him. And so let us get three facts about the law very clear.

(1) The law cannot forgive or justify us.

Romans 3:20—“By the deeds of the law there

shall no flesh be justified in His sight.”

(2) It cannot keep us from sin or sanctify us.

Galatians 3:21—“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”

(3) It cannot cleanse us, or keep the heart clean (Romans 9:3, 7-8).

The law is limited in its ability to do all that needs to be done for the sinner. A wound cannot be sewed up with only a needle. The thread of the gospel must do that.

3. The wonderful grace of Christ solves the problem! This is what it can do for the sinner:

When the law of God and the Spirit of God have made the sinner conscious of his sin, he will then feel his need of Christ and go to the Saviour for pardon. The publican found it so (*Luke 18:13-14*). The woman taken in adultery felt condemned and ashamed. She needed sympathy and forgiveness, and Christ was ready to grant these to her. Then He said, “Sin no more.”

If we confess and put away sin, He will forgive (*1 John 1:9*). This is grace, or unmerited favor. This gracious love of Christ awakens love in the heart of the sinner, and he then desires to serve and obey God.

(1) The grace of Christ forgives and justifies.

Acts 13:38-39—“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (*see Luke 18:13-14*).

(2) It saves from sin, or sanctifies.

Matthew 1:21—"She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins."

1 Corinthians 1:30—"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

(3) It inspires faith.

Ephesians 2:8-10—"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

(4) it brings God's power.

Romans 1:16—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Forgiveness of sin and power over sin comes through the exercise of simple faith in God's promises and a full surrender of the heart to Him.

4. How should a sinner, who is being saved by the grace of Christ, relate to God's law?

(1) The law becomes the standard of his life.

1 John 5:3—"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."

(2) The law permits Christ to fulfill in him the righteousness of the law.

Romans 8:3-4—"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

(3) Christ writes the law in his heart.

Hebrews 8:10—“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people” (see *Ps 119:11*).

It is as simple as that! **Jesus Christ, by His death on the cross, forgives our past sins and enables us, by His redeeming grace, to keep the Ten Commandments.** It is God’s plan to purify His people of sin. Through the study of the Bible and continual prayer and faith, we are enabled to live clean, godly lives.

“Sin is the transgression of the law” (*1 John 3:4*); Jesus Christ came to earth and died in order to save us from our sins (*Matt 1:21*). And that is what He will do, if we will cooperate with Him.

THE LAW OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Another charge against the moral law of God is that it is not found in the New Testament. Therefore we need not obey it. But Jesus clearly disproved this by His own actions and words.

1. For example, while here on earth, Jesus gave us a careful example of obedience to the Fourth Commandment, the Sabbath day which, at the Creation, was given to mankind.

Luke 4:16—“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”

His custom should be ours, for He is our example. He gave us an example of obedience that we should follow.

1 John 2:6—“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”

1 Peter 2:21—“Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.”

John 15:10—“I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”

1 John 5:3—“For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments.”

2. Throughout His earthly life, Jesus continually gave us an example of obedience to the moral law of Ten Commandments. And He told His disciples to obey it also.

Matthew 5:17-19—“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

3. Not only did He give us a careful example of obedience while here on earth,—but Christ also rebuked man-made attempts to change His law.

Matthew 15:9—“But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Matthew 15:6—“Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”

Matthew 15:3—“But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”

4. Throughout His life, Christ did just as Scripture predicted He would do: He magnified the law and made it honorable.

Isaiah 42:21—“The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable.”

Psalms 40:7-8—“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me: I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart” [*compare Hebrews 10:5, 7*].

5. While here on earth, Jesus gave us a careful example of obedience to the Fourth Commandment: the Sabbath day which, at the Creation, He had given to mankind.

Luke 4:16—“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”

6. His custom should be ours, for He is our example. He gave us an example of obedience that we should follow.

1 John 2:6—“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”

1 Peter 2:21—“Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.”

John 15:10—“I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”

1 John 5:3—“For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments.”

Christ also taught that others should obey the law of God, as He was doing.

Matthew 7:21—“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:19—“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 19:16-17—“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him . . . If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

However, God's faithful ones fully realize that they are incapable, in their own strength, of rendering this obedience to God. We must all lay hold of the enabling grace of Christ.

John 15:5—“I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.”

WHAT WAS ABOLISHED AT THE CROSS?

It is charged that, when He died on Calvary, Christ destroyed the moral law of Ten Commandments. But the Bible does not teach this.

Here are the passages used to show that God's law has been abolished:

Hebrews 10:7-9—“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law. Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.”

Ephesians 2:15—“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.”

What do those passages mean? They cannot mean that either the moral law of Ten Commandments or the Creation Sabbath were destroyed at Calvary.

Hebrews 10:7-9 is talking about the sacrificial and offering laws. It says so. Christ's sacrificial death on the cross eliminated the sacrificial laws (also called ceremonial laws). The death of God's Lamb did away with the offering of lambs on the altar. The sacrificial laws were taken away and the moral law of Ten Commandments established.

Ephesians 2:15 is talking about “the commandments contained in ordinances.” The ordinances were the ceremonial laws. By His death, Christ eliminated the sacrificial laws and, as our Mediator, brought us to God.

1. Jesus did not come to earth to destroy the moral law! Keep in mind that it was because that law could not be abolished that Christ had to die. Christ did not die so we could keep sinning.

He died to provide us miraculous divine grace to empower us to keep the law.

1 John 5:2—“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.”

Revelation 14:12—“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

2. Some today claim that there has been no law since the death of Christ. But the Bible teaches that if there is no law, there is no sin! Indeed, without the law to identify sin, we cannot know what sin is. Apart from the presence of the law, sin does not exist.

Romans 4:15—“Where no law is, there is no transgression.”

Romans 5:13—“Sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

Romans 3:20—“For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 7:7—“I had not known sin but by the law.”

1 John 3:4—“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.”

It is the Ten Commandment law of God that the saints will keep. When asked, “Which law?” Jesus replied by naming several of the Ten Commandments (*Matt 19:17-19*). And the Apostle James did likewise (*James 2:10-12*).

3. It is the ceremonial law, the law of Old Testament sacrifices, which ended at the cross.

The only thing abolished at the cross was the

ceremonial law, contained in ordinances. They were the sacrificial laws. After Christ's death, it was no longer necessary to sacrifice lambs at the Temple, for Christ, our Lamb, had died. But, after the death of Christ, we were still obligated to keep the moral law.

Daniel 9:26-27 predicted that, at His death, Christ would "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." And the Apostle Paul tells us that this is exactly what happened. When Christ died, the ceremonial ordinances were blotted out. The sacrificial services in the Temple no longer had meaning in the eyes of God.

Colossians 2:14—"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

Ephesians 2:15-16—"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

A leading Protestant writer, Dr. Albert Barnes, in commenting on Colossians 2:16, said this:

"But the use of the term ['sabbaths'] in the plural number, and the connection, show that he [Paul] had his eye on a great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, part of the moral law,—and not on the moral law or the Ten Commandments. No part of the

moral law—not one of the Ten Commandments—could be spoken as a shadow of things to come.”—*Dr. Albert Barnes, Commentary on Colossians 2:16.*

The “shadowy laws” were the ones that foreshadowed the coming of Christ: the slaying of the lambs and goats, the keeping of the yearly Passover, etc. All these ceremonial laws were taken away by the death of Christ.

Hebrews 10:1-4—“For the [sacrificial] law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have cease to be offered? . . . But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.”

- The moral law is a perfect law (*Ps 19:7; 119:172, 142; Rom 7:12*). The ceremonial law was imperfect (*Heb 7:18-19; 10:1-4*).

- The moral law is in itself spiritual (*Rom 7:14*). The ceremonial law was not in itself spiritual (*Heb 9:10*).

- The moral law was spoken directly by God Himself (*Deut 4:12-13, 22-23; Ex 20:1*). The ceremonial law was spoken by Moses (*Lev 1:1-2; 7:37-38*).

- The moral law was written by the Lord Himself upon two tables of enduring stone (*Deut 5:22; Ex 31:18*). The ceremonial law was written by Moses in a book (*Ex 34:27; Deut 31:9*).

• **The moral law is eternal, requiring obedience from all (Rom 3:31; Matt 5:17; Luke 16:17; Matt 19:17; 1 Cor 7:19; Rev 22:14). The ceremonial law was abolished at the cross; therefore obedience to it is not required from anyone today (Eph 2:15; Col 2:14-17; Acts 15:24).**

These sacrificial laws included yearly holy days, or yearly “sabbaths.” The weekly Sabbath was given to mankind at the foundation of the world and is the fourth of the Ten Commandments.

But the yearly sabbaths were gatherings for special sacrificial service and foreshadowed the death of Christ. At those services, there were special “meat offerings” and “drink offerings.” A list of the yearly sabbaths will be found in Leviticus 23:4-44.

The weekly seventh-day Sabbath is called “the Sabbath” in the Bible, but the yearly sabbaths are easily identified. When mentioned together, an “s” is added; they were the “sabbaths” or “sabbath days.” All those yearly gatherings were abolished at the cross. Paul calls them (and their meat and drink offerings) a “shadow.”

Colossians 2:16-17—“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

Hebrews 10:1—“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

This is because the meaning of the Temple ser-

vices ended when Christ died. At that moment a hand reached down from heaven and tore the veil of the Temple in two, thus desecrating it and destroying its significance:

Matthew 27:50-51—“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”

Hebrews 10:7-9—“Then said I [Christ], Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law. Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.”

The first—the shadow laws and ceremonies—was taken away by the death of Christ, that He might solidly establish by His death the principle that man must obey God—and, through the merits of Christ, he can be empowered to do it!

MORE BIBLE FACTS ABOUT THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

It is commonly agreed that God gave us the seventh-day Sabbath, at Creation, and commanded us to keep it throughout the Bible. But it is charged that God let fallible men change it to Sunday several centuries after the Bible was finished.

The truth is that men made that change without God's permission. We should still keep the

Bible Sabbath today, not Sunday.

1. The Sabbath was given to all mankind at the Creation of this world.

The seventh-day Sabbath was given to mankind on the seventh day of Creation Week.

Genesis 2:1-3—“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.”

God dedicated and set aside the Sabbath as a rest day—2,000 years before the first Jew. Abraham is considered by all to have been the first Jew. He lived about 2000 B.C. Biblical records indicate that the Creation of this world took place about 4000 B.C. So the Bible Sabbath is not Jewish! It is for mankind; it is for all the world.

Mark 2:27—“The Sabbath was made for man.”

2. The Sabbath is a memorial of Creation and our salvation.

First, it is a memorial of Creation.

Exodus 31:17—“It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.”

As a memorial of the Creation of this world, the Sabbath cannot pass away without first having this world pass away—and creating a new one! Our planet could not have a new or different Sabbath day, without having it first hurled into oblivion—and then a new planet created from noth-

ing. But no such event has occurred.

Second, the Sabbath is a symbol of our salvation. When we keep it, we tell all the world that we belong to God and that we serve and obey Him. The seventh-day Sabbath is a sign of our conversion, sanctification, and salvation:

Exodus 31:13—“Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”

Ezekiel 20:12—“Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.”

Ezekiel 20:20—“And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.”

But what about Christ's resurrection? Nowhere in Scripture were we told to keep any day in honor of Christ's resurrection. To do so is unscriptural. On the contrary, to set aside the Creation and sanctification Sabbath of the Bible—for another day of the week—and excuse it by saying that we do so “in honor of Christ's resurrection”—is indeed to do a very daring thing. Who dare presume to set aside the Memorial of Creation and salvation for any reason! To knowingly do so flies in the face of repeated, direct, Biblical commands by the God of heaven. To do so denies that He is our Creator and Redeemer.

If we abandon the Bible Sabbath and keep another day holy, in the Judgment what excuse can we offer? There is no Bible reason for keeping the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh

day.

3. Christ's disciples faithfully kept the Bible Sabbath, not Sunday.

The disciples had been with Jesus for three and a half years and had listened closely to His teachings. What they did at the time of His death on Calvary shows what He taught them. The sacred importance of the seventh-day Sabbath was of such concern to them that they would not even prepare the body of Jesus properly for burial on Friday, lest they transgress the Fourth Commandment.

Mark 15:42, 47-16:1-3—"And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath . . . Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where He was laid.

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

For more on this, read Luke 23:53-24:2.

4. According to the New Testament, the Apostles of Jesus always kept the Bible Sabbath.

Read Acts 13:14; Acts 13:42; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:1-2.

Paul supported himself by tentmaking; and then, on the Sabbath, he would preach the gospel.

Acts 18:3-4, 11—"Because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their

occupation, they were tentmakers . . . And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks . . . He continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them."

Paul's manner was the same as Christ's custom: to keep the Bible Sabbath (Acts 17:1-2; Luke 4:16).

Paul never taught that the moral law was, or could be, set aside. It will ever govern the conduct of mankind:

Romans 3:31—"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

Romans 6:1-2—"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Romans 7:7—"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

Paul clearly saw that the problem was that we needed to obey the law; there was nothing wrong with the requirements of the law itself.

Romans 7:12—"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

1 Corinthians 7:19—"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but [that which is important is] the keeping of the commandments of God."

The moral standard that governs mankind was not relaxed or destroyed by the death of Christ; for, indeed, it is through the merits of Christ's sacrifice that we can be empowered to keep that law.

Matthew 1:21—"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Jesus saves us from our sins, not in our sins. And since sin is the breaking of the Ten Commandments, it is obvious that He saves us by enabling us, strengthening us, to keep that law.

1 John 3:4—"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

The other Apostles saw this same great truth, that the moral standard that governs mankind was not relaxed or destroyed by the death of Christ:

James 1:22-25; 2:10-12, 17-18—"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed . . . For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty . . . Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

1 John 5:2-3—"By this we know that we love the

children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”

5. God predicted, in Scripture, that men would later try to change the Law of God—especially the “time law.”

The Bible Sabbath is very important—for it is the very center of our worship of God! If men were later to try to change it to another day, we should surely expect a Bible prophecy saying that it would happen.

Daniel 7:25—“And he [the little horn power] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into His hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

The church of the Dark Ages was to rule the world for 1260 years; and, during this time, it would try to tear out God’s holy Time Law and put a counterfeit in its place. Oh, what blasphemy men can dream up, when they are tempted by Satan to gain religious control of their fellow men!

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4—“For that day [the second coming of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.”

God said:

Ezekiel 20:20—“And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.”

After the New Testament was finished and the

Apostles had died, men tried to transfer the sacredness from the seventh to the first day of the week. They tried to change the "time law."

Roman Catholic: "It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday. Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church."—*Priest Brady, in an address at Elizabeth, N.J., March 17, 1903; reported in the Elizabeth, N.J., News of March 18, 1903.*

"You may search the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."—*James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers, chapter 8.*

"If Protestants would follow the Bible, they should worship God on the Sabbath day. In keeping the Sunday they are following a law of the Catholic Church."—*Albert Smith, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, replying for the cardinal, in a letter of February 10, 1920.*

"We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty."—*Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, June 20, 1894; The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII, p. 304.*

"Prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says, No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedi-

ence to the command of the Holy Catholic Church.”—**Priest Thomas Enright, CSSR, President of Redemptorist College, Kansas City, MO, in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas Weekly Call, February 22, 1884, and the American Sentinel, a New York Roman Catholic journal, in June 1893, p. 173.**

“Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act . . . AND THE ACT IS A MARK of her ecclesiastical power.”—*From the office of Cardinal Gibbons, through Chancellor H. F. Thomas, November 11, 1895.*

How important it is that we obey the commandments of God rather than the commandments of men.

Romans 6:16—“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?”

Matthew 4:10—“It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

Matthew 15:9—“But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

1 Kings 18:21—“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

“If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.”

—John 14:23

*Chapter Seven**Bible Facts
about How to Come
to Christ*

— Part One —

How Can I Come to Christ?

Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. It is transgression of God's law - the law of love - that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. "God is love" is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass.

Jesus came to live among men to reveal the infinite love of God. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God.

It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suf-

*—Summary of the book, *Steps to Christ*, in the author's own words. (For additional information on this abridgement, please turn to page 9.)*

ferred and died. He became a "Man of Sorrows," that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not make Him willing to save. No, no! "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." *John 3:16*. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption.

What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God.

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil.

It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. To all, there is but one an-

swer, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." *John 1:29*. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us that we may be transformed into His likeness, and be restored to fellowship with the ministering angels, to harmony and communion with the Father and the Son.

How shall a man be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ?

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.

But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart.

The prayer of David, after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness, to be restored to harmony and communion with God. A repentance such as this is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ.

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will. If we refuse, what more can

He do? Study God's Word prayerfully. As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up in despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that "Christ came into the world to save sinners" and that you may be saved (*1 Timothy 1:15*).

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." *Proverbs 28:13*. The conditions of obtaining the mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. Those who have not humbled their souls before God, in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first step of acceptance. We must be willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the Word of truth. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. True confession is always of a specific character and acknowledges particular sins. All confession should be definite and to the point. It is written, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *1 John 1:9*.

God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." *Jeremiah 29:13*. The whole heart must be yielded, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness.

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the

soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.

In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him. There are those who profess to serve God while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worthless.

When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Such do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer.

Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, "What has Christ given for me?" The Son of God gave all - life and love and suffering - for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him? What do we give up, when we give all? A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view.

Many are inquiring, "How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?" You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of

sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair.

What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can *choose* to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not *now choose* to be Christians.

Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.

As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, of its power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon

it with abhorrence. It is peace that you need. You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart.

Then believe that He does this *because He has promised*. The gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours. You are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise, God supplies the fact. Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, "I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God promised."

—Summary of Steps to Christ, pages 9 to 51, in the author's own words.

– Part Two –

How Can I Remain True to Christ?

Jesus says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." *Mark 11:24*. There is a condition to this promise - that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we *have* received them.

Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought

with a price. Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, "I am Christ's; I have given myself to Him," and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him.

Here is where thousands fail; they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His Word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor.

Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of His dear Son.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." *2 Corinthians 5:17.*

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in this process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they have become. Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best

energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him. There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God.

There are two errors against which the children of God especially need to guard: The first is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, which can make us holy.

The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

Obedience is the fruit of faith. Righteousness is defined by the standard of God's holy law, as expressed in the ten commandments (*Ex 20:3-20*). That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption. The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been - just what it was in paradise before the Fall of our first parents - perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your

will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer. This is evidence that Satan's delusions are losing their power. No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His character. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.

The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. Again it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandman. It is God who brings the bud to bloom and the flower to fruit. It is by His power that the seed develops.

As the flower turns to the sun, that the bright beams may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that heaven's light may shine upon us, that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ.

Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." *Colossians 2:6*. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him - by giving and taking. You are to give all, - your heart,

your will, your service - give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all - Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper - to give you power to obey.

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence, it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ.

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power, save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie - to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today.

Jesus prayed for us, and He asked that we might be one with Him, even as He is one with the Father. What a union is this! Thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall “grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” *Ephesians 4:15*.

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing.

Our Saviour’s joy was in the uplifting and redemption of fallen men. For this He counted not His life dear to Himself, but endured the cross, despising the shame. When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father’s care. Those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it. This spirit is the sure outgrowth of a soul truly converted. No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we shall have something to tell. We shall seek to present to others the attractions of Christ and the unseen realities of the world to come. There will be an intensity of desire to follow in the path that Jesus trod.

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their

Creator. The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. Strength comes by exercise. We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. With a loving spirit we may perform life's humblest duties "unto the Lord." *Colossians 3:23*. If the love of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the life. You are not to wait for great occasions or to expect extraordinary abilities before you go to work for God. The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others.

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. If we will but listen, Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. God's created works will teach us precious lessons of obedience and trust.

No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark. If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God.

God speaks to us through His providential works and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. God speaks to us in His Word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption. Fill the whole heart with the words of God. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven.

The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song

of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? As we meditate upon the Saviour, there will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like Him whom we adore.

The Bible was written for the common people. The great truths necessary for salvation are made as clear as noonday. There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. But there is little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Bible. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained.

Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory.

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. How must God esteem the human race, since He gave His Son to die for them and appoints His Holy Spirit to be man's teacher and continual guide!

Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a

friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith?

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of prayer. Yet prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence.

There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers:

One is that we feel our need of help from Him. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions.

Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing

that we desire is presumption.

When we come to God in prayer, we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts.

Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience.

We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God.

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance.

Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He is not indifferent to the wants of His children.

We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. If Christians would associate together, speaking to each other of the love of God and the precious truths of redemption, their own hearts would be refreshed and they would refresh one another.

We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of

conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. As we express our gratitude, we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts.

Many are at times troubled with the suggestions of skepticism. God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. Disguise it as they may, the real cause of doubt and skepticism, in most cases, is the love of sin. We must have a sincere desire to know the truth and a willingness of heart to obey it.

—Summary of Steps to Christ, pages 51 to 111, in the author's own words.

"As the heaven is high above the earth,
so great is His mercy toward them
that fear Him."

—Psalm 103:11

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of
man, the things which God hath
prepared for them that love Him."

—1 Corinthians 2:9

"The meek shall inherit the earth, and
shall delight themselves in the
abundance of peace."

—Psalm 37:11

Appendix

Thirty-one Days of Bible Promises

Here is a monthful of precious Bible promises. Each day, read one, memorize it, and take it with you through the day. There are four promises for each day in the calendar month. Shorter ones are easier to memorize.

1—"The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

—*Psalm 84:11*

"The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me."

—*Psalm 116:6*

"In God will I praise His Word . . . in God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."

—*Psalm 56:10-11*

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by faith of Him."

—*Ephesians 3:12*

2—"I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

—*Jeremiah 29:11*

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings."

—*Isaiah 3:10*

"A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again."

—*Proverbs 24:16*

"The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him."

—*Lamentations 3:25*

3—"Ye shall serve the Lord your God . . . and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee."

—*Exodus 23:25*

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper."

—*2 Chronicles 20:20*

"Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

—*2 Corinthians 13:11*

"To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

—*Hebrews 13:16*

4—"I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."

—*Micah 7:7*

"But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto Him."

—*Psalms 4:3*

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

—*2 Timothy 2:12*

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles."

—*Proverbs 21:23*

5—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

—*Psalms 34:19*

"The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

—*Psalms 34:22*

"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

—*2 Corinthians 8:12*

"He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

—*Hebrews 5:9*

6—"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

—*John 1:12*

"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed."

—*Psalms 37:25-26*

"Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

—*1 Peter 1:13*

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee."

—*Isaiah 41:10*

7—"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

—*1 John 3:3*

"The Lord is my strength and song."

—*Exodus 15:2*

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

—2 Corinthians 12:9

"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy: He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."

—Zephaniah 3:17

8—"Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments."

—Psalm 112:1

"A soft answer turneth away wrath . . . He that is slow to anger appeaseth strife."

—Proverbs 15:1, 18

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

—Hebrews 11:26

"Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."

—John 15:2, 5

9—"Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments."

—Psalm 112:1

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

—John 15:7

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."

—Psalm 41:1

"Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

—Proverbs 29:25

10—"His God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him."
—*Isaiah 28:26*

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"
—*Hebrews 1:14*

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

—*Psalms 126:5-6*

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City."

—*Revelation 22:14*

11—"Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things."

—*Proverbs 28:5*

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

—*Philippians 1:6*

"I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart."
—*Jeremiah 24:7*

"Thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress."

—*Psalms 71:3*

12—"They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses."

—*Psalms 107:19*

"Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

—*Jude 24*

"Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."

—*Jeremiah 7:23*

"If thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."

—*Exodus 23:22*

13—"He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

—*Isaiah 2:3*

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

—*1 Corinthians 2:9*

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

—*Isaiah 54:13*

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will shew them His covenant."

—*Psalms 25:14*

14—"We are saved by hope."

—*Romans 8:24*

"This God is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death."

—*Psalms 48:14*

"As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him."

—*Psalms 103:11*

"The integrity of the upright shall guide them . . . The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them . . . Such as are upright in their way are His delight."

—*Proverbs 11:3, 6, 20*

15—"Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin."

—*Exodus 34:7*

"God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a City."

—*Hebrews 11:16*

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."

—*Isaiah 41:17*

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

—*2 Corinthians 6:17*

16—"If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

—*John 14:23*

"The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility."

—*Proverbs 15:33*

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain; for the former things are past away."

—*Revelation 21:4*

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

—*Psalms 1:1*

17—"Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

—*Psalms 119:165*

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High, to show forth Thy loving kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night."

—*Psalms 92:1-2*

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

—*Hebrews 11:6*

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

—*Isaiah 63:9*

18—"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

—*Philippians 4:19*

"Our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name."

—*Psalms 33:21*

"The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

—*Psalms 37:11*

"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love."

—*John 15:10*

19—"To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

—*Romans 8:6*

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word."

—*Psalms 119:9*

"The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul."

—*Proverbs 13:25*

"O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."

—*Psalms 66:8-9*

20—"The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek Him; your heart shall live forever."

—*Psalms 22:26*

"Who remembered us in our low estate; for His mercy endureth forever."

—*Psalms 136:23*

"The Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

—*Deuteronomy 20:4*

"Through God we shall do valiantly; for He it is that shall tread down our enemies."

—*Psalms 60:12*

21—"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

—*Psalms 37:16*

"God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

—*1 Corinthians 2:10*

"In famine He shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword."

—*Job 5:20*

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

—*Matthew 11:29*

22—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

—*1 Timothy 1:15*

"The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him: and the Lord shall cover him all the day long."

—*Deuteronomy 33:12*

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

—*1 John 1:9*

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

—*Proverbs 18:10*

23—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

—*Isaiah 55:1*

"He shall save His people from their sins."

—*Matthew 1:21*

"Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

—*Psalms 37:3*

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

—*Proverbs 3:6*

24—"Thus saith the Lord: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."
—*Isaiah 49:25*

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and His children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

—*Proverbs 14:26-27*

"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 Jehovah is everlasting strength."

—*Isaiah 26:3-4*

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."

—*Proverbs 10:22*

25—"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."
—*Psalms 34:18*

"Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart."
—*Isaiah 65:14*

"Whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent."

—*Acts 13:26*

"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
—*Matthew 23:12*

26—"When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."

—*John 16:13*

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His Judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

—*Zephaniah 2:3*

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

—*Ephesians 1:7*

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

—*1 Corinthians 2:12*

27—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

—*John 10:10*

"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him."

—*Psalms 147:11*

"I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord, and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee."

—*Jeremiah 39:17-18*

"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

—*2 Peter 3:13*

28—"By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

—*Proverbs 16:6*

"The Lord taketh pleasure in His people; He will beautify the meek with salvation."

—*Psalms 149:4*

"Evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."

—*Psalms 37:9*

"The Lord preserveth all them that love Him."

—*Psalms 145:20*

29—"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord,
that walketh in His ways." —*Psalms 128:1*

"It shall be well with them that fear God, which
fear before Him." —*Ecclesiastes 8:12*

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him,
because we keep His commandments, and do
those things that are pleasing in His sight."

—*1 John 3:22*

"Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble:
Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause thine
ear to hear."

—*Psalms 10:17*

30—"The lips of the wise shall preserve them."

—*Proverbs 14:3*

"He that is slow to wrath is of great
understanding."

—*Proverbs 14:29*

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the
earth."

—*Matthew 5:5*

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a
crown of Life."

—*Revelation 2:10*

31—"His mercy is on them that fear Him, from
generation to generation."

—*Luke 1:50*

"If any man love God, the same is known of Him."

—*1 Corinthians 8:3*

"He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply
thee."

—*Deuteronomy 7:13*

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be
with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not
overflow thee."

—*Isaiah 43:2-3*

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Vindicating the Character of God

FROM THE HOLY BIBLE

Stepping outside to your front porch, you are just in time to see your son strike the dog with a stick.

Bringing your boy into the house, you administer justice. Lifting him up, you set the child on the top of the cookstove. Then you turn the burner on beneath him—and leave him there a week.

—That would NOT be a just punishment!

Who would do such a thing to his son? Only an absolute monster. The punishment does not match the crime.

Yet people are taught that God has been doing worse to people for centuries. They say that, for the sins of a short lifetime—He burns people throughout all eternity.

The God of heaven is infinitely kinder, wiser, and more just than earthly parents. He is a God of love, and is now pleading with everyone to come to Him for comfort and salvation.

Some people during their lifetime do a lot of evil to others while some do far less. Yet in the final judgment, God will mete out an entirely just punishment to all who choose to be lost. *That punishment will be very brief.* Then will follow the silence of eternal non-existence.

Inside this book is Bible proof. Read it and learn that God is good, always good.