

WHAT IF

???

Dare to Ask

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What If ?

Introduction

Do you remember as a kid asking the ‘what if’ questions or have you been around any four year olds lately? What if the sky were green? What if I mix up this stuff under the bathroom sink with that stuff over there? What if I put on a super hero costume and jump off the kitchen table? What if I take my gold fish out of the bowl to play with? What if I put tape in my little sister’s hair...

Now that we’re all grown up, our ‘what ifs’ have a lot more to do with worry than wonderment. What if I lose my job? What if she or he rejects me? What if my child gets hurt or sick? What if..., and just fill in the blank. Life often becomes a frantic roller coaster ride with us caught between working to stave off our worries and seeking out distractions to avoid thinking of them, to the point

that we are too busy and too occupied to ask the most important questions of life.

What will bring me true happiness in the long run and not just immediate gratification right now? Is there any more to this life than meets the eye and if so how do I find it? And the question of all questions, is there someone out there, larger than life, who sees me, knows me and actually cares about and for me? What if there were? What if?

What If ?

Chapter 1 - Perception

From the moment he laid eyes on her, Ben knew that Laurie was the one for him and so did Laurie; that is she knew that Ben was smitten, completely enamored and helplessly in love with her.

Laurie took her time, smart woman, but eventually Ben's undying ardor and passion had its effect, and she fell in love too; it was either that or 'kick him to the curb', because he wouldn't or rather couldn't leave her alone.

Young and in love, there's nothing else quite like it. That was Ben and Laurie and all was going beautifully until Ben's dad came into the mix.

No, it wasn't that he disapproved, in fact he wasn't even in the picture really, hadn't been since Ben was four. It was that Laurie, always the practical type and wise beyond her years, insisted that Ben make up with his dad if he ever hoped to keep her love.

Now Ben had no interest in getting to really know his dad who had never been there for him during his growing up years, but what choice did he have, he was smitten with Laurie and if the only way to keep her was to make up with his old man, well he might as well get on with it or at least pretend to, for as Ben well knew, once Laurie had set her mind to something there was no turning it.

It wasn't that Ben hated his dad either, he didn't anything him. Like so many others, Ben's dad had been a non-factor throughout most of his life. As a boy his mother had always told him that his dad didn't care about him enough even to send him birthday presents and that the "good for nothing so and so wouldn't even pay to support him." In fact his whole view of his dad was shaped by the negative comments of his mom, and he believed what he heard.

Then the "Laurie factor" came into play. She had a way with people getting them to tell secrets they swore they'd take to their grave. Ben used to tease her that she ought to get an office and a couch and charge for her ability to get others to spill their

guts.

It happened at one of those mandatory visits brought on by Laurie's insistence when Laurie ask Ben's dad the direct question that Ben wanted to avoid at all cost. "Why weren't you involved in your son's life while he was growing up?" All Ben wanted was to crawl under the carpet but instead of that he sat and listened while his dad broke down and told them a story that turned his whole world upside down.

You see, it wasn't by choice that Ben's dad hadn't been involved in his young son's life, the courts decided unfairly to give full custody to Ben's mom. He told them both how hurt he'd been by that event and he also brought out a large box of cards and letters that he had written to his son over the years, all marked "returned to sender." Something awakened in Ben and his perception of his dad as an uncaring, unloving father melted away in the sunlight of this new understanding. Then came out the gifts that were sent back in the same way and last of all the box of cashed child support checks... After that there was no holding

back the dam of emotion that had been held back years of unrealized relationship. Tears can be healing but only if accompanied by the awakening knowledge that comes from suddenly finding the *truth*. In this case the truth that not only did his dad care about him, but his dad cared about and loved him beyond what he thought possible.

Now *what if* something similar were true for all of us? What if we all have a divine parent, not just the combined forces of nature, but a personal creator God of infinite intelligence, power and wisdom, a being as far beyond our comprehension as the universe is to our complete understanding of time and space? What if this Being loved and cared for you and me on an intimate, personal level and wanted a one on one relationship with us? And what if we, just like Ben, entirely misunderstand what this God is like all because of what we'd been told about Him? What if, just as in Ben's story, this Being also had an enemy who has gone on a worldwide smear campaign using propaganda and lies to cause us to misunderstand even fear, despise and ultimately disbelieve the existence of this God?

We tend to think that our view of reality and of the world is of our own making, but it really isn't. Think about it! Where did you get the information to form your ideas and opinions? You'd have to say from your parents or care givers, family and friends, and society at large. But what if our sources are wrong or skewed?

What if there really is a God but like Ben's father who was misrepresented to Ben, God has also been misrepresented to us? If our picture of Him is formed either by someone else's false information or by our own imperfect faulty perception, then we will never really know what God is like? If so, both God and we would be robbed of the relationship that such a divine Parent would want to have with us.

Let your imagination run wild for just a minute. What if 1) There is a God who is real, 2) this God loves you unconditionally, 3) He also wants to *know* you and wants to be known by you, 4) He has prepared a place *only for you* to live with Him for all eternity! By way of comparison what if you woke up one morning to discover, not that you had

just won the lottery, not that an uncle you never knew had just died and left you his entire estate worth billions. No, what if you woke up one morning to discover you were in line to the Throne! Not the Throne of England however, not even the Throne of the world - if there were such a thing. No, think bigger, way bigger! What if you woke up one day to discover that you were in line to the Throne of the entire universe! That you were appointed queen or king to share the throne with the ruler of the universe.

What if this was no dream at all but the real deal. The funny thing about our so called 'modern' world is, it tells us it's OK to believe just about anything you want to, anything you feel like believing is OK except One thing, and that is this. There is a God who loves you and desires you to be with Him so much that he sacrificed Himself towards that end. Not only that but this God has already adopted you as His child and as such you are invited to sit with Him on His throne.

Sounds like a fairy tale for sure, but *what if* the stories we grew up with had more to do with reality

than our busy crazy day to day life does? What if reality, true reality, exists more beyond the curtain of the invisible world rather than the visible one we live in? What if?

What If ?

Chapter 2 - Reality

So what if there is more than meets the eyes? What if we really do have an all knowing all loving heavenly parent who is also *the* God of the entire universe? What if we went our whole life and never *really* discovered that? Something to think about!

However, in order to think rationally about this one must first come to terms with the way our modern society teaches us to think. It tells us that all spiritual truth is relative. In other words it depends on *you* the viewer and *your* experience, and so what is true for you is not necessarily true for me and vice versa. It teaches us that anyone who claims to hold absolute truth is either old fashioned, naive, bigoted or all three.

It's funny how when one tries to use this same line of thinking in the physical world it doesn't work out so well. Take for example the law of gravity. Let's say someone decided that law might

be OK for some people but that it didn't apply to them. In fact they became so convinced that the law of gravity didn't hold sway over them that they decide to prove it by jumping off a sixty story building! You know how that would end up, unless they had a parachute or a bungee cord all they would do is prove that the law of gravity is no respecter of persons.

So why do we humans think that the spiritual realm is any different from the physical? If there is a God who is separate from and infinitely superior to life on this planet, do we really think that by believing He doesn't exist we can blank Him out of existence? Or on the other hand, if there is no God, do we really think we can create one simply by believing one into existence? The greatest scientist in the world cannot create even a bug or a worm; they can't even make a living microbe! Yet more and more people today, in our post-modern western society, believe that they can create reality including their own version of God, with their own mind.

So let's consider the possibility of One God and

Ultimate truth. But before doing so, we must agree to some ground rules. First off, truth is independent of human perception, thought and reasoning.

Second, truth does not belong to the majority! How many times did your mother say, “If everyone else jumped off a cliff, would you do it too?” Likewise, even if the whole world decided that $1 + 1 = 3$, $1 + 1$ would still equal 2.

Thirdly, it is possible to know and understand truth. Just look at all of the advances in science and medicine over the last 100 years. None of those would have been possible without knowing and at least partially understanding the truth behind the discoveries.

Last of all, truth belongs to whatever entity set it up and not to the ones who are only learning of it. Or another way to say that is **the pursuit of truth is really the pursuit of God.**

What’s that, you ask? OK, think of it this way. Who decided the sun was going to come up today? Who put into place an atmosphere perfect to sustain both plant and animal life? And then there

is the question to top all questions. Where did you come from? There are traditionally two basic answers to that question. One is that you and I evolved from a lower life-form over millions of years, and the other is that we were created by a vastly superior and intelligent being.

So imagine you were taking a college course that required you to research out the truth of where you came from? Pretend that you weren't allowed to just give your opinion and back it up with the professional opinions of others who shared your belief. Instead to get an A you had to do completely unbiased research with no preconceived conclusion. Getting an A in that class suddenly became a lot more difficult didn't it? It just so happens that in the final score of life, that is exactly what each one of us will have to do if we really want to find out the truth for ourselves. Most people are either too busy or too complacent or too opinionated or too... you finish the sentence, to do this for themselves. And not just to answer this question but all the rest of life's most important questions.

The following may be an oversimplification of the topic but to illustrate the difference that belief makes in the life, take the two extremes of belief in the theories of origin to their ultimate conclusion. The belief that you came to be as the result of chance, evolving over hundreds of millions of years, means you do not believe in a personal God who created you directly. If you don't believe in a personal, all powerful God who created you and who thereby knows what is best for you, and has the right to expect your love, trust and obedience, then you have just become your own god.

If on the other hand to you do decide to believe in a personal all powerful creator God, it is Him who you will worship instead of yourself.

- 1) ~~ONE GOD~~
- 2) ~~ULTIMATE TRUTH~~
- 3) RELATIVE TRUTH
- 4) MANY gods*

FOUNDATION OF
EVOLUTION

- 1) ONE GOD
- 2) ULTIMATE TRUTH
- 3) ~~RELATIVE TRUTH~~
- 4) ~~MANY gods~~

FOUNDATION OF
CREATION BELIEF

*A god is anything or anyone, including yourself, who you worship. In other words, if you love and trust in yourself, if you do whatever *your* heart desires and your body feels like, then you are involved in self-worship. Most people in our culture find this to be the acceptable norm. Then there are a million and one externals that can also be worshiped in a similar manner. Money, houses, cars, movie, music and sport stars, the list could go on and on.

So then the real problem many people have with believing in a creator God, is that to such a being, we the creatures, would owe our existence. That means such a being would deserve our worship and obedience. And that is the real reason so many are determined that intelligent design or creation is impossible and that all the scientific evidence only points only towards evolution.

BUT, above the confusing rush of our high-tech fast-paced

life, there is a solitary voice calling to all who care to listen.

And it says, “Come unto me all you ends of the earth, for

I am God and there is none other!”

Are you one who cares to listen? Are you one who wants more than what this world has to offer? Are you open to explore the realms that go beyond the physical world that we all live in? If you are willing to be open to the possibility of ONE GOD and Ultimate Unchangeable Truth, then take this challenge: At least once a day for the next few weeks say out loud or even just think to yourself this thought. “If there really is a creator God out there, who loves and cares for me, then please show yourself to me.”

What If?

Chapter 3 - Life

The planet Saturn makes for incredibly beautiful photos in a coffee table book, but it would be a disastrous tourist destination even if we could invent a space ship that could transport us there quickly. Made up almost entirely of Hydrogen and Helium, it has no solid surface that a space craft could land on.

For all the problems our planet has, it is precisely positioned and supplied to support life in a myriad different ways. Yet even all the right conditions to support life don't actually produce it. Science tells us that beside the right ingredients and conditions, even more paramount to production of life is information. We now have a map of the entire genome of human DNA, the magnificent blue print of the human body. Printed out in text it would fill the equivalent of 200 phone directories each 500 pages long. So where did all that information come from? Or put it another way,

who wrote the book on human life?

Modern Western culture's response is that it came through the slow and gradually upward evolutionary process. But because the answer to that question holds so much weight over the rest of life, it deserves a thoughtful looking into. For as long as history was written down man-kind has believed the world and all its life was created. To be sure the details varied from one story to another on exactly how that happened, but the common theme was that of creation. In western religious culture that theme took on an extremely ridged dogma. So much so that scientists and thinkers who questioned the accepted view were persecuted and some even paid with their life for their questionings.

And this raises the question, could it be that people of that era because so fed up with the churches' mind control that they were ready for any excuse to "throw out the baby with the bathwater" so to speak? If so that excuse was supplied by the man we all know as Charles Darwin.

Born in 1809 just after the great French

Revolution that saw the church violently kicked out of France, Charles Darwin was the first to research, document and publicize the now recognized facts of natural selection during his famous work among the Galapagos Islands. It was from these observations that his book “Origin of the Species” came about. Darwin was the first to observe and publicize the now recognized truth that life forms on this planet are constantly changing and adapting in order to survive. As individual members of a species are born with characteristics which help them to get food or escape their enemies, they are more likely to live, reproduce and pass on those characteristics to their offspring.

However there is a **world of difference** between the proven fact of natural selection and the belief that life on planet earth began so many billions of years ago from some primordial pond and evolved into the tremendous variation of plant and animal life that we see today!

Here is the problem, if the greatest minds in the best universities of science can't create life, how can anyone hold to the belief that it started by

chance? Or, let's just say for the sake of argument that someday man does figure out how to make a microbe that can live and reproduce, how many hours of investigation, study and failed attempts do you think it would take?

Here is something else to consider. In order to have the formation of life as we know it, we must have two items, the ingredients and the information on how to put those molecules together! Let's skip the first requirement and just assume that all of the right ingredients just happened to show up by random chance on planet earth - a major feat in itself. But there is a lot more to life than just stirring up all of the ingredients for even the simplest life form known to man. Something or someone must put them together, must organize the ingredients or all you will ever have is a chemical soup! So what about the possibility of this happening by chance, given just the right conditions over enough time and given enough lightning strikes?

To put this question into perspective, what if you took apart your car, I mean broke it down into

every individual piece, every single nut and bolt and then put it in a giant shaker for a million years. Would your car “come back to life” so to speak? What if you did that with all of the cars in the world today? It’s still hard to imagine even one engine being reassembled let alone a whole car. Now what if we took all those car parts and broke them down into steel, and plastic and rubber and poured them all together in a lake. Even if we had 100 billion years and all the lightening we could ask for, do you really think you would ever get your car back or even a variation of it that would actually run?

Yet that is exactly what the theory of life via random chance says. Life was formed without oversight, without direction, without any previous information, all on its own!

Natural selection itself does not work to explain how life began since it requires the reproduction of life from one generation to the next in order to work. Instead, pure chance is the only option given to anyone who believes there was no oversight in the appearance of life on our planet. **But isn’t it**

possible, given enough time, that life could appear by chance?

The non-creationist Nobel prize-winner Sir Fred Hoyle wrote about this in his book *Evolution from Space*. He states that the chances of even one information-bearing polymer, (these are foundational to all life), being formed by random chance are about the same as if our solar system were filled with blind people, shoulder to shoulder, all randomly shuffling Rubik's cubes. Then all of them, by pure chance, happened to solve the puzzle at the same time! **So the answer is a resounding "NO!"**

And because of our greater understanding of how complex life really is, more and more scientists believe that life on this planet was started when the "seeds of life" were sown here billions of years ago. There are three interesting things about such a theory. First of all, if aliens were able to "create" life or at least plant it, why not God! And then of course there is the question of where the aliens came from. Thirdly, this theory still relies on the idea that life evolved from the simple to the

complex over hundreds of millions of years.

But that at least has been proven to be fact, right? Or has it just been taught as fact in our science text books for so long that we've come to accept it as fact? Actually there is no observable scientific evidence for evolution where life changes from a lower to a higher form. All of the evidence relied on to support this theory is from digging up and trying to recreate the past. The problem with this approach is that while much can be learned by doing this, there is still no way to actually observe it happening. Therefore, until someone invents a time machine, we must rely on what the 'experts' tell us. But what if their story is biased?

Darwin's discovery of the process of natural selection doesn't explain how information is added to the genes, rather it only explain how those genes are switched on or off as doing so makes the organism more likely to survive. In fact there are plenty of examples in nature where supposed evolution in the upward direction is actually not upward at all. We find germs that are better able to survive in a hospital when they *lose* the ability to

absorb disinfectants, beetles that *lose* their wings and are then more likely to survive living by the ocean where those having wings are easily drowned by being blown into the water. In humans, sickle cell anemia is used by evolutionists to show "beneficial mutation" because those who carry the disease are less prone to malaria. However, it is caused by a damaged gene which generates a crippled form of hemoglobin. If it is inherited from both parents, it is a lethal disease. Hardly an argument in favor of evolution in the upward direction!

All of these examples in nature as well as many more show evidence of a downward trend rather than the upward one taught by the theory of evolution. In addition to this, no one has ever witnessed a transition from one family of plant or animal life to another. In fact, none of the examples of intermediaries or what are called "missing links" between dinosaurs and birds, monkeys and humans or any other two groups of animals have ever stood the test of time. They have all been shown to be either a mistake or an

outright fraud! Of course variation and natural selection are seen working to make changes within groups of animals. For example, geneticists tell us that all of the different kinds of dogs in our world, both tame and wild came from a common ancestor. But what there is no hard evidence for, even though it is commonly taught and accepted as fact, is cats *and* dogs, along with all other types of animals, come from a common ancestor that lived billions of years ago.

But so what, what difference does it make anyway? Isn't that simply an argument for those who just want to show off their knowledge? What difference does it really matter anyway? Here's the point, you can't believe either side based on argument alone. More than simple scientific observation is required to navigate through these waters. If that leaves you feeling uneasy, well then good, that is what this book is supposed to do; to unsettle you and to cause you to open your mind to new realms and possibilities.

What If?

Chapter 4 - What If?

The Lion was pacing to and fro about that empty land and singing a new song. It was softer and more lilting than the song by which he had called up the stars and the sun; a gentle, rippling music. And as he walked and sang the valley grew green with grass. It spread out from the Lion like a pool. It ran up the sides of the little hills like a wave. In a few minutes it was creeping up the lower slopes of the distant mountains, making the young world every moment softer. The light wind could now be heard ruffling the grass. Soon there were other things besides grass. The higher slopes grew dark with heather. Patches of rougher more bristling grass appeared in the valley. Digory did not know what they were until one began coming up quite close to him. It was a little spikey thing that grew dozens of arms and covered these arms with green and grew larger at

the rate of about an inch every two seconds. There were dozens of these things all around him now. They were nearly as tall as himself, he saw that they were. “Trees!” he exclaimed. (CS Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew*, pg 104,105 Scholastic 1988).

On page 356 of his book “Parallel Worlds” (2005), Michio Kaku explains the string theory this way.

“String theory allows us to view the subatomic particles as notes on a vibrating string. The laws of chemistry correspond to the melodies one can play on these strings. The laws of physics correspond to the laws of harmony that govern these strings. The universe is a symphony of stings and the mind of God can be viewed as cosmic music vibrating through hyperspace. If this analogy is valid, one must ask the next question, is there a composer? Did someone design the theory to allow for the richness of possible universes that we see in

string theory. If the universe is like a finely tuned watch, is there a watch maker?

What if there really was someone in the universe so awesome and so powerful that He could speak or sing and it happened just like that. Someone who had unlimited energy and could control it in a way to make matter, even living matter out of pure raw energy!

So imagine for a moment that you are transported out into the blackness of space and you come upon a planet lifeless and empty. There is rock, water and ice with little more. Then you sense a power like nothing you have ever felt before; pure unbounded energy, divinely controlled; Spirit of the living God! This presence moves across the vast ocean, completely empty of all life. Then the mystery and presence of eternal God speaks, “Let there be”, and there is. First light, then an atmosphere, next dry land and after that life of every kind; plants and animals, fish and birds, simply spoken into existence by the word of God.

There it hangs in space, a jewel of God’s

creative power, planet earth. But look again and behold, the God of all the universe is kneeling in the dirt! With his own hands He is shaping the first human being out of clay. The One who just finished speaking into existence a world full of every kind of plant and animal one could imagine, is now forming the crowning act with His own fingers. It is as if He wanted to have the most intimate of connections with this race of beings even from the very start.

After completing this world's first and greatest sculpture, God bends over the lifeless form and gives to mankind the kiss of life! In that kiss He breathed into us **the breath of life** and in that instant awareness and vitality filled that first human being, the father of our race. The mother of our race was soon to follow, and talk about saving the best for last.

The first wedding was a garden wedding and performed by none other than God! The One who holds the boundless reaches of space and time in His hands took out time to unite the first ever couple. There was no engagement period either. It

was love at first sight and married that same day. There was no need for waiting; they were quite literally made for each other; the picture of perfection. No defects of any kind whatsoever. They always thought of the other one first, they never said an unkind or impatient word to each other; honeymooning in the “Garden of Eden”!

This description of the beginning of life comes from chapters 1 and 2 of the book of Genesis. Genesis, or the book of beginnings, makes up the first book of a collection of 66 books, which all together, make up the Bible.

But so what? It’s the Bible and who believes those stories literally happened? Isn’t the story of Adam and Eve just ancient myth or poetic symbolism?

That’s a valid question for sure. Without a time machine, it’s hard to prove or disprove anything that allegedly happened ages ago. It’s the same problem we have with the theory of evolution,

nobody was there to see and report on it.

The reason that this little book is called ‘What If?’, is because it’s about possibilities; it’s about exploring for yourself. This is the only way for you to decide on your own what you believe is true. And so one must ask the question, what if there was and is a creator God who is the singular source of life on our planet? What if He made not only our world, but He also made and controls the universe? He would have to be powerful beyond our comprehension. What if this being were also a loving and caring God, a Heavenly parent as in chapter one; don’t you think He would want to communicate with His creatures, i.e. us humans?

If this is true however, such a God would have a problem. You see a God who fashioned and controls the universe, must have infinite power and wisdom. He must also be perfect in every respect. We humans on the other hand, are anything but perfect. Ever heard the expression “to error is human”? The problem is that when perfection and imperfection are brought together in the case of a perfect God and imperfect humans, imperfection is

consumed or literally burned up. Sort of like if you were to come from the pitch darkness of a cave into the direct noonday sun and then were forced to stare right into the sun; it would be blinding, overwhelming right? In the same way, if a perfect God were to speak to us face to face we would be instantly blinded; in fact we would be burned up by His incredible glory!

So what is a God like this to do? He would still want to reach out to us just as human parents want to connect with their children. What if the Bible, rather than a collection of old tales and human wisdom, is really the divine word of God brought to us through human instruments? What if there is something more to it than meets the eye? The only way you will ever know is to read it for yourself, to taste and see whether it is good or not. The acid test is does the Bible have the answers to *my* tough questions. For example, what's wrong with me? What's wrong with this crazy world? What's going to happen tomorrow? Where am I going? How did I get where I am today? "Is there anybody out there?" Who truly, loves me as I am, no questions

asked?

If you are willing to seek out the answers to these questions say the following prayer as you read the next chapter.

“If there really is a creator God out there, who loves and cares for me, then please show yourself to me.”

What if?

Chapter 5 - *True Love*

The last chapter asked what if the Bible was more than a collection of old fables. What if it really was God speaking to us?

This chapter, instead of raising questions and making arguments, will simply look at what the Bible says about God, who is He and what is He like? You see, the only way to know for yourself whether or not the Bible is the genuine thing, is to check it out. **If the Bible really does contain the words of Almighty God, then divine power must accompany the reading and contemplation of them.** Otherwise they are just human words, which can only be trusted to a certain point and must be interpreted by human expertise.

So imagine if God were to write you a personal letter, it might read something like this. Each thought is taken from a part of the Bible and the references are listed at the end of the chapter so insert your name in the blank and read on.

Dear _____,

Hello, I am God. I am the One who created you¹. *I love you*². I'm sure you've heard those words before from others who really meant, I want something from you or I love you so long as you...

But when I say *I love you* it means something entirely different, something out of your world. You see, I am God and I never change³. That means when I say I love you, I have always loved you and I always will love you. Since I am God, it is impossible for me to lie⁴ or ever change my attitude towards you. That means I am 100 percent reliable. Now where on earth have you ever experienced true love like that?

Please let me tell you more. I loved you before you were even born⁵ because I knew you back then. In fact I know you so well that I know how many hairs you have⁶. Now that's pretty intimate! Also, my love for you has no limits and is free of any conditions. I think you will agree that is very different from the love you are used to

experiencing from other humans.

You see, I am love⁷, it's not just a part of me. LOVE is who I am. My love is the greatest power in the entire universe and I am the source of that love. But My love is not just a feeling and I am not just some impersonal force field. I am Yahweh⁸, timeless eternal GOD ALMIGHTY. My love is so powerful that I must shield you from its full glory because you could not handle it at present. If you were to see my face, you could not live. My glory would consume you⁹.

Instead, I reveal myself to you through the natural world¹⁰. When you behold the beauty and intricacies of nature, I am there. I come to you through the still small voice of my Spirit who will lead you into ALL TRUTH if you let Him¹¹. I am with you when you open and read the inspired words of life, *My Holy Bible*¹². I had it written by My servants so that you could know Me. You can know who I am and what I am like, and then decide whether or not to join My kingdom.

Speaking of My kingdom, it is My love that forms the basis of My government. Let Me give

you an illustration of what I mean. Have you ever noticed how in nature, everything, whether alive or not, has its place. Everything gives and receives, gives and receives. It is one big circuit. The air you breathe works to provide life to both plant and animal. Plants produce oxygen without which animal life would soon die and animals breathe out carbon dioxide that plants need in order to live and grow.

The oceans give water through evaporation to the clouds which carry it inland and deposit it through rain and snow. From the hills and the mountains the water flows downstream and eventually ends up back in the ocean; on the way it give life wherever it flows. In a similar way, my love is the source of all life,¹³ and wherever it flows you see an abundance of life¹⁴. But where water stagnates, where there is no give and take, you have death, decay and stench.

Selfishness is like that. “The survival instinct” or “looking out for number one,” are only two of the many ways you can describe it. This terrible disease has been passed on to every last descendent

of your race by your first parents¹⁵. I didn't create your first parents to know selfishness, but they choose to stop trusting Me and My rule and to give their allegiance to My enemy¹⁶. By doing that they have infected the entire human race with this curse¹⁷.

I could have turned my back on you humans and let you go your own way, but I did not! My great heart of love would not allow Me to. Instead I formed a plan and carried it out. The most difficult thing I have ever done was to follow this plan through.¹⁸ It meant the greatest personal loss and sorrow I have ever or will ever experience. When faced with losing you forever, I chose this course in order to save you from extinction, from your own self destruction¹⁹.

You see you had separated yourselves from Me²⁰, your source of life. You had taken yourself out of the great circuit of My love, of giving and receiving, giving and receiving and placed yourselves on a straight line for destruction, on the path called selfishness²¹. This "straight line" means taking first and giving only when it suits

your purposes. It also means you became afraid and suspicious of Me²², your source of life. It means you hoard my gifts while running away from Me at the same time.

If I had not intervened, your course would have taken you out into the empty reaches of space, farther and farther from Me, where you would have died forever. But because I love you more than Myself, I gave Myself to you. In front of your road to destruction I dropped a wooden cross with My Only Son bleeding and dying, hanging upon it²³. All who choose His death as their own are united with Him in His resurrection²⁴ and are brought back into the circle of my Love. By this union with my Son, you are not only brought back into the circle, you are elevated to the status of sons and daughters of the God of the universe. You are kings and queens and will reign with my Son on His throne for all eternity²⁵.

The only thing I ask from you is that you not resist my love; that you accept the only way back to me that I have given to you; that you take the medicine I have provided, so to speak; that you

stop running away from me for I love you as you are. I don't blame or condemn you for things you have done. I'm not out to "get you". No, instead I'm pursuing you; you are my child and I love you. I know you inside and out and I want you to know and love me back.

On the other hand if you are trying to reach me on your own or by some other method than the One I gave to you, please stop and accept the only way back to Me. Please don't insist on helping yourself, on making it on your own. All you will do is to hurt yourself in the end, by holding yourself back from Me.

My name is GOD ALMIGHTY. I am the Eternal One, the Creator, I control the universe and still I love and care for you. I have time just for you. I am your heavenly Father. Come and be my child forever.

Bible References

- | | |
|---|---|
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| 2 Acts 17:26 | 14 John 10:10 (last part) |
| 3 Malachi 3:6 | John 7:37 |
| 4 Titus 1:2 | 15 Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 4:14 & 5:23 |
| 5 Psalms 139: 13,14 | 16 Genesis 3 |
| 6 Matthew 10:30 | 17 Romans 5:12, 18 |
| 7 1 John 4:7, 8&16 | 18 Revelation 13:8 |
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and Isaiah 12:2 | 19 Matthew 27:46 |
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| 10 Psalms 19:1-6 | 21 Proverbs 14:12, 16, 25 |
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What If?

Chapter 6 - Freedom and Choice

God is reaching out to you and you are experiencing His pull on your life. But it is quite possible that you, like many others, pull back when you feel His tug. You may have been taught or experienced things that contradict what you have been reading in this book. You may have some real questions in your mind at this point. You may wonder if God is so good and so powerful, how could He allow so much that is bad to exist in our world?

So far this book has considered a God very different from the pictures of God that both traditional and modern culture has to offer. God is not a vindictive tyrant out to get you but neither is He a sort of heavenly Santa Claus who is whatever you feel like designing Him to be. God is the source of all good things, He is NOT the source of evil in this world, and whether you talk about hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, terrorism, crime,

and failed relationships, God is not responsible for these. So who or what is? This chapter as well as the next two will begin to answer that crucial question.

You might not expect to find the answer to this often asked question coming from the world of Angels, but that is exactly where it lies. From Network TV to Hollywood, to the plethora of angel ornaments, knickknacks etc., angels have become very popular in recent years. Yet very few people can tell what an angel really is if you ask for an exact description. Most people think they are “recycled” humans who have died and gone to heaven and who God has sent back down to earth to do His business as in “It’s a Wonderful Life”. Since angels are heavenly beings, you will not be surprised to find them talked about in the Bible.

Chapter four of this book asked the all-important question, what if the Bible really is the divine Word of God? Again, the only way for you to know is for you to check it out for yourself. The first three chapters of the Bible, Genesis chapters 1-3, give the basis to answering the question of how

evil came into this world. In summary, these chapters describe how life on this world came about. God started with an empty desolate planet and ended with life, not as we know it, but perfect just as He is perfect. Not only were the first two humans perfect by God's account, they actually talked face to face with Him for they were made to be friends and to rule over and manage the earth.

Genesis chapter 2 verse 7 (NKJV) reads, "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." What a picture that is! The God of the universe who can speak worlds into existence, down on His hands and knees forming the first human out of the dirt with His *own* hands and then giving him the "kiss of life" as He breathed into His nose and mouth the breath of life. He also created the first woman, Eve, married the two of them and then came down each evening to be with them. That's certainly not the way most people usually think of God.

More than that, God created romance and sex. It was lovely, innocent and without perversion.

Never-the-less it did come from God. God who created the first couple, literally “made for each other”. Not only that, but He brought them together and placed them in the Garden of Eden. A literal paradise on earth, so wonderful that if all of the famous resort areas we know today were combined together, they would look dull by comparison. Every need and desire of the first pair was carefully and thoughtfully provided. There was no death, no sickness and no pain in this incredible place, even among the animal world with only peace, love and prosperity on every side.

So what happened to our world? Instead of peace we now see war, instead of love we see hate and while there is prosperity in some places, poverty and suppression still reign in much of the globe. The first two chapters of Genesis tell of God’s impact on this world, which was only a lifeless rock before creation week. His Word turned it into a living paradise and with His own hands He created humanity in His own image - absolute perfection. But the third chapter of Genesis tells the impact that the serpent or the

snake had on this planet. After the serpent had deceived Eve, who in turn caused Adam to disobey God, the floodgates of evil, misery and death were opened on this world. Who or what was behind the snake? Here are the first six verses of Genesis, the book of beginnings, (NKJV) chapter 3:

The Temptation and Fall of Man

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”

2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband, and he ate.

But why would God plant a “forbidden tree” in Adam and Eve’s garden home in the first place and then tell them they couldn’t eat from it? The answer is surprisingly simple. God values freedom above all else. This forbidden tree was planted by God to allow Adam and Eve to choose if they wanted to obey God or not. Without it they really would not have had a choice since they were created by God and all they knew was to obey Him. Unlike us they were created perfect and their natural tendency was to love and serve God. That is why the tree was called the “tree of the *knowledge* of good *and* evil”. Before eating it Adam and Eve did not even know what evil was!

God has often been painted as a dictator, one who will throw you into hell if you don’t serve and obey Him. This picture of God is a complete lie, crafted by the snake to cause us humans to fear and

despise Him, or to decide to reject His existence altogether! God values freedom so much that He placed a tree in the Garden of Eden, where the first people could decide not to serve Him if that was their choice. God desires that we love and serve Him, but He will not force us to. His government is based on love, the giving of Himself to His creatures. He is looking for those who choose to return that love and serve Him by their own free will, but He takes no captives by force!

How do **angels** enter into all this? The first time that angels are mentioned in the Bible, is in Genesis chapter three, verse 24, where sadly they are commanded by God to stand guard to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had been compelled to leave their garden home because they disobeyed God. Now the Angels were stationed to guard the gate to the Garden of Eden to keep them from ever returning.

Interestingly enough the angels were in existence before the first humans came on the scene. In other words, according to the Bible,

humans and angels do not belong to the same race of beings.

What If?

Chapter 7 - Evil

In the Indiana Jones movie “Raiders of the Lost Ark”, the final climactic scene has the Nazi Army captain opening the sacred Ark of the Covenant. He and his men who want the Arks legendary power to work for them, are consumed by a force that is released from it, but meanwhile Indi and Miriam remain safe because they kept their eyes closed in deference to the Ark. Interestingly enough, this movie is actually based on something real. The Ark of the Covenant, was the premiere object in the Jewish system of worship as it was established by God through His servant Moses after the Israelites left Egypt. You might remember another classic movie “The 10 Commandments”. How Moses the leader of Israel was called by God to meet Him on the Mt. Sinai. There God Himself gave Moses the 10 commandments written in stone by His own finger. In addition to the 10 commandments, God also gave Moses plans to

build a tabernacle where the Israelites or Jews could worship God. The Ark was the most sacred piece of furniture inside this tabernacle. It was made of hand-crafted gold, and symbolized God's throne in heaven. On top were two "covering" **angels** made of pure gold, their wings shadowed the model throne of God!

With that picture in mind, consider the previous chapter, and who or what was behind the snake that deceived Eve, the mother of our race, in the Garden of Eden? According to the Bible it was a *former* covering **angel** of God Himself! One who although he was created by God, "became too big for his own britches" and thought to become like God and take God's very throne for himself and in this attempt became the source of all evil. Because this angel decided he knew better than God, He started a rebellion which has spilled over into our world, through our first parents, and is the cause of every murder, every crime, every sickness, every divorce and every death in human history. This angel's name was Lucifer, Son of the Morning, but through rebellion it became Satan.

Remember the first clue given about **angels** in the last chapter. Remember that they were in existence before humans and that they are servants of God. That clue came from the first book of the Bible; the next clue about **angels** comes from the last book of scriptures. Revelation 12 verses 7-9 NIV describes a scene to make “Star Wars” look like child’s play! “And there was war in heaven. Michael and His **angels** fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his **angels** fought back. But he [the dragon] was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down-that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his **angels** with him.”

“War in heaven!” I wonder what that was like. There must have been some real “force fields” used because these rebels didn’t leave peaceably. The verses we just read say he was “hurled” out and his **angels** with him. Do you see the picture starting to form? A mighty and powerful angel, a “leader of the pack” turning against his maker to lead a rebellion in the very courts of heaven at the highest

level. An attempt at the throne of the universe itself! Cast out, along with his supporters to the earth where he continues to spread his rebellion.

Isaiah was a prophet of God born over 700 years before Jesus Christ. In chapter 14 of his book, he describes the fall of this great heavenly being. From his account we can see more details about the greatest rebellion of all time. Isaiah 14 verses 12-15 NKJV says, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

Ezekiel was another of God's prophets who wrote about this same being in chapter 28 of his book, "This is what the sovereign LORD says: 'You [speaking of Lucifer] were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl... You were anointed as a guardian cherub, [covering angel] for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created *till wickedness was found in you*. ...you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you. O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.” Ezekiel 28: 11-16 (NIV)

But hold on half a second, the Devil is only a cartoon character or for those with a religious bent the head minion of hell. The educated intellectual world knows that Satan is only myth and legend, right, *right*? What if that was his cover? There’s an interesting line in the movie “The Usual Suspects” that goes something like this. The devil’s greatest achievement was to get the world to believe he didn’t exist!

So if the Bible’s account of where Satan comes

from is true, it would certainly explain why there is so much misinformation about God. According to scripture, this fallen being hates God with a passion beyond our understanding and has gone on a giant worldwide smear campaign against God. One that would make the dirtiest of political campaigns looks like a playground fight by comparison.

Satan's ultimate wish is to be God. In fact by his deceptive lies he convinced one third of the angels of heaven to join him in his rebellion against God (See Revelation 12: 1-10) and began a war of galactic proportions. While there was never a real contest of power since God's strength is infinite, the war of truth versus lies is a very real one over the hearts and minds, for souls and bodies of God's intelligent creation.

What If?

Chapter 8 - War

Fight! Conflict! Battle! War! These are words that get our attention. Whether it is on the ball-field, the courtroom or the business arena, or, God forbid, the battlefields of our world - we are fighters. All of us, we were born that way. Certainly some more than others and all in different ways, but just the same, if we are alive, then we are involved in some kind of fight. As much as we talk about and long for peace, it remains as elusive as a desert mirage. Wherever we turn, struggle and conflict abound. From the world as a whole all the way down to the thoughts inside our mind, peace seems to escape our grasp.

If this is true for the world we see and touch, what about the unseen spiritual/supernatural world. Here again, whether you read Greek mythology or the Bible you see conflict abounding. There is an ongoing war between good and evil superpowers, between light and darkness. Yet in the western

world in which we live, there is a deliberate attack upon the idea that evil exists outside of the human realm. The majority of people today believe in a divine being or higher power that is generally called God, but the belief in a real literal devil along with fallen **angels** or demons is quickly dismissed or even laughed to scorn in our culture.

Why is this? Do we *not* want to believe in a real devil more powerful than we are, who we cannot fight on our own strength, and from whose power we must rely on God's power to save us? In fact the idea that evil can be overcome by human strength is very prevalent in our American Psyche. Just think about the basic plot to every typical Hollywood action movie you have ever seen. Whether it's a rather believable plot like Harrison Ford fighting terrorists on Air Force One or a not so believable one like Bruce Willis blowing up an asteroid, the basic super-hero philosophy is the same. And when have you ever seen a super-hero action movie where the hero stops to bow his or her head in order to pray to God and confess that they aren't big enough to face the danger or the threat of

evil on their own? Then to ask for Divine help to overcome what they are facing and to save whoever it is they are supposed to be saving? NO WAY, and you never will see that either.

This is because movies are made to be popular and we humans love to believe in ourselves. New Age philosophy that pervades our modern pop culture teaches you to believe in yourself, improve yourself, heal yourself, rely on yourself and love yourself. Not all of that is bad, however, the teaching of the Bible is to first believe in and worship God. Out of that come Spiritual, Emotional, Physical, Social Healing and Well-being which allows a person to respect themselves. Never does the Bible teach you to rely first upon yourself, but rather to always rely first upon God. This is why there never has been and never will be reconciliation between human pride and the teachings of the Bible.

In our world there is no end of spiritual, emotional, physical and social problems and likewise there is also no end to voices claiming to have fixes for all these problems; Politicians,

Educators, Councilors, Psychologists, the Police and Military, “Faith” healers on TV, Pharmaceutical Companies, New Age Gurus, and a million and one TV adds we see every day, all claim to have fixes in some way or another for our problems. Do they make us feel better? Oh sure, some work better than others. Do they fix the core problem? I’ll let you answer that question for yourself.

But getting back to **angels**, and how they relate to the problems of the world and the problems in our own heart and life. One of the “super-heroes” of the Bible was the apostle Paul. Originally Saul, he changed his name to Paul after meeting Jesus Christ. Paul means little. So while Paul was a true hero, in his own eyes he was “little.” Paul wrote a book called Ephesians to the first century church in Ephesus, (a city in modern day Turkey). In Chapter six of this book Paul wrote about Satan and his angels and how to relate to them.

“God is strong, and He wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And

put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

Be prepared. **You're up against far more than you can handle on your own.** Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in the ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long." Ephesians 6: 10-18 The Message (a paraphrase of the Bible)

God is pure love. He loves you personally and He wants you to live forever with Him! The devil on the other hand, is pure hate. He hates God and he hates you. He wants to drag you down with him and he is doing his best to do just that. What part

do you play? Are you a helpless pawn? No Way! Yours is to choose, Life or Death, God or Satan. God wants you so badly that He gave everything so that you might be with Him forever, but remember He will never force you to choose His side.

Satan's MO is to spin your perceived reality in such a way that you choose his side. If we really want to know what God is like, we must recognize that many of the things we have thought about Him are actually lies that originated from His enemy. For example, have you ever thought about why natural catastrophes such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes are called "Acts of God"! Who really is the one that enjoys violence and mayhem and watching people suffer and die? It is certainly not God the one who created us and then sacrificed Himself to save us.

But the single greatest lie, is about the very character of God! Satan has taken his own characteristic of malignant revenge and cruelty, and foisted it upon God and very successfully too. He must laugh in that most sadistic way over this one, because his instrument for bringing about this

deception has been the very body that claims to represent God to this world, the Christian Church!

What If?

Chapter 9 - Hell's Greatest Lie

Sinners in the hand of an Angry God! Now there's a sermon to make you sit up and listen. No studying the back of your eye lids that time in church. Actually there is much that was good and true in this sermon preached by the very influential American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards (also the grandfather of Aaron Burr, vice president under Thomas Jefferson); but error mixed with truth is all the more deadly because it more easily deceives the unaware. Here are a couple of lines from his sermon:

“The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.”

So is God an angry God whose main concern is justice and retribution or is He a God of Love and Mercy. The answer to that all important question is found in the cross of Christ whereas Psalm 85:10 (KJV) puts it, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." At the cross the very worst of human nature was displayed in stark contrast to the very best of God's nature. At the cross God proved before the watching universe that without a doubt He loves His creatures over Himself. Satan's claim that God was an arbitrary God, who required the forced service of His creatures, was once and for all destroyed. However while Satan can no longer hope to deceive angels; he continues to spread his lies here on earth. One way that he does that is by the religious teaching on hell and the widespread belief that wicked people are tortured there for all of eternity.

If this were true then Satan's claim that God is an arbitrary and vindictive tyrant would be true. But the Bible doesn't teach this! There are some

verses of scripture when taken alone seem to indicate it, but when studied in the context of the whole of scriptures and the original language that the verses were written in, it is not a forever torture but a forever destruction of those who ultimately choose to reject God's love and salvation for sin.

Some teach that God so loves that He will destroy none and eventually all; even monsters like Hitler and Stalin will be changed and accepted into Heaven. This belief known as "Universalism" is also no-where to be found in the Bible. While it is true that God loves even his enemies, Jesus prayed for those who were driving nails through his hands at his crucifixion (see Luke 23:34). It is for that very reason that He will let go those who eventually and finally refuse his mercy. Those who refuse the life that Jesus Christ wants to give them would be miserable in Heaven, in fact it would be Hell for them. And so God does what is the most merciful and loving thing for those who choose not to accept Him, He lets them go their separate way and to separate oneself from the source of life means to die forever.

So will there be a fire? Yes, but not to torture, only to consume away all the fears and all the tears, all the horror and malice, all the disease and famine, all the killing and strife! All the evil and woe of the curse brought upon humanity when we threw in our lot with the Serpent instead of remaining with God, all of that will be burned up. In fact the Bible says that “hell”, is for the Devil and his evil angels. The common assumption is that Satan reins over hell, when quite the opposite is true, the Devil is “scared as hell” of hell because he knows it will be made for him (see Revelation 20:10).

But even Satan will be destroyed completely! (See Ezekiel 28) The following is a montage of Bible passages that tell of the complete destruction of Satan and all who choose his ways: Those who eventually refuse completely God’s gift of salvation, will suffer "death" (Romans 6:23), will suffer "destruction" (Job 21:30), "shall perish" (Psalms 37:20), will "burn up" (Malachi 4:1), "shall be destroyed together" (Psalms 37:38), will "consume away" (Psalms 37:20), "shall be cut off"

(Psalms 37:9), "shall be slain" (Psalms 62:3). God will "destroy" them (Psalms 145:20), and "fire shall devour them" (Psalms 21:9). The prophet Isaiah described it this way "Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it." (In other words, once they are burned up the fire will go out not keep on burning for all eternity) Isaiah 47:14. The prophet Malachi echoes Isaiah's words "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*." "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 (KJV).

The Apostle John the Revelator reports from his God given vision of glory "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." "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.*" Revelation 21:1, 4 (KJV). How can one believe that there would be **NO MORE PAIN**, if the lost were roasting over an eternal infernal BBQ?

Some might object that the Bible only means the physical body will be destroyed or burned up and that there is an immortal soul in each of us that cannot die and that is what will keep suffering for all eternity but the Gospel of Matthew says in Matthew 10:28 NLT, "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can *destroy* both soul and body in hell. The prophet Ezekiel says "The soul who sins shall die".

But even though God will destroy both sin and sinners it gives Him only sadness to do so for these are His children even if they are rebellious and have refused His every call to return home. "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil

ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11 (KJV). "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56 (KJV). "For the Lord shall rise up ... that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act." (speaking of His destruction of evil and all who cling to it) Isaiah 28:21 (KJV).

And what will be the result of this?

"He will make an utter end: affliction (evil or sin) shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9 (KJV). In other words when God is finished cleaning up Satan's rebellion and all that came from it, God's work will be as it always is, complete! There will be no possibility of a second rebellion, not because God's children will fear Him but because they will love and worship Him completely. All will have seen Satan and his way unmasked for what it really is and the perfect contrast between him and God. After that no one will ever again be tempted to question if God rules out of love or selfish interest.

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor

come into mind." Isaiah 65:17 (KJV). "Behold, the tabernacle [or home] of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 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." Revelation 21:3, 4 (KJV)

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, I heard saying:
“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!” Revelation 5:13 (KJV)

What If?

Chapter 10 - First the Germ, then the Plague

The screech of brakes and the awful sound of metal on metal, the scream of the ambulance siren and even worse still the heart cry of the parent upon learning that their son, their daughter has been stolen from them by yet another drunk driver. “God, why did you let it happen!?” You are supposed to be so big and powerful; if you really loved me you could have kept this from happening.

In fact one could go on and on about all of the countless innocent victims of crime, war, famine, AIDS, and natural disasters of all kinds. If there really is a God of love, how can He stand by and watch all of this while possessing the power to stop it? This question probably more than any other has troubled those who believe in God and been used by those who don't to hang their doubts on. That is why having an answer to evil and suffering in our world is so absolutely critical.

Consider for a minute the BLACK PLAGUE,

the one we've read about in the history books, that annihilated more of Europe's population than all of its wars combined. All because of something so small you can't even see it with the naked eye, something called a *Yersinia pestis*. Now, if according to the book of beginnings or Genesis, God created all things good, then where on earth did this *Yersinia pestis* come from?

Very simply it came from the curse. But what curse, the curse of God? That would make sense right. The first man Adam and the first woman Eve, disobeyed God's command and so He cursed them right?

To help answer that question consider this scenario. What if you were to create a robot and the robot suddenly got "a mind of its own" and wouldn't do what you told it to. You would just simply pull the plug on it and go into its programming and fix the problem right? God certainly could have done this with Adam and Eve, but had He done that then all their children would only be glorified robots. God loved us as we were, free moral beings, So, as hard as it was, even for

God, He choose to save us out of the predicament that we had gotten ourselves into while at the same time maintaining our identity as free moral human beings. In other words, He didn't reprogram our brains even when we choose to disobey Him. He did however allow the natural results of our decision to fall on our heads. But even this He uses to restore us by bringing us back to Himself.

So NO, God did not curse us but, He did explain to Adam and Eve what the natural result or curse of their choice to distrust and disobey Him would mean. Interestingly enough God speaks first to the serpent, the avenue of disguise used by the devil to tempt Eve.

Genesis - The Book of Beginnings, Chapter 3 verses 14(NTL):

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike your head,” [a promise that eventually Satan, the one behind the snake would be crushed]
“and you will strike his heel.” [a reference to Christ’s death on the cross, by men inspired and controlled by Satan]

¹⁶ Then he said to the woman,
“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.
And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you.” [Speaks of division and strife where before there had been only peace, harmony and love]

¹⁷ And to the man he said,
“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow **thorns and thistles** for you, though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made.

For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

The “thorns and thistles” include much more than just weeds. This cursing of the ground, which was the natural result of Adam and Eve’s choice, resulted in untold misery for humankind. This is the true source of Black Plague.

The germ in this illustration was the first choice of Adam and Eve. The choice to disbelieve and disobey God, and the plague that followed it, are all the multitude of *bad choices* that we, the children, have made thus multiplying sorrow and woe upon this world.

Think of God in His role as our parent. He

looks down on the mess that we have created by choosing to go our own way separate from Him and all He wants is for us to return home. In fact now that we have all but ruined our world by our choice to live apart from God, His objective, as our Devine Parent, is to get us out of this world alive! If He were to intervene in all aspects of life and make everything rosy for us, we would be content to remain in the world where the plague runs rampant. But His great plan of Salvation is to get us out of this world without us becoming yet another causality of the “plague”.

There is another very important reason why God doesn't stop every bad thing from happening and that is because the players involved in the situation have not truly given God permission to intervene in their lives. God will not force good upon those who choose otherwise. For example, consider a life threatening disease or health condition; we know of things that we do to ourselves that can contribute to these problems. We can ask God to remove the health problem with our words but our actions may say just the opposite

if we are unwilling to change behaviors that may have contributed to the problem in the first place. God is not in the business of dispensing pain meds. Instead He wants to cure the real problem which is our distrust and disobedience of Him.

God is in a tough place. It's almost like a parent who is watching their adult child acting like a kid. The parent naturally wants to stop bad things from happening to their child, but the child is now an adult who is making his or her own decisions for better or for worse. If the parent tries to remove all consequences, then they just enable their child to continue in their self-destructive behavior.

But the most basic reason why God does not stop bad things from happening is the same reason that He did not stop Adam and Eve from eating of that forbidden tree. It is very simply that He loves us too much to take away our freedom to choose and tied up with that is this great conflict between Himself and Satan. Satan has declared that God is a tyrant of the worst sort. That His rules are impossible to keep and if you violate even the smallest of them God will jump on you and punish

you forever. These accusations are false. However if God who is infinitely stronger than the devil, were to just snuff him and his followers out and right all wrongs instantly, then it would appear the false claim was true. Instead God must allow Satan's rebellion to play out and show itself for what it really is.

Once Jesus Christ's disciples came to Him and asked him, "Master teach us to pray." The most famous prayer of all time or "The Lord's Prayer", found in Luke 11:1-5 (KJV) was Christ's answer to their request and in that prayer Christ teaches His followers to pray, "Our Father which art in Heaven...thy will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven." It is very insightful to realize that God's will is not always done on earth otherwise why would He instruct His followers to pray in this way? When an innocent child is abused, it is never God's will.

Does this mean that God is just sitting back and letting human history play out? Absolutely NOT. Yet most people in this world, even those who call themselves Christians have not truly surrendered

their lives to God. If you and I, truly and honestly give our lives to God for His care and keeping, then absolutely nothing and no one that God does not allow can touch us! Does that mean that everything will go as we wish for ourselves from now until Kingdom come? No, but it does mean that we are eternally secure because we belong to God's very literal Heavenly Kingdom that will never end. We will have to endure trouble and trials while we are still living in enemy territory but even those issues God will use for our own good, see Romans 8:28. In fact in many cases those who commit their lives most closely to God seem to come off worse. Just think of Christ's apostles, who except for John, all died the death of a martyr. Yet they died with peace and even joy, glad to bring glory to their master and knowing that the next thing they would know would be His presence.

It seems hard to believe while we are down here on earth. Hard to believe there is a God of love when so much of what we see around us is so ugly! That's why we can't be content to see only the physical world in which we live. We must allow

our vision to be expanded to that of the spiritual realm and that is exactly why God has given us His book the Bible. Read it for yourself and discover its power! Power to lift your spirits, power to address your issues, power to give you hope and power to introduce you to a heavenly parent who loves you more than you can possibly imagine, He wants more than anything to bring you home.

The following is a perfect example of that! Read it and see if it doesn't leave your sense of reality bigger than what you normally live in.

Romans Chapter 8 (NKJV): ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or

persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What If?

Chapter 11 - The Kingdom of God

“As long as there has been one true God, there has been killing in his name.”

The Da Vinci Code (Columbia Pictures, 2006)

One of the greatest deceptions of the evil one is the idea that there is competition between good and evil for an *earthly* kingdom of God! To be sure there is a terrible war going on, but it is not over real-estate. The war is not over how many Countries or lands are Moslem versus Christian, nor is it over political power and policy that favors Christian beliefs versus secular ones.

It seems that almost the entire world is caught up in a war of power and position of which religion plays a central role. Sadly to say this too often spills over into actual warfare. One could almost view every war ever fought on this planet in one way or another as a “holy war”, instigated by the

perpetrator in the name of their God or gods. For, if you consider money, lands, power and position to all be gods then this is certainly true. Sad to say Christianity is not exempt from this, in fact if one takes a bird's eye view of the history of Christianity, one would almost have to conclude that its main objective was political. From the supposed conversion of the fourth century Roman Emperor Constantine, to the crusades to retake the Holy Land, to the incredible political power and rule of the Church during the Middle Ages, to the politics of today, the advancement of human pride and power, control and cohesion is easily seen within the Christian Religion.

The reason for this is simple. The name Christian means a Christ follower, but most who take the name Christian are not really following the Master. Here's just one example of that; the number one reason that Christ was rejected by the majority of His own people was that He consistently refused to get into politics. If He were to have led an earthly rebellion against the ruling power of His day, the Roman Empire, He would

have been hailed as the Messiah and worshiped by the entire Nation of Israel. But because He instead preached of a Spiritual Kingdom whose subjects were supposed to “turn the other cheek” rather than “take up the sword”, He was rejected and put to the cruelest of deaths. So it’s not surprising that Jesus Christ, in one of the most poignant and powerful conversations recorded in all of history would state that His Kingdom is “NOT of this world”. It took place during His own “trial” by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem and is found in John Chapter 18: 33-37 (NKJV):

³³ Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

³⁴ Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

³⁶ Jesus answered, “***My kingdom is not of this world.*** If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Yet despite this very specific declaration, the enemy of God has convinced us humans that we need to join a group and fight for our version of utopia or our idea of what the ‘Kingdom of God on Earth’ should be. And the results are such horrific things as the crusades, jihad, genocide and the ugly side of politics and grasping for power that we see even in the “developed world”.

At the commencement of His ministry on this earth and right after His baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, Jesus was lead into the wilderness by the Spirit for 40 days of meditation and prayer with His heavenly Father. Matthew Chapter 4:1-11 tells this story and how after the 40 days were up Satan came to try and derail Christ and keep Him from saving lost mankind. In his third of three great temptations the devil showed Christ a panoramic video display of all the best and beautiful of the kingdoms of the world. Then the Devil offered to give it all to Christ if only He would bow down and worship him. The devil's hope was that Jesus would be tempted to take the "easy way" to saving the world rather than have to endure living with an ungrateful race that misunderstood and would eventually murder Him. Instead Christ could have the world back from Satan's control by simply bowing to him. Of course if Jesus had put Himself under the devil, His power to deliver the world from under Satan's reign would have been broken in that same moment. But, Christ resisted him with the words,

“Get behind me Satan, for it is written in God’s word, you will worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.” While Satan did leave him for the time being, He returned again and again with a similar temptation, trying to get Jesus to accept a worldly kingdom. There were several times throughout his ministry on earth that the people tried to force Him to become their king. They figured that with His miraculous powers, He could easily lead them to victories over the Romans who had conquered them and to whom they were forced to pay tribute. But each time He resisted His fellow countrymen’s attempts to make Him an earthly King for as he said; “My Kingdom is NOT of this world”.

If he had become an earthly King He could have easily gained His people’s allegiance but He was after something deeper, he wanted their hearts and minds and not only theirs but the peoples of all race and religion. If He had taken the side of the Jews, how could He have won the hearts of the Romans?

Is it possible then that God does not take sides, that He is just sitting back and letting things unfold as they will? No not at all! However the side that God takes is not what we would always expect. The side that God takes is that of freedom; Freedom from slavery to sin, Satan and selfishness, freedom from tyranny in all of its forms even when held by the so called Christian Church. Freedom from human slavery, freedom from dependency, freedom from illiteracy, freedom from disease and freedom of conscious! If you want to know which side God is on, ask yourself if one side is fighting for these things alone? If not, then more than likely God is not with either side and it's just another human fight for power, position and followers.

God's Kingdom is NOT of this world also means that this world as we know it will never become heaven on earth as some are trying to make it. Not until evil is completely removed off of the face of this world and ultimately destroyed will it become "the Kingdom of God". The reason that He delays doing just that is because He waits in mercy for us to be done with the evil that still

remains inside each of us. If He were to suddenly eliminate all evil, then all who harbored even the slightest trace would be destroyed as well. No, the world as we know it must come to an end before the Kingdom of God can be set up on earth. A striking picture of this is found in Daniel chapter 2 where the prophet sees the governments of this world come to a singular and sudden end! He is explaining how the dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was a history of world kingdoms and powers from Nebuchadnezzar's rule down to the end of time.

While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. [representing the Kingdom of God] It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them [Represents the kingdom's of men]. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain

and filled the whole earth. Daniel Chapter 2:34,35 (NIV)

Rev 11:15 (NKJV) Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

What If?

Chapter 12 - The End of the World as we Know It

“It’s the end of the world as we know it (And I feel fine)” – R.E.M, 1987.

Those who were enjoying the luxurious accommodations and entertainments of the Titanic on its maiden voyage felt fine too. That is they did until they realized their ship was sinking. There were no storms the night of April 14, 1912 to contend with, making it smooth sailing for the 2000 some passengers and crew aboard the Titanic. This largest and most opulent ship ever built was styled unsinkable by her builders, Harland & Wolff Industries. But sink she did, taking down 1,517 of the crew and passengers with her.

Planet earth and its ‘passengers’ are not so different from that fateful ship. We are already ‘taking on water’. The ice burls ahead are thicker

than ever. One is marked terrorism, another financial collapse, and then there's ecological collapse around the corner; over population and depletion of resources; nuclear arms, wars, pandemics. No end of material for Hollywood plots about the end of the world as we know it. In fact there seems to be a steady stream lately of 'Armageddon' movies and TV plots. Is Armageddon upon us, and if so what is it really and how do we get ready for it?

What if there really are apocalyptic events ahead for planet earth? If there is a God who loves us, then He would certainly tell us what to look for and how to get ready. On the other hand if there really is an "evil prince" who desires our destruction, then he would want to scare and confuse us about what is to come and then when it does come capture us with his deceptions. Once again the issue, just as it has been since the very beginning when the first parents disobeyed and distrusted God is, who will you believe and follow, in whom will you put your trust. To who will you give your allegiance, your loyalty and ultimately

your WORSHIP. The difference here is that always before there has have been shades of gray among those who followed God and those who have not. However, the climatic events of earth's history will polarize the entire world's population into only two groups, those who's WORSHIP of GOD is total and cannot be shaken! and those who will prefer the deceptions of the evil one over God's kingdom and rule; then and only then will God bring an end to evil on this world. To do so before that would mean the demise of those who had not fully chosen one side or the other and God's great love will not allow Him to do that.

Whether we will admit it or not the fact is that we all worship because to worship is simply part of our human DNA. Every major historical group of peoples throughout history has worshiped something. Western civilization here and now in the 21st century is no different. We might not burn incense to a statue or a figurine but we worship our TV, our cars, our houses, our movie and or sports stars and of course ourselves. Just look at where we focus our time and money and there you'll see a

‘god’ being worshiped.

You might wonder why if God is all-powerful and infinitely stronger, why should there be any real contest at all? The apostle Paul wrote that:

“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the **god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, KJV)

If God were to use overwhelming evidence, then there would be no contest at all. In fact while loath to admit it, Satan cannot even exist without God’s sustaining power. But since God refuses to use force and will only fight with truth and love, the war goes on. God does this to protect our **freedom to choose**. Satan on the other hand has no qualms whatsoever about ‘playing dirty’. The Bible calls him the “father of lies” and a “murderer from the beginning”, see John 8:44.

The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 1:5 that we are God’s adopted children. Now Satan knows he is powerless to hurt God directly, so instead he goes

after us! Satan knows how terribly it hurts God to see any of His children hurt or destroyed. He also knows that his days are numbered (see Revelation 12:12) so he works with cruel malice to take down as many of us with him while he still can. The apostle Peter writes in his book to ‘Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour’ (I Peter 5:8 NKJV).

This incredible war between good and evil is being fought over one thing, the hearts and minds of God’s created beings. You and I are the prize! Wars have been fought over real-estate, gold and many other things, but the ultimate war is a war over us. God wants us because He loves us, He wants only our eternal good and well-being, and Satan wants us because he hates God and wants to destroy God’s kids. Because of Jesus and His death on the cross, we get to choose whose side we want to be on. You might think that would be an easy choice but if you think that Satan will appear with horns and a spiked tail to deceive you - think again. Paul the apostle says “For Satan himself

transforms himself into an angel of light'. (II Corinthians 11:14 NKJV)

The interesting thing about this line from Paul is that all three of the world's monotheistic religions are expecting a messiah type to return, Muslims are looking for Mahdi, Christians for the return of Christ and Jews for the Messiah. Our world seems to be headed for even more frequent and severe calamities than what we've already seen in recent years. Imagine what it would be like to enter into a time of trouble worse than any we have ever seen or experienced. Financial collapse, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, pandemics, wars, acts of terrorism all things we've seen in our life time but never before happening all at once. What if these things were to all happen simultaneously and the whole world were thrown into great confusion, then suddenly a news flash came across the globe – "Savior Appears" and you see with your own eyes a being of dazzling light and splendor, saving people from terrible calamities, healing the sick, bringing in peace and calling on all people to follow him as he promises to save them from all

the crazy things going on around them!

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Revelation 16:13, 14 NKJV)

And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the **beast**. (Revelation 13:3 NKJV)

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14 NKJV)

If God really loves us, how could He allow Satan to trick us like that? Actually God's grace

and Holy Spirit are present on this earth as real as the air we breathe and depend on every day for life! All who desire to know truth and search for it *above all else*, will find it; God will not leave them helpless. But for all who prefer the easy path, who refuse to humble themselves and receive salvation from God for their fallen condition of slavery to sin, these will be easy prey for Satan and his deceptions. Everyone gets to choose his or her own destiny but some will choose death by not choosing life. In the end it will be one of only two destinies.

The Book of Beginnings, Genesis tells the story of a worldwide flood from which only 8 people were saved. Noah, who God used to save not only the human race but the animals as well, preached to the people of his time for 120 years pleading with them to come into the ship he was building and be saved. (See Genesis Chapter 6).

It wasn't for lack of trying on God's part that only 8 people in the whole world were saved, it was the stubborn unbelief of the people of that age

that was their downfall. Christ told His disciples “But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24:37. And the apostle Peter likens the end of all things to the great flood of Noah’s day.

2 Peter 3 (NLT) ³ Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. ⁴ They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.”

⁵ They deliberately forget that God made the heavens by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. ⁶ Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. ⁷ And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire...

⁹ The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

¹¹ Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, ¹² looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. ¹³ But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

The same God who provided a boat of safety for the people of Noah's day has not forsaken us. Jesus Christ Himself is the 'life boat' that will carry

all who will get into Him safely through every storm and across every ocean to the safety of God's embrace. But like with the Titanic, where many of the life boats went off only half full or Noah's Ark, where only eight people got on board, many will refuse the Salvation that God has freely given. If we try and save ourselves by swimming, we will not make it through alive either, for as Peter preached it, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 KJV)

So how does a person enter into the Christ? God would not have given us His only Son to save us from death, only to make the way to life difficult. No, it is a simple choice on our part and it is our pride or our fears that turn this simple act of belief into something complicated or difficult. However God's word that cannot fail promises us that, "Perfect love casts out fear" I John 4:18 (NKJV) and if Jesus calls Himself Humble, as He

does in Matthew 11:29 NIV, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and **humble** in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” then He will certainly give us the grace we need to humble ourselves before Him.

The best way to explain something is always with an example and the apostle John gives a most incredible account of the encounter between the Jewish leader Nicodemus and Jesus in chapter three of his gospel account (John 3 1-10 NLT):

1 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2 After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

4 “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

9 “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

10 Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?...

Christ was simply saying, Nicodemus, in your present state and condition you can never see God. But this was next to impossible for Nicodemus to believe because in the world he lived in, his type was the best of the best of God’s favored people. If anyone deserved Heaven it was Him, or so he

thought. But Jesus told him, in no uncertain terms, no one can ever *deserve* Heaven, it is a free gift that must be received. And to receive it one must be humble enough to accept it as a gift; acknowledge their helplessness and admit their only hope of ever reaching heaven is Heaven's help, Jesus Christ the Messiah.

And then Jesus spoke those words, more loved and more recognized and more enduring than any others in all of scripture.

John 3:16 “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

Returning to God, requires that we journey through the one and only channel that God has given us, the God-Man Jesus Christ. He is 100 percent the Son of God and 100 percent the Son of

Man at the same time. It is through that connection that humanity is reunited with God and we as individuals can return to our heavenly father. God has all our lives been pursuing each one of us and the light shining from the cross reveals this. That love is drawing us to Him and if we do not resist it will draw us all the way to the foot of the cross where we will repent for our sins that caused the death of Jesus Christ, the “Savior of the world”. Then as we say Yes to God, His Spirit produces a new life in our soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, is created anew in the image of God as we were originally meant to be. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, “I delight to do Thy will O my God.” (Ps. 40:8 KJV)

True Faith is Real Life

God is stretching out His great arm to save us but He will not force us to choose Him. Faith is how we say “YES” to God; it is how we receive

His gift of salvation and eternal life. The greatest example of Faith from the Bible comes in the story of Mary. Not Mary the mother of Jesus, but Mary the prostitute, Mary of Magdalene! This is the Mary that the Bible says Jesus prayed for over and over again; the Mary who Jesus cast the demons out of seven times! It is the same Mary whose heart was so shut down by pain from the men using and abusing her that she had forgotten what real love was. When True Love in the person of Jesus finally won and Mary was free from her past, forgiven and made whole again, she literally poured out her love for Christ by buying the most expensive of perfumes, worth a whole year's wage, and anointing His head and feet with it. Then her dam of emotions broke loose as she was overwhelmed with love for the One who had given her true love. With her stream of tears she washed the feet of the one who had shown her that she was a loved and valued daughter of God. (See Matthew 26:6 and onward, Mark 16:1 and onward, Luke 7:37 and onward, John 12:1 and onward).

One finds in her story the full Gospel of God (to

call and love us back from the destruction others have placed on us as well as that of our own poor choosing). In fact Jesus said that whenever and wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, Mary's story would be told. If we will only follow Mary's example, we have an iron clad guarantee of eternal safety and security in the arms of our God. If we will only give ourselves heart and soul to our maker and redeemer, God will not only give us eternity with Him, He will start right now, here on earth, a process of restoring us to what we were created to be!

And what was her example? It was receiving His free gift of salvation; recognizing that without God she was a lost cause, a total and complete basket case; that there was absolutely nothing she could do to save herself, other than to throw herself on the mercy of her God. Of her Christ said, "She loved much because she was forgiven much!" Paraphrase of Luke 7:47. Not that she was a worse sinner than the rest, but that she realized how much she had been forgiven. This was the reason her faith and love for God were so large and she

received such a commendation from her Lord. She was the first of Christ's followers to realize the real reason why He had come to earth. If that had been her last day on earth she would have been just fine with that. Faith and love had carried her out of this world and into the arms of God. Never again would she feel alone, rejected or afraid for she had seen the face of God.

What If?

Chapter 13 - The Face of God

**Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father
and that will be enough for us.” John 14:8
NIV**

Philip was that kid in the classroom who raised his hand and asked the question that all the rest of the kids wanted to know, but were too shy or embarrassed to ask. The kind of question you feel you really ought to know the answer to but just aren't at all sure. Jesus never lost his patience with his friends but you can almost feel Him sigh as He replies:

...“Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?
Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.
How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰
Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and

that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14: 9-13 NIV

Jesus Christ is the “face of God”. If you want to see what God is like and how He thinks of us and treats us, His run away children, all you have to do and in fact all you can do is to look at Jesus. See how He reacted to people, especially the ones the rest of society had either given up on or shunned, and know what He is like. If you aren't

sure God really does care about and love you, just consider the trouble, the pain and the loss that He went through in giving His only Son to rescue you! Every parent who truly loves their child knows it's easier to suffer pain themselves than watch their child go through it. So with God, the Father had to watch as His Son, His Only Begotten, was born in a barn, mistreated and misunderstood His entire life by us humans and eventually put to the cruelest possible death known to man. God could have washed His hands clean of us and left us to lie in the bed we created for ourselves, but He did not. Instead He committed to a Journey, leaving the gates of Paradise where He was surrounded by adoring angels and seated upon the throne of the Universe, He came down to a lowly dirty, fly infested barn. It was here that God's most incredible act of all time occurred, God became man and lived with us.

In the incarnation there came a joining of our race to the divine that not only transformed our history but would forever alter the Godhead itself. The Son of God became equally the Son of Man,

100% divine and 100% human and forever to retain that humanity. Never after would it be possible for our race as a whole to be lost from God and neither could God as Christ ever be separated from His newly acquired humanity. The marriage of two is beyond us to comprehend but the results are ours to enjoy, if only we will believe.

If you could imagine reducing yourself to an ant and then living among the ‘poorest of the ants’ if there were such a thing, it would hardly compare to what God did when He choose to be born a human baby. Born in a barn, raised in and among poverty, misunderstood all His life, rejected by most, abused and eventually murdered by us humans! And all the time He was doing it He could have in an instant returned to the love and worship of Heaven, yet He would not give up on us! Even while we were nailing Him to a cross He prayed for us to be forgiven. WHAT A GOD!

Here’s how the apostle Paul describes the ‘face of God’ in his letter to the Philippians in chapter two verses five and onward

⁵ You should think in the same way Christ Jesus

does.

⁶ In his very nature he was God.

But he did not think that being equal with God was something he should hold on to.

⁷ Instead, he made himself nothing.

He took on the very nature of a servant.

He was made in human form. [Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem's stable]

⁸ He appeared as a man. [Christ's life here on earth]

He came down to the lowest level.

He obeyed God completely, even though it led to his death.

In fact, he died on a cross.

⁹ So God lifted him up to the highest place.

[Jesus Christ was raised from death and is now on Heaven's throne]

He gave him the name that is above every name.

¹⁰ When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone's knee will bow to worship him.

Every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow to worship him.

¹¹ Everyone's mouth will say that Jesus Christ is

Lord.

And God the Father will receive the glory.

(NIRV)

But it takes on Old Testament prophet / poet to give the true grit the real emotion of what God has done for us, to really see the ‘face of God’. Isaiah, lived about 700 years before Christ and was executed for offending the king and people of Israel during his time, and wrote the words through Divine inspiration later to become immortalized by George Frederick Handel with his composing of “The Messiah”.

Isaiah 53 - King James Version (KJV)

¹ Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

² For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was

cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

⁹ And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Handel composed the Messiah in 1741 and wrote the first version in only 24 days. His most famous choral work that tells the story of Jesus Christ's birth, death, resurrection and ascension has borne out the test of time and is performed thousands of times over in all sorts of venues around the world each Christmas Season. One hundred percent of its text or lyrics are taken directly from the King James Bible and many believe that Handel received his inspiration for the music from on High.

One has to wonder in a world growing increasingly secular how this singular work could have such power to move and inspire the diversity of humanity that it does every year. After close to 300 years it continues to grow in popularity. Of course music has a tremendous power to move us with emotion but "The Messiah" has more than inspirational power for it contains the greatest words ever combined into one single work of music. These words do more than just inspire and arouse our emotions, they bring HOPE and LOVE! Real hope and real love, not the chance hope and one sided love the world offers, not Vegas and not

Hollywood. This is love that can heal your specific hurts, that can forgive the worst offence and that can bring peace to any soul. And this is Hope that can promise a future! Not 10 to 20 years of retirement followed by disease and death, but real Hope for a real home in a real heaven with a real GOD who loves you more than you can know. The reason that “The Messiah” contains so much power is that it so poignantly points to the Messiah, or as Isaiah wrote and then Handel incorporates, our “Prince of Peace”.

“For unto us a Child born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6 KJV).

This Child, that was to be born in Bethlehem’s manger, as the Angel told Mary, would be called “Jesus”.

Luke Chapter 1 KJV ²⁶ And in the sixth month [after Elizabeth became pregnant with John the Baptist] the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What If?

Chapter 14 - His Kingdom without End

King Solomon, wisest of the wise once said, “There is nothing new under the sun”. That simply means that everything we humans think we were smart enough to come up with on our own, we really didn’t. And likewise, if you were to dream up the most wonderful storybook kingdom ever, it would barely begin to describe, God’s Kingdom without End!

The apostle Paul wrote about it this way:

But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those
who love Him.” I Corinthians 2:9 NKJV

Notice how he says in the first line “But as it is

written:” and who do you suppose he was quoting. Not surprisingly it was the Prophet Isaiah, no wonder he is called the gospel (Good News) prophet. (See Chapter 64:4)? The same who also wrote that in God’s Kingdom, when all wrongs will be made right and those who choose God’s side will be at home, that the lion would lie down with the lamb.

Isaiah 11:6 & 65:24-25

New King James Version (NKJV)

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

²⁴ “It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust *shall be* the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy
mountain,"
Says the LORD.

Fast forward to the last book of the Bible where the
Apostle John describes God's Kingdom to come:

All Things Made New - Revelation 21 NKJV

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for
the first heaven and the first earth had passed
away. Also there was no more sea. [John wrote
this book from the prison island of Patmos
which explains why he would say, no more sea]

² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New
Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from
God, prepared as a bride adorned for her
husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven
saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with
men, and He will dwell with them, and they
shall be His people. God Himself will be with

them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Not only will He wipe away all future tears but He will restore all who died loving and obeying to the best of their ability His gospel of peace.

1 Corinthians 15

New King James Version (NKJV)

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where *is* your sting?
O Hades, where *is* your victory?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this heaven is for all who desire it. Some try to make it difficult or complicated to get there but in the fifth book of the New Testament, the book of Acts, there is a story that relates an amazing clear

and simple picture of how one gets to heaven. It happened after Paul and his companion had been beaten and thrown into the stocks for preaching Christ. The full story is in chapter 16 of Acts where it says that after being beaten and locked up in the stocks, the two men of God, instead of crying and complaining about how they were treated, sang songs of praise to God. As they were praising Him for being able to suffer for His name, God used an earthquake to bust His two servants out of the joint. The Jailer knew that if the prisoner's escaped it would be his head and so without any hope he drew his sword to kill himself but was stopped when Paul called out to him, "don't do it, we're all still here". The jailer in utter amazement threw himself down at the apostles feet and exclaimed how can I be saved, or to put it another way "I want what you've got"! First he had never heard men sing praises from his jail before especially after just being flogged and then he finds that these same men care about him, the man used to incarcerate them. So you can see why he'd be amazed and drawn to the two men of God and why he would

ask quite simply, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And Paul replies -

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your house shall be saved. Acts 16:31 NKJV

To believe on the Lord or Lordship of Jesus, is simply to give Him your life and if He’s got your life then it is safe, no one or nothing can touch it without His permission. If He does allow you to go through the sleep of death, (both Jesus and Paul talk of the death of a believer as sleep), He’ll wake you up when He comes back to this earth. What peace and what security to trust your life into the hands of the one who first created you and then gave His own life to save yours!

John 3:16&17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to

condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jeremiah 31:3 (NKJV)

³ The LORD has appeared of old to me, *saying*:
“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn
you.

Lamentations 3 (NKJV)

²² *Through* the LORD’s mercies we are not
consumed,

Because His compassions fail not.

²³ *They are* new every morning;

Great *is* Your faithfulness.

²⁴ “The LORD *is* my portion,” says my soul,
“Therefore I hope in Him!”

²⁵ The LORD *is* good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul *who* seeks Him.

²⁶ *It is* good that *one* should hope and wait

quietly

For the salvation of the LORD.

Romans 8 (NIV)

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than
conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I
am convinced that neither death nor life, neither
angels nor demons, neither the present nor the
future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor
depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be
able to separate us from the love of God that is
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What If?

The Conclusion - Why Not?

If the Bible is truly from God and God is really as the Bible describes Him to be, then you have everything to gain by choosing to love and serve Him. Jesus Christ died to give you life and the liberty to choose your own destiny. He will never force you to choose Him but He will do everything He can to draw you to Himself. That is mind-blowing! The God of the universe wanting us, His creatures, so much that He condescends to plead with us to accept a gift from Himself!

³⁰ ... Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! (Ezekiel 18:30-32 NLT).

We've all sinned and run from God. It started with

Adam and Eve in the garden; they ate the 'forbidden fruit' and the very next thing they did was to run, cover and hide. But God is not mad at us, He doesn't blame us, He wants us to know He actually loves us and wants a relationship with us. Stop running from Him, tell Him you want to be friends and He will be your friend, your very best friend! Being friends with the King of the Universe comes with all sorts of benefits; Unconditional Love and Acceptance by the One who can really give it; Peace and Tranquility in the midst of this crazy world we live in; Purpose and Direction and all the best reasons to get up in the morning; Emotional Healing, and Eternal Security, a home with God forever!

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9 NKJV)

All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. (I John 4:15 ESV)

Here is a little prayer to ask God into your life.

Father God, I confess I've avoided you and even run from you. I thought you wanted to steal my fun and control my life but I've come to realize that's not true, and what you really want is to give me an abundant life and true freedom. Freedom from all of my baggage, freedom from addictions, freedom from all my fears and worries, even freedom from the fear of death.

I give you my life right now and ask you to take it and do with it as you like. I trust you with it! I confess my past mistakes, all of my doubt and unbelief of You. **Thank you for taking me as I am and forgiving my sins.** Now that I'm yours I can't wait to see what you will make of me. I want to journey with you for the rest of my life until I'm

living forever and always where you are. I can't wait for that day when I will see you face to face and You will say come enter into the joy of my company forever.

I love you Father God,
In the name of your Son Jesus Christ I Pray, Amen!

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.²

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (I John 3:1-3 New King James Version)

Thank you

To Annie without who's help, endless editing and encouragement I never would have finished this even as short as it is ☺. To Gary who's insights helped make it much improved... and to all the other wonderful people who helped, edited and who are continuing to help me make improvements. If there is anything worthwhile

here, God gets the credit. I'll take credit for the rest.