

## EASY READING BIBLE STUDIES

**An Easy Reading series of Bible Studies using *Easier English* versions of the Bible. You may see a discussion of these eight versions at the end of the 30 studies.**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this series of studies is to present a large group of Bible doctrines in simple English. The original book published 100 years ago, ‘**Bible Readings**’, was the inspiration for this work. This original book uses a Question, Bible Text and Comment format - so does this simple series.

The special feature of this series is that nearly all of the texts are not from the grade 12 reading level, *King James Version*, but from a group of Easier Reading & Easier English versions.

**Why so many versions?** The easier the version, the more interpretation may be needed to make the verse easy to understand. This also means that the views of the translators may also effect the interpretation in the translating. We liked texts from different versions at different times. That is why we used up to eight different translations.

**Use Note:** We will not object if you use these studies for your own personal use, or with your church or study group. We ask that you not ‘sell’ them without permission.

\* If you choose to print them all out, it should be a little under 100 pages, depending on your printer and type size.

### TOPICS COVERED:

1. SALVATION: How Are We Saved From Sin?
2. BIBLE: God’s Word For My Life
3. ORIGIN SIN: Where Did Sin Come From?
4. CREATION: Did Man Evolve or Was Man Created By the hand of a Loving God?
5. JESUS: Was Jesus Really God, or Just a Superman?
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19. BAPTISM: Is it necessary to be baptized to be saved?
20. PROPHETS: What about modern day prophets?
21. STANDARDS: How does God expect Christians to Live?
22. MILLENNIUM: What Happens During the 1000 Years After Jesus Second Coming?
23. STEWARDSHIP/TITHE: Caring For What God Has Loaned To Us
24. HOLY SPIRIT: Who Is the Holy Spirit?
25. LAW/GRACE: Does God's Grace Do Away With God's Law?
26. TRINITY: What Can We Know About God?
27. REMNANT/MISSION: What is the purpose of God's Final Remnant People on Earth?
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29. MARRIAGE/FAMILY: Why Did God Invent Families?
30. PRAYER: How Important is Prayer?

# 1. HOW ARE WE SAVED FROM SIN?

## What is the most important question a person can ask?

**Matt. 19:16 TEV-** “ Once a man came to Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?"

**Note:** The most important subject in the world is how to be saved from sin so we that can live forever.

## How important is it to know what will happen to you in eternity?

**Matthew 16:26 Nlrv-** “What good is it for you to gain the whole world but lose your soul?”

**Note:** It would be terrible to live here for only 60-100 years, when we can live for all eternity - if we prepare. We are born sinful in a sinful world. We are born going away from Heaven. We can only be saved if we change directions, and allow Jesus to control our lives.

## How can we live for all eternity?

**John 3:5 Nlrv-** “What I am telling you is true. No one can see God’s kingdom without being born again.”

**Note:** Being ‘born again’ is changing directions. Instead of heading toward Hell, we turn toward Heaven. We have selfish natures, and cannot save ourselves. Only God can save us by His power.

## How can we be ‘born again’?

**John 3:16, 17 TEV-** “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior.” **Ephesians 2:8 NCV** “I mean that you have been saved by grace because you believe. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God.”

**Note:** We see our sinful condition. We want change. We ask God to come and live in us.. We ask God to change us from the inside out to be like Him. We ask God to forgive our sins, and cover us with Jesus perfect character. We then appear before the Father as if we had never sinned. If we die in the next moment, we are saved for eternity.

## How could Jesus die in our place instead of us?

**2 Cor. 5:21 Nlrv** “Christ didn’t have any sin. But God made Him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.”

**Note:** God said if man disobeyed, man would die. The penalty for sin is eternal death. But, the Creator Himself may pay the death penalty for us. So Jesus took our sins on Himself, and died in our place, as our substitute (alternate).

## Why do we need to be “born again”?

**Romans 3:23 Nlrv-** “Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory.”

**Romans 5:12 CEV-** “Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world. Now everyone has sinned, and so everyone must die.” **Romans 6:23 Nlrv-** “When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives

you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.”

### **What has God done to bring us back to Himself?**

**John 3:16 TEV-** “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.”

### **What will God do with our sins?**

**1 John 1:9 CEV-** “But if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away.”

**Micah 7:19 NirV-** “Once again you will show loving concern for us. You will completely wipe out the evil things we’ve done. You will throw all our sins into the bottom of the sea.”

**Note:** The good things we have done and our bad deeds are all recorded in Heaven. We will be judged according to what is written. But, as soon as we ask for forgiveness, pardon is written by our name and the record of our sins. Later, in the final judgment, the record will be erased if we have been truly sorry for our sins.

### **How does becoming a Christian change your life?**

**2 Cor. 5:17 NLV -** “What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!”

### **How does God change you from the inside out?**

**Psalms 51:10 NirV -** “God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.” or **CEV-** “Create pure thoughts in me and make me faithful again.”

**Note:** When we are born again, we switch bosses. Before Satan was in charge. After, it is Jesus. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to take away our sinful wishes. As we walk daily with Christ, what we want will be what He wants. Our thoughts become like His thoughts. By constantly looking to Jesus, we are changed. As a computer can change programs, so our minds are given a new program by the Holy Spirit. Sinful things we liked before, we come to hate. Spiritual things we hated, we learn to like.

### **What is one way we can know if we are ‘born again’?**

**1 John 3:14 NirV-** “We know that we have left our old dead condition and entered into new life. We know it because we love our brothers and sisters. Those who do not are still living in their old condition.”

**Note:** The heart of Christianity and God’s law, is true, deep, caring love. We know true Christians by the love they show for both their friends, and their enemies.

### **Will ‘born again’ people keep on planning to sin?**

**1 John 3:9 ICB-** “When God makes someone his child, that person does not go on sinning. The new life God gave that person stays in him. So he is not able to go on sinning, because he has become a child of God’.

**Note:** A true Christian may be caught in a moment of weakness, and fall. But, a true Christian will not be planning to continue doing the same sin. True love will not allow us to keep on planning the same unloving acts.

**When we give ourselves fully to God, will we love Him enough to obey?**

**1 John 2:3-6 CEV-** “When we obey God, we are sure that we know him. But if we claim to know him and don't obey him, we are lying and the truth isn't in our hearts. We truly love God only when we obey him as we should, and then we know that we belong to him. If we say we are his, we must follow the example of Christ.

**Note-** Jesus makes it clear that if we truly love Him, we decide to obey Him fully.

**Will God accept anyone no matter what they have done?**

**John 6:37 NIV -** “Everyone the Father gives me will come to me. I will never send away anyone who comes to me.”

**Note-** There is no sin that is too bad for God to forgive. But, if we keep pushing God away, it is possible to finally seal our minds away from the working of the Holy Spirit. God will not force Himself on us. But, as long as there is hope, God will not give up!

**Is it safe to put off a decision for God?**

**2 Corinthians 6:2 CEV-** “In the Scriptures God says, "When the time came, I listened to you, and when you needed help, I came to save you." That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved.”

**Note:** Life is so uncertain with instant death through accidents or heart attacks. It is not safe to ever put off a decision for Christ. Really, being a Christian life brings a deeper joy and satisfaction than anything the world can give. Why wait?

## 2. GOD'S WORD'S FOR MY LIFE

### Has God ever spoken directly with people?

**Hebrews 1:1 NIrV** - "In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways."

**Note:** Before man sinned, God spoke directly to Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening. God may speak directly to us through our conscience or even a dream. But, God usually uses special people called 'Prophets'. God asks the prophets to write His messages for us.

### How can we know that it was God who really spoke through the prophets or Bible writers?

**2 Peter 1:19 CEV**- "All of this makes us even more certain that what the prophets said is true. So you should pay close attention to their message, as you would to a lamp shining in some dark place. ...

**2 Peter 1:20, 21 NIrV**- "Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding. It never came simply because they wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So prophecy comes from God."

**Note:** God gave His messages to the prophets. God talked to the prophets with dreams, visions, clear thought impressions, or sent an angel to explain things. Sometimes God directly spoke out loud to them. When a true prophet tells us what is going to happen, it must come true. A later prophet's messages must agree with an earlier prophets (Isaiah 8:20). We must test the messages because there are both true and false prophets. We believe all the prophets in the Bible are true.

### Is everything written in the Bible from God?

**2 Timothy 3:16 TEV**- "All Scripture is *inspired* by God"

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIrV**- "God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, God people can be completely prepared to do every good thing."

**Note:** The Bible is the Word of God for us. God helped (inspired) the writers with their thoughts. The Holy Spirit helped the writers choose the right words from their own vocabulary. Each prophet wrote in his own way (style). John (a former fisherman) uses easier words than Paul (a former Jewish leader). The Bible gives us clear and true messages from God.

### Why did God speak to us through the Bible?

**Romans 15:4 NIrV** - "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They cheer us up and give us hope."

**Note:** The Bible is the story of how God has worked for about 6,000 years to save people. We see how God worked with people and with nations. Most of the Bible tells us how God worked with His special people, Israel. God wanted them to be His missionaries.

### Why did God give so many stories about real people and their experiences?

**1 Cor. 10:11 ICV** - "The things that happened to those people *are examples*. And they were written down to be warnings for us. For we live in a time when all these things of the past have reached their goal."

**Note:** We need to learn lessons from the good and bad experiences of the people in the Bible. We see behind what *'seemed to just happen'* that was really part of the great war between God and Satan. We see how a loving God is trying to do everything He can to save sinful man!

**Do we need any special help in understanding what God is trying to tell us in His Word?**

**1 Cor. 2:14 NlrV** - "Some people don't have the Holy Spirit. They don't accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. Things like that are foolish to them. They can't understand them. In fact, such things can't be understood without the Spirit's help."

**Note:** It was the Holy Spirit that inspired the prophets and helped them write. We need the same Holy Spirit to help us understand what the Spirit is really trying to tell us in the Bible. It is very easy to misunderstand or twist words to make things read the way we want to believe. [2 Peter 3:16]

**Is it important to take time to really study the Bible?**

**John 5:39 ICV**- "You carefully study the Scriptures because you think that they give you eternal life. Those are the same Scriptures that tell about me."

**Acts 17:11 NirV**- "The Bereans were very glad to receive Paul's message. They studied the Scriptures carefully every day. They wanted to see if what Paul said was true..."

**Note:** The Bible is the most important book in the world. We should study it carefully and with prayer. ***We need to try and understand:*** (1) Who first received the message? (2) Why it was given? (3) What did the message mean to the people who first heard it?. We need to try and understand the meaning of each verse in its context (what goes before and after). When we want to understand a topic, we should put all the texts on the same subject together from all the Bible. It is wrong to take just one verse, and build a teaching on it without the many other verses that talk of the same thing.

**Did Jesus encourage others to use the Bible to better understand His life and work?**

**John 5:39 ICV** - "You carefully study the Scriptures because you think that they give you eternal life. Those are the same Scriptures that tell about me!"

**Luke 23:27 ICV** - "Then Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures. He started with Moses, and then he talked about what all the prophets had said about him."

**Note:** Jesus made it very clear that it was important to study and know what was in the Bible. If God wrote us His messages, we need to understand what God is trying to tell us. In the judgment, we are responsible for what God has been telling us in His word. Saying, "I was too busy" won't be a good excuse. Jesus said: The words I have spoken will be their judge on the last day! (**John 12:48 GNB**)

**What is the right attitude to the study of the Bible so we can have the Holy Spirit to help us understand?**

**John 7:17 ICV** - "If anyone chooses to do what God wants, then he will know that my teaching comes from God. He will know that this teaching is not my own."

**Note:** People often choose to believe only what they ***want to believe***. (Paul warns against this in 2 Timothy 4:3) So, if we really want to know God's truth, we must have the right attitude. We must really want to know God's will. This is why it is so important to pray before we read the Bible. God's Spirit needs to prepare our hearts to be ready to accept God's will for our lives - even if it is not what we like!

**What is the final goal of the Scriptures for your life?**

**John 20:21 NirV-** “But these are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.”

**Note:** The goal of the Bible is to help us be saved and prepare for Heaven. Jesus is the only way to Heaven. We need to concentrate on coming to know, love and follow Jesus fully!

### 3. WHERE DID SIN COME FROM?

#### Who began all sin?

**1 John 3:8 ICV-** The devil has been sinning since the beginning. Anyone who continues to sin belongs to the devil. The Son of God came for this purpose: to destroy the devil's work."

**Note:** Jesus says that Satan was a real person.. Sin first started in Lucifer's heart.

#### How did sin begin in the heart of a perfect angel, Lucifer (the Devil) when He was still in Heaven?

**Ezekiel 28:15,17 BBE-** " There has been no evil in your ways from the day when you were made, till sin was seen in you. ...Your heart was lifted up because you were beautiful, you made your wisdom evil through your sin: I have sent you down, even to the earth..."

**Note:** Somehow Satan started thinking thoughts of pride and selfishness. Satan also became jealous of Jesus. God pleaded with Satan to repent. But Satan would not repent and accept God's authority. Satan wanted to do things his way, not God's. That is the heart of sin.

#### What was Satan's goal?

**Isaiah 14:13,14 NCV-** "You told yourself "I will go up to heaven. I will put my throne above God's stars. I will sit on the mountain of the gods, on the slopes of the sacred mountain. I will go up above the tops of the clouds. I will be like God Most High."

**Note:** Satan wanted to be like God in power and authority. Satan wanted to be worshiped. Today Satan is being worshiped in many false religions in ways people do not suspect.

#### What happened to the Devil after He sinned?

**John 10:18 CEV-** " Jesus told them: I saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.

**Rev. 12:7-9 ICV -** "Then there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back. But the dragon was not strong enough. He and his angels lost their place in heaven. He was thrown down out of heaven. (The giant dragon is that old snake called the devil or Satan. He leads the whole world the wrong way.) The dragon with his angels was thrown down to the earth."

**Note:** After He sinned, Satan and his angels were thrown out of Heaven. Satan and his angels tried to win other worlds over to their new ways of thinking. But, our world is the only one that fell to Satan's lies.

#### How did sin spread to our earth?

**Genesis 3:1-6 NCV -** "Now the snake was the most clever of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day the snake said to the woman, Did God really say that you must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden? The woman answered the snake, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden. But God told us, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch it, or you will die. But the snake said to the woman, You will not die. God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, you will learn about good and evil and you will be like God! The woman saw that the tree was beautiful, that its fruit was good to eat, and that it would make her wise. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of the fruit to her husband, and he ate it."

**Note:** Adam and Eve were given a test of loyalty and obedience. They were told not to eat of one tree - the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But, when Eve wandered away from Adam, she fell to Satan's temptation. Adam knew Eve had sinned, but Adam decided to also eat the forbidden fruit. Adam decided to suffer the same penalty as Eve, whatever that might be.

**We sin because of Adam, but how is Jesus working things out to save us from sin?**

**Romans 5:12 & 15 NirV** - "Sin entered the world because one man sinned. And death came because of sin. Everyone sinned, so death came to all people. ...God's gift is different from Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man. But it was even more sure that God's grace would also come through one man. That man is Jesus Christ. God's gift of grace was more than enough for the whole world."

**Note:** When Adam and Eve sinned, their whole nature changed. They became naturally selfish and disobedient. We are now born with that same bent to evil. When we give ourselves completely to Jesus, we change Masters. Instead of having Satan in control, we have Jesus in control through His Spirit. Through God's power we can change and live lives as Jesus lived.

**What did Jesus say about the Devil?**

**John 8:44 ICV**- "Your father is the devil. You belong to him and want to do what he wants. He was a murderer from the beginning. He was against the truth, for there is no truth in him. He is a liar, and he is like the lies he tells. He is the father of lies."

**Note:** Satan wins by deception and lies. Satan offers temporary 'highs', but they leave us worse off. Sin can be fun for a while, but in the end it brings disappointment, suffering and death. God can only use honesty. God has to win our loyalty. God is now working to demonstrate His love to the Universe through our experiences here in this world. The universe is watching everything that is happening now. But, it takes time and everyone must have free choice.

**What will finally happen to Satan and his angels?**

**Rev. 20:7-10 NCV** - "When the thousand years are over, Satan will be set free from his prison. Then he will go out to trick the nations in all the earth--Gog and Magog gather them for battle. There are so many people they will be like sand on the seashore. And Satan's army marched across the earth and gathered around the camp of God's people and the city God loves. But fire came down from heaven and burned them up. And Satan, who tricked them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur..."

**Note:** After the final judgment and the Universe have seen that God is not a dictator, but is really loving, Satan will be destroyed. But God cannot bring it to an end until His love and mercy is proved beyond any doubt!

**Who will make it possible for us to be free from the power of the Devil?**

**Heb. 2:14,15 NLV** - "Because God's children are human beings made of flesh and blood. Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. [ICV] He did this so that, by dying, he could destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil."

**Note:** Jesus says in Revelation 3:20 CEV- "Listen! I am standing and knocking at your door. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will eat together." Jesus is waiting to come into your heart. Have you made that decision to let Him in?

## 4. DID MAN EVOLVE OR WAS MAN CREATED BY THE HAND OF A LOVING GOD?

### How does the Bible say our world was made?

**Genesis 1:1 KJV** - "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth."

**Note: *There are three ideas:*** (1) Man evolved from one celled animals after some kind of a 'big bang' that began life. This is the theory of Evolution (2) God created the first life, but used evolution as His way of creating - *Theistic Evolution* (3) God created everything exactly as it says in Genesis 1 - Creation. While we respect those who have views # 1 and # 2, the only way to accept the Bible as fully inspired (from God) is to take it as it reads. This means that we accept "six 24 hour days" of Creation - just as it says in Genesis.

If people say that God created something, but Genesis is a mixture of truth and error (myth), then they soon say that the whole Bible is also filled with truth and error. Why? Jesus and the Bible writers all believed a literal creation story. If people don't believe Genesis as fact, then they start to doubt the story of the flood and the miracles of the Bible. Finally, they claim that the story of Jesus is a mixture of truth and man's private opinions. Because the power of Bible truth is broken, they may believe that Jesus has no power to save them.

### Who actually did the creating of our world?

**Col. 1:15,16 NirV**- "Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. He is first, and he is over all of creation. All things were created by him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him."

**Note:** The Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all worked together in Creation. The Father helped plan, but Jesus did the speaking, and the work was carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### What was the earth like at the beginning of Creation week?

**Genesis 1:2 NirV** - "The earth didn't have any shape. And it was empty. Darkness was over the surface of the ocean. At that time, the ocean covered the earth. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

**Note:** Some believe that at the beginning of creation week that God created all the elements, minerals and stone in our world. Others believe that some time earlier that God made the world in the rough and that during Creation week God then developed our world as described in Genesis 1. Either way, God created everything as described in Genesis 1.

### When did God make the sun and the moon?

**Genesis 1:16,17 NCV** - "So God made the two large lights. He made the brighter light to rule the day and made the smaller light to rule the night. He also made the stars. God put all these in the sky to shine on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that all these things were good."

**Note:** On the 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Creation, God probably our own solar system with our sun and our planets. Obviously, the Universe is extremely old. We are seeing light from stars that only started coming toward us billions of years ago.

### **Did we evolve up through monkey's, or were we made to look like God?**

**Genesis 1:26, 27 NIV-** “Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our likeness. ...” “So God created human beings in his own likeness. He created them in the likeness of God.”

**Note:** God made man like Himself with power to think, plan, invent, design and worship. If man only evolved through ‘*survival of the fittest*’ as taught by Charles Darwin, then the story of Genesis and the first sin does not make sense. The Bible then becomes a myth, and one does not know what is truth and what is false.

### **What was the last thing God created at the end of the week?**

**Genesis 2:1-3 ICB-** “So the sky, the earth and all that filled them were finished. By the seventh day God finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. He made it holy because on that day he rested. He rested from all the work he had done in creating the world.”

**Note:** It says that God set apart a special day calling it the Sabbath. The Sabbath was to be a memorial of God’s creative power. Man would also be able to rest from his labors, and have time to develop a personal relationship with His Creator. God showed that the day was to be very special for He Himself rested, put a special blessing into the day, and made it a holy day for man to keep forever. In the Ten Commandments, God gives Creation as the reason for the Sabbath.

### **Some people think the days of creation were long periods of time, but how long was each day?**

**Gen 1:31 CEV-** “God looked at what he had done. All of it was very good! Evening came and then morning--that was the sixth day.”

**Note:** The Bible is very clear that each day was like our day. It says that there was evening and morning. The Fourth Commandment in Exodus 20 says (NIV): “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work ... **For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth**, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore he blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. “

God is saying - I worked six days and blessed the 7<sup>th</sup>. I want you to do the same as I did. If the Creation days were thousands of years, then Adam and Eve would have died before the Sabbath started. The Bible is very clear that each Creation day was just like our 24 hour day. The Fourth Commandment obviously also takes each day of Creation as being a literal 24 hour day.

### **What was man’s first home like?**

**Genesis 2: 8 & 15 -NIV-** “The Lord God had planted a garden in the east. It was in Eden. There he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. Their fruit was pleasing to look at and good to eat. ...” “The Lord God put the man in the Garden of Eden. He put him there to work its ground and to take care of it.”

**Note:** God made a garden to be man’s first home. There were no weeds, no winter, no rain. God watered the earth from one place and the water flowed out. God also watered with a heavy dew or mist. Man was to train the vines, do easy work in the beautiful garden, and eat the fruits, nuts and grains that grew there.

**When we really believe that God made us, and that we did not evolve from animals, what will we want to do to our King and Creator?**

**Psalms 95:6 BBE-** “O come, let us give worship, falling down on our knees before the Lord our Maker.  
**Note:** When we truly realize the wonderful way God made us and our world, we will be so thankful. We will want to praise and worship Him. We will also realize that when God designed us, He knew what was best for us. That is why God has given us laws and the Bible. The Bible is our book of the Creator’s instructions for the people He has made.

**Our world has become sinful and evil - will God ever create again?**

**Isaiah 65:17 ICV -** “Look, I will make new heavens and a new earth. And people will not remember the past. They will not think about those things.”

**Note:** Our world is now a mess because of sin. But God has promised to make everything new again. We are to do the best we can now to look after what He has given. But what a joy a new Earth will be - no winter, no pollution, no sin. Let’s prepare our lives for that new world!

## 5. WAS JESUS REALLY GOD, OR JUST A SUPERMAN?

### What did Jesus say about Himself?

**John 14: 8- 11- ICV** “Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need.” Jesus answered, I have been with you a long time now. Do you still not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. So why do you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you don’t come from me. The Father lives in me, and he is doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or believe because of the miracles I have done.”

**Note:** Jesus is saying that He and the Father are one in purpose. But it is more than that - the Father and Son are one God. Can we fully understand how the Father and Son can be two separate ‘persons’, but only ‘one God’? Our minds must just accept it. We have no human parallel.

### What does the Bible say was Jesus place in Heaven before He came to live with us on the earth?

**John 17:5 CEV-** “Now, Father, give me back the glory that I had with you before the world was created.”

**Phil. 2:6-9 NirV-** “In his very nature he was God. But he did not think that being equal with God was something he should hold on to. Instead, he made himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant. He was made in human form. He appeared as a human being. 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.”

**Note:** Before Jesus came to earth as a human baby, He was always with the Father in Heaven. There never was a time when Jesus was created back in eternity. Jesus always existed.

### Was Jesus born naturally or supernaturally?

**Isaiah 7:14 NCV-** “The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and she will name him Immanuel.”

**Luke 1:27, 30,31 NirV-** “He was sent to a virgin. The girl was engaged to a man named Joseph. ... But the angel said to her ... “You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must name him Jesus.” ...

**Vs. 34, 35-** “How can this happen?” Mary asked the angel. “I am a virgin.” The angel answered, “The Holy spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God.”

**Note:** Through a miracle the Holy Spirit supernaturally made Mary pregnant with Jesus. The Bible gives no details about this miracle. Jesus had a human Mother and a Divine Father. Jesus was fully God and fully Man at the same time.

### Did Jesus come on time?

**Gal. 4:4 TEV-** “But when the *right time* finally came, God sent his own Son.”

**Note:** The prophecy in Daniel 9:24 & 25 shows us exactly when Jesus would come. If you study this prophecy, you find that Jesus was to be anointed, or baptized, in 27 AD. Jesus was baptized in the Fall of 27 AD and crucified in the Spring of 31 AD. Jesus public ministry lasted exactly 3.5 years - just as the prophecy said. So, in a special way, Jesus came ‘on time’!

### Who actually had the power to make our world?

**Col. 1:15,16 NirV**- “Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can’t be seen. He is first, and he is over all of creation. *All things were created by him.* He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can’t be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him.”

**Note:** Jesus was the God at Creation who did the speaking and creating. Jesus is our Creator, and now through His death is our re-creator.

**Does Jesus have supernatural power to save us?**

**Acts 4:12 NCV**- “Jesus is the only One who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. And we must be saved through him!”

**Note:** Jesus paid the death penalty for us, so we can be saved. Now through His Holy Spirit, Jesus wants to give us power to live a life of love for Him. Jesus want us to show the world what He is like!.

**What will Jesus have power to do in the future?**

**Matt. 24:30 NirV** - “At that time the sign of the Son of man will appear in the sky. All the nations of earth will be sad. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky. He will come with power and great glory.” **1 Thess. 4:14 TEV**- “ We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus those who have died believing in him.”

**Note:** When Jesus was here on earth, His power was largely hidden, except for His miracles. But, when Jesus returns the second time, He will show His power as King of the Universe. Jesus will call the dead from their graves. Jesus will have so much power and brightness that the wicked will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. What a joy to be able to serve such a loving and powerful God!

## 6. WHAT HAPPENS TO US WHEN WE DIE?

### How were we created?

**Genesis 2:7 BBE-** “And the Lord God made man from the dust of the earth, breathing into him the breath of life: and man became a living soul.”

**Note:** God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living being (soul). Man does not have a separate ‘soul’, but he is a ‘living soul’.

### What happens when we die?

**Psalms 146:4- BBE-** “Man's breath goes out, he is turned back again to dust; in that day all his purposes come to an end. The **KJV** version puts it “in that very day his thoughts perish [stop].”

**Note:** A light bulb is a good illustration of what happens to a human being at death. When you turn on the electricity in a dark light bulb, you get light. When you turn off the electricity, you have a dark light bulb. When God breathed in the ‘breath of life’ into the human form, the form became a living breathing human - a soul. When we die, the life and breath (like the electricity) ends, and the lifeless human form is left (the bulb). Man stops thinking and is totally unconscious. [People and animals share the same life force, called “breath” in Ecclesiastes 3:19 and “spirit” in verse 21.]

### What goes back to God at death?

**Eccl. 12:7 TEV-** “Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of life will go back to God, who gave it to us. **BBE** version: “...and the spirit goes back to God who gave it.”

**Note:** The life force, or breath goes back to God. God keeps all the life codes and the character, and later puts it all back together - just like we were before.

### Is that “breath:” or “spirit” that goes back to God at death able to think or work or talk with God?

**Psalms 115:17 NIRV-** “Dead people don’t praise the Lord. Those who lie quietly in the grave don’t praise him.”

**Eccl. 9:5,6 NIRV-** “People who are still alive know they’ll die. But those who have died don’t know anything. They don’t receive any more rewards. And they are soon forgotten. Their love, hate and jealousy disappear. They will never share again in anything that happens on earth.”

**Note:** The Bible says that the dead are not praising the Lord and that the dead don’t know anything. In the Garden of Eden Satan told a lie saying - you will not die. Satan has persuaded every false religion to teach that when we die, we simply leave the body. Satan’s goal is to have his angels pretend that they are the ‘spirits’ of dead loved ones who come back to visit.

### What did Job say about the sleep of death?

**Job 14:12 BBE-** “So man goes down to his last resting-place and comes not again: till the heavens come to an end, they will not be awake or come out of their sleep.”

**Note:** Job calls death a sleep. So does Jesus. Many times the Bible calls death a sleep.

### What word did Jesus use to describe death?

**John 11:11, 12 ICB-** “After Jesus said this, he added, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen *asleep*. But I am going there to wake him.” The followers said, “But Lord, if he can sleep, he will get well.” Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead.”

**Note:** Jesus clearly called death a sleep. Why? Because man is unconscious, the same as when we are sleeping.

**When Jesus rose from the dead, there was also a little resurrection of good people who had died. What did these people do?**

**Matt. 27:52,53 CEV-** “The graves opened, and many of God’s people who had died were raised from death. They came out of the graves after Jesus was raised from death. They went into the holy city, and many people saw them.”

**Note:** This text shows what it will be like in the resurrection at Jesus Second Coming. People are not coming back from purgatory, hell or heaven to get bodies. No, they were sleeping in the grave, and Jesus wakes them from the sleep of death.

**Jesus talked about a resurrection of the good people at the end of the world. But Jesus also talked about a second resurrection, what was it?**

**John 5:28, 29 NCV -** “Don’t be surprised at this: A time is coming when all who are dead and in their graves will hear his voice. Then they will come out of their graves. Those who did good will rise and have life forever, but those who did evil will rise to be judged guilty.”

**Note:** There will be two resurrections: one for the good people, and the other for the bad people. In our study on the Millennium, we find that these two resurrections are 1000 years apart.

**What will happen to the good?**

**1 Thess. 4:16, 17- NCV-** “The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. And those who have died believing in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive will be gathered up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever.”

**1 Corinthians 15:23 CEV** “...Christ was the first to be raised to life, and his people will be raised to life when he returns.”

**Note:** At the call of Jesus, the good will be raised and taken up in the air to meet Jesus in the clouds. The good then go to Heaven to help in the judgment of the lost.

**What will happen to those who are ‘judged guilty’?**

**Rev. 20:15 ICB-** “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

**Mal. 4:1 CEV-** “The day of judgment is certain to come. And it will be like a red-hot furnace with flames that burn up proud and sinful people, as though they were straw. Not a branch or a root will be left. I, the LORD All-Powerful, have spoken!”

**Note:** Eventually, after they are judged, the wicked are destroyed for eternity. There will be nothing left of sin or the wicked when God has done His awful work of destroying all sin and sinners. It hurts God, but He must do it.

**What was Paul looking forward to after he would die for his faith?**

**2 Tim. 4:6-8- TEV-** As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day---and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.

**Note:** Paul talks about receiving his reward of eternal life 'on that Day' when Jesus 'appear(s)'. There is no talk here about immediately going into heavenly glory and talking to saints in heaven. Paul expected to wait for the resurrection He had talked about before (1 Cor. 15:51-52 & 1 Thess.4:16,17)

Eternal life, given at the resurrection, will be the reward of every good person who has ever lived!

## 7. IS THERE REALLY A HELL?

### Is there a time when bad people will be punished?

**2 Peter 2:9 CEV-** “This shows that the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their sufferings and to punish evil people while they wait for the day of judgment.”

**Note:** Many evil people receive punishment for their evil deeds here on earth. But, many other people seem to get away with their sins. We may be sure that everyone will be judged and receive the reward they deserve - good or bad.

### What did Jesus say about what would happen to the wicked?

**Matt. 10:28 NirV-** “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but can’t kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

**Note:** Jesus said to be afraid of the God who will destroy both soul and body completely in the fires of hell. But, if we give ourselves fully to Jesus, then there is nothing to fear, for we will be in Heaven, not Hell.

### Did Jesus warn us about hell?

**Matt. 13:40-42 ICB -** “The weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire. It will be this way at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send out his angels. They will gather out of his kingdom all who cause sin and all who do evil. The angels will throw them into the blazing furnace.”

**Note:** Jesus does not want anyone to be lost and go into the fires of hell. Jesus is doing everything He can to keep us from having to be burned up. That is why Jesus kept *warning* about the fires of hell.

### Will both the good and bad be raised to receive their reward?

**John 5:28, 29 NCV -** “Don’t be surprised at this: A time is coming when all who are dead and in their graves will hear his voice. Then they will come out of their graves. Those who did good will rise and have life forever, but those who did evil will rise to be judged guilty.”

**Note:** Since we don’t get our eternal reward here, God promises us that everyone will get their reward later - whether good or bad!.

### When will the wicked and Satan be destroyed?

**Revelation 20: 7-9 & 12-15 ICB-** “When the 1,000 years are over, Satan will be set free from his prison. He will go out to trick the nations in all the earth – Gog and Magog. Satan will gather them for battle. There will be so many people that they will be like sand on the sea shore. And Satan’s army marched across the earth and gathered around the camp of God’s people and the city that God loves. But fire came down from heaven and burned them up. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. The dead were judged by what they had done, which was written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. Each person was judged by what he had done. And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

**Note:** Satan, his angels and all wicked will be burned up at the end of the 1,000 years described in

Revelation chapter 20.

### Who will end up in hell?

**Rev. 21:8 ICB-** “But those who are cowards, who refuse to believe, who do evil things, who kill, who sin sexually, who do evil magic, who worship idols, and who tell lies -- all these will have a place in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

### How completely will the bad people be destroyed?

**Matt. 5:30 NCV-** “But those who are cowards, who refuse to believe, who do evil things, who kill, who sin sexually, who do evil magic, who worship idols, and who tell lies—all these will have a place in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

**Matt. 10:28 CEV-** “...you should fear God who can destroy both your body and your soul in hell.”

**Note:** The destruction of the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years will be final and complete. They will never live again. Our first death is here, but the wicked suffer the *final second death*.

### Will the fires of hell go out?

**Mal. 3:1 & 3 ICB -** “There is a day coming that will be like a hot furnace. All the proud and evil people will be like straw. On that day they will be completely burned up. Not a root or branch will be left, says the Lord of heaven’s armies. ...Then you will crush the wicked. They will be like ashes under your feet. I will do this on that day, says the Lord of heaven’s armies.”

**Psalms 37:1 & 20 BBE-** “ For in a short time the evil-doer will be gone: you will go searching for his place, and it will not be there. ... But the wrongdoers will come to destruction, and the haters of the Lord will be like the fat of lambs, they will be burned up; they will go up in smoke, and never again be seen.”

**Note:** Jude 1:7 says that those in Sodom and Gomorrah “suffer[ed] the punishment of *eternal fire* as a plain warning to all.” Just as the fires are no longer burning in Sodom, so the fires of hell will go out when they have finished their work. The *nature* of the fire is eternal for it comes from God and no one can put it out, but God. The Bible says the wicked will become ashes. Revelation 20 tells us that Hell happens right outside the walls of the New Jerusalem. What purpose would there be in having the wicked be tortured in hell for all of eternity just outside the city? God is just and fair. The wicked will be punished with reasonable punishment, but not tortured for all of eternity for just a few years of sin here. The Bible says nothing about a hell now burning deep under the earth.

### Even though the fires of hell will go out, does the Bible give us any idea about differences in the amount of punishment some receive before they are completely burned up?

**Luke 12:47,48 NCV-** “The servant who knows what his master wants but is not ready, or who does not do what the master wants, will be *beaten with many blows*! But the servant who does not know what his master wants and does things that should be punished will be beaten *with few blows*. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded. And from the one trusted with much, much more will be expected.”

**Note:** Jesus clearly gives us the idea of differences of punishment. Someone who lived a moderately decent life, but did not accept Christ, should not receive the same punishment as Hitler or Stalin. Satan has invented the idea of eternal torment. Satan wants to picture God as mean and cruel. Even the evil Hitler did not torment the Jews endlessly. The Jews were sent to gas chambers and quickly killed. Would a loving heavenly Father torment people for billions and trillions of years without end, for just 60 or 100 evil years

here? The Devil wants us to believe his lie so that God looks bad.

**How does God feel about having to destroy sin and sinners in hell?**

**Ezekiel 33:11 CEV** - “Say to them: ‘The Lord GOD says: As surely as I live, I do not want any who are wicked to die. I want them to stop doing evil and live. Stop! Stop your wicked ways! You don’t want to die, do you, people of Israel?’”

**Isaiah 28:21 BBE** - “For the Lord will come up as on Mount Perazim, he will be moved to wrath as in the valley of Gibeon; so that he may do his work--strange is his work; and give effect to his act--unnatural is his act.”

**Note:** Jesus sat and cried over Jerusalem. Jesus had so badly wanted them to repent. Perhaps Jesus will also cry when He has to finally destroy all sinners for eternity. This will be the first time any being has ever been destroyed never to come back. Surely, it will be a very, very sad time for all the Universe! But in love, God cannot allow sin to continue for eternity. Those who want to hold on to sin will have to be destroyed because sin only brings sorrow, death and heartache.

**Will sin come up in the universe again?**

**Nahum 1:9 BBE**- “What are you designing against the Lord? he will put an end to it: his haters will not come up again a second time.”

**Note:** The terrible experience with sin will be a sort of ‘inoculation’ for the universe. No one will ever want to sin again, for everyone has seen the results of sin. The righteous can be a constant reminder of this terrible experience with sin. They can give a living testimony (report) of what sin is like and how wonderful it is to be free from sin!

**What wonderful encouragement and advice does Jesus disciple Peter give us?**

**2 Peter 3:10-14 ICB**- “But the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise. Everything in the skies will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything in it will be burned up. In that way everything will be destroyed. So what kind of people should you be? You should live holy lives and serve God. You should wait for the day of God and look forward to its coming. When that day comes, the skies will be destroyed with fire, and everything in the skies will melt with heat. But God made a promise to us. And we are waiting for what he promised—a new heaven and a new earth where goodness lives. Dear friends, we are waiting for this to happen. So try as hard as you can to be without sin and without fault. Try to be at peace with God.”

**Note:** How wonderful Heaven will be when every trace of sin, selfishness, war and terror is gone. All will be peace, love, trust, tenderness and joy! Have you made your decision for heaven?

## 8. WILL JESUS COME AGAIN?

### **Will the same Jesus who was here 2000 years ago come back as a real person?**

**Acts 1:11 NIrV** - “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. But he will come back in the same way you saw him go.”

**Note:** As Jesus was being taken up and back to Heaven after His resurrection, the angel brought comfort to the watching disciples. The angel said that Jesus would come back again - the same way they saw Him go.

### **How many will see Jesus come in the clouds?**

**Matt. 24:30 ICB** - “At that time, there will be something in the sky that shows the Son of Man is coming. All the peoples of the world will cry. They will see the Son of Man coming on clouds in the sky. He will come with great power and glory.”

**Rev. 1:7 NIrV**- “Look? He is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see him. Even those who pierced him will see him. All the nations of the earth will be sad because of him.”

**Note:** Every being alive on earth will see Jesus Second Coming. The Bible says that even those that pierced Him will see the glory of His coming. It appears that the leaders who crucified Jesus will be raised to also see His Coming! [See Matthew 26:64]

### **Is it possible that part of Jesus return could be secret?**

**Matt. 24:25-27 NCV**- “‘If people tell you, ‘The Christ is in the desert,’ don’t go there. If they say, ‘The Christ is in the inner room,’ don’t believe it. When the Son of Man comes, he will be seen by everyone, like lightning flashing from the east to the west.’”

**1Corinthians 15:51,52 ICB**- “But listen, I tell you this secret: We will not all die, but we will all be changed. It will only take a second. We will be changed as quickly as an eye blinks. This will happen when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet will sound and those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we will all be changed.

**Note:** There is nothing secret here with a huge trumpet blast and graves opening! The Bible makes it very clear that the good people and the bad people will both be there at the Second Coming.

### **What will people do who are not ready for Jesus coming?**

**Rev. 6:15-17 NCV**- “Then the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the rich people, the powerful people, the slaves, and the free people hid themselves in caves and in the rocks on the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us. Hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne and from the anger of the Lamb! The great day for their anger has come, and who can stand against it?”

**Note:** The wicked will not want to face Jesus when He comes as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### **When Jesus comes, what will happen to the good – both those who are living those who were dead?**

**1 Thess. 4:16, 17 NirV**- “The Lord himself will come down from heaven. We will hear a loud command. We will hear the voice of the leader of the angels. We will hear a blast from God’s trumpet. Many who believe in Christ will have died already. They will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them. We will be taken up in the clouds. We will meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with him forever.”

**Note:** The good raised from the dead and those still living, will all go up together to meet Jesus in the air. There is no talk here of a secret group being raptured (taken) up ahead of time. The Bible is clear that they all go up together.

**How will the good people be changed at the resurrection?**

**1Cor. 15:51-53 NCV-** “But look! I tell you this secret: We will not all sleep in death, but we will all be changed. It will take only a second—as quickly as an eye blinks—when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet will sound, and those who have died will be raised to live forever, and we will all be changed. This body that can be destroyed must clothe itself with something that can never be destroyed. And this body that dies must clothe itself with something that can never die.”

**What will our bodies be like after the resurrection?**

**Phil. 3:21 ICB-** “He will change our simple bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power. With that power he is able to rule all things.”

**Note:** The righteous will get bodies that will not die or get old. We will all have the energy of youth. Our minds will be sharp. Our memories will be perfect. Our looks, character and personality will be close enough to how we are here, that our friends will still know us. But, we will no longer have an evil nature. Every desire will be to be loving and good.

**Where will the good people go with Jesus?**

**John 14:1-3 ICB -** “Jesus said, Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am.”

**Note:** The righteous will go up to meet Jesus in the air, and go to Heaven for 1000 years. They will also take have a part in the judgment before the wicked are destroyed.

**What will heaven be like for all who have disabilities, problems and sorrows now?**

**Isaiah 35:56 NirV-** “Then the eyes of the blind will be opened. The ears of those who can’t hear will be unplugged. Those who can’t walk will leap like a deer. And those who can’t speak will shout with joy.”

**What can we do to prepare ourselves for Jesus Second Coming?**

**1 John 3:2,3 TEV-** “My dear friends, we are now God’s children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.”

**Note:** God will not take anyone to Heaven who could take sin to Heaven. God and the Universe must be satisfied that everyone that goes to Heaven must be ‘safe to save’ and will never sin again. Those who are saved will want to serve God fully and completely. When we love God truly, we would rather die than commit one sin. Now is the time to learn to know and trust Jesus fully.

**Who will come with Jesus to help at the Second Coming?**

**Matt. 25:31 NirV-** “The Son of Man will come in all his glory. All the angels will come with him. Then he will sit on his throne in the glory of heaven.”

**Note:** Our guardian angels will be there to greet us. How wonderful it will be to talk with the angel who has watched over and helped us so many times. The good angels have many times had to guard us from evil angels who wanted to hurt, tempt or destroy us. What wonderful stories we will learn of what was going on that we could not see! It will be so wonderful to be able to thank our own angel for everything!

## 9. WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?

### **Before there is a new earth, what must happen to the earth as it is now?**

**2 Peter 3:10, 12,13 ICB-** “But the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise. Everything in the skies will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything in it will be burned up. In that way everything will be destroyed. ... When that day comes, the skies will be destroyed with fire, and everything in the skies will melt with heat. But God made a promise to us. And we are waiting for what he promised—a new heaven and a new earth where goodness lives.”

**Note:** ‘Heaven’ can be thought of as two places. First: ‘Heaven’ is somewhere in the center of the Universe where God lives now. At the Second Coming, we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air and go to Heaven for 1000 years [See study on the Millennium] Revelation tells us that the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven to earth with the good. Revelation also says that God lives with us. We know that the good people from earth will all be in Heaven with Jesus, and that the earth will be our final ‘Heaven’.

### **How wonderful will heaven be?**

**1 Cor. 2:9 NLV -** “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

**Note:** Our whole world system could change. Our earth is made up of elements like carbon, iron, copper, etc. What if God made up thousands of new elements that do things we have never dreamed of? The Bible tells us that heaven is even more than we can imagine. Heaven will be full of wonderful surprises!

### **What will be in the center of Heaven?**

**Rev. 21: 1-4 ICB-** “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared. Now there was no sea. And I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. This holy city is the new Jerusalem. It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne. The voice said, Now God’s home is with men. He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone.”

**Note:** The New Jerusalem will apparently become the center of the Universe

### **What will that huge New Jerusalem city be like?**

**Rev. 21:10-18 NirV-** “He showed me Jerusalem, the Holy City. It was coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God. It gleamed like a very valuable jewel. It was like a jasper, as clear as crystal. The city had a huge, high wall with 12 gates. Twelve angels were at the gates, one at each of them. On the gates were written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, and three on the north. There were three gates on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had 12 foundations. Written on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked with me had a gold measuring rod. He used it to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square. It was as long as it was wide. The angel measured the city with the rod. It was 1,400 miles long. It was as wide and high as it was long. He measured the wall of the city. It was 200 feet thick. The angel did the measuring as a human being would. The wall was made out of jasper. The city was made out of pure gold, as pure as glass.

**Vs. 21-** “The 12 gates were made from 12 pearls. ... The main street of the city was made out of pure gold,

as clear as glass.”

**Note:** It appears that the New Jerusalem will be over 300 miles on each side of the square. There is a text that seems to say that it will be as high as it is wide. This could mean it will be a cube, or more likely in the shape of a pyramid. [Perhaps that is why Satan has been so anxious to make pyramids for part of his worship system]. The New Jerusalem is beyond our imagination to think through.

#### **What special things are in the city to help the people?**

**Rev. 22: 1,2 CEV** -“The angel showed me a river that was crystal clear, and its waters gave life. The river came from the throne where God and the Lamb were seated. Then it flowed down the middle of the city's main street. On each side of the river are trees that grow a different kind of fruit each month of the year. The fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations.”

**Note:** There is a wonderful supply of pure water. There are special trees giving life giving and healing fruit each month.

#### **Where did the light come from in the city?**

**Rev. 21:22,23 NirV**- “I didn’t see a temple in the city. This was because the Lamb and the Lord God who rules over all are its temple. The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it. God’s glory is its light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”

**Note:** The light comes from the glory of God - something we don’t understand. But, it will all be wonderful!

#### **Will animals eat each other?**

**Isaiah 11:6,7 CEV**- “Leopards will lie down with young goats, and wolves will rest with lambs. Calves and lions will eat together and be cared for by little children. Cows and bears will share the same pasture; their young will rest side by side. Lions and oxen will both eat straw.”

**Note:** In Heaven animals will be quite different from today. They will not eat each other, or be afraid of each other or of man.

#### **Will we just sit on a cloud and play a harp, or will we do real things?**

**Isaiah 65:21 NCV**- “In that city those who build houses will live there. Those who plant vineyards will get to eat their grapes. No more will one person build a house and someone else live there. One person will not plant a garden and someone else eat its fruit. ... My chosen people will live there and enjoy the things they make. They will never again work for nothing.”

**Note:** It appears that we will be able to have a home prepared for us by God in the city, and also to build our own somewhere in the country outside of the city. We will be able to enjoy doing all kinds of our own projects with no worry of war, robbery or fire.

#### **How and when will be worship in Heaven?**

**Isaiah 66:22, 23 ICB**- “I will make new heavens and the new earth. And they will last forever, says the Lord. “In the same way, your names and your children will always be with me. All people will come to worship me. They will come to worship me every Sabbath and every New Moon,”says the Lord.”

**Note:** The Bible tells us that we will come together to worship God each Sabbath and also another worship

time at the New Moon. What wonderful and joyous times these will be!

**Who will be with His people in Heaven?**

**John 14:1-3 ICB** - “Jesus said, Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am.”

**Note:** Jesus will be with His people for all eternity. We will love to be with Jesus. His saved people will be Jesus’ reward. What a tremendous thought that there will always be people living forever that were rescued from this world of sin and suffering. And – we can join with Christ in helping rescue people so they can live for eternity with Jesus!

## 10. HOW SOON WILL JESUS RETURN?

### **Did anyone ever ask Jesus about when the end of the world would come?**

**Matt. 24:3 CEV-** “Later, as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him in private and asked, “When will this happen? What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the world?”

**Note:** When the disciples asked Jesus to tell more about the temple being destroyed, they thought this would happen at the end of the world. So, they asked Jesus when it would happen. The destruction of Jerusalem happened in 70 AD, about 40 years later.

### **After telling about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, what did Jesus say about the end of the world?**

**Luke 21: 25-28 NCV-** “And there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On earth, nations will be afraid and confused because of the roar and fury of the sea. People will be so afraid they will faint, wondering what is happening to the world, because the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then people will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to happen, look up and hold your heads high, because the time when God will free you is near!”

**Note:** Jesus listed many signs of the end of the world: signs in the heavens, strange things happening in the world, and confusion and fear among the nations. We need to watch what is happening to see what may truly be signs of Jesus coming.

### **Are a great increase in wars and famines another sign of the Second Coming?**

**Matt. 24:6 NCV-** “You will hear about wars and stories of wars that are coming, but don’t be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. Nations will fight against other nations; kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat, and there will be earthquakes in different places. These things are like the first pains when something new is about to be born.”

**Note:** These things are only some of the signs. Many of these things have been happening for a long time. But, it is the great *increase* of these things that is so important to watch!

### **What are some of the signs in the social world?**

**2 Timothy 3:1-5 ICB-** “Remember this! There will be many troubles in the last days. In those times people will love only themselves and money. They will brag and be proud. They will say evil things against others. They will not obey their parents. People will not be thankful or be the kind of people God wants. They will not have love for others. They will refuse to forgive others and will speak bad things. They will not control themselves. They will be cruel and will hate what is good. In the last days, people will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking. They will be conceited and proud. They will love pleasure. They will not love God. They will continue to act as if they serve God, but they will not really serve God. Stay away from those people.”

**Note:** God’s people will see that God’s spirit is slowly being withdrawn from the world. Things will get slowly get worse and worse. Selfishness, greed and evil will reach everywhere. Two important things to note are a breakdown of the family and the lack of love.

### **What about conditions in the economic world before Jesus comes?**

**James 5:1-5 ICB-** “You rich people, listen! Cry and be very sad because of the trouble that will come to you. Your riches will rot, and your clothes will be eaten by moths. Your gold and silver will rust, and rust will be a proof that you were wrong. It will eat your bodies like fire. You saved your treasure for the last days. Men worked in your fields, but you did not pay them. They harvested your crops and are crying out against you. Now the Lord of heaven’s armies has heard their cries. Your life on earth was full of rich living. You pleased yourselves with everything you wanted. You made yourselves fat, like an animal ready to be killed. You showed no mercy to the innocent man. You murdered him. He cannot stand against you.”

**Note:** Greed will be felt everywhere in the world. The rich will be taking advantage of the poor. There will be trouble between workers and bosses.

### **Another sign of the end will be a huge increase in knowledge - are we seeing this today?**

**Daniel 12:4 NLV-** “But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end. Many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase.”

**Note:** Knowledge is increasing in many ways with computers, satellite, the internet, video and DVD. Most People in North America can get all kinds of information. We can get both the very good and terrible evil! There is also a great increase in available Bible knowledge and that may be the most important sign!

### **What is probably the most important sign of the end of the world?**

**Matthew 24:14 BBE-** “And this good news of the kingdom will be given through all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end will come.”

**Note:** The complete gospel going to all the world is the greatest sign. Much is being done, but there are still millions, maybe billions, who have never heard or read a clear explanation of the plan of salvation. What a challenge for us to do our part to take the gospel to every part of the world!

### **How will Satan try and deceive people just before Jesus returns?**

**2 Thess. 2:9 NIRV -** “The coming of the man of sin will be Satan’s work.” **Vs. 10-11- ICB** “He will have great power, and he will do many different false miracles, signs, and wonders. He will use every kind of evil to trick those who are lost. They are lost because they refused to love the truth. (If they loved the truth, they would be saved.) But they refused to love the truth; so God sends them something powerful that leads them away from the truth. He sends them that power so they will believe something that is not true.”

**Matthew 24:23, 24 NirV-** “At that time someone may say to you, ‘Look! Here is the Christ!’ Or, ‘There he is!’ Do not believe it. False Christs and false prophets will appear. They will do great signs and miracles. They will try to fool God’s chosen people if possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tell you, ‘He is far out in the desert,’ do not go out there.”

**Note:** Satan will give a big demonstration of power in miracles, real-looking healings and other exciting signs. Satan’s plan is to deceive people making them think that it is Christ’s power. Satan will finally pretend that he is Christ. Satan will look and act much like people might be expecting Jesus to look like.

### **How can we know when the real Christ is returning?**

**Matthew 24:30 NirV-** “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. All the nations on earth will be sad. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky. He will come with power

and great glory. He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call. They will gather his chosen people from all four directions. They will bring them from one end of heaven to the other.”

**Note:** Satan will appear on the ground on earth, but Jesus will not touch the earth. Jesus will remain high in the air. The good people will all be caught up to meet Jesus high in the air. Also, we believe that Jesus coming will be seen around the world - all at the same time. The Bible says that “every eye shall see Him.”

**What conditions did Jesus say would be the same before His coming as they were in the time of Noah?**

**Matt. 24:37 NIrV-** “Remember how it was in the days of Noah. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. In the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking. They were getting married. They were giving their daughters to be married. They did all those things right up to the day Noah entered the ark. They knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes.”

**Note:** People will be doing the things they always have. The world will be trying to enjoy itself. Jesus coming will be a great surprise to the wicked. To them Jesus coming will be like a thief coming in the night.

**Can anyone know for sure the time when Jesus will come?**

**Matt. 24:36 ICB-** “No one knows when that day or time will be. Even the Son and the angels in heaven don’t know. Only the Father knows.”

**Note:** We cannot know the day or hour, until it is announced in the heavens to the faithful - perhaps just hours before Jesus comes. We are to carefully study the general signs of Jesus coming. These signs will be a warning to do all we can to prepare ourselves and help others to be ready for Jesus coming. However, we each should be ready every day. Our life could end any time with an accident, and the next thing we would know would be Jesus coming!

**What should make sure we are now getting ready for Jesus coming?**

**Matt. 24:44 CEV-** “ Always be ready! You don't know when the Son of Man will come.”

**Note:** We need to make sure that Jesus is in full control of our lives. Each day we need to work on building a loving and obedient relationship with Jesus!

## 11. HOW CAN WE LEARN TO LOVE AND OBEY GOD?

**Jesus, our Saviour, told us that His greatest law is the law of love: Love to God and love to man.**

**Matt. 22:36-40 ICB-** “The Pharisee asked, Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?” Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ All the law and the writings of the prophets depend on these two commands.”

**Some people think that the Old Testament told us about an unloving God. But, what did the Old Testament tell us about loving God?**

**Deut. 6:5 TEV-** “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

**Lev. 19:18 CEV-** “Stop being angry and don't try to take revenge. I am the LORD, and I command you to love others as much as you love yourself.”

**Note:** So, Jesus was really telling us in the New Testament what He had already told us in the Old Testament through the prophet Moses.

**What is sin?**

**1 John 3:4- NIRV-** “Everyone who sins breaks the law. In fact, breaking the law is sin.”

**Note:** Love is unselfishly caring for the good of others. Sin is the opposite of love. Sin is an attitude of “I'll do what I want to do” without thinking of the good of others. Sin is basically selfishness.

**God's laws help us understand what love is and what love is not. Why are laws important for us to know?**

**Romans 7:7 NirV-** “I wouldn't have known what sin was unless the law had told me.”

**Romans 3:20 CEV-** “All the Law does is to point out our sin.”

**Note:** God's laws tell us what true love is and how love acts. Love is more than feeling. God tells us clearly how love works. Our nature is evil and it is very easy to think we are good, when we are really acting in a selfish way. God's law helps us understand what true love will do.

**What did Jesus say about the importance of obeying His commands?**

**Matt. 19:17-19 IDB-** “ But if you want to have life forever, obey the commands.” The man asked, “Which commands?” Jesus answered, ““You must not murder anyone. You must not be guilty of adultery. You must not steal. You must not tell lies about your neighbor in court. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.””

**Note:** Jesus here was quoting from the Ten Commandments which He wrote with His own finger in stone.

**Some people think the Ten Commandments ended at the cross, but what does Jesus say about them?**

**Matt. 5:17 NIRV-** “Do not think I have come to get rid of what is written in the Law or in the Prophets. I have not come to do that. Instead, I have come to give full meaning to what is written.”

**Note:** Jesus came to magnify the law and give us a demonstration of how love works in our world. **Isaiah 42:21[NLV]** said: “*The LORD has magnified his law and made it truly glorious.*”

**Can you save yourself through good works and by keeping God's law?**

**Eph. 2:8- NirV-** “God’s grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn’t come from anything you do. It is God’s gift. It is not based on anything you have done.”

**Note:** In Jesus day many people thought they could earn salvation through good works. We cannot earn salvation for it is a free gift. God’s grace is free.

**Does this mean that we don’t have to keep God’s law of the Ten Commandments?**

**Romans 3:31 TEV-** “Does this mean that by this faith we do away with the Law? No, not at all; instead, we uphold the Law.”

**Note:** Faith in God is our response to God’s free grace. We keep God’s loving commandments because we *are saved from the guilt of sin*, not to get saved.

**The requirement for salvation is perfect obedience, but we have failed. God forgives us. Jesus kept the commandments perfectly for us-**

**Romans 8:3b,4 NirV-** “But God did what the written law could not do. He made his Son to be like those who have a sinful nature. He sent him to be an offering for sin. In that way, he judged sin in his Son’s human body. Now we can do everything the law requires. Our sinful nature no longer controls the way we live. The Holy Spirit now controls the way we live.”

**Note:** When we give our hearts to God and really want to keep the commandments perfectly, Jesus counts us as if we have kept them - even when we fail. Jesus perfect life counts in place of ours. When we are sorry, we are forgiven and counted as if we had never sinned. His perfect life is counted as ours in the judgment.

**When we realize what Jesus has done to save us, what will we want to do about the Commandments?**

**John 15:10 ICB-** “I have obeyed my Father’s commands, and I remain in his love. In the same way, if you obey my commands, you will remain in my love.”

**John 14:15 TEV-** “If you love me, you will obey my commandments.”

**Note:** We want to be loving like Jesus. We ask Jesus to live out His perfect obedience through us. By His wonderful power working through us, we can grow more loving every day. We will learn to obey as we grow in love for Him.

## 12. A WONDERFUL DAY FOR WORSHIP & REST FROM STRESS

### **When God finished making the world, what did He do?**

**Genesis 2:1-3 NCV-** “So the sky, the earth, and all that filled them were finished. By the seventh day God finished the work he had been doing, so he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day, because on that day he rested from all the work he had done in creating the world.”

**Note:** Surely God was not really tired, but He rested and set an example for us. God took a day and made it holy time. Man would now have time to remember and worship His Creator.

### **How did God show the Israelites the importance of the Sabbath even before God wrote it on stone in the Ten Commandments?**

**Exodus 16:4 BBE-** “Then the Lord said to Moses, See, I will send down bread from heaven for you; and the people will go out every day and get enough for the day's needs; so that I may put them to the test to see if they will keep my laws or not.

**Note:** About 2,600 years after Creation, God's special people Israel were in the wilderness on the way to the promised land. They had almost forgotten about the Sabbath. God said He would test them with ‘manna’ to see if they would obey. They should gather enough for one day, for 5 days a week. But on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, they should gather enough for both that day and the Sabbath. No manna would come on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. For forty years God did this wonderful miracle every week!

### **In the Ten Commandments given a short time later, what reason did God give for the importance of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath?**

**Exodus 20:11 BBE-** “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and everything in them, and he took his rest on the seventh day: for this reason the Lord has given his blessing to the seventh day and made it holy.”

**Note:** On the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath God wants us to remember that He is the Creator and that He made all life in the world in six literal days. The Sabbath is the *birthday celebration* for the world. God wants to give us the special blessing that He has put into the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

### **What did Jesus say about his relationship to the Sabbath?**

**Mark 2:27, 28 CEV-** ‘Jesus finished by saying, “People were not made for the good of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for the good of people. So the Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath.”

**Note:** The Sabbath is like a winter glove, and we are like the hand. The glove, or Sabbath, was made to fit us and our need for time to worship and for our spiritual and physical rest.”

### **What is the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath is a sign or seal of?**

**Ezekiel 20: 12, 20 BBE-** “And further, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, so that it might be clear that I, who make them holy, am the Lord. ... (V-20) And keep my Sabbaths holy; and they will be a sign between me and you so that it may be clear to you that I am the Lord your God.

**Note:** God wanted the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath to be a special sign of His power to save them. By keeping the Sabbath they showed that they were being saved by Jesus death.

### **What did Jesus do on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath?**

**Luke 4:16 NIRV-** “Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. On the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue as he usually did. And he stood up to read.”

### **How does the Bible ask us to keep the Sabbath?**

**Exodus 20:8-10 NCV-** “Remember to keep the Sabbath holy. Work and get everything done during six days each week, but the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the LORD your God. On that day no one may do any work: not you, your son or daughter, your male or female slaves, your animals, or the foreigners living in your cities.”

**Isaiah 58:13,14 NCV-** “Remember to keep the Sabbath holy. Work and get everything done during six days each week, but the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the LORD your God. On that day no one may do any work: not you, your son or daughter, your male or female slaves, your animals, or the foreigners living in your cities.”

**Mark 3:4 CEV-** “ Then he asked, "On the Sabbath should we do good deeds or evil deeds? Should we save someone's life or destroy it?" But no one said a word.”

**Note:** The 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is not a ‘*holiday*’ to do just what we want, but a ‘*holy day*’ to do the things that build a relationship of love with Jesus. We may worship in church as Jesus did. We can study God’s other book to us, the book of Nature! It is good to do helpful things that will bless others like visiting the sick, etc.

### **When should the Sabbath be kept?**

**Lev. 23:32 NCV-** “It will be a special day of rest for you. ... It will continue from that evening until the next evening.”

**Note:** The Bible days were from sunset to sunset. The Bible tells us that the Sabbath is from sunset on Friday night until sunset on Saturday night. [Luke 23:54-56]

### **Did the disciples keep the Sabbath after Jesus rose from the dead?**

**Acts 17:2 CEV-** “*So as usual*, Paul went there to worship, and on three Sabbaths he spoke to the people.”

**Acts 13:42 & 44 CEV-** As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the meeting, the people begged them to say more about these same things on the next Sabbath. ...The next Sabbath almost everyone in town came to hear the message about the Lord.”

**Acts 18:4 NCV-** “Every Sabbath day he talked with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue, trying to persuade them to believe in Jesus.

**Note:** Some people say that in the New Testament Christians started keeping Sunday. But, there is no text that says that they kept any day but the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. If there was going to be a big change from Saturday to Sunday, God would make it very plain in the Bible.

### **Will God’s people still keep the Sabbath in the New Earth?**

**Isaiah 66:22,23 BBE-** “For as the new heaven and the new earth which I will make will be for ever before me, says the Lord, so will your seed and your name be for ever. And it will be, that from new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh will come to give worship before me, says the Lord.

### **What would Jesus might say to you after studying this topic?**

**John 14:15 KJV-** “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

**John 15:10- BBE-** “If you keep my laws, you will be ever in my love, even as I have kept my Father's laws, and am ever in his love.”

## 13. WHY DID SATAN TRY TO CHANGE GOD'S SABBATH?

**God loves you. Satan hates both you and God. Satan is trying to do everything he can against God. We will look at one of Satan's most clever plans to work against you and God!**

**What evil power will exalt itself before Jesus comes?**

**2 Thess. 2:3,4-** Do not let any person fool you in any way. That day of the Lord will not come until the turning away from God happens. And that day will not come until the Man of Evil appears. He belongs to hell. **He is against anything called God or anything that people worship.** And the Man of Evil puts himself above anything called God or anything that people worship. And that Man of Evil even goes into God's Temple and sits there. Then he says that he is God."

**Note: This is really a prophecy about a Christian power that would come up, but a false one that is like Satan.** Satan had said: [ICB] *"I will go up to heaven. I will put my throne above God's stars. ...I will go up above the tops of the clouds. I will be like God Most High ."* Isaiah 14:13,14 Satan wanted to be like God! Now, Satan works through human powers to work against God. Satan hates God and wants to damage and change anything precious that God has set up. The Sabbath is a sign of Creation and of our salvation (See the lesson on the Sabbath). So, Satan designed a plan to try and change God's special 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. He first set up a pagan "Sun Day" on the first day of the week. Satan made it popular in the Roman empire as a holiday. Then Satan had a clever plan. The Bible warns about that plan.

**How did the Prophet Daniel warn about Satan's plan to change the specific commandment about time?**

Daniel 7:25 BBE- "And he will say words against the Most High, attempting to put an end to the saints of the Most High; and he will have the idea of **changing times and law**; and the saints will be given into his hands for a time and times and half a time."

**Has any religious power ever claimed that it had the power to change the time part of one of the Ten Commandments?**

**Q.-** Which is the Sabbath day?

**A-** Saturday is the Sabbath day.

**Q-** Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

**A-** We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." From- *The Convert's Catechism by Rev. Peter Geierman p. 50*

\* From the "**Catholic Record**" of Sept. 1, 1923 (London, Ont., Canada)- "The church is above the Bible; and this transference of Sabbath observance to Sunday is proof of that fact. Deny the authority of the church, and you have no adequate or reasonable explanation or justification for the substitution of Sunday for Saturday." And from the "**Catholic Mirror**" of Sept. 23, 1893- "The Catholic church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday."

**Were these Early Church leaders really wanting to go against God's Ten Commandments?**

**No, not really. Good men were caught in a web that Satan planned.** Slowly some Christians started to keep an Easter Sunday *once* a year. Then they started to remember Jesus resurrection every Sunday morning - while they still kept the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Then because the Jews rebelled against the Romans, the

Jews and the Sabbath became very unpopular. Some Christians decided they would put more importance on Sunday, and less and less on the Sabbath. Finally, a **church council in 323 AD** made the change official. **But did man's ideas change God's law? Never!**

**What is God's plan for bringing the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath back to His people?**

**Isaiah 58:12 KJV**- "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places.: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach [broken wall or gap], The restorer of paths to dwell in ...

*[Then immediately the prophet talks about the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath ]*

**Vs. 13 NCV**- "You must obey God's law about the Sabbath and not do what pleases yourselves on that holy day. You should call the Sabbath a joyful day and honor it as the LORD'S holy day. You should not saying whatever you please on that day. Then you will find joy in the LORD, and I will carry you to the high places above the earth."

**The last book of the Bible talks about a final group of people who are faithful to God. What is special about them?**

**Rev. 14:12- KJV** "Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Note: God's final people are commandment keepers.

## 14. HOW TO HAVE ‘WONDERFUL HEALTH’!

### **What does the Bible say about ‘Good Health’?**

“Dear friend, I know that your spiritual life is going well. I pray that you also may enjoy good health. And I pray that everything else may go well with you.” 3 John 2 NIrV

### ***Spiritual health and physical health go hand-in-hand. How does the Bible put them together?***

“So eat and drink and do everything else for the glory of God.” 1 Cor. 10:31 NIrV

**Note:** God is our master Designer and Creator. God knows what makes our bodies work best. When we decide to follow the Creator’s instructions for life and health, we will put ourselves in agreement with the laws of God and of nature. We will then be showing honor to God as our maker - giving Him the glory that belongs to Him.

### **What did God promise the children of Israel IF they would follow His instructions?**

“He said, ‘I am the Lord your God. Listen carefully to my voice. Do what is right in my eyes. Pay attention to my commands. Obey all of my rules. If you do, I will not send on you any of the sicknesses I sent on the Egyptians. I am the Lord who heals you.’ Exodus 15:26 NIrV

### **Do We Just Belong to Ourselves, or to God?**

“Don’t you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. You do not belong to yourselves.” 1 Cor. 6:19 NIrV

**Note:** If we belong to God, our Creator, then our Designer has the right to tell us what is best for us, and what are the Divine and Natural Laws that we need to obey to have good health.

### **What are some Health Rules God gives us about Health?**

#### **1. God’s Ideal Diet given in the Garden of Eden:**

Then God said, “I am giving you every plant on the face of the whole earth that bears its own seeds. I am giving you every tree that has fruit with seeds in it. All of them will be given to you for food.” Genesis 1:29 NIrV

**Note:** God’s ideal food for man in the Garden of Eden was a plant based diet. Grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables contain no cholesterol, no harmful nitrates, no animal products, no hormones, no disease germs. When there was not much food around after the flood, God gave permission for man to eat certain types of meat for food.

#### **2. God Gave Permission to add some food after the flood that was not part of His ideal diet:**

“ You are holy people. You belong to the Lord your God. He has chosen you from all the people on earth to be his very own. Do not eat anything the Lord hates. These are the animals you may eat: ox, sheep, goats, deer, gazelle, roe deer, wild goats, ibex, antelope and mountain sheep. You may eat any animal that has a split hoof and chews the cud. But you may not eat camels, rabbits or rock badgers. These animals chew the cud, but their feet are not divided. So they are unclean for you. Pigs are also unclean for you. They have split hoofs, but they do not chew the cud. Do not eat their meat or touch their dead bodies.” Deuteronomy 2:2-8 ICV

**Note:** God knows which meats are *less of a problem*, and which should not be eaten at any time. Man has permission to eat meat from animals that chew their food a second time, and have a split hoof. God does not allow man to eat animals like the pigs, a bear or a horse. God knows that some meats are less harmful than others. God allowed man to use the *less harmful* ones.

**3. Sea Foods:** “Many creatures live in the water of the oceans and streams. You can eat all of those that have fins and scales. But be sure to avoid all of the creatures in the oceans or streams that do not have fins and scales. That includes all of those that move together in groups and all of those that do not. Be sure to avoid them. Do not eat their meat. Do not even touch their dead bodies.” Leviticus 11: 9-11 Nlrv

**Note:** Fish that have fins and scales, like salmon and trout, etc., are allowed. God does not allow us to use sea foods like crabs, shrimp, and fish that do not have fins and scales.

***GOD’S WARNING TO PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO EAT WHAT HE ASKS THEM NOT TO EAT:***

“These people make themselves holy and pure to go to worship their gods in their gardens. Following each other into their special gardens, they eat the meat of pigs and rats and other hateful things. But they will all be destroyed together, says the LORD.” Isaiah 66: 17 NCV

**Note:** God is concerned about people that eat foods that He has told us not to eat.

**What does God say about drinking alcoholic drinks?**

“Do not be among those who give themselves to wine-drinking...” Prov. 23:20 BBE

“Don’t look at wine when it is red. Don’t look at it when it bubbles in the cup. And don’t look at it when it goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a snake. It bites like a poisonous serpent.” Prov. 23:31,32

**What was the rule for Priests in Israel?**

“Then the Lord said to Aaron, ‘You and your sons must not drink wine or beer when you go into the Meeting Tent. If you do, you will die! This law will continue from now on. You must keep what is holy separate from what is not holy. You must keep what is clean separate from what is unclean.’” Leviticus 10:9,10 ICV

**Note:** God’s ideal is not to use alcohol, but God has let man do some things that were not ideal. Why? Because man lives in an evil world, and God leads man upward one step at a time. Now that we are preparing for Jesus soon return and face terrible events coming on the world, following God’s ideal will help prepare us to go through all the problems of the future.

**What is one important reason for not using any alcoholic drinks?**

“You should know that you yourselves are God’s temple. God’s Spirit lives in you. If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him, because God’s temple is holy. You yourselves are God’s temple.” 1 Cor. 3:16, 17

**Note:** We are to be God’s temple. The priests were asked not to drink when they went into God’s temple. *Is there a message for us, too?* God’s way of talking to us is through the front part of our brain. This is the first place that alcohol hurts - the conscience. If we want to be God’s temple for the Holy Spirit, we will want to avoid hurting any of the brain cells that the Holy Spirit needs to use to help us become like Jesus.

**What will God’s children do about anything that hurts God’s body temple like: tobacco, harmful drugs, and caffeine-loaded drinks?**

“So if you eat, or if you drink, or if you do anything, do everything for the glory of God. 1 Cor. 10:31 ICV

**If we find that we are now doing something that hurts our body, how can we change our habits and start to live a healthy life?**

“I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13 ICV

**Does God ask us to go around with sad faces groaning about the things we cannot do?**

“A happy heart is like good medicine, but a broken spirit drains your strength.” Proverbs 17:22 NCV

**What does Paul say about our bodies being a holy sacrifice to God?**

“Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God.” Romans 12:1 CEV

**Note:** God is so loving that He does not want to hold back anything from us that is good for us. God wants us to be happy. But, God also knows that some things we may like to do will really hurt us, so He warns us against them. Because He created us, and knows everything, He knows what will - in the end - make us truly happy, healthy and holy. Let's trust Him enough to follow everything He asks for us to do!

## 15. WILL EVERYONE BE JUDGED SOME DAY?

### **Will everyone some day be judged for his or her life here on earth?**

**Acts 17:30,31- NIrV** In the past, God didn't judge people for what they didn't know. But now he commands all people everywhere to turn away from their sins. He has set a day when he will judge the world fairly."

**Note:** Sometimes it seems that the bad people usually get away without punishment. But God promises that one day, everyone will receive their reward - both the good and the bad.

### **Is there a record now being made of our actions that will be used in our judgment?**

**Revelation 20:12 ICB** "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. The dead were judged by what they had done, which was written in the books."

**Note:** God has a record of every word, action or thought. The Bible pictures it as in a 'book', but whether that book is on literal paper, or a computer disk, or something much more wonderful that God uses, we don't know. The important thing is that there is a perfect record of both the good and the bad!

### **Will the judgment look at everything we ever did?**

**Ecc 12:14 CEV** "God will judge everything we do, even what is done in secret, whether good or bad."

**Note:** Nothing is secret in the judgment. Even our secret actions and hidden motivations will be judged.

### **What will the God's judgment hall look like?**

**Daniel 7:9,10 NCV** "As I looked thrones were put in their places, and God, who has been alive forever, sat on his throne. His clothes were white like snow, and the hair on his head was white like wool. His throne was made from fire, and the wheels of his throne were blazing with fire. A river of fire was flowing from in front of him. Many thousands of angels were serving him, and millions of angels stood before him. Court was ready to begin, and the books were opened."

**Note:** The prophet Daniel gives us a little idea of the glory and power of the judgement scene. If we have given our lives to God to control, then we have nothing to fear. But, if Satan is still our Master, then we need to fear the judgment. But, if we are living, it is not too late to choose Jesus as our Saviour and Judge!

### **What will be the spiritual rule (or yardstick) by which we will be judged?**

**James 2:10-12 NIrV-** "Suppose you keep the whole law but trip over just one part of it. Then you are guilty of breaking all of it. God said, "Do not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18) He also said, "Do not commit murder." (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17) Suppose you don't commit adultery but do commit murder. Then you have broken the Law. Speak and act like people who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom."

**Note:** God gave us the great law, the *Ten Commandments*. But, Jesus summed them up as loving God and loving our fellow man with all our hearts. The motivation for our actions - our attitude of loving obedience and care for others. We will be judged not only by the act, but by the motivation behind what we do.

### **Who will be the judge in Heaven?**

**2Co 5:10 BBE** "For we all have to come before Christ to be judged; so that every one of us may get his reward for the things done in the body, good or bad."

**Note:** God has given Jesus the work of doing all the judging. Jesus understands what it is like to live here in our sinful world, because He came down to live with us!

### **When will the good people all be judged?**

**Revelation 14:6,7 NIrV** “I saw another angel. He was flying high in the air. He came to tell everyone on earth the good news that will always be true. He told it to every nation, tribe, language and people. In a loud voice he said, “Have respect for God. Give him glory. The hour has come for God to judge. Worship him who made the heavens and the earth.”

**Revelation 22:12 NIrV** Look! I am coming soon! I bring my rewards with me. I will reward each person for what he has done.

**Note:** The judgment will actually be divided into two parts. The first part is before Jesus comes. The Universe must see who is safe to save. There is always a judgment before people receive their rewards. If Jesus brings His rewards for the good at His Second Coming, then their rewards must have been decided in a judgment before Jesus comes.

### **In the second part of the judgment, who will also help in the judging?**

**1 Corinthians 6:2,3 NIrV** “Don’t you know that God’s people will judge the world? And if you are going to judge the world, aren’t you able to judge small cases? Don’t you know that we will judge angels?”

**Revelation 20:4-6 NIrV** “I saw thrones. Those who had been given authority to judge were sitting on them. I also saw the souls of those whose heads had been cut off because they had given witness for Jesus and because of God’s word. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue. They had not received his mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years. This is the first resurrection. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended. Blessed and holy are those who take part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them. They will be priests of God and of Christ. They will rule with him for 1,000 years.”

**Note:** God is going to do something special. During the 1000 years following Jesus Second Coming, God will have the second part of His judgment. This time, as Paul says, the good people will take part in the judgment. All the good from Earth, and all of the Universe, must have a chance to see why each wicked person cannot be saved. Everyone who is saved must be satisfied that God did all He could do, before anyone is destroyed for eternity!

### **Will the good receive any special rewards in Heaven?**

**Rev 22:12 GW** "I'm coming soon! I will bring my reward with me to pay all people based on what they have done.”

**Note:** If you read the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:34-46 about the talents and then about the sheep and the goats, you see that God does have rewards. The parable of the talents may lead us to believe that there may be some difference in rewards - even in Heaven. But, God will trust each person in Heaven with the type of responsibility that their character preparation here has prepared them for in Heaven.

### **What is one reason that God’s judgment is taking so long in coming?**

**2 Peter 3:9 NIrV** “The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. He is patient with you. He doesn’t want anyone to be destroyed. Instead, he wants all people to turn away from their sins.

### **If we give our lives to His care, we can trust that Jesus will be fair and merciful when He judges us.**

**Why? John 5:22- ICB** Also, the Father judges no one. But the Father has given the Son power to do all the judging.

**Rom 8:34 TEV** “ Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us!

**Note:** Jesus is now doing everything He can to save us. The text says that Jesus is now pleading, or interceding for us. Jesus is both our Intercessor and our Judge. If Jesus sees that we have put our lives completely into His hands for eternity, then we will be safe to save.

**How can we be sure our sins are forgiven so when they come up in the judgment that we have pardon written by our name?**

**1Timothy 5:24 BBE** “The sins of some men are clearly seen, going before them to be judged; but with others, their sins go after them.’

**Note:** If our sins go *after us into the judgment*, they are not forgiven and will condemn us. But, if we confess our sins now, then our sins will now each have ‘pardon’ written by them in heaven. So, when our name comes up in the final judgment, there will be nothing against us that is not already forgiven.

**How can we live a life that pleases God and gives Him the glory for all that we do?**

**Philippians 4:13 TEV-** “ I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

**Note:** It is Jesus living His life through us - by the power of the Holy Spirit - that makes us like Jesus in character.

## 16. WHEN WILL YOUR NAME COME UP IN THE JUDGMENT?

### Why did God ask Moses to build a sanctuary in the wilderness?

**Exodus 25:8 NIV** “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

**Hebrews 8:5 CEV** “ But the tent where they serve is just a copy and a shadow of the *real one in heaven*.

Before Moses made the tent, he was told, "Be sure to make it exactly like the pattern you were shown on the mountain!"

**Note:** God wanted a special place where He could meet with His people. Also, the earthy sanctuary was to help people understand what Jesus was going to do in Heaven. The earthy sanctuary was a copy or symbol of the one in heaven God had given Israel the sanctuary services -- a sort of ‘sand-box’ in the desert to show them how the plan of salvation works. The Israelite fathers were asked to sacrifice a real lamb. They were to confess their sins over the head of the lamb. The lamb was then killed and the blood put into the sanctuary. The fat of the lamb was burned on the altar. This all pointed ahead to the Lamb of God, or Jesus, who would die on the cross for them. God wanted a simple group of people to have some idea how they were being saved from sin!

### What did Jesus start doing when He went to Heaven after He was resurrected from the dead?

**Hebrews 9:24 NIV** “For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; *he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.*”

**Note:** When Jesus went back to Heaven after His resurrection, He began a special work pleading or interceding for man before the Father. Jesus is now in the Heavenly Sanctuary, or God’s throne room. Jesus pleads His blood that covers our sins. Jesus died for us so we don’t have to die for eternity. When we confess our sins here, Jesus is now interceding (pleading) for us in Heaven, and pardon is written by the record of our sins. *But, the record is still in Heaven until the judgment.*

### What happened once each year in the Earthly Sanctuary?

**Heb 9:6,7 CEV** - “... But this is how everything was when the priests went each day into the first part of the tent [sanctuary] to do their duties. However, only the high priest could go into the second part of the tent, and he went in only *once a year.*”

**Note:** *The earthly sanctuary had two parts.* In the **first part** was a table with special bread, 7 golden candlesticks and an altar with incense burning. Each item represented a different part of God’s plan to save us. The priests each day went into this first part and sprinkled blood there. This symbolically moved the record of the people’s sins into the sanctuary. The sins were forgiven, but there was still a record of them. It was the same in the Heavenly Sanctuary. When we ask forgiveness, we are forgiven, but the record is still there in Heaven.

**But, once every year, the earthly sanctuary was ‘cleaned out’.** The high priest went into the **second part** of the sanctuary and sprinkled blood on the ark. The ark was a symbol of the Throne of God in Heaven.

### Then an interesting thing happened with two goats - what was it?

**Leviticus 16: 5-10 NIV** “From the Israelite community he [the head priest] is to take two male goats for a sin offering . Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of Meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.”

**Note: God chose to use two goats in this special service that represented the judgment. One represented Jesus and the other one Satan.** The goat that represented Jesus was killed and its blood sprinkled on the ark in the Most Holy place. This showed that Jesus paid the price for our sin. *But what about Satan?* Satan started all sin and keeps pressuring us to sin, so Satan must bear the guilt and punishment for starting and helping us to sin. The second goat represented Satan. The second goat was led out into the wilderness to die. This represents Satan waiting in the broken up *wilderness* of the earth during the 1000 years before Satan and sinners are all destroyed. These two goats help us understand God's heavenly throne room and the time when God deals with sin in the judgment!

#### **When will the heavenly records be examined in the Judgment and the record of sin be wiped clean?**

**Dan 8:14 BBE-** “And he said to him, For two thousand, three hundred evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be made clean.

**Note:** This text in the heart of Daniel's prophecies explains when the sanctuary in Heaven would be 'cleansed'. It really tells us when the first judgment is to happen in Heaven. When we go ahead to the explanation of Daniel 8:14 in the next chapter of Daniel, we learn when the prophecy of this 2300 prophetic days, or literal years (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34) will begin.

#### **When will this 2300 year prophecy begin?**

**Daniel 9:24-27 NCV-** God has ordered four hundred ninety years for your people and your holy city for these reasons: to stop people from turning against God; to put an end to sin; to take away evil...and to appoint a most holy place. Learn and understand these things. A command will come to rebuild Jerusalem. The time from this command until the appointed leader comes will be forty-nine years and four hundred thirty-four years. [a total of 483 years]

[*The King James Version* calls this appointed leader - “**Messiah the Prince**”] In verse 26 the KJV version explains: “after threescore and two weeks [or 434 more years] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself...”

**Note:** In 457 BC a Persian King, Artaxerxes, gave permission for the captive Jews in Babylon to go back to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding it. This is the beginning of the 2300 years prophecy and also the 490 year prophecy that was 'cut off' the long 2300 year prophecy. At the 483 year point in the prophecy, the Messiah [Jesus] was to be anointed [baptized]. Jesus was baptized right on time in 27 AD.

#### **What would happen in the middle of the last seven years of the 490 year prophecy?**

**Daniel 9:27 KJV** “...in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.”

**Note:** During the middle of the last seven years of the 490 year prophecy, the Messiah would bring the sacrificial system to an end. Why? Because in 31 AD Jesus died for our sins and that ended the old earthly system of sacrifices that pointed to Jesus death.

#### **Since the old earthly system of sacrifices ended, what is Jesus doing now?**

**Heb 8:1,2 GW** “The main point we want to make is this: We do have this kind of chief priest. This chief priest has received the highest position, the throne of majesty *in heaven*. He serves as priest of the holy place and of the true tent set up by the Lord and not by any human.”

**Note:** Jesus has gone to Heaven and now doing a similar work in Heaven to what the human priest did on earth. As the human priest once a year 'cleansed' the earthly sanctuary of sin, so Jesus would 'cleanse' the Heavenly sanctuary of sin. Daniel 8:14 tells us that it would be 2300 years until the Heavenly sanctuary would be 'cleansed'. Since the 490 year prophecy and the 2300 year prophecy both start at the same time in 457 BC, this means that the start of the 'cleansing' of the Heavenly Sanctuary would begin in 1844 AD. This Heavenly cleaning out of sin is a time of judgment in Heaven. So, a judgment began in Heaven in 1844

AD.

**Who is being judged in the judgment that began in 1844?**

**2Co 5:10 BBE** “For we all have to come before Christ to be judged; so that every one of us may get his reward for the things done in the body, good or bad.”

Note: Before Jesus can come and give out the rewards, there must be a judgment to show the Universe who is safe to save and what reward each saved person will receive. This investigative [or searching out] judgment has been going on since 1844. The rewards will be given to the righteous at Jesus Second Coming.

**When will the evil people who be judged?**

**Revelation 20:4-6 NIrV** “I saw thrones. Those who had been given authority to judge were sitting on them. I also saw the souls of those whose heads had been cut off because they had given witness for Jesus and because of God’s word. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue. They had not received his mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years. This is the first resurrection. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended. Blessed and holy are those who take part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them. They will be priests of God and of Christ. They will rule with him for 1,000 years.”

**Note:** Those who miss out on the Second Coming, will be judged in Heaven during the 1000 years following Jesus coming. The good from all ages, and all the Universe will all be watching to find out why each lost person cannot be saved. God did everything He could to save each person. But, at the end of the 1000 years, God will have to destroy all sinners. Those who still have sin in them will have to die for eternity.

**How can we be sure to be judged in the first judgment and live for eternity with Jesus?**

**John 5:24 TEV** "I am telling you the truth: those who hear my words and believe in him who sent me have eternal life. They will not be judged, but have already passed from death to life.

**Note:** The sins of those who have accepted Jesus already have ‘pardon’ written by their names. They will not have judgment made against them, for they already have the promise of eternal life.

*Have you given your life to Jesus fully, so pardon can already be written by your name in Heaven?*

## 17. GOD'S SEAL & SATAN'S MARK

### What does a seal do?

*A seal can do different things:*

1. It is usually a **sign of authority**: The British Queen's seal has three things - her name (Elizabeth) - Her title (Queen) and Her territory (the British Empire)
2. One purpose of a "Seal" is to **keep something from changing**. If the Queen signs a law it shows her authority and it must not be changed after it is sealed. A seal on a jar of fruit keeps the air out and stops it from going bad. A seal on a legal paper gives it force in a court of law.

### Does God have a seal?

**Ezekiel 20:12 BBE** And further, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, so that it might be clear that I, who make them holy, am the Lord. And keep my Sabbaths holy; and they will be a sign between me and you so that it may be clear to you that I am the Lord your God.

**Exodus 31:13 NIV-** "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.'

**Note:** Think of the word, "sign" as when you sign a check or put a seal on a contract. Right in the heart of the *Ten Commandments*, God placed a special commandment - different from all the others. This commandment tells us to worship our Creator because He made us and our world. As we keep the Sabbath, it shows that we recognize God's right to rule our lives. The Sabbath is a sign of God's authority.

The texts above also tell us that the Sabbath is the signature of God on His law. In keeping it, we recognize God's power and authority in our personal lives as we surrender to His will. The Sabbath is also a sign of God's work in our lives as He makes us holy. So, the Sabbath helps seal our lives for God, allowing Him to make us holy like He is holy. This is why Satan hates this seal. Satan wants us to give him honor and worship him instead of God.

### The Bible warns us about the opposite of God's seal - Satan's Mark. What does God say?

**Revelation 14: 9,10 NIV-** "A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath."

**Note:** The words "mark" and "seal" are much the same in meaning. Since God's special sign or seal involves the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath, it makes sense that Satan's 'Mark' would involve a false or counterfeit Sabbath.

### Did the Bible predict (tell ahead) of any power that would try and change God's Sabbath and His law?

**Dan 7:25 BBE** "And he will say words against the Most High, attempting to put an end to the saints of the Most High; and he will have the idea of changing times and law; and the saints will be given into his hands for a time and times and half a time.

### Does any religious power claim to have changed the Sabbath "time" in God's law?

**"Question:** How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

**Answer:** By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of..."

[From an Abridgement of the Christian Doctrine p. 58]

**“Question:** Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute [set up] festivals of precept [holy days]?

**Answer:** Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists [churches] agree with her, –she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural [Bible] authority.” A doctrinal Catechism” by Rev. Stephen Keenan, p. 174

**Note:** The Bible says that this counterfeit religious power would try to change the time part of God’s law. You can see clearly from these Roman Catholic statements, that the church claims it had the power to change God’s law. This church claims it had the power to change the Sabbath from the 7<sup>th</sup> day, to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, and that there was no Biblical authority for doing this.

The great church historian, *Neander*, says that it was “far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command ...to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.” *Neander’s Church History, Roses’ translation p. 186*

***We choose to worship the one that we choose to obey.***

**Does it make any difference which day we keep, or which power we choose to obey?**

“The observance of Sunday by Protestants is an homage (honor or worship) they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] church. **Plain Talk About Protestantism of Today, by Monsignor Segur, p. 213**

**Note:** One of the Catholic leaders is here telling Protestants that if they keep Sunday, that they are really honoring the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

**Why is the Sabbath Sign (or Seal) so important to us today?**

**Exodus 31:17 BBE-** “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel (we are now the spiritual Israel) for ever; because in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he took his rest and had pleasure in it.”

**Note:** The theory of evolution is doing so much to weaken or destroy faith in the Creation story of the Bible. But, the Sabbath is God’s special sign (or seal) in the Ten Commandment law to show that the Law cannot be changed. Keeping the Sabbath demonstrates our faith in the Bible story of a literal 7 day creation of 24 hour days. The Sabbath is also a sign that we accept Jesus as the Lord of our Life, and our law giver and King.

If we choose to knowingly keep a counterfeit (false) day that Satan originally set up for his worship, then we really give honor and worship to those powers - a Roman Catholic Church with counterfeit doctrines, and the Devil as the mastermind behind all these changes.

**What does the Bible say about the final sealing of God’s people?**

**Rev 7:1-4a GW:** “ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. They were holding back the four winds of the earth to keep them from blowing on the land, the sea, or any tree. I saw another angel coming from the east with the seal of the living God. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been allowed to harm the land and sea, Don't harm the land, the sea, or the trees until we have put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." I heard how many were sealed: 144,000. ..."

**Note:** Jesus Second Coming is very near. The 7 Final Plagues (See Revelation 16 & 15) come when everyone has chosen either to serve and obey God, or serve and obey the counterfeit Christ, Satan himself.

AND the Plagues only come AFTER God's people are all sealed, and Satan's followers have received the "**Mark of the Beast**". Those who do not keep the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath, and choose to keep the counterfeit -- AFTER they know better -- will finally receive the terrible '**Mark of the Beast**' that we read about in Revelation 14:9,10 (quoted above). However, it will not be too late to change until after the Sunday law is enforced.

**Compared to those who receive the "Mark of the Beast", what will God's final remnant people be doing?**

**Revelation 14:12 KJV-** "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

**Revelation 12:17 NIV-** "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

**Will Satan be angry at those who refuse to keep his counterfeit day and worship the false beast (false powers with false doctrines)?**

**Revelation 13:15-17 NIV-** "He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name."

**Revelation 13:15-17 ICV-** "The second beast was given power to give life to the idol [or image] of the first one. Then the idol could speak and order all who did not worship it to be killed. The second animal also forced all people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to have a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. No one could buy or sell without this mark. This mark is the name of the beast or the number of his name."

**Note:** During the final 10 last Plagues before Jesus comes, Satan tries hard to destroy all God's people. But, though they may suffer in jail, or have great problems trying to buy or sell anything, God keeps them all in the hollow of His hand. Not one is killed!

**What is the final reward of that final Remnant who don't receive Satan's mark?**

**Revelation 13:2 KJV-** "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

**Note:** God's love and God's plans will win. God's people will receive God's seal and will be victorious in Christ. Now is our time to prepare for receiving God's seal. Now is the time to be 100% on God's side in keeping His Sabbath and all His commandments - through His power. This is preparation time for receiving that Final Seal of God!

## 18. IS IT IMPORTANT TO BELONG TO A CHURCH?

### What is a church?

**Acts 2:47 KJV**- “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

**Acts 8:1 NIrV**- On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria

**Note:** The Bible here shows that a church is a group of Christians worshiping together. The church is also shown as a group that could be persecuted. People can join the church for it says the Lord added people to the church.

### What is the purpose of a church?

**1 Timothy 3:15 GW** “...if I am delayed, you will know how everyone who belongs to God's family ought to behave. After all, the church of the living God is the strong foundation of truth.”

**Acts 11:30 CEV** “So they had Barnabas and Saul take their gifts to the church leaders in Jerusalem”

**Acts 15: 6 CEV** “The apostles and church leaders met to discuss this problem about Gentiles.”

### Note: The church of God is set up for:

1. The **Worship of God** that includes praise, prayer and study
2. **Fellowship:** a support group of believers helping each other
3. **Deciding on the teachings (doctrine):** The church must have some basic agreement about what is truth, or anyone can believe and teach any idea.
4. **Standards of Behaviour:** The church loves and works for everyone, no matter what type of life they have lived in the past. But, the church can only keep as ‘members’ those who believe basically the same thing, and are really seriously trying to live up to basic Christian standards of behaviour.
5. The church is organized to powerfully take the **gospel to all the world** in every language. (including sign language, Braille, etc.)

### Is it important that church members believe the same doctrines?

**Acts 15:1,2, 23, 28, 31 CEV**

“Some people came from Judea and started teaching the Lord's followers that they could not be saved, unless they were circumcised as Moses had taught. This caused trouble, and Paul and Barnabas argued with them about this teaching. So it was decided to send Paul and Barnabas and a few others to Jerusalem to discuss this problem with the apostles and the church leaders.

[*After the discussion*] “... They wrote a letter that said: We apostles and leaders send friendly greetings to all of you Gentiles who are followers of the Lord in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.”

“... The Holy Spirit has shown us that we should not place any extra burden on you. ...”

“... When the letter was read, everyone was pleased and greatly encouraged.”

**Note:** In the days of the apostles, there was an argument in the church about what Old Testament rules should apply to the new Gentile Christians. In Acts 15 we read that they called a meeting of the church leaders. They had a long discussion. At the end, they felt the leading of the Holy Spirit in their decision. The leaders sent out an official letter telling what the believers should do about doctrine.

### Should the church discipline people who are living in open sin?

**1 Corinthians 5:1 CEV** “ I have heard terrible things about some of you. In fact, you are behaving worse than the Gentiles. A man is even sleeping with his own stepmother

**Vs. 4, 5 GW** “When you have gathered together, I am with you in spirit. Then, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and with his power, hand such a person over to Satan to destroy his corrupt nature so that his spiritual nature may be saved on the day of the Lord.

**And if the sinner repents?**

**2 Corinthians 2:6-8 TEV:** “It is enough that this person has been punished in this way by most of you. Now, however, you should forgive him and encourage him, in order to keep him from becoming so sad as to give up completely. And so I beg you to let him know that you really do love him.”

**And what if the sinner does not listen to the discipline of the church?** Matthew 18:17 CEV “If the follower refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church. Anyone who refuses to listen to the church must be treated like an unbeliever”

**Note:** In 1 Corinthians Paul wrote that the church should discipline a man who was having a sexual relationship with his stepmother. The church then apparently strongly disciplined the man. But, in his next book to the Corinthian church, Paul says they should now forgive him, and love him. The discipline had stopped the sinful actions and now the repentant man needed extra love and care.

**Where does God say that He will build His church?**

**Matthew 16:18 NIV-** “...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

**Ephesians 2:20 GW-** “You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.”

**Ephesians 1:22 CEV-** “God has put all things under the power of Christ, and for the good of the church he has made him the head of everything.”

**Note:** God uses leaders, but Jesus is the cornerstone on which the church is set up.

**Are the leaders in the church appointed by God?**

**Acts 20:28 GW -** “ Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops to be shepherds for God's church which he acquired with his own blood.”

**1 Corinthians 12:28 CEV-** “First, God chose some people to be apostles and prophets and teachers for the church.”

**Note:** When church leaders have been carefully and prayerfully appointed, we may trust that God has given them authority to lead His people. This authority does not give them absolute power, but it does mean that we should show respect to those God has set up as our church leaders.

**If a person is sick, what are church leaders told to do about it?**

**James 5:14 CEV-** “If you are sick, ask the church leaders to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord.”

**Note:** One of the duties of pastoral church leaders, is to pray for the sick. James tells the leaders to anoint the sick with oil (representing the Holy Spirit) and pray for them. They will not always be healed, but when a person is very seriously ill, this is what God asks leaders to do for their members.

**Does God have both a visible and an invisible church?**

**Hebrews 12:22,23 NIrV-** “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.”

**Ephesians 2:19 GW-** “That is why you are no longer foreigners and outsiders but citizens together with God's people and members of God's family.”

**Note:** God has both a *visible church* you can see, and an *invisible church* you cannot see. Everyone who truly loves and follows God, is part of His invisible church. Their names are written down in Heaven's books. These may include anyone from anywhere who God sees is really trying to follow Him. *So, why join a visible church?* Because God has set up a visible church where members can be a support to each other, and in an organized way they can take God's messages to the whole world.

**There are hundreds of churches, each having different doctrines. How can we know if God is working through one church more than another – are there any doctrines that identify (must be in) God's final remnant church?**

Revelation 14:12 NIrV- “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”

Revelation 12:17 NIrV- “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

Revelation 19:10 NIrV- “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

**Note:** God's last church in the world will be a commandment keeping church. They will not neglect any commandment, and will also be teaching the world about the importance of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sabbath commandment - the one the world has forgotten. They will also be a people who have a special interest and understanding of the prophecies of the Bible. Finally, they will also have the gift of prophecy demonstrated in their church.

**What is the way people join God's spiritual body or church?**

1 Corinthians 12:13 GW- “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether we are Jewish or Greek, slave or free, God gave all of us one Spirit to drink.”

Ephesians 4:4,5- CEV- “All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.”

**Will God's people come closer together in church as they see the End of the world coming?**

Hebrews 10:24,25 ICB - “You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing. But you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the Day coming.”

**Note:** As the end comes closer, we will have a greater and stronger need to encourage and support each other when things get tough.

**What is God's final goal for His church?**

Ephesians 5:25-27 CEV- “...Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. He made the church holy by the power of his word, and he made it pure by washing it with water.

Genesis 28:16,17 GW- “Filled with awe, he said, “How awe-inspiring this place is! Certainly, this is the house of God and the gateway to heaven!”

**CONCLUSION:**

God wants His church to be a place of inspiration and support, helping His people to become like Him in character. Jesus wants His people to demonstrate His love to the world through the lives of His people in His church!

## 19. IS IT NECESSARY TO BE BAPTIZED TO BE SAVED?

### What was the natural thing for people to do when they accepted Jesus in the New Testament?

Acts 8:12 NIV- “But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

**Note:** Baptism is a public witness to the world and other Christians that we have accepted Jesus as our Saviour.

### How is baptism done?

**Acts 8:36, 38 & 39** NIV- As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch *went down into the water* and Philip baptized him. When they *came up out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away...”

**Note:** Baptism is lowering a person into the water until they are covered, and then lifting them up again. This type of baptism is called ‘immersion’. The Greek word for baptism, baptizo, means to go down into the water. It is a symbol of being buried in the grave, like Jesus did for us. Our old life of sin is to die, and we rise to a new life following Jesus.

### What about the baptism of babies?

There is no record of babies ever being baptized in the New Testament times. The very old baptisteries that have been found, show that people went down into the water to be baptized. Baptism is a symbol of our new life in Jesus. It is impossible for a baby to do this. Infant baptism came in when the church later started to teach that you could not go into heaven without being baptized. So, they started to baptize babies. Usually those baptized as babies have their baptism ‘confirmed’ when they reach maturity. But, this is not the Bible method. In the Bible, parents dedicated their babies to the Lord on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after birth. They never baptized them. Baptizing babies changes God’s plan to man’s plan.

### What is the meaning of baptism to the Christian?

**Romans 6:3-5 GW-** “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? When we were baptized into his death, we were placed into the tomb with him. As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should live a new kind of life. If we’ve become united with him in a death like his, certainly we will also be united with him when we come back to life as he did.”

**Acts 22:16 NIV -** “... be baptized and wash your sins away...”

**Note:** Being baptized shows that a Christian has died to the old self, or the old sinful way of living. Instead of “I want what I want when I want it”, the Christian chooses to do what Jesus asks. Going into the water is a symbol of our dying to the old way of life. It also is a symbol of our sins being washed away. Really, baptism is an outward symbol of what has already happened in the Christian’s heart and life! Baptism is a public witness to the world that we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and as the King of our life!

### What preparation is needed before being baptized?

**Acts 16:31-33 GW-** “Then he took Paul and Silas outside and asked, “Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved?” They answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved.” They spoke the Lord’s word to the jailer and everyone in his home. At that hour of the night, the jailer washed Paul and

Silas' wounds. The jailer and his entire family were baptized immediately.”

**Matthew 28:19,20- ICB-** “So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them *to obey everything* that I have told you.”

**Note:** Jesus said that those who are baptized are to be taught everything that He taught His disciples. This should be done before we are baptized. Often a pastor uses a set of baptismal lessons with those who are preparing for baptism. People need to understand what baptism means and what is expected before they are baptized. Baptism is an outward sign that they now fully believe in Jesus, and have accepted Jesus completely as their Savior and Lord.

### **How is baptism related to joining a church?**

**1 Corinthians 12:13 GW-** “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether we are Jewish or Greek, slave or free, God gave all of us one Spirit to drink.”

**Ephesians 4:4,5- CEV-** “All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.”

**Note:** Baptism is a symbol of accepting Christ as our Master. Christ expects His followers to be part of His church, or symbolically - Jesus body. So, baptism is like going through a door into God's church. The new believer also needs to study what is expected as a member of the church.

### **Should we wait a long time after accepting Christ before we are baptized?**

**Acts 22:16 CEV-** “What are you waiting for? Get up! Be baptized, and wash away your sins by praying to the Lord.”

**Note:** After being struck with the bright light, Paul had waited blind for three days in darkness. Paul knew all about Jesus. Paul had likely seen Jesus, and had perhaps even heard Jesus preach. Perhaps Paul had even watched Jesus trial. Now Paul had three days to think everything through, and see how wrong he had been in fighting against Christ. Now after healing Paul's blindness, the disciple Ananias urged Paul not to wait, but to take a public stand for Christ and be baptized right away!

So as adults, as soon as we are properly taught, we should be baptized.

### **At what age should people be baptized?**

**Luke 2:41-43 & 47-49 CEV-** “Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for Passover. And when Jesus was *twelve years old*, they all went there as usual for the celebration. After Passover his parents left, but they did not know that Jesus had stayed on in the city.

**Vs. 47-48 CEV-** “Three days later they found Jesus sitting in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was surprised at how much he knew and at the answers he gave. When his parents found him, they were amazed. His mother said, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried, and we have been searching for you!" **Vs. 49 ICB-** “Jesus asked, “Why did you have to look for me? You should have known that I must be where my Father's work is!”

**Note:** The 12<sup>th</sup> year of age marked a special time for Jewish boys. Each boy was then confirmed as a ‘son of the law’. By his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Jewish boy was then expected to follow the Jewish ceremonies and customs. This might have been Jesus first trip to Jerusalem since He was dedicated and circumcised when he was 8 days old. It was around 12 that Jesus realized who he was and publicly got talking with the Jewish leaders about the meaning of spiritual things. Many feel that at around the age of 12 or 13 is a good time

for a young person to be baptized. Some may be ready then, some earlier, and some may not be ready until much older.

### **In whose names are we to be baptized?**

**Matthew 28:19 ICB-** “Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

**Note:** Jesus is very clear that we are to be baptized using the names of all three of the ‘Trinity’ or Godhead: the Father, the Holy Spirit, and in Jesus name. A pastor often says: **“I now baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen”** – just before lowering the person into the water.

### **Is it necessary to be baptized to be saved?**

**John 3:5 CEV-** “Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit.”

**Mark 16:15, 16 NIV-** “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

**Note:** The thief on the cross could not come off the cross to be baptized, and there will be others in Heaven who were never baptized. However, when we read the words of Jesus here, it shows the importance of being baptized both with literal water and also by the Holy Spirit. If we purposely continue to neglect the urging of the Holy Spirit to be baptized, we will finally reject the Holy Spirit and be lost.

There are several occasions where the disciples put their hands on those baptized so they would receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6)

### **What about being baptized a second time?**

**Acts 19: 2-6 IBC-** “Paul asked them, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? They said, “We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!” So he asked, “What kind of baptism did you have? They said, “It was the baptism that John taught.” Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of changed hearts and lives. He told people to believe in the One who would come after him. That One is Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them.”

**Note:** Just before and during Jesus early ministry, John the Baptist had baptized many Jews. Paul met a group of twelve men who had been baptized years before by John the Baptist. Now they believed in Jesus, but had not received the spiritual gifts of the Spirit. So, the twelve were all baptized a second time, now in *Jesus name and the name of the Holy Spirit*. They were baptized into ‘new truth’.

It is often recommended that even if people have been baptized by immersion, that when they accept the new truth of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath, etc., that they may wish to be rebaptized. People who have never been baptized by immersion need to follow Jesus example and be baptized by immersion.

### **Who set us an example of being baptized, even though He had never sinned?**

**Matthew 3:13-16 ICB-** “At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He came to John and wanted John to baptize him. But John tried to stop him. John said, “Why do you come to me to be baptized? I should be baptized by you!” Jesus answered, “Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are right.” So John agreed to baptize Jesus. Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water. Heaven opened, and he saw God’s Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, “This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him.”

**CONCLUSION:**

When we see the love of Jesus, accept Him, and decide to follow Jesus example fully, we will want to be baptized by immersion, just as Jesus was!

## 20. WHAT ABOUT MODERN DAY PROPHETS?

**Some believe that the words of Revelation 22:18 and 19 teach that God will never speak through prophets again like He did in the Bible. Is this true?**

**Revelation 22:18,19- NIRV-** “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

**Let’s first look at another verse:**

**Ephesians 4:8, 11-13 NIRV-** “ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up *until we all reach unity in the faith* and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature...”

**Note:** The first text warns us not to add or take away anything from the words written in the John’s book of Revelation. It is **not** telling us that God will never speak with prophetic authority through prophets again!

Paul in Ephesians tells us that God has put the gift of prophecy in His church until we all reach unity in faith. That complete unity will only come at the Second Coming of Jesus.

*–So we may expect the gift of prophecy to continue until Jesus comes again.*

**When does God give messages to the prophets?**

**Isaiah 42:9 GW-** “What I said in the past has come true. I will reveal new things before they happen.”

**Isaiah 46:10 GW-** “From the beginning I revealed the end. From long ago I told you things that had not yet happened, saying, “My plan will stand, and I’ll do everything I intended to do.”

**Amos 3:7 GW-** “ Certainly, the Almighty LORD doesn’t do anything unless he first reveals his secret to his servants the prophets

**John 13:19 CEV-** “I am telling you this before it all happens. Then when it does happen, you will believe who I am.”

**Note:** Part of the work of a prophet is to tell us what God says will happen in the future. Amos said that God would not do anything without first revealing His plans to the prophet. Jesus said that another reason for prophecy was so after the prophesied event happens, we can see the fulfillment of the prophecy. This will strengthen our faith.

**Why does God speak through prophets?**

**2 Timothy 3:16 CEV-** “Everything in the Scriptures is God’s Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live.”

**How important are the messages that God has given through the prophets?**

**2 Peter 1:20, 21 NIRV-** “Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet’s own understanding. It never came simply because they wanted it to. Instead, the *Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So prophecy comes from God.*”

**1 Corinthians 9:16 CEV** [Paul, a prophet said ]- “I don’t have any reason to brag about preaching the good news. Preaching is something God told me to do, and if I don’t do it, I am doomed.

**Note:** Prophets are given visions, dreams or thoughts from God to give to others. It may be written in a book or on parchment (skins), or even acted out in a parable (Ezekiel 4:1-7). Many times it was spoken to a group. Prophets were told that they must tell what God showed them. Jeremiah was told: *“I have put My words in your mouth.”* Jeremiah 1:9

**What happened when Israel refused to follow what God said through the prophet Jeremiah, etc.?**

**Jeremiah 32:23 CEV-** “But when our ancestors took over the land, they did not obey you. And now you have punished Israel with disaster.”

**Note:** God cannot support rebellion . Often, God’s “curse” is when He takes away His protection. Satan is then allowed to hurt the rebellious people. During the seven last plagues - when the angels allow the bowls of God’s wrath to fall on the earth - there will be no protection for the wicked. (Revelation 7:1-3 & Revelation 16)

**What did God say about His speaking through people in the last days of earth’s history?**

**Acts 2:16,17 NIV-** “No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “ ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

**Is the gift of prophecy to be in God’s final remnant church?**

**Revelation 12:17 NIV-** “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the *testimony of Jesus.*”

**Revelation 19:10 NIV-** “For the *testimony of Jesus* is the *spirit of prophecy.*”

**Note:** The Remnant or Final Church on earth are to be a people of prophecy and have the spirit of prophecy, or the gift of prophecy.

**Has God spoken through any modern prophet?**

**God calls a young woman-** In December of 1844, while praying with friends, a young 17 year old girl, by the name of Ellen Gould Harmon, was given a vision. This vision talked about the experience of God’s people and gave comfort to the group. Later Ellen was given many visions and dreams. Sometimes it seemed like she was taken off in vision to other places on earth (Ezekiel 8:1-4), in heaven, or even on another planet. It is estimated that Ellen had around 2,000 visions and dreams in her life. They might last anywhere from a few seconds, to up to four hours.

**Ellen’s many messages:** At first Ellen was very timid, and was afraid to be God’s special prophetic messenger. Ellen begged to be released from this call of the Lord. However, finally she said she would tell whatever messages God gave her. She died in 1915, after a very long, and at times, difficult life. Ellen wrote about 100,000 pages of manuscript. Her writings may be translated into more languages than any other woman in history. About 100 of her books have been published.

**What Ellen Wrote About:** Ellen (later married James White) White wrote on many topics that affect our lives. Ellen wrote a five volume commentary on the story of the Bible. Other books cover health, education, temperance, religious liberty, church organization and life, family life and future events. Many times Ellen was given a special message to give to someone. Sometimes this was simply encouragement. Other times her message pointed out sin in their lives. Ellen did not like to have to give unpopular messages, but she

determined to give the messages that God trusted to her.

### **Was Ellen White a true prophet?**

Either Ellen White was given visions and dreams from God, or from Satan. Her messages and experiences were clearly supernatural. She said:

**“God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs, and strengthening their faith or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work for the past thirty years bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no half-way work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the Devil.” 4 T. p. 230**

### **Are we warned about false prophets?**

**Matthew 7:15 CEV-** “Watch out for false prophets! They dress up like sheep, but inside they are wolves who have come to attack you.”

**Note:** The fact that we are warned about false prophets and told to test the spirits (1 John 4:1) shows that there should also be true prophets.

### **The Bible gives some tests that we can use to see if the prophet is true or false. What are these tests?**

#### **1. Do their writings and work agree with the Bible?**

**Isaiah 8:20 KJV-** “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

**Note:** Do their writings agree with what the prophets before them have written? Do they support God’s Ten Commandment law and all that is in the Bible?

#### **2. Does what they prophecy really happen?**

**Jeremiah 28:9 NIV-** “But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true.”

**Note:** Ellen White predicted the terrible San Francisco earthquake of 1902. On another occasion she predicted that sons of people in that audience would die in a war soon to start. Later after the US Civil had started, it was found that five families from that group had lost sons in battle. In 1849 she predicted that a world-wide system of printing plants would be build. Today the Adventist church has about 50 publishing houses around the world. There are many, many other predictions that have come true.

Her writings have led to the founding of one of the largest medical clinic and hospital systems in the world. The health principles she gave have given Adventists an average of from 3-7 years longer life. If followed fully - perhaps an extra 10-15 years. The educational principles and outlines that Ellen gave have led to the establishment of the largest non-Catholic educational system in the world.

About 25 or so years ago, a professor and Nutritionist at Cornell University came across her writings on nutrition through one of his students. After a deep study of her writings on diet and health, he was amazed. Though he never became an SDA, he wrote a series of three articles for the Review and Herald church paper. At the end of the last article, he said that **there was no better overall guide to nutrition to be found. An amazing statement about a woman who only had a grade three education!** Her gift had to be from God!

#### **3. What is the fruit of the life and work of the prophet?**

**Matthew 7:15,16 CEV-** “Watch out for false prophets! They dress up like sheep, but inside they are wolves who have come to attack you. ***You can tell what they are by what they do.***”

**Note:** If you read Ellen’s writings like *Desire of Ages*, or *Christ’s Object Lessons*, you can really feel God’s drawing power on your life. Her writings help you see your sins very clearly, but at the same time point you to a forgiving Christ! Her writings have the ‘*Ring of truth*’!

Ellen’s life was lived in modesty and hard work. Her work took her to live in both Europe and Australia. She left no huge sums of money. Ellen carefully planned so that after her death, the royalties from her books would help print more of her books. You can read many stories of the kind and loving life she lived, and how she lived for the good of others. Ellen had a balance in her life that was not extreme.

#### **4. Did Ellen teach that Jesus came in a literal human form like us?**

**1 John 4:2- GW-** “This is how you can recognize God’s Spirit: Every person who declares that Jesus Christ has come as a human has the Spirit that is from God.”

**Note:** Ellen clearly taught that though Jesus was fully God and eternal, that on earth Jesus became a human like us. Ellen taught that Jesus was tempted like we are, but that he never sinned. Ellen made it clear that Jesus lived as an example of what humans can do when they trust God fully and depend on His power.

#### **5. Are there other things that show that God really spoke through Ellen White?**

God gave Ellen White supernatural powers in some of her earlier visions. Sometimes like Daniel, she would talk without breathing during the whole vision. (Daniel 10:7-18) She was tested by a doctor while in vision. Her own strength would be taken away, and then she would be given supernatural strength. One time Ellen held up a large family Bible at arm’s length for about 20 minutes. Often her eyes would be open and looking up, and yet she would not see anything around her. Without looking, she once held a Bible up and turned the pages to the texts that she was talking about. (Numbers 24:2-4)

#### **Will the prophecies of the Bible always, under all conditions, really happen exactly as prophesied?**

**Jeremiah 18:7-10 ICB-** “There may come a time when I will speak about a nation or a kingdom. I might say I will pull that nation up by its roots. Or I might say I will pull that nation down and destroy it. But if the people of that nation are sorry for the evil they have done, I would change my mind. I would not carry out my plans to bring disaster to them. There may come another time when I will speak about a nation. I might say that I will build up and plant that nation. But if I see it doing evil by not obeying me, I would change my mind. I would not carry out my plans to do good for them.”

**Note:** *God gives what we call “Conditional Prophecy”*. That means that if the conditions on which the prophecy was given - change - then God may do the opposite of what He said. An example is the destruction of Nineveh that Jonah predicted. The people repented, and God did not destroy the city. Another is that God made many wonderful prophecies about what He would do for the people of Israel. But, the people rebelled, and God could not do what He had prophesied.

#### **Is it important that we listen and act when God tells us something through His prophets?**

**2 Chronicles 36:15, 16 CEV-** “But the LORD God felt sorry for his people, and instead of destroying the temple, he sent prophets who warned the people over and over about their sins. But the people only laughed and insulted these prophets. They ignored what the LORD God was trying to tell them, until he finally became so angry that nothing could stop him from punishing Judah and Jerusalem.”

**What happens when we listen, believe and follow God's prophets?**

**2 Chronicles 20:20 CEV-** "Early the next morning, as everyone got ready to leave for the desert near Tekoa, Jehoshaphat stood up and said, "Listen my friends, if we trust the LORD God and believe what these prophets have told us, the LORD will help us, and we will be successful."

## **21. HOW DOES GOD EXPECT CHRISTIANS TO LIVE?**

**What two basic principles should guide how we live our daily lives:**

**A- To Be Like Jesus - honor Him by the way we live!**

**1 John 2:6 ICB -** "Whoever says that God lives in him must live as Jesus lived."

**Luke 9:23 ICB-** "Jesus went on to say to all of them, If anyone wants to follow me, he must say no' to the things he wants. Every day he must be willing even to die on a cross, and he must follow me."

**B- We are not to be like the world, but we are to come out of the world and be separate:**

**2 Corinthians 6:17 NIrV-** "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

**1John 2:15 GW-** "Don't love the world and what it offers. Those who love the world don't have the Father's love in them." **Vs. 16 CEV-** "Our foolish pride comes from this world, and so do our selfish desires and our desire to have everything we see. None of this comes from the Father."

**Note:** We are all born with an evil nature. Satan wants to control our evil nature by molding us with the attitudes and ways of the world. Not everything in the 'world' is bad, but Satan has been mixing sin in with most things in the world. The world live in selfishness, competition and pride. These ways are not the ways of unselfish love and of Heaven. So, God asks us to be separate from the ways and thinking of the world.

**John 17:15 NIrV-** "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."

God wants us to grow to be more and more like Him in character. Jesus wants to change sinful humans by His Holy Spirit to be like Himself. As we copy and reflect Jesus character, we will bring glory to God by the way we live.

**What does coming out of the world mean?**

**2 Corinthians 6:14-17 CEV-** "Stay away from people who are not followers of the Lord! Can someone who is good get along with someone who is evil? Are light and darkness the same? Is Christ a friend of Satan? Can people who follow the Lord have anything in common with those who don't? Do idols belong in the temple of God? We are the temple of the living God, as God himself says, "I will live with these people and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people." The Lord also says, "Leave them and stay away! Don't touch anything that isn't clean."

**Note:** Since we have to live and work in an evil world, surely this does not mean that we will be rude or unfriendly to anyone. But, the text warns us about making close friends of those who do not know and love God. Our closest friends and business partners need to be people who share our beliefs, religious values and standards. We should choose to marry only a person who also loves and wants to obey God. It is not wise to marry first, and then try to 'win' your spouse.

**Will following Christ fully sometimes bring trouble or persecution from family or friends?**

**Matthew 10:37-39 CEV-** “ If you love your father or mother or even your sons and daughters more than me, you are not fit to be my disciples. And unless you are willing to take up your cross and come with me, you are not fit to be my disciples. If you try to save your life, you will lose it. But if you give it up for me, you will surely find it.”

**Note:** Being different from the world may be unpopular. Resisting ‘peer pressure’ may be hard. Standing for truth and honesty may even bring persecution. This is what Jesus suffered and Jesus warns that we will receive persecution.

**What is the basic principle that we are to use in deciding what to do, what entertainment to take part in, or even what to eat or wear?**

**1 Corinthians 10:31 NCV-** “So if you eat, or if you drink, or if you do anything, do everything for the glory of God.”

**Note:** A good question to ask is: “*If Jesus were in my place, what would Jesus do about it?*” This question quickly helps us decide not to eat anything that would hurt our health, or take part in entertainment that Jesus would frown on. Even by what we wear, we want our clothing to demonstrate Christian modesty and economy while still looking beautifully dressed.

**What do Peter and Paul say about a Christian’s clothing?**

**1 Peter 3:3,4 BBE-** “Do not let your ornaments be those of the body such as dressing of the hair, or putting on of jewels of gold or fair clothing; But let them be those of the unseen man of the heart, the ever-shining ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the eyes of God. And these were the ornaments of the holy women of the past, whose hope was in God.”

**1 Timothy 2:9 CEV-** “I would like for women to wear modest and sensible clothes. They should not have fancy hairdos, or wear expensive clothes, or put on jewelry made of gold or pearls.”

**Note:** The man or woman will try to dress simply, modestly, beautifully and with grace and dignity. That is the way we believe Jesus dressed. We represent Jesus to the world by the way we dress. Modesty is dressing so we don’t draw sexual attention to our bodies. [What is considered ‘modest’ may sometimes be different in California than in Saudi Arabia. But the principle of acting and dressing ‘modestly’ always applies wherever we live.]

**When we are considering the music we listen to, the TV programs we watch, the books we read, the DVD’s we watch, or the video games we play, what should be the guiding principle?**

**Philippians 4:8 CEV-** “Finally, my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don’t ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise.

**There is one more important principle to help guide us -**

**1 Corinthians 10:32 ICB-** “Never do anything that might make others do wrong—Jews, Greeks, or God’s church.”

**Note:** We should try to avoid the appearance of evil so someone does not misunderstand and be influenced in the wrong way. This principle might discourage one from going to a saloon or bar for a bottle of pop. We should try to avoid encouraging another person to go against their conscience - even if our conscience is not bothered. We will respect the principles and values of others, even if we do not yet see it true for ourselves.

**Finally, how can we represent Christ to the world?**

**Romans 12:1,2 CEV-** “Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him.”

## 22. What Happens During the 1000 Years After Jesus Second Coming?

### **What does Chapter 20 of the book of Revelation tell us about a special period of 1000 years?**

**Revelation 20:1,2 ICB-** “I saw an angel coming down from heaven. He had the key to the bottomless pit. He also held a large chain in his hand. The angel grabbed the dragon, that old snake who is the devil. The angel tied him up for 1,000 years.”

**Note:** The Bible tells us about a special period of 1000 years that people call the ‘Millennium’. The ‘Millennium’ comes right after Jesus returns. Many feel that the good are here on earth living with Jesus. However, if you put all the texts together, we believe that the good are with Christ in the center of the universe in Heaven. *Revelation 20:1,2* told us that at the beginning of the Millennium that Satan is chained. That chain is a ‘chain of circumstances’ - a sort of prison for Satan.

### **What does that ‘chain of circumstances’ do to Satan?**

**Revelation 20:3,4 ICB-** “Then he threw him into the bottomless pit, closed it, and locked it over him. The angel did this so he could not trick the people of the earth anymore until the thousand years were ended. After a thousand years he must be set free for a short time.”

**Note:** Satan cannot trick the people any more until the 1000 years have ended. Why?

### **What is the earth like during the Millennium?**

**Jeremiah 4:23-26 CEV-** “After this, I looked around. The earth was barren, with no form of life. The sun, moon, and stars had disappeared. The mountains were shaking; no people could be seen, and all the birds had flown away. Farmland had become a desert, and towns were in ruins. The LORD's fierce anger had done all of this.”

**Isaiah 24: 21-23 CEV-** On that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens and the kings of the earth. He will put them in a pit and keep them prisoner. Then later on, he will punish them. The moon and sun will both be embarrassed and ashamed.”

**Note:** These verses talk about a time a bit like before the earth was created, or like the events around the Second Coming of Christ. These conditions have never happened, so they are in the future. The earth is in darkness.

### **What has happened to the earth and the bad people at Jesus Second Coming?**

**2 Peter 3:10,11 ICB-** But the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise. Everything in the skies will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything in it will be burned up. In that way everything will be destroyed.”

**2 Thessalonians 2:8 ICB-** “Then that Man of Evil will appear. And the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath that comes from his mouth and will destroy him with the glory of his coming [KJV- “with the brightness of his coming”]

**Note:** The bad people will be destroyed by the bright glory of Jesus Second Coming. They will be dead in their graves for 1000 years.

### **What happens to the good people at Jesus Second Coming?**

**John 14:1-3 ICB -** “Jesus said, Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a

place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am.”

**1 Thess. 4:16, 17 NirV-** “The Lord himself will come down from heaven. We will hear a loud command. We will hear the voice of the leader of the angels. We will hear a blast from God’s trumpet. Many who believe in Christ will have died already. They will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them. We will be taken up in the clouds. We will meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with him forever.”

**Note:** The good will go to heaven for 1000 years. This will be a time when God answers questions: What was God doing to save each of us? What was God doing behind the scenes with the nations of the earth? What is God really like? There will also be a judgment.

### **Are there two resurrections - one for the good people, and one for the bad?**

**John 5:28, 29 NCV -** “Don’t be surprised at this: A time is coming when all who are dead and in their graves will hear his voice. Then they will come out of their graves. Those who did good will rise and have life forever, but those who did evil will rise to be judged guilty.”

**Acts 24:15 ICV-** “and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

**Revelation 20: 5,6 GW-** “The rest of the dead did not live until the 1,000 years ended. This is the first time that people come back to life. Blessed and holy are those who are included the first time that people come back to life. The second death has no power over them. They will continue to be priests of God and Christ. They will rule with him for 1,000 years.

**Note:** Jesus tells us in John that there will be a resurrection of the good people, and a second resurrection of the bad people. John is really saying in Revelation that those in the first resurrection at the beginning of the 1000 years are the blessed, or the good people. John talks about the second resurrection at the end of the 1000 years. John says that the people already raised won’t die a second time. Those raised at the end of the 1000 years will only be alive for a relatively short time, and then they will die for eternity in the second death. The bad people are sleeping in their graves during the 1000 years.

### **Why are the bad people sleeping in their graves for 1000 years?**

**Revelation 20:4 GW-** “I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were allowed to judge. Then I saw the souls of those whose heads had been cut off because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its statue and were not branded on their foreheads or hands. They lived and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years.”

**Revelation 20:11GW-** “I saw a large, white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence, but no place was found for them. I saw the dead, both important and unimportant people, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened, including the Book of Life. The dead were judged on the basis of what they had done, as recorded in the books. The sea gave up its dead. Death and hell gave up their dead. People were judged based on what they had done.”

**Note:** All the good people who have ever lived will be in Heaven for 1000 years. Here they live with Jesus and take part in the judgment. Before the bad people are destroyed for eternity, the rest of the universe must take part in their judgment. God has been accused of being selfish and unloving. All the Universe must see for themselves what God has been doing. The Universe must understand clearly that God has done all He possibly can to save each person! When the wicked are finally destroyed, there must be no unanswered question left in the mind of any saved person about the goodness of our loving God!

### Who else will the good be judging during the 1000 years?

**1 Corinthians 6:2,3 NIrV** “Don’t you know that God’s people will judge the world? And if you are going to judge the world, aren’t you able to judge small cases? Don’t you know that we will judge angels?”

**Note:** The good people and all the Universe will judge Satan and his angels, as well as the wicked from earth. Each being must understand how sin started with Satan, and why God allowed sin to go on so long.

### What happens at the end of the 1000 years?

**Revelation 21:2 GW-** “Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, dressed like a bride ready for her husband.”

**Romans 14:10,11 TEV -** “All of us will stand before God to be judged by him. For the scripture says, “As surely as I am the living God, says the Lord, *everyone will kneel before me, and everyone will confess that I am God.*”

**Revelation 20:3 ICB-** “The angel did this so that he could not trick the people of the earth anymore until the 1,000 years were ended. After 1,000 years he [Satan] must be set free for a short time.

**Revelation 20:7-9 GW-** When 1,000 years are over, Satan will be freed from his prison. He will go out to deceive Gog and Magog, the nations in the four corners of the earth, and gather them for war. They will be as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore. I saw that they spread over the broad expanse of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's holy people and the beloved city. Fire came from heaven and burned them up.

**Revelation 20:10 GW-** “The devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were also thrown.”

### Note:

At the end of the 1000 years, the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven to earth. The good people come with the city! The wicked dead are raised to life and see the good through the transparent (clear) walls inside the city. Apparently Satan inspires them to try and take the hold city as it says that they *prepare for war*. Then, they are stopped, and in front of them Jesus is lifted up above the New Jerusalem. Jesus is crowned King of Kings, and everyone, even the wicked, will kneel and confess that Jesus is a just God. (*Romans 14:10,11*)

Then it says that fire comes down from heaven and burns them up. Satan is also burned up. Because God is just in giving different measures of punishment, some may suffer longer than others. Satan will be the last to die, but finally Satan and everything sinful will be completely burned up.

### How complete is the burning up of the wicked?

**Mal. 3:1 & 3 ICB -** “There is a day coming that will be like a hot furnace. All the proud and evil people will be like straw. On that day they will be completely burned up. Not a root or branch will be left, says the Lord of heaven’s armies. ...Then you will crush the wicked. They will be like ashes under your feet. I will do this on that day, says the Lord of heaven’s armies.”

**Psalms 37:1 & 20 BBE-** “ For in a short time the evil-doer will be gone: you will go searching for his place, and it will not be there. ... But the wrongdoers will come to destruction, and the haters of the Lord will be like the fat of lambs, they will be burned up; they will go up in smoke, and never again be seen.”

### What else will the fires of hell do beside burn up Satan and the wicked?

**2 Peter 3:10, 12,13 ICB-** “But the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise. Everything in the skies will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything in it will be burned up. In that way everything will be destroyed. ... When that day comes, the skies will be

destroyed with fire, and everything in the skies will melt with heat. But God made a promise to us. And we are waiting for what he promised—a new heaven and a new earth where goodness lives.”

**Note:** God will destroy everything that has even a tiny bit of sin in it. Every germ, virus, gun, radioactive stockpile, atomic bomb, chemical or biological weapon and all pollution (garbage) will be burned up. The earth will be purified (cleaned up) by God’s special fire.

**What will the good people then have?**

**Revelation 21: 1-5 GW-** I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and earth had disappeared, and the sea was gone. Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, dressed like a bride ready for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "God lives with humans! God will make his home with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There won't be any more death. There won't be any grief, crying, or pain, because the first things have disappeared." The one sitting on the throne said, "I am making everything new." He said, "Write this: 'These words are faithful and true.'"

**Note:** After every bit of sin is gone, God will be with His people in the holy city, New Jerusalem. The good will be able to go anywhere in the beautiful earth made new.

**And when will we all get together in the New Earth to worship and fellowship?**

**Isaiah 66:23- CEV-** On the first day of each month and on each Sabbath, everyone will worship me. I, the LORD, have spoken.”

**REVIEW:**

**AT THE SECOND COMING:**

- The evil are killed by the brightness of Jesus coming
- The good go to Heaven for 1000 years
- Satan and his angels are left in darkness. The earth is empty, broken and dark

**DURING THE 1000 YEARS:**

- The earth is empty and dark, except for Satan and his evil angels
- The good people are all in Heaven living with Jesus
- The saved take part in the judgment of Satan, his angels and all the wicked
- God answers everyone’s questions

**AT THE END OF THE 1000 YEAR ‘Millennium’**

- The New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven to earth - with all the saved
- All the wicked are raised from their graves
- Satan inspires the wicked to try and take the New Jerusalem, now filled with the good people
- As the wicked try to take the city, they are stopped
- They see Jesus crowned King of Kings, and every knee bows and every person recognizes Jesus as King
- Fire then comes down and destroys every evil person and angel
- The same fire that destroys the wicked, then burns up every bit of evil on our world
- God creates a beautiful New Earth - free from sin, sickness and pain

***Don’t you want to be there - inside the city with Jesus and all the saved when the fires of hell do their work?***

## 23. CARING FOR WHAT GOD HAS LOANED TO US!

### **Who is really the source of everything we have?**

**Psalm 24:1 GW-** “A psalm by David. The earth and everything it contains are the LORD'S. The world and all who live in it are his.”

**Haggai 2:8 TEV-** “All the silver and gold of the world is mine.”

**Note:** God is the source of everything we have. God made the world and everything in it. God supports everything by his power. God supplies the power for the sun, the rain and the weather. God provides the life in each cell of plant, animal or man.

### **Why does God really own everything?**

**Deuteronomy 8:18 CEV-** Instead, remember that the LORD your God gives you the strength to make a living. ( The *ICB Version says-* “It is he who gives you the power to become rich.”)

**Note:** Everything we have is dependent in some way on the power of God. We are put here to look after the earth as caretakers, or stewards. God holds us responsible for how we take care of all He has allowed us to have. Even if we think we earned it - God allowed it and provided the power for us to earn it.

### **Does God own you, too?**

**1 Corinthians 6:19,20 ICB-** “You should know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. You do not own yourselves. You were bought by God for a price. So honor God with your bodies.”

**Acts 17: 25 GW-** “He gives everyone life, breath, and everything they have.”

**Note:** When Adam and Eve sinned, we all came under the power and control of Satan. But, when Jesus died for us, He bought us back. So, we are twice HIS. Jesus created us, then died to let us come back to Him.

### **What are the basic reasons (principles) for giving back to God and His work?**

**2 Corinthians 9:5-8 CEV-** “Then you will have the chance to give because you want to, and not because you feel forced to. Remember this saying, "A few seeds make a small harvest, but a lot of seeds make a big harvest." Each of you must make up your own mind about how much to give. But don't feel sorry that you must give and don't feel that you are forced to give. God loves people who love to give. God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others.”

**Luke 6:38 CEV-** “If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return. It will be packed down, shaken together, and spilling over into your lap. The way you treat others is the way you will be treated.”

**Acts 20:20 TEV-** “...the Lord Jesus himself said, 'There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.' ” or the **ICB-** “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

**Note:** God wants cheerful givers. God wants us to give from thankful hearts, not just because we think we *must* give. When we really see all that God has given us, we will live to bless others with our time and our money. God will also bless us, so we can give more. God could provide all the money needed for His work through a miracle. But, God knows that giving helps us to learn unselfishness and how to sacrifice.

### **What is God's plan for the use of the money we give?**

**1 Corinthians 9:14 GW-** “In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who spread the Good

News should earn their living from the Good News.

**Numbers 18:20,21- CEV-** “You will not receive any land in Israel as your own. I am the LORD, and I will give you whatever you need. Ten percent of the Israelites' crops and one out of every ten of their newborn animals belong to me. But I am giving all this to the Levites as their pay for the work they do at the sacred tent.”

**Matthew 24:14 CEV-** When the good news about the kingdom has been preached all over the world and told to all nations, the end will come

**Note:** God has planned that those who give their lives in full time ministry, may be paid money so they can live and pay their bills. Back in Israel, God had the people set aside ten percent (a Tithe) which paid the Levites and Priests who worked with the temple. Today we don't have a literal 'tribe' of Levites, but the principle of supporting ministers with our tithe is still important.

### **Does God have a plan for how much we should give?**

**Malachi 3:8-10 CEV-** “You people are robbing me, your God. And, here you are, asking, "How are we robbing you?" You are robbing me of the offerings and of the ten percent that belongs to me. That's why your whole nation is under a curse. I am the LORD All-Powerful, and I challenge you to put me to the test. Bring the entire ten percent into the storehouse, so there will be food in my house. Then I will open the windows of heaven and flood you with blessing after blessing.

**Note:** God makes it very clear that the ten percent of our income is His, not ours. God even says that if we don't return what is His, that we are robbing Him. God even says that those that don't pay tithe may have His blessings removed - a curse! Today, God wants us to give the tithe to our church to support its ministry.

### **Does God ask us to give more than the ten percent 'Tithe'?**

**Deuteronomy 16:10 ICB-** “Bring him an offering as a special gift to him. Give to him just as he has blessed you.” **VS. 17 GW-** “Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the LORD your God. Bring a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you.”

**2 Corinthians 8:10-12 CEV-** “A year ago you were the first ones to give, and you gave because you wanted to. So listen to my advice. I think you should finish what you started. If you give according to what you have, you will prove that you are as eager to give as you were to think about giving. It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have.”

**Note:** These texts are not talking about the 'tithe', but about freewill offerings beyond tithe. God specifically asks for the tithe - that 10% is His. But, God also asks for offerings beyond tithe. However, there is no fixed percent, and we are to give in proportion to (how) God has blessed us. Some can give more than others.

### **Some have thought that Tithing was only for the Old Testament times, but what did Jesus say about giving our tithe?**

**Matthew 23:23 CEV-** “You Pharisees and teachers are show-offs, and you're in for trouble! You give God a tenth of the spices from your garden, such as mint, dill, and cumin. Yet you neglect the more important matters of the Law, such as justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These are the important things you should have done, though you should not have left the others undone either.”

**Note:** Jesus made it clear that He believed that tithing was important. But, Jesus says that being fair and

merciful and faithful is even more important. But, being faithful to God will mean we also return God's tithe to Him.

**Did Jesus have anything else to say about our giving?**

**Matthew 6:19-21 ICB** - "Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can break into your house and steal the things you have. So store your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure. Your heart will be where your treasure is."

**Note:** Those who really love God will show or demonstrate it through their giving. God wants us to concentrate putting our money into His work rather than building an empire here. Our highest motive in earning more needs to be so that we will have more to give.

**Will God really take care of us?**

**Matthew 6:30-33 GW-** That's the way God clothes the grass in the field. Today it's alive, and tomorrow it's thrown into an incinerator. So how much more will he clothe you people who have so little faith? "Don't ever worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?' Everyone is concerned about these things, and your heavenly Father certainly knows you need all of them. But first, be concerned about his kingdom and what has his approval. Then all these things will be provided for you.

**Note:** God promises that when we put Him first in giving and living, that He will take care of us!

## 24. Who Is the Holy Spirit?

### What promise did Jesus make to His disciples just before He went back to Heaven?

**John 14:16 CEV-** “Then I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will help you and always be with you.”

**Note:** When Jesus went back to Heaven He sent the Holy Spirit to be with His people in a special way. The Holy Spirit was to take Jesus place.

### What will the Holy Spirit do for us and in us?

**John 14:17 & 26 CEV-** The Spirit will show you what is true. The people of this world cannot accept the Spirit, because they don't see or know him. But you know the Spirit, who is with you and will keep on living in you. ...But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you.”

**Note:** The Holy Spirit wants to live in us and do a special holy work in us. The Holy Spirit will help us understand what is truth and then help us apply it to our lives.

### Who is the Holy Spirit?

**Matthew 28:19 ICB-** “Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

**2 Corinthians 13:14 TEV-** “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

**John 3:8 CEV-** “Only God's Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going.”

**Acts 5:3,4 CEV-** “Peter said, “Why has Satan made you keep back some of the money from the sale of the property? Why have *you lied to the Holy Spirit?* The property was yours before you sold it, and even after you sold it, the money was still yours. What made you do such a thing? You didn't lie to people. *You lied to God!*”

**Note:** There is no one text that fully explains who the Holy Spirit is. We have to put a number of texts together like a child building a house with toy blocks.

We are told to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Paul's blessing to the Corinthians he uses the name of the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Peter talks about a couple lying to the Holy Spirit, and in the next verse says they lied to God. Jesus said that only God's Spirit gives new life. Everywhere the Holy Spirit is talked about as being equal with God's power. So, we believe that the Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of God (Father, Jesus & Holy Spirit), or part of the Godhead or 'Trinity'.

### Does the Holy Spirit have a personality?

**Ephesians 4:30 CEV-** “Don't make God's Spirit sad.”

**Acts 5:3 CEV-** “Why have *you lied to the Holy Spirit?* “

**Acts 15:28 BBE-** “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...”

**Note:** Only a personal being can be made sad or be lied to. When the early church gave a decision on church matters in Acts 15, they referred to the Holy Spirit as a person.

### What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

**John 16:13, 14 GW-** When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into the full truth. He won't speak

on his own. He will speak what he hears and will tell you about things to come. He will give me glory, because he will tell you what I .”

**John 16:8 CEV-** “He will come to convict the world of sin, to show the world what has God's approval, and to convince the world that God judges it.”

**2 Peter 1:21 ICB-** “No prophecy ever came from what a man wanted to say. But men led by the Holy Spirit spoke words from God.”

**Genesis 6:3 NIrV-**Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend [plead] with man forever...”

**Note:** The Holy Spirit is the part of God that can be everywhere at once. The Holy Spirit will live in anyone who is willing to be filled with the Spirit. *The Holy Spirit:* gave God’s words to prophets, convicts us of God’s truths, pleads with us to repent and follow God and urges us to prepare for the judgment.

### **How does the Holy Spirit plead or intercede for us?**

**Romans 8:26,27 NCV-** “Also, the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us, even begs God for us with deep feelings that words cannot explain. God can see what is in people’s hearts. And he knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way God wants.”

### **What part did the Holy Spirit have in the Creation of this work and in Mary becoming pregnant?**

**Genesis 1:2 NCV-** “The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God’s Spirit was moving over the water.”

**Luke 1:35 CEV-** “The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God.”

**Note:** The Holy Spirit is the one actually doing things. The Holy Spirit was waiting just over the water to follow Jesus next instructions in creation. Mary became pregnant through a miracle of the Holy Spirit, for she had no sexual intercourse to make her pregnant.

### **How are we to be filled with the Holy Spirit?**

**Ephesians 5:18 KJV-** “...be filled with the Spirit.”

**Acts 9:17 GW-** “Ananias said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way to Damascus, sent me to you. He wants you to see again and to be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

**Luke 24:49 TEV-** “And I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised. But you must wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you.”

**Acts 1:8 TEV-** But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me

**Acts 2:1-4 GW-** “When Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Passover, came, all the believers were together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like a violently blowing wind came from the sky and filled the whole house where they were staying. Tongues that looked like fire appeared to them. The tongues arranged themselves so that one came to rest on each believer. All the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak.”

**Note:** Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come when they prepared their hearts for it. The Holy Spirit will only fill our hearts if we ask for it. [Luke 11:14] Even when we know we are very sinful, we may ask for the Holy Spirit to come in and clean out the sin. Then, as we surrender fully to the Spirit’s control, we will be filled with the power. The power is to give us strength to live loving Christian lives. The Spirit will also give us the ability to share with others.

**How important is being filled with Jesus through the Holy Spirit?**

**John 15:5 GW-** "I am the vine. You are the branches. Those who live in me while I live in them will produce a lot of fruit. But you can't produce anything without me."

**Note:** God can do nothing for your salvation without you choosing Him, and you can do nothing really important for God without his Spirit.

## 25. Does God's Grace Do Away With God's Law?

### What did Jesus say about the importance of His law?

**Matthew 5:17-19 CEV-** "Don't suppose that I came to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to do away with them, but to give them their full meaning. Heaven and earth may disappear. But I promise you that not even a period or comma will ever disappear from the Law. Everything written in it must happen. If you reject even the least important command in the Law and teach others to do the same, you will be the least important person in the kingdom of heaven."

**Note:** Jesus says very clearly that nothing in His commandments is to be done away with. Not even a tiny part of the law is to be done away with. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding has come when people think that living under grace means that we no longer need to keep God's laws. Jesus is really the one who spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai. The law is a reflection of the character of Jesus. Satan hates Jesus and hates God's law. Satan wants to brand those who keep God's law as 'legalists'. Satan wants man to think that we don't need to keep God's laws.

### What law did Jesus say we should be keeping?

**Matthew 19:17-19 TEV-** "Keep the commandments if you want to enter life." "What commandments?" he asked. Jesus answered, "Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not accuse anyone falsely; respect your father and your mother; and love your neighbor as you love yourself."

**Note:** Jesus refers directly to the *Ten Commandments* as the law to keep. Jesus also quotes the Old Testament "love summary" of the last six commandments from Leviticus 19:18.

### What did James tell us about the importance of each of the commandments?

**James 2:10-11 TEV-** "Whoever breaks one commandment is guilty of breaking them all. For the same one who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Even if you do not commit adultery, you have become a lawbreaker if you commit murder."

**Note:** Breaking any one of the Ten Commandments means that we have broken God's summary of the commandments - love God first, and love your neighbor as yourself. God's laws are a detailed definition of how love works in action - in our every day life!

### How does the Bible explain what sin really is?

**1 John 3:4 TEV-** "Whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law, because sin is a breaking of the law."

**Note:** Sin is not just breaking one of the 'rules', but sin is breaking God's principle of love. Sin is going our own way, instead of God's way. Sin is shaking our fist in the face of God and saying, "I'm going to do it my way - I don't care about your way!" Sin is going it alone, trying to be good in our own strength, instead of with God's power.

### What is grace?

**Acts 15:11 ICB-** But we believe that we and they too will be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus!"

**Ephesians 2:8 NCV-** "I mean that you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God."

**Romans 5:17 TEV-** It is true that through the sin of one man death began to rule because of that one

man. But how much greater is the result of what was done by the one man, Jesus Christ! All who receive God's abundant grace and are freely put right with him will rule in life through Christ.

**Note:** God's grace is forgiveness that we do not deserve because of anything we have done. A quick definition is "*unmerited favor*". Jesus has paid the death penalty for our sin. Jesus lived a perfect life. His blood cleanses us from our sins. His perfect life is counted instead of our sinful lives. When we accept Jesus and ask to be forgiven, we are seen by God as if we had never sinned.

#### **Are we saved by what we do?**

**Romans 3:20 NIrV-** "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."

**Romans 3:22, 24, 26 ICB-** "God makes people right with himself through their faith in Jesus Christ." People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God gave Jesus as a way to forgive sin through faith. And all of this is because of the blood of Jesus' death."

**Note:** "*Legalists*" are the people who think they can earn their salvation by what they do. In Jesus day the Jewish leaders thought they could earn salvation doing things that pleased God. But, we cannot earn Heaven by anything we do. Salvation and Heaven are a free gift. We obey God for three reasons: (1) We love Him enough to obey (2) God has asked us to trust Him enough to obey (3) When we don't understand why, we still obey because we trust that God knows best. One day we will understand 'why'.

#### **If we are not 'made right' with God through 'law keeping', then what is the purpose of God's law?**

**Romans 3:30 TEV-** For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make us know that we have sinned.

**Galatians 3:24 NIrV-** "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith" KJV- "...the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

**Note:** Like a mirror shows us our face is dirty, so the law clearly shows us our sins. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sinful ways, and we run to Jesus for forgiveness. The Holy Spirit will then give us power to live more and more like Jesus.

#### **Does being 'saved by grace' mean that we no longer need to obey God's law?**

**Romans 3:31 CEV-** "Do we destroy the Law by our faith? Not at all! We make it even more powerful."

**Note:** Grace shows us that the law could not be done away with, or we would not need it. No law - no sin - therefore no need of grace. The broken law condemns us and we see that we desperately need God's grace!

#### **Was a law done away with at the cross?**

**Colossians 3:14 NIrV-** "having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross."

#### **Was this the Ten Commandment law, or the law of ceremonies and sacrifices?**

**Colossians 2:16, 17-** Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a *Sabbath day*. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

**Note:** There are different laws in the Bible. The Ten Commandments are eternal principles and are never done away with for they show us what sin is. The Health laws don't change, for if it was unhealthy to eat hogs before Jesus died, Jesus death did nothing to change the hog.

But, there are many laws in Leviticus that tell how to offer sacrifices, etc. These laws were a '*shadow of things to come*'. A sign post points to the city ahead, and when we get there, we don't need it any more. The Old Testament sacrifices were sign posts pointing to the Cross. When Jesus our real sacrifice came and died, we don't need that old set of sign posts any more. Jesus gave us two new 'memorials': Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are really our new ceremonies - pointing back - reminding us of the cross and what Jesus did for us.

### **Were the ceremonial Sabbaths different from the Seventh Day Sabbath?**

**Leviticus 23:24,25 KJV-** "In the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work *therein*..."

**Leviticus 16:29 KJV-** "And let this be an order to you for ever: in the seventh month, on the tenth day, you are to keep yourselves from pleasure and do no sort of work. **Vs. 31** It is a special Sabbath for you, and you are to keep yourselves from pleasure; it is an order for ever."

**Note:** The Seventh-day Sabbath began in the Garden of Eden and was a memorial of Creation. The Sabbath of Creation started before man sinned.

The Ceremonial Sabbaths were part of the sacrificial system. God gave instructions for the ceremonial Sabbaths at Mount Sinai. These ceremonial Sabbaths could be on any day of the week - perhaps the first and last day of a certain Feast. These ceremonial Sabbaths pointed forward to the Cross. When Jesus died and the sacrificial system stopped - the ceremonial Sabbaths also ended. But, the Seventh Day Sabbath did not end, and will still be kept in the new Earth (Isaiah 66:23)

### **How do we know for sure that the 'Sabbaths' that done away with were *not* the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, but were still kept in the New Testament?**

**Acts 13:42 CEV-** "As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the meeting, the people begged them to say more about these same things on the next Sabbath. **Vs.44-** The next Sabbath almost everyone in town came to hear the message about the Lord.

**Acts 16:13 NIrV-** "On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there

**Acts 17:2 CEV-** "So as usual, Paul went there to worship, and on three Sabbaths he spoke to the people..."

**Acts 18:4 NIrV-** "Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

**Note:** The Seventh-day Sabbath was always kept in the New Testament. If Paul was really trying to tell us that the Seventh-day Sabbath was done away with, surely Paul would have told us about the glories of a new first day holy day. But, the Bible is silent about any new holy day. It only makes sense that if God was going to change His holy Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, then God would have made this change super clear!

### **What does God tell us in Revelation about the final remnant people and their relationship to His law?**

**Revelation 14:12 NIrV-** "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus."

### **What does Jesus say we will do if we really love Him?**

**John 14:15 KJV -** "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

**John 15:10 GW-** “If you obey my commandments, you will live in my love. I have obeyed my Father's commandments, and in that way I live in his love.”

**1 John 5:2 BBE-** “ In this way, we are certain that we have love for the children of God, when we have love for God and keep his laws.

**1 John 5:3 CEV-** “We show our love for God by obeying his commandments, and they are not hard to follow.

**CONCLUSION:**

The purpose of God’s law is to point out sin and show us God’s loving and unselfish way. God’s grace meets us as sinners where we are and pulls us toward Christ - if we don’t resist. Jesus is anxious to bring sin to an end. Jesus is waiting for a final remnant people who will reflect His love to the world!

## 26. What Can We Know About God?

### **Is it important to understand who God is?**

**John 17:4 CEV-** Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, the one you sent.”

**Note:** It is extremely important for everyone to know if God exists, who God is, and how we are to relate to God! Our future may be decided by our answers.

### **Does the Bible talk about more than one ‘person’ as God?**

**Genesis 1:26 TEV-** “Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble [be & look like] us.” In the BBE Version it reads: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, like us “.

**Note:** In John 1:1-3, it tells us that it was really Jesus, the “Word” that created the world. In Genesis 1:2 it says, “...the Spirit of God was moving on the face of the waters.” So, when we put this all together, we understand that it was not just one person that was involved in Creation. It was really the Father, the Son (Jesus) and God’s spirit, the Holy Spirit.

### **What three names did Jesus tell us to use when being baptized?**

**Matthew 28:19 ICB-** “Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

**Note:** Jesus asked us to use all three names because all three, Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit - are fully God.

### **How many of the ‘Godhead’, or ‘Trinity’, were involved at Jesus baptism?**

**Matthew 3:16 ICB-** Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water. Heaven opened, and he saw God’s Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, “This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him.”

**Note:** When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the form of a dove. The Father spoke out loud saying this is ‘my Son’.

### **Has God always existed (lived)?**

**Psalms 90:1-3 ICB-** “Lord, you have been our home since the beginning. Before the mountains were born, and before you created the earth and the world, you are God. You have always been, and you will always be.”

**Note:** God has always lived. Our human brains cannot really fully understand this. Everything we know has a beginning. Yet, if God has not always existed, how could everything come from nothing? The Bible says in **Hebrews 11:6 NIrV-** “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

God does not try to prove his existence. We can see enough evidence for God to believe, but faith is still needed. As humans we don’t have all the answers now. **1 Corinthians 13:12 CEV-** “ Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us.”

**Has Jesus also always existed?**

**Micah 5:2 BBE-** And you, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, the least among the families of Judah, out of you one will come to me who is to be ruler in Israel; whose going out has been purposed from time past, from the eternal days.”

**John 8:58 ICB-** “Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Before Abraham was born, I am!”

**Colossians 2:9 TEV-** “For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity...”

**Note:** The texts above make it clear that Jesus has always lived. Jesus was born here on earth as a human being, but Jesus always lived in Heaven with the Father before coming to earth.

Someone may say that the study of the Godhead or ‘Trinity’ is not that important as long as we believe Jesus died for us. But, Satan hates Christ and does not want us to believe that Jesus is fully God. There is one church that only believes that Jesus is ‘a god’, but not fully God. Another religion accepts Jesus as coming again, and a wonderful being, but not as equal with God. While we respect people with those beliefs, the Bible teaches that Jesus is fully God and was from eternity. Satan wants to put Jesus ‘down’ in every way he can, so it is important for us to lift Jesus up to the place He must have in our life and heart.

**What did Jesus say about his relationship with his Father?**

**John 10:30 CEV-** “...*I am one with the Father.* Once again the Jewish leaders picked up stones in order to kill Jesus. But he said, "I have shown you many good things that my Father sent me to do. Which one are you going to stone me for?" They answered, "We are not stoning you because of any good thing you did. We are stoning you because you did a terrible thing. You are just a man, and here *you are claiming to be God!*"

**Note:** Claiming to be God, or claiming the powers of God is known in the Bible as the sin of ‘*Blasphemy*’. The Jews did not believe that Jesus was God, and when Jesus appeared to be claiming that He was equal with God, the Jews were going to kill Jesus. But, Jesus allowed people to call Him God (John 20:28 KJV And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.” Jesus also did not stop people worshipping Him. If Jesus was not God, then this would be a terrible sin.

**Is Jesus a source of life?**

**John 5:26 TEV-** “Just as the Father is himself the source of life, in the same way he has made his Son to be the source of life.

**Note:** Jesus has live original and unborrowed. Jesus has always existed.

**What are the names of God given to Jesus?**

**Isaiah 9:6 TEV-** A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Eternal Father," "Prince of Peace."

**Note:** If Jesus were not fully part of “GOD”, surely these names would never be applied to Jesus. These names being given to Jesus help us understand that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are really ‘one God’. We cannot fully understand it for we have no human parallel. The unity of the ‘three’ is much closer than a husband and wife. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are ‘one God’, but as three separate persons, each with their own personality. While living as a man here on earth, Jesus prayed to His Father. It appears that our Father is the leader of the three. But, for humans to try and understand more than the Bible tells us, is dangerous. We can only understand so far, and beyond that we must leave our understanding in God’s hands. In Heaven, God will explain what we can understand when our minds are so much smarter!

**What is God like?**

**Exodus 34:5-7 CEV-** “The LORD God came down in a cloud and stood beside Moses there on the mountain. God spoke his holy name, "the LORD." Then he passed in front of Moses and called out, "I am the LORD God. I am merciful and very patient with my people. I show great love, and I can be trusted. I keep my promises to my people forever, but I also punish anyone who sins. When people sin, I punish them and their children.”

**What favorite text helps us understand so much about God?**

**John 3:16,17- ICB-** For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him.”

**CONCLUSION:**

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all important to us [*Be sure and read the study on the Holy Spirit*]. Each one is to be very precious to us. All three love us dearly, and are doing everything they can to save us! How thankful we can be for a loving God!

## 27. What is the Purpose of God’s Final Remnant People on Earth?

### **Does God have a Final Remnant and special people on earth before Jesus returns to earth?**

**Revelation 12:17 NIrV-** “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman [*a woman in prophecy is a church*] and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

**Note:** God is working to prepare a final ‘Remnant’ group of people who will carry His final message of love and warning to the world. God wants this Remnant to show that it is possible to live in harmony with God’s law of love - the Ten Commandments.

### **The book of Revelation pictures three angels giving a final message of love and warning to the whole world. What is it?**

**First Message: Revelation 14:6,7 NIrV-** “Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

**Note: *This message includes:*** (1) The complete gospel story that must go to every person in the world (2) A call to give God glory, and not man. (3) The Pre-Advent Judgment now going on now in Heaven as God and the Universe go over the record books to see who is safe to save [See Study-‘**When Will Your Name Come Up in the Judgment**’] (4) A special call to keep the memorial of Creation - God’s seventh-day Sabbath [See Study- ‘**A Wonderful Day for Worship**’]

**Second Message: Revelation 14:8 NIrV-** “A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

**Note:** The Second Message points out what Satan has been doing to bring in counterfeit (false) doctrines among God’s people. Churches that became corrupted have fallen under Satan’s influence.

**Third Message: Revelation 14:9-11 NIrV-** A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”

**Note:** This message warns against worshipping with the fallen Christian powers - especially the fallen Roman religious power that claimed power to change God’s laws and His seventh day Sabbath to Sunday. [See study called ‘**Why Did Satan Try to Change God’s 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath**’] By knowingly accepting a false Sabbath, a person then honors the power of the church that set up the counterfeit. After a certain point (in God’s timing), anyone then honoring the false Christian powers ends up in false worship. All the people giving this false worship will receive the ‘**Mark of the Beast**’. The most terrible warning in all the Bible is found here in the Third Angel’s Message. If individuals only ‘go along’ with the false Sunday worship, for any reason, whether they believe it or not, they receive the ‘Mark’ in their hand. If they really believe and teach it, they receive this ‘Mark’ in their forehead (or mind). God warns us strongly about receiving either mark!

At the beginning man was given a test of obedience in the Garden of Eden. Would they obey and worship

God, or disobey and end up worshiping Satan? Adam and Eve failed the test and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree! Just before Jesus returns, God has chosen another final test of loyalty. This test is about who we will worship - God, or behind false Christian (and other) powers, we worship Satan.

### **How is this false religious power described by Paul?**

**2 Thessalonians 2:7-12 ICB-** “The secret power of evil is already working in the world now. But there is one who is stopping that power. And he will continue to stop it until he is taken out of the way. Then that Man of Evil will appear. And the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath that comes from his mouth and will destroy him with the glory of his coming. The Man of Evil will come by the power of Satan. He will have great power, and he will do many different false miracles, signs, and wonders. He will use every kind of evil to trick those who are lost. They are lost because they refused to love the truth. (If they loved the truth, they would be saved.) ***But they refused to love the truth; so God sends them something powerful that leads them away from the truth. He sends them that power so they will believe something that is not true.*** So all those who do not believe the truth will be judged guilty. They did not believe the truth, and they enjoyed doing evil.

**Note:** Many people have been and will continue to be deceived by this false Christian power. Why? Because they were not willing to accept the hardships that following truth brings. So, God allows them to believe a lie. **John 7:17 GW-** says: “Those who want to follow the will of God will know if what I teach is from God or if I teach my own thoughts.” We must each be willing to do anything God asks. Only then can we be sure that we will not be deceived.

### **Is it easy to be deceived?**

**Matthew 24:4 GW-** “Jesus answered them, “Be careful not to let anyone deceive you.”

**Matthew 24:24 CEV-** “For there will come up false Christs, and false prophets, who will do great signs and wonders; so that if possible even the saints might be tricked.”

### **What does the false church ‘Beast’ power of Revelation do?**

**Revelation 13:NirV-** Vs 1-“I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. Vs.2- The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Vs. 3- Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?” Vs 4- The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. Vs 5-He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. Vs 6-He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. Vs 7-And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. Vs 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

**Note:** At one time, this power was a true Christian church, but had slowly adopted doctrines from paganism and Greek philosophy. Many of the people in the church have been, and are now, wonderful people who love Jesus very much! But, the Roman Catholic system has many errors that the Reformation ‘Protested’ against.

### **How can we know that this ‘Beast’ of Revelation is really a fallen church?**

(1) The Beast appears to be a religious power. Papal Rome clearly followed Pagan Rome as the greatest

power in Europe for about 1260 years.

(2) One of the 'heads' of the Beast was wounded, but then was healed. The pope was taken captive in 1798. However both land and political power was given back to the Catholic church by Mussolini in 1929

(3) The 'Beast' power would reign supreme for 1260 prophetic or literal years - from 538 AD to 1798 AD when the Pope was taken captive up to France

(4) The Roman church worked with political powers to torture or kill an estimated 50 million Christians during that 1260 year period. [See the book '*Foxes Book of Martyrs*']

(5) The Catholic church began to exalt the 'intercession' of the priests (in confession) and the intercession of Mary and saints, instead of lifting up Jesus as our only intercessor.

(6) The Roman church is again to gain great power in the years to come

[For a detailed discussion of this and other prophecies of Revelation, see the book, "God Cares # 2" by Dr. Maxwell - write [office@deafhope.org](mailto:office@deafhope.org) for details]

### **What 'final call' does God's Final Remnant give to the world?**

**Revelation 18:1-4 CEV-** After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was bright with his glory. And he gave a loud cry, saying, Babylon the great has come down from her high place, she has come to destruction and has become a place of evil spirits, and of every unclean spirit, and a hole for every unclean and hated bird. ... and the kings of the earth made themselves unclean with her, and the traders of the earth had their wealth increased by the power of her evil ways. And another voice from heaven came to my ears, saying, **Come out of her, my people...**"

**Note:** Before Jesus returns, there will be a clear separation between those who are willing to follow God fully, and those who are not willing to pay the price. Satan will come in person and try and act like Christ. The world will think that Jesus has returned, but it is Satan's master deception. Finally, most of the world will worship Satan himself.

But, God's people who have come out of false religions and doctrines, will see Satan's counterfeit. God's Remnant church and people will not worship any false power.

### **Why is this so important?**

**Revelation 18:4 CEV-** "... so that you may have no part in her sins and in her punishments."

**Note:** God now has many of His followers in what the Bible calls "*Babylon*" (churches still containing many false doctrines from paganism, etc.). If the '*Come Out*' call was not made, these precious people might be deceived and suffer with the wicked. These truly converted people must be called out of falsehood to prepare for the return of Jesus. God wants a purified church: Pure in doctrine and pure in lifestyle - living out a demonstration of true Christianity and God's love.

## 28. What Is God Wanting To Do For You Through His Holy Spirit?

### **What special blessings will God give to His people before Jesus Second Coming?**

**Joel 2:28-31 GW-** "After this, *I will pour my Spirit on everyone*. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. In those days I will pour my Spirit on servants, on both men and women. I will work miracles in the sky and on the earth: blood, fire, and clouds of smoke. The sun will become dark, and the moon will become as red as blood before the terrifying day of the LORD comes."

**Note:** The last few verses about the signs in the heavens show us that this prophecy is about God doing special things just before Jesus returns. God says He will pour out His Holy Spirit and there will be many wonderful things happening to old and young.

### **Have wonderful things like this happened before?**

**Acts 1:8 TEV-** But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me

**Acts 2:1-4 GW-** "When Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Passover, came, all the believers were together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like a violently blowing wind came from the sky and filled the whole house where they were staying. Tongues that looked like fire appeared to them. The tongues arranged themselves so that one came to rest on each believer. All the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak."

**Note:** Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to be given in a special way to them. The Holy Spirit came in the form of tongues of fire on their heads. They were given special gifts to help them take the gospel to the world in difficult times.

### **What are the 'gifts of the Holy Spirit'?**

**1 Corinthians 12:28-31 NIRV-** "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts."

**Note:** Some of these gifts are miracles that could not possibly happen without a miracle. These miracle gifts are things like predicting the future, miracles of healing, and speaking or hearing in another language that one has never learned. Other gifts like teaching, preaching and helping, may not always be 'miracles'. God takes our natural talents and gives them supernatural power to help fill the needs we face in ministry.

### **What reason does the Paul give for these supernatural gifts?**

**Ephesians 4:12,13 ICB-** "Christ gave those gifts to prepare God's holy people for the work of serving. He gave those gifts to make the body of Christ stronger. This work must continue until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge about the Son of God. We must become like a mature person – we must grow until we become like Christ and have all his perfection."

**Note:** The gifts of the Spirit are given to provide supernatural power to do the difficult work of taking the gospel to all the world. Today God is using different of these supernatural gifts to greatly help His work.

### **How do these gifts work out in real day to day ministry?**

**1 Corinthians 12:7-11 ICB-** Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, to help everyone. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. And the same Spirit gives another the ability to speak with knowledge. The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And that one Spirit gives another gifts of healing. The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles, to another the ability to prophesy. And he gives to another the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages and to another the ability to interpret those languages. One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things. The Spirit decides what to give each person.

**Note:** It is the Holy Spirit that decides what gift or gifts we should have. There is no one gift that is automatically given to every true Christian, other than salvation which is a gift of God. We don't know all the reasons the Spirit has. Probably the decision is based on the need we face and our own Christian experience. If the Spirit sees we would become proud with a gift - surely we would never receive that gift.

The disciples used their gifts for prophecy (Acts 21:10,11) , for healing (Acts 3:1-6), for making church decisions (Acts 15:27-29) and even to miraculously move Philip to another location when his work was finished. (Acts 8:38-40)

### **What are the 'fruits' that the Holy Spirit wants to bring to our lives?**

**Galatians 5:22-25 ICB-** "But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their own sinful selves. They have given up their old selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do. We get our new life from the Spirit. So we should follow the Spirit."

### **What is the one principle behind every gift or fruit of the spirit?**

**Romans 5:5 ICB-** "And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out *his love* to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us."

### **How important is the Spirit's gift of love to fill everything we do?**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-10 ICB -** "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not become angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. Love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always continues strong. Love never ends. There are gifts of prophecy, but they will be ended. There are gifts of speaking in different languages, but those gifts will end. There is the gift of knowledge, but it will be ended. These things will end, because this knowledge and these prophecies we have are not complete. But when perfection comes, the things that are not complete will end."

### **Are we to ask for a spiritual gift?**

**1 Corinthians 12:29-31 ICB-** "Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. Not all do miracles. Not all have gifts of healing. Not all speak in different languages. Not all interpret those languages. But you should truly want to have the greater gifts. (Vs 31 in the CEV version: I want you to desire the best gifts.)"

**Note-** So, it is not wrong to want a gift if it is needed in doing the Lord's work. But, we are not to demand any gift. We may ask that the Holy Spirit will give us the best gift for our need - when the Holy Spirit sees is the right time

**Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is not something we 'use'. The Holy Spirit, if we are humble and willing, will use us! We can do nothing really useful for God without the Holy Spirit giving us the wisdom and power. The Holy Spirit wants to prepare us for service, then use us in service for Christ!

## 29. Why Did God Invent Families?

### Why did God make the first family?

**Genesis 2:18 GW-** Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him."

**Note:** The first man, Adam, after naming all the animals, noticed that all the animals came in pairs, but he was alone. God now chose to make a companion and friend for him.

### What amazing way did God use for making the first woman?

**Genesis 2:21-23 GW-** "So the LORD God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. While the man was sleeping, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. Then the LORD God formed a woman from the rib that he had taken from the man. He brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be named woman because she was taken from man."

**Note:** God chose to make the first woman from the side of the first man. She was to be his equal, and his companion - made from a part of his own body.

### How close are a husband and wife to be together?

**Genesis 2:24 GW-** "That is why a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh."

**Matthew 19:6 GW-** "So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, don't let anyone separate what God has joined together."

### How is a husband to love and treat his wife?

**Ephesians 5:28 ICB-** "And husbands should love their wives in the same way. They should love their wives as they love their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves himself."

**1 Peter 3:7 CEV-** "If you are a husband, you should be thoughtful of your wife. Treat her with honor, because she isn't as strong as you are, and she shares with you in the gift of life. Then nothing will stand in the way of your prayers."

### How is a wife to relate to her husband?

**1 Peter 3:1 ICB-** "In the same way, you wives should accept the authority of your husbands. Then, if some husbands have not obeyed God's teaching, they will be persuaded to believe. You will not need to say a word to them. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live."

**Ephesians 5:21-24 TEV-** "*Submit yourselves to one another* because of your reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Savior of the church, his body. And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ."

**Note:** Notice that before Paul says that the husband has authority over his wife, that he says that both husband and wife are to "*submit yourselves to one another*". While the husband is to be a leader in the home, he is not to be a dictator to his wife or family. They are to be partners making decisions together - respecting each other's rights before the law and before God.

### **How are parents to treat the children?**

**Ephesians 6:4 ICB-** “Fathers, do not make your children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord.”

**Proverbs 31:26 GW-** “She speaks with wisdom, and on her tongue there is tender instruction.

**Note:** If parents want to teach our children to respect God and themselves, then they must also show respect to their children. Never should a child be disciplined in anger. The purpose of true discipline is to train the child for self-control. The goal is that when ready to leave home, grown children will still follow the family’s religious values because they love and believe them!

### **What should be the attitude of the children to the parents?**

**Ephesians 6:1-3 GW-** Children, obey your parents because you are Christians. This is the right thing to do. “Honor your father and mother that everything may go well for you, and you may have a long life on earth.” This is an important commandment with a promise.”

**Proverbs 1:18 ICB-** “My child, listen to your father’s teaching. And do not forget your mother’s advice.”

**Proverbs 23:22 ICB-** “Listen to your father, who gave you life. And do not forget your mother when she is old.”

**Note:** When children truly learn to love, respect and obey their parents, they will probably also do the same to God. And - they will likely have this same love and respect in the homes they set up!

### **What should be the attitude and responsibility of grown children to their parents?**

**Proverbs 28:24 CEV-** “If you cheat your parents and don't think it's wrong, you are a common thief.”

**Ephesians 5:4 & 8 ICB-** “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they need to learn is to do their duty to their own family. When they do this, they will be repaying their parents or grandparents. That pleases God. (Vs 8) A believer should take care of his own relatives, especially his own family. If he does not do that, he has turned against the faith. He is worse than a person who does not believe in God.”

**Matthew 15:4-6 CEV-** [Jesus own words-] “ Didn't God command you to respect your father and mother? Didn't he tell you to put to death all who curse their parents? But you let people get by without helping their parents when they should. You let them say that what they have has been offered to God. Is this any way to show respect to your parents? You ignore God's commands in order to follow your own teaching.”

**Note:** Honoring and respecting our parents is to continue through our lives until we die. Some older parents may come to think and act more like children. It is then time for the children to return the blessings given them when they were young. Now the mature children may lovingly and tenderly care for their child-like parents. There will be limits because of distance or problems like Alzheimer’s Disease. But, younger family members need to do what they can.

### **Are parents to teach their children about God’s love and His laws?**

**Deuteronomy 6:16. 17- GW-** “ Take to heart these words that I give you today. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up.”

**Proverbs 22:6 GW-** “Train a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not turn away from it.”

**Genesis 18:19 ICB-** “I have chosen him so he would command his children and his descendants to live the way the Lord wants them to. I did this so they would live right and be fair. Then I, the Lord, will give

Abraham what I promised him.”

### **Did God invent and encourage sex in marriage?**

**Genesis 1:27,27 ICB-** “In the image of God he created them. He created them male and female. God blessed them and said, “Have many children and grow in number ”.

**Hebrews 13:4 BBE-** “Let married life be honoured among all of you and not made unclean.”

**1 Corinthians 7:2-5 GW-** “But in order to avoid sexual sins, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. Husbands and wives should satisfy each other's sexual needs. A wife doesn't have authority over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but his wife does. Don't withhold yourselves from each other unless you agree to do so for a set time to devote yourselves to prayer. Then you should get back together so that Satan doesn't use your lack of self-control to tempt you.”

**Note:** It is very clear in the Bible that God made the sexual relationship. Sex may properly be enjoyed within marriage. Each partner has a responsibility to satisfy the reasonable needs of the other person. Marriage lovers need to study carefully how to satisfy without hurting or offending the other. The sexual union is also a symbol of our relationship with Christ, and Christ with His church.

### **Is there any place in God's ideal plan for a homosexual relationship?**

**Romans 1:26, 27 ICB-** “Because people did those things, God left them and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex and started having sex with other women. In the same way, men stopped having natural sex and began wanting each other. Men did shameful things with other men. And in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrongs.”

**Note:** The Bible is very clear that God's plans don't include any type of homosexual relationship. This very controversial subject is only settled when we take a plain, “Thus says the Lord”. We must take the text with its obvious meaning. People who don't use these principles of interpretation, may gradually weave in their own beliefs on this subject. Even though we disagree with those who choose a homosexual lifestyle, we are still to love and care for them regardless of their choices.

### **Does God allow divorce?**

**Matthew 19:9 ICB-** “ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery. The only reason for a man to divorce and marry again is if his first wife has sexual relations with another man.”

**Romans 7:2,3- ICB-** “For example, a woman must stay married to her husband as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, then she is free from the law of marriage. But if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, the law says she is guilty of adultery. But if her husband dies, then the woman is free from the law of marriage. So if she marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery.”

**Note:** God's ideal is one lifetime marriage partner. But, God knows that sin and selfishness affects us all. God allows a person to divorce their partner, if the partner has been sexually unfaithful to them. The one who did not sin sexually may then choose to remarry. If they do, the other is then free to also marry as there is then no possibility of coming back together.

### **Does the family have any responsibility to God, the church and the community?**

**1 Corinthians 16:15,16 ICB-** “You know that the family of Stephanas were the first believers in Southern

Greece. They have given themselves to the service of God's people. I ask you, brothers, to follow the leading of people like these and anyone else who works and serves with them."

**Mark 5:18,19- CEV-** "When Jesus was getting into the boat, the man begged to go with him. But Jesus would not let him. Instead, he said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how good he has been to you."

**Note:** Not only is the family to be a blessing and support to each other, but they can be a blessing to people around them. The purpose of their home can be to share Jesus love in every way possible! God's purpose for the family is to be a little '*Heaven on Earth*' where heavenly love, joy and peace is demonstrated and felt by those coming into the home!

## 30. How Important is Prayer?

### Does God really want us to pray?

**Jeremiah 29:11-13 ICB-** “I say this because I know what I have planned for you,” says the Lord. “I have good plans for you. I don’t plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future. Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me. And I will listen to you. You will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me!”

**Philippians 4:6 ICB-** “Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks.”

**Note:** God wants us to pray. Prayer does not change God’s attitude to us, but it changes us. Prayer makes us ready to receive God’s answers.

### How anxious is God to answer our prayers?

**Matthew 7:7-11 CEV-** “Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. Would any of you give your hungry child a stone, if the child asked for some bread? Would you give your child a snake if the child asked for a fish? As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give good things to people who ask.”

**Note:** God is more anxious to help us, than we are to ask. Someone has said that God has only two answers to prayer. “Yes” or “I have something better”. God may not always give us what we ‘want’. We need to pray asking that He will give us what is best for us. And - when He sees it is best - not in our timing!

### How should we pray?

**Matthew 5:5 ICB-** “When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door. Then pray to your Father who cannot be seen. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.”

**Note:** We may pray while kneeling, standing, or even when we are busy working. Kneeling, bowing our heads and folding our hands is good when we are having special times of prayer. The song says that “prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, unuttered (not spoken) or expressed (said).” God sees what is in our hearts. But, God still wants to hear us ask. God will do things for us because we ask, that He would not do if we did not ask. Why? When we are here in a sinful world in a struggle with Satan, there are certain things God can only do when we give God permission through our asking.

### How important is faith for having our prayers answered?

**James 1:5-8- ICB-** “But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people, so God will give you wisdom. But when you ask God, you must believe. Do not doubt God. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea. The wind blows the wave up and down. He who doubts is thinking two different things at the same time. He cannot decide about anything he does. A person like that should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord.”

**Note:** Prayer is our key in the hand of faith - to unlock Heaven’s wonderful things for us. Faith is believing God will do what He said He would do. Ask, believe, then claim the answer - trusting that God will answer in the best way, in His own timing.

### **Are there any other conditions for having our prayers answered?**

**Psalm 66:18 GW-** “If I had thought about doing anything sinful, the Lord would not have listened to me.”

**Proverbs 28:9 ICB-** “If you refuse to obey what you have been taught, your prayers will not be heard.”

**Matthew 11:25 ICB-** “When you are praying, and you remember that you are angry with another person about something, then forgive him. If you do this, then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.”

**Note:** If we are planning sin, and don't want to stop, God cannot answer our prayers. But, sometimes we know we should do something and don't really want to do it. Then we can ask God to make us willing to do things His way. We don't have to wait until we think we are good enough to come to God. We are to come as we are, surrendering our sinful selves to Him.

### **What is the model prayer Jesus gave us?**

**Matthew 6:9-13 KJV-** “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

### **How often should we pray?**

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 GW-** “Never stop praying.”

**Psalm 55:17 CEV-** “Morning, noon, and night you hear my concerns and my complaints.”

**Note:** We need to always be in an attitude of prayer - ready to pray as soon as we feel the need. We are told that Daniel prayed a formal prayer three times a day.

### **What are we to pray for?**

**John 14:13 CEV-** “Ask me, and I will do whatever you ask. This way the Son will bring honor to the Father.

**Note:** God is interested in our every day lives. We can pray about anything that concerns us.

### **Who are we to pray for?**

**John 17:20,21 ICB-** “I pray for these men. But I am also praying for all people who will believe in me because of the teaching of these men. Father, I pray that all people who believe in me can be one. You are in me and I am in you. I pray that these people can also be one in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me.”

**1 Timothy 2:1 ICB-** “First, I tell you to pray for all people. Ask God for the things people need, and be thankful to him. You should pray for kings and for all who have authority. Pray for the leaders so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives — lives full of worship and respect for God.”

**Matthew 5:44 ICB-** “But I tell you, love your enemies. *Pray for those who hurt you.*”

### **What is the Holy Spirit doing when we pray?**

**Romans 8:26,27 NCV-** “Also, the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us, even begs God for us with deep feelings that words cannot explain. God can see what is in people's hearts. And he knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way God wants.”

**Note:** Our hearts are so sinful, that we may be praying in ways God can't accept. So, the Holy Spirit intercedes (pleads with) our prayers to make them acceptable to God.

**Does God look at our motivation (reasons) for praying?**

**James 4:3 CEV-** “Yet even when you do pray, your prayers are not answered, because you pray just for selfish reasons.”

**Note:** The value of an action is determined by the motivation we have. If we are praying for selfish reasons, God cannot answer selfish prayers. God knows what is for our best good, or the best good of others. If God was allowing a person to die now to save them, it would not be wise for us to demand that they be healed. God sees ahead into eternity, so God knows what is best. This is why we should always pray that His will be done.

**In Conclusion:**

**We should include in our prayer:**

- (1) Praise for all He has done for us
- (2) Thanksgiving for what He has given us
- (3) Ask for forgiveness of our sins
- (4) Prayer and intercession for others
- (5) Requests that are close to our hearts
- (6) Ask that His will be done, not ours - and in His timing
- (7) Thank Him for answering, then trust that He will honor our request as He sees best.

**OTHER POSSIBLE TOPICS PERHAPS FOR LATER STUDIES:**

Why does God allow suffering?

How to have personal victory over sin

How to Study the Bible

How Can I know God's will for my life? (Guidance)

What is God's attitude to Disabled People?

What about all the prophecies God Made About Israel?

Does God care how we dress?

How Does God Want us to keep the Sabbath?

The Sabbath and Sunday in the New Testament

What is the work and ministry of angels?

Why must we be so careful about Evil Angels

## VERSIONS USED IN THIS SERIES:

**We thank the following publishers and translators for their excellent work in these Easier Reading Versions of the Bible. Versions are listed from the easier to the harder English versions**

### **Bible in Basic English: bb-**

Originally copyrighted by the Cambridge University Press over 50 years ago. Probably about a grade 3-5 reading level.

**Comment:** This version uses a basic set of about 1000 words of vocabulary, plus names and locations. Sounds something like the older King James Version. “*Basic English*” is a set of about 850 words, but this version adds about 150 words to the ‘basic English’ vocabulary.

### **The New International Reader’s Version: NIrV-**

Copyright by Zondervan Publishing House and the International Bible Society. This version is rated at a grade 2.9 reading level, and is an excellent version.

**Comment:** This is a version done by the same people that did the famous “*New International Version*”. It is fairly literal, but uses a very simple vocabulary.

### **International Children’s Bible: ICV-**

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This version is based on work done in the New Century Version. Rated at a grade 3.9 reading level

**Comment:** There are some very good translations here. It is almost the same as the *New Century Version*, but longer sentences are often broken into two sentences.

### **The God’s Word Version: GW-**

Published by World Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49418, USA Copyrighted by God’s Word to the Nations Bible Society, 1995. Probably about a grade 3-5 reading level.

**Comment:** Not a very well known version, but has some excellent simple translations in easy to understand English! However, in some places the ‘interpretation’ encouraged us to use another translation instead of this.

### **New Century Version: NCV-**

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**Comment:** This version is very similar to the ICV, but a little harder with some longer sentences. A very good overall translation.

### **The Contemporary English Version: CEV-**

Copyrighted by the American Bible Society in 1995. Rated at a grade 5.4 reading level

**Comment:** Some very good translations here, in practical simple language, but seems to lean toward some interpretation in making things so simple.

### **The Good News Bible or “Today’s English Version”: TEV-**

Copyrighted in 1976 by the American Bible Society. Probably about a grade 5-7 reading level

**Comment:** This version is a little harder than the ICV, but also done by the American Bible Society. There is a fair bit of ‘interpretation’ involved, but some very good translations.

**The New Living Version: NLV-**

Copyright 1996 by Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. Rated at a grade 8.3 reading level

**Comment:** An excellent version which started originally with the “*Living Version*”, but was then taken by a committee and turned from a single translator paraphrase to a committee translated version. It has many excellent translations, but is not especially easy English.