

Christian Life Digest

Featuring:

The Finished Work of Christ, Entering God's Rest, The Story of Billie Jo, Things You Should Do Before Christ Returns, Second Coming of Christ, The Rapture of The Church, Left Behind, Portrait of The Damned, The Reality of Hell, Life At The End of The Age, Heresy In Today's Christian Church, Divine Judgments, The Great White Throne Judgment

*Bible Teaching
For Today's Walk of Faith*

we walk by faith, not by sight

*Volume
#5*

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Preface

This Book is Volume five of five Volumes. Each volume focuses on different Biblical Teachings that are educational in nature.

The goal of all five volumes is to edify, and educate the Christian in the deeper things of God. This fifth volume addresses such concepts as The Finished Work of Christ, Entering Into God's Rest, The Second Coming of Christ, The Rapture of The Church, The Reality of Hell, A Portrait of the Damned, Life At The End of The Age, Heresy In Today's Christian Church, Divine Judgments And More.

The KJV of the bible is used most often as examples and referred to many times. It is considered by the author to be the most reliable source of knowledge and revelation in matters of Christian Living.

Introduction

Today's Christian church has left its first love. It is no longer on fire but rather, "Luke Warm." A secular gospel has replaced the truths of God's Word. Miracles and Faith have fallen under the rule of Fate. There is a great falling away from the faith among churchgoers. Christianity is on a down spiral in the USA. Bible reading is just about a thing of the past, buried in work, play and self-absorption.

Volume #5 of Christian Life Digest is an attempt to reveal the truth and turn the hearts of God's people back to Him. The right perspective is the sustaining force in living the Christian Life victoriously.

Most of us live our lives based upon assumptions that may or may not be true. Some folks don't even question the thought process that society says is the basis for living. There is no **"Real Truth"** anymore. It seems to be your truth or my truth but never

Absolute Truth. I guess that is why so many folks are confused and have difficulty trying to figure out their existence. The truth seems to elude them.

I believe that “**Absolute Truth**” comes from God and is revealed in the Bible. In order to know God’s will, we must know the finished work of Christ. Our understanding will literally determine the way we live our lives here on earth and what our eternal destiny will be. They are also the basis for our everyday perspectives.

We start our quest for knowledge and revelation with a look at what Jesus, the Christ, did for us.

The Finished Work of Christ Introduction

You’ll remember that when Jesus was on the cross, he said, “It is finished.” **John 19:30**
These three words illustrate the profound actions that forever changed the way God deals with mankind.

"What did Jesus mean when He said, 'It is finished'?"

GotQuestions.org offers the answer to this question... Of the last sayings of Christ on the cross, none is more important or more poignant than, “It is finished.” Found only in the Gospel of John, the Greek word translated “it is finished” is *tetelestai*, an accounting term that means “**paid in full.**” When Jesus uttered those words, He was declaring the debt owed to His Father was wiped away completely and forever. Not that Jesus wiped away any debt that *He* owed to the Father; rather, Jesus eliminated the debt owed by mankind—the debt of sin.

Just prior to His arrest by the Romans, Jesus prayed His last public prayer, asking the Father to glorify Him, just as Jesus had glorified the Father on earth, having “finished the work you have given me to do” (**John 17:4**). The work Jesus was sent to do was to “seek and save that which is lost” (**Luke 19:10**), to provide atonement for the sins of all who would ever believe in Him (Romans 3:23-25), and to reconcile sinful men to a holy God. “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**). None other but God in the flesh could accomplish such a task.

Also completed was the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies, symbols, and foreshadowing’s of the coming Messiah. From Genesis to Malachi, there are over 300

specific prophecies detailing the coming of the Anointed One, all fulfilled by Jesus. From the “seed” who would crush the serpent’s head (**Genesis 3:15**), to the Suffering Servant of **Isaiah 53**, to the prediction of the “messenger” of the Lord (John the Baptist) who would “prepare the way” for the Messiah, all prophecies of Jesus’ life, ministry, and death were fulfilled and finished at the cross.

Although the redemption of mankind is the most important finished task, many other things were finished at the cross.

1. The sufferings Jesus endured while on the earth, and especially in His last hours, were at last over.
2. God’s will for Jesus was accomplished in His perfect obedience to the Father (**John 5:30; 6:38**).
3. Most importantly, the power of sin and Satan was finished.
4. No longer would mankind have to suffer the “flaming arrows of the evil one” (**Ephesians 6:16**).
5. By raising the “shield of faith” in the One who completed the work of redemption and salvation, we can, by faith, live as new creations in Christ.

Jesus’ finished work on the cross was the beginning of new life for all who were once “dead in trespasses and sins” but who are now made “alive with Christ” (**Ephesians 2:1, 5**).

When Jesus cried out "It is finished," he meant, "It was finished in the past, it is still finished in the present, and it will remain finished in the future." It was and will always be a finished work of grace.

From Heaven To Hell And Back Again

Introduction

Sit back and listen closely as you read this eBook. I am going to share with you the greatest story ever told. It’s about love and passion and pain and suffering, and triumph, and victory for millions who meet the man behind the story.

We will learn a few things about God’s matchless love, His longsuffering, His sovereignty and ultimate destiny for mankind. We will look into the Holy Scriptures, using the King James Version, to validate truth and identify some modern day heresy. We will discover the Grace of Almighty God towards the human race.

This story is more than just a story. It is the Gospel record of Jesus, the Christ of Calvary who was crucified by Rome in the 1st century. This man claimed to be the Messiah or the “Anointed One,” who had been prophesied for thousands of years before He arrived on

the scene. The word, “Messiah” is Hebrew for Anointed. The word, “Christ” is Greek for Anointed. They both are the identifying factor of the God-Man that was to come.

The prophecy said that this anointed one would save the world from its own sin...and deliver Israel, restoring it to its former glory. The Israelites waited for hundreds of years, from the 1st mention of a “Coming One” foretold by God Himself in the Garden of Eden to John, the Baptist that would go before Jesus proclaiming His arrival.

They waited through the Egyptian captivity, the Babylonian captivity, the glory days of King David and all the other events that shaped their history only to reject Him when He came.

Yet He came anyway and fulfilled every prophecy foretold over the past centuries. He performed miracles and even raised the dead and still His own rejected Him.

The Beginning of The Story

John, the apostle, wrote the book of Saint John, the 4th book of the New Testament. Here’s what he says about the beginning of the story.

“In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. **He came unto his own**, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, this was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests

and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who art thou? and he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they, which were sent, were of the Pharisees. John 1:1-24

So, Jesus, the long awaited, “Anointed One” arrives on the scene, gets rejected by His own but nevertheless proceeds with His mission.

The Mission

We celebrate the birth of Jesus every year and rehearse the event in pageants all around the globe but because He is the God-Man, the devil has taken Him out of Christmas replacing Him with Santa Clause. His mission has been changed from salvation of the souls of men to presents under a tree and good will to all.

The “Good Will” Jesus has no redemptive power. Nor does it have the ability to set captives free from heavy burdens, evil spirits and sinful condemnation yet the world chases after this, “Good Will,” Jesus so it doesn’t have to deal with its own sin.

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” John 1:5

Though the world lay in sin and degradation not comprehend who Jesus really is, He presses on to accomplish all that He was sent to do.

The God-Man Revealed

Who was Jesus, really? Let’s look again at John chapter one.

“In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:1-3

He was the preexistent Divine Word that was with God and was God in all respects. All that was made, the heaven, the earth and every living creature...all was made by Him.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

The Divine was made flesh...in other words; He took on himself the form of humanity. The apostle Paul tells the Philippian church that Jesus was indeed God and Man. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8

Jesus emptied Himself of His rightful Divinity to become a mortal man. God became Man that man could become "Born Again" by God's Holy Spirit. What was lost in Adam was restored in Jesus.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
I Corinthians 5:22

He's Not An Ordinary Man And He's Not A Superman

So here comes Jesus into a world of corruption, war, adultery and a host of other maladies...all caused by a fallen nature that passed upon all mankind when Adam rebelled against God. Listen to what the Bible says about Sin entering into the world and death by sin.

"Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12.)

Our "In The Image of God" nature was replaced with the very nature of Satan. Instead of love, peace, joy, kindness, long suffering and all the other attributes of God that were placed into man at his creation, he received Lust, pride, selfishness, adultery and all the other deeds of the flesh spoken of in Galatians chapter five. As Lucifer lost his 1st estate and fell from heaven into darkness so did Adam lose his 1st estate and that "Breath of Life" that was breathed into man at his creation. God's Holy Spirit was taken from him. He died spiritually. Adam became a walking dead man and we followed in his footsteps.

The DNA Swap

The Passing on of Death and a "Fallen Nature" were real occurrences. All this happened to Adam long before we came on the scene...so how does what happened to him affect us? Here's what the Bible says about that. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Romans 3:23

This is why there is a need to be saved...because, Adam's descendants, that's you and me, also possessed the same fallen nature. It passed on to all of mankind through their DNA. They could not help but sin. Therefore, everyone dies because of sin. And so it was and so it is and so it will be. Mankind dies because of personal sins against a Holy & Righteous God.

So what makes Jesus, the man, any different than us? He was also born of a woman. However, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her. She did not participate in the conception, only the housing of the baby so He could grow to full term. It was a virgin birth.

If Jesus had been a product of Joseph and Mary at conception, He would have had a fallen nature like us and could not have saved anyone. But because He was pure in character, He had a fighting chance to overcome Satan's attacks, win the battle and bring us into a righteous relationship with God, the Father. He did all that Adam and everyone that came after him could not do.

Thus the DNA of God comes back into mankind as a result of Jesus' obedience to God and His death on the cross. Jesus, knowing He would save all that came to Him, made this statement.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.: John 3:16

Jesus started a, "Whosoever" generation that would thrive and grow throughout all centuries. The term, "Whosoever" is all-inclusive. It leaves no one out but excludes everyone that will not believe.

The Story Doesn't End With The Redemption of Man

Up to this point in our story, which by the way, is the greatest story ever told; the initiative has been with God reaching down to man, calling him to salvation. The only thing for man to do at this point is to respond by repenting and believing.

We know that the wicked will be cast into hell and death and hell into the lake of fire, but that comes later. If this was an article in the newspaper, the headline might read something like this, "Persecution of Christians around the world is on the rise" "Satan Targets Christians With Fiery Darts, Theft's and Total Destruction."

The "**Battle of The Ages**" rages out of control as believers face off with spiritual wickedness in high places. Here's where the story gets dicey. Little did the average Christian know that they were targeted for a demonic slaughter.

Paul, the apostle tells the church to put on the whole armor of God.

"Put on the **whole armor of God**, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11

Just so you know, here is a list of armor that every Christian is supposed to ware:

- The Belt of Truth.

- A Breastplate of Righteousness.
- The Gospel of peace.
- The Shield of Faith.
- The Helmet of salvation.
- The Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Peter, another apostle, tells the church to resist the devil and he will flee away in utter fear.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” I Peter 5:8

So, the plot thickens as true believers do battle with daemons. They fight for their freedom, their families, their finances, their health and every other thing that Satan tries to steal from them. They worship Jesus and enter into His presence with singing. They do not fight under their own efforts but in the Spirit of The Lord. Their weapons are not carnal but mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” II Corinthians 10:4-5

So the battle rages in our minds as we repel accusations, lies, fake news and gossip from evil doers and/or well meaning but not so smart Christian folk.

Did I tell you that these true believers are fighting a defeated foe? That’s right, Jesus defeated Satan, the Devil, Lucifer and all the other anti-God demons. He faced them on the battlefield of His mind and won every time He was tempted. He was indeed without sin. There was no darkness in Him at all.

Then He willingly allowed Himself to be led to the slaughter, like an innocent lamb. He became the “Spotless Lamb” which was the sacrifice required for the remission of sin on the Day of Atonement.

God let it be know, through His prophet, Ezekiel that the soul that commits sin would die. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:20 Jesus did not commit sin yet He was put to death for the sins of the entire world. He became the Divine Sacrifice for our transgressions. Isaiah makes this clear in his writings. He said, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.: Isaiah 53:5

The Resurrection

Proof That All This Is Real

Without the resurrection, this would be just a nice story. However, with the resurrection, it becomes the greatest story ever told. Here's why?

Death was the punishment for sin but Jesus never sinned. Yes He was the "Scapegoat" that was portrayed in Old Testament imagery but that was a Divine act to reunite God and man. It was not the personal sin of the man called Jesus. Death could not hold Him. When He died on the cross, He entered the place of the dead but not as a sinner. He entered as a conqueror to overcome its influence. His body could not be corrupted because it had no evidence of Sin in or on it.

So God raised Jesus from the dead, as the scriptures recorded. There were over 500 witnesses that saw Jesus ascend into the heavens after He was raised from the dead. This was the proof that Jesus was who He claimed to be and that all the scriptures that spoke of Him were true. He was and still is God's Messiah or Christ. This being raised from the dead thing stands today as proof-positive hook that we hang our faith on. It is the foundation of the Christian Life.

Ascension And Intercession

So Jesus ascends into the heavens to be seated at the right hand of God. There He makes Intercession for the saints. He is back where He came from. Remember, it all started with Jesus, then called the "Word" being with God and actually being God. The pre-existent immortal became mortal and took on the form of flesh. Now He returns, in the flesh to be seated at the place of all power and authority, the right hand of God. This completes the title of my eBook and why I called it such. "From Heaven To Hell And Back" is a true story about Jesus, God's Anointed One, the Christ that became our savior and Lord.

The Final Chapter

There is a final chapter that has yet to play out in this Divine Drama. It is the future in the timetable of God. Here are a few events that must still happen:

- **On The Earth**...there will be a great falling away from the faith. Wars and rumors of wars will increase. Men's hearts will fail them because of fear. Natural affection will give way to distorted lust. God's people will suffer persecution. Good will be called evil and evil good. Earthquakes and natural disasters will happen more frequently in various places. Love and decency will wax old and almost disappear.
- **In The Heavens**...Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven to collect all true believers in a glorious rapture of His church. This event will be a grave opener for all who died in faith before His return. The dead in Christ will be raised from the dead. Then we, all who stand in faith, will be caught up together with them in the air to be with Jesus.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we, which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” I Thessalonians 4:13-17

Things Yet To Come

The Judgment Seat of Christ...Romans 14:10–12 says, “For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. . . . So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” (ESV). Second Corinthians 5:10 tells us, “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” In context, it is clear that both passages refer to Christians, not unbelievers. The judgment seat of Christ, therefore, involves believers giving an account of their lives to Christ.

The judgment seat of Christ does not determine salvation; that was determined by Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf (1 John 2:2) and our faith in Him (John 3:16). All of our sins are forgiven, and we will never be condemned for them (Romans 8:1). We should not look at the judgment seat of Christ as God judging our sins, but rather as God rewarding us for our lives.

At the judgment seat of Christ, believers are rewarded based on how faithfully they served Christ (1 Corinthians 9:4-27; 2 Timothy 2:5). Some of the things we might be judged on are how well we obeyed the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), how victorious we were over sin (Romans 6:1-4), and how well we controlled our tongues (James 3:1-9). The Bible speaks of believers receiving crowns for different things based on how faithfully they served Christ (1 Corinthians 9:4-27; 2 Timothy 2:5). The various crowns are described in 2 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, and Revelation 2:10. James 1:12 is a good summary of how we should think about the judgment seat of Christ:

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (Got Questions.com)

The Man of Sin Comes Forth...The Ant-Christ...”Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that

is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” II Thessalonians 2:3-4

First John 2:18 speaks of the Antichrist: “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”

The specific term antichrist is used seven times in Scripture, twice here in 1 John 2:18 and also in 1 John 2:22; 4:3; and twice 2 John 7.

The meaning of the term antichrist is simply “against Christ.” As the apostle John records in First and Second John, an antichrist denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22), does not acknowledge Jesus (1 John 4:3), and denies that Jesus came in the flesh (2 John 1:7). There have been many “antichrists,” as 1 John 2:18 states. But there is also coming “The Antichrist.”

Most Bible prophecy/eschatology experts believe the Antichrist will be the ultimate embodiment of what it means to be against Christ. In the end times/last hour, a man will arise to oppose Christ and His followers more than anyone else in history. Likely claiming to be the true Messiah, the Antichrist will seek world domination and will attempt to destroy all followers of Jesus Christ and the nation of Israel.

The Mark of the Beast... “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.” Revelation 13:16-18

Revelation 16:2 and 19:20 cite the "mark of the beast" as a sign that identifies those who worship the beast out of the sea (Rev 13:1). This beast is usually identified as the antichrist. This mark is first mentioned in 13:16-17, where it is imposed on humanity by the beast out of the earth (13:11). This second beast is the false prophet (19:20), who forces the worship of the antichrist and brands those who do so with the mark. This mark is equivalent to the beast's name or number (13:17 ; cf. 14:11). This enigmatic number is announced in 13:18 as **666**.

The term "mark" has no special biblical usage apart from its association with the beast. The Greek term charagma [cavragma] was most commonly used for imprints on documents or coins. Charagma [cavragma] is well attested to have been an imperial seal of the Roman Empire used on official documents during the first and second centuries.

The history of interpretation concerning the correlation of a person with the number 666 has only resulted in endless speculations. One of the most prominent candidates has been the first-century Roman emperor Nero.

A few modern scholars have noted that the numbers can also argue for a connection with Babylon and Nimrod. The list is expanded with the creative use of numbers during times of modern crises (e.g., Hitler was a major candidate during World War II).

It is possible that John merely intended the number to be symbolic of what the beast and his followers represent: humankind in their ultimate rebellion against God, his Lamb, and the followers of the Lamb.

John explains in 13:18 that the number 666 is the number of man. The number 7 is well established as a number of completeness or perfection. The number 6, being one less than 7, may symbolize humankind, which falls short of perfection.

The number 666 could well personify the imperfection of man, even implying in the triple number the unholy trinity of the dragon, antichrist, and the false prophet. The identity of those who follow the Lamb or the beast is self-evident to the observer, whether it is the first century or the eschatological future. The vision calls John and his audience to discern the spirit of sinful humanity that accompanies the antichrist rather than to decode his identity.

The Battle of Armageddon... The Battle of Armageddon will take place in Israel, in the prophesied Valley of Megiddo. It will occur after the Great Tribulation Period, at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when He returns to set up His Kingdom on earth.

There are several Bible passages which refer to the same event, but which do not use the term "Armageddon," including the Supper of the Great God (**Revelation 19:17**), the Valley of Jehoshaphat (**Joel 3:2**), the Valley of Decision (**Joel 3: 13-14**), and the Battle of that Great Day of God Almighty (**Revelation 16:14**).

Revelation chapters 14, 16, 17 and 19 describe Armageddon as a place of great slaughter where troops will be gathered, assembled and pressed together. At Armageddon Christ will come in all of His wrath and glory with His army following Him on white horses. Jesus is pictured here as a man of war, judging in righteousness with the sword of His mouth. Jesus will deliver Israel from destruction by the Antichrist. Nations will be punished for their sins. Those who have received the Mark of the Beast will be judged. And Jesus will take authority over the earth and remove the kingdom and reign of the Antichrist.

The Final Solution

My story began with the “Word” coming down from heaven and taking the form of man. He was fully God and fully man in one place and one time. He was as Adam was before his fall, innocent.

His name was and still is Jesus and He is the “Anointed One”, the Christ. He came to save mankind and defeat the devil. He came that we might have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

He came from heaven, went to hell and returned to heaven as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He accomplished everything God, the Father, sent Him to do and is currently seated at the right hand of God.

Now He is waiting for the time when He will return for His church and later judge the world in righteousness. We, as Christians, will see Him in action as He plants His feet on the Mount of Olives and enters Jerusalem.

He will end all wars as He sends His angels to gather all who remain alive. Then He will separate the Sheep from the Goats (Bad folks from Good folks). The Goats, workers of iniquity, He will banish into darkness to await final judgment. The sheep will enter into His kingdom that was prepared for them before the world began.

The Great White Throne Judgment.... “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15

The Great White Throne Judgment, according to the book of Revelation, will take place at the end of the Millennium, prior to the time when God will "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). This will be the final and irreversible judgment of Satan and his. According to the Bible, the great books recording the deeds of all mankind will be opened. Those people whose names were not recorded in the "book of life" will be cast into the lake of fire reserved for the devil and his angels. This experience is called "the second death" to distinguish it from mere physical death.

Christ's 1000 Year Reign

When Jesus comes back, He comes back to rule and reign over the inhabitants of planet earth. The devil is cast into a bottomless pit for 1,000 years and life goes on with no evil, no temptation or hassles. It's a good time of long life, prosperity and peace. We live with Christ in the New Jerusalem and minister to those who lived through the great tribulation and were received by Jesus at His coming. New births will happen and the population of earth will flourish.

One More Go Around

At the end of Christ's 1000-year reign, the devil will be loosed to tempt those who dwell on earth. These folks have never been given a choice to rebel. Free will means choices. They will have to decide if they want evil or good. This will go on, as the Bible says, for a season. I had a hard time with this trying to understand why. Then I heard the Spirit of God tell me, "**God takes no prisoners.**" Everyone must choose the road in life they want to walk on and the destiny that comes with it.

The End Is Only The Beginning For Us

Here's how the story ends, according to the Apostle John, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more". Revelation 21:1

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, write: for these words are true and faithful. ⁶ And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Rev. 21:2-8

Conclusion

My story is just a summary of all that the Bible says has and will happen. It does not cover every detail. For full explanations read Daniel, Revelations and all other references to Jesus' return. My story is a collection of highlights and may not be in exact chronological order.

The story is a record of documented past events and prophetic statements of future events. However, we are in the present, living life day by day. We are rushing into the future to meet our destiny, whether good or bad.

It is my hope that you will have discovered the truth of God's Word; seen Jesus as a suffering servant to redeem mankind and King of Kings to rule with love and grace.

A Greater Story

A greater story was never told
Than this one told to me
A story of love, once spoken bold
Through the cross of Calvary

He can by water and by blood
To bestow God's grace on me.
He came as a penalty for sin



God gave His Son, a ransomed soul
As a gift to set men free.
No greater story was ever told
Than this one told to me.

Written By Rev.
John Marinelli

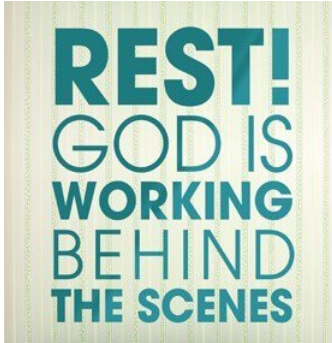
“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
Romans 10:9-10

Questions or Comments:
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God bless you as you consider where you will spend eternity. Let me know your decision. I can pray for you and answer any other questions you may have.

Entering Into God's Rest

Introduction



There is a rest that God has provided for His children. However, this rest is only for those who walk with the Lord by Faith. If you are a sometimes Christian with very little biblical knowledge, you will most likely miss out on God rest.

One just doesn't stumble into the rest of God. The Lord has to lead you there. That means you have to be tuned into hearing His voice and willing to obey His commands. Otherwise, you will stray off in another direction by yourself. God must above all else, lead you. Now let's

look at the scriptural support for such a notion.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is probably the most well known text in the Holy Scriptures. This is a most beloved psalm and has been quoted in almost every conceivable venue where people need hope. Many a soldier has carried it into battle or placed it next to his heart in a frightening foxhole. Hospitals and funeral homes are also often places of recital. There was a time when every school child would learn it and say it as a daily routine. Sadly, those days are mostly gone because of our government's hatred of all things godly. However, disdain for the Bible does not diminish the spiritual impact made by its words.

Some folks fear turning their lives over to God because He might lead them somewhere they do not want to go. The 23rd psalm tells us that being led by God is a rewarding experience. We end up in green pastures (Prosperity) and lie down by still waters (Peace-no confusion); Our souls (Mind, Will & Emotions) are restored; The fear of evil fades away; Goodness and mercy follow us through life; We even have a feast right in the midst of our enemies and finally we dwell with the lord forever, that's a pretty good deal, don't you think? **However:**

God's Rest Is Not For Everyone

God does not lead the masses into His rest. He leads His Children. He must be your shepherd. That makes you His sheep. Being a sheep has certain indicators that prove you are really a sheep and not a wolf:

1. Sheep hear their Shepherd's voice.
2. Sheep come to their Shepherd's call.
3. Sheep do not question their Shepherd's commands.
4. Sheep know when the wolf is near and cries for the Shepherd

The atheist, agnostic, pantheist, all others that reject Jesus Christ as well as disobedient Christians do not and will not follow His lead. Thus, they miss the rest of God.

God's Promise of Rest Hebrews 4:1-11

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word, which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

“So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’”

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; and again in this *place*: “They shall not enter My rest.”

Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

We are encouraged to rest from all our works because God rested from all His works. The promise from God is that we can really enter into His rest and because He did, we can rest too from all of our works. However, sometimes we have to labor to enter in. Why? Because they got so caught up in what they were doing that it become really hard to just sit back and leave it up to God.

Someone may be wondering what, “ all our works” is. It is not getting up and going to work every day or being a reliable husband or wife.

The rest is from trying to attain salvation by our own efforts. God took care of that in His master plan before the foundation of the world. His redemptive plan for man was to sacrifice His only Son as a penalty for sin and offer His salvation to all who would believe. **(John 3:16)**

To rest then is to believe that Jesus was sacrificed for our sin and accept Him as our savior. We are to put our trust in Him and stop trying to buy God’s favor with good works. **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**

That which we let go of is the anxiety, fear, confusion, worry and control over our own lives. We are to step off the throne of our life. That seat is now reserved for Jesus. We can trust Him because He said from the cross; **“It Is Finished”** which fulfilled God’s rest from all His works on the 7th day of creation. He already made plans for us to rest in Him.

Jesus, Our Sabbath Rest

From Got/Questions.com



The key to understanding how Jesus is our Sabbath rest is the Hebrew word *sabat*, which means "to rest or stop or cease from work." The origin of the Sabbath goes back to Creation. After creating the heavens and the earth in six days, God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" **(Genesis 2:2)**. This doesn't mean that God was tired and needed a rest. We know that God is omnipotent, literally "all-powerful." He has all the power in the universe, He never tires, and His most arduous expenditure of energy does not diminish His power one bit. So, what does it mean that God rested on the seventh day? Simply that He stopped what He was doing. He ceased from His labors. This is important in understanding the establishment of the Sabbath day and the role of Christ as our Sabbath rest.

God used the example of His resting on the seventh day of Creation to establish the principle of the Sabbath day rest for His people. In **Exodus 20:8-11** and **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**, God gave the Israelites the fourth of His Ten Commandments. They were to "remember" the Sabbath day and "keep it holy." One day out of every seven, they were to

rest from their labors and give the same day of rest to their servants and animals. This was not just a physical rest, but a cessation of laboring. Whatever work they were engaged in was to stop for a full day each week. The Sabbath day was established so the people would rest from their labors, only to begin again after a one-day rest.

The various elements of the Sabbath symbolized the coming of the Messiah, who would provide a permanent rest for His people. Once again the example of resting from our labors comes into play. With the establishment of the Old Testament Law, the Jews were constantly "laboring" to make themselves acceptable to God. Their labors included trying to obey a myriad of do's and don'ts of the ceremonial law, the Temple law, the civil law, etc. Of course they couldn't possibly keep all those laws, so God provided an array of sin offerings and sacrifices so they could come to Him for forgiveness and restore fellowship with Him, but only temporarily. Just as they began their physical labors after a one-day rest, so, too, did they have to continue to offer sacrifices. **Hebrews 10:1** tells us that the law "can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship."



But these sacrifices were offered in anticipation of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross, who "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right of God" (**Hebrews 10:12**). Just as He rested after performing the ultimate sacrifice, He sat down and rested—ceased from His labor of atonement because there was nothing more to be done, ever. Because of what He did, we no longer have to "labor" in law-keeping in order to be justified in the sight of God. Jesus was sent so that we might rest in God and in what He has provided.

Another element of the Sabbath day rest, which God instituted as a foreshadowing of our complete rest in Christ is that He blessed it, sanctified it, and made it holy. Here again we see the symbol of Christ as our Sabbath rest—the holy, perfect Son of God who sanctifies and makes holy all who believe in Him. God sanctified Christ, just as He sanctified the Sabbath day, and sent Him into the world (**John 10:36**) to be our sacrifice for sin. In Him we find complete rest from the labors of our self-effort, because He alone is holy and righteous. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). We can now cease from our spiritual labors and rest in Him, not just one day a week, but always.



Jesus can be our Sabbath rest in part because He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (**Matthew 12:8**). As God incarnate, He decides the true meaning of the Sabbath because He created it, and He is our Sabbath rest in the flesh. When the Pharisees criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus reminded them that even they, sinful as they were, would not hesitate to pull a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath. Because He came

to seek and save His sheep who would hear His voice (**John 10:3,27**) and enter into the Sabbath rest He provided by paying for their sins, He could break the Sabbath rules. He told the Pharisees that people are more important than sheep and the salvation He provided was more important than rules. By saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (**Mark 2:27**), Jesus was restating the principle that the Sabbath rest was instituted to relieve man of his labors, just as He came to relieve us of our attempting to achieve salvation by our works. We no longer rest for only one day, but forever cease our laboring to attain God's favor. Jesus is our rest from works now, just as He is the door to heaven, where we will rest in Him forever.

Hebrews 4 is the definitive passage regarding Jesus as our Sabbath rest. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts his readers to "enter in" to the Sabbath rest provided by Christ. After three chapters of telling them that Jesus is superior to the angels and that He is our Apostle and High Priest, he pleads with them to not harden their hearts against Him, as their fathers hardened their hearts against the Lord in the wilderness. Because of their unbelief, God denied that generation access to the holy land, saying, "They shall not enter into My rest" (**Hebrews 3:11**). In the same way, the writer to the Hebrews begs his readers not to make the same mistake by rejecting God's Sabbath rest in Jesus Christ. "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience" (**Hebrews 4:9-11**).

There is no other Sabbath rest besides Jesus. He alone satisfies the requirements of the Law, and He alone provides the sacrifice that atones for sin. He is God's plan for us to cease from the labor of our own works. We dare not reject this one-and-only Way of salvation (**John 14:6**). God's reaction to those who choose to reject His plan is seen in Numbers 15. A man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, in spite of God's plain commandment to cease from all labor on the Sabbath. This transgression was a known and willful sin, done with unblushing boldness in broad daylight, in open defiance of the divine authority. "Then the LORD said to Moses, the man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp" (verse 35). So it will be to all who reject God's provision for our Sabbath rest in Christ. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (**Hebrews 2:3**).

Spiritually Speaking

Now that I have shown the scripture in context and explained the meaning is of the text in Hebrews, let's look at the spiritual applications. As Christians, we have made Jesus Lord and seek to walk with Him through this world. However, evil is on every side and it is hard to live out our faith in Christ. We strive to make ends meet. We worry over our children and their future. We hope that sickness or sorrow will not knock on our door. We are anxious, fearful, and when someone says to us, "How are you doing today", we reply with, "I am just hanging in there".

This is a word picture of a Christian without faith. They are doing just what the Old Testament saints did, not believing. Their unbelief kept them from entering into God's rest. We can fall into the same scenario and miss out on the promise.

How We Enter In

Our labor to enter in is believing. What do we believe? We believe that God rested on the 7th day from all His work. That means His master plan was complete. It means that God saw every need, every situation and every prayer in His foreknowledge and scheduled them for action in His master plan.

The Law was seen long before it appeared. In the fullness of time, it came to expose sin and bring death to all that sin. **(Lev.18:20)** Accordingly, in the fullness of time, Christ came with a new law...the law of the Spirit of Life that brought us liberty and salvation. **(Romans 8:2)** This new law set us free from the old one. However, both were in God's master plan waiting to be releases. Thus it is with our daily lives. We are in God's master plan and He works everything together for our good and His glory. **(Romans 8:28)** All we have to do is trust in Jesus; believe that He is in control; and wait for the manifestation of our deliverance/supply.

We enter in by faith and we remain at rest knowing that the battle is the Lords and He is our shield against evil and lack in this life. He will provide. He will lead us to green pastures and still waters. He will restore our souls.

Unbelieving Christians

The Bible tells us that some of the Old Testament saints did not believe and they perished in the wilderness. They never entered the rest of God that was promised to them. They never entered the Promised Land. However, the amazing thing was that God still took care of them in the wilderness. Their shoes did not wear out. Nor did their clothing. They ate manna from heaven. Not one was feeble in mind or spirit. They still died in the wilderness. Here's what this says to me:

1. Life can be good but you can still miss out on God's very best.
2. It is better to fear (reverence) God than to fear giants and men of power and authority that dwell in your future.

Rest My Child

Rest my child, says the Lord.
Take thy peace and be restored.
I have provided, thy mouth to feed.
From the beginning, I knew your need.

Do not worry, fret or even fear,
For, my child, I am always near
To bless thy soul with love and grace,
To be with thee, face to face.

Come, my child, near to my throne.
Do not allow your faith to roam.
For those who will not believe
Can never find rest in times of need.

My Word shall see you through.
My grace I freely give to you
That you should rest, thy soul to keep,
Forever delivered from unbelief.

Written By Rev.
John Marinelli

3. God's blessings are always connected with Faith. No faith, no promise, no divine destiny.
4. Fear will hinder faith. They are two sides to the same coin. But faith crushes fear and brings victory.
5. One's destiny rest in their own hands. We choose the path to walk in life and what lies at the end of the road. Life or death is in the power of our own choices.
6. God is looking for a partner to rule the earth and has chosen us, His children...those who are willing to stand with Him.

Living In God's Rest

Joyce Meyer

“When I’m *trying* to believe, I haven’t entered God’s rest. But when I *do* believe, I have complete rest in Him. Living by faith is not a struggle—it’s rest. And you can enter into God’s rest in every area of your life. I’ve discovered that the stress in my life is caused by the way I approach my circumstances and the attitude I have toward them. It was a turning point for me when I realized that the world will probably never change, but I could learn how to change the way I go about handling situations that are challenging.

One key to this is knowing that as believers in Christ, we are partners with God—we have a part and He has a part in everything He calls us to do. When we don’t do the part we can do and we try to do His part, that’s when we live stressed-out with worry, fear, anxiety, frustration, no peace and no joy.

The reason this happens sometimes is because we think God needs our help. We meditate on the problem—rolling it over and over in our mind, worrying, and trying to figure out how things should work out. It’s like we’re telling God, “I kind of think you need my help, and I’m not sure you can take care of this situation, Lord.”



We need to realize that worrying is useless! It’s like sitting in a rocking chair, rocking all day, wearing yourself out and getting nowhere. Trusting God means we give up worrying, reasoning, and anxiety and we enter into His rest with simple childlike faith—we live by grace through faith!” (Excerpts fro her article, “Living In God’s Rest)

God Means What He Says

The greatest kind of relationship with God is the one where He takes care of you in this life and the one to come. That's what God is promising. This is what the scripture calls rest. But many of God's children because they, for some reason or another won't believe that God means what He says.

It's really amazing that God offers all of this to His children and some just won't believe it. These folks find it easier to resist the goodness of God. One day they will face their heavenly Father and give an account for their unbelief. For now, they continue wandering in the wilderness of anxiety, confusion, depression and worry over every life situation having no rest...no peace. And so the warning from the Spirit of God is **"Harden Not Your Hearts"**. Don't be like unbelieving Israel and miss God's perfect rest.

Benefits of Entering Into God's Rest

When we enter into the rest of God, we benefit in these important ways:

1. We have continual access into God's rest where we find peace.

It's God's rest. That means He is at rest knowing that His master plan is activated and being accomplished. If we know this, we can also rest knowing that He is in control. The key is, who is in control of things, God or you? I say, "Continual Access" because we, being of a fallen nature, sometimes freak out and exit God's rest. However, having access all the time is the privilege of returning back to His rest anytime we want. (Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.") **Hebrews 4:16**

2. We gain a new perspective on life and eternity.

It's our life and we can live it anyway we so desire. Over the years, we form a perspective that drives our thought process and shapes our destiny. If that perspective is negative, we see life that way. We worry, get anxious, become fearful and generally live a defeated life. Becoming a Christian is just a title. It does not change you. You change you. How we see things is the motivator for how we act and speak and think. When we see that God is really in control, we start shifting our perspective from a negative to a positive. We begin to trust in Jesus and start saying that everything will work out. This changes our life dramatically. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." **Romans 8:28**

3. We do not beat ourselves up when we fall short.

When we realize that God is not kidding and life is not a video game, we discover His magnificent grace. He has forgiven us our trespasses. We are free to worship Him and have fellowship through His Spirit. (“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”) I John 1:9 Another great scripture proof is II Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” We can go on in life believing God that He is in control, even of our salvation.

4. We start being who we are in Christ and not what others think we are.

If you are truly saved by the blood of Jesus, you will become a “New Creature” so the Bible says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” **II Corinthian 5:17** What that new creature looks like is mostly a spiritual image and reflection of God. This can be seen by reading **Galatians 5:22**, which is: Love, Peace, Joy, Longsuffering, Self Control, and all the other fruit of God’s Spirit. The opinions of others, the critical attacks of Satan and all the rest just fall away. We do not dwell in them anymore. Our new man serves the lord with great Joy.

5. We have true fellowship with God and we rest in His grace.

Does God talk to you? I hear His voice all the time. Wouldn’t it be strange for a father to not talk to his children? What kind of father neglects his kids like that? God sees to it that we hear His voice and He always listens for ours. Remember, His Holy Spirit dwells within us and leads us along life’s way. As we read the Bible we learn of Him. As we apply the truths found in the Bible, we grow in Faith and have fellowship with Him. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” **Romans 8:16**

6. We see God at work fighting our battles for us. The battle is the Lords.

If we are truly at rest, we do not fight every battle that comes our way. In fact, Paul tells us that we can simply resist the devil stedfast in the faith. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” I Peter 5:8-9 We need to allow God to be God in our lives and keep Him in control of things.

7. We become more thankfully towards God as He reveals His will and shows us the way.

As we rest in God, we grow in grace. We see His hand in our life and hear His voice. All of this makes us more thankful than ever before. Our thoughts move to an old expression that is found in **Psalm 124**,

“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.”

Our praise and adoration for God is because we know that “If it had not been the LORD”, we would not have been able to stand.

I am sure you can find more benefits. Mine are just some that I know to be true.

Conclusion

There remains a rest for the children of God. It was born out of God’s rest on the 7th day of creation when He rested from all His work. It is a Sabbath Rest that was fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

It was Jesus that completed the Law and opened up the door of grace for those who believed in Him. He was the one that lived the life that God expected man to live, a righteous life.

He was the only one that could die for the sins of mankind, because He was, as it were, the spotless Lamb of God, that was foreshadowed in the Hebrew sacrifices of the Old Testament. It was He that became the Captain of our Salvation and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

To enter into God’s rest is to receive Christ as Savior and lord and to rest in His finished work of Grace. This entire concept of Rest is wrapped up in John’s record of what Jesus said...” For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” **John 3:16**

We know that we are in God’s rest when we are not worrying; have no anxiety; have no fear of the future; when we are not striving to do good deeds to be accepted; when we are at peace, full of joy and love; have patients, and can see ourselves in eternity with Jesus.

The only thing we are instructed to fear is unbelief. We always want to believe regardless of what we see or feel. God is always with us and He alone is in control. This is the perspective that should rule our lives and shape our actions. Unbelief has no place in our Spiritual walk with Jesus. We walk by faith and not by sight. **II Corinthians 5:7**

**May the Lord bless you and keep you
*in all that you do.***

The Story of Billie Jo

Introduction

This is a fictional Christian Short Story designed to capture the essence of finding “*Inner Peace*.” It is the personal journey of Billie Jo who was lost in anxiety, fear and depression during her teen years.

We will follow Billie Jo as she seeks to fill the void in her soul. We will hear the story first hand from Michael Tudor, her best friend. It’s just as much his story as hers.

“Hurry Melody.” Said Michael. “Get the kids ready. I don’t want to be late for Church. The pastor is counting on me to give my personal testimony.” Melody responds, “OK! Ok!, We’ll all be ready.”

And so the time came for Michael to stand before the congregation of Saints to give his personal testimony. There must have been more than three thousand folks looking straight at him.

Michael begins his long awaited personal testimony as his wife; Melody and two children are seated in the front row.

First of all, let me say that Melody and I have been together for over fifteen years. We have two fine children, Bobby, age 12 and Larry, age 9. We have two dogs and four cats and may soon add a talking bird.

We’ve been active members of this community church for most of that time. Those of you that know us... know that we are a very happily married couple.

Well life was not so wonderful for me before I met Melody. What I am about to say has been cleared with my family so there will be no surprises.

My personal testimony is intertwined with another woman. Her name was Billie Jo. I will tell you her story as part of my testimony. It's the only way to show you how God worked in my life.

About 16-years ago, I was living alone, depressed and lost. I just couldn't figure out why things were the way they were. My life was empty and I had a lot of issues.

One cold winter's day, I received an invitation in the mail. It was actually a notification of the passing of an old girlfriend from high school. Her name was Billie Jo. We didn't date that much but were really good friends.

I hesitated to go to her memorial service because those things are so depressing. It's just one long trip down memory lane and this lane was filled with so many sorrows. I didn't want to relive the past. After all, I lived it all with Billie Jo many years ago.

My Billie Jo

Billie Jo was a suffering soul. She was caught up in one trap after another as she tried to live her life her way. The problem was, her way was a road that led to destruction.

Billie Jo was so independent and head strong that nobody could tell her what to do. She hardly took my advice. I had to argue with her over most everything to get her to see that there were alternatives to what she was thinking.

All of my friends loved Billie Jo. She was alive and outgoing, a lot of fun. However, we all felt that Billie Jo was not the marring kind. We didn't want a house of contention and miscommunication.

We were from the old school that looked at life and marriage as a partnership where friendship and love could flourish. Yes, we still believed that the man was chosen by God to be the head of the household.

However, being the head of the household, to me anyway, did not include spouse abuse, dictatorship, or an iron hand rule. I figured that God created woman because man was incomplete, being by himself. A "Help Mate" would be of great value.

But Billie Jo had her own thoughts on the subject and marched to the beat of a different drum. She was right in her own eyes all the time. There was no room for mistakes or other folk's suggestions. It was her way or the highway.

Foot loose And Fancy Free

Billie Jo was a free spirit. Yes, she was liberal and openly hostile towards men who looked “Macho” She would challenge boys to a mental duel using head games and sexual teasers to manipulate them. Most guys didn’t know that they were being manipulated.

Billie Jo was, “Foot Loose And Fancy Free.” She wasn’t afraid to try new things and do things that were considered “Taboo.” That was the path that led to her eventual downfall. She had no ears to hear the sounds of danger and no eyes to see what lie ahead..

She was just 15-years old when she ran away with the bandleader of a “Nowhere” Band. She sent me a letter soon after asking me to tell her mother that she was all right. She said, “I got my man and we’re going from bar to bar across country. We’re going to make it big.

She was with a “Nowhere Guy”, in a “Nowhere Band”, in one “Nowhere Bar” after another but I guess that was ok for her because nowhere was “Somewhere” she hadn’t been before.

I was Billie Jo’s best friend and she knew that I would not share anything unless she said it was ok. However, I couldn’t but wonder if all was really well with her.

Her handwriting was not the best and her thoughts seemed scattered. They were not clearly expressed. This was unusual for Billie Jo. She was an expert at language and always made an “A” in English class.

On The Road Again

As Billie Jo and her new found lover went from “Nowhere Bar” to “Nowhere Bar”, I realized that she was on the road again in search of that illusive butterfly that was forever out of reach. She could see it but not catch hold of it. It was that inner peace that we all strive to attain.

Soon the bar hopping got old and the drugs ran out. Yea, Billie Jo was a slave to cocaine, thanks to her “Nowhere” band leader. He left her in a shabby roadside motel in Indiana with no drugs, no money and pregnant.

As usual, when Billie Jo was in trouble or needed help, she turned to the only friend she ever had, me. I received a call around two a.m. from a voice crying in the wilderness. “Please help me”, she said. “I need you now more than ever.”

The Drug Epidemic

The drug problem has only worsened over the years. Billie Jo became a drug addict and user of both cocaine and a derivative called crack. It was a party drug and some of the cool movie stars and popular kids liked it. However, its affect on America was devastating. Over 70,000 drug induced deaths occurred in 2017 alone.

Crack cocaine causes weight loss, high blood pressure, hallucinations, seizures, and paranoia. Emergency room visits due to cocaine incidents such as overdoses, unexpected reactions, suicide attempts, and other chronic effects more than doubled.

The Rescue

So I went to Indiana and rescued Billie Jo. But I never gave her drugs. She went right into a rehab center that I paid for in full until she was better. It took six long and terrible months with daily counseling, special medication and most of all the Word of God.

The rehab center was run by a Christian organization that believed in the Bible as the inspired word of God. They said that she could be delivered from her drug habit and set free from its residual effects. All she had to do was believe it and hang on to God's Word. That would prove to be extremely difficult for Billie Jo because she was Jewish and turned away at the name of Jesus.

I took Billie Jo to this rehab because I was raised as a "P. K." That is short for "Pastor's Kid." I grew up hearing the Word of God and being individually taught by my dad. I knew that the only real cure was God and the only inner peace Billie Jo would ever find had to come from Him.

But it was all up to Billie Jo. She had to be onboard and fight for her soul in the power of the Holy Spirit. Man's psychological counseling would not be enough. She had to put her faith in Jesus and call upon His power to be set free.

Back then, I watched many a repentant soul come to Christ but was myself, standoffish. I walked the walk because my dad was the pastor and I talked the talk so I could fit in. However, I had the same void in my heart as Billie Jo had in hers. We both were searching for inner peace.

Running Away From Love

So Billie Jo was dried out, encouraged and sent on her way. She was drug free at least for the moment. However, she lost the baby due to the drugs and stress of trying to get enough money for her next fix. She had a miscarriage.

On one hand, she was glad because of the increase of responsibility facing her and her poor parenting skills. She didn't feel up to caring for a baby when she hardly could care for herself. On the other hand, she was deeply depressed because she felt a sense of relief that her unborn child died.

She concluded that God was mad at her and punished her for her drug addiction and immorality. She and I had many talks about a lot of things. Sometimes I got through to her but most of the time she cried too much and couldn't hear what I was saying.

I loved Billie Jo. She was my heartthrob since the 10th grade and I knew that God loved her too. It made me sad to think that Billie Jo couldn't see my love or God's love. It was if some evil force blinded her eyes. I knew that it was most likely the drugs that kept her in the dark.

Well, the long and the short of the story is that Billie Jo fled the scene. She ran as fast as she could in search of that inner peace. She also ran away from God and my love. My heart was stuck on her but her heart was stuck on a habit she just couldn't kick. She thought it would fill the void in her life and bring her peace. Instead it enslaved her and drove her to the brink of insanity.

The Letter

About six months later I received a letter from Billie Jo. She was singing in a small nightclub in New Your City. She found another "Nowhere" guy to live with and she kept him in drugs as he was out of work and out of cash.

Times were hard but she said she was happy. I didn't believe her because I knew that her search for inner peace could only be found in the Lord. She needed to find herself in God to be truly happy.

The Void

Telling Billie Jo about God and How He could help brought me again to the realization that I needed the same inner peace, P.K. or not. We both had a void in our souls. She filled it with drugs. I tried to fill it with Billie Jo.

My dad always said that each person has a void in his or her heart that can only be filled with God. People try to fill it with all sorts of things, thinking that in doing so they will attain happiness and peace of mind. But, as my dad said, only God can fill the void in man's soul. It was put there by God and is exclusively for His indwelling Spirit.

I shared all of this with Billie Jo in a letter but she never responded back to me. Oh, we talked about other stuff but never again about filling that void.

Lost But Not Forgotten

Billie Jo's letters suddenly stopped. She was lost in the streets of Manhattan. I never heard from her again. No letters. No phone calls. Nothing. Two years passed and I still had a deep desire to be with Billie Jo. The void in my heart was slowly expanding and Billie Jo was the only thing that could bridge the gap, so I thought. She was always on my mind.

Billie Jo was the first love of my life and why I married so late in life. Oh, I dated many other girls but just didn't feel the same with them as I did with Billie Jo. I just had to know if she was all right. The void in my heart kept growing bigger as Billie Jo was slowly fading away.

That same summer, the summer of my desire to see Billie Jo again, I hired a NYC detective to look for her. His mission was not to approach her or tell her anything about me looking for her. It was to determine if she was well and doing ok.

It didn't take long, about three months. The detective agency called me and shared the news of Billie Jo. She was living but not so well. She fell upon really hard times, went back into drugs and became a prostitute on Broadway.

Billy Jo now worked for a pimp that required her to pull five tricks a night or he would beat her up. It was like she was on the auction block being sold to the highest bidder.

That night I opened my Bible to read, asking God for an answer. Was it just too late? Could I have done anything different to help Billie Jo? I was beside myself. I had suffered so very long because of Billie Jo. She was my illusive butterfly.

Hosea, The Prophet

I opened my Bible and the pages fell exactly on the opening chapter of Hosea, one of the books in the Old Testament. As I read the pages, I began to hear from God. To understand what He said to me, you need to know a bit about Hosea.

Hosea was a prophet that had a wife that was also a "Free Spirit." She ran away from Hosea and God to find herself. Her wayward journey led her to the auction block where slaves were sold. She was a prostitute that was to be sold to the highest bidder.

God told Hosea to sell all that he had and go to the auction and buy his wife back. Though she had disgraced her husband and rejected God, God still loved her and would show mercy and love to her again.

This was a portrait of the children of Israel that went astray. They were lost in sin yet God found them and gave all He had, His dear Son, as a sacrifice. This was payment in

full to redeem His children. He shows Himself to be a God of mercy and love to all that call upon His name.

Answered Prayer

I knew then that I needed to go to NYC and find Billie Jo. I needed to redeem Billie Jo as God had redeemed Israel. When I found her, she was strung out on drugs, thin and a rail and anemic. We ran to get away from her pimp and headed straight out of town to a safe house that I set up a few days before.

As she cried in my arms, I told her that it didn't matter what went down in the past. I said that I knew everything and still loved her. I also told her that God was not mad at her. He is a God of Love and has already forgiven her. He wants to restore all that the drugs took from her. Then she fell asleep in my arms.

Billie Jo was lost but I found her and now she had another opportunity to give her life to God. I figured, if God could forgive Israel, I could find Billie Jo and bless her. This was also my chance to be with Billie Jo and attain the inner peace I so desperately wanted.

We lived together for six years and she seemed happy. She even went to church with me and prayed that God would keep her free from drugs. It was a good time for both of us. We went to church but God was still not in us. That void was still there. I thought it would go away. I had Billie Jo and we were happy. But that was about to change.

Billie Jo was sneaking behind my back, buying and dealing drugs, She showed the face of innocence to me but was a totally different person to her drug clients.

One day, I came home from work and read a note left by Billie Jo. She said she had to leave me. She said it would be better for both of us if she were out of the picture. She dropped out of sight. It was like she just dropped off this planet. I looked for her everywhere but found nothing.

A Last Goodbye

It's been over twenty years since Billie Jo left. I never heard from her again until I received the letter about her death. She died from a drug overdose in a back ally of Chicago. She died alone, but not really, because God's angels were there to escort her into the presence of her Heavenly Father. She had accepted Jesus as her Savior the year she left. She was clear minded when made a serious decision for Christ.

The Story of Billie Jo was a journey through a drugs and immorality that pulled her down to the depths of despair and ended up taking her life. However, God had the final say as to her journey's end. She became a *"Whosoever"* and God honored His Word.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Billie Jo finally found that inner peace and she also found herself in God. She became a, “Whosoever.” The void in her soul was filled with joy and peace and love as she entered eternity.

I decided not to attend her memorial service. I wanted to remember our times together without all the sorrow.

The void in my heart was also filled. I stopped playing church and became a, “Whosoever” like Billie Jo. I began to trust in Jesus and called upon His Holy Spirit to guide me in all things. I found myself in God and he blessed me with a new *love of my life*. Her name is Melody. As I mentioned before, we have two wonderful children, two dogs and four cats.

Billie Jo will live within my memories until I see her again in Glory. We are both going to be all right, blessed of God and redeemed by His mighty hand.

The story of Billie Jo was also my story. We both suffered under false assumptions of what inner peace was all about and we both felt the pain and anguish of life’s many trials. However, God didn’t abandon us. He saw to it that we knew the path to His love and grace.

If He can do this for us, He can do it for all of you. You don’t have to go through hardship and suffering to find God’s love. You just need to become a, “*Whosoever*” and live for Him.

Well that’s my story and I am sticking to it. My heart is full, my life is blessed and my prayers are answered...and above all, my wife loves me...and I give thanks to God for making it happen.

To God Be The Glory

Things You Should Do Before Jesus Comes

Introduction

“Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. ¹²Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth”. **Psalm 96: 11-13**

This portion of scripture tells us that the Lord is coming. He is headed our way with a specific purpose and mission in mind...to judge the earth. He will judge this world with righteousness and the people of earth with His truth.

It also says for the trees, the fields, the earth and even the heavens to be glad and rejoice. We are to be glad and even rejoice over the idea that God is coming in judgment against the wickedness of this world. No longer will we be subject to lies, deceit, violence and oppression. Life as we know it is about to change.

In light of these Biblical facts, Psalm 96 offers a **“Things To Do”** list for His people. This list is a guideline that will keep us clear from participating in the sins of this world. It will also keep our minds free from the philosophies that oppose and attack our faith. If you believe, like I do, that Jesus is coming back to this earth, you should also want to know what you can do while waiting for his return. This **“Things To Do”** list will help.

Psalm 96:1

“Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth.”

The first thing the Lord wants us to do while waiting for His return is to Sing A New Song. When I first read this I had to think about what song I was singing. I quickly discovered that my song was one of doubt, criticism, fear and worry.

Your song is what you think, what you say and what you do. All you have to do is listen to yourself and hear what your spirit is releasing. Most of us sing a country song that is full of misery, sadness and pain. We seem to relate more to that type of song. I guess that’s why the psalmist said, **“Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!** The old one will not take you through life’s trials and tribulations. You need a new song that is full of joy, peace and hope for the future.

This new song is to be sung to the Lord, not the enemies of your soul. It is a song of worship and praise. It is a song of thanksgiving. It is a song of gratitude. Hear what the Bible says about a merry heart.

**“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine:
but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” Proverbs 17:22**

The old song emanates from a broken spirit. It will dry out the bones and create sickness in the soul. However, the new song makes the heart happy and it is like a medicine. It brings healing and restores the body to good health.

I know you will ask, “Where can I get the words to this new song so you can sing it” They are found only in the Bible. They are the great and precious promises God has given to His people. Just open your Bible, read until you come across a promise, absorb it and begin to sing.

When I read, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5, I begin to feel safe, secure and accepted. This brings me joy that translates into happiness, which causes me to sing. My song can be none other than an inward hymn of praise, which will alter the way I communicate with others and bring peace to my soul.

Psalm 96:2

“Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.” **Psalm 96:2**

While we wait for His return, we are encouraged to keep singing, to bless His name and especially to proclaim His salvation from day to day. That’s Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and of course, Sunday. Every day, we are to proclaim or TELL. If we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus, we tell the story of how He came from heaven to be our savior. If we proclaim His salvation, it becomes personal to us. It is our story too, of how we were saved.

The Good News

The “**Good News**” is that we do not have to live out our lives in hate, sorrow or defeat. We can, because of Jesus, live an abundant life of victory. See it for yourself in the scriptures,

“The thief cometh, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”. **John 10:10**

We also have more “**Good News**” in that Jesus is now preparing a place for us and will indeed come for us to take us to our new home where we will dwell with Him for all of eternity. Here’s what He said...

“In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” **John 14:2-3**

It's a great thing to know that you are accepted by your creator, blessed in life and destined to dwell with Christ. That is “**Good News**”

Psalm 96:3

“Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.” **Psalm 96:3**

Jesus does not want us to just sit back and wait for His return. We need to be about our Father's business. Hear what Jesus said to His disciples.

1. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” Matthew 28:19 (spoken just prior to His ascension into Heaven)
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2. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” John 14:12 (what greater work have we done in His name?) His power and authority is always available to us.
3. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” **Matthew 5:16**

We are to declare His glory. That means we share our relationship with the Lord with those around us. We may not be able to go to all the nations but we can view every person around us as a nation in themselves.

Their perspectives and thought process is different than ours. However, they still need Jesus and still need God's forgiveness. We can instruct, rebuke and even comfort those that enter our world. The key is to be ready when the moment comes. Know what to say and how to say it. A review of salvation scriptures can make a big difference when the opportunity is before you. Consider these:

John 14:6, John 3:16, Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23
and Romans 6:23, Romans 10:9-10 and Hebrews 7:25.

This is just a short list. You can Google and find over 70 different verses.

Psalm 96:4-6

“For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. ⁶ Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and Beauty are in His sanctuary.” **Psalm 96:4-6**

It is clear from the above text that God is the only God. All other gods are man made and not real. We serve Him, the creator of all things. He is all-powerful and worthy of our praise and worship. Honor and Majesty precede His goings and Strength and Beauty fill His sanctuary.

So, as a “**Thing To Do**”, add a clear mindset that elevated Jesus to His rightful place as Lord over your life. Then ensure that you honor Him in everything you do. Be sure you reject idols of all kinds from famous folks to false gods and from power and wealth to self-exaltation.

Psalm 96:7-9

“Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Give to the LORD glory and strength. ⁸ Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. ⁹ Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.”

Psalm 96:7-9

Adding to our “**To Do**” list while waiting for Jesus to return is:

1. **Come into His courts**...go to church, enter His presence, get into an attitude of prayer.
2. **Be sure to bring an offering**... to help fund the gospel.
3. **Acknowledge Jesus as powerful**...and glorify Him in your speech and actions.

These things are not hard to do. We just have to set our will aside and seek His. Once we start doing it, it will become easier with every attempt until it is commonplace. We just need to decide and then honor our own decisions with actions.

Psalm 96:10

“Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns; The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously.” **Psalm 96:10**

Finally, we need to know that, “**The Lord Reigns.**” When we are confused, fearful, upset and/or anxious, we need only to remember that, “**The Lord Reigns.**” I know that some folks will not fully grasp this REIGN business so I’ll try to explain it.

When the Bible says that, “**The Lord Reigns**”, it means that:

1. God is in control.
2. He is ruling His kingdom as King.
3. He is endowed with Power and Authority.
4. He is sovereign over this world.
5. He is against the oppressor.
6. He judges righteously.
7. He protects His own.

Knowing these things and that, ”**The Lord Reigns**” is more than half the battle. We can rest assured that God is on our side and His judgments are true and beneficial to our well-being.

Conclusion

I love Psalm 96 because it gives us a clear mindset as to how to think and what to do while we wait for Jesus to come for us. Make no mistake, He will come and we will dwell with Him forever.

Today is not a time to sleep or be lackadaisical. It is our opportunity to prepare. There is a world out there that is on its way to Hell and just maybe we can save a few from its fire.

So, let’s make a list so we can look at it everyday. It can be our guide to victory now and peace along the way until our time comes to be with Jesus.

“To Do” List

- Sing A New Song Unto The Lord
 - Bless The Lord At All Times
 - Show Forth His Salvation Daily
- Declare His Glory Among the Heathen
- Give Unto The Lord Strength & Honor
- Come Into His Courts With An Offering
- Worship The Lord In The Beauty of Holiness
- Say Among The Heathen, “The Lord Reigns”

**Taken from
Psalm 96**

The Second Coming of Christ And The Rapture of The Church

Introduction

Here is another eBook on Christian Doctrine. It represents my views and feelings concerning the return of Jesus Christ. I do not pretend to know everything. Nor do I present myself as a Theologian. I do, however, offer a Biblical teaching on the subject. It is my hope that readers will come to see that the return of Jesus is eminent and very well could be within our lifetime.

We will look at some signs that Jesus said to look for. We will search the scriptures for documentation of thought and evidence. We will discuss the WHEN?, WHY?, WHERE?, and HOW to gain a full perspective.

I will be using the KJV of the bible as my primary resource for scripture references. I will also be looking for other references from noted individuals to document everything I say.

There are a lot of different beliefs concerning the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. Some say He never came the 1st time. Some say there is no next time. Yet others divide His coming into Pre, Mid, and Post Tribulation events.

I will attempt to prove, with biblical support, that Jesus indeed is coming back. I will discuss when, where, why and how. We will investigate the concept of a “Rapture” of the Church and delve into prophetic interpretations.

By the time you are finished reading, I feel sure that you will be, as I am, looking for Jesus, to come again.

**Watch therefore: for ye know not
*what hour your Lord doth come.***

Matthew 24:42

Ye men of Galilee, why stand
ye gazing up into heaven?

this same Jesus, which is taken
up from you into heaven, shall
so come in like manner as ye
have seen him go into heaven.

Acts 1:11

Some Opinions As To Jesus' Return

Folks have predicted the exact day when Jesus will return but over the years those exact days came and went and He did not show up. I guess He didn't get the memo. We are still waiting and some folks are saying lots of different things. Here are some that I have heard:

1. He is supposed to come for a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle and the church has not evolved to that point yet.
2. All the signs are not as yet revealed so He is waiting for those final signs.
3. Jesus' return has already happened and we missed it because it happened before we were born.
4. Jesus' return happened on the day of Pentecost and the church is supposed to now take charge and rule the world.
5. His return was never meant to be a single event but an on-going event from heart to heart of those that repent and become, "Born Again"

I am sure you have heard several that I did not list. The fact is, we are still waiting. That reminds me of a parable that Jesus taught to His disciples. It's found in **Matthew 25:1-13**.

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise, for when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.'" But he answered, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Here's what James Montgomery Boice wrote about this parable. He is a contributor for Logos Bible Software.... As we take a good look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), we must acknowledge up front that there has been much debate as to the meaning of these words of our Savior.

At least one aspect of this parable can be known with absolute certainty. The bridegroom is Jesus Christ, and this parable describes His return. Both the Old Testament (Isaiah 54:4-6; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:19) and the New Testament (John 3:27-30; Matthew 9:15; Mark

2:19-20) represent the Messiah as a bridegroom. Both God's people Israel and the Church are described in Scripture as the bride (Ephesians 5:25-32) for the Messiah.

The overall and easily seen thrust of the parable is that Christ will return at an unknown hour and that His people must be ready.

Being ready means preparing for whatever contingency arises in our lives and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus at all times while we eagerly await His coming.”

B. L. Cocherell and Charles E. Barrett of Biblesearch.org offer this interpretation:

“It is very clear that the ten virgins represent a significant part of the entire body of elect. Because of the warning messages in Revelation 2 and 3 to the seven churches of God which will exist just before Christ's return, it appears likely that the ten virgins represent all the elect that exist during the end of the age, except for those of the Philadelphia church.

Perhaps the reason that there are ten virgins divided into two groups is the numerical meaning of the numbers 10 and 5 as they apply to biblical symbolism. The number 10 is symbolic of the law of God and the number 5 is symbolic of God's grace.

This parable indicates that all of these people knew that the banquet would occur very soon and they were looking forward to the arrival of the bridegroom and participating in the celebration after his arrival.”

The Wise And The Foolish

“Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take enough oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps“ (**Matthew 25:2-4**).

Notice that Jesus separates the 10-vergins into two groups, the wise and the foolish. Both are waiting for His return. All of the virgins began with full lamps. It is obvious that all of the virgins were anticipating a period of waiting but none of them know just how long. All of them also identified themselves as the bride. They knew that there was a wedding banquet in their future. The wise anticipated that they might have to wait longer than expected so they brought extra oil in order to keep their lights burning as long as necessary.

The burning lamp is a picture of the Word of God. **Psalm 119:105** verifies this, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”It is important to understand the symbolism of the lamps.

The lamp represents the principles upon which one's life is established. It is the Will of God given to man to guide him in the way of righteous and away from the snares of the devil. The Word of God symbolized by a lighted Lamp is the key to understanding this parable.

The emphasis seems to be on the importance of keeping one's lamp lit. *That is to say*, being so full of God's word that you shine like a beacon atop a hill overlooking the city. Didn't Jesus say, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." **Matthew 5:16**

What happens when your light goes out? You guessed it; you fall into darkness where confusion, depression, sorrows and death dwell. The lamp that lit the way is out. The path is lost and you wander in the wilderness like the children of Israel on old. This is a picture of the 5-foolish virgins and their ultimate destiny.

10 Virgins Equals Six Churches

I believe that the 10 virgins represent the six churches in Revelation that Jesus rebuked, it is also important to see that they all fell asleep. Only the 7th church, Philadelphia, stayed awake.

Here is the account in **Revelation 17:7-9**. It is a picture of the wife of the Lamb, which before being the wife was, as the parable teaches, 10 virgins waiting for the Bridegroom to come.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they, which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God."

Who was called to the marriage supper of the Lamb? The 10 virgins and the church of Philadelphia are they that were called. They represent the Bride who became the wife.

To fall asleep, in my opinion, and others I read after, is to fall away from the truth. It's like forgetting that Jesus is really coming back and falling back into life as usual, like the world system of things. The zeal and dedication fades away and is eventually replaced with religion, rules, dogma and political correctness, the result of which is liberalism.

"Nowhere in the message to the elect of Philadelphia, do we find them pictured as being asleep. On the contrary, they are shown as being the zealous elect who are commended for faithfully keeping the truth of God and upholding the name of Jesus.

Thus, it is clear that the parable of the 10 virgins is talking about the rest of the elect who are all spiritually asleep just before Christ's return. History shows us that because of spiritual lethargy the early church disappeared as a united, powerful entity. However,

throughout the centuries, there have been a few among the elect of God who have kept awake while the great majority has gone to sleep.” G. L. Cocherell and Charles E. Barrett

Today’s Christian Community

If we are really in the last days before the return of Christ, which I believe we are, this parable is a clear picture of our Christian community. Do you know how many denominations there are in our modern world? According to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, there were an estimated 34,000 denominations in 2000, rising to an estimated 43,000 in 2012. These numbers have exploded from 1,600 in the year 1900. Do you suppose that this is a picture of division, confusion and apathy? I do not see unity and brotherhood. I see virgins asleep (preoccupied with the cares of this world) I also see churches that have embraced immorality.

I was curious to see if I could find denominations that have affirmed the LBTG lifestyle. LBTG refers to Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Gay. Here’s what I found in a Google search. These denominations affirm the LBTG lifestyle:

Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, Brethren Mennonite, Presbyterian, Evangelical Anglican, Disciples of Christ, Independent Orthodox Greek, Lutheran, and Charismatic.

I realize that most of these denominations have many different offshoots and the above list does not necessarily portray full acceptance by the entire denomination mentioned. It does however; illustrate a trend towards immorality and worldly political correctness. It also shows a church that was once vibrant and on fire for God as falling asleep.



The majority of today’s church felt that Christ's return was very near and would happen before the end of the century. Many people thought that He would return before 1975. We know that it didn’t happen. The Philadelphia church went on in faith and stayed awake but the rest conveniently went to sleep. In other words, they believed that “The Lord delayed his coming“ **(Luke.12:45)**.

It should be noted that the Philadelphia church is scattered among every denomination. They are the believers that walk by faith and trust in the Lord. They are those that look for His coming and seek to live within the known will of God. They are those that hide His word in their hearts and fill themselves with His Spirit daily. They hear His voice and come to His calling. The return of Christ will be no surprise to them. They will be ready.

The Midnight Cry



“At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him'” **Matthew 25:6.**

I believe that the cry at midnight comes from the church that did not fall asleep...the spiritual church that flows through most every denomination. They are watching and praying for His return and will, through the Spirit, sense His coming ahead of time.

“This cry of warning follows the pattern of all the warnings given by prophets to God's people throughout history. God never lets his people go into severe trials without a resounding warning and an opportunity to repent. The issue here is a very serious one. It is an issue of salvation or the Lake of Fire. This is not a minor reprimand or chastisement.

This is an issue of whether one will respond to the warning, repent, and return to the faith once delivered and return to God the Father and Jesus Christ in a proper attitude. The window of opportunity for true repentance seems very short. It appears likely that there will be little time to get one's spiritual house in order before the door to salvation is shut forever.” G. L. Cocherell and Charles E. Barrett

This brings up a question about the salvation of those that ran out of oil (the Word of God) All of the Virgins Hear the Cry. They all woke up. They all realized the seriousness of the cry. Everyone gets a wake up call but half didn't have any oil, Word of God. They are left behind. The Bridegroom comes and receives the wise virgins and shuts the door. The foolish virgins are denied access and hear the Lord say to them as they try to gain access, “I don't know you.”

These foolish virgins did not take the Word, oil with them. They allowed the Word of God to slip away. They did not keep the truth of God alive in their hearts. They stopped walking by faith. In fact, they cut off the very source by which they could receive faith, the Scriptures.

Is this a loss of one salvation? I think not. Hear what the scripture says.

1. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. **I John 2:19**

“ A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and



the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!" **(Matthew 13:3-9).**

2. "Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." **Matthew 13:24-30**

Here's what these three scriptures tell me: 1.) Some of our group is not really what they claim to be. 2.) Some of the folks that received the Word that was sown in their hearts by the sewer did not take it seriously and it did not take root. 3.) Some of the harvest is not really wheat at all but tares fighting for the same ground.

The five foolish virgins, in my opinion, are really tares that sought to dominate the Wheat. They used the oil or Word of God as a cover to hide their true identity but failed in the end to actually apply the scripture. They appeared to be with us but really were not. They could not make the transition from unrighteousness to righteousness. They ignored God's truth and ran out of oil, that is to say, the Word had no affect on them because it was not mixed with faith. In doing so, they have, in fact, sentenced themselves to the Lake of Fire.

Too Late Is Too Late

"And the door was shut. Later the others also came. Sir! Sir! they said, open the door for us! But he replied, I tell you the truth, I don't know you. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour wherein the Son of man comes" **(Matthew 25:10-13).**

The parable teaches that once the door is closed, it's just too late. The foolish virgins are excluded from the Marriage Supper of The Lamb because they were not really qualified or "Born Again".

Once the church is gathered from the earth, there will no longer be a person alive on earth that has the Spirit of God within them. This is documented in **II Thessalonians 2:7**, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

He that letteth, (or restrains), is the Holy Spirit. When He is taken out of the way, He has to take us with Him because Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" **John 14:16** This is why Jesus says to the foolish virgins, "I don't know you." They no longer have the Spirit of God available to them and they have lost their opportunity for salvation, which means that their fate is the Lake of Fire, because they were called of God but they did not repent and become, "Born Again". "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." **II Peter 3:9**

Knowing How To Wait

As we Christians wait for our Lord's return, what should we be doing? This seems to be the best kept secret ever. The devil just doesn't want us to know how to wait. He wants us to fall asleep which means to drift off center and leave our faith on the table. He wants us to follow our fleshly appetites and become one with the world system.

If we do this, we will show God and those around us that we were never really a Christian. We will show them that we are playing church and using what little scripture we know as a cloak to hide our inward unsaved condition. Eventually we will find one of the six churches that have fallen asleep and sleep there until the midnight call. That will be a day of reckoning. On the other hand, if we stay awake we will be joining the Philadelphia church that walks by faith, prays for revelation and eagerly looks for His return.

There is a theological assumption in all of this. It is called, "*The Perseverance of The Saints*". The premise is that true saints will not give up. They will instead persevere to the very end. If any give up, it is because he or she is not really a saint. This is not to say that saints do not stumble and fall. It is to say that when they do, they get back up and go on with their relationship with God.

Those that don't get up but give up and return to the world system. They are those that have no oil. They claim to be a saint but never had the, "Born Again" experience. I can see them now in the sleeping churches. They lack spiritual knowledge, know nothing of spiritual warfare, walk in the flesh instead of the Spirit and believe they can get to heaven through good works.

Signs of His Coming

Jesus said that when you see certain things begin to happen, "Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near," and "when you see them happen the kingdom of God is near" (**Luke 21:28,31**).

Jesus and Paul both taught that the proper way to wait for His return is to therefore be **Watchful, Ready and Sober (Matthew 24:42-44,25:13; 1 Th. 5:6)**.

Here are some signs of His Coming. The signs are everywhere.

Wars And Rumors of Wars

"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."(**Matthew 24:6,7a**)

Since World War II, many countries have been building up massive arsenals of conventional and nuclear weapons. The potential for war grows day by day. In addition to potential nuclear war, we have war on terror, water wars, weather wars, and a host of various types that need not be named.

Famines, Pestilence, Earthquakes

"And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." (Matthew 24:7b,8). Due to flooding and droughts, world food supplies are running very low. Many people are expecting a global food shortage and famines.

In 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a warning that infectious diseases are emerging more quickly and spreading faster around the globe than ever before, and they are becoming increasingly difficult to treat. The UN said in its 2007 annual world health report that an outbreak or epidemic in one part of the world can easily threaten billions of people in other parts due to large numbers of modern day air travelers.

Regarding earthquakes, scientific data does show that we have been seeing a large increase in seismic activity. According to a number of scientists, another star or large planet is affecting the sun's magnetic field, which is also affecting the earth's magnetic field - both the core and the ionosphere. The north pole is shifting at an accelerated pace, and the earth seems to be expanding. Thus, we should see a continual increase in earthquakes and volcanic activity in coming years.

Deceivers Who Claim To Be Christian

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you for many will come in My name saying that I am the Christ and will deceive many." **Mt. 24:4,5**

Although the Bible teaches that Jesus is the promised Jewish Messiah and is "the only begotten Son of God" (**John 3:18**), who created the world and everything in it (**Col. 1:16**), at the end of the Church Age many people will be teaching these truths, yet they will have other teachings that are not consistent with the Bible and will deceive many. Perhaps the majority of professing Christian teachers in the world today fall into this camp, as most have

fallen away from sound Biblical teachings and instead place traditions of men and/or the goal of increasing church attendance above the authority of the Bible. Some are subtle, and some are blatant. Sincere followers of Jesus should come out of these wayward institutional churches and seek to fellowship with people who follow and teach what Jesus and His apostles did.

People of Israel Return To Their Land



"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that ... I will bring again captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no

more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God." **(Amos 9:13-15)**

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.'" **(Ezekiel 37:21,22)**

During the last 130 years, Jews from 108 nations have migrated to the land of Israel.

In 1882 the first wave of modern immigration to Israel started as Jews fled persecution, or followed the Socialist Zionist ideas of Moses Hess. From 1882 to 1919 around 75,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine, mostly from Russia. They bought land from the Ottoman Empire and individual Arab landholders and established agricultural settlements. During this period the Hebrews language was revived, newspapers and literature were published in Hebrew and political parties and workers organizations were established.

In 1917 during World War I, the British government in its Balfour Declaration supported plans for a national home for the Jews in their promised land. Later, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) lost control of the Middle East. This made it possible for hundreds of thousands more immigrants to arrive from Europe. Anti-Semitism drove most there. Many more would have come had it not been for Arab protest and resulting British restrictions on immigration.

During World War II, the Nazis killed around 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, so it became clear to the Jews that they needed a homeland. Many Holocaust survivors immigrated illegally to Palestine. When the British pulled out of Palestine in May 1948, the state of Israel formally declared its independence. It was immediately recognized by the USA, followed by Guatemala, Nicaragua and Uruguay. A few days later, the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and South Africa did the same. No Arab states have ever recognized Israel, but several have attacked them. However, Israel has successfully defended itself against numerous Arab attacks. As a result, Jews throughout the Middle East have also been forced to immigrate to Israel, and the nation has grown strong. It has turned a

desert into an agricultural success, and its technology as seen in industry exports are cutting edge innovations.

Today, Israel's population is over 7 million. In 2018, Israel will celebrate it's 70th anniversary, but some of its neighbors hate it and want to "wipe it off the map". It is still mostly a secular state, but it has a growing percentage of Orthodox Jews and Christians. Today, the Aliyah immigration movement continues to embrace Jewish newcomers, to help them become a part of communities and help them learn Hebrew.

Increased Wickedness & Loss of Love

"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold." (**Matthew 24:12**)

Today, more and more people are living primarily for themselves and their own happiness. The idea of denying themselves, taking up their crosses daily and following Jesus (**Luke 9:23**) is a foreign concept. What TV and movies show as "normal" has affected the values of those who indulge in them. At the same time, couples are divorcing, and children are growing up with deep unmet needs as a result. Many couples are not even marrying but living together in fornication (any form of sex not sanctioned by God). The result has been the blood sacrifice (murder) of hundreds of millions of innocent, helpless children through abortion, over 50 million in the United States alone and the birthing of even more children who lack a healthy home where they can receive love and training from their own father and mother.

Life & Business As Usual

Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man " (**Matthew 24:37-39**). Note that the flood was unexpected. They were all unaware of its coming and its affect on them until it was too late. Noah was a preacher of righteousness who warned the people around him but no one listened.

Today, we have radio, T.V. and other media and we use it to tell folks that Jesus is coming soon but no one is really listening. The world is carrying on with business as usual and will until it is just too late.

Strong Delusion



And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie. (2 Th. 2:11 NKJV)

The primary focus of the deception is the use of the controlled corporate media by the Prince of the Power of the Air. TV, radio, Internet, cell phones, etc. keep people completely preoccupied and oblivious to the fate that awaits unbelievers. The goal is also to prevent people from hearing the Gospel of Jesus, and if they do hear it to forget about it and be entertained constantly. Most people in developed countries are now in a fog due to the impact of these media that lull them into a false sense of security and into a false sense of right and wrong. This delusion can be seen in three areas:

Spirituality... the Emerging Church has become so pervasive that most churches in developed countries will tolerate abortion (murder), fornication (premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality) and almost any other violation of God's law. Just think: how many churches will excommunicate a person for involvement in these sins?

Finance... many people are unaware that an international government / banking cartel partnership is stealing their wealth and using the funds to control the world. (See How Some Rich Bankers Tricked the American People and Gained Control of the World's Economic, Political, Legal and Educational Systems and 19 Reasons Why The Federal Reserve Is At the Heart of Our Economic Problems, 20 Questions To Ask Anyone Foolish Enough To Believe The Economic Crisis Is Over.).

The stealing is done through the printing of fiat money (money not based on gold or silver but on debt), through interest on money that does not exist (due to fractional reserve banking laws) and through the saw tooth effect of markets that draws people into bad investments over a long period of time and then makes them lose large portions of their life savings when markets drop. (See 200 Year Dow/Gold Ratio, and note how it became much more dramatic after the creation of the Federal Reserve System in 1913.

Politics... most people are also unaware of the liberal media and left-wing parties that push their socialistic views and seek to change the very foundation by which our country was established. This political premise has called evil good and made laws that protect immoral behavior and the killing of unborn babies. They, the people, think it's ok. Their spiritual darkness is now called light that will guide our country into the future.

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and



lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (**2 Thessalonians 2:3,4,9-12**)

When Will Jesus Return?

Would you believe me if I told you that Jesus will return on the 3rd Friday of next month? Some have actually tried to predict the actual day of His return. I guess they never read the scripture that says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” **Matthew 24:36**

Knowing the actual day or hour is impossible to know. Only God, the Father knows. However, we do know that it will be an unexpected event in the eyes of the world. “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night”. **1 Thessalonians 5:2**

Why Is He Coming Back?

Jesus is coming back because He said He would. He is coming for us, the “Born Again” saints. “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” **Ephesians 5:27**

Why Did He Go Away?

“In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” **John 14:2-3**

Jesus is preparing a place for us that we can dwell with Him for all of eternity. How great is that? This going away and coming back to receive His bride is pictured in the parable of the 10 virgins. The bridegroom goes away to prepare a place while the bride waits. Jewish culture and customs portray the greatest event of all times, Jesus’ return.

The Rapture of The Church Is At Hand

It’s been said that Jesus will come for His church and rapture it out of this world into His presence. It is a catching away of all Christians, real ones, not religious, fake or even churchgoers that play church for other selfish reasons.

The word rapture (in Greek *harpazo*, in Latin *rapere*) means to be caught up or taken away suddenly. The rapture refers to the sudden removal of all of God's people on the earth. In the twinkling of an eye, "Born Again" Christians will suddenly be transformed out of their human bodies and will rise up into the air to join Jesus Christ.

Christ warned His followers 13 times in the New Testament to not be deceived, and to watch and be ready. He wanted us to be excited about His glorious appearing. His 2nd coming is in anticipation of the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Satan, on the other hand, does not want us to be excited. He is the master deceiver; the father of lies and wants us to believe his deception rather than the signs of the times pointing to Christ's return. He will send many lies to deceive us and to rob us of the joy of living every day in anticipation of Christ's return.

Living In Anticipation

For those who believe that the Bible is the truth and is the very Word of God, it's easy to believe in and rejoice in the prophecies that tell of the rapture of God's church. The Bible tells us of others who have been taken up into heaven in very much the same way that we will be at the time of the rapture. Elijah was taken up into heaven like a whirlwind. **I Kings 2:11-12** "As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel! And Elisha saw him no more."

Enoch was also taken from this life so that he would not experience death. **Hebrews 11:5** "By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. for before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 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." **Hebrews 11:6**



So, when will the church be raptured? We know there is more evidence today that He is coming for His church sooner, than at any other time in history. As these signs intensify, all of us who know Christ as our savior will be looking toward heaven and waiting, with great anticipation, the coming of our Lord.

The Pre-Trib Theory

Many biblical scholars feel that the rapture will occur prior to the “Tribulation Period” spoken of in Revelation. This is called a pre-tribulation rapture. Thus God will spare His church from the persecutions of the Antichrist and the wrath of God that will fall upon the inhabitants of the earth during the end times. Those who come to Christ following the rapture will live through the persecution of Christians by the Antichrist. Some will face martyrdom for their faith. There are several other views of the timing for the rapture of the church; in particular, Mid-Trib, Post-Trib and No-Trib or no rapture at all, however, here we will examine the pre-tribulation view and the biblical support for it.

Revelation 3:10 is one of the best supporting verses from the Bible for the rapture of the church. "Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth."



I would assume that God would not bring the same type of judgment to His children, as He will on the wicked. This scripture seems to support my premise. The assumption is that believers will be taken out of harms way. Listen to what Paul tells the Thessalonians in his second letter, chapter two verses 2-15.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

² That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? ⁶ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. ⁸ And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions, which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

I wanted to show the context so there is no misunderstanding. Note verse seven...he that letteth is God's Holy Spirit. He is a restraining force in the world, holding evil back from its ultimate expression. When the Spirit is taken out of the way, guess what? the Spirit is in us and Jesus said He would never leave us comfortless but will be with us until the end of the age. (**John 14:18**)

The moment has come. It is the end of the age and we will go with the Spirit to meet Jesus in the air as Paul says in **1 Thessalonians 4:17**.

There you have it. The rapture or sudden removal of God's children is at hand. The big question now is will you be left behind? Non-believers will be left to face the great tribulation where God pours out His wrath upon the wicked. You don't want to be in that group of folks. Get your heart right with God, make Jesus your Lord and Savior, and start looking and being ready for His return.

In the twinkle of an eye,
The Lord will come for me.
Before you can even blink,
I'll be with Jesus in eternity.

In the twinkle of an eye,
The trump of God will sound,
And all who love the Lord
Will be homeward bound.

In the twinkle of an eye,
The World will fall into despair.
When God's wrath is poured out,
Upon all who do not care.

In the twinkle of an eye,
We shall shout the victory.
Spared from His judgment,
To complete our divine destiny.

**In A Twinkle
Of An Eye**

**Think
About
It**

The Rapture

The Rapture of the church...is it a fact that will play out in future events? Or is it just fiction meant to confuse and deceive believers into thinking they need not take their faith seriously? After all, Jesus is coming so why live this life with passion and ambition.

This eBook is a study of the Rapture. It is clear from the many Bible text that the Rapture is a real future event that will happen. It is not just a fictional story.

We will look at Pre, Post And Mid Tribulation raptures to determine the timeframe that the Rapture will occur. We will examine what Jesus says and some of His disciples, mainly the Apostle Paul.

The Joining of Spirits

The purpose of the sudden catching away is to be joined with Jesus in His anointing at the wedding feast of the Lamb. We are not just honored guest but rather the center of attention, His bride. It is our wedding and our celebration to be joined with Him in Spiritual union. This is not a strange concept. Read what Paul said, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." I Corinthians 12:13

If we are all baptized into one Spirit here on earth now, how much different will it be to be joined together with Jesus in one Spirit? If man and women can be, "One Flesh" here, why can't Jesus and His church be, One Spirit" there?

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." Revelation 19:7

We are the five virgins that trimmed their flames so they would not run out of oil and were ready to meet the bridegroom when He appeared. There is no more evil. No more doubt. No more sadness. No more anything but jubilant excitement because we will rule with Christ over the Kingdom of God forever. Holiness will reign in our hearts and love will flow to every creature as God the Father blesses His son with a bride that has been washed in His own blood and redeemed from the hand of the devil and death itself.

Satan, on the other hand, does not want us to be excited. He is the master deceiver; the father of lies and wants us to believe his deception rather than the signs of the times pointing to Christ's return. He will send many lies to deceive us and to rob us of the joy of living every day in anticipation of the bridegroom's return.

Here are a few references to the Bride

Isaiah 54:5 ...For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.

Revelation 21:9 ...Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Isaiah 62:5 ...For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Ephesians 5:27 ...So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Hosea 2:16-23 ..."And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. **And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness.** And you shall know the LORD."

If you are not familiar with the story of Hosea, His wife left him and became a prostitute. She was found on the slave market ready to be sold. God told Hosea to go sell all he had and buy her back and love her with unconditional love for she was a foreshadow of the children of God that were in sin and degradation. The story revealed God's unconditional love.

Revelation 22:17 ...The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Revelation 21:1-27 ...Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Revelation 3:10 ...Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

The Great Tribulation

The Rapture of the church cannot be removed from the great tribulation that will come upon the inhabitants of the earth. This is when God pours out His wrath and indignation upon the wicked that dwell upon the earth. It is His divine judgment. Some folks believe that there is no rapture at all and all believers will have to endure the judgment of God. Others, like me, feel that when you are a child of God, why would your Heavenly Father put you under condemnation with the wicked and cause you to suffer His wrath? It doesn't make sense. His wrath is for the ungodly not His beloved children.

There are several theories as to the timing of a rapture. The Post-Trib is after the tribulation. The Mid-Trib is the middle of the tribulation and Pre-Trib is before the judgment of God falls upon the earth. Then there is no-Rapture, just a final 2nd coming at the end of all things.

He That Withholdeth Restrains

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then... shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions, which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."

I wanted to show the context so there is no misunderstanding. Note the red letters above....**he that letteth is God's Holy Spirit**. He is a restraining force in the world, holding evil back from its ultimate expression.

When the Spirit is taken out of the way, guess what? The Spirit is in us and Jesus said He would never leave us comfortless but will be with us until the end of the age. (John 14:18) The moment has come. It is the end of the age and we will go with the Spirit to meet Jesus in the air as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

There you have it. The rapture or sudden removal of God's children is at hand. The big question now is will you be left behind? Non-believers will be left to face the great tribulation where God pours out His wrath upon the wicked.

You don't want to be in that group of folks. Get your heart right with God, make Jesus your Lord and Savior, and start looking and being ready for His return.

Being "Born Again" Is The Key

There are a lot of folks that belong to a church that are not, "Born Again." They follow rules and regulations called church doctrine instead of following the lead of the Holy Spirit

In Brief...being "Born Again" is to be born of the Spirit. The flesh is mortal and has no eternal significance. However, the Spirit is the life giver and the one that bestows immortality upon believers.

He is the one that takes us into the death of the flesh with all its lust and immoral deeds and through our own personal resurrection whereby we can now call God our Father.

These folks move and live and have their being in God. These are the folks that will be looking for the coming of the Lord and will see Him when He arrives. The rest of the world, whether unbelievers or religious will not be looking and to them, Jesus' coming will be as a thief in the night.... totally unexpected.

A Promise To The Church

The concept of the Rapture was not revealed to the Old Testament prophets because it is a promise to the New Testament Church and not to the saints of God who lived before the establishment of the Church. Jesus will return as a bridegroom for His bride, and that bride consists only of Church Age saints.

Logic Makes A Statement

There are several points of interest associated with this subject. They are:

1. Fact or Fiction
2. Tribulation or Divine Judgment
3. All Christians or Just Those Born Again
4. Before, Middle, After or Not At All
5. God's Children To Suffer Or Not

6. Soon To Happen Or Far Off

I have so far presented a logical case for a Pre-Tribulation event. We have seen scripture and connected some dots to bring together a picture of what is in store for all who live on this earth.

Now let us use this logical approach to finish our picture and complete our study. I will do this with a Q & A session.

Q #1...If God has indeed saved us by His Grace, which means unmerited favor, why would He then pour out His wrath upon us?

Jesus said, as recorded by John, the Apostle, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth** in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:16

We are the, “Whosoever” generation that found favor with God through believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. We did nothing to attain God’s grace but to believe in Christ. To condemn a soul after forgiving it would be a contradiction of policy that shows instability and insecurity. This is not the character of God.

Q #2...If we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus as the Bible says, how then can God pour out His wrath on His own righteousness?

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” II Corinthians 5:21

The wrath of God, during the tribulation period, will be focused on the ungodly, the wicked and the unrighteous, not the righteous. Jesus was made sin and suffered the full extent of God’s wrath so we could walk in His righteousness before God, the Father. **To** pour out His wrath upon us would be an insult to the finished work of Christ in our salvation.

Q #3... If Jesus told His followers that He would not leave them comfortless but would be with them to the end of the age, why then would He and the Holy Spirit (He that withholdeth of I Thessalonians 4:17) abandon the saints when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way so the man of sin can be revealed?

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:19-20

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John 4:18

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; John 14:16

We have been promised continual comfort until we arrive safely in the kingdom of God. The Father sent the Holy Spirit to be with us, to teach us and to keep us on track.

It is silly to think that He would leave us to face the wrath of God. If He goes, we must go with Him. To do otherwise would be God going back on His word, which just doesn't happen.

The Holy Spirit has been given to us by God to abide or dwell with us forever, not just until the tribulation period.

Q #4... If the tribulation period is in fact a time where God's wrath is poured upon the ungodly, why then would His children, who were bought with the blood of Christ, forgiven of all sin and made to be righteous be condemned with the ungodly?

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” Ephesians 5:25-29

Jesus has cleansed the church with His own blood and made it without spot of blemish so it would be holy. If God's wrath fell upon us God would undo what Jesus has done.

There should be no further doubt that the rapture of the church is Jesus coming for His bride and that He will not allow His bride, who has been cleansed and made holy, to experience God's judgment that is reserved for the ungodly.

Let us be comforted by the soon arrival of Jesus and hope that we can be among those that are alive at the time and experience the glorious transformation from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal.

A Summary **By Dr. David R. Reagan**

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

To summarize, these passages teach that the shout of an archangel and the blowing of a trumpet will herald the sudden appearance of Jesus in the heavens (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The dead in Christ will be resurrected and rise up to meet the Lord in the sky. Then, those saints who are alive will be “caught up” to the Lord. Paul concludes his description in 1 Thessalonians 4 by encouraging his readers to “comfort one another with these words.”

And truly the Rapture is a comforting thought! Consider the promises contained in the concept of the Rapture.

Jesus will bring with Him the spirits of those who have died in Him (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

He will resurrect their bodies in a great miracle of re-creation;
He will reunite their bodies with their spirits;
He will then glorify their bodies, making them immortal.
Those believers who are living will not even taste death. Rather, they will be caught up to the Lord, and in transit, they will be translated from mortal to immortal.

All my life I have heard that there are two things no one can avoid: taxes and death. Well, that is not true. According to 1 Thessalonians 4, a whole generation of believers will escape death. Taxes appear to be the only inevitability!

Focus On Jesus

This raises the issue of what we are to be looking for. Nowhere are believers told to watch for the appearance of the Antichrist. On the contrary, we are told to watch for Jesus Christ.

In Titus 2:13 Paul says we are to live “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

Likewise, Peter urges us to “fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

John completes the apostolic chorus by similarly urging us to “fix our hope on Him” at His appearing (1 John 3:2-3).

Only Matthew speaks of watching for the Antichrist (Matthew 24:15), but he is speaking to the Jews living in Israel in the middle of the Tribulation when the Antichrist desecrates the rebuilt Temple.

Protection Against The Wrath of God

Another argument in behalf of a pre-Tribulation Rapture has to do with the promises of God to protect the Church from His wrath. As has already been demonstrated, the book of Revelation shows that the wrath of God will be poured out during the entire period of the Tribulation.

The Word promises over and over that the Church will be delivered from God's wrath. Romans 5:9 says

“We shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him [Jesus].”

1 Thessalonians 1:10 states that we are waiting “for His Son from heaven... who will deliver us from the wrath to come.”

The promise is repeated in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 — “God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Symbolism

There are several prophetic types that seem to affirm the concept of deliverance from Tribulation.

Take Enoch for example. He was a prophet to the Gentiles who was raptured out of the world before God poured out His wrath in the great flood of Noah's time. Enoch appears to be a type of the Gentile Church that will be taken out of the world before God pours out His wrath again. If so, then Noah and his family are a type of the Jewish remnant that will be protected through the Tribulation.

Another Old Testament symbolic type which points toward a pre-Tribulation Rapture is the experience of Lot and his family. They were delivered out of Sodom and Gomorrah before those cities were destroyed.

The Apostle Peter alludes to both of these examples in his second epistle. He states that if God spared Noah and Lot, then He surely “knows how to rescue the godly from trial and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgment” (2 Peter 2:4-9).

Another beautiful prophetic type is to be found in the Jewish wedding traditions of Jesus' time. After the betrothal, the groom would return to his father's house to prepare a wedding chamber for his bride. He would return for his bride at an unexpected moment, so the bride had to be ready constantly.

When he returned, he would take his bride back to his father's house to the chamber he had prepared. He and his bride would then be sealed in the chamber for seven days. When they emerged, a great wedding feast would be celebrated.

Likewise, Jesus has returned to Heaven to prepare a place for His bride, the Church. When He returns for His bride, He will take her to His Father's heavenly home. There He will remain with His bride for seven years (the duration of the Tribulation). The period will end with "the marriage supper of the Lamb" described in Revelation 19. Thus the seven days in the wedding chamber point prophetically to the seven years that Jesus and His bride will remain in Heaven during the Tribulation.

Revelation

Speaking of Revelation, the structure of that book also implies a pre-Tribulation Rapture in a symbolic sense.

The first three chapters focus on the Church. Chapter 4 begins with the door of Heaven opening and John being raptured from the Isle of Patmos to the throne of God in Heaven. The Church is not mentioned thereafter until Revelation 19:7-9 when it is portrayed as the "bride of Christ" in Heaven with Jesus celebrating the "marriage supper of the Lamb." At Revelation 19:11 the door of Heaven opens again, and Jesus emerges riding a white horse on His way to earth, followed by His Church (Revelation 19:14).

The rapture of the Apostle John in Revelation 4 appears to be a symbolic type of the Rapture of the Church. Note that it is initiated by the cry of a voice that sounds like the blowing of a trumpet (Revelation 4:1). Since the Tribulation does not begin until Revelation 6, the rapture of John in Revelation 4 appears to be a symbolic type that points to a pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church.

Some counter this argument by pointing out that although the Church is not mentioned in Revelation during that book's description of the Tribulation, there is constant mention of "saints" (for example, Revelation 13:7). But that term is not used in the Bible exclusively to refer to members of the Church.

Daniel uses it to refer to Old Testament believers who lived long before the Church was established (Daniel 7:18). The saints referred to in the book of Revelation are most likely those people who will be saved during the Tribulation, after the Church has been taken out of the world.

Paul's Assurance

An interesting argument in behalf of the pre-Tribulation timing of the Rapture can be found in 2 Thessalonians. The church at Thessalonica was in turmoil because someone had written them a letter under Paul's name stating that they had missed the "gathering

to the Lord” and were, in fact, living in “the day of the Lord.” II Thessalonians 2:1-2

Paul attempted to calm them down by reminding them of his teaching that the day of the Lord would not come until after the Antichrist is revealed. He then stated that the Antichrist would not be revealed until a restraining force “is taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7).

There has been much speculation as to the identity of this restraining force that Paul refers to. Some have identified it as the Holy Spirit. But it cannot be the Holy Spirit because there will be people saved during the Tribulation, and no one can be saved apart from the testimony of the Spirit (John 16:8-11 & 1 John 5:7).

Note: I disagree with Dr. Reagan on the identity of the restrainer. Before the saints were filled with the Spirit, believers did not possess the infilling of God’s Spirit. They relied on the Prophets that were overshadowed by the Spirit as they prophesied. The Bible seems to say that the same situation will exist during the Great Tribulation. God will use the 144,000 who are sealed before the wrath of God begins. Let’s look at it more closely: (Revelation 7 thru 14)

1. John calls the 144,000, “servants,” “servants the prophets,” and “servants of God” in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 6:11, 7:3, 10:7, 19:2)
2. The four angels do not hurt Earth until the 144,000 are sealed. (Revelation 7:3)
3. The 144,000 will be the first to receive the seal of God. (Revelation 7:3) They will be presented to God as the firstfruits of the Great Tribulation. They will not be defiled with women and they will travel with Jesus wherever He goes. (Revelation 14:4)
4. Unlike the *numberless* multitude that will come out of the Great Tribulation, the 144,000 will be *numbered*. (Revelation 7:5-8, 9, 14)
5. The 144,000 will experience and endure the sufferings of Christ. They will be honored above the rest of the redeemed. No one else will be able to sing their song. (Revelation 14:1, 3)
6. No lie or falsehood will be found in the mouths of the 144,000. (Revelation 14:5)
7. The 144,000 will visibly wear the names of the Father and Son on their foreheads throughout eternity. (Revelation 14:1; Revelation 22:3, 4)
8. The 144,000 will be Jews, descendants of Abraham. (Revelation 7:5-8)

The 144,000 are Jews who accept Christ as their Messiah. They evangelize the world and are responsible for a great multitude that are saved. However, their salvation is marked by endurance unto the end, even though it is by grace.

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. “ Matthew 24:13

The restrainer is the Holy Spirit and He is in us so we go when He goes. However, if you think about it, if the restrainer is the Church, as Dr Reagan says, and it goes, it goes without the Holy Spirit and is left alone in the heavens to face the onslaught of the prince of the power of the air that sons of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:1–2)

Others have identified the restrainer as human government. It is true that government was ordained by God to restrain evil (Romans 13:1-4). But the governments of the world are in rebellion against God and His Son (Psalm 2), and they are therefore a contributor to the evil that characterizes the world.

Furthermore, the Tribulation will not be characterized by a lack of government. Rather, it will feature the first true worldwide government (Revelation 13:7).

In my opinion that leaves only one other candidate for Paul's restrainer — and that is the Church. It is the Church that serves as the primary restrainer of evil in the world today as it proclaims the Gospel and stands for righteousness.

When the Church fails in this mission, evil multiplies, as Paul graphically points out in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Paul says that society in the end times will be characterized by chaos and despair because “men will hold to a form of religion but will deny its power.” When the Church is removed from the world, all hell will literally break loose.

Regardless of when the Rapture actually occurs, we need to keep in mind that the Bible teaches that societal conditions are going to grow increasingly worse the closer we get to the Lord's return. That means Christians will suffer tribulation whether or not they go into the Great Tribulation. And that means all of us had better be preparing ourselves.

If you are a Christian, you can do that on a daily basis by putting on “the full armor of God”(Ephesians 6:13), praying at all times in the Spirit that you will be able to stand firm against the attacks of Satan (Ephesians 6:14-18).

If you are not a Christian, your only hope is to reach out in faith and receive the free gift of God's salvation, which He has provided through His Son, Jesus (John 3:16).

Conclusion

The **rapture** is an eschatological term used by certain Christians, particularly within branches of North American evangelicalism, referring to a purported end time event when all Christian believers – living and dead – will rise into Heaven and join Christ.

No one, at this point in human history, can say it is fact or fiction because it has not as yet happened. We can only refer to those scriptural indicators that point to the soon to be reality of a Rapture or sudden catching away of the true believer.

There are plenty of scriptures that confirm a real event is about to happen. My eBook, I think, has shown that when it happens, it will be a Pre-Tribulation event.

The Bridegroom is coming. The Philadelphia church has issued its midnight cry. The foolish virgins are off looking



for oil. The door of salvation is about to be closed. Today is the day of salvation but tomorrow will just be too late.

If you are one of the virgins that fell asleep and now are awake, don't be foolish. Repent and be Born Again. Fill yourself with God's Spirit and His Word and be ready, ever watching and praying for the Bridegroom to appear.

I believe it will occur in my lifetime. But, even if it doesn't, I will keep alert with my ear attuned to His voice and my heart filled with His Word to walk with Him by faith every day. I will occupy until I see Him face to face.

Left Behind

Introduction

The Bible says that Jesus Christ will one day return to this earth. Listen to what the angel said to the men of Galilee just after they saw Him ascend into heaven.

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” **Acts 1:11**

Here's what Jesus told His disciples, “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” **John 14:2-3**

Here's what the apostle Paul told the Thessalonian church. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” **I Thes. 4:16-17**

The three scripture references above tell us that Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us and is coming back one day. I think it is about time that we look at what life will be like before His return and who actually will be caught up in the clouds in the rapture of His church.

When Will Jesus Return?

No one knows when Jesus will return, only God the Father. Attempts have been made before to guess the exact date but the dates have come and gone and we are still here. So are, or were those who made the predictions.

Listen again to the scriptures.

1. **Mark 13:32** - But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.
2. **I Thes. 5:2** - For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
3. **Matthew 24:42** - Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
4. **Luke 12:40** - Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.
5. **Matthew 24:26-27** ²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ²⁷ For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The Condition of The Church At Jesus' Return

The apostle Paul did not want us to be deceived. He wrote to the church answering their questions..."Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, **except there come a falling away** first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **II Thes, 2:3-7**

The Condition of Society At Jesus' Return

According to Matthew 24, here's what will happen as we draw closer and closer to the "Big Event" which is the end of all things. These are the signs of the times that tell us if we are really in the last days before Jesus comes back and whether or not we are fast approaching the end of days.

1. Many shall come on the scene saying, I am Christ;(or I am a Christian) and shall deceive many.
2. We will hear of wars and rumors of wars.
3. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
4. There will be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
5. Many will be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
6. Many false prophets will rise, and shall deceive many.
7. The love of many shall wax cold.
8. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations.
9. As the days of Noah were, so will be the days before Jesus returns.

The Cause And Effect Scenario

One powerful example of cause and effect occurred in the time of Noah. The book of Genesis makes clear that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually” (**Genesis 6:5**). The world then was “filled with violence,” as humans corrupted themselves and God’s creation (**Genesis 6:11**).

This disobedience to God’s beneficial laws caused automatic pain and suffering to the point that God was “grieved in His heart” and decided to start all over again through Noah and his family (**verses 6, 18**).

Even though, from God’s perspective, the storm clouds of the impending flood were obvious, the people of Noah’s day ignored Noah’s warnings and lived as if nothing were wrong. Jesus Christ made this point in His warning to people about the signs of the end time. He said...

“For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (**Matthew 24:38-39**).

Year after year, human opinions about sin have changed. Actions recognized as wrong in the past are increasingly accepted, whether premarital sex, cheating, lying, swearing, lusting or homosexuality. Jesus warned that we must not fall prey to the apathy of Noah’s day.

Two Key Signs One For You & One For Them

It’s important to see that life is as usual before and up to the great tribulation. There are no signs or are there? Hear what the Apostle John says, “even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” **I John 2:18** This is how we know that we are living in the last time/days...because of the many “Anti-Christ” that are in the world.

The other sign is the revelation of the Son of Man in heaven. The Unveiling of His Shekinah Glory to this world. After the tribulation came the Sign of His coming, being the glory He exhibits in heaven and will here on the earth.

There are signs everywhere but the two mentioned above are the most important because of what they tell us.

Sign #1...Multiple Antichrists...The earth is full of antichrists that are hard at work trying to mislead the human race and Christians in particular. Have you noticed any antichrists lately? The one thing they do that gives them away as being an, “antichrist” is...well I’ll let John tell you, “**1 John 4:2** “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **1 John 4:3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” **2 John 1:7** “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

Sign #2... Shekinah Glory..., which is the full glory of God. However, note that sign #1 is for us along with all the other signs. Sign #2 is a warning to those who are alive after the tribulation. This is pictured in **Revelation 6:16**, “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:”

Who Goes And Who Is Left Behind?

The children of God that have been “Born Again” are the folks that will be raptured from this earth and spared the wrath of God. “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.¹¹ Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” **I Thessalonians 5:9-11**

The 1st century Saints were admonished to take comfort in the fact that God had not appointed them to wrath. That would be His wrath that will be poured out on the ungodly. The great tribulation is when God pours out His wrath upon the earth.

Here is another few passages to look at from **II Thessalonians**, chapter two.

“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? **6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.**⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: **only he who now letteth (Restrains or hold back) will let, until he be taken out of the way.**

⁸ And then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹² that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Note: God’s wrath is to be poured upon those who take pleasure in unrighteousness, not those that love and serve the Lord. God will even send them a strong delusion to be sure they will not repent.

One More Thought...” For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” **II Thessalonians 2:7**

He that letteth (or Restrains) is the Holy Spirit of God. Until He is taken out of the way, He will continue to restrain the full expression of evil in human flesh from appearing. Because Jesus said He would never leave us comfortless but would be with us even to the end of the age, it only makes sense that when He, the Holy Spirit, is taken, we will be taken with Him.

To leave us and take Him would be abandonment and contrary to what Jesus said. So, we will go with the Spirit when He goes and that will be before the Antichrist is revealed. This qualifies us to receive a Pre-Tribulation Exit. The wrath of God falls only after the Man of Sin is revealed.

So Who Will Be Left Behind?

If you are not, ”Born Again” you will be left behind when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way. You will have to face the anger of the “Antichrist” as he takes over the world and dominates the human race. It will be a full manifestation of evil that the world has ever seen. You will be left to go through the 7-year tribulation and be forced to receive the mark of the beast or die.

However, these free will choices to accept Jesus and possibly die for your faith is only offered to those who realize what has happened and repent. Those that rejected God to follow false gods, and those that would not submit to the will of God but follows after wickedness...the scripture says God will send them a great delusion so that they might be damned.

The prevailing notion is that all believers will make it to heaven. But is this theory really grounded in Scripture? I’m convinced that not all believers will be in the rapture. Here’s why:

1. The word, “believe” is defined as relying upon, adhering to and trusting in. You can say that you believe but if you are not relying on, adhering to and trusting in, you are not believing. You’re just saying you are and fooling yourself.

Example...I can believe that a chair can support my weight but until I sit down in it, I haven’t really believed at all. I had the head knowledge but not the practical relationship. So it is with many Christians. They have head knowledge but no relationship. They do not really believe at all.

2. Many Christians are Christians because they belong to a church and are relying on their church membership to save them. They do not really know Jesus.
3. Yet other Christians do not follow the doctrine of “Salvation By Grace”. They believe in salvation as a result of being good and doing the right things in live. They are never sure of their salvation because it is based upon works, not grace, which is not Biblical. (see Ephesians 2:8-10)
4. Some Christians have fallen for false doctrine that comes from Satan that denies Jesus as the Son of God and say that the cross has no bearing on salvation. In effect, they say there are many paths to heaven and eternal life.
5. Other folks start churches based upon false doctrine and capture the souls of those that refuse to follow sound biblical teaching. Among these churches are The Universal Church, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witness, The Church of Satan, The Gay & Lesbian Church and many others.

I am sure you will come across more than what I have listed. The point is...not all who call themselves Christian will be saved in the rapture of the church. That experience is reserved for true believers that are, “Born Again” and are walking with the Lord. I believe that these true Christians are found in every walk of life, in most every church.

The Pew Report Tells Us Who Will Be Left Behind

This report says that 78% of all Catholics do not identify themselves as being, ”Born Again”. 51% of all Methodists, 55% of all Presbyterians, 63% of all Lutherans, 29% of all Adventists and 29% of all Restaurants. These folks will not see the kingdom of God because they are not, “Born Again” by their own admission.

All the wicked; all the false religions and all the Christians that claim a church affiliation but have never been Born Again...will be left behind when Jesus comes to take His church to heaven. That’s a lot of folks.

The, Born Again” Christian

Listen to what Jesus said as recorded by the apostle John. “Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot* enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” **John 3:3-6**

Those that are not Born Again cannot see the Kingdom of God. This means they are not Christian, even if they claim to be. They may be a member of a church or not but religion doesn't count. Being “Born Again” counts.

The Pew Research Organization also reports percentages of folks in certain denominations that identify themselves as, “Born Again” or not. Protestant denominational families are quite divided on this measure, including Methodists (45% born-again or evangelical vs. 51% no), Presbyterians (42% yes vs. 55% no), Lutherans (33% yes vs. 63% no), Adventists (63% yes vs. 29% no), and Restorationists (66 yes vs. 29% no).

The question is, Are non “Born Again” Christians really children of God? I think it is important to examine why Jesus said, “You Must Be “Born Again”. He was talking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews of that day.

So What Does It Mean To Be, “Born Again”?

To be “Born Again” is to undergo a "spiritual birth", or a regeneration of the human spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is contrasted with the physical birth everyone experiences. It refers to being converted to a personal faith in Christ which cause the new birth to occur. It requires repentance from personal sin and accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

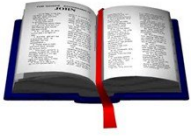
Deception Rules The Day

Sixty-five percent of all Christians say there are multiple paths to eternal life, ultimately rejecting the exclusivity of Christ teaching, according to the latest survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Even among white evangelical Protestants, 72 percent of those who say many religions can lead to eternal life name at least one non-Christian religion, such as Islam or no religion at all, that can lead to salvation.

Surprisingly, Christians also believe atheism can provide a ticket to heaven. Forty-six percent of white mainline Christians, 49 percent of white Catholics and 26 percent of

white evangelicals who believe many religions lead to salvation say atheism can lead to eternal life.



The Bible Tells The Truth

Here's what the bible says:

1. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. **Acts 4:12**
2. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. **John 14:6**
3. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. **John 10:9**
4. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. **Revelation 3:20**

Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. **Matthew 7:13-14**

Just "One Way"

It is hard for most folks that are not "Born Again" to understand why there is just one way to God, yet it is true. There is only one way and that is through Jesus Christ. The Bible is our source to prove that the one-way doctrine is valid. **Acts 4:12** says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Here's why it's so important. Adam sinned against God and died spiritually. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat:¹⁷ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." **Genesis 2:16-17**

His creation account shows him being made of clay and God breathing into him the breath of life. He thus became a living soul. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." **Genesis 2:7** When he sinned, the breath of life was taken from him and he became a dead soul. He was truly the first of a race of the walking dead.

Life is always in relationship to God. It is His breath or Spirit that makes us alive. So, death passed upon all men for all sinned. **(Romans 5:12)** Their nature was now sinful. We see this in all of us and in our society.

The 2nd birth experience is by the Spirit. The Breath of Life is given to each repentant heart and their souls become alive to God. They become His children by birth.

Jesus is the only way to attain salvation. All the world religions cannot save us. Joining a church or specific faith cannot save us. It must be an acknowledgment of our sin, our cry before the throne of God for forgiveness, and our invitation for Jesus to come into our hearts and save us. His name is the only name that can get us through death into eternal life.

Conclusion

The scripture tells us that the children of God experience the witness of the Holy Spirit, telling them that they are the children of God. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” Romans 8:16

If you are a true Christian, you’ll know it. There is no guesswork. God’s Spirit is continually witnessing to your spirit that you belong to God. You will begin to hear His voice and that voice will become, “The Voice In Your Head” telling you what to do or not to do so you will stay on the path to eternal life.

Yes, you’ll make mistakes, fail in your faith at times, and even be disobedient now and then. But there will be a cry in your spirit for the living God and a reverence for Jesus. You will make Him your Lord and follow His teaching the best you know how. He will be your very best friend and when He comes for His Saints, you will be caught up to meet Him in the Air to ever be with Him. The names of all Born Again folks are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

If you are not truly saved and have never heard the Holy Spirit talking to you to confirm your destiny, I suggest you read John 3:16 and allow Christ into your heart and be, “Born Again” by His Spirit.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that Whosoever Believeth In Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Portrait of The Damned Introduction

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;” Romans 1:1

After reading this scripture, it is apparent, to me anyway, that those who hold the truth in unrighteousness will no doubt face the wrath of God.

This eBook is designed to shed light on these kinds of people. Who are they? Where do they live? Why do they knowingly resist God? Are they really going to be damned by God? What does “Damned” mean? What exactly is the wrath of God?

We will search for the answers to the above questions using the KJV version of the Bible, beginning in Romans chapter One. Let’s begin with some definitions so we know the biblical meanings.

A Few Definitions

What is the Biblical understanding of the wrath of God?

Wrath is defined as “the emotional response to perceived wrong and injustice,” often translated as “anger,” “indignation,” “vexation,” or “irritation.” Both humans and God express wrath. But there is a vast difference between the wrath of God and the wrath of man. God’s wrath is holy and always justified; man’s is never holy and rarely justified.

In the Old Testament, the wrath of God is a divine response to human sin and disobedience. Idolatry was most often the occasion for divine wrath. Psalm 78:56-66 describes Israel’s idolatry. The wrath of God is consistently directed towards those who do not follow His will (Deuteronomy 1:26-46; Joshua 7:1; Psalm 2:1-6). The Old Testament prophets often wrote of a day in the future, the “day of wrath” (Zephaniah 1:14-15). God’s wrath against sin and disobedience is perfectly justified because His plan for mankind is holy and perfect, just as God Himself is holy and perfect. God provided a way to gain divine favor—repentance—which turns God’s wrath away from the sinner.

The New Testament also supports the concept of God as a God of wrath who judges sin. The story of the rich man and Lazarus speaks of the judgment of God and serious consequences for the unrepentant sinner (Luke 16:19–31). John 3:36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on Him.” The one who believes in the Son will not suffer God’s wrath for his sin, because the Son took God’s wrath upon Himself when He died in our place on the cross (Romans 5:6–11). Those who do not believe in the Son, who do not receive Him as Savior, will be judged on the day of wrath (Romans 2:5–6).

The wrath of God is a fearsome and terrifying thing. Only those who have been covered by the blood of Christ, shed for us on the cross, can be assured that God’s wrath will never fall on them. “Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more

shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!” (Romans 5:9).... Definition and copy taken from GotQuestions.org.

What Does It Mean To Be Damned By God?

It is logical to assume that anyone that is under the wrath of God is also damned of God. However, what exactly does that mean? Here’s what the dictionary says.

A damned human "in damnation" is said to be either in Hell, or living in a state wherein they are divorced from Heaven and/or in a state of disgrace from God's favor.

The KJV Bible Dictionary says this about the word “Damn.”

1. To sentence to eternal torments in a future state; to punish in hell.
2. To condemn; to decide to be wrong or worthy of punishment; to censure; to reprobate.
3. To condemn; to explode; to decide to be bad, mean, or displeasing, be hissing or any mark of disapprobation; as, to damn a play, or a mean author.
4. A word used in profaneness; a term of execration.

We should never say, “Damn You” because it calls for the wrath of God to be upon that individual and seeks a final solution of eternal damnation. We should not wish that on even our worst enemy. Besides, it is not our job to be the judge, jury and executioner over anyone. That is God’s responsibility.

Why Would God Condemn or Damn Anyone?

God has gone to great lengths to reveal Himself to mankind. We are without excuse when it comes to acknowledging the existence of God.

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them, For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” Romans 1:19

God has a specific reason to pour out His wrath and even damn the souls of men to an eternal death. Here it is, straight from the Word of God.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” Romans 1:21-23

Man has always known that there was a God that created him and ruled over his universe. However, to deny God's existence and refuse to glorify Him as God comes with consequences.

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen...For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:” Romans 1:24-26a

Vile Affections... The descent into evolutionary paganism is always soon followed by gross immorality, specifically including sexual perversion, such as described in Romans 1:26-29. Ancient Sodom was so notorious for homosexuality that its practice has long been known as sodomy (see Genesis 13:13; 19:4-9). The practice became so widespread in ancient Greece that it was considered normal and even desirable. Other examples are abundant and, of course, it is quickly becoming accepted—even encouraged—here in America. Not surprisingly, this was preceded by widespread return to evolutionism in science and education.

(Institute For Creation Research)

When God gives up on you, you fall into vile affections and become the worst of the worst among human beings. Here's a list of vile affections: Romans 1:27-

1. **Going Against Nature**...for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. Romans 1:26
2. **Homosexual lifestyle**....And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. Romans 1:27
3. **Refusal To Acknowledge God**...And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Romans 1:28
4. **Unrighteous To The Bone**....Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful (In other words...Immoral) Romans 1:29-31
5. **Disobedient And Rebellious**...Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Romans 1:32

I think it's important to understand the meaning for some of the words used in #4 above. Most of us know what they mean but some are not used in today's expressions and may not be as familiar.

Fornication...is generally consensual sexual intercourse between two people not married to each other. ... For many people, the term carries an overtone of moral or religious disapproval. Throughout history, most theologians have argued that any and all forms of premarital sex are immoral. A contemporary example is the modern-day theologian Lee Gatiss who argues that premarital sex is immoral based on scripture. He states that, from a Biblical perspective, "physical union should not take place outside a "one flesh" (i.e. marriage) union.

Wickedness...The state of being wicked; a mental disregard for justice, righteousness, truth, honor, virtue; evil in thought and life; depravity; sinfulness; criminality. See SIN. Many words are rendered "wickedness." There are many synonyms for wickedness in English and also in the Hebrew. Pride and vanity lead to it:

Covetousness... Strong desire to have that, which belongs to another. It is considered to be a very grievous offense in Scripture. The tenth commandment forbids coveting anything that belongs to a neighbor, including his house, his wife, his servants, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to him (Exod 20:17). Jesus listed covetousness or greed along with many of the sins from within, including adultery, theft, and murder, which make a person unclean (Mr 7:22). Paul reminded the Ephesians that greed or covetousness is equated with immorality and impurity, so that these must be put away (5:3). A covetous or greedy person is an idolater (5:5) and covetousness is idolatry (Col 3:5). James warns that people kill and covet because they cannot have what they want (4:2).

Maliciousness...or Malice," now used in the sense of deliberate ill-will, by its derivation means badness, or wickedness generally, and was so used in Older English. In the Apocrypha it is the translation of kakia, "evil," "badness." We have "malice" in the more restricted sense as the translation of menis, "confirmed anger." In the New Testament "malice" and "maliciousness" are the translation of kakia (Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 14:20; Colossians 3:8); malicious is the translation of poneros, "evil" (3John 1:10, malignity occurs in Romans 1:29 as the translation of kakoetheia, "evil disposition"; "maliciously," "having ill will."

Malignity... malice, malevolence, ill will, spite, **malignity**, spleen, grudge mean the desire to see another experience pain, injury, or distress. Malice implies a deep-seated often-unexplainable desire to see another suffer.

Despiteful... adjective. Characterized by intense ill will or spite: black, evil, hateful, malevolent, malicious, malign, malignant, mean, nasty, poisonous, spiteful, venomous, vicious, wicked. Slang: bitchy.

Without Natural Affection... This phrase "without natural affection" is the translation of one Greek word, *astergeo*. It was a characteristic of many pagans of the ancient world. Significantly, it is also prophesied to be a characteristic of the humanistic pagans of the end-times. "In the last days . . . men shall be . . . without natural affection" (II Timothy 3:1-3). These are the only two occurrences of this word in the New Testament.

The word *stergeo* ("natural affection") is one of four Greek words for "love," but it is never used at all in the New Testament. It refers to the natural love that members of the same family have for each other. It is such a common characteristic of all peoples that there was apparently no occasion to refer to it at all -- *except* when it is *not* present, when people lose their instinctive love for their own parents and children, and thus are "*without* natural affection." One thinks of the widespread abortions of these last days, as well as the modern breakdown of the family in general.

Implacable,... not placable : not capable of being appeased, significantly changed, or mitigated and *implacable* enemy.

Lets Paint A Portrait

Some folks see only with their five senses. If they can't smell it, feel it, taste it or otherwise use their natural senses, it doesn't exist. However, there are those that see with their spirit and feel with their heart. They look at such things as character, morals, and commitment.

Those that see with the spirit paint a portrait of the damned with character that reveals itself in personality traits and actions. Jesus, referring to false prophets said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16

Paul, the Apostle, tells us about the fruit of the Spirit in his letter to the Galatians. He says, "But the fruit of the Spirit.

That fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." **This fruit is in fact the very character of God.**

The fruit is contrasted with the *works of the flesh*, which are also found in Galatians chapter five. They are the deeds of the flesh and include but are not limited to the following:

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21

So, to see a person that has been damned by God, you will see a person that is a murderer; One who is caught up in habitual envying of others; one who allows hate to dwell in their heart, one that commits adultery against his or her spouse; one who is into sexual immorality; one who fights against peace to create strife; one who puts idols above God and worships them; one who participates in witchcraft (The worship of Devils);

These folks are soiled, filthy, base, unchaste, sinful, corrupt and polluted. However, Paul says that this portrait, at one time, was a picture of us. We were the monsters that ruled the world in sin. See it for yourself in Paul's letters to Titus and the Colossian church.

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” Titus 3:3

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight:” Colossians 1:21-22

You'll remember that God created man in His own images and in His likeness. Man was, originally, created to manifest the very character or nature of God on the earth. But, with the disobedience of one man, Adam, sin entered into the human race and death came as a result of that sin...so says Paul in his letter to the Romans.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” Romans 5:12

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Dead in Sins

Eph 2:1 ¶ And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Col 2:13 ¶ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

From Death Into Life

Here's what these scriptures tell us about ourselves:

1. We were just like everyone else, dead in our sins.
2. We walked according to the lifestyle of this world, following the call of immorality.
3. We were slaves to Satan who rules the souls that are living on planet earth but dead spiritually.
4. We were children of wrath and disobedient against the will of God.
5. We talked the talk and walked the walk as people of the flesh, not the Spirit.
6. We were enemies of God, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Aren't you glad that I said, "Were?" Paul goes on to say that Jesus reconciled us to God by His own death, as a penalty for sin. He did all of this so He could present us holy and unblameable and unproveable before the throne of God.

The true gospel message is that God lost His most prized possession, Mankind. He lost Adam to disobedience and self-will that actually led him to attempt to be his own god. That was the same sin that Lucifer, otherwise know as Satan, and the Devil commuted.

The difference between Lucifer's sin and Adam's was Adam was deceived into believing a lie. Here's what Jesus said that later became the Divine solution. He tossed Lucifer out of heaven and into chains of darkness. God, through Jesus' death, resurrection and righteous life, restored man to his rightful place in God's kingdom. God's great Love for us was manifested in Jesus.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Why did God do such a thing?" For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:17

How can you and I be saved and escape the wrath of God that He will pour out upon the wicked?

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:18-19

Aliens And Strangers

The Bible says we are now Aliens in this world.

The Word of God tells us that we are **aliens and strangers** in this world. This means that this world is NOT our home. We do not belong here. To understand this better let's use an example: let's say that you board a plane and land in a country foreign to you. You are alien and foreigner in that country. You don't understand the language of the people. You cannot read their newspapers. You turn on the TV but you soon have to turn it off as you do not understand anything. It is all foreign to you. You are an alien and a stranger.

If however, using the same example, you start speaking the language of the people, listen to their news, watch their TV programs, speak about what they speak and do what they do, you are no longer a stranger and an alien, but you are **integrated** to that country, you are part of it. It is the same for us as Christians.

The Word of God tells us that we are strangers and aliens to this world. We are not supposed to be conformed to this world, to share the same interests with the world, behave as the world behaves, watch what the world watch and have the same vision and interests as the world has. We are strangers and aliens here and we are not supposed to be integrated or conformed to this world (Romans 12:2) i.e. be shaped together with the world (that's what co-formed means). We are coming from another world, another home. Where is this home? Here are a couple of passages that answer this:

Philippians 3:20...“**For our citizenship is in heaven**, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,…”

Colossians 1:12-13...“He [God] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us **into the kingdom of the Son of His love**,”
The Journal of Biblical Accuracy

“The Soul That Sinneth, It Shall Die.”

I know that some folks that read this eBook will be upset. After all, who am I to say that the entire world, every person, is full of sin and headed towards eternal destruction? However, I did say it but I did not originate the idea. God sets the rules. He said it first, “*The soul who sinneth, it shall die.*” Ezekiel 18:20 I just happen to believe it, especially when Jesus backs it up. Here's what He said.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3:19

Most of the world is on that broad road that leads to destruction. The gate is wide and easily seen. The only way to enter the narrow gate is to repent (turn from your wicked ways) and receive Jesus as your savior.

Wait A Minute...I am a decent person. I try to be good, go to church occasionally, work hard and love my family, so why is God angry with me?

The measurement for which salvation is given is Holiness. We must be continually Holy, without even one blemish...no disobedience! No sin! If we miss the mark, we miss it, even if it is just by a few inches. In other words, we can never reach God's level because He is Holy and Righteousness. We are not, no matter how good we seem to be in the eyes or the eyes of others.

***“All have sinned and fall short
of the glory of God.”***

Romans 3:23

Again Paul, in his letters to the church, makes this clear. He says...

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” ... Paul wrote in Romans 2:10, “It is written: none is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.”

Think About it...if God had looked at the human race as fixable, he would have fixed it with new laws or some easier mark to attain. But He, instead, saw mankind as totally depraved and thus concluded that there was no fixing it. He knew that mankind could not or would not ever attain Holiness on its own merits. (Remember, Holiness is moral purity) So...He deemed it all as spiritually dead so He could save it all through life, the life of Jesus.

Where is good works? Where are man's efforts to attain moral purity? The best of the best is still short of the mark. Man is still a slave to sin. Only Jesus could redeem mankind. Listen as you read this next scripture. It will show the truth.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Romans 5:10

The death of Jesus on the cross, reconciled us unto God. However, our salvation comes by His life. Where we fail, time after time, He did not. He lived the life we were supposed to live and He dies the death we were supposed to die.

Salvation

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
Romans 10:9-10

It's that simple. Confess Jesus with your mouth by making Him Lord of your life and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead...and you shall be saved. This puts you on the narrow way that leads unto eternal life. Read my other eBook on "How To Be Born Again" for all the details.

Conclusion

I think I have done a fair job of painting a portrait of the damned. Little did I know when I started this study that I would see myself and every other believer from Adam to the end of time in the portrait. Thank God I can say, it was in the past and not now. Thank God that I responded to the call, repented and received Jesus as my personal savior. How about you?

It saddens me to know that the entire world is soon to come face to face with the wrath of God. However, all peoples of the earth have the knowledge of the one true and living God and they are all subject to His judgment or grace. I am glad that I have found grace in His sight and will not suffer the terror of His wrath.

And now...it is your choice. What shall we say to these things...Believe and be saved or ignore and be damned?

Let me know what you think

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The Reality of Hell Introduction

This teaching is written to expose the myth that hell does not exist and that there is no judgment or eternal punishment.

I will be using the KJV of the bible most of the time to share scripture on this topic. I will also look for other noted personalities or articles on the web that have opinions on the subject.

My hope is that readers will see the reality of Hell and take Biblical actions to avoid it at all cost.

The end of days is fast approaching and we need to be assured of our salvation and focused on those things that really count. Knowing that there is a Hell and understanding how to escape it, as a destiny, is the most important thing anyone can do.

How many times have you told someone to, “*Go To Hell*”? How many times has someone told you the same thing? If we knew the type of place that Hell is, we would not be telling others to go there.

Webster defines Hell as “A place regarded in various religions as a spiritual realm of evil and suffering, often traditionally depicted as a place of perpetual fire beneath the earth where the wicked are punished after death.”

The Bible definition goes like this, “Hell is the future place of eternal punishment of the damned including the devil and his fallen angels. There are several words rendered as Hell:

1. **Hades**--A Greek word. It is the place of the dead--the location of the person between death and resurrection. (See **Matt. 11:23, 16:18, Acts 11:27, 1 Cor. 15:55, Rev. 1:18, 6:8**).
2. **Gehenna**--A Greek word. It was the place where dead bodies were dumped and burned (**2 Kings 23:13-14**). Jesus used the word to designate the place of eternal torment (**Matt. 5:22, 29, 30, Mark 9:43, Luke 12:5**).
3. **Sheol**--A Hebrew word. It is the place of the dead and not necessarily the grave but the place the dead go to. It is used of both the righteous (**Psalms 16:10, 30:3, Isaiah 38:10**) and the wicked (**Num. 16:33, Job. 24:19, Psalm 9:17**).
4. **Hell** is a place of eternal fire (**Matt. 25:41, Rev. 19:20**). It was prepared for the devil and his angels (**Matt. 25:41**) and will be the abode of the wicked (**Rev. 21:8**) and the fallen angels (**2 Pet. 2:4**).

It's not a place where the average folks would want to go, visit or live. But, according to Jesus, many will go there. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.” **Matthew 7:13**

The Horror of Hell

Ton Ascol of Ligonier Ministries shares four truths about hell that Jesus taught in **Matthew 25:41-46**. These truths should cause us to grieve over the prospect of anyone experiencing its horrors.

First, hell is a state of separation from God. On the day of judgment, Jesus will say to all unbelievers, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire” (v. 41). This is the same sort of language that Jesus uses elsewhere to describe the final judgment of unbelievers (see **7:23**).

To be separated from God is to be separated from anything and everything good. That is hard to conceive because even the most miserable person enjoys some of God's

blessings. We breathe His air, are nourished by food that He supplies, and experience many other aspects of His common grace.

On earth even atheists enjoy the benefits of God's goodness. But in hell, these blessings will be nonexistent. Those consigned there will remember God's goodness, and will even have some awareness of the unending pleasures of heaven, but they will have no access to them.

This does not mean that God will be completely absent from hell. He is and will remain omnipresent (**Ps. 139:7–8**). To be separated from the Lord and cast into hell does not mean that a person will finally be free of God. That person will remain eternally accountable to Him. He will remain Lord over the person's existence. But in hell, a person will be forever separated from God in His kindness, mercy, grace, and goodness. He will be consigned to deal with Him in His holy wrath.

Secondly, hell is a state of association. Jesus says that the eternal fire of hell was “prepared for the devil and his angels” (**Matt. 25:41**). People were made for God. Hell was made for the Devil. Yet people who die in their sin, without Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, will spend eternity in hell with the one being who is most unlike God. It is a tragic irony that many who do not believe in the devil in this life will wind up spending eternity being tormented with him in hell.

The third truth is that **it is a state of punishment.** Jesus describes it as “fire” (v. 41) and a place of “punishment” (v. 46). Hell is a place of retribution where justice is served through the payment for crimes.

The punishment must fit the crime. The misery and torment of hell points to the wickedness and seriousness of sin. Those who protest the biblical doctrine of hell as being excessive betray their inadequate comprehension of the sinfulness of sin. For sinners to be consigned to anything less than the horrors of eternal punishment would be a miscarriage of justice.

And that brings us to the **fourth truth** — **hell is an everlasting state.** Though some would like to shorten the duration of this state, Jesus' words are very clear. He uses the same adjective to describe both punishment and life in verse 46. If hell is not eternal, neither is the new heaven and earth.

How can God exact infinite punishment for a finite sin? First, because the person against whom all sin is committed is infinite. Crimes against the infinitely holy, infinitely kind, infinitely good, and infinitely supreme Ruler of the world deserve unending punishment. In addition to that, those condemned to hell will go on sinning for eternity. *There is no repentance in hell.* So the punishment will continue as long as the sinning does.

The dreadfulness of hell deepens our grateful praise for the salvation we have in Jesus Christ. *Hell is what we deserve.* And hell is what He experienced on the cross in our place.

Believing the truth about hell also motivates us to persuade people to be reconciled to God. By God's grace, those of us who are trusting Christ have been rescued from this horrible destiny. How can we love people and refuse to speak plainly to them about the realities of eternal damnation and God's gracious provision of salvation? Clearer visions of hell will give us greater love for both God and people.

How Can A Loving God Condemn So Many To Hell

I have a few friends that tell me, in no uncertain terms, that they cannot understand how a loving God can dam to hell so many people. It is obvious that they do not comprehend the concept of the "Free Will" of man.

God is in full control of His creation. Part of that control is to allow man to have a free will to also be in full control.

When you gather thousands or even a few folks together that are all exercising their free will, things can get ugly. Some will get drunk, others will kill or steal and yet others will exercise good judgment in life. All this interaction of free wills brings on different opinions, different lifestyles and different attitudes.

If God intervenes to stop the flow of our free will decisions, He tampers with the future and denies man his right to be a free moral agent. His actions would contradict His own will and plan for mankind. Man must be free to choose his own way in order to escape a robotic existence that is not what God or man wants.

However, with this gift of "Free Will" comes responsibility. The Bible says that the soul that sins will die..." Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." **Ezekiel 18:4** ("Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.") **Galatians 6:7** ("For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;") **Romans 3:23**

It should be obvious by now that **God sends no one to hell.** He does, however, allow mankind to send themselves to hell by their own choices in life. Our life choices do affect our destiny. They take us down the road to destruction or up the road to eternal life.

This concept is not new. We need only to look at a man that drinks a lot and we can conclude that if he does not slack off, he will become a drunk. We can see it coming. The same is true when we look at a person who cares not about their eternal soul, lives for today, denies the existence of God and ignores the truths of the Bible. We can say, if they do not repent, they will ultimately end up in hell. We can see it coming.

Is The Devil In Charge of Hell?

No, the devil is not in charge of anything, but is actually thrown into Hell and ultimately the lake of fire according to **Revelation 20:10**. There is no party in hell for the lost. There is no reward. There is no pleasure at all.

Where Is Hell?

Your guess is as good as mine. Various theories on the location of hell have been put forward. A traditional view is that hell is in the center of the earth. Others propose that hell is located in outer space in a black hole. In the Old Testament, the word translated “hell” is Sheol; in the New Testament, it’s Hades (meaning “unseen”) and Gehenna (“the Valley of Hinnom”). Sheol is also translated as “pit” and “grave.” Both Sheol and Hades refer to a temporary abode of the dead before judgment (**Psalm 9:17; Revelation 1:18**). Gehenna refers to an eternal state of punishment for the wicked dead (**Mark 9:43**).

In the King James Version, **Ephesians 4:9** says that before Jesus ascended into heaven, “he also descended . . . into the lower parts of the earth.” Some Christians take “the lower parts of the earth” as a reference to hell, where they say Jesus spent the time between His death and resurrection. However, the New International Version gives a better translation: “he also descended to the lower, earthly regions.” This verse simply says that Jesus came to earth. It’s a reference to His incarnation, not to His location after death.

The notion that hell is somewhere in outer space, possibly in a black hole, is based on the knowledge that black holes are places of great heat and pressure from which nothing, not even light, can escape. Surprisingly, this concept of hell is presented in the 1979 Walt Disney film *The Black Hole*.

Another speculation is that the earth itself will be the “lake of fire” spoken of in **Revelation 20:10-15**. When the earth is destroyed by fire (**2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1**), the theory goes, God will use that burning sphere as the everlasting place of torment for the ungodly. Again, this is mere speculation.

To sum up, Scripture does not tell us the geological (or cosmological) location of hell. Hell is a literal place of real torment, but we do not know where it is. Hell may have a physical location in this universe, or it may be in an entirely different “dimension.” Whatever the case, the location of hell is far less important than the need to avoid going there.

What Is Hell Really Like?

The Bible tells us that God is light and that there is no darkness in Him. When a soul is separated from God, there is no light, only total darkness. There is no friendships, only total isolation...all alone forever. It is a place of torment. I believe that the ultimate

torment is to see God, feel His love and splendor and have to live with the fact that you can never know such love.

I also see the deep cravings of the flesh being manifested but never fulfilled. Then there is the fire and stench of burning flesh. This type of fire cannot be quenched. It will burn with the wrath of God forever.

I realize that this is a morbid picture and a horrible destiny but that is what Jesus said, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out”.
Luke 13:28

The Controversy Over Eternal Suffering of The Wicked And Annihilation

There is a controversy over eternal suffering and annihilation. Some folks believe that the souls in hell suffer forever. Others read “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” **Revelation 20:14** and conclude that this 2nd death is total annihilation.

The premise for this conclusion is, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” **Revelation 21:14**.

The thought is that our tears are caused by knowing some of our loved ones are suffering in hell and the fact that we remember them no more is due to the end of their suffering by the 2nd death. As hopeful as this thought process is, it is not Biblical because it goes against what God has spoken about the wicked and their destiny.

Many folks that do not believe in God, say, “Even if there is a God and He sends me to hell, It’s not forever”. “I will end up non-existent, as though I never existed...so, that justifies my so-called sin now, to eat, drink and be merry.” Without an absolute penalty, there is no fear of judgment because the punishment is temporary.

When God wipes away all our tears, I believe that He removes the memory of all the bad stuff, including those that chose against God and ended up in eternal damnation.

Are People Suffering In Hell Right Now?

Jesus related a story about a rich man and a beggar. Here’s what He said as recorder by
Luke 16:20-24

“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs, which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; ²³ **And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments**, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

I realize this was just a story that Jesus related. However, there are several important points to consider:

1. The wicked die and find themselves in hell in torment. It's an immediate happening. It is therefore a picture of reality. The Bible also confirms this, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” **Hebrews 9:27**
2. The torment was hell fire.
3. The suffering was of the body and soul.
4. Those assigned to hell cannot leave.
5. They have no way to quench the flames or find any sort of comfort.

They could hear, thirst, feel pain and sorrow, and even communicate with those in paradise. But the one thing that the people in hell could not do was to cease to exist.

After the Resurrection of Christ, things concerning hell changed. Jesus went to hell, took the keys of hell and death (**Rev. 1:18**), and set the captives free—those who were in Abraham's bosom.

Ephesians 4: 9-10 says,

“Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.”

After defeating the devil and setting the captives free, Jesus took those in Abraham's bosom to heaven with Him, where all believers go now. But we will not live in heaven forever. We only live in heaven until the end of the age. Then God is going to make a new heaven and a new earth, and all the believers will live there with Jesus in the new Jerusalem. (**Rev. 21:1-4**)

When you die in your sins, you go straight to hell. You do not pass go or collect \$200. The game is over and you lost big-time. You experience death physically, torment until the end of all things and then a 2nd death of your eternal soul as it is cast into the lake of fire.

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

Although it was never intended for man, hell is an awful place where those who reject so great a sacrifice will join the devil and his angels for eternity. (**Rev. 20:10**)

The Unpardonable Sin

The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit convicts us of one sin, and **it's the only sin that will cause people to go to hell**. That is the sin of rejecting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin [singular], and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me.” (**John 16:8-9**) Excerpts taken from Andrew Womack Ministries article “Hell, A Reality or Metaphor?”

The Punishment of The Wicked

There is a punishment for sinners who refuse to repent. In **Revelation 20:13-15** we read of a resurrection of the dead where people will be judged, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (These are the folks that willingly rejected Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, as the sacrifice for their sin.)

When you are, “Born Again” your name is written in the Book of Life. If your name is not there, you are counted with the wicked, no matter what good you may have done while alive.

Being a Saint and being “Born Again” is not determined by what you do or don’t do. It is determined on what Jesus did. He lived a perfect life in accordance to God’s law and as the perfect Lamb of God, without blemish, became the sacrificed, on the cross of Calvary, as the penalty for sin. This is the essence of the Gospel or Good News. Paul, the apostle put it this way, “For by grace (Unmerited Favor) are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:” **Ephesians 2:8**

The punishment of the wicked dead in hell is described throughout Scripture as “**eternal fire**” (**Matthew 25:41**), “**unquenchable fire**” (**Matthew 3:12**), “**shame and everlasting contempt**” (**Daniel 12:2**), a place where “**the fire is not quenched**” (**Mark 9:44-49**), a place of “**torment**” and “**fire**” (**Luke 16:23-24**), “**everlasting destruction**” (**2 Thessalonians 1:9**), a place where “**the smoke of torment rises forever and ever**” (**Revelation 14:10-11**), and a “**lake of burning sulfur**” where the wicked are “**tormented day and night forever and ever**” (**Revelation 20:10**).

The punishment of the wicked in hell is as never ending as is the bliss of the righteous in heaven. Jesus Himself indicates that punishment in hell is just as everlasting as life in

heaven (**Matthew 25:46**). The wicked are forever subject to the fury and the wrath of God. Those in hell will acknowledge the perfect justice of God (**Psalm 76:10**). Those who are in hell will know that their punishment is just and that they alone are to blame (**Deuteronomy 32:3-5**). Yes, hell is real. Yes, hell is a place of torment and punishment that lasts forever and ever, with no end. Praise God that, through Jesus, we can escape this eternal fate. (**John 3:16, 18, 36**) Excerpts from **GotQuestions.org**

Who Are The Wicked?

Here's what the dictionary says about the word, "Wicked"
(Highly offensive; obnoxious: a wicked stench.)

Adj. wicked - morally bad in principle or practice
evil - morally bad or wrong; "evil purposes"; "an evil influence"; "evil deeds"
immoral - deliberately violating accepted principles of right and wrong
impious - lacking piety or reverence for a god
wrong - contrary to conscience or morality or law; "it is wrong for the rich to take advantage of the poor"; "cheating is wrong"; "it is wrong to lie"
unrighteous - not righteous; "an unrighteous man"; "an unrighteous law"

The wicked are people that live in this lifestyle and practice it every day. They violate the laws of God and rebel against His sovereign rule. They are their own god, doing what they want, not what God created them to be.

Here are a few scriptures related to the wicked and their wickedness.

Genesis 6:5 ...And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 38:7...And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

1 Chronicles 17:9... Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning,

Habakkuk 1:4 ...Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

Malachi 3:18 ...Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Psalms 101:8 ...I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

Proverbs 21:12 ...The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

Proverbs 21:27 ...The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

Why Are The Fires of Hell Necessary?

The cleansing fire brings about a complete eradication of sin. **Ezekiel 28:18-19** speaks the following about Satan, "Therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth...And [you] shall be no more forever." With Satan and all wickedness burned up the Bible says that sin and affliction will not ever arise a second time. (**Nahum 1:9**)

2 Peter 3:10-14 explains that earth being on fire will melt, but that we should look forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. The fire purifies the earth and establishes a place of righteousness for the saved to live. **Isaiah 65:17** adds, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind."

This righteous place is described in **Revelation 21:1-5** in the following way: "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away...Then *He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'*"

The Reason Hell Was Created

In a relativistic culture, the very concept of sin must be elucidated and defended vigorously. If morality is relative to each person, then there is no higher moral standard one can meet or break.

But as C. S. Lewis argued in *Mere Christianity* and *The Abolition of Man*, the idea of an objective moral law is inescapable. When we are snubbed or exploited, we call out for justice. When we encounter people of grit and grace, we praise them as moral examples. Our conscience is more than mere instinct or social conditioning. Yet because there is often a great gap between our ideals and actions, we suffer guilt and regret. Despite our denials and excuses, our consciences dog us throughout our days.

Christianity explains the global stain of human guilt by placing it in a theological framework that both sharpens its sting and makes relief possible. Sin is a moral condition that offends the holy God and removes us from His approval.

While much modern psychology assures us that guilt can be gutted through humanistic methods, the Gospel faces the problem head-on. Guilt is real because we have violated the standards of goodness. Left to ourselves, we can do nothing to undo our wrongs.

Forgiving ourselves is never sufficient because we are in no position to exonerate the guilty party — anymore than a murderer can grant himself or herself a stay of execution.

Lawbreakers deserve punishment. But is hell too extreme? The great American theologian Jonathan Edwards took this question up in his essay, “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.” Edwards argued that because God is “a Being of infinite greatness, majesty, and glory,” He is therefore “infinitely honorable” and worthy of absolute obedience. “Sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and deserving of infinite punishment.”

Edwards’s much maligned but solidly biblical sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” presses home the point that without Christ we have no grounds for confidence and every reason to fear hell. God, who is angry with sin, could justifiably send the unrepentant sinner to hell at any moment. Jesus Himself warned, “*Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell*” (**Matt. 10:28**).

To fathom the horror of sin and the holiness of God we must kneel before the cross of Christ. While the Scriptures command us to be like Christ, this is never presented as the basis of our salvation. Christ’s sinless perfection is impossible for us to attain, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (**Rom. 3:23**). Because Jesus flawlessly obeyed God’s moral law in our place, He is uniquely qualified to be our Savior. On the cross, Christ offered Himself to the Father as a spotless sacrifice for our sin.

Sin against God is so severe that only the death of the sinless Son of God could atone for it. We see the reality of hell when the crucified Christ calls out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (**Mark 15:34**). Paul explained, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (**2 Cor. 5:21**).

In the cross of Christ, the sinfulness of sin, the holiness of God, and the reality of hell are all writ large with the blood of the Lamb. Only through Christ taking on our hell through His death could sinners be reconciled to a holy God. Once this is understood, hell takes on a clarity not otherwise perceived. Apart from the cross, there is no hope for forgiveness or reconciliation. Hell is the only alternative.

Only by understanding hell can we grasp the immensity of God’s love. God’s love took His Son to the hell of the cross for our sake. This is a costly love, a bloody love that has no parallel in any of the world’s religions. Although other religions (particularly Islam) threaten hell, none offer the sure deliverance from it that Christianity offers through the sacrificial love of God Himself.

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Eternal Separation From God

What Does It mean?

The Bible is clear that there are two possible destinations for every human soul following physical death: *Heaven or Hell* (**Matthew 25:34, 41, 46; Luke 16:22–23**) Only the righteous inherit eternal life, and the only way to be declared righteous before God is through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**John 3:16–18; Romans 10:9**). The souls of the righteous go directly into the presence of God (**Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23**).

For those who do not receive Jesus Christ as Savior, death means everlasting punishment (**2 Thessalonians 1:8–9**). This punishment is described in a variety of ways: a lake of fire (**Luke 16:24; Revelation 20:14–15**), outer darkness (**Matthew 8:12**), and a prison (**1 Peter 3:19**), for example. This place of punishment is eternal (**Jude 1:13; Matthew 25:46**). There is no biblical support for the notion that after death people get another chance to repent. **Hebrews 9:27** makes it clear that everyone dies physically and, after that, comes the judgment. Christians have already been judged and sentenced. Jesus took that sentence upon Himself. Our sin becomes His and His righteousness becomes ours when we believe in Him. Because He took our just punishment, we need not fear ever being separated from Him again (**Romans 8:29–30**). The judgment for unbelievers is still to come.

“He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” **II Thessalonians. 1:8-9**. The misery of hell will consist of not only physical torture, but also the agony of being cut off from every avenue of happiness.

God is the source of all good things (**James 1:17**). To be cut off from God is to forfeit all exposure to anything good. Hell will be a state of perpetual sin; yet those suffering there will possess full understanding of sin’s horrors. Remorse, guilt, and shame will be unending, yet accompanied by the conviction that the punishment is just.

There will no longer be any deception about the “goodness of man.” To be separated from God is to be forever shut off from light (**1 John 1:5**), love (**1 John 4:8**), joy (**Matthew 25:23**), and peace (**Ephesians 2:14**) because God is the source of all those good things. Any good we observe in humanity is merely a reflection of the character of God, in whose image we were created (**Genesis 1:27**).

While the spirits of those regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit will abide forever with God in a perfected state (**1 John 3:2**), the opposite is true of those in hell. None of the goodness of God will exist in them. Whatever good they may have thought they represented on earth will be shown for the selfish, lustful, idolatrous thing it was (**Isaiah 64:6**). Man’s ideas of goodness will be measured against the perfection of God’s holiness and be found severely lacking. Those in hell have forever lost the chance to see God’s face, hear His voice, experience His forgiveness, or enjoy His fellowship. To be forever separated from God is the ultimate punishment. (Taken from GotQuestions.com)

What About Those That Never Heard About Jesus, The Christ? What Happens To Them?

Old And New Testament Saints

The Old Testament saints put their trust in, "The Coming One" **Matt 11:2-7** And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." **Isa 29:18-19** "In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel. "

Gentiles... (Everyone Else)

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" **Romans 2:14-15**

The Coming One

Many times Jesus would make one statement and be quoting or hinting at four or five different verses in the Old Testament, especially when He was being attacked by the religious leaders, he would answer their questions with another question or statement that would allude to the Scriptures that they were presuming to know so much about and following so closely. There are numerous examples but for now we will examine John's question and Jesus' response.

If we examine the Old Testament we would find a multiplicity of statements about the Messiah being regarded as "the coming One" in Hebrew its "haba" which means "to come." One of the most popular Messianic Scriptures where this word is used is in one of the Psalms: **Ps 118:26** "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!"

Another Scripture in the Psalms that was regarded in Judaism as Messianic is in Psalm 40 where it contains the word "haba" spoken by Christ Himself through David before Jesus was born: **Ps 40:6-8** Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart."

Another example is found in the last book of our English Bible: **Mal 3:1** "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

The knowledge and expectation of the "Coming One" was prevalent during the time of Christ as we can see from a couple of examples:

John 6:14 "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

John 11:25-27 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Old Testament saints looked ahead to the "coming one". Their faith and hope was in Him. The New Testament saints looked back to the cross, put their faith in the, "One who came." Messiah is a Hebrew term. It means, "Anointed." and Christ is a greek term also meaning Anointed. Thus both Old and New Testament saints put their trust and faith in the same Anointed One, sent from God. **John 3:16** *His Name is Jesus, the Anointed One of God.*

Now all the folks that never heard of this Anointed One, which Jesus proved that He was, fall into the **Romans 2:14-15** Salvation Net that is stated above. All babies and children under the age of accountability are automatically saved because they have not willfully denied God's plan of salvation.

Conclusion

God does not want anyone to go to hell (**2 Peter 3:9**). That is why God made the ultimate, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice on our behalf. So, how can we not go to hell? Since only an infinite and eternal penalty is sufficient, an infinite and eternal price must be paid.

God became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ (**John 1:1, 14**). In Jesus Christ, God lived among us, taught us, and healed us—but those things were not His ultimate mission. God became a human being so that He could die for us. Jesus, God in human form, died on the cross.

As God, His death was infinite and eternal in value, paying the full price for sin (**1 John 2:2**). God invites us to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, accepting His death as the full and just payment for our sins. God promises that anyone who believes in Jesus (**John 3:16**), trusting Him alone as the Savior (**John 14:6**), will be saved, i.e., **not go to hell**.

God's Plan of Salvation

If you want this salvation, repent of your sin and receive Jesus as your Savior. It is as simple as that. Tell God that you recognize that you are a sinner and that you deserve to go to hell. Declare to God that you are trusting in Jesus Christ as your Savior. Thank God for providing for your salvation and deliverance from hell. Simple faith, trusting in Jesus Christ as the Savior, is how you can avoid going to hell!

Life At The End of The Age Introduction

This Teaching is designed to be an eye opener for the average Christian and those non-Christians that wonder what life will be like at the end of the world. I will attempt to create a portrait through Biblical revelations given to the church by prophetic word and Jesus Himself.

I will be using the KJV of the bible as my source text as well as opinions from noteworthy individuals who have posted their viewpoints on the Internet.

Will we be alive at the end of the age? What will life be like leading up to and during the end of all things? Should we be alarmed or worried now? How far away is the big event?

We will be discussing the above questions and looking for answers. This will be a study of end times. If we do not consider this topic, we do ourselves a grave injustice because the time will come and it could be in our lifetime. It is better to examine the scriptural references and draw our conclusions now rather than think it will not happen, be unprepared and fall into despair.

Some folks I know are becoming fearful because they don't know when the end of the world will happen. How do you prepare for total destruction? As I talk with others about the end of times, all I get is Fear, Skepticism and Confusion. No one has a clear-cut answer and everyone seems to have his or her own opinion.

Our study will examine the Skeptic's view, the Theologian's view and the person on the street. We'll discover facts, theories and Biblical views of what may very well be our own end of days.

The Big Event

There can be no bigger event in the history of this world than its total destruction. It may even be bigger than its creation. God created it and plans to destroy it. The question is, when? Other questions also exist like: Will I be living when it happens? Can I know before time approximately when it will occur? Is there anything I can do to delay it or stop it from happening? What will life be like in the years just before and as that final moment comes?

Important Terms

Presented by: B.A. Robinson

Eschatology is a Christian term that means the study of the end of history from a religious perspective. Probably more obscure theological text has been written on this topic than on any other belief in Christendom.

The Bible contains many prophecies about the future. The Christian Scriptures (New Testament) in particular, talks extensively about the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. This is usually called His "second coming," or "parousia." The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 24, is devoted to this topic, as is much of the book of Revelation, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. A *literal* interpretation of the Bible shows that four important events are predicted:

The Millennium: Revelation describes an important interval lasting for 1000 years when Christ rules. This is a golden era; a time of universal peace.

The Tribulation: This is a 7-year interval when a world religious-political leader called the Antichrist takes power.

Armageddon: This is a terrible war provoked by the Antichrist. Most people on earth will die. God's wrath will be poured out over evil people who are on the earth at this time. A series of violent events are predicted in Daniel 9, Matthew 24, and Revelation 4-19.

The Rapture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 describes an event when Christ will descend from the heavens towards the Earth. Many conservative Protestants believe that faithful "*born again*" Christians who have previously died will be resurrected, (rise from their graves), and ascend to meet Jesus in the sky. Immediately afterwards, "*born again*" Christians who had not died will also ascend into the air to be with the Lord.

Some Christians interpret events mentioned in the Christian Scriptures as descriptions of real happenings in our future; others interpret them symbolically. This leaves the passages open to many conflicting beliefs about the end times. A lot of intra-denominational and inter-denominational strife has resulted from disagreements about "end time" prophecy.

Yet teaching on the End Times (Eschatology) is important:

- It makes up some 9% of the New Testament, which is a very significant proportion.
- The New Testament teaches that we should be living in the light of the End Times.
- It is important that the Christian community has an informed hope, instead of the current ignorance or fear, and conveys a message of hope.
- It is important that the Christian community has a proper sense of accountability to God including an awareness of the last judgment.

Matthew 24 is one of the best Biblical references for an explanation of the end of the age. Hear what Jesus said when asked when the end of the world would be,

“³ And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Notice that there are three questions. The 1st is when shall the temple be destroyed? The 2nd is what is the sign of His coming? and the 3rd is when shall the end of the world be?

⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. ⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Notice again that life leading up to the end is full of war, rumors, deception, and lies and in verse 7-earthquakes, famines, and pestilences.

⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Jesus tells His disciples that all these signs are not pointing to the end but the beginning...the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Persecution, hate, offence, betrayal will fill their days.

¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Here come the false prophets leading many away from the truth and love waxing cold. Is this the rise of cults and false religions? (This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.) Could this be TBN? They are reaching the entire planet via satellite right now.

²⁵ Behold, I have told you before. ²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ²⁷ For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ²⁸ For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

When Christ comes back it will be spectacular...everyone will see Him.

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ³⁷ ***But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*** ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Discerning The Signs of The Times “Life Before The End”

So, according to Matthew 24, here's what will happen as we draw closer and closer to the “Big Event” which is the end of all things. These are the signs of the times that tell us if we are really in the last days before Jesus comes back and whether or not we are fast approaching the end of days.

1. Many shall come on the scene saying, I am Christ;(or I am a Christian) and shall deceive many.
2. We will hear of wars and rumors of wars.
3. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
4. There will be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
5. Many will be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
6. Many false prophets will rise, and shall deceive many.

7. The love of many shall wax cold.
8. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations.
9. As the days of Noah were, so will be the days before Jesus returns.

Life After The Tribulation

These are prophetic revelations of what is about to happen but are scheduled on God's timeline for after the great tribulation.

1. The powers of the heavens shall be shaken.
2. The sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.
3. The stars shall fall from heaven.
4. The sign of the Son of man in heaven.
5. The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved.
6. The elements shall melt with fervent heat.

Does your future look bright? It should because God's purpose in revealing His plans through the prophets and Jesus and His Apostles is to increase our hope and strengthen our faith.

Peter said, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

Because we know that the end of the world is at hand, we are sure to live in the light of that knowledge. That would be using holy conversation and seeking to walk in a godly lifestyle. This is why we are pre-warned. God does not want us to be caught unaware.

Suddenly And Without Warning

Jesus said about His return to earth that life would be like it was in the days of Noah before the flood. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." **Luke 17:26-27** (without warning was because they did not want to listen or obey. Thus, they were taken by total surprise.)

The

Cause And Effect Scenario

One powerful example of cause and effect occurred in the time of Noah. The book of Genesis makes clear that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). The world then was “filled with violence,” as humans corrupted themselves and God’s creation **(Genesis 6:11)**.

This disobedience to God’s beneficial laws caused automatic pain and suffering to the point that God was “grieved in His heart” and decided to start all over again through Noah and his family **(verses 6, 18)**.

Even though, from God’s perspective, the storm clouds of the impending Flood were obvious, the people of Noah’s day ignored Noah’s warnings and lived as if nothing were wrong. Jesus Christ made this point in His warning to people about the signs of the end time. He said...

“For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” **(Matthew 24:38-39)**.

Year after year, human opinions about sin have changed. Actions recognized as wrong in the past are increasingly accepted, whether premarital sex, cheating, lying, swearing, lusting or homosexuality. Jesus warned that we must not fall prey to the apathy of Noah’s day.

The Day of The Lord

What’s being said? Only This ...life was as normal as ever. There were no real signs that warned the people. It just happened and when it did, it was too late. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” **II Peter 3:10**

I know, Jesus was asked about what was the sign of His coming. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man. What is that sign?

The Unveiling of Shekinah Glory

Revelation 6 says people scream for the rocks and the mountains to cover them up and hide them from the face of the One who sits on the throne, the One who comes in blazing glory. And I believe it's none other than the Lord Himself. *That's the sign*. It is the revelation of the Son of Man in heaven. In the midst of this blackness will appear in blazing, infinite, unveiled glory, the Son of Man. In fact, at the end of verse 30, it says He will come not just with glory but with great glory. Glory like the world has never seen.

Some of the disciples received a glimpse of this glory. Matthew 17 describes the transfiguration of Jesus. Jesus took James, Peter and John up to the mountain, pulled aside the veil of His flesh, and they beheld His glory, and they got a taste of what second coming Shekinah was like. And it was only a small one and Peter never forgot it, and remember when he penned 2 Peter, he said we have not come unto you with cunningly devised fables, we don't tell you lies invented by men, we were eyewitnesses of His majesty when we were with Him in the holy mount. We got a glimpse of second coming glory. (Excerpts from John Mc Arthur of Grace To You)

The word, "**Shekinah**" is a Hebrew word that means the presence of God on earth or a symbol or manifestation of His presence.

Remember the unveiled glory of Jesus, as it is in heaven will not appear until the great tribulation is over with all its destruction, the sun and moon shines no more, the heavens shaken, and the stars falling. Then, in the midst of all this chaos, Jesus opens the heavens so those who are left see Him seated in the heavens.

Two Key Signs One For You & One For Them

It's important to see that life is as usual before and up to the great tribulation. There are no signs or are there? Hear what the Apostle John says, "even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." I John 2:18 This is how we know that we are living in the last time/days...because of the many "Anti-Christ" that are in the world.

The other sign is the revelation of the Son of Man in heaven. The Unveiling of His Shekinah Glory to this world. After the tribulation came the Sign of His coming, being the glory He exhibits in heaven and will here on the earth.

There are signs everywhere but the two mentioned above are the most important because of what they tell us.

Sign #1...Multiple Antichrists...The earth is full of antichrists that are hard at work trying to mislead the human race and Christians in particular. Have you noticed any antichrists lately? The one thing they do that gives them away as being an, “antichrist” is...well I’ll let John tell you, “1 John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **1 John 4:3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. **2 John 1:7** For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Sign #2... Shekinah Glory..., which we have already discussed. However, note that sign #1 is for us along with all the other signs. Sign #2 is a warning to those who are alive after the tribulation. This is pictured in **Revelation 6:16**, “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:”

God’s Exit Strategy For Those Living At The End of Days

Considering that all these things happen during and after the great tribulation of those days, where are the saints? Will they have to go through the tribulation? Will we be spared the ordeal? There is a huge controversy among protestant groups as to the location of the saints when Jesus comes back. Some have positioned the saints as being raptured up into heaven in a pre-tribulation exit while others say they will experience a post-tribulation exit. Still others hold to a mid-tribulation exit. Finally, the last group says there is no exit at all. Let’s see what the scripture has to say.

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
¹⁰ who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

¹¹ Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” **I Thessalonians 5:9-11**

The 1st century Saints were admonished to take comfort in the fact that God had not appointed them to wrath. That would be His wrath that will be poured out on the ungodly. The great tribulation is when God pours out his wrath upon the earth.

Here is another few passages to look at from **II Thessalonians**, chapter two.

“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? ⁶ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

⁸ And then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹² that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Note: God’s wrath is to be poured upon those who take pleasure in unrighteousness, not those that love and serve the Lord. God will even send them a strong delusion to be sure they will not repent.

One More Thought...” For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” **II Thessalonians 2:7**

He that letteth (or Restrains) is the Holy Spirit of God. Until he is taken out of the way, He will continue to restrain the full expression of evil in human flesh from appearing. Because Jesus said He would never leave us comfortless but would be with us even to the end of the age, it only makes sense that when he, the Holy Spirit, is taken, we will be taken with Him. To leave us and take Him would be abandonment and contrary to what Jesus said.

So, we will go with the Spirit when He goes and that will be before the Antichrist is revealed. This qualifies us to receive a Pre-Tribulation Exit. The wrath of God falls only after the Man of Sin is revealed.

Now Hear This! “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” This is the reason we are not to be so soon shaken, fearful, full of doubt and anxious. Because God has made provisions for us so we won’t suffer the wrath of God.

The End of The World Is At Hand

Most folks believe that the end of days is not far off. How far? Well that's another whole story. To say that it is "At Hand" is to say that it is imminent, about to happen or here now. Here are some predictions of the return of Jesus Christ which is synonymous with end of days thinking.

1. Kenton Beshore Kyle, pastor of Mariners church in California, said Jesus Christ would run for the Rapture around 2021. There will then be seven years of tribulation – a period of intense suffering, which will end with Christ establishing a new kingdom.
2. The Messiah Foundation International says an asteroid will collide with the Earth in this year, destroying it. Riaz Ahmed Gohar Shahi, founder of the organization, says the "mammoth comet" is already "hurtling" towards us. Also: followers believe Shahi's image is present on the moon.
3. The world will end for the fifth time in 2060, according to Sir Isaac Newton. The English physicist and mathematician used the Book of Daniel to come up with the date, according to a 1704 letter, which went on show in Jerusalem's Hebrew University in 2007.

The Anti-Christ

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

¹⁸ Little children, **it is the last time**: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. ²⁰ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

²¹ I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

²³ Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. ²⁴ Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also

shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. ²⁶ These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

²⁷ But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. ²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” **I John 2:16-28**

Crimes Against Christians

We have read about how life will be as we get closer and closer to the return of Christ and the end of days. Love will wax cold, wars will break out, and folks will become offended and so on. That brings up an unusual question... Should a Christian protect his or her home and family? In particular, own and carry a weapon?

We read in the paper and see on the news, instances of violence, terrorism and burglaries. The most recent issue of the SafeWise Report tells us that there is an armed burglary every 16 seconds. 60% of these are forced entries and 30% were entries through an unlocked door. 33% enter through the front door. 25 percent of burglars reported cutting telephone or alarm wires before they broke into the home.

According to the FBI, the average dollar loss per burglary in the U.S. is \$2,185. On average, police clears only about 13% of burglaries, and recovering victim's property is even less likely to happen.

I share these statistics with you because the time is coming and even is now when Christians are being targeted by evil men for ambush, victimization and even death. It's my feeling that we should rise up and fight, if necessary, to protect ourselves, our families and our freedom to worship God.

Should you decide to buy a revolver, pistol or other firearm, be sure you find out what the law is concerning concealed carry and gun safety. There are classes and firing ranges around where you can learn.

Conclusion

We began our study seeking to discover life at the end of the age. There is that nagging question in everybody's mind that says, "Will I be here on earth." If so, what can I expect?

By now it should be obvious that the answer lies in where you are spiritually.

Group #1...If you are being led by the Holy Spirit, He will walk with you through this life and when He departs, He will take you with Him. You will experience the Pre-Tribulation Exit. That experience is reserved for only those who have been, "Born Again"

Group #2...If you are not, "Born Again" you will be left behind when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way to face the anger of the "Antichrist" as he takes over the world and dominates the human race. It will be a full manifestation of evil that the world has ever seen. You will be left to go through the 7-year tribulation and be forced to receive the mark of the beast or die. However, this free will choice is only offered to those who are not hostile to God and repent when they realize what is really happening.

Group #3...those left behind that follow after wickedness...those that rejected God to follow false gods, and those that would not submit to the will of God. The scripture says God will send them a great delusion so that they might be damned.

Group # 2 & 3 will not be invited to the Pri-Trib Exit but Group #2 will have a chance to be saved if they can endure until the end. Group #3 has no hope after the Exit of the Saints. However, simply confessing their sin to God, repenting and receiving Jesus into their heart as Lord can save them all. It's not too late.

Which group are you in? When it's all over, Jesus will say these words. "Then shall the King say unto them (The Sheep) on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" Those on His left, (The Goats) well, they didn't make it. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" (**Matthew 25:34 & 41**)

If you are Born Again, we will see you in the clouds rising with us to meet the Lord in the air. If you are in one of the other groups, we, "Born Again-ers" will be watching to see if you are a sheep or a goat.

God help you to make the right decision. Your eternal destiny depends on it.

Heresy In Today's Christian Church

Introduction

This Teaching will focus on Heresy in the church and Christian World. We will identify several heresies, their origins, their purpose, the way to combat them and other aspects.

Our purpose is to make Christians aware of truth and error so they will not succumb to damnable heresies.

We will be using the KJV of the Bible when ever possible and will present the complete scripture reference with its address so the reader can look it up and read it in context.

My hope is that the reader will come out of error if caught up in false teachings and be blessed by the truths of God's Holy Word.

The word, "Heresy" is defined by Webster's dictionary as; adherence to a religious opinion contrary to church dogma; denial of a revealed truth by a baptized member of the Roman Catholic Church; an opinion or doctrine contrary to church dogma; dissent or deviation from a dominant theory, opinion, or practice; an opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to the truth or to generally accepted beliefs or standards.

Heresy, according to Easton's Bible dictionary

Comes from a Greek word signifying (1) a choice, (2) the opinion chosen, and (3) the sect holding the opinion. In the Acts of the Apostles (5:17 ; 15:5 ; Isaiah 24:5 Isaiah 24:14 ; 26:5) it denotes a sect, without reference to its character. Elsewhere, however, in the New Testament it has a different meaning attached to it. Paul ranks "heresies" with crimes and seditions (Galatians 5:20). This word also denotes divisions or schisms in the church (1 Corinthians 11:19). In Titus 3:10 a "heretical person" is one who follows his own...self-willed "questions," and who is to be avoided.

**Heresies thus came to signify self-chosen doctrines
not emanating from God (2 Peter 2:1).**

Where Does Heresy Come From?

Jesus said, ¹⁵ Beware of **false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth-good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth-evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

²⁰ **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**
Matthew 7:15-20

False Prophets Are Anti-Christ

A false prophet is an Anti-Christ. They can be pastors, teachers or just regular folk like you and me. However, they hold a private interpretation of the scriptures and use it to gather souls unto themselves. They make policy and doctrines that contradict the scriptures. They do this for their own gain.

Remember what Jesus said to His disciples on the Mount of Olives? -And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. 5- For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24: 4-5)

The word Christ is Greek for Anointed One. I believe that Jesus was telling His followers that as the world drew closer to its inevitable end that people would show up on the stage of life saying, "I am anointed". It's another way of saying I am a Christian. These professing Christians will deceive many with their damnable heresy. They will wear sheep's clothing. They will speak the lingo, and push their self-willed doctrines that do not align with Biblical revelation.

Christianity is the most adhered religion in the United States, with 70.6% of polled American adults identifying themselves as Christian in 2014. This is down from 1965 where 93% identified themselves as Christian, according to the Pew Religious Report. These folks make up both Protestant and Catholic and every other sects claiming Christianity.

Let's talk for a moment about the many of Matthew 24 that are deceived. Who are these folks? I will list a few so you can see for your self. Each holds fast to a private interpretation: Mormonism, Unity Church, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witness and, well you can fill in all the others. These claim to be children of God but deny or distort the gospel message of Christ. They do not believe in being, "Born Again" as Jesus said in John chapter three nor do they see salvation as being by grace.

To know them by their fruits is to listen to what they say about Christ and Salvation. If it does not line up with what the apostles taught, they are false prophets. They are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Titles like pastor, evangelist, bible teacher and the like mean nothing. We do not respect anyone that distorts the truth of God's Word. We are to turn away. We are the sheep of His pasture and hear only His voice.

Behind The Scenes

Any spiritual minded believer would tell you that all of this is motivated by the devil. Jesus said, as recorded in **John 10:10**, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Peter told the 1st century Christians to, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹ Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." **I Peter 5:8-9**

It's obvious that these wolves in sheep's clothing are sent by Satan to deceive many thereby stealing their destiny, destroying their peace in this world and killing their dreams. We are admonished to resist using our faith in Christ and the Word of God.

The Purpose of Heresy

However, when Paul and Peter's writing began circulating, heresies were defined as a destructive element within the church that creates division through consciously formed opinions and ideas in disagreement with the orthodox teachings of the apostles. Paul condemns it in **Galatians 5:20** as one of "the works of the flesh." Sometimes it is translated "factions" or "party spirit," but regardless of its translation, Paul says that people who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God (verse 21)! (Forerunner, February 1995) Thus the purpose is to cause divisions and destroy established doctrine.

Heresy's Only Goal

The only goal is to lead the believer into error where he or she cannot benefit from the truth. A good example of this is in Galatians chapter three.

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? ² This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? ⁴ Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. ⁵ He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" **Galatians 3:1-5**

Paul called them foolish for starting out in the spirit and ending up in the flesh. That's what the devil wants....to take you away from living your life in the spirit. He wants you to operate in the flesh so you can be tormented day and night.

The error was to dismiss Grace through faith and hold fast to salvation by works. This cancelled out the finished work of Christ on the cross and positioned the believer to work at attaining salvation. No longer was it a free gift. Salvation by works is heresy for sure.

How Old Testament Saints Dealt With A False Profit

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is

testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁴ "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. ⁵ "But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk So you shall purge the evil from among you. **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**

How The Early Church Deal With Heretical Teachings?

The Church fought against heresies from the very start. Here are some ways they attacked errors that crept into the church:

1. **Acts 15:41** – The apostolic visits were solely to confirm or strengthen the church and ensure they are preserved from doctrinal errors.
2. **1Cor. 1:11-13; 2: 1-2; Gal 3:1-3** – The epistles were written to various local assemblies to correct heresies and arrest the trend early.
3. **1 Thess. 5: 2-8** – We are children of the day and not of the night, hence, let us keep the light of the true gospel shining. **Acts 15: 1-31**
4. **1Tim. 1:3-7, 18** – Timothy was given specific charge when he was sent to Ephesus and this is to confront the heretical teachers.
5. **2 Tim. 2:2; 4:2-5** – Paul advocates intentional mentoring as a way of dealing with wrong teachings. This approach will embolden true teachers of the Word to counter the effect of heretical teachings.
6. **Tit.1:9-11** – The assignment of Titus among the Cretans was to stop the mouth of the false teachers.
7. **1 John 2:15-19** – John warns against worldliness, as a sign of heretical teachings. He also identified the spirit at work as that of the antichrist.

How To Identify Heresy? (Gen 3:1-9)

1. It appeals to the flesh – **2 Tim 4:2; 2 Pet 3:3.**
2. It challenges the authenticity of the Word of God.
3. It is half-truth; just enough poison to damage and damn the soul eternally.
4. It does not rely on the operation of the Holy Spirit.
5. It could lead to a movement, but it will not produce true believers.
6. It impoverishes the laity while the clergy lives big.– **1 Pet 5:2-3**
7. It feeds on the ignorance of the followers.
8. It downplays end time warning – **2 Pet 3:3-4.**

Heresy is a neighbor to apostasy. This is why there are homosexuals and lesbians who call themselves believers today.

A sure way to identify a false doctrine is to know the truth of God's Word. The 1st century believers studied, taught, fellowshiped, prayed, lived and died to ensure the decimation of the true doctrine of Christ. They risked everything for it. Nothing was compromised for the truth, **1 Tim 6:3-5; Rom 16: 17; Deut 13:1-10, 2John 10-11.** If you know the truth, not only will it set you free, but you will also be able to identify heresies afar off and help others to do the same. (Excerpts taken from RCCG SUNDAY SCHOOL, UK)

Damage Done By Heretical Teachings?

The biggest damage is divisiveness in the church. There are currently over 3,000 protestant denominations in the United States. Unity is a long way off as Christians fight over doctrines and policies. Here are a few errors that are causing confusion and overshadowing the truth of the apostolic doctrines that originally grounded the believer and solidified the church:

1. A shift from salvation by grace through faith to salvation by the works of the law.
2. A shift from the eternal security of the believer to a loss of one's salvation due to falling short.
3. A trend towards reincarnation as a means of getting better in degrees and thereby gaining salvation.
4. A denial of God as the creator of all things including man for an a theory of evolution.
5. An assault on marriage as being holy and strictly for the benefit of male and female to being expanded to include same sex marriages.
6. A huge decline in the need to be, "Born Again" to enter the Kingdom of God among self identified protestant Christians.

7. A significant rise in the belief that Jesus is no longer the only way to God the Father.
8. The legalization of abortion and the murder of more than 50-million babies in their mother's womb.

I am sure you can think of more ways Heresy has damaged the church and diluted the Christian Faith.

Why Do We Still Tolerate Heresy?

Much of today's heresy started in the secular world. Over the years, Christians began to accept the false teachings until it has now become acceptable in most groups except the ultra conservative. The government was and still is an agent of heresy as it pushes abortion rights and the gay lifestyle through legislation.

Being politically correct is more important than Biblically sound. Churches now accept gays, tolerate immorality and even embrace liberalism, all in an effort to not be ridiculed as a backward non-progressive institution. What was once light to the soul has become darkness in the eyes of the world and the world's darkness is now light by which society defines itself.

Heresy In The Catholic Church

Here is a list of Catholic Traditions that are contrary to Bible truth:

- OF ALL THE HUMAN TRADITIONS taught and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church, which are contrary to the Bible, the most ancient are the **prayers for the dead** and the **sign of the Cross**. Both began around 300 years after Christ.
- The **worship of Mary**, the mother of Jesus, and the use of the term, "Mother of God", as applied to her, originated in the Council of Ephesus around 431 AD.
- The doctrine of **Purgatory was first established** by Gregory the Great in 593 AD. The Bible teaches that we pray to God alone. In the primitive church never were **prayers directed to Mary**, or to dead saints. This practice began in the Roman Church around 600 Ad. (**Matthew 11:28; Luke 1:46; Acts 10:25-26; 14:14-18**)
- The **Papacy** is of pagan origin. The title of **pope** or universal bishop, was first given to the bishop of Rome by the wicked emperor Phocas. This he did to spite Bishop Ciriacus of Constantinople, who had justly excommunicated him for his having caused the assassination of his predecessor emperor Mauritius. Gregory 1, then bishop of Rome, refused the title, but his successor, Boniface III, first

assumed title "pope" IN 610 AD. Jesus did not appoint Peter to the headship of the apostles and forbade any such notion. (Luke 22:24-26; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 1st Corinthians 3:11).

Note: Nor is there any mention in Scripture, nor in history, that Peter ever was in Rome, much less that he was pope there for 25 years; Clement, 3rd bishop of Rome, remarks that "there is no real 1st century evidence that Peter ever was in Rome."

- **Worship of the cross, images and relics** was authorized in 788 AD. This was by order of Dowager Empress Irene of Constantinople, who first caused to pluck the eyes of her own son, Constantine VI, and then called a church council at the request of Hadrian I, pope of Rome at that time. Such practice is called simply IDOLATRY in the Bible, and is severely condemned. (Read Exodus 20:4; 3:17; Deuteronomy 27:15; Psalm 115).
- **Canonization of dead saints**, first by Pope John XV in 995 AD. Every believer and follower of Christ is called saint in the Bible. (Read Romans 1:7; 1st Colossians 1:2).
- **Fasting on Fridays** and during **Lent** was imposed in 998 AD. Imposed by popes said to be interested in the commerce of fish. (Bull, or permit to eat meat), some authorities say, began in the year 700. This is against the plain teaching of the Bible. (Read Matthew 15:10; 1st Corinthians 10:25; 1st Timothy 4:1-3).
- The **Celibacy of the Priesthood** was decreed by Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VII in 1079 AD. Jesus imposed no such rule, nor did any of the apostles. On the contrary, St. Peter was a married man, and St. Paul says that bishops were to have wife and children. **(Read 1st Timothy 3:2,5, and 12; Matthew 8:14-15).**
- The **Rosary**, or prayer beads was introduced by Peter the Hermit, in the year 1090. Copied from Hindus and Mohammedans. The counting of prayers is a pagan practice and is expressly condemned by Christ. **(Matthew 6:5-13).**
- The dogma of **Transubstantiation** was decreed by Pope Innocent III, in the year 1215 AD. By this doctrine the priest pretends to perform a daily miracle by changing a wafer into the body of Christ, and then he pretends to eat Him alive in the presence of his people during Mass. The Bible condemns such absurdities; for the Lord's Supper is simply a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ. The spiritual presence of Christ is implied in the Lord's Supper. **(Read Luke 22:19-20; John 6:35; 1st Corinthians 11:26).**
- **Confession of sin to the priest** at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent III., in the Lateran Council of 1215 AD. The Bible commands us to

confess our sins direct to God. (Read Psalm 51:1-10; Luke 7:48; 15:21; 1st John 1:8-9).

- The **Bible forbidden** to laymen and placed in the Index of forbidden books by the Council of Valencia in 1229 AD. Jesus commanded that the Scriptures should be read by all. (John 5:39; 1st Timothy 3:15-17).
- The **doctrine of Purgatory** was proclaimed as a dogma of faith by Council of Florence in 1439 AD. There is not one word in the Bible that would teach the purgatory of priests. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sins. (Read 1st John 1:7-9; 2:1-2; John 5:24; Romans 8:1).
- **The Council of Trent**, held in the year 1545, declared that **Tradition** is of equal authority with the Bible. By tradition is meant human teachings. The Pharisees believed the same way, and Jesus bitterly condemned them, for by teaching human tradition, they nullified the commandments of God. (Read Mark 7:7-13; Colossians 2:8; Revelation 22:18).
- The **apocryphal books** were added to the Bible also by the Council of Trent in 1545 AD. These books were not recognized as canonical by the Jewish Church. (See Revelation 22:8-9).
- **The Creed of Pope Pius IV** was imposed as the official creed 1560 years after Christ and the apostles. True Christians retain the Holy Scriptures as their creed. Hence their creed is 1500 years older than the creed of Roman Catholics. (Read Galatians 1:8).

The **Immaculate Conception** of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1834. The Bible states that all men, with the sole exception of Christ, are sinners. Mary herself had need of a Savior. (Read Romans 3:23; 5:12; Psalm 51:5; Luke 1:30,46,47).

In the year 1870 after Christ, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of **Papal Infallibility**. This is a blasphemy and the sign of the apostasy and of the antichrist predicted by St. Paul. (Read 2nd Thessalonians 2:2-12; Revelation 17:1-9; 13:5-8,18). Many Bible students see the number of the beast (Rev. 13:18), 666 in the Roman letters of the Pope's title: "VICARIUS FILII DEI." -- V-5, I-1; C-100, I-1; V-S, I-1; L-50, I-1; I-1; D-500, I-1 — Total, 666.

In the year 1931 the same pope Pius XI, reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is "**the Mother of God**". This doctrine was first invented by the Council of Ephesus in the year 431. This is a heresy contrary by Mary's own words. (Read Luke 1:46-49; John 2: 1-5).

In the year 1950 the last dogma was proclaimed by Pope Pius XII, the **Assumption of the Virgin Mary**

(Compiled by Rev. Stephen L. Testa)

Heresies In The Protestant Church

Here are a few false teachings that have crept into our protestant churches.

Salvation By Works...this false doctrine puts our eternal security on a foundation of good works. That is never enough to attain salvation. It also negates the finished work of Christ on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. It also diminishes the concept of a free gift from God that came as a result of His matchless love for us as declared in **John 3:16**.

The House of God Doctrine...this false teaching is that the brick and mortar building is the temple of God and that believers are to keep it holy and be there every time the doors open. It's teaching is that you meet God there, not on the streets of your city or in the quietness of your own heart. This is contrary to **I Cor. 6:19** which says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" The correct theological view is that we, "all Born Again" believers, are the house of God. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."(I Peter 2:5) Next time you go to church, call it a believer's fellowship, not the house of God. You are His house.

Mandatory Tithing...Tithing was exemplified in the Old Testament but the New Testament teaches that we are a new creature in Christ and thus all that we are and have belongs to God. **Matthew 16:24-26** says, "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

Rev. John Walvoord, a Christian theologian, pastor, and president of Dallas Theological Seminary from 1952 to 1986 has a right perspective. Here's what he says, (*Major Bible Themes*, Revised) Grand Rapids: Academie Books

"In matters pertaining to the giving of money, the grace principle involves the believer's recognition of God's sovereign authority over all that the Christian is and has, and contrasts with the Old Testament legal system of tithing which was in force as a part of the law until the law was done away with (**John 1:16-17; Rom. 6:14; 7:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:1-18; Gal. 3:19-25; 5:18; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14**). Though certain principles of the law were carried forward and restated under grace, tithing, like the Sabbath observance, was never imposed on the believer in this dispensation. Since the Lord's Day superseded the legal Sabbath and is adapted to the principles of grace as the Sabbath could not be, so tithing has been superseded by a new system of giving which is adapted to the teachings of grace, as tithing could not be."

Their giving was not by commandment **1 Cor. 8:8**, nor of necessity **II Cor. 9:7**. Under the law, a tenth was commanded and its payment was a necessity; under grace, God is not seeking the gift, but an expression of devotion from the giver. Under grace no law is

imposed and no proportion to be given is stipulated, and, while it is true that God works in the yielded heart both to will and to do of His good pleasure (**Phil. 2:13**), He finds pleasure only in that gift which is given cheerfully, or more literally, "hilariously" (**II Cor. 9:7**)

The early Christians, first of all, gave themselves. Acceptable giving is preceded by a complete giving of oneself (**II Cor. 8:5**). God never imposed tithing on any other than the nation of Israel (**Lev. 27:34; Num. 18:23-24; Mal. 3:7-10**).

God sustains the giver. God will sustain grace giving with limitless temporal resources (**II Cor. 9:8-10; Luke 6:38**). In this connection it may be seen that those who give as much as a tenth are usually prosperous in temporal things, but since the believer can have no relation to the law (**Gal. 5:1**), it is evident that this prosperity is the fulfillment of the promise under grace, rather than the fulfillment of promises under the law. No blessings are thus dependent on exact tithing. Remember, Jesus said in **Mathew 6:33** that these things, meaning stuff that the world seeks after, will be added to the believer as he seeks God and His righteousness. He did not say if you tithe 10%.

God loves a cheerful giver that offers his or her entire being and fortune. Grace giving is what God lays on your heart, not what an Old Testament law dictates. Does this then free the New Testament believer of any obligation to support God's work of grace? No, it does not. Grace giving frees the believer to *hear from God* and opens the door to giving what is placed upon his or her heart. I realize that this teaching lends itself to a less than 10% tithe because of the greed of many or selfishness of some. However, it also promotes giving as a happy cheerful experience that is born out of a close walk with the Lord. We must first hear from God before we give. 10% can easily be an escape from having to hear from God. Remember, under grace, it all belongs to God. We are only Stewards of His blessings.

Man's Purpose Is Self-Determined...Most folks, even Christians, have very little understanding as to where they came from, why they are here and where they are going when they die. We are told that we need to find our slot in life, our purpose, as though it were a profession or job. Only then will we be happy and find peace. This is not in line with Biblical teaching.

God gave us our purpose in Genesis chapter one, **to be the image of God**, His very reflection on the earth. That's a lot different than being a Doctor, Marketing Director or some other profession. His Divine will, will prevail in leading us to a work related job, if we listen to Him and follow His lead. What we take with us along life's way is our character. If we are tuned into God's Spirit, allowing Him to bring forth the life of Jesus in us, we will begin to manifest the fruit of the Spirit as shown in **Galatians 5:22**, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

If we are filled with the Spirit, as we are commanded, (Ephesians 5:18), we will display Godly fruit in our lives. I believe that doing this is letting our light so shine as Jesus asked us to do. (**Mathew 5:16**)

Man of God Supremacy...this is a false teaching. It says that the pastor or some other church leader is the Man of God and therefore cannot be questioned. His word is final. This goes directly against the teaching in **I Cor.12:7-11** that says, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [divers] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

Husband Lordship...this false teaching puts the wife under the foot of her husband and encourages the male to dominate the female as though she were a 2nd class citizen. It goes against the biblical teaching of Ephesians 5:22-33, “²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Husbands and wives are to submit to one another in a bond of love. Yes the husband is the head but that headship is to lead from a position of love counting on the wife for counsel as a helpmeet, knowing that he is not fully equipped to accomplish all that God wants for him.

We are all children of God; therefore, there is no need to be, “Born Again”... We are not all children of God. Listen to Paul as he writes to the church at Corinth. “2 Corinthians 6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? Paul describes two types of folks, light and darkness. The children of light are righteous (In Christ) while the children of the darkness are unrighteous (Dwelling in sin). Being a child of the darkness is to be a child of disobedience. “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Ephesians 2:2

Being, “Born Again” is a prerequisite to salvation. You cannot enter God’s Kingdom without first being born again. See John chapter three.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit ended with the death of the apostles... The biggest issue is found in speaking in tongues. This has divided many a fellowship. Some use the gift to edify themselves and communicate spirit to Spirit with God. Others insist that this century has no need for tongues and they, with all the rest of the gifts, were stopped with the death of the Apostles.

Here’s some food for thought.

1. The gifts validated Jesus’ claim that He was the Messiah, the Christ. They were bestowed upon His followers to continue that validation. Why would that not be needed now in our generation?
2. The gifts were given to the followers of Jesus to help the body to grow and become one. The words of wisdom, knowledge, miracles, and even tongues were all aimed at bringing unity and purpose to God’s people. Isn’t that still needed in today’s world?
3. There are way more people in today’s world, (20 times more), than back in Jesus’ day. Isn’t the need for Holy Spirit power through the gifts needed more now than ever before?
4. The Apostles laid hands on new believers, that were not Apostles, and they received the gifts and began to operate in them. They were passed on and on from anointed believer to new convert. Why would that need to stop? That which is perfect has not yet come.

Satan's deception is obvious in this matter. He has deceived many in believing they do not need even one Holy Spirit gift because it is a thing of the past. This is a practical stripping of power and stealing of authority. If you do not believe that you can discern spirits, you'll never try. If you do not believe that God can and will give you a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge, you'll miss out on His will and end up groping in the dark for answers. The gifts are needed today more than ever before.

The Dangers of False Doctrines

(American Standard Version)

Ephesians 4:14 ...We are no longer to be children, **tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine**, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

1 Timothy 1:18-20 ...This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and **suffered shipwreck** in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

2 Timothy 2:16-18...But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for **it will lead to further ungodliness**, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

Titus 1:10-11...For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because **they are upsetting whole families**, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.

Hebrews 13:9 ...Do not be **carried away by varied and strange teachings**; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

2 Peter 3:17 ...You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men **and fall from your own steadfastness**.

Romans 16:17-18 ...Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech **they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting**.

1 Timothy 1:3-4 ...As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, **which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.**

Galatians 1:8-9...But even if we, or an angel from heaven, **should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you**, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

2 Peter 2:1... But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, **who will secretly introduce destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.
Excerpts from Knowing Jesus.com

Biblical Warnings About Counterfeits

1 John 4:1...Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ASV

Galatians 1:6-7 ...I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ASV

2 Corinthians 11:13 ...For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

Matthew 24:23-24..."Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

Conclusion

It should be noted that Heresy is not restricted to religion. It is a contrary opinion or set of rules that go against an established doctrine. In the above cases, the disregard for original Biblical truth makes it a heresy. The fact that the 1st apostles, who walked with and were

taught by Jesus, fought against most of these heresies proves that what was being introduced to the church, as a new doctrine was false.

As I have mentioned previously, the best way to not get caught up in false teachings is to know the truth. It will set you free and keep you in the Will of God.

One final scripture...**Colossians 2:8**... Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Divine Judgments Introduction

I write this teaching as a biblical study of the Judgments of God. My purpose in attempting this study is to make Christians and inquiring minds aware of the various divine judgments God orchestrated in the earth.

I will look closely at those who were judged and why God judged them. We will look back into the ancient days of Israel, as well as some of the more popular prophetic revelations of future divine judgment.

We will look also at warning signs of pending judgment and key factors as to whether or not a specific event was a judgment from God or a natural occurrence.

We will attempt to formulate conclusions as to what could have been done to prevent God's judgment and review any lessons learned from the reading.

I will be using the KJV bible as the main source for material but will also refer to noted ministries that have posted views and research on the Internet.

Most of us believe in a, "Judgment Day," a day sometime in the future when God will judge humanity, one by one, for its deeds done in the flesh. More and more, folks are setting aside the notion of divine judgment and the concept of God with it. It's easier to believe in evolution or a pantheistic view of god than to become subject to divine judgment.

If there is a god that is everything and everything is god, there is no need for judgment. If evolution is really true, we are our own gods, ever evolving towards perfection. On the other hand, if there is only one true and living God, that created us and everything else, we are obligated to find out who this god is and what he is like so we don't make him angry.

The Bible tells us that there is only one God and that He did in fact create us along with all of creation. It also says that we are responsible to Him and are held accountable.

Humanity is God's prize possession. We are the apple of His eye. Genesis tells us that He created us in His own image and His own likeness. We were to be the head and not the tail. We were to subdue the earth and rule over it. We were fashioned in innocence and was being groomed for eternal perfection as a morally righteous being, just like God.

With the fall of man through disobedience (Sin) against God, the innocence was lost, the breath of life was taken out of the human race and it was left to face a physical death. But God still loved us and set up a plan that would bring us back to Him where we could be restored. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" **Romans 5:8**

So here we sit today waiting to exhale and meet our maker face to face on "Judgment day." Our meeting with God can be a joyful thing or a time of terror. The deciding factor is what we did with the plan of Salvation that God gave us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **John 3:16**

Let's look at some of the divine judgments recorded in the Bible and see if we can learn from them.

Our Attitude Reflects Our Judgmental Posture

I want to be clear about judgments so before I begin with the judgments of God, I want to discuss judgment in general so we do not get man's judgments confused with those that come from God.

We all know that when we get mad at the government or another individual, we usually formulate a pattern of judgmental speech that delivers condemnation. Our attitude reflects our judgmental posture and we can see that in ourselves and in others.

Sometimes we fluff it off as being from God so as to justify our actions. This was the case with the white supremacy folks in the south during the race riots. They used the bible, twisting its meanings to validate their actions. We also saw this in WWII with the Nazis'. They declared God dead and used the absence of God to condemn 29 million people to death including 6-million Jews.

Our desires to kill, condemn, criticize, and gossip are not and can never be divine. All these things are Sin and should be put out of our minds as quickly as they enter. Hear the Word of the Lord:

1. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” **Romans 12:19**
2. “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.” **Hebrews 10:30**
3. “Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.” **Deuteronomy 32:35**
4. “Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to" his work." **Proverbs 24:29**
5. “May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you.” **I Samuel 24:12**

Natural Disasters And God’s Children

I know what you’re thinking...what about so called “Acts of God?” Things like Earthquakes, Floods, Tornadoes and other events that are beyond our control? An “Act of God” is an Insurance term. It is an event that is caused solely by the effect of nature or natural causes and without any interference by humans whatsoever.

Why do we automatically assume that a hurricane or flood is a direct act of God? The Bible says, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” **Romans 8:22**

The whole creation is in a state of turmoil. No wonder there are violent acts of nature occurring around the world. That is not to say that they are a direct and vicious attack by God.

We have already seen the nature of God through His attributes and how He is compassionate, merciful, loving...all of which are good. The so-called “Acts of God” would be out of character. They do not line up with who God is and His care for mankind.

So, what do we do when bad things happen to us? Here are a few thoughts.



1. Seek the Lord, applying **Proverbs 3:5-6** (“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”) No matter what has happened, God will direct your paths if you trust in Him. He will lead you out of the sorrow, stress and heartaches.
2. Let the Lord comfort you. (“Blessed be **God**, even the Father **of** our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father **of** mercies, and the **God of all comfort**”) **II Corinthians 1:3**

3. Know that Jesus is always with you. (“lo, I am with you always, even unto the **end of the world**. Amen.” **Matthew 28:20b**)
4. Realize that God will work everything together for good. (“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”) **Romans 8:28**
5. Refocus your eyes upon those things that you cannot see for they are eternal. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” **II Cornithians 4:18**
6. Rest in the Lord, knowing that He will deliver you. (“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”) **Psalm 34:7**

Natural disasters are just that...a natural result of a creation that is in turmoil. They are not planned by God as an act of vengeance. I am referring to God’s Children when I say all that I said above.

Natural Disasters And The Children of Darkness

It’s a different story is you are a child of the devil. God will and has used natural and even supernatural weather events to carry out His vengeance against the children of darkness. When God uses the elements of nature in Judgment, He does it with such a splendor that everyone knows it was He. There is no doubt or question as to whom. All I have to do is mention the great Deluge or Flood or the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah where they were destroyed when God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven.

It’s important to note that God’s Judgments always fall on the wicked. He never pours our His wrath on His children.

He will however, allow the overthrow of His people by wicked kings because His children have turned away to follow false gods. The Old Testament is full of situations where the people of God began to worship idols. As a result, they lost their land, homes, wealth, and social status and were even led into captivity by their enemies.

Weather, As God's Judgment

Most Relevant Verses

Joshua 10:11 ...As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

Isaiah 30:30...And the LORD will cause His voice of authority to be heard, And the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger, And in the flame of a consuming fire In cloudburst, downpour and hailstones.

Ezekiel 38:22 ..."With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.

1 Kings 17:1 ...Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

Haggai 1:10-11 ..."Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. "I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

Genesis 7:11-12 ...In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 9:22-26 ...Now the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

Leviticus 26:18-19 ...'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 'I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.

Deuteronomy 11:17 ... "Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Deuteronomy 28:22-24 ... "The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish. "The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron. "The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

Jeremiah 3:3 ... "Therefore the showers have been withheld, And there has been no spring rain Yet you had a harlot's forehead; You refused to be ashamed.

Jeremiah 14:1-6 ... That which came as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah in regard to the drought: "Judah mourns And her gates languish; They sit on the ground in mourning, And the cry of Jerusalem has ascended. "Their nobles have sent their servants for water; They have come to the cisterns and found no water They have returned with their vessels empty; They have been put to shame and humiliated, And they cover their heads.

Amos 4:7 ... "Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While there were still three months until harvest Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain; One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up.

Zechariah 14:17-19 ... And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

Job 30:15 ... "Terrors are turned against me; They pursue my honor as the wind, and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.

Jeremiah 23:19 ... "Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, Even a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the wicked.

Isaiah 55:10-11 ... "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My

mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Let's look at some of the Judgments of God. I see them in 10 categories:

1. Judgments against nations.
2. Judgments against cities.
3. Judgments against individuals.
4. Judgments against angels.
5. Judgments against demons.
6. Judgments against the redeemed.
7. Judgments against the lost or un-saved.
8. Judgments against Sin.
9. The Great White Throne Judgment.
10. The judgment of the damned



What God Does to Sinful Nations

The bible and history show that God will destroy the sinful nations that forget him. **Psalm 9:17** says, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Every nation will be judged in its proper time. Since God has promised to warn the sinful nation before it happens. There is a time for everything and the time to repent is now before it is too late. The bible has many examples of people trying to repent **after** judgment began but God did not accept them because they did not repent when God called them to repentance. By not repenting at the proper time, you run the risk of not being accepted by God.

Here are a few nations that were destroyed by God's Wrath because of their evil and wickedness: Persia, Philistines, Ephraim, Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Moabites, Israel, Canaanites, Assyria, Rome and all the nations at the time of the flood. You will discover more as you read more on the subject.

Jeremiah 11:11,14 says:

- Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.
- 14. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

Jeremiah 8:5,7 says:

- They refuse to return (repent)... no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.
- Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

God says the animals know when to do certain things but the people don't know when it's time to repent.

What About America?

Psalm 9:17 says *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."* This is a promise from God, given thousands of years ago through a prophetic word. It is still apolitical today as it was then.

The Sins of America...Here is a partial list of the sins of America that provokes God to bring judgment: *"Woe To Them That Call Evil Good And Good Evil"*

Abortion...Our Nation is stained with the innocent blood of abortion and because no one will acknowledge it as sin and repent, it cannot be cleansed. Simple Mathematics Shows How Much Innocent Blood America Will Have to Answer For...Just like the prophet Nahum said of ancient Nineveh, people in America are continually stumbling upon murder victims. These victims are the unborn that are killed every day, now totaling over 50 million.

The primary guilt is not with politicians or judges or abortion providers, but with the mothers who allow themselves to be deceived and believe the lies of the abortion providers whose goal is to make a profit. They are the ones that know better but still engage the services of someone, "the Government Funded clinic" to murder their unborn children. Also everyone who agrees with, consents to, or otherwise does not oppose abortion bears part of the guilt. You must stand against and speak against abortion or you will bear part of the guilt. If you say it should be left to the mother to decide, then you favor abortion.

Fornication and Adultery-This nation has gone crazy over sex. Even Christian ministries give an inordinate amount of attention to sex and marriage. In Old Testament times adultery got the death penalty, thus showing how God considers this a grievous sin. There are countless scriptures that condemn all kinds of sexual impurity.

Homosexuality...It is still a sin according to the bible. Some people think this sin has evolved into "not sin." Stealing, lying, murder, adultery, robbery are all still sins. They have not evolved into "not sin." The bible teaches against all forms of sexual impurity.

Covetousness-This is when you never have enough money. Covetous people sit around and talk about what they “need.” They make lists of things they want to buy. They imagine themselves winning the lottery. They always want the next gadget that comes along. When people have an income and still never have enough money, the root cause of their problem most often is covetousness. Covetous or greedy people are always in a financial bind. In **Romans 1:29** the apostle Paul makes a list of sins and covetousness is right in among fornication and murder.

Romans 1:29... “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy murder, debate deceit, malignity; whisperers,”

1Timothy 6:9-10... “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10. For the love of money is the root of all-evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

1. **Jeremiah 6:13...** ”For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.”
2. **Jeremiah 22:15-17....** “Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? 16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD. 17. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.”

Do you see in verse 17 above how covetousness is mixed up with shedding innocent blood, oppression, and violence? It is not a light thing to be covetous. The Bible says we should hate covetousness. (**Exodus 18:21**)

The above references fit America perfectly. The warnings from God have been sent from heaven and are still being sent. If we do not repent, our nation will be dragged into hell as the scripture says in **Psalms 9:17**. God help us to repent before it's too late.

City States That Fell Under God's Wrath

Here's a partial list of cities that God dealt with because of Sin and wickedness; Sodom & Gomorrah, Babylon, Canaan, Petra, Edom, Jericho, Moab, Philistia, Dumah, Tyre and Damascus and let's not forget Jerusalem.

You probably have never heard of many of these cities. That is because they were dragged into hell and no trace was left of them save a dim historical trace.

You can study every nation, every kingdom and every society in the cities of God's Wrath and you will see the common denominators that all of them had...Immorality, Idolatry, and Sexual Perversion. These are the embers that flame the fires of God's Wrath.

The Dead Will Face The Judgment of All-Mighty God

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”
Revelation 20:11-15 We have a date with God in eternity to discuss our future.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: Hebrews 9:27

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” **I Thessalonians 5:9**

The judge that you appear before, out there in eternity, will be one of mercy or of wrath. We pick the Judge on this side of life. After death, we will meet God face to face.

There are two thrones where judgment takes place, The **Great White Throne** judgment and The “**Bema Seat.**” All of humanity will meet with Jesus at one of these thrones. No one is exempt.

The Difference Between The Great White Throne And The Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ

The Great White Throne Judgment is where all the dead are summoned to be judged. All are judged by what was written in the books that were opened. Their deeds were on trial.

Another book was also opened, the book of Life. Those whose name was not found written in the book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Thus occurs the second death. The 1st death being physical and the 2nd death spiritual which lasts forever.

The Judgment Seat of Christ, or “Bema Seat” is where followers of Christ are rewarded for their loyalty to Him while in the flesh. “For we must all appear before the judgment

seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.” **II Corinthian 5:10**

The difference in the two judgments is, one is a true judgment that awards punishment for things done in the flesh. The other is where followers receive awards and honor for their faith and commitment to Christ.

The Meaning of the Judgment (Bema) Seat

Both **Romans 14:10** and **2 Corinthians 5:9** speak of the “judgment seat.” This is a translation of one Greek word, the word *bema*. While *bema* is used in the gospels and Acts of the raised platform where a Roman magistrate or ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence (**Matt. 27:19; John 19:13**), its use in the epistles by Paul, because of his many allusions to the Greek athletic contests, is more in keeping with its original use among the Greeks.

This word was taken from Isthmian games where the contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every rule of the contest was obeyed (**2 Tim. 2:5**). The victor of a given event who participated according to the rules was led by the judge to the platform called the *Bema*. There the laurel wreath was placed on his head as a symbol of victory (**1 Cor. 9:24-25**).

In all of these passages, “Paul was picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual contest. As the victorious Grecian athlete appeared before the *Bema* to receive his perishable award, so the Christian will appear before Christ’s *Bema* to receive his imperishable award. The judge at the *Bema* bestowed rewards to the victors. *He did not whip the losers.*”² We might add, neither did he sentence them to hard labor.

In other words, it is a reward seat and portrays a time of rewards or loss of rewards following examination, but it is not a time of punishment where believers are judged for their sins. Such would be inconsistent with the finished work of Christ on the Cross—because He totally paid the penalty for our sins. Chafer and Walvoord have an excellent word on this view:

With reference to sin, Scripture teaches that the child of God under grace shall not come into judgment (**John 3:18; 5:24; 6:37; Rom. 5:1; 8:1; 1 Cor. 11:32**); in his standing before God, and on the ground that the penalty for all sin—past, present, and future (**Col. 2:13**)—has been borne by Christ as the perfect Substitute, the believer is not only placed beyond condemnation, but being in Christ is accepted in the perfection of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10; Heb. 10:14) and loved of God as Christ is loved (**John 17:23**).

The Positive Aspects of The *Bema*

(1) To evaluate the quality of every believer's work whether it is good or bad, i.e., acceptable and thus worthy of rewards, or unacceptable, to be rejected and unworthy of rewards. Actually an evaluation is going on every day by the Lord (**Rev. 2-3**).

(2) To destroy and remove unacceptable production portrayed in the symbols of wood, hay, and stubble. All sinful deeds, thoughts, and motives, as well as all good deeds done in the energy of the flesh will be consumed like wood, hay, and stubble before a fire because they are unworthy of reward. Why? This will be answered as we consider the basis on which rewards are given or lost.

(3) To reward the believer for all the good he or she has done as portrayed by the symbols of gold, silver, and precious stones, that which is valuable and can stand the test of fire without being consumed.

1 Cor. 3:13-15 says each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

"Evident" is *phaneros* which means "known, plain, visible, revealed as to its nature." "The day" refers to a day well known and refers to the day of the *Bema* after the rapture of the church. "Declare it" is *deloo* which means "to make evident, clear." "Be revealed" is *apokalupto* and means "to unveil." "Test" is *dokimazo* and means "to test for the sake of approval." "The quality" is *hopoios*, a correlative and qualitative pronoun meaning "of what sort or kind."

1 Cor. 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

"Bring to light" is *photizo*, "to bring to light, make visible." "Disclose" is *phaneroo*, "to manifest, reveal." The issue should be extremely clear from these two verses: The Lord will evaluate the quality and nature of every person's work. Compare also:

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Revelation 22:12 Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

The Negative Aspects of the *Bema*

There are a number of passages that refer to the negative aspects of the *Bema* which need to be mentioned and explained. In these passages we read such things as "give account of

himself,” “suffer loss,” “shrink away from Him in shame,” and “recompense for his deeds ... whether good or bad.”

Will believers experience shame, grief, and remorse at the *Bema*? If so, how do we reconcile this with passages like **Revelation 7:17**, “God shall wipe away every tear from their eye,” and **Revelation 21:4**, “and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away,” or with **Isaiah 65:17**, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind”?

The negative effects involve the following:

(1) The loss suffered in **1 Corinthians 3:15** refers to the loss of rewards, not salvation as the verse goes on to make clear. Please note that the clause “he shall suffer loss” would be better rendered “it (the reward) shall be forfeited.”

(2) The disqualification mentioned in **1 Corinthians 9:27** means disqualified from rewards, not loss of salvation. This is clear from the context and the analogy to the Greek athletic games.

(3) The “recompense” (NASB) or the “receive back” (KJV) of 2 Corinthians 5:10 refers to the dispensing of rewards or their loss. The verb used is *komizo* and means “to carry off safe,” “to carry off as booty.” In the middle voice as here, it meant “to bear for oneself,”¹⁰ or “to receive back what is one’s own.”¹¹ Compare **Matthew 25:27** and **Ephesians 6:8**.

(4) That dispensing of rewards is in view is also evident from the Greek words in **2 Corinthians 5:10** translated “good” (*agathos*—valuable like good fruit) and “bad” (*phaulos*—unacceptable like rotten or spoiled fruit). The idea is not good in the sense of righteousness versus bad in the sense of evil or sinfulness. For those ideas Paul would have most likely used *kalos*, “good,” and *kakos*, “evil.” For good works, those valuable like good fruit, we will receive back rewards, but for bad works, those rotten and worthless, we will receive no rewards or the loss of rewards.

This is no more a punishment than when a student turns in a worthless assignment and receives an F or a D. His poor work results in a just grade or recompense. This is what his work deserves. There used to be a sign in the registrar’s office at Dallas Seminary, which read, “Salvation is by grace ... Graduation is by works.”

(5) **1 John 2:28**. This verse undoubtedly refers to the *Bema* and shows there will be both boldness as a result of abiding, and shame before the Lord as a result of failing to abide.

“And now little children.” John is writing to believers. This is his term of endearment for his readers as born again people.

“Abide in Him.” “Abide” is a synonym for fellowship which is the subject of the book (1:3-7). It means to remain in Him from the standpoint of drawing on His life as the source of ours and then to obey Him out of that relationship of dependence. This is the basis of rewards or the cause of their loss, the abiding, Christ-dependent life.

“So that” points us to the purpose, the return of the Savior and what it will mean.

“When He appears.” The “when” points to the imminency of the return of the Lord. It is literally “if He appears.” The conditional clause does not question the reality of Christ’s coming, only the time of it and thereby points to its imminency. “Appears” refers to the rapture, which leads quickly into the *Bema*.

(Taken from Bible.org Article)

So here’s what we know from our study so far:

1. Believers are rewarded for their faith and dedication at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2. Non-believers are judged in accordance to their works. However, all that are not found in the Lamb’s Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.
3. No non-believer escapes Judgment Day. Judgment is an appointment after we die.
4. Christians are not included with the lost on Judgment Day. They escape the wrath of God because Jesus bore it in His body for them and they accepted His finished work of Grace.

The Judgment Against Angels & Demons

Fallen angels are those that rebelled against God to follow Lucifer, which we also know as Satan and the devil or evil one. They were thrown out of heaven. The angels became demons and now dwell in a disembodied state as an evil spirit under an eternal chain of darkness.

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” **Jude 1:6**

He hath reserved in everlasting chains - **2 Peter 2:4**. Peter says, "chains of darkness;" that is, the darkness encompasses them "as" chains. Jude says that those chains are "everlasting."

The sense is, that that deep darkness always endures; there is no intermission; no light; it will exist forever. This passage in itself does not prove that the punishment of the rebel angels will be eternal, but merely that they are kept in a dark prison in which there is no light, and which is to exist for ever, with reference to the final trial. The punishment of the rebel angels after the judgment is represented as an everlasting fire, which has been

prepared for them and their followers, **Matthew 25:41**. (Excerpts from **Barns Commentary Notes**)

The only way to see the light of day is through your eyes. If that evil spirit can influence you and attach itself to you, it can see and with that sight, live again to bring torment to your soul and death to your dreams and hopes for the future. That's why Jesus defeated all of them on the cross and has given us the spiritual weapons to protect ourselves from demonic attacks.

The Serpent Bites The Dust

Genesis 3:14-15 tells us about the judgment of the Serpent that was used by Satan to bring down Adam & Eve. The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

This is the 1st prophecy of the Messiah and God Himself uttered it. He said that the Serpent, now being referred to as Satan, would bruise His, Jesus' heel but Jesus would crush his, the serpent (Devil's) Head. This happened by Jesus on the cross and was recorded for our edification. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. **Colossians 2:15**

Judgment of This World

2 Peter 3:7 "But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. "

Here Are Some More References To The Destruction of Our Earth

Genesis 6:13 ...Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

Mark 13:31 ..."Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

Revelation 21:1... Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

Isaiah 51:6 ..."Lift up your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; For the sky will vanish like smoke, And the earth will wear out like a garment And its inhabitants will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not wane.

Zephaniah 1:18...Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Isaiah 34:4 ...And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.

Matthew 5:18..."For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Matthew 24:29..."But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

2 Peter 3:7... But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:10...But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

2 Peter 3:12 ...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Revelation 6:14...The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Revelation 20:11... Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Revelation 8:7...The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned

up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.



God's Judgment Against Sin

All have sinned:

Romans 5:12-17 tells us, “¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

¹⁵ But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. ¹⁶ And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. ¹⁷ For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Romans 8:3 give us a clearer picture of God's Judgment of sin. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:”

Jesus was the penalty for our sin. All the sins of the entire world were laid upon him. God judged Sin in the flesh but not any flesh. The only flesh that could be judged is the flesh of Jesus because His flesh was holy, righteous and pure. There was no sin in Him.

That's why we call him the slain Lamb of God. He was foreshadowed in the sacrificial system of Israel where the pure Lamb was slain for the sins of the people. Year after year this happened until Jesus came. He was the purest of them all and it took just one to die for sin.

Romans 5:10 further clarifies this, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

His death paid the penalty but His life, because it was and is holy and righteous, saves us. That means when I feel bad about myself or unworthy in any way, I can look to Jesus by

faith and declare that His righteousness is now mine and I can finally have a life above criticism, hostility and hatred...so says the apostle Paul to the **Galatians 2:20** “am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Conclusion

We have looked at a lot of divine Judgments, those against Nations, Cities, People, Angels and Demons, Satan and others. We looked at “The Day of Judgment” and if and when God’s children are judged by God. We looked at the “Judgment Seat of Christ” and what is and what it is not.

Without exception, the verses reviewed declare that God’s wrath will fall on the ungodly, not the righteous. Therefore, to escape the terrible day of vengeance that God will bring upon this world, we need only to repent, believe in Christ as the penalty for sin, and put our faith in His finished work of Grace.

As long as we do not follow the example of the Old Testament Saints that fell into immorality and followed after false gods, we will never experience God’s wrath. We surely do not want to be accounted with the damned. God is able and willing to bring us out of temptation and snares set for us by the devil. He wants us to walk by faith with Him.