

**JUSTICE  
AND  
MERCY**

**WHY GOD IS ANGRY**

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## Introduction

We have an amazing God.

Despite all the suffering we see in the world, the Bible tells us that God does not simply have love towards us, but that He *is* love. Which means that all true love has its source in God. But as people, we do not have this love, which is the reason for all of the troubles in our world. All of our good deeds and motivations are ultimately self orientated - a truth often hidden within the dark depths of every subconscious. That is why every one of us has rebelled from God and chosen to follow our own way in life.

But from the cross of Calvary He is calling us back, giving us a second chance. To ignore this invitation is the unforgivable sin, which leads ultimately to the second death. And that is *not* God's desire. This book will explore this basic truth so that if you have not yet given the Bible a chance, you may still be enlightened as to what God has said through His Holy Word. If you choose to repent in light of the truth then you can be sure of your salvation and look eagerly ahead to a glorious eternity with God and His people. But before that chance comes it is likely that you will be offended by some of the things you read here, because the gospel testifies to our sinful nature and exposes the darkness within us; our pride prevents us from easily receiving the truth, which is why you must show humility in order to give the gospel a chance.

Now no one knows what tomorrow may bring, but the world is becoming a more dangerous place and thus the call to repentance more urgent. The world of this present corruptible age has always been heading for destruction, but now events are escalating and although it will ultimately be saved right before the end, the old world order – which is that of mankind's self-rule - will not survive and neither will many of those who fail to turn to God in Jesus Christ.

As we head into 2010 we are aware that the nuclear threat is immense, with Iran led by Islamic extremists whose goal is to initiate an apocolypse in order to bring about the coming of their Mahdi, whilst Pakistan and North Korea, who already have nuclear weapons, are socially and politically unstable respectively. The health threat sees the bird and swine flus having so far remained relatively benign but capable of mutating and wiping out millions at any moment. With an unprecedented global recession, diminishing oil, ever increasing natural disasters and major wars, we face the financial threat of a world economy teetering on the edge of collapse, for if just one of the major terrorist, energy, health, or environmental threats that we face were to occur before the recession fully recovers, the global economy would collapse altogether. With democracy in Europe being dismantled by the EU, re-submerging in Russia, and absent in China, a new age of superpower dictatorships appear to be just around the corner of a rapidly destabilising world. With civil unrest rapidly increasing in both the developed and undeveloped worlds, the opportunities are going to exist for iron-fisted power grabs to change the world as we know it.

This isn't being negative, or alarmist, just watchful.

In all honesty there isn't much we can do about it; Biblical prophecy tells us that a worst case scenario of ALL our planet's plights is destined to occur at some point in the future. But the true fight for survival is spiritual and individual, so the worsening

condition of our world should be a sign to us that we are running out of time to turn our individual lives around. This book points the way to Christ as our only saviour in this matter and in all others.

Now there are many false prophets appearing who would deny the true divinity of Christ, who deny the reality of hell and who deny the existence of a spirit world. For those who do not know what the Bible teaches in these areas, I hope this book will help to expose these false doctrines and false prophets. And whilst in places this book attempts to extrapolate on Biblical prophecies, it is not prophetic in nature and neither am I myself a prophet. I am attempting to make clear the very basics of what the Bible teaches for those who have not yet given it a chance, or completed a serious study of it. It is also an attempt to represent Christianity in its proper light, which an increasing number of churches fail to do as they gradually turn away from Biblical truth; which even prophesises such an apostasy.

Now because of this growing apathy within the church establishments, justice and mercy, like love and hatred, now appear to many people to be contradictory to our picture of God, rather than complementary as they really are. Christendom throughout most of history has often emphasised one or the other to the detriment of the whole.

As an example we can look back in our recent history to see that many people were generally filled with an unhealthy fear of God due to the message of God's love and mercy becoming lost within zealous tirades about hell and damnation. Saints and sinners alike suffered much physical persecution even unto death by those in power of corrupt Christian churches. Because these churches failed to correctly apply righteous judgement, by the late twentieth century the very concept of judgement was being thrown out altogether as people started being fed a picture of a god that was all "hugs and kisses", a gentle old-bearded-fellow who wasn't angry with anybody. Yet God's anger, as well as His love, is found throughout the Bible in vivid terms and in detailed statements, and none more so than in His rising displeasure towards the end times in which we now found ourselves. Most people are not aware of this aspect because God is patient and slow to anger, but the modern world has now provoked Him to the point where His anger is poised to spill out across the world in unrestrained righteousness. God is love, but God is also holy and holiness cannot abide sin. But if we can learn to love holiness more than we love our own sins, then we will recognise the true love of God and we will be drawn to possess a genuine love and respect for Him in return.

So the time is more than ever at hand for every man, woman, and child to learn that God is just, as well as merciful, that He loves us, but hates our sinful behaviour, and to find out how these dual elements can be satisfied through nothing else but the atonement of Jesus Christ. The time is close at hand when, "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." But that time is not yet, and God is still angry - and increasingly so - with our world today...

God *is* a just judge, And God is angry *with the wicked* every day. Psalm 7: 11

...do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? Romans 2: 4

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3: 9

## Author's Note

This book is intended as a pro-active response to the plethora of atheistic works that have found their way onto the market in recent years. It isn't nearly as long as such publications due to the fact that it is based solely upon the Word of God as revealed in the Bible, which requires no widespread and extensive research from across the academic world to be understood or believed; it stands on its own merit as a greater wisdom, because as the inspired apostle Paul tells us, "every scripture is God-breathed."

Although I would have preferred to go into more depth on the many issues addressed in this book, my aim is to portray the gospel's *general* message without losing its efficacy. To further support this aim I have referenced each chapter with Biblical scripture so that God's word may speak more directly to your heart. These scriptures have been drawn mainly from the Amplified translation of the Bible which manages to more extensively draw out the greater meaning and expression found in the original Greek and Hebrew tongues that were used to compile it. The Amplified Bible draws on the earliest manuscripts to amplify as much of the original inspired content as the original church was blessed with. (This content is found within brackets in the quoted verses at the end of each chapter).

Whilst the Bible's integrity is beyond reproach in relation to other historical texts, the Amplified translation can better express the riches of God's Word. However, this is not to say that other translations cannot sometimes give a better representation of an isolated verse's meaning (because of the loss of context found in an isolated verse), so I occasionally quote from other translations if I feel their particular phrasing gets a certain point across more emphatically.

Now with regards to the structure of this web book, the first three chapters delve into our personal relationship with God as sinners, and what this means for us as individuals, whilst chapters four and five explain how this affects our world and how God interacts with us as communities, concluding with the final two chapters which explore what it means to be a Christian and the blessings that will come from this restored relationship to God.

On a final note I'd like to say that whilst the subjects discussed within are serious and may even be disturbing, it is important to note that the key message is one of love, proclaiming a most wonderful salvation that is completely and reliably accessible to every single person. If one believes and adheres to this message, then there is nothing to fear from it. I pray you keep this in mind as you read through to the end.

Stuart Wall

## 1. God is angry.

If you are a true born again Christian, then God is not angry with you. That anger was poured out upon His Son whilst He hung dying upon the cross for your sins. But if you are generally unrepentant for the wrongs you continually commit in your life, if you are happy how I am, and therefore see no need for Christ as your redeemer, then God is angry.

Why? Quite simply because you set your own interests above His.

Now this is no ego trip that God is on. If the God of all creation says this is a sin, then how can we argue? What position of self-righteousness or superior knowledge can we possibly take to say that He is wrong?<sup>[1]</sup> After all, if we are admitting for even a moment that He exists - not as *a* god, but as *the* God - then we have to say that God, by definition, is supremely perfect. The Bible confirms this:

He was God before, He is God now, and He will always be God.<sup>[2]</sup>

He is self-existent. He is all knowing. He is eternal.<sup>[3]</sup>

He created all things. He sustains all things. He knows the future of all things.<sup>[4]</sup>

So it's true to say that God isn't egotistical.

Neither is He domineering. God isn't asking for obedience simply because He is more powerful than us; He isn't a dictator, an abusive parent, a gang leader, or the school bully, all looking to extortion us. God is love,<sup>[5]</sup> and so His interests are going to be more noble, more meaningful, and incomprehensibly more altruistic than yours or mine could ever be. That is why it is wrong, not just arrogant, to set our own interests above His.<sup>[6]</sup>

Yet instead of allowing Him to facilitate through us a divine and wonderful plan for the lives of all of His creation that would truly bring about an utopian civilisation, you hinder His plans by living according to only a certain level of behaviour that you have arbitrarily decided is good enough. You then inwardly judge everyone as good or bad according to your own standards, placing yourself somewhere in the middle as a generally good person. For example, you may place Hitler rock bottom and Mother Theresa at the top, with the people you know in your life much closer to you; perhaps a few people at work or in the family just below, and a few friends and loved ones just above. You may recite the secular mantra that you don't judge anybody, but you do.

All the time.

In thought, word, and deed.

How you think about someone. How you talk about them. How you treat them.

It's no excuse, yet it's our fallen human nature to do so. And with few exceptions most people will always think of themselves as a generally good person. After all, you wouldn't want to think otherwise, would you?

But what does God say?

He says you're not a good person.<sup>[7]</sup>

Nor is this author. Nor is anyone who was ever born of man and woman. Yet He still loves you, more than you can know - that's why He sent Jesus, but we will get to that later.

For now, let's focus on the fact that you're not a good person. Even if from your earliest memory no one told you about God and what He expects from us, you have recognised Him in two ways and ignored Him in both.

Firstly by ignoring your conscience.<sup>[8]</sup>

It is God's inbuilt voice for letting us know when we are confronting something sinful, which means that from your very first moment He was there with you and you were aware of Him. That is why every culture and people in history have possessed an innate awareness of God and share the same essential concepts of morality. That is why every child begins to develop in innocence and with a sense of wonder. But at some point we began to ignore this inner voice and thus rejected Him.

Secondly, you have ignored the great handiwork of His creation; nature, the entire universe and everything.<sup>[9]</sup>

You see, once you were in beautiful awe of the very substance of creation itself – existence - and you might even remember it; when your eyes were open to its every aspect, its potentiality. But it spoke of its creator to your heart, so when you rejected the inner voice of conscience that proclaimed God's moral supremacy, so you also rejected His role in creation and became blind to this physical and metaphysical proof.

So why do you feel so justified in believing that you have never known a God in whom to disobey in the first place?

The problem is that our conscience gets eroded when we repeatedly do what it tells us is wrong, or when we create intellectual arguments to explain it away and seek justifications for the bad things that we do.<sup>[10]</sup>

Most people don't like their conscience. Because they see it (or anyone that stimulates it) as the accuser rather than the lookout guard,<sup>[11]</sup> it prickles them and makes them feel bad, and so they will respond only in an attempt to make themselves feel better without actually caring about the issue at hand. For example, you might buy a copy of the Big Issue, just to ease your conscience about the poor homeless guy begging you to buy it, but you probably won't read it or even think twice about its subject material. There will be no attempt to engage emphatically with the plight of the homeless and seek out how you can really help them. You've only cared about the unpleasant voice in your mind and your heart, and with one small action (what the Bible calls a 'work') you now feel better about yourself.

But your conscience isn't fully eased, because deep down you know you should be caring more, so you look for ways to discredit your conscience and inevitably your sense of morality becomes blurred and you begin to think you are a better person than

you really are. But follow this dark path too long and eventually even the concept of morality is rejected, becoming something that is only subjective at best. Your ability to hear God's internal voice disappears and you forget you ever heard it for what it was.<sup>[12]</sup> The calling card of His creation suffers likewise; because His internal voice has become so quiet it can no longer bear witness of His authorship of the external creation, so you align yourself to outlandish theories that don't require His creative hand, such as evolution (a theory with so many holes that educational establishments fear to even mention them), and a Big-Bang theory which tells us that something can explode into being from nothing, whilst dismissing the more plausible acceptance of God's eternal self-existence.

One thing He advises us to do is, "be still and know that I am God".<sup>[13]</sup> He is *that* easy to discover.<sup>[14]</sup> Yet to avoid awareness of Him, or rather to avoid awareness of an absent relationship with Him, some people will fill their lives with noise, commotion, and *keeping busy*, in a perhaps almost unconscious effort to drown out the stillness through which His Spirit can speak to us. You may know the kind of people who must always have the TV or radio on because silence to them is deafening; long periods of quiet contemplation are something that have become an alien concept to them through the subconscious fear of what they might hear in the quiet still voice of God. You may even be such a person yourself. Or you may find other methods to drown out His quiet voice, such as regular intoxication, getting stoned, or any other indulgent pastime that helps to shut out the uncomfortable silences, perhaps even working long hours to avoid the empty moments at home when something deep within you prods with the insistence that something's not right.

Now hiding from God is nothing new. Adam and Eve did it as soon as God came calling for them after they had eaten from the forbidden fruit.<sup>[15]</sup> Likewise, a guilty conscience tempts us all to flee from God, and it only grows larger until you embrace it's ugly truth and hand it over to Him in admission of your guilt. Then conscience becomes a welcome friend, and the Accuser can have no holding power over you.<sup>[16]</sup>

But if you fail to acknowledge the absence of a right relationship with God in your life, then you will be burdened down with guilt. It will weigh upon your soul even if you are not aware of it, draining you of happiness and possibly acting as a precursor for illnesses and emotional conditions. If we don't lean on God for the kind of support that only He can provide us with<sup>[17]</sup> then we will seek out other sources of support that can never give us the security and well-being that we truly need.

Money is a popular replacement for God, but the rich often seem more unhappy and less at ease with themselves and their lot in life than the poor. Fame leads many to misery and ill health. Sexual relationships never seem to satisfy for long, and create more emptiness than fulfilment. The respect and adherence of others, even if truly earned, can still be lost within a day. Anything that we trust in to support ourselves, even our own abilities, will be a poor substitute for the Great Provider Who knows all our needs even before we do. Primary reliance on anything or anyone other than God will lead us into becoming a slave to these idols of our hearts because they will never give us what we are truly after. Even trust in ourselves is an illusion, because we do not have full control over ourselves or our situations. The great philosophers came to the conclusion that wisdom is to realise that one knows nothing. This is just a foundation stone. The Bible tells us that true wisdom is respect and adherence to God.

Now why do New Year's resolutions hardly ever seem to work out? Because we have no reliable way of engineering virtues within ourselves. Selfish motivation can lead us to make some improvements, but such an approach is usually a long hard slog that is never fully victorious (the subject of motivation is covered in the next chapter).

People who come to know God's forgiveness and be filled with His Holy Spirit in their life become healed from many of their addictions and disorders, if not overnight then certainly over time. This is because sin itself is the ultimate addiction;<sup>[18]</sup> every emotional disorder is a manifestation of our main addiction to please ourselves and dismiss God from our lives. So although there are many treatments that can break (or temporarily relieve) us from many problems, only the Holy Spirit can break us from the overriding addiction to sin.<sup>[19]</sup>

But if you continue putting your own interests before God, then you become ever more the child of corruption rather than a child of God.<sup>[20]</sup> And as God, His judgement is rightfully incontestable when He says that you are a bad person for this very reason.

Now how would we expect to be dealt with by a responsibly righteous judge...

Consider a criminal, whether he be a petty thief or a serial murderer; the severity is immaterial at this point. The culprit isn't particularly bright and is easily caught and sent to trial. As one of the jurors, you are witness to all of the incontestable evidence that is laid out to prove his guilt, and you hear the judge declare, as expected, that the offender has been found guilty. But then you are shocked when the judge waives the sentence and allows the offender to go free. Outraged, you ask why.

"Because," the judge says, "I am a loving and forgiving person, and I would never condemn anyone to jail."

As bizarre as this sounds, does it correspond to your view of how God should act? Have you ever said, "the God I believe in would never send anyone to hell?"

God is a loving God, but He is also a just God. You cannot separate the two, as we'll explore in chapter three. But if you do try to separate the two, then you create in your mind a false god, a god who justifies your own agenda. This is no different today than with the idolisation of false gods in Biblical times; just because you don't carve your fictional god out of wood, stone or precious elements, it doesn't mean that this god is not idolised in your heart and mind.

Now you might feel tempted to say that the path you have followed in life has not been completely at odds with God's and that surely He will make some allowance for the good things that you have done?

Let's consider another example.

Again you are in court, but this time you are the victim. Your lawyer explains the crime to those in the courtroom and once again incontestable evidence is laid before the judge and jurors. The defendant even pleads guilty. But then his lawyer details how the accused has done some wonderful deeds for others in the past few weeks and that this should be taken into consideration. Horrified, your attempt to seek redress from your assailant is rebuffed on these grounds and he goes free. Not only that, but

the courtroom applauds him for these other good deeds that he did and the judge presents him with a small reward.

Now of course it would have been only just that you should have been entitled to some redress. Your assailant's good deeds for other people did nothing to make things right with you. It is the same situation when we sin against God. He is the victim, as we have abused His beautiful gift of life, so doing good things for others provides Him with no redress. He is the one who deserves the compensation.<sup>[21]</sup>

In case you are still thinking that by doing good things for others you can make up for the bad things in your life, let's look at a parable...


Imagine a man who entrusts his friend with a hundred pounds of his savings whilst he goes away for a short while. Rather than keeping it safe, the friend spends ninety-nine pounds of it on himself and then he has the temerity to expect some congratulations for returning the final pound to his friend when he returns. The same principle operates with good works; God has entrusted us with almost limitless opportunities to do good works, but for every good act that you do there are probably another ninety-nine opportunities where you have acted selfishly instead. Therefore our good works are simply all that remains after all of the many missed opportunities that we have been given in life in which to live righteously but which instead we have used for ourselves.<sup>[22]</sup> This essentially is what it means to sin; to misuse something that God has entrusted to us. If you take only one thing from this chapter then I hope it is this.

So forget heaven for a moment, because the only way to stay out of *hell* is to return the whole hundred pounds that has been entrusted to you – in other words to live the perfect life as it was given to us to live. Heaven would then still be a gift on top of all those good works.

So we can't make up for the wrong things that we have done by doing good things. No allowances can be made. Heaven is unattainable. And the conclusion that we deserve punishment is inescapable, for we have all been unfaithful stewards of the life that was given to us.

But a punishment as extreme as hell? This is too much for many to swallow. So let us first make sure that we understand just what hell is, before we can argue if we deserve it.

[1] Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, that instruction might be given Him? Who taught Him the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and showed Him the way of understanding?

 Isaiah 40: 13-40


[2] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord God, He Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty (the Ruler of all).

 Revelation 1: 8


[3] Who has prepared and done this, calling forth and guiding the destinies of the generations [of the nations] from the beginning? I, the Lord--the first [existing before history began] and with the last [an ever-present, unchanging God]--I am He.

 Isaiah 41: 4


[4] Or who has first given God anything that he might be paid back or that he could claim a recompense? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. [For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him.] To Him be glory forever! Amen (so be it).

 Romans 11: 35-36

[5] And we know (understand, recognize, are conscious of, by observation and by experience) and believe (adhere to and put faith in and rely on) the love God cherishes for us. God is love, and he who dwells and continues in love dwells and continues in God, and God dwells and continues in him.

 1 John 4: 16

[6] Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

 Romans 2: 4-8 (ESV)

[7] As it is written, None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one.

 Romans 3: 10

[8] For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God [Himself] has shown it to them.


 Romans 1: 19

[9] For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through


the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification]

 Romans 1: 20

[10] For the heart (the understanding, the soul) of this people has grown dull (stupid, hardened, and calloused), and their ears are heavy and hard of hearing and they have shut tight their eyes, so that they may not perceive and have knowledge and become acquainted with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their souls and turn [to Me and be converted], that I may heal them.

 Acts 28: 27

[11] To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

 Jeremiah 6: 10 (King James)


[12] And so, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or approve of Him or consider Him worth the knowing, God gave them over to a base and condemned mind to do things not proper or decent but loathsome

 Romans 1: 28

[13] Let be and be still, and know (recognize and understand) that I am God...

 Psalm 46: 10

[14] And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire [a sound of gentle stillness and] a still, small voice.

 1 Kings 19: 1-12


[15] And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, Where are you?

 Genesis 3: 8-9

[16] So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you. Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery].

 James 4: 7-8

[17] Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good--not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.

 Matthew 11: 29-30


[18] Let not sin therefore rule as king in your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies, to make you yield to its cravings and be subject to its lusts and evil passions. Do not continue offering or yielding your bodily members [and faculties] to sin as instruments (tools) of wickedness. But offer and yield yourselves to God as though you have been raised from the dead to [perpetual] life, and your bodily members [and faculties] to God, presenting them as implements of righteousness.

 Romans 6: 12-13

[19] For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has freed me from the law of sin and of death.

 Romans 8: 2

[20] But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

 James 1: 14-15 (ESV)

[21] Against You, You only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified in Your sentence and faultless in Your judgment.

 Psalm 51: 4

[22] For we have all become like one who is unclean [ceremonially, like a leper], and all our righteousness (our best deeds of rightness and justice) is like filthy rags or a polluted garment; we all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away [far from God's favor, hurrying us toward destruction].

 Isaiah 64: 6

## 2. Why Hell?

There are six different words that have been translated into the general word ‘hell’ as found in some modern translations of the Bible. These are: Hades, Sheol, Abaddon, Gehanna, the Lake of Fire, and the actual word Hell itself. Hades, Sheol and Abaddon are the only references to hell that we find in the Old Testament, and the other three references are found only in the New Testament. It is therefore important to discover if they all mean the same thing or if there are important differences between them.

**Hades** was a Greek translation of the Hebrew word **Sheol**, so these two words are the same. They are described as the “unseen state where none can arise from”, a place of “gloom and darkness”, a “barren womb with unquenchable and unrelenting fire”, and where the wicked are consumed in like manner to “drought and heat consuming snow waters”. But these are almost certainly *allegories* of torment, rather than literal interpretations. There are three reasons for believing this:

- Firstly, the majority of references to Sheol occur in the Psalms, which are commonly poetic and allegorical.
- Secondly, the Bible tells us that whilst remaining in Sheol, the dead shades are capable of haunting the scenes of past transgressions<sup>[1]</sup>, indicating that Sheol – rather than being a specific place – is likely an existential state of torment. It is important to note however that there *is* a literal place within Sheol called **Abaddon**. It is referred to as a place of destruction and ruin, where the devil’s final resting place will be.<sup>[2]</sup> But it is not clear if the deceased are there also.
- Thirdly, Jesus tells a story in the New Testament of a man in the “fires” of hell who tries to convince the deceased Abraham to warn his still living relatives of the dangers of rejecting God.<sup>[3]</sup> These fires are clearly metaphorical because the man would not be capable of making such a plea if he were in the midst of extreme physical suffering.

So the conclusions we can draw from this are that the wicked dead exist in a very real spatial and temporal locality that is parallel to our own world, within which they can transit and communicate with one another, whilst their torment is most likely on a spiritual/emotional level, rather than the sufferance of external afflictions – which makes further sense when we consider that the dead have no physical form.

Moving onto New Testament terms for hell, it is important to note that **Gehanna** is the only word that Jesus uses within the gospels to refer to hell, so it must be very worthy of our attention...

It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word ge-hinnom, which means Valley of Hinnom. This was being used as a fiery refuse dump during the time of Jesus’ mortal ministry, and it had held great significance for many centuries previously because the valley had originally gained eminence in Old Testament times by serving as a site where the rebellious Israelites had sacrificed their children by fire in demon worship. In consequence, God spoke in prophecy through the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah that it would one day be referred to as the Valley of Slaughter.<sup>[4]</sup> This prophecy came true in 70AD when the Romans sacked Jerusalem and cast many of the Jews into the valley. It is also a dual prophecy, because the Book of Revelation tells us that this same valley will be the scene for Armageddon (the epicentre of the final world war that precipitates Jesus Christ’s return).

But we should not believe for a moment that this was all that the Valley of Hinnom meant to Jesus and His listeners when he warned of the fires of Gehanna, because Jesus also uses the Hebrew name of the valley in the context of calling the wicked “children of ge-hinnom” and referring to their future torment as the “suffering of ge-hinnom.” So it seems extremely likely that this infamous valley was being used as a well known cultural metaphor for a very real hell, whether it be a specific place, a spiritual condition, or both. This is further supported by the apostle James in his New Testament epistle, where he uses the word “Gehanna” in conjunction with depravity and contamination.<sup>[5]</sup> And further support for the spiritual suffering of hell as opposed to a physical one is found in the apostle Peter’s writings.<sup>[6]</sup>

So it seems that Gehanna could be a New Testament reference to Hades/Sheol.

The only time the word **Hell** appears without having been translated from any other word or phrase is when it is used to describe the prison where the fallen angels reside until the day of judgement.<sup>[7]</sup> This prison is described as consisting of pits of gloom, therefore departing from the fire and brimstone imagery. There is no way of knowing if this Hell is the same as Sheol, but it seems unlikely because the fallen angels and the wicked dead are never mentioned together.

This leaves us with the **Lake of Fire**, which isn’t technically hell as we have so far been considering it, although its vivid imagery is responsible for the misconstrued visions of hell that centuries of religious and secular impressionism have created. But before we can attempt to understand it, we need to be aware of the three judgements that lead up to the arrival of the wicked there.

The first judgements are those that come upon all of us in this life simply because we live in a fallen world that we have helped to create. God doesn’t shelter us from the immediate consequences of our sinful actions or from those of others, because to do so would be to hide the true nature of sin and thus prevent us from seeing the need to repent, which if we do not results in the *full measure* of God’s wrath coming upon us in judgement. Therefore, whether we have yet to repent or not we are all currently under God’s universal combination of both grace and judgement in this world.<sup>[8]</sup>

The second judgements are for those who have passed into death unrepentant. Our look at hell has shown us that the suffering of the wicked is probably not physical in nature, and must therefore constitute their exposure to the full consequences of their sins in ways that we probably can’t comprehend, completely cut off from the presence and intervention of God.<sup>[9]</sup> Their time of probation has come to an end and they did not repent before it was too late. Now they occasionally haunt the scenes of their past transgressions, perhaps wondering only, what if...

The third judgement takes place on Judgement Day, still yet in the future. At this point both death and hell will be cast into the Lake of Fire,<sup>[10]</sup> along with the devil<sup>[11]</sup> and all those who did not repent before death.<sup>[12]</sup> This cannot be a physical lake of fire because death is not tangible and if hell is cast into the Lake of Fire then clearly this lake cannot be hell itself, despite its common function as a terrible consequence for the unrepentant. And as this is meant to be a statement of joy it makes no sense that the Lake of Fire would be just another place of torment for the wicked; why then rejoice over the destruction of hell? So again it seems we have an allegory rather than

a literal interpretation, explaining that the old corrupt universe will be destroyed to make way for the new, in which there will be no death and no corruption.

But what of those who are thrown into the Lake of Fire?

It is said that the devil and his two major accomplices (the beast and the false prophet) will suffer torment through the “ages and the ages” (which is a more specific translation than the word “forever” - which is used in most modern translations). The phrase “ages and the ages” may mean truly forever or it may be a phrase that suggests a finite period of time; albeit exceedingly long. As for the wicked (unrepentant) of mankind, elsewhere in the book of Revelation it says that the smoke of the torment of the unrepentant will rise “forever and ever” - a phrase with greater emphasis than the single word “forever” which is used to explain the length of the devil’s torment. Yet we wouldn’t expect mankind to suffer more than the devil, so let’s look at this word “forever”...

It is essential to note that the word “forever” isn’t always used to specify a period of time. It is used two hundred and ninety times in the Amplified Bible translation, and in many of these instances it is used to mean “final” - as in completed, satisfied, or unyielding, rather than ongoing. For example, God made a covenant “forever” with a priest named Aaron and the tribe of Levi when Israel was originally founded some three thousand years ago, but this covenant<sup>[13]</sup> was a prophetic shadow (example) of a new and greater covenant to come that fulfilled and replaced it when Jesus died on the cross. The Amplified translation reveals to us that the word “forever” in this case does not refer to an eternal period of time for the covenant itself, but of the unyielding finality of its effects, which cannot be ‘dissolved or violated’. Therefore, whilst the original covenant itself no longer exists between God and the tribe of Levi, the *effects* of it last forever.

So when we examine the fates of the devil and the wicked, we need to know what meaning of the word “forever” is being used, and the clue is in recognising what is being referred to as lasting forever. With regard to the wicked of mankind, the *smoke* of the torment of the wicked rises forever (which would suggest the after effects, the finality of the judgement) not the actual torment itself. The fact that we are told this smoke rises “forever and ever” therefore seems to further emphasise the point that this judgement has been “fully satisfied and forever dealt with.”

We also have a word from Jesus that shows us that there is an end to the suffering of the wicked as far as making restitution for their sin is concerned:

When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite. (Luke 12: 58+59)

So when elsewhere in the Bible we read of eternal punishment, we can be sure that the punishment is of eternal *consequence* rather than eternal *suffering*. There is a big, big difference between the two. We find further evidence for this in the book of Jude, which shows us that eternal fire refers to a fire of eternal consequence, not of eternal suffering; otherwise the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would still be burning today.<sup>[14]</sup>

There is therefore a notable distinction between the devil's false trinity (antichrist, beast, and prophet) who suffer *torment* through the ages, and the wicked of mankind, whose *smoke* from their torment rises through the ages. When we consider that the devil is the instigator of all sin,<sup>[15]</sup> he clearly has far more to answer for than mankind does, for we first had to be tempted by him in order to sin. Therefore it would make sense that his torment would be of far greater duration, perhaps even truly forever.

There is one more point to address about the nature of eternity, and that is time itself. The Bible tells us that time is not without beginning and end. Creation was in *the beginning*,<sup>[16]</sup> and Jesus refers to Himself as “the beginning and the end” and tells us that *all* things will be made new when the old universe is destroyed to make way for the heavenly inheritance of the redeemed.<sup>[17]</sup> And because we know that God exists *outside* of time<sup>[18]</sup> it seems likely that a believer's eternal life with Him will also be an existence without relevance to time, and would therefore be a truly *infinite* existence. But for the wicked in hell, their suffering would correspond to a *finite* experience. i.e. until the end of time, when they suffer a final and eternal death.

So this study strongly suggests that justice for the wicked will be fully exercised (for however long it takes to be satisfied), that the process will not last forever in the sense of “without end”, but that its effects possess a truly eternal consequence – missing out on eternal life. With regard to the devil, his torment may truly be without end within the Lake of Fire, once Abaddon (the place in hell where he is held prisoner during the thousand year rule of Christ on earth – see chapter four) is destroyed at the end of time. But for those of mankind who do not repent, it would seem that their punishment is only for as long as they are in Hades/Sheol, before being cast into the Lake of Fire for the second death at the end of time.

So clearly the nature of hell is a complicated subject, and despite getting the gist of it we have to admit that the fate of the wicked is not crystal clear. This may be because God does not want us too preoccupied with the state that the unrepentant find themselves in; as though we could foolishly try to weigh up for ourselves whether it is just or right, or even a cost worth paying to live life our own sinful way. But what is clearly necessary from what we *have* been told is that we understand there is a very real warning that needs to be heeded. The revelation that hell is not a physical torture yard run by mischievous imps, or a literal lake of fire and brimstone, should not lessen our comprehension of the severity of the torment that comes from remaining unreconciled to God, whatever it's nature. The allegories that are used, although not literal, have been chosen to portray the severity of the sufferings and losses that come upon the unrepentant, and it may be that allegories have been used because we cannot comprehend the true nature of the spiritual existence. So although hell is not some sadistic plaything into which God delights to throw the unrepentant, please realise that it is an unavoidable spiritual consequence of sin that He is desperate to save us from.<sup>[20]</sup> None of us will go to hell for rebelling against God the first time, but you *will* find your way there if you ignore His peace offering found in Jesus Christ.

So do you deserve to go to hell?

When God speaks of final judgement, it's important to note that it is not so much the sinful acts you commit which you are culpable for, but the sinful state of heart which leads to them. As stated in chapter one, it is selfish rebellion that God is angry

with. Sinful acts are only manifestations of the previously established corrupt state of heart; the selfish disposition that underlies all the sinner's motives. It may not seem that way to you, and you might have reason to think that most people are basically good because of what you interpret to be some degree of altruism which you and they display. But this is an illusion upheld by pride and fear of the truth. In reality, all the good in the world is solely the result of the presence of God in it.<sup>[21]</sup>

As an example, let us consider the progression of civilisations. Even though there is still much evil in the world today, both at home and abroad, our western democratic civilisation in general is far more humane than when kings and queens ruled these parts of the world. In the last few centuries there have been great leaps of progression in the drive for human equality and dignity, nationally and worldwide. The fact that the social systems that have been developed to bring these changes about are now being perverted for the re-emergence of evils old and new is a related issue we will look at in chapter four. But for now it is necessary to realise that those nations which were founded on the Christian gospel were the ones that had made the greatest strides in prospering socially, as well as materially. The fact that many of their citizens who refused to accept God into their lives were still developing into fine, responsible adults, was because of their good environment and the expectations it set, which ultimately derived from Christ and His gospel.

Now imagine that one of these non-believing yet still upstanding members of the community had been born into the Mongol civilisation instead (one of the most savage civilisations recorded by history), where it was typical of their warriors to pour molten metal into the eyes and orifices of their living captives. Would that fine young man have still developed his fine humanistic values, or would he have become as depraved as his fellows?

It's impossible to really know of course, but most people these days believe that genes and nurture go a long way to determining who we are. Christ's gospel affirms this to a point; we are definitely influenced by our environment, by our abilities, by our limitations, and by our experiences. But we always have the choice to turn away from who we are and what we are becoming, completely independent from everything else going on around us. This is what God judges; a God who can see through to the heart where repentance lies,<sup>[22]</sup> not the external conditioning of our upbringing. When we hear of violent youths in gangs acting with virtually no moral inhibition it is because they have become victims of their own, to the cold and hard environment of absent fathers, indifferent mothers, poverty, poor education, corrupt authorities, drug lords... the list could go on. So unless a person chooses to repent, their life becomes a result of their environment.<sup>[23]</sup> This is why Jesus said in His famous sermon on the mount that if a man has anger in his heart towards his brother then he is a murderer<sup>[24]</sup> (a concept explained more readily in the epistle of James<sup>[25]</sup>); most of us would not murder someone simply on the basis of our anger towards them, but the right kind of environment, emotional state or upbringing can create within us a disposition to do so, where anger reveals itself as a true murderous impulse. This truth about the condition of our heart is where we get the phrase, "but for the grace of God go I". Whenever we see a person we are tempted to judge, we must remember that we could have become that person but for the more favourable events that have shaped us.

So to reiterate, this means that whilst good internal character only comes from God through repentance and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, we can still receive good

external conduct through the laws and values of our various cultures to the extent that they are based on God's laws. Even other nations which are not built on the Christian gospel are still built on the basic morality that is central to all the world's religions and which comes ultimately from God.

This concept of our becoming selfish/evil at heart from the moment we rebel from God rather than as something accrued over time, can be seen no clearer than from the very beginning of the Bible when we read about Cain and Abel in Genesis. In the very first generation to be born from Adam and Eve we find that Abel repents from his sinful nature and serves God, whilst Cain rebels and slays his brother!<sup>[26]</sup> It wasn't the case that humanity gradually fell into sin over time, with the first generation lying, the second stealing, the third turning violent, the fourth raping and killing. No, from the very first generation man killed his own brother, and violence and covetousness have swept the globe thereafter. The reason that God allows this evil to continue (and one of the answers to why God allow suffering) is because if He was to remove all the evil people from this world He would have to remove all of us! But He is long suffering in order to save as many people as are willing to come to Him in repentance of the evil that is in their heart.<sup>[27]</sup>

In fact things got so bad that God eventually had to wipe out the entire planet with a flood for all but one family, because "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Man's wickedness had grown so great that there was no longer any good influence by which to hold back the tide of evil, and the overwhelming and ubiquitous temptations to sin would have completely drowned out the small quiet voice of conscience.<sup>[28]</sup> So for humanity's sake, God had to wipe the slate clean. If it were true that good comes out of mankind naturally, God could in time have coaxed a restoration. But because man's corrupt nature fully realises itself without any good influence to hold it at bay, he had to be destroyed so that future generations could be saved from the same fate.

It must be stressed that even though we have become fully corrupt at heart, that corruptness has not yet fully expressed itself, thanks to God's invisible influence upon us. This will be dealt with more in chapter four, but for now a good analogy would be to imagine sin and corruption as a poison that has already consumed our heart, but is still in the process of coursing through our veins to lead the other organs to corruption as well. We tend to see only the final result as a liver goes, a kidney malfunctions, the lungs collapse, etc. But all along there was something wrong in our blood, a problem that we could not see, because it was under the surface and had not yet exerted its full effect. This same deception can be true for a business, a community, or an ecosystem. But it is especially true for the individual. The spiritual darkness that results from our rebellion to God hides from us our true fallen state until the light of the gospel enters our lives through the Holy Spirit. As God's holy light grows brighter in the life of the repentant Christian, the darkness within is exposed to ever greater degrees so that as the humble Christian steadily progresses into a better person, they become ever more aware of just how much further they still have to go. But the opposite is true for the unrepentant; their spiritual darkness grows thicker as the light of Christ recedes, and they become less aware of their shortcomings, becoming steadily more confused as to all the "fuss" that Christians make about sinful behaviour. Their ability to understand the gospel disappears<sup>[29]</sup>.

In the New Testament we see that Jesus spoke of the heart as a source of inner corruption, saying, “for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies...” So if as a last line of defence you try to *excuse* yourself by saying that you are the product of a bad environment, all that environment is really doing is coaxing out of the heart what is already there.<sup>[30]</sup>

For many this is hard to accept, yet the philosophies of modern psychology agree, science with its Darwin-inspired survival-of-the-fittest theories agree, postmodernism and its grim acceptance of the future agrees. Yet the common man on the street who trusts in psychology, believes in evolution, and sympathises with postmodernism, does not. This is a contradiction in the mind of almost every individual, and explains why few people are willing to believe the world is in a mess because of people like “me”. People are willing to accept the evidence, but not to apply it to themselves. Try to remove yourself from the world when it comes to judgement of the world’s ways if you will, yet you *are* the world. Your relative superiority or inferiority to the majority is only down to factors beyond your control.

The only thing you *can* control is your willingness to repent and seek God’s forgiveness, at which point He will give you a new heart that allows you to follow His ways.<sup>[31]</sup> A complete surrender to God is what is required,<sup>[32]</sup> so that you can be reborn from within, so that you are no longer a slave to sin as the Bible says that you are.<sup>[33]</sup> Claim the victory through repentance that Christ’s death on the cross gives you.<sup>[34]</sup> Then and only then will you become *truly* empowered to do that which is right.<sup>[35]</sup>

So when we think about whether we deserve hell or not, we need to acknowledge that if it wasn’t for God’s universal grace - His faithful commitment to our world from the beginning - then we would by now be utterly depraved and unrecognisable to our own selves. We would not even be recognisable as human. We would be as demons. Likewise, if we were to live forever, we would finally attain this terrible state if we never repented. Some people in life are already aware of this progressive descent into corruption as they look back upon their life, particularly their childhood or teenage years and despair as to how they ever ended up as the kind of person they are now. We are gradually, and then swiftly, moving further and further away from God unless we humbly submit to Him and receive His Holy Spirit.

Now it has been said that only when you are willing to die for a cause are you truly converted to it, and God attests to this truth with regards to conversion. God’s word says that we must die to our old selves and become new creations.<sup>[36]</sup> Jesus said that you cannot patch up an old bag or add new wine to old bottles,<sup>[37]</sup> but a complete regeneration is in order. When we see Islamic militants in Iraq purposefully blowing up their own people, including women and children to try and force the foreign armies to depart, can we really believe that humanity does not need to yield itself to God for its true condition and motivations to be revealed and made pure?

Do you deserve hell? The point is that without God in this world we would make our own hell. It may be hard to admit, but it is more plain to see with every passing year. So the final answer is: YES. If you fail to repent before this life is over (and you cannot be certain that you will truly repent at the end if you have no desire to repent right now) then God’s judgement will be to withdraw His invisible influence from you and like the falling away of scales from your eyes, you will be exposed to the awful

reality of your own fully corruptible state as it engulfs you.<sup>[38]</sup> And you will be unable to genuinely contest the judgement.

But this is not God's desire!<sup>[39]</sup> He is so desperate to keep you from this fate, that He condescended to become a man with the following purpose:

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3: 17)


[1] But he knows not that the shades of the dead are there [specters haunting the scene of past transgressions], and that her invited guests are [already sunk] in the depths of Sheol (the lower world, Hades, the place of the dead).

 Proverbs 9: 17


[2] Sheol (the place of the dead) and Abaddon (the abyss, the final place of the accuser Satan) are both before the Lord--how much more, then, the hearts of the children of men?

 Proverbs 15: 11

[3] And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have pity and mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Child, remember that you in your lifetime fully received [what is due you in] comforts and delights, and Lazarus in like manner the discomforts and distresses; but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who want to pass from this [place] to you may not be able, and no one may pass from there to us. And [the man] said, Then, father, I beseech you to send him to my father's house--For I have five brothers--so that he may give [solemn] testimony and warn them, lest they too come into this place of torment.

 Luke 16: 24-28

[4] Because the people have forsaken Me and have estranged and profaned this place [Jerusalem] by burning incense in it to other gods that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I commanded not nor spoke of it, nor did it come into My mind and heart-- Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when this place shall no more be called Topheth or the Valley of Ben-hinnom [son of Hinnom], but the Valley of Slaughter.

 Jeremiah 19: 4-6

[5] And the tongue is a fire. [The tongue is a] world of wickedness set among our members, contaminating and depraving the whole body and setting on fire the wheel of birth (the cycle of man's nature), being itself ignited by hell (Gehenna).

 James 3: 6

[6] These are springs without water and mists driven along before a tempest, for whom is reserved forever the gloom of darkness.

 2 Peter 2: 17

[7] For God did not [even] spare angels that sinned, but cast them into hell, delivering them to be kept there in pits of gloom till the judgment and their doom.

 2 Peter 2: 4


[8] It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath.

 Ecclesiastes 9: 2 (ESV)

[9] But these [people]! Like unreasoning beasts, mere creatures of instinct, born [only] to be captured and destroyed, railing at things of which they are ignorant, they shall utterly perish in their [own] corruption [in their destroying they shall surely be destroyed]

 2 Peter 2: 12

[10] Then death and Hades (the state of death or disembodied existence) were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

 Revelation 20: 14

[11] Then the devil who had led them astray [deceiving and seducing them] was hurled into the fiery lake of burning brimstone, where the beast and false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (through the ages of the ages)

 Revelation 20: 10


[12] And if anyone's [name] was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was hurled into the lake of fire.

 Revelation 20: 15

[13] All the heave offerings [the lifted-out and kept portions] of the holy things which the Israelites give to the Lord I give to you and to your sons and your daughters with you, as a continual debt forever. It is a covenant of salt [that cannot be dissolved or violated] forever before the Lord for you [Aaron] and for your posterity with you.

 Numbers 18: 19


[14] Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

 Jude 7 (King James)


[15] And the huge dragon was cast down and out--that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him.

 Revelation 12: 9

[16] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

 Genesis 1: 1 (ESV)

[17] 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." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

 Revelation 21: 5-8 (ESV)


[18] Nevertheless, do not let this one fact escape you, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

 2 Peter 3: 8


[19] Then He will say to those at His left hand, Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!

 Matthew 25: 41

[20] For such [praying] is good and right, and [it is] pleasing and acceptable to God our Savior, Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth.

 1 Timothy 2: 3-4


[21] In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins.

 1 John 4: 10


[22] For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.

 Hebrews 4: 12

[23] Jesus answered them, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, Whoever commits and practices sin is the slave of sin.

 John 8: 34


[24] "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

 Matthew 5: 21-22 (ESV)


[25] You are jealous and covet [what others have] and your desires go unfulfilled; [so] you become murderers. [To hate is to murder as far as your hearts are concerned.] You burn with envy and anger and are not able to obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness that you seek], so you fight and war. You do not have, because you do not ask. [Or] you do ask [God for them] and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives...

 James 4: 2-3

[26] And the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why do you look sad and depressed and dejected? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin crouches at your door; its desire is for you, but you must master it. And Cain said to his brother, Let us go out to the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

 Genesis 4: 6-8


[27] But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

 Psalm 86: 15


[28] The earth was depraved and putrid in God's sight, and the land was filled with violence (desecration, infringement, outrage, assault, and lust for power). And God looked upon the world and saw how degenerate, debased, and vicious it was, for all humanity had corrupted their way upon the earth and lost their true direction.

 Genesis 6: 11-12


[29] The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

 1 Corinthians 2: 14 (ESV)

[30] The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...

 Jeremiah 17: 9 (King James)

[31] I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

 Jeremiah 36: 25-27 (ESV)

[32] For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God's power working unto salvation [for deliverance from eternal death] to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance...

 Romans 1: 16


[33] Do you not know that if you continually surrender yourselves to anyone to do his will, you are the slaves of him whom you obey, whether that be to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness (right doing and right standing with God)?

 Romans 6: 16


[34] We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that [our] body [which is the instrument] of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin.

 Romans 6: 6


[35] And having been set free from sin, you have become the servants of righteousness (of conformity to the divine will in thought, purpose, and action).

 Romans 6: 18

[36] We were buried therefore with Him by the baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might [habitually] live and behave in newness of life.

 Romans 6: 4


[37] No one sews a patch of unshrunk (new) goods on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and the rent (tear) becomes bigger and worse [than it was before]. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the bottles destroyed; but new wine is to be put in new (fresh) wineskins.

 Mark 2: 21-22

[38] All hands shall be feeble and all knees shall be weak as water. They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth; horror and dismay shall cover them, and shame shall be upon all faces and baldness upon all their heads [as evidence of grief].

 Ezekiel 7: 17-18

[39] 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live...'

 Ezekiel 33: 11 (NIV)

### 3. Why Jesus?

God loves us.

I've refrained from saying this too directly until now, because it is often hard to see love in tandem with justice. But you can't have one without the other. The starting point to understanding this is the acceptance of right and wrong as absolutes, not as subjective concepts. Whilst it is true that certain decisions can be subjectively right or wrong when we don't see the bigger picture, and whilst some decisions can be neither right nor wrong, neither of these facts contradicts the reality that right and wrong do exist.

Now to build on this basic foundation we have to delve a little into metaphysics.

For right and wrong to exist it stands to reason that there must also be punishment and liberty as respective judgements, for if wrongness didn't require punishment, then it couldn't be wrong. The same logic applies to doing what is right and the freedom it deserves. So if there was no system of liberty and punishment, which together we call justice, then there would be no right and wrong.

Therefore there would be no good and evil, no love and hate. Desire and pain yes, for these are sensory experiences, but no accountability for evil and no sacrificial love (real love is defined by a person's willingness to invite loss upon themselves so that another may gain).

So for love to exist there must also be justice to rule over good and evil.

The problem for us as sinners is that justice creates repercussions.

At this point of the chapter all other world religions and philosophies have to stop and say, "that's it, we've told you about right and wrong, what the consequences are, and we can do nothing more for you, you're pretty much on your own from here on." But as a God who wants to bless where no blessing is deserved, the one and only true God created a solution - as we would expect from a loving omnipotent being. His love not only upholds justice by fulfilling it,<sup>[1]</sup> but spills over it to provide undeserved blessings<sup>[2]</sup> through what we call the Atonement.

To explain this, let's go back to our courtroom scene. You the transgressor of the law have been found guilty. Sentence is about to be passed. But then a unique moment in all of history takes place: the victim says that he will serve your sentence instead of you. The judge tries to argue, but the victim says that because the sin was committed against him, he has the right to decide how to respond, and so as to not violate justice by ignoring the sin committed, he will serve the sentence in stead of the accused.

"That is all well and good," the judge says. "But the sentence is also designed to help keep the public safe from the accused, so he still needs to be restrained."

"I have a solution to that," the victim says. "My offer is conditional in that the accused must promise never to break the law again."

Knowing it would be futile to be anything other than honest, the accused admits that he would never be able to keep that promise, despite the overwhelming gratitude he is currently feeling. But the victim then replies that he has a special ring, which if the accused is willing to wear, will gradually reduce the man's desire to break the law again, until one day he will have no such desire to do so at all. So the accused agrees and goes free, the victim goes to prison, and the judge says that justice has been met.

This is how the courtroom scene plays out in the spiritual world that we don't see: God, as the victim of our breaking His laws, offers to suffer our punishment for us<sup>[3]</sup>, if we repent from our ways<sup>[4]</sup>. But He knows that we can't do that no matter how strong our desire to do so is<sup>[5]</sup>, so He gives us His Holy Spirit to facilitate our change into the perfect man or woman of God.<sup>[6]</sup>

What we see in action here is justice, mercy, and grace, all upheld and motivated by love.

Justice, because sin has been dealt with, the price paid.

Mercy, because the repentant sinner has not had to suffer what he *fully* deserved.

And grace, because he is blessed with eternal life which he *never* deserved.

And we see these three aspects in the trinity of the godhead. God the Father, the judge in our courtroom, is justice. The Son Jesus Christ, the sacrificial victim in our courtroom, is mercy. And the Holy Spirit, the special ring in our courtroom, is grace. This is not to say that we don't find all three aspects exercised by each member of the trinity, rather that each member has a primary purpose founded in a particular aspect with regards to the Atonement event. In the great plan of salvation as a whole, each member of the godhead serves with all three aspects of the character of God, which can be seen in the chapters that follow.

At this point it may be important to explain the concept of the Trinity, for many people misunderstand it.

There is only one God, the Bible makes this clear throughout its pages. Yet God expresses Himself in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are yet one and the same God. It goes beyond our comprehension and for this reason many reject the notion. But by observing nature we can see that this is not impossible. For example, light is both a wave and a particle at the same time; which in science is referred to as wave-particle duality. Electrons also exhibit this duality. If nature, created by God, can uphold a duality, then why can't God Himself uphold a trinity?

As finite beings with finite minds, we must be careful to avoid the blasphemy of trying to put God into a box; in other words trying to reduce His existential nature into something our limited minds can comprehend. He is far beyond the scope of the greatest imaginations and it is extremely arrogant of us to believe that God must conform to our own grasp of reality which we must admit is extremely limited. But what we should seek to understand of God's nature is His great love for us, which He expressed perfectly through His Son Jesus Christ.

Now how did Jesus serve as the sacrificial victim in this great act of love which we call the Atonement?

Despite the numerical decline of Christianity in the western world in recent years, most people are still aware that Jesus was crucified on the cross at Calvary, and from reading this book thus far you will have an understanding that this was accomplished so that God Himself would suffer as the scapegoat for all those who repent from their sinful rebelliousness, in order that we might be saved whilst justice remains fulfilled. There is far more that He did for us following His physical death, but for now it is important that we understand the nature of this suffering, and a clue resides in the penultimate words Jesus uttered on the cross.

Many people have tried to claim that Jesus Himself proved He was only a man and nothing more when he cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Clearly, people have said, this proves He was a delusional man and not God incarnate.

But firstly, to think this through logically, if Christianity had been built around a myth (supposing as many do that Jesus' historical reality was combined with older pagan theologies of resurrected gods - a topic that will be dealt with in chapter five), then surely these words would have been omitted from the Bible by those looking to deify Christ? If He was only a great teacher and nothing more, then surely words that seem to indicate doubt in His mission and divinity would have been deleted or would not even have been recorded in the first place? So we are left with the only sensible conclusion that the presence of Jesus' words help to prove His divinity and purpose.

Now Jesus was fulfilling prophecy when He said these words, for they appear in the twenty-second psalm of the Old Testament, which foretells of Jesus' fate upon the cross (hundreds of years before the Romans had even been invented crucifixion)<sup>[7]</sup>. By quoting from the first verse of this psalm, He fulfils yet one more prophecy regarding His identity as the Messiah. But why did He say these words at all, that they might be prophesised of in the first place?

Because of the nature of the Atonement...

The ultimate spiritual consequence of rebelling from God is to be cut off from His presence altogether. It's impossible to imagine. The closest we can come to imagining it is to be so filled with despair that there is absolutely no hope left within us. Even the unfortunates who commit suicide have not reached this point of degeneration, for at least in death they see hope for the release of their pains. But spiritual death, complete isolation from God, is complete and abject misery with no hope of reprieve.<sup>[8]</sup> Jesus had to suffer this feeling, this condition, to truly suffer the pains of spiritual death in order to fulfil our penalty. Even though Jesus understood the need and purpose of the Atonement, it was necessary for Him to be shocked by the nature and experience of it, even to the degree that He felt forsaken by God,<sup>[9]</sup> which was only possible if He came down to earth as a mortal man with mortal knowledge (a subject explained in chapter seven). Anything less than this would have made the Atonement incomplete.

No one other than God could have done this. Even with His influence in our lives, men and women are too self-serving to bow to God's will to this extent. Jesus' closest disciples could not even stay awake to support Him as He prepared Himself for the

cross. The Atonement also required a perfect, sinless man to sacrifice himself in order to reverse the original transgression of Adam in the Garden of Eden. So it had to be God Himself as Jesus Christ.<sup>[10]</sup> But even if someone else could have qualified for this sacrifice, the point is that God experienced this separation so that we wouldn't have to!

Jesus' descent into this state of spiritual abandonment is even more amazing when we remember that He first of all condescended from heaven to earth, departing from the majesty and glory of His residence and state of existence to be born in complete humility, becoming susceptible to all the same pains and trials as mortal man.<sup>[11]</sup> Like a good general who does not order one of his troops to do something that he isn't also willing to do himself, God proved by example that it wasn't unfair of Him to expect us to walk this life in perfect obedience to Him.<sup>[12]</sup> And His humility knew no bounds! He didn't even give Himself a head start; born in a stable to a carpenter and his wife who were refugees, He had to work His way from a position of ridicule to become a rabbi who would leave home at the tender age of thirty on a three year mission that would end in a brutal and merciless death. He even ignored His mortal heritage as the heir to King David's throne,<sup>[13]</sup> even when His thousands of followers tried to crown Him king,<sup>[14]</sup> instead choosing to live a life of material poverty and spiritual service to a world of sinners.

As if that wasn't enough, He suffered the pains of spiritual death,<sup>[15]</sup> the pains of hell on our behalf, until the very last mite had been paid. All of it willingly.<sup>[16]</sup> All of it foreknowingly.<sup>[17]</sup> All of it for men and women who from their birth had ignored Him and for those who continue to ignore Him still.

And by the very nature of the godhead, not only did He suffer as God the Son, but He also suffered as God the Father by enduring the agony of watching His suffering Son. Just think how profound is this truth; God cut Himself off from... Himself! He substituted Himself for those who would come to Him in repentance, and experienced the full judgement of His own anger! Is it any wonder that at midday the sun's light faded for three hours<sup>[18]</sup> before the earth groaned and tore apart in the pains of a major earthquake following His last breath?<sup>[19]</sup>

Even more amazing is the fact that this sacrifice is deeply personal because Jesus would have made this unimaginable sacrifice just for you. If you had been the only person in the world who had sinned, or if everyone else refused repentance except for you, Jesus would still have done it. Jesus is God in the flesh. God would still have done it, just for you! How great and deep and powerful is that love.


But in the light of this stark reality, do you still desire your sinful behaviour and your own agenda?

The sad fact is that you do. And you need to repent of it, for the good news is that God's love is so much greater than our darkest sins.<sup>[20]</sup> He has removed the barrier of justice that keeps us separated from Him. Are you willing to remove the final barrier of putting yourself first?


[1] And God purposed that through (by the service, the intervention of) Him [the Son] all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, [the Father] made peace by means of the blood of His cross.

 Colossians 1: 20

[2] For you are becoming progressively acquainted with and recognizing more strongly and clearly the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (His kindness, His gracious generosity, His undeserved favour and spiritual blessing), [in] that though He was [so very] rich, yet for your sakes He became [so very] poor, in order that by His poverty you might become enriched (abundantly supplied).

 2 Corinthians 8: 9

[3] Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

 Isaiah 53: 4-6 (ESV)


[4] And He called a little child to Himself and put him in the midst of them, and said, Truly I say to you, unless you repent (change, turn about) and become like little children [trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving], you can never enter the kingdom of heaven [at all].

 Matthew 18: 2-3

[5] For I endorse and delight in the Law of God in my inmost self [with my new nature]. But I discern in my bodily members [in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh] a different law (rule of action) at war against the law of my mind (my reason) and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs [in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh]. O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from [the shackles of] this body of death? O thank God! [He will!] through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One) our Lord! So then indeed I, of myself with the mind and heart, serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

 Romans 7: 22-25


[6] But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Savior to man [as man] appeared, He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity and mercy, by [the] cleansing [bath] of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out [so] richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.

 Titus 3: 4-6

[7] For [like a pack of] dogs they have encompassed me; a company of evildoers has encircled me, they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; [the evildoers] gaze at me. They part my clothing among them and cast lots for my raiment...

 Psalm 22: 16-18

[8] And throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

 Matthew 25: 30

[9] And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?--which means, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me [deserting Me and leaving Me helpless and abandoned]?

 Mark 15: 34

[10] But He holds His priesthood unchangeably, because He lives on forever. Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity) those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede with Him and intervene for them. [Here is] the High Priest [perfectly adapted] to our needs, as was fitting--holy, blameless, unstained by sin, separated from sinners, and exalted higher than the heavens. He has no day by day necessity, as [do each of these other] high priests, to offer sacrifice first of all for his own [personal] sins and then for those of the people, because He [met all the requirements] once for all when He brought Himself [as a sacrifice] which He offered up.

 Hebrews 7: 24-27


[11] Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form, He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!

 Philippians 2: 6-8


[12] For even to this were you called [it is inseparable from your vocation]. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you [His personal] example, so that you should follow in His footsteps. He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit (guile) ever found on His lips.

 1 Peter 2: 21-22

[13] Constantly keep in mind Jesus Christ (the Messiah) [as] risen from the dead, [as the prophesied King] descended from David, according to the good news (the Gospel) that I preach.

 2 Timothy 2: 8


[14] Then Jesus, knowing that they meant to come and seize Him that they might make Him king, withdrew again to the hillside by Himself alone.

 John 6: 15


[15] He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree [as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.

 1 Peter 2: 24


[16] And He said to them, My soul is exceedingly sad (overwhelmed with grief) so that it almost kills Me! Remain here and keep awake and be watching. And going a little farther, He fell on the ground and kept praying that if it were possible the [fatal] hour might pass from Him. And He was saying, Abba, [which means] Father, everything is possible for You. Take away this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You [will].

 Mark 14: 34-36


[17] For I passed on to you first of all what I also had received, that Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for our sins in accordance with [what] the Scriptures [foretold],

 1 Corinthians 15: 3

[18] It was now about the sixth hour (midday), and darkness enveloped the whole land and earth until the ninth hour (about three o'clock in the afternoon), while the sun's light faded or was darkened; and the curtain [of the Holy of Holies] of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit! And with these words, He expired.

 Luke 23: 44-46

[19] When the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus observed the earthquake and all that was happening, they were terribly frightened and filled with awe, and said, Truly this was God's Son!

 Matthew 27: 54

[20] For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the Just for the unjust, the Innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit

 1 Peter 3: 18

## 4. The falling umbrella.

As explained in chapter two, God's grace and judgement falls on the whole world whether people accept Him or not. But the means by which a great deal of that grace falls on a particular culture is dependant on its collective acknowledgement of God in its behaviour and laws. When a nation falls away from that acknowledgement by dispensing with God's commandments and persecuting His followers whilst choosing instead to legalise, uphold and glamorise unrighteous activity, the protective umbrella of grace that shields the people from God's righteous judgements gradually falls. If that culture fails to repent then it is eventually destroyed.<sup>[1]</sup>

The tragic account of Sodom and Gomorrah is still a fairly well known story from the histories of the Bible, detailing the complete destruction of a group of cities by fire from heaven<sup>[2]</sup> (which could feasibly be meteorites, but could also just as easily be a spiritual manifestation), due to the depravity of their culture as witnessed by their total lack of morality.<sup>[3]</sup> Another occasion of judgement upon total depravity that is found in the Bible is when God ordered the complete destruction of the Canaanites by the sword,<sup>[4]</sup> because their lack of respect for human life (mixed in with idol worship) had led them to such depravities as burning children alive in metal sarcophagi to appease their false gods.

In addition to the Bible, secular history also recounts how civilisations destroy themselves when their cultures deteriorate to the point where law and order break down, because the people become too irresponsible for the state to regulate. Of the twenty-one documented civilisations that have existed, nineteen have been destroyed by their own people from within rather than from their enemies without. The modern world must take heed of this warning, because establishing a police state to combat internal disorder tends to hold things at bay for only a while. The only answer is the gospel, because it transforms the hearts of people and then goes on to change a society from the inside out.

So whenever these critical masses of sin arise, God's judgement arrives as a result of both justice and mercy; justice because the sin has become too great to remain unaddressed, and mercy because the corruption must be removed in order for new people being born into the world to regain the chance to know and worship God.

The western world has surely begun the process of dispensing with God, none more so than Europe. Whereas a host of European monarchies and their subsequent governments were for many centuries Defenders of the Faith, upholding God's laws and supporting Christ's church, they now promote secularism and defend any faith as long as it is free from fundamental religious conviction. In fact the European Union's charter is completely free from any responsibility towards God at all.

This is as expected to Christians who are familiar with Biblical prophecy, because it has long been believed that certain passages from the book of Daniel warn of a re-emergence of the Roman Empire.<sup>[5]</sup>

The parallels between the developing European Union and the Roman Empire are unmistakable. The core parallel is that they share the same geographical region. At the moment this only consists of Europe, but there have been recent calls from within the

European Union to create a Mediterranean Union, that will unite the Palestinian lands and Northern Africa with Europe. This greater union of nations would encompass the same territory as the old Roman Empire and there are plans to drop the European prefix and simply call it the Union.

This parallel helps us to identify the New Roman Empire, but what is disturbing are the shared characteristics of the old Empire and the new Union:

- Tolerance of religious culture but intolerance of religious conviction.
- A cultural idolisation of vice and lawlessness.
- Promotion and even enforcement of liberal morality (One woman in Germany was actually denied income support because she refused an opportunity to work in a brothel, which her jobcentre considered an acceptable line of work.)
- Motivated *primarily* by economics and material wealth (unlike the American constitution and former Christian monarchies).
- The unifying of different cultures under one government with its own agenda.
- Obsession with extending dominion and exterminating true democracy. (One only has to look at how the European Union is reviving its constitution without a democratic vote under the guise of a treaty)

In 2004 the European Commission actually put on an exhibit outside their offices to promote the EU under the heading of “the Roman Empire returns”.

Then there are more parallels to come between the old Roman Empire and the European Union. In the possible European treaty there will be a permanent European president, a European Chief Prosecutor (perhaps as a forerunner to a common law), and a European foreign affairs official. A European army is also on the horizon. It does not seem unlikely that in the not too distant future there will also arise a common religion (perhaps emerging from the United Religions Initiative). A united religious belief system will become increasingly important as the European Union expands into the Middle East and Northern Africa, where the world’s three major religions will be expected to live in peace and prosperity. (Indeed, religious fundamentalism is today being increasingly blamed for the cause of all the world’s woes, despite the fact that most of the major wars and atrocities committed in the last century were by atheistic regimes, such as Nazism and Communism to name but two. By contrast, God tells us that the world is experiencing all of its woes because it is increasingly ignoring Him and His laws on how to live righteously; true peace cannot exist between people or nations until there is peace between God and man, and this is only possible through Jesus Christ.)

What is truly worrying about this Union is that it is prophesied to eventually be usurped and ruled over by the antichrist,<sup>[6]</sup> who will deceive the world by appearing to be its saviour from the unprecedented chaos that is engulfing it. He will form a peace treaty, originally for seven years, with the one country that is positioned at the centre of all the nations’ major disputes: Israel.<sup>[7]</sup> But this peace will be a temporary smokescreen to position himself as the world’s worst ever dictator.<sup>[8]</sup> For almost two thousand years this prophecy had a fictitious appearance to many, because the state of Israel was destroyed in 70AD. But in 1948 it was resurrected as prophesied,<sup>[9]</sup> just a year prior to the formation of the European Council, which is no coincidence - the stage is being set for the final showdown between God’s chosen nation and the rest of the world. Fortunately, the reign of the antichrist will be short, because Jesus Christ

will return to bring justice and usher in a millennium of true peace and righteousness for all those who will have survived God's preceding judgements, in addition to those who died as true believers in His Son and are resurrected with immortal and perfect bodies.<sup>[10]</sup>

Now this may sound like fiction to many readers, but there are numerous Biblical prophecies beyond the scope of this book that support past, present, and future world events as setting the stage for this showdown between the forces of good and evil in the middle east, culminating in the war of all wars surrounding Armageddon in Israel. The miraculous survival of Israel as a national state for over sixty years against overwhelming odds (not to mention almost two millennia as a people with no land, but a distinct cultural heritage) and the accelerating rise of the EU into a Big Brother superpower, should be enough to encourage you to look into these prophecies in more detail. But ultimately they are there to point the way to a trust in the Bible as the inspired word of God and to a trust in Jesus Christ as your personal saviour.

Now Britain, perhaps more than any other western country, appears to be fighting upon one of the toughest spiritual battlegrounds whilst the stage is being set for these end-of-days prophecies to come to fulfilment, and this is because it is intimately tied up with both the US and the EU; because of its close historical ties to the US, Britain has imported much of the broken system of values that has weakened US culture, whilst auctioning off its God-given sovereignty to the EU for inclusion in a body that seeks to glorify mankind's eminence rather than God's pre-eminence. Great Britain is thus suffering from both civic and governmental breakdown.

As the guardians of British society, the UK government is partially responsible. It cannot use the excuse of exercising the will of the people in a democratic society, because the laws it has changed, removed, or added have been to appease minorities rather than the majority of voters. For example, in the ten years under the government of new Labour, religious freedom has been threatened by the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, the sanctity of sex and marriage has been all but destroyed in law by the Sexual Orientation Regulations, and other legislation has also been put into force that undermines Christian values and the traditional family unit. These changes have been driven by religious minorities, sexual minorities, and parental minorities, all of whom have desired the kind of changes that oppose God's laws and therefore by association Christ Himself.

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act makes it a crime to intentionally stir up hatred towards any racial or religious group. This is no bad thing in itself of course, and Christianity does not intentionally stir up hatred, in fact Jesus taught us to love our enemies.<sup>[11]</sup> But the concern is the fact that the government has been trying to modify the act to include the stirring up of *unintentional* hatred, which could easily be the *unintended* result of any religious preaching. This is of great concern to the spread of Christianity because Jesus teaches that He is the only way to God,<sup>[12]</sup> and the Bible fully verifies the fact that any person or religion which denies His divinity and His sacrificial death on the cross, is inspired of the devil, not of God.<sup>[13]</sup> The government has twice tried to modify this act and has twice been defeated. Yet it could only be a matter of time, and may explain why some of the Act has yet to come into force.

Now whilst we are on the subject of religious hatred, is it not strange that there is no governmental protection for the reverence that Christians hold for their Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ? How His name has become a curse in every walk of British life? Clearly what can be termed religious hatred is a one way street.

People need to ask themselves how the name and title of Jesus Christ is capable of carrying so much force that no other alternative curse will suffice. There is a power in this curse that is felt whether uttered or heard. Could it be because there is real power and authority in it? Be thankful that Jesus said such blasphemy against Him can be forgiven. But that forgiveness needs to be sought or you will not find it...<sup>[14]</sup>

Now to the Sexual Orientation Regulations; the government has among other things: legalised civil partnerships (which are in all but name homosexual marriages), made Christian churches vulnerable to legal action by homosexuals who desire to impose their active homosexuality as an accepted practice within the church, and even gone so far as to act as moral determiners by legalising the use of public funds in schools to promote homosexual acceptance irrespective of a person's beliefs. Yet God has declared in no uncertain terms that homosexuality is an offense against holiness, which means that it is also a damaging practice, both physically and spiritually. It is a particular result of sin in itself, not a biological disposition.<sup>[15]</sup> A misplaced belief in the latter is what creates such an outpouring of condemnation upon those who declare it as a sin. But God's word is clear, and contrary to the world's media, science cannot prove or even offer acceptable evidence that homosexuality is predetermined. There is in fact evidence to the contrary, including the documented case of a pair of identical twins, one of whom pursues a homosexual lifestyle and the other a heterosexual one.

God has also ordained marriage for the purpose of raising children in a secure and loving family environment. No matter how much they are loved, children cannot receive full emotional security and development from single parent families, or enjoy full emotional and spiritual growth by being raised by a homosexual couple; men and women were made by God to complement each other<sup>[16]</sup> and become "one flesh" in emotional and psychological ways as well as in physical ways. Any other system is sacrilegious, and will also be damaging. We are only just beginning to recognise the ill effects that the breakdown of traditional family life is having upon our culture, and this is being accelerated by all the further legislation that has favoured single parent families and the cultural promotion of sexual promiscuity. Of course the social and moral fabric of Western culture has been deteriorating for far more than just the last ten years, but it has been rapidly accelerating in this time and reaping what it sows in equal measure. Not a year goes by when the newspapers don't reveal violent new trends being committed by the youths of our rising generation.

Now fortunately there *are* times when a culture does repent and God saves them from destruction. The story of Jonah and the city of Nineveh is one example from the Bible.<sup>[17]</sup> But by observing the prophetic signs that signal we are closing in on the last days of this fallen world order, it may already be too late...

The greatest judgement that ever affected this world was the global flood, and that was because there was a single world culture that had reached the critical mass point of sin.<sup>[18]</sup> Once again we are re-establishing a single world culture, and once again we are heading towards a similar worldwide critical mass point of sin which the Bible also records, this time through prophecy.<sup>[19]</sup> And it tells us that this time the world will not be destroyed by water, but by fire.<sup>[20]</sup> (As water in the scriptures represents birth or rebirth, fire represents dissolution and refinement).

As we look back at the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even more so at just the first eight years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see that God's judgements (His relinquishing blessings and protections) over western affairs are becoming heavier at an exponential rate.

- ❖ 1914 – The first ever world war, lasting for four years and resulting in severe economic depression.
- ❖ 1939 - Another world war, this time for five years, and with far greater pains and consequences.
- ❖ 1945 - The United Nations replaces the League of Nations to prevent such an atrocity from ever occurring again, but at the cost of British sovereignty over many lands, dramatically reducing the former empire's wealth and security.
- ❖ 1960s - Rather than seeking God for help, the western world turns to greater liberalism, so God's judgements manifest as physiological and psychological illnesses that are spread by and afflict those who practise increasingly immoral behaviour.<sup>[15]</sup> Britain compounds its sexual immorality by legalising abortion, thus devaluing human life as well as the sexual act of creation.
- ❖ 1970s - Still God is ignored, even mocked. As His statutes crumble, respect of principle and righteous character is replaced by respect of liberalisation, which is paradoxically set to masquerade as respect for the individual.<sup>[21]</sup> As people seek after rights more than responsibilities they become more like children and as a result social cohesion begins to disintegrate.
- ❖ 1980s - The selfish gain of consumerism fosters a 24/7 lifestyle that increases stress, insecurity, and relational breakdowns.
- ❖ 1990s – Governments continue to seek greater luxuries for their own nations in the process of heaping trouble on the developing world and the Middle East, so famines, natural disasters and wars break out which turn full circle to bite the hand that feeds them. The consequences of this are only now maturing.
- ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> Century – And so eventually the separation between governmental and civil disaffection for God is bridged by the ongoing and increasing judgement of twenty-first century terrorism and environmental disaster (the latter of which has quadrupled in the last twenty years alone, with floods increasing six-fold in the same period<sup>[22]</sup>).

It pains God to see His creation suffer, but as we approach the critical mass point of sin He has to allow our consequences to ripen in the expectation that the world will humble itself after realising its folly and recognising the correlation between rejection of Him and its increase in misery. Sadly, most ignore this correlation, because to recognise it would be to admit they are under judgement. Some do notice it, but they see rejection of God only as rejection of a particular system of morality, which they then try to redefine to be more acceptable in their own eyes.<sup>[23]</sup> Humanism is thus born and evolves to replace the role of religion. But the result is a staggering increase in mental illness and the breakdown of relationships.

To admit that there is a God who made us and who therefore is the only one who knows what is best for us, is a fact that too many people are currently trying to avoid. Ultimately the world wants to live selfishly, but reap the benefits of a selfless society. It's just plain common sense that this doesn't work.

The only way to break free from living only for yourself and for those closest to you,<sup>[24]</sup> is to have your heart changed by receiving the Holy Spirit, which comes from trusting in Jesus Christ by faith and obedience. Then you'll find a joy that you never knew existed and which surpasses all the world has to offer.<sup>[25]</sup>

God is so desperate to hand us this gift and save us from the awful state of being eternally cut off from His presence,<sup>[26]</sup> that when people continue to ignore Him He has to take more direct action. This means that whereas most natural disasters are the result of our own abuse of the planet, some are directly from God as a wakeup call.

The book of Revelation describes many mighty and terrible judgements that are due to come upon the world in the final days leading up to its restoration, and towards the end of His mortal ministry Jesus warned that all we have experienced so far<sup>[27]</sup> is just a prelude to these major troubles detailed in Revelation. As greater wars, conflicts and natural disasters come upon us, we know that God is gearing up for this final phase of judgement and that we are getting dangerously close to the critical mass point of sin. It is so important to realise now more than ever that these judgements are less about punishment (because they do not discriminate) and more about God's call to global as well as individual repentance. (Thus we must be aware that the victims of such disasters do not suffer because they deserve it more than anyone else.)<sup>[28]</sup>

As an example, lets look at the Asian tsunami of Boxing Day 2004.

There are two pieces of virtually irrefutable evidence for linking the tsunami to an act of God's judgement, and a third that is highly suggestive.

Firstly, the nature of the disaster. The tsunami occurred because an earthquake caused a continental shelf under the Pacific Ocean to fall suddenly by several metres, creating a shockwave. There is extremely little chance that this was the result of human mismanagement of the planet, and there is no known technology that could possibly affect such a remote and staggeringly large section of the earth's crust. So if you believe in a God actively involved in our affairs, the only remaining conclusions are that He either initiated the tectonic plate shift, or He allowed a natural shift to occur. (And we must remember that as a consequence of being wilfully rebellious creatures, we live in a rebellious world where "natural" is anything but kind. Pagans worship nature at their folly!)

A second point, however, supports the former assumption of the disaster being God's active divine will, for the dates of the tsunami and the relatively minor one that followed act as a divine witness; the first and major tsunami fell on Boxing Day, the day after the paganized celebration of Christmas, which historically has nothing to do with Christ or the time of year that He was born (clues in the gospels point to a date around the end of September and the beginning of October), but which is actually the Day of the Invincible Sun, established by a Roman emperor in 274 to observe the day the Persian god of light and sacred contracts, Mithra, was born. The second and less devastating tsunami fell on Easter Monday, the day after the paganized celebration of

Easter, which in 325 replaced the Biblical observance of Passover (the true day Jesus was crucified) with a day reserved for the worship of Ishtar, the fertility goddess of ancient Babylon and Assyria. The odds of these companion disasters falling by chance on these two significant dates in the same year is unbelievably high. But why?

It needs to be understood that since before the fall of the Tower of Babel some four and a half thousand years ago, there has been a system of worship to counter that of the true God Jehovah. This false system of worship began in ancient Babylon and has been retained until the present day through many pagan cults and false religions. It seeks to mimic the Christian gospel given at first to Adam and Eve (and later to the nation of Israel in types and symbols, but which has now been fully revealed in Jesus Christ) in order to draw away men and women from worship of the true Messiah who alone has the ability to save souls. The latest vessel for this false system of worship is the Catholic church, which grew out of the Roman church that instituted these pagan celebrations under the guise of Christianity in the third and fourth centuries AD.

So any celebration rooted in this false system of worship that began in Babylon is sacrilegious and ripe for judgement. We see this during the Exodus when the Israelite slaves were freed from Egypt but returned to practising Egyptian idolatry; many were slain by “natural” disasters and by the end of the wilderness years only two men survived to see the Promised Land. We see such judgement again after the kingdom of Israel was divided into north and south; the northern kingdom turned to idolatry and was conquered by the Assyrians, who deported the people. The same judgement fell upon the southern kingdom of Judah more than a hundred years later, once it too had become religiously and (as a result) socially corrupt.

God cannot ignore compromised religion. He is gracious for a time so that people have a chance to repent, but judgement always comes for those who do not turn from their idolatrous ways. Many people might say that observance of Christmas and Easter is harmless, that they are now secular holidays with no intentional worship of false gods and goddesses. But whether such celebrations are intentionally observing pagan festivals or not, they are still paying homage to them; they are an offence to truth and to a Holy God. Ignorance is no excuse in the heavenly courts, just as ignorance of the laws of our land does not prevent us from being subject to our earthly courts. If people genuinely care about honouring the God who made them by living holy lives that are dedicated to observing His commandments and appointed festivals as the early church was encouraged to do,<sup>[29]</sup> then the information is out there for them in the pages of the Bible and the histories of the world. But few people are looking, because few people truly have their hearts set on honouring Christ.

The fact that our decisions in this life regarding our attitude to God are of a holy and eternal significance is why the deaths of so many people *by God* is not an evil act. He gives us life and He has the right to take it away again at the appropriate time. Whether that be tomorrow in an unfortunate disaster, or fifty years from now in your sleep, it is all the same from an eternal perspective.

Thirdly, the location of the tsunamis hints at an act of grace. Had these disasters occurred along the coasts of the developed world, the loss of life would have been in the millions rather than the thousands, and the world’s economy could possibly have collapsed, inviting wars and riots that would have killed *hundreds of millions* and sent us into a new dark age. So let us not believe that God delights in some kind of sadistic

satisfaction in watching so many people die so tragically. Rather, I imagine He would have been pained beyond words as He was forced to execute His judgement,<sup>[30]</sup> a judgement that may yet be recognised by many who are suffering from being out of full fellowship with God as they committ spiritual adultery, as well as those who have not yet been reconcilled to Him because they know the pagan roots of our ‘Christian’ holidays and mistakenly equate true Christianity with its paganized imposter. By judging our pagan holidays, God may reveal the truth of pagan influence specifically to those who disbelieve in Him because of it, and lead them to the cross of His Son,<sup>[31]</sup> who suffered and died to save us from a far worse fate than any physical death.

It helps our faith during such tragic incidents when we focus on the fact that death is sometimes required to prevent a greater calamity. An example can be found in the Old Testament with King Hezekiah, who despite being a righteous king, when told by the prophet Isaiah that he would soon die, begged God in prayer to let Him live longer. In response, the Lord told Hezekiah that he would live a further fifteen years.<sup>[32]</sup> But as a result of his longer lifespan, he sired a successor who became arguably Israel’s most wicked tyrant king, leading his family and nation into many disasters and evil designs that eventually resulted in the destruction of their entire royal house.

So we must always bow before God’s greater wisdom and foresight, even in the face of terrible tragedies and death.

Another point for us to remember is that God does not remove Himself from the messiness of tragedy. He does not sit high on a throne lording it over people, but gets actively involved, even suffering Himself for our sakes. We explained this in chapter three, but an even more poignant scripture shows us that even when He suffers, He is still more concerned with our pain than His own:


And as they led Him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross and made him carry it behind Jesus. And there accompanied [Jesus] a great multitude of the people, [including] women who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning toward them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming during which they will say, Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the breasts that have never nursed [babies]! Then they will begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us! and to the hills, Cover (conceal, hide) us! For if they do these things when the timber is green, what will happen when it is dry?

(Luke 23: 26-31)

Jesus was referring to the calamity of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Israel as a state, less than forty years hence; a result of Israel’s rejection of their Messiah as prophesised by the prophet Hosea.<sup>[33]</sup> But the days are coming again when the timber will be dry. Jesus warned that as the days grew near to His return, when the eternal fate of the remainder of mankind would be determined, world upheaval would increase in frequency and intensity. He warned of greater persecutions for His people from all the nations of the earth and that even His own church would become filled with evil conduct and false teachings.<sup>[34]</sup> He prophesised of these things so that they might be signs for us, to help us realise that the last days are already here and that time to repent is running out for the world at large.

Don’t let this time run out in your own life.


[1] And if these [neighbor nations] will diligently learn the ways of My people, to swear by My name, saying, As the Lord lives--even as they taught My people to swear by Baal--then will they be built up in the midst of My people. But if any nation will not hear and obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, says the Lord.

 Jeremiah 12: 16-17


[2] Then the Lord rained on Sodom and on Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of the heavens.

 Genesis 19: 24

[3] And the Lord said, Because the shriek [of the sins] of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is exceedingly grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether [as vilely and wickedly] as is the cry of it which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.


 Genesis 18: 20-21

[4] But in the cities of these people which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes. But you shall utterly exterminate them, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that they may not teach you all the abominable practices they have carried on for their gods, and so cause you to sin against the Lord your God.

 Deuteronomy 20: 16-18

[5] Daniel 7-9 + Revelation 13

[6] And he shall speak words against the Most High [God] and shall wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change the time [of sacred feasts and holy days] and the law; and the saints shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time [three and one-half years].

 Daniel 7: 25

[7] And he shall enter into a strong and firm covenant with the many for one week [seven years]. And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease [for the remaining three and one-half years]; and upon the wing or pinnacle of abominations [shall come] one who makes desolate, until the full determined end is poured out on the desolator.

 Daniel 9: 27

[8] Who opposes and exalts himself so proudly and insolently against and over all that is called God or that is worshiped, [even to his actually] taking his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming that he himself is God.


 2 Thessalonians 2: 4

[9] Ezekiel 37


[10] After that I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse [appeared]! The One Who was riding it is called Faithful (Trustworthy, Loyal, Incorruptible, Steady) and True, and He passes judgment and wages war in righteousness (holiness, justice, and uprightness). His eyes [blaze] like a flame of fire, and on His head are many kingly crowns (diadems); and He has a title (name) inscribed which He alone knows or can understand. He is dressed in a robe dyed by dipping in blood, and the title by which He is called is The Word of God. And the troops of heaven, clothed in fine linen, dazzling and clean, followed Him on white horses.

 Revelation 19: 11-14


[11] But I say to you who are listening now to Me: [in order to heed, make it a practice to] love your enemies, treat well (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest you and pursue you with hatred, invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you].

 Luke 6: 27-28


[12] Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me. If you had known Me [had learned to recognize Me], you would also have known My Father. From now on, you know Him and have seen Him.

 John 14: 5-7

[13] For many imposters (seducers, deceivers, and false leaders) have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge (confess, admit) the coming of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) in bodily form. Such a one is the imposter (the seducer, the deceiver, the false leader, the antagonist of Christ) and the antichrist.

 2 John 1: 7

[14] Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

 Matthew 12: 31-32 (ESV)


[15] ...they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever! Amen (so be it). For this reason God gave them over and abandoned them to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural and abnormal one, and the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burning out, consumed) with lust for one another--men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities the inevitable consequences and penalty of their wrong-doing and going astray, which was [their] fitting retribution.

 Romans 1: 25-27


[16] He replied, Have you never read that He Who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be united firmly (joined inseparably) to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?

 Matthew 19: 4-5


[17] And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God revoked His [sentence of] evil that He had said that He would do to them and He did not do it [for He was comforted and eased concerning them]

 Jonah 3: 10

[18] The earth was depraved and putrid in God's sight, and the land was filled with violence (desecration, infringement, outrage, assault, and lust for power). And God looked upon the world and saw how degenerate, debased, and vicious it was, for all humanity had corrupted their way upon the earth and lost their true direction. God said to Noah, I intend to make an end of all flesh, for through men the land is filled with violence; and behold, I will destroy them and the land.

 Genesis 6: 11-13

[19] But you must remember, beloved, the predictions which were made by the apostles (the special messengers) of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). They told you beforehand, In the last days (in the end time) there will be scoffers [who seek to gratify their own unholy desires], following after their own ungodly passions. It is these who are [agitators] setting up distinctions and causing divisions--merely sensual [creatures, carnal, worldly-minded people], devoid of the [Holy] Spirit and destitute of any higher spiritual life.

 Jude 17-19

[20] To begin with, you must know and understand this, that scoffers (mockers) will come in the last days with scoffing, [people who] walk after their own fleshly desires and say, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the forefathers fell asleep, all things have continued exactly as they did from the beginning of creation. For they willfully overlook and forget this [fact], that the heavens [came into] existence long ago by the word of God, and the earth also which was formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then [existed] was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been stored up (reserved) for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly people.

 2 Peter 3: 3-7

[21] Because when they knew and recognized Him as God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools [professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves].

 Romans 1: 21-22

[22] And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth [there will be] distress (trouble and anguish) of nations in bewilderment and perplexity [without resources, left wanting, embarrassed, in doubt, not knowing which way to turn] at the roaring (the echo) of the tossing of the sea

 Luke 21: 25

[23] Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and prudent and shrewd in their own sight!

✚ Isaiah 5: 20-21

[24] If you [merely] love those who love you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the [very] sinners love their lovers (those who love them). And if you are kind and good and do favors to and benefit those who are kind and good and do favors to and benefit you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the preeminently sinful do the same.

✚ Luke 6: 32-33

[25] But love your enemies and be kind and do good [doing favors so that someone derives benefit from them] and lend, expecting and hoping for nothing in return but considering nothing as lost and despairing of no one; and then your recompense (your reward) will be great (rich, strong, intense, and abundant), and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind and charitable and good to the ungrateful and the selfish and wicked.

✚ Luke 6: 35

[26] But these men revile (scoff and sneer at) anything they do not happen to be acquainted with and do not understand; and whatever they do understand physically [that which they know by mere instinct], like irrational beasts--by these they corrupt themselves and are destroyed (perish)... They are clouds without water, swept along by the winds; trees, without fruit at the late autumn gathering time--twice (doubly) dead, [lifeless and] plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, flinging up the foam of their own shame and disgrace; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of eternal darkness has been reserved forever.

✚ Jude 10-13

[27] And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened or troubled, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in place after place; all this is but the beginning [the early pains] of the birth pangs [of the intolerable anguish].

✚ Matthew 24: 6-8


[28] Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them--do you think that they were more guilty offenders (debtors) than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No; but unless you repent (change your mind for the better and heartily amend your ways, with abhorrence of your past sins), you will all likewise perish and be lost eternally.

✚ Luke 13: 4-5


[29] Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

✚ 1 Corinthians 5: 7-8 (NKJV)

[30] 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. For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken, grieved in spirit, and heartsore--even a wife [wooed and won] in youth, when she is [later] refused and scorned, says your God. For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion and mercy I will gather you [to Me] again.

 Isaiah 54: 5-7

[31] And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must [so it is necessary that] the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross], in order that everyone who believes in Him [who cleaves to Him, trusts Him, and relies on Him] may not perish, but have eternal life and [actually] live forever!


 John 3: 14-15

[32] 2 Kings 20-21

[33] The high places also of Aven [once Beth(el), house of God, now (Beth-)aven, house of idolatry], the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed; the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their [idol] altars, and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us! And to the hills, Fall on us!

 Hosea 10: 8

[34] Then they will hand you over to suffer affliction and tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended and repelled and will begin to distrust and desert [Him Whom they ought to trust and obey] and will stumble and fall away and betray one another and pursue one another with hatred. And many false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead many into error. And the love of the great body of people will grow cold because of the multiplied lawlessness and iniquity, but he who endures to the end will be saved.

 Matthew 24: 9-13

## 5. The Church has let you down.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

This poetic scripture tells us that we are born with an awareness of God and of a spiritual dimension to life, but without the knowledge of what it is really all about. As chapter one of this book explained, we are all aware enough of God through our conscience and through His creation to be held accountable to Him. But this doesn't provide us with any kind of detail as to who He truly is.<sup>[1]</sup>

That is why He has always had representatives to speak for Him, whether it was Abraham, Moses, the Jewish prophets, or His church today.<sup>[2]</sup> But there have always been varying degrees of gospel revelation to mankind<sup>[3]</sup> and this knowledge has a habit of being corrupted by pagan societies to create tales and myths that blend fiction with truth, particularly those that revolve around the central prophecy of God Himself coming down to earth where He would die and be resurrected. The closest example we see in mythology is the Egyptian god Horus who was killed and brought back to life in like manner to Jesus. But to various degrees the resurrection motif recurs time and again throughout most, if not all, ancient cultures and civilisations. (For more on this subject, read the article, "[Why the Catholic Gospel is not the Biblical Gospel.](#)")

The greatest revelation of God's character and purpose thus came in the person of Jesus Christ when he condescended to walk among His creation, bringing the message firsthand and then fulfilling it.<sup>[4]</sup> Not only did He provide for us a gift beyond measure by coming down to atone for our sins, but He also gave us a fuller and more enduring picture of who He truly is.<sup>[5]</sup> This is why Jesus was a Jew, because He had promised to come down to his chosen (select) people<sup>[6]</sup> to provide them with greater revelation as to His character and purpose for the world.<sup>[7]</sup> Those who accepted Him became Christians, but those who did not accept His identity as God thus rejected Him and remained unbelieving Jews. This is why Jesus is a Jew whilst still being recognised as the Christian God. In truth He is God of all, but He came as a Jew.

Now because God's chosen people (whether the patriarchs, the nation of Israel, or Christians) have always existed for the primary reason of providing the rest of the world with a testimony of God<sup>[8]</sup> through their words and actions, Satan has always targeted these people by smuggling in false teachers and attempting to lead astray true believers.<sup>[9]</sup> For this reason God's people have on many occasions throughout history been worse than those they try to teach. You see, the devil is quite happy to leave the unconverted sinner alone, because as long as you are happy how you are, there is little chance you will desire to seek God and His salvation for you. This is why God often has to bring calamity into our lives so that we become desperate to find Him<sup>[10]</sup> and step away from our complacent walk into hell. (As we noted in the previous chapter)

Now God's ability and desire to help us is far stronger than the devil's ability to hinder us.<sup>[11]</sup> But so often God's people try to overcome struggles in their lives by their own efforts, rather than drawing on God's strength,<sup>[12]</sup> (a remnant of the self-focus that so angers God) so that even today Christians unwittingly allow the devil to be victorious in many battles - although thankfully not in the overall war, because Jesus has won that for us already.<sup>[13]</sup> The devil is fighting a battle that is already lost

but which still has to play itself out, much like a chess game where checkmate is only a few inescapable moves away. But whilst God is in the act of chastising His people for their correction,<sup>[14]</sup> you the unconverted sinner are provided with far less of a reason to believe.

So by example the church often fails. It also fails at correctly preaching the word of God, and there are many reasons for this. But the chief one goes a long way back to the founding of Christ's church almost two thousand years ago, for which we need a brief history lesson...

The first three hundred years of the Christian church were marked by extreme persecution, both physically and spiritually, as the Romans (and the unbelieving Jews) tried to destroy a church which they saw as a threat to their empire; not in a political sense, because the early believers never sought for political power, knowing that until Christ returns, the Kingdom of God is not of this earth but is only spiritual in nature<sup>[15]</sup> and the scriptures also teach people to be obedient to the laws of their nations as far as they do not contradict the laws of God.<sup>[16]</sup> But the Roman Empire saw Christianity as a threat to its culture of emperor worship and moral liberalisation; just as with today's western civilisations the Roman Empire upheld an "anything goes" policy, and God's word, which at that time was being preached in great power, condemned their amoral attitudes and their demand for nation to come before religion in terms of devotion.

But then in an astounding twist the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as its state religion in the late fourth century, albeit blending it with many of its member nations' pagan beliefs and observances, thereby producing the religious chimera that became known as the Catholic church. As state and religion merged into what became known as Christendom, the church that Jesus Christ had established had all but ceased to exist.<sup>[17]</sup> The word of God was sequestered from the general populace as it became the sole preserve of the Catholic priest and it wasn't until a thousand years had passed that the Bible found its way back into the hands of the common citizen, at which point faithful Christians learnt that Catholicism was far departed from God's true teachings.

Many people today seem to think that the Protestant church was formed solely because the Catholic pope would not allow Henry VIII to divorce his first wife. But the truth is that many Christians were already clamouring for a breakaway church that would allow them to worship in spirit and truth; the situation with Henry VIII and his instigation of the Church of England simply gave them the political freedom to do so, once Queen Elizabeth had ascended to the throne some twenty-five years later.

As religious freedom abounded over the next several hundred years, the protestant church steadily moved forwards to a point when Christianity would once again have a clear understanding of all spiritual doctrines.<sup>[18]</sup> *(I must emphasise at this point that the divine nature and once-for-all sacrificial role of Jesus Christ is the only doctrine central to conversion, and this has always been present to some degree; even during the ascendancy of the Catholic church there were secret "heretical" house churches that taught this true saving doctrine.)* However, even as the Spirit of God continued to reveal increasing spiritual truth in order to counter many centuries of false teachings, new protestant churches had to break away in order to embrace these spiritual truths because their established churches failed to do so. Thus the denominational church era begun and still continues to this day.

Initially, this disparity in the ready uptake of revealed truth amongst the churches actually works out quite well, because the more established traditional churches help to anchor the new evangelical churches (which are more liable to be led astray by false teachers) to core gospel teachings. However, if the traditional churches do not eventually embrace for themselves the rediscovered revelations that scripture brings to light through the denominational churches, they can lose the light and guidance of God's Spirit and become susceptible to false teachers within their *own* ranks,<sup>[19]</sup> resulting in liberalisation and division as we see in the Anglican church today. This is God's judgement upon His chosen people, and it is therefore becoming harder to find a church that is keeping pace with God's revealing spirit without getting carried away with a set of false ideas and deluding spirits.

Now the ultimate problem stemming from all of this is that whereas we are told in the Bible that God's word does not return to Him void,<sup>[20]</sup> (which means that the word of God will always touch the heart of the person who hears it, leading to a response to either accept God or push Him further away), false teaching will always be ineffectual to conversion and spiritual growth. And so the more false teaching we have within the church as a whole, the less effective witnessing there will be to those who do not yet believe.

Another reason the church has let you down is *related* to the problem of false teaching, but deals with how we respond to the law of God; you see it's important to realise that although we have a conscience that identifies sin for us, it is nevertheless an imperfect tool even if we do our best not to dismiss it as detailed in chapter one. It's almost like holding a compass in a boat during a nasty storm; we can tell north from south quite easily, but because the boat gets so bumpy during this storm we call life, it is often hard to settle it down to get direct bearings. The law of God is like an anchor that steadies the boat, allowing the repentant sinner to get his bearings correct before moving on again. But the *problem* with the law is that by highlighting sin it also makes it more *attractive* to the *unrepentant* sinner.<sup>[21]</sup>

Now at first we would probably rebuke the notion that we are attracted to evil, but how often have you been tempted to do something because you knew it was wrong? It is a sad fact that we can get a thrill out of being rebellious, from doing what we have been told or even know to be wrong. That is why God warned Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; without God's pure heart, knowledge of sin would only make them attracted to it and bring them spiritual death. This is why we need to gain a new heart through the act of repentance and receiving Christ as our redeemer.

Now the law doesn't usually pose a problem when someone is first converted, because they are humble enough before God to be receiving the fullness of His Spirit, which leads to a distaste and even a hatred for sin rather than a desire for it.<sup>[22]</sup> But if an unconverted person, or a backsliding Christian who is not filled with God's Spirit (by neglecting obedience and devotion to Him), starts attending a church with a lot of false teaching, their carnal (worldly) mind will instead be stimulated to sin by the law, rather than to reject sin by the law's combination with the Spirit. So as false teaching continues to grow in the churches at large,<sup>[23]</sup> you encounter a greater proportion of Christians (and those who mistakenly think they are Christians) who are not living in and displaying the light of the gospel,<sup>[24]</sup> which then tarnishes the image of the church and of God, and can even lead non-believers down the same dark and shadowy path.

I feel it is necessary at this point to emphasise that there are many people who you will meet who will profess to be Christians but in reality remain unconverted to Christ and His gospel (Chapter six explores what it means to be a Christian). When you hear in the news that the Christian world is so many hundreds of millions strong, it is important to realise that the media are referring to the church and its members as an *institution*, but the true church is an unseen church, a membership of which only God knows the true figure and which consists only of those who are truly born again. Unfortunately, it is not many.<sup>[25]</sup>

The saddest thing is that the majority of people who say that they are Christians are actually not aware of their unsaved status. These people fall into two main groups:

1. Those who believe that the things which they do or have done in the past (such as church attendance, good deeds, being baptised) make them Christians; these are all praiseworthy actions but they do not obtain salvation for anybody.
2. Then there are those who *do* understand the basic doctrine of salvation but have never truly repented and been born again, who are deceived by signs and wonders (false spiritual experiences) and base their saved status upon them.<sup>[26]</sup>

This latter group tend to think that being filled with the Holy Spirit is evidenced by being possessed by strong uncontrollable energies that create a myriad of bizarre behaviour in the individual. But the fruits (evidential effects) of the Holy Spirit are quite the opposite; such as peace, patience, gentleness,<sup>[27]</sup> and most especially self-control.<sup>[28]</sup> In contrast, possessions are demonic and they lead people to mistakenly seek God's presence in these sensations of the flesh, rather than in seeking the peace and joy of the Spirit that comes from following the Lord's commandments.<sup>[29]</sup>

Now because the church has become weak and disrespected, especially in the last few decades, those who recognise that there is something more meaningful missing from their lives are being presented with false substitutions for the spiritual fulfilment they desire; in conjunction with the new age movement, spiritualism has come to be seen as an acceptable alternative to religion. But not only will it fail to provide or even inform the practitioner of their need for salvation (chapter three has explained that only Christ's Atonement can achieve this) it will also lead them further away from God as they become exposed to spiritually damaging experiences and are seduced by false and lying spirits.<sup>[30]</sup>

The seeking of any spiritual knowledge or power that is not rooted in Christ is firmly forbidden by God.<sup>[31]</sup> This isn't a restriction the Christian church has construed in order to retain a monopoly on the spiritual realm, but a safeguard from the very real and dark spiritual forces that roam the world looking to lead astray the foolish.<sup>[32]</sup> And Satan is very crafty in this realm. He encourages people to open themselves up to the spiritual realm, where false spirits lie in wait to deceive us or to even enter into and possess the unsaved.<sup>[33]</sup> Usually this is not something that people are even aware of. Mainly we are talking about God's quiet voice being replaced by other voices that oppose His perfect designs and purpose. Mystic cards, palm readings, mediums, even certain forms of meditation; anything along these lines are opportunities for evil spirits to delude us from the truth and lead us away from God. And they often do so by actually providing many truths, but within which will be found the odd deception, packaged in the same bundle so as to appear trustworthy. In this way the false spirits

subtly lead people away from *the* truth, which is our spiritual dependency on Jesus Christ.

You might be surprised that meditation is something to be wary of, but there are two very different forms, one positive and the other negative. The positive form is that as literally defined in the dictionary; which means to contemplate. God actually asks us to ponder his Word, to examine ourselves, and then come to Him in prayer with a sincere awareness of both ourselves and our relationship to Him.<sup>[34]</sup> Thus introspection and reaching out in prayer to God is a safe and encouraged form of meditation.<sup>[35]</sup> The negative form of meditation is that such as found in disciplines such as Buddhism, certain levels of martial arts, and dedicated yoga. This form of meditation is based on opening oneself up to the unseen world around us and inviting in such beings as spirit guides or so-called guardian angels, which in reality are evil spirits clothed in light.<sup>[36]</sup> This isn't meditation as it is literally defined, but it is a term that has been borrowed to make the spiritualist experience seem less taboo and harmless.


As such experiences become accepted by a culture at large, and an individual's inborn wariness to dabbling in the spiritual realm becomes desensitised, Satan can more easily push forward an attraction to the arcane; that which is truly repulsive to God.<sup>[37]</sup> It must be stated there is no such thing as "white magic"! God refers to it as an abomination, because rather than seeking blessings from an acceptance with God that comes from the gracious sacrifice of His Son, the magic user is seeking blessings they have no right or claim to from powers that oppose God. And we see in the Bible that whenever the ancient nation of Israel turned to such paths their downfall was just around the corner.<sup>[38]</sup> What is referred to as Wicca in the western world is simply a repackaging of the occult, but without the inhibitive taboos that the latter word brings to mind. It's increasing promotion in the western world today is a grave concern.

The only way to yield a true spiritual fulfilment is to be reconciled to God through His Son Jesus Christ, and then to walk in harmony with Him through His Holy Spirit. Then you will begin to experience all the wonderful blessings that He has had in store for you since the foundation of the world; a time of which we are told when all the angels sang for joy.<sup>[39]</sup> So if you've ever found yourself with a low opinion of the Christian church, it is important that you realise that life is not primarily about the church, it is about finding God and entering into a perfect relationship with Him.


The church is simply a catalyst to help us grow into a better relationship with God as we learn more about Him and how we should relate to Him, not just by studying His Word but also by interacting and communing together.<sup>[18]</sup> In a good church this is the perfect feedback mechanism for spiritual growth and understanding, but because of false teaching and false practice, churches can actually hold people back or even drag them down rather than lifting them up. But there are still some that teach and support each other well and are worth your time if you can find them. The ones to be trusted the most are those that refer to themselves as free churches. Primarily though you should be setting your mind on and fully trusting in God,<sup>[40]</sup> not the church, and if you continually do this you will find that you continue to grow in truth and love.<sup>[41]</sup>

So look to Jesus. Read about Him in the gospels of the Bible and learn more about Him in the epistles that follow. Pray to Him. But please don't ignore Him. At the end of the day *you* are still responsible for claiming your salvation or otherwise reaping your condemnation, not the church.<sup>[42]</sup>

[1] Yet these are but [a small part of His doings] the outskirts of His ways or the mere fringes of His force, the faintest whisper of His voice!...

 Job 26: 14


[2] Surely the Lord God will do nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets.

 Amos 3: 7

[3] In many separate revelations [each of which set forth a portion of the Truth] and in different ways God spoke of old to [our] forefathers in and by the prophets,

 Hebrews 1: 1

[4] [But] in the last of these days He has spoken to us in [the person of a] Son, Whom He appointed Heir and lawful Owner of all things, also by and through Whom He created the worlds and the reaches of space and the ages of time [He made, produced, built, operated, and arranged them in order].

 Hebrews 1: 2

[5] For God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as [to beam forth] the Light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God [as it is manifest in the Person and is revealed] in the face of Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

 2 Corinthians 4: 6


[6] And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify (declare righteous, put in right standing with Himself) the Gentiles in consequence of faith, proclaimed the Gospel [foretelling the glad tidings of a Savior long beforehand] to Abraham in the promise, saying, In you shall all the nations [of the earth] be blessed.

 Galatians 3: 8

[7] I the Lord have called You [the Messiah] for a righteous purpose and in righteousness; I will take You by the hand and will keep You; I will give You for a covenant to the people [Israel], for a light to the nations [Gentiles], to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who sit in darkness from the prison.

 Isaiah 42: 6


[8] And said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ (the Messiah) should suffer and on the third day rise from (among) the dead, And that repentance [with a view to and as the condition of] forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

 Luke 24: 46-48


[9] So then the dragon was furious (enraged) at the woman, and he went away to wage war on the remainder of her descendants--[on those] who obey God's commandments and who have the testimony of Jesus Christ [and adhere to it and bear witness to Him].

 Revelation 12: 17

[10] I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.

 Isaiah 45: 5-7 (ESV)


[11] So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you.

 James 4: 7

[12] In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [be empowered through your union with Him]; draw your strength from Him [that strength which His boundless might provides]. Put on God's whole armor [the armor of a heavy-armed soldier which God supplies], that you may be able successfully to stand up against [all] the strategies and the deceits of the devil.

 Ephesians 6: 10-11


[13] But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory [making us conquerors] through our Lord Jesus Christ.

 1 Corinthians 15: 57

[14] For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. You must submit to and endure [correction] for discipline; God is dealing with you as with sons. For what son is there whom his father does not [thus] train and correct and discipline?

 Hebrews 12: 6-7

[15] Jesus answered, My kingdom (kingship, royal power) belongs not to this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My followers would have been fighting to keep Me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, My kingdom is not from here (this world); [it has no such origin or source].

 John 18: 36

[16] Let every person be loyally subject to the governing (civil) authorities. For there is no authority except from God [by His permission, His sanction], and those that exist do so by God's appointment. Therefore he who resists and sets himself up against the authorities resists what God has appointed and arranged [in divine order]. And those who resist will bring down judgment upon themselves [receiving the penalty due them]. For civil authorities are not a terror to [people of] good conduct, but to [those of] bad behavior. Would you have no dread of him who is in authority? Then do what is right and you will receive his approval and commendation.

 Romans 13: 1-3

[17] Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

 Acts 20: 28-30


[18] His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church), [That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him. So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead.

 Ephesians 4: 12-14

[19] Where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish; but he who keeps the law [of God, which includes that of man]--blessed (happy, fortunate, and enviable) is he.

 Proverbs 29: 18

[20] For as the rain and snow come down from the heavens, and return not there again, but water the earth and make it bring forth and sprout, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void [without producing any effect, useless], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

 Isaiah 55: 10-11

[21] But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded

 Romans 5: 20

[22] For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit.

 Romans 8: 5

[23] But also [in those days] there arose false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among yourselves, who will subtly and stealthily introduce heretical doctrines (destructive heresies), even denying and disowning the Master Who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their immoral ways and lascivious doings; because of them the true Way will be maligned and defamed.

 2 Peter 2: 1-2

[24] No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or crypt or under a bushel measure, but on a lampstand, that those who are coming in may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye (your conscience) is sound and fulfilling its office, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound and is not fulfilling its office, your body is full of darkness. Be careful, therefore, that the light that is in you is not darkness.

 Luke 11: 33

[25] Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and spacious and broad is the way that leads away to destruction, and many are those who are entering through it. But the gate is narrow (contracted by pressure) and the way is straitened and compressed that leads away to life, and few are those who find it.

 Matthew 7: 13-14


[26] Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and done many mighty works in Your name? And then I will say to them openly (publicly), I never knew you; depart from Me, you who act wickedly [disregarding My commands].

 Matthew 7: 22-23

[27] But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].

 Galatians 5: 22-23


[28] And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

 1 Corinthians 14: 32-33

[29] As we keep his commands, we live deeply and surely in him, and he lives in us. And this is how we experience his deep and abiding presence in us: by the Spirit he gave us.

 1 John 3: 24 (Message Translation)

[30] Beloved, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove (test) the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. By this you may know (perceive and recognize) the Spirit of God: every spirit which acknowledges and confesses [the fact] that Jesus Christ (the Messiah) [actually] has become man and has come in the flesh is of God [has God for its source];

 1 John 4: 1

[31] Turn not to those [mediums] who have familiar spirits or to wizards; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

 Leviticus 19: 31

[32] Therefore humble yourselves [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you, casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully. Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour.

 1 Peter 5: 6-8

[33] But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it roams through dry [arid] places in search of rest, but it does not find any. Then it says, I will go back to my house from


which I came out. And when it arrives, it finds the place unoccupied, swept, put in order, and decorated. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and make their home there. And the last condition of that man becomes worse than the first. So also shall it be with this wicked generation.

 Matthew 12: 43-45


[34] But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night.

 Psalm 1: 2


[35] I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I ponder the work of Your hands. I spread forth my hands to You; my soul thirsts after You like a thirsty land [for water]. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

 Psalm 143: 5-6


[36] And it is no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light;

 2 Corinthians 11: 14


[37] There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, Or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and it is because of these abominable practices that the Lord your God is driving them out before you.

 Deuteronomy 18: 10

[38] And when the people [instead of putting their trust in God] shall say to you, Consult for direction mediums and wizards who chirp and mutter, should not a people seek and consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? [Direct such people] to the teaching and to the testimony! If their teachings are not in accord with this word, it is surely because there is no dawn and no morning for them. And they [who consult mediums and wizards] shall pass through [the land] sorely distressed and hungry; and when they are hungry, they will fret, and will curse by their king and their God; and whether they look upward or look to the earth, they will behold only distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish, and into thick darkness and widespread, obscure night they shall be driven away.

 Isaiah 8: 19-22


[39] Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare to Me, if you have and know understanding. Who determined the measures of the earth, if you know? Or who stretched the measuring line upon it? Upon what were the foundations of it fastened, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

 Job 38: 4-7

[40] Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man who makes the Lord his refuge and trust, and turns not to the proud or to followers of false gods.

 Psalm 40: 4

[41] And this is His order (His command, His injunction): that we should believe in (put our faith and trust in and adhere to and rely on) the name of His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah), and that we should love one another, just as He has commanded us. All who keep His commandments [who obey His orders and follow His plan, live and continue to live, to stay and] abide in Him, and He in them. [They let Christ be a home to them and they are the home of Christ.] And by this we know and understand and have the proof that He [really] lives and makes His home in us: by the [Holy] Spirit Whom He has given us.

 1 John 3: 23-34

[42] For the time [has arrived] for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will [be] the end of those who do not respect or believe or obey the good news (the Gospel) of God?

 1 Peter 4: 17

## 6. What it means to believe

There is great disagreement within the Christian church as to the reality of free will. Do those who desire God do so because He has put that desire in their hearts, or has He truly given us free will; a concept which is almost incomprehensible to us in an age when we are preconditioned to view reality only through the lens of cause and effect? We may think to ourselves, why do I feel this way, why do I feel sorry or why do I not, or if I am simply the way I am then how can I be blamed or held accountable for anything?

It doesn't help that science is also divided on the issue; quantum mechanics seems to suggest that there really is such a thing as free will because it deals with a realm where cause and effect do not truly exist and where it appears the mind can have some form of control. But because this scientific discipline is still very much theoretical, there is no general consensus and it is likely there never will be. But the Bible is quite clear that we *are* accountable for what we do. There could be no justice in punishment if there was no freedom of choice. But the crux of the issue within Christianity is that whilst most Christians do believe in free will, many others (generally those who hold to the tenets of *Calvinism*) believe that moral free will was surrendered after we first rebelled from God through sin and that as a result God needs to compel people to truly repent, thereby requiring Him to select whom to save, in complete independence from the will of the recipient. However, the proponents of what is called *Arminianism* believe that we could not truly love God if we did not respond positively through choice to the love that He bestows upon us all; is compelled love really love?

Free will is in essence the ability to choose how we respond to a stimulus, not to be a predetermined result of it. But we are restricted to some extent in our ability to choose by past decisions; make enough right choices and other right choices become easier. Make enough bad choices and the right choices become much harder. This is called habit, and through choice these habits make us either slaves of righteousness or slaves of sin.<sup>[1]</sup> So in a sense we have the free will to decide to what we yield our free will: obedience or sin, God or the devil, eternal life or spiritual death. The Arminian view thus differs from the Calvinist view in that it understands our moral free will to be something *gradually* surrendered to sin over time until we repent, at which point it is gradually restored, rather than moral free will being lost irretrievably from the first rebellion. Whilst it is the Arminian view which holds sway over this chapter, it is still important to note that both views recognise that because we have all been made slaves of sin through our rebelliousness to God (whether that's understood to be partially or completely), we therefore require Christ's atonement in conjunction with the Holy Spirit to enable us to be freed and redeemed.<sup>[2]</sup>

So with God's grace we are free to decide to what spiritual powers we are to be in subjection to. Eternal life is presented to us as a gift that must still be claimed by our choice to follow God<sup>[3]</sup>. And what is most wonderful about grace is that it is a gift that allows us to repent no matter how far wrong we have gone,<sup>[4]</sup> because as we explored in chapter two, all hearts are equally as wicked. However this is no excuse to delay repentance, for if you do not desire repentance and righteousness today, how can you be sure that you will desire it tomorrow? If you keep procrastinating, eventually you will lose your chance to be redeemed forever.<sup>[5]</sup>

Now it's not my intention to delve into a complex scriptural analysis of Calvinism versus Arminianism, because it falls outside the purpose of this book which is to draw you into a faith in Christ, whether the truth is that God has chosen you through His own mysterious design or on account of your independent choice to repent. But there are two common arguments running through the church that are used to support the belief that salvation is by compulsion that I would like to briefly address because they can draw people into a Calvinistic mindset for the wrong reasons. These are:

- *Because God is so glorious and perfect, it is impossible to reject Him when He reveals Himself, thus rendering our free will obsolete.*
- Yet Satan can be in God's presence, even exchanging dialogue with Him,<sup>[6]</sup> without being converted. If we say that the devil is an exception, we are still at least limiting the power of this argument, and limiting it even further for the believer who would say that mankind is just as depraved as the devil.
- We also have to remember that the devil and his fallen angels once existed in heaven,<sup>[7]</sup> that God made Lucifer (and assuredly all the angels) perfect,<sup>[8]</sup> and yet they still chose to rebel whilst in the presence of God.<sup>[9]</sup>
- When Jesus walked in the flesh He did not have His heavenly majesty about Him, but those who developed intimate friendships with Him were surely exposed to God's boundless love and mercy, for Jesus said that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father, yet still there was one who betrayed Him.<sup>[10]</sup>
- Jesus Himself said that people who reject God do so because they prefer the darkness to the light.<sup>[11]</sup> This is contrary to the belief that God's self revelation to an individual would compel repentance in every case.
- At the end of the Millennium (the thousand year rule of the glorified Christ) there will be a final battle where many people will reject Jesus even in His glorified majesty in order to follow the devil instead.<sup>[12]</sup>
- *Free choice is not mentioned in the Bible.*
- But neither is the Trinity, which is central to the nature of Christ. Yet both free choice and the Trinity are easily implied within the Bible's pages.

Moving on, the book of Romans in the Bible should be of particular focus in how we come to understand how God deals with individuals and nations in response to their degree of faith in Him. Probably its most important chapter (which is also one of the most difficult chapters to understand) is chapter nine. So if you have a Bible then please read along. Or access: [www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=romans%209&version=50](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=romans%209&version=50).

Now as we look at the first five verses of chapter nine, we see that Paul is so filled with the Holy Spirit that He wishes that he could be cut off from Christ (in other words be damned) if it resulted in his people the Jews accepting Christ for themselves. We see the same thing in Exodus 32 with Moses imploring God to remove his own name from the Book of Life, if it would save the Israelites from hell.<sup>[13]</sup> What we see here are two of the greatest spiritual leaders nearing the end of their ministries, who have achieved such an intimate walk with God that they have gone on to develop in

their own lives the fruit of God's desire to save everyone even at the expense of their own eternal fates. If they have this desire, then you can be assured that it is God's desire as well and He says as much throughout the pages of the Bible. He says it none more so that on the cross of Calvary, where He died and suffered for the sins of the world,<sup>[14]</sup> not for the sins of the few! (But as always on condition of repentance)

As we continue to read through chapter nine of the book of Romans, we see that Paul goes on to repeat what Jesus taught in His mortal ministry; that being one of God's chosen people is not synonymous with being spiritually born again, but it is by having faith in the promise made to Abraham; that is in Christ Himself. Thus Israel serves as an analogy, showing us that God calls all people to Him, but it is their own response through faith which saves them no matter their background or heritage. This is attested to elsewhere in the Bible where we are told that many are called but few are chosen.<sup>[15]</sup>

The following verses in chapter nine then go on to recount how God made an exception to the Arabic custom of allowing the eldest son to rule, by instructing Isaac to have his younger son Jacob rule over the family instead of his older brother Esau. We can see from history that God's purpose of selecting Jacob was because He knew that Jacob would repent and become a godly man in the future, whereas Esau would not. Thus God's selection in this instance was not based on any good works that Jacob had done (for he was not even born when this decree was made), but was instead based on the Lord's foreknowledge of his future repentance and thereby future access to grace.

Paul then goes on to ask rhetorically if there is injustice on God's part, because by Arabic custom God's chosen people, with the gift of God's covenants and revelations to them, should have been descended from Esau as the elder son. But Paul reminds his readers that God has mercy and compassion upon whom He wills, which as the rest of the Bible tells us is for those who will repent. Therefore Esau and his descendants lost out on the protection of being the Lord's chosen people because of Esau's unrepentant choices, whereas Jacob and his descendants received the mercy and compassion that came from Jacob's desire to know God and serve Him.<sup>[16]</sup>

We are then shown another example of God's foreknowledge, when we are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart during his political exchanges with Moses in order for God's power to be seen with His prophet during his confrontation with Pharaoh. But this is not to be interpreted as God overriding Pharaoh's free will, or the free will of anyone else who has had their heart hardened by God. Rather, it shows us that God will order events to further ripen a person's heart in the direction that it is already set at that time. In other words, when God allows the devil to tempt a person (and in the case of Pharaoh, the devil was tempting him with occult powers by which to enforce his earthly dominion), the unrepentant sinner submits to the temptation and therefore becomes more of a slave to sin, which results in a hardened heart. But the repentant sinner resists the devil and gains a softer, more God-compliant heart. Thus God set in motion a hardening of Pharaoh's heart, but it was always Pharaoh's choice to respond in the way that he did to God's sovereign control of events. By foreknowledge God knew which way Pharaoh would turn, and He used that knowledge to raise Pharaoh up to a position of power whereby God's own righteous purposes could be revealed and left to unfold.

As an aside, it is important to note that God's foreknowledge comes from existing outside of time – being constantly witness to all of time - not from being rooted in the same moment of time as us. It is important to realise this because if God was tied into time as we are, then His foreknowledge would necessitate that everything is based on cause and effect, thus rendering free will obsolete. Rather, He has already witnessed the choices that we will make and it is likely that He plans around them accordingly.

So because we all choose how to respond to God's call to repentance, we have no right to blame God for the way in which He chooses to shape us through experiences. If He chooses to shape a repentant heart into a vessel of beauty, and an unrepentant heart into a vessel of corruption, that is His prerogative. It would be unjust for Him to shape an unrepentant heart into a vessel of beauty and unmerciful to shape a repentant heart into a vessel of corruption.

Yet God is a God of both justice and mercy.

So now that we have seen how moral free will can exist within the prescribed bounds of God's sovereignty and how that by personal choice we can either accept or reject salvation, just how *do* we accept it?

The subsequent chapter in the book of Romans tells us that if we believe in our heart that Jesus is Lord, and confess this belief with our lips then we are saved.<sup>[17]</sup> It also says that all who call on the Lord will be saved.<sup>[18]</sup> But this leads to further questions... What about the demons in the gospels who recognise and affirm Jesus as the Son of God?<sup>[19]</sup> Who even call on Him for mercy?<sup>[20]</sup> Surely they are not saved!<sup>[21]</sup> And what about people who never hear of Jesus in their lifetime? How would God then save them if He truly desires to save everyone?<sup>[22]</sup>

Fortunately we have the answers in the same book that the questions are raised.

The Amplified Bible expands on the original translation from the Greek text to explain that the word "believe" fully means to **adhere to, trust in, and rely on**. So believing in Christ does not rest solely on an intellectual understanding or knowledge of His true identity, but on a positive response to Him in the form of repentance and faith.

With this understanding we can identify what it means to be a Christian:

- ✓ Adhere to – strive to obey Christ's commandments<sup>[23]</sup>
- ✓ Trust in – remain faithful to Him during times of trial<sup>[24]</sup>
- ✓ Rely on – call on Jesus as the Son of God to fulfil all your needs<sup>[25]</sup>

By striving to obey Christ's commandments we display the fruits of repentance, because to repent is to literally change one's mind, meaning that we turn away from sin (self-service) and turn to righteousness (God-service). By trusting and relying on Jesus for our salvation we show that we have faith by which we are justified through the blood of Jesus Christ. When we turn to God in these ways we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which empowers us to remain faithful; this is being born again.

The demons on the other hand believe only in so far as they have the intellectual understanding of all these truths; they desire no repentance and express no faith. This

combination of knowledge and indifference is what makes them so dangerous, as they go about to lead us astray.

So what of those who never hear of Jesus?

Well at first the gospel was preached to all people and all nations throughout the earliest ages of the world, a fact that Paul hints at in his epistle to the Colossians:

...be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven... (Colossians 1: 23)

But then the gospel was corrupted as men and women are prone to corrupt all that is good and true, leading to all the false religions of today. However, God still speaks to all people through conscience and creation, as has been earlier noted.

Unfortunately many Christians use the following scripture out of context:

For “*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10: 13-14 NKJV)

This is not to say that if people do not hear the gospel then they are damned... In the verses that follow the writer Paul goes on to say that creation itself has declared God to all the peoples of the world.

But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: “*Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.*” (Romans 10: 18 NKJV)

But who’s sound? And who’s words? Paul is quoting from verse 4 of Psalm 19:

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language *where* their voice is not heard. Their line [sound] has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4 NKJV)

This means that we do not need to know His name or be aware of the specifics of His atonement in order to respond to the external revelation of our innate awareness of Him. God judges us by how we respond to Him based on the amount of revelation we have received.<sup>[26]</sup> So those who do not hear the gospel in this lifetime and are disobedient only in as far as they do not have the Holy Spirit to assist them (i.e. they strove to live to please God in response to His invisible hand upon the world and in their lives),<sup>[27]</sup> will surely be counted among the redeemed in death<sup>[28]</sup> because they would have accepted Christ in life had they heard of Him.<sup>[29]</sup>

This truth doesn’t contradict the scriptures that tell us that we are saved if we call on God in the name of Jesus, for such scriptures exist simply as a *reassurance* to those who have done so, that they might know that they are saved. It is not a prescription to salvation, for an unconverted heart and mere lip service to God means nothing.

For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses

(declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation.  
(Romans 10: 10)

The heart – repentance in response to God – is what justifies.  
The mouth – which calls on the Lord – simply confirms.

But for those who do know who Jesus is and who have heard His gospel preached already, the choice must now be made. Only God can know whether you have been exposed to enough of the gospel to be held liable for the unforgivable sin if you do not now repent, but I would make it your priority today. And for those who choose eternal life there are many wonderful things in store just for this life alone...


[1] Do you not know that if you continually surrender yourselves to anyone to do his will, you are the slaves of him whom you obey, whether that be to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness (right doing and right standing with God)?

 Romans 6: 16

[2] For if you live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, you will surely die. But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit you are [habitually] putting to death (making extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever.

 Romans 8: 13

[3] And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

 Joshua 24: 14-15


[4] Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool.

 Isaiah 1: 18

[5] “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

 Revelation 22: 11

[6] Now there was a day when the sons (the angels) of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan (the adversary and accuser) also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, From where did you come? Then Satan answered the Lord, From going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it.

 Job 1: 6-7

[7] Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels went forth to battle with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought.

 Revelation 12: 7


[8] You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

 Ezekiel 28: 14-15


[9] For God did not [even] spare angels that sinned, but cast them into hell, delivering them to be kept there in pits of gloom till the judgment and their doom.

 2 Peter 2: 4

[10] He replied, He who has [just] dipped his hand in the same dish with Me will betray Me!

 Matthew 26: 23


[11] The [basis of the] judgment (indictment, the test by which men are judged, the ground for the sentence) lies in this: the Light has come into the world, and people have loved the darkness rather than and more than the Light, for their works (deeds) were evil.

 John 3: 19

[12] And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his place of confinement, and he will go forth to deceive and seduce and lead astray the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth--Gog and Magog--to muster them for war; their number is like the sand of the sea.

 Revelation 20: 7-8

[13] So Moses returned to the Lord, and said, Oh, these people have sinned a great sin and have made themselves gods of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written! But the Lord said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him [not you] out of My book.

 Exodus 32: 31-33

[14] For such [praying] is good and right, and [it is] pleasing and acceptable to God our Savior, Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. For there [is only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all [people, a fact that was] attested to at the right and proper time.

 1 Timothy 2: 3-6

[15] For many are called (invited and summoned), but few are chosen.

 Matthew 22: 14

[16] THEN WHAT advantage remains to the Jew? [How is he favored?] Or what is the value or benefit of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, to the Jews were entrusted the oracles (the brief communications, the intentions, the utterances) of God.

 Romans 3: 1-2

[17] Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

 Romans 10: 9


[18] For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord [invoking Him as Lord] will be saved.

 Romans 10: 13

[19] And the spirits, the unclean ones, as often as they might see Him, fell down before Him and kept screaming out, You are the Son of God!

 Mark 3: 11

[20] And he kept begging Him urgently not to send them [himself and the other demons] away out of that region. Now a great herd of hogs was grazing there on the hillside. And the demons begged Him, saying, Send us to the hogs, that we may go into them! So He gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out [of the man] and entered into the hogs; and the herd, numbering about 2,000, rushed headlong down the steep slope into the sea and were drowned in the sea.

 Mark 5: 10-13


[21] You believe that God is one; you do well. So do the demons believe and shudder...

 James 2: 19

[22] For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

 1 Timothy 4: 10


[23] Whoever says, I know Him [I perceive, recognize, understand, and am acquainted with Him] but fails to keep and obey His commandments (teachings) is a liar, and the Truth [of the Gospel] is not in him.

 1 John 2: 4

[24] He who overcomes (is victorious), I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of My God; he shall never be put out of it or go out of it, and I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which descends from My God out of heaven, and My own new name.

 Revelation 3: 12

[25] He who possesses the Son has that life; he who does not possess the Son of God does not have that life.


 1 John 5: 12

[26] [Things are hidden temporarily only as a means to revelation.] For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything [temporarily] kept secret except in order that it may be made known. If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening and let him perceive and comprehend. And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you--and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.


 Mark 4: 22-24

[27] When Gentiles who have not the [divine] Law do instinctively what the Law requires, they are a law to themselves, since they do not have the Law. They show that the essential requirements of the Law are written in their hearts and are operating there, with which their consciences (sense of right and wrong) also bear witness; and their [moral] decisions


(their arguments of reason, their condemning or approving thoughts) will accuse or perhaps defend and excuse [them]

 Romans 2: 14-15

[28] The Lord is close to those who are of a broken heart and saves such as are crushed with sorrow for sin and are humbly and thoroughly penitent.

 Psalm 34: 18

[29] Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

 Acts 10: 34-35

## 7. What God has won.

As has already been touched upon in this book, Christianity is a blessing in this lifetime as well as in the next. God is not satisfied with just placing His mark upon the repentant and separating them out for eternal life but He also wishes to bless us in this lifetime as well.<sup>[1]</sup> As our creator He desires that we can return the love that He has for us through praise and righteous living,<sup>[2]</sup> which brings glory to Him,<sup>[3]</sup> and happiness for us.<sup>[4]</sup> We were not made for Him as slaves,<sup>[5]</sup> but to be members of a family with whom He could share all that He has, and all that He is.<sup>[6]</sup>

And God has a lot to offer.

It needs to be understood that when Jesus died on the cross for our sins He not only cancelled out our un-payable debt to Him, but He also won back for us all of the wonders and blessings that had been intended from the very beginning,<sup>[7]</sup> but which we abdicated when we rebelled from Him. Therefore the Atonement of Jesus Christ is far superior in both act and effect to the original trespass of rebellion and sin.<sup>[8]</sup> In His mercy He has satisfied the demands of justice for the original trespass, and then through His grace He has won back for us our original gifts. If we want to know what these are then we have only to look at His life on this earth.

You see, all of the power and authority that Jesus had in His mortal ministry came from being in complete fellowship with God the Father,<sup>[9]</sup> which means that He was an example of exactly what man could be if he were to live a sinless life. He gave up all divine attributes and rights to become a man and show us what we were missing out on.<sup>[10]</sup> So when we become a Christian we begin to gain these originally intended gifts of power and authority,<sup>[11]</sup> plus a few extra blessings that have been adapted for the fallen world we now live in.

The greatest gift is fellowship with God,<sup>[12]</sup> which can be explained as coming to share in the richness of His being; thinking, feeling and acting as He does.<sup>[13]</sup> As we follow the teachings of the gospel, we come to know God even more and share in His joy.<sup>[14]</sup> We even receive our own glory on the day of Christ's return.<sup>[15]</sup> We get but the barest sliver of a glimpse of these gifts right now, but they are a taster of what is yet to come in heaven. The more we live in obedience to God, just as Jesus did, the more we come to partake of this blessing. It results in inner peace, joy, faith, and greater love for God and each other.<sup>[16]</sup> A common misconception of Christianity is that it is a religion of rules and regulations that prevent us from doing the things we enjoy, but the truth is that we are set free to enjoy the blessings of life more fully by using them in the ways in which they were originally intended.<sup>[17]</sup> This often requires patience for the right conditions to be met, and as such can seem grievous and painful at first, even inviting external troubles as we attempt to swim against the current of the world's beliefs and values, but it later yields the greater fruits listed above.<sup>[17]</sup> Do not believe the misnomer that a Christian is someone who takes the easy way out of life.<sup>[18]</sup> A true Christian life is subject to greater trials, but its ongoing rewards are far greater.<sup>[19]</sup>

The other gifts that were intended for us at the beginning were of a more physical nature, such as perfect immortal bodies, a paradise to live in, authority and power over God's creation and all the things that lived in it.<sup>[20]</sup> Even though it was Adam and Eve who gave all these things up, we too would have done exactly the same thing had we been in their position; for the Garden of Eden story, as well as being a true literary

account, is also a spiritual analogy for the rebellion that every one of us has chosen. But when we repent and are spiritually reborn we become a new creation,<sup>[21]</sup> and these gifts begin to be restored to us as we draw closer to God. We gain healthier,<sup>[22]</sup> more robust bodies (generally speaking, as we must still face trials and tests and be subject to external afflictions), more enlightened minds and greater wisdom,<sup>[23]</sup> an assurance and sense of belonging to a future heavenly realm,<sup>[24]</sup> and power and authority over evil spirits, illnesses, the natural and physical world, even death. Unfortunately, there are very few Christians who walk closely enough with God to claim these more far-reaching gifts, but we know that they exist because Jesus Himself said that His followers would do even greater things than He,<sup>[25]</sup> something that is sorely lacking in today's world.

Now why is this?

I think one key factor must be desire. Or rather lack of it. As was noted in chapter five (alongside prophetic scriptures), much of the modern day church is sorely lacking in truth and love, with too many Christians simply happy with things how they are, or not even aware that such gifts are just as available today as they were two thousand years ago. Do Christians care enough to pursue such gifts?<sup>[26]</sup>

But a word to the wise: Jesus and His apostles only acted when people had faith enough to ask. They were always eager to do so, but we must ask in faith in Christ before a blessing can be given.<sup>[27]</sup> Thus another reason why Christians do not exhibit the more powerful gifts could be because most people do not have the required belief in Christ to ask or are happy enough with the benefits of modern technology.

Another blessing of the gospel is knowledge that frees us from prisons of fear. For example, certain pagans once believed that the devil is just as powerful as God and so they used to try to appease the devil by making living sacrifices to him. But the knowledge that God is sovereign over all creation, including the devil,<sup>[28]</sup> freed them from their unsubstantial fears and the evil acts that ensued. In some parts of the world today certain tribesmen called Shamans believe that they are in touch with holy beings who can help and guide them. These beings seem benevolent, but as was explained in chapter four these spiritual entities are most likely deceptive spirits that lead people away from Christ. He ultimately has the power to heal and restore, without the need for Shamans to put themselves at great risk in altered states of consciousness.

Closer to home, the gospel also releases us from our own fears and insecurities that drive us to seek solace in unfulfilling and misguided ways. Once someone learns how much God loves them and receives the newness of life from His Holy Spirit, they gain a trust and a hope in Him that helps them to grow into who they were originally meant to be whilst exercising the gifts they have been given for their enjoyment and contribution towards society and God's ever growing Kingdom. The need and desire to control everything and everyone swiftly begins to disappear.

So when Jesus commands His followers to take His gospel to all the world, it isn't because that without it people would have no chance of entering heaven, but because Jesus wants to replace the kingdom of darkness, fear and deception on this world with His kingdom of light, love and truth, as it is in heaven.<sup>[29]</sup> The person who repents in life because they see God in creation and listens to the witness of their conscience will be saved whether they hear of Jesus or not, as explained in the previous chapter, yet

still by and because of Him; only through Jesus Christ can we be saved. Yet it would have been far better in this lifetime if these people had heard the gospel because of all the additional blessings it would have brought them through knowledge of the Word. There would also have been more glory given to God in the full revelation of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, and of more thoroughly transformed lives.<sup>[31]</sup> So a failure to spread the gospel may mean lost opportunities but not lost souls, for God will not let any of His children (those whom He knew would receive Him from before the foundation of the world) be lost.

Yet this world is so very dark, with so much pain in so many lives, that Christians should not let this fact satisfy or console them to the point of inactivity, for do we love people only enough to save them from hell but not from a life of misery, fear, and superstition? Do we only care about honouring God in our own lives but not in having His Word and His Spirit tread down sin in order to declare His glory across the face of the whole world? Are we living the gospel only to satisfy our own sense of purpose, rather than possessing a comprehensive hatred of sin, and a deep and abiding love of God? We must ask God to show us our hearts if we feel less of a burden to preach the gospel in light of what has been revealed here.

So it is essential that a true born again Christian spends as much quality time as possible studying (not just reading) God's word and seeking His Spirit to fill them in every area of their life, so that they can take His gospel not just in word but in power to a world that does not know Him.<sup>[30]</sup> In this respect a Christian has to be in the world but not of it,<sup>[31]</sup> for if a Christian partakes of immoral practices and exposes themselves to temptations to sin, then they will lose the power of the Spirit to fill them with the joy and authority that is required to really make a difference in this world.

So as you near the end of this book, what reasons do you have for not accepting these blessings for yourself?


If for any reason there is fear or hesitancy in your decision to accept Christ as your Saviour, consider these following words by the apostle Paul:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised— who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,


"For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8: 31-39)

[1] I am the Door; anyone who enters in through Me will be saved (will live). He will come in and he will go out [freely], and will find pasture. The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His [own] life for the sheep.

 John 10: 9-11


[2] For the [true] love of God is this: that we do His commands [keep His ordinances and are mindful of His precepts and teaching]. And these orders of His are not irksome (burdensome, oppressive, or grievous).

 1 John 5: 3

[3] For all [these] things are [taking place] for your sake, so that the more grace (divine favor and spiritual blessing) extends to more and more people and multiplies through the many, the more thanksgiving may increase [and redound] to the glory of God.

 2 Corinthians 4: 15

[4] If you keep My commandments [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love. I have told you these things, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing.

 John 15: 10-11

[5] But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law, to purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to atone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God's sons]. And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)! Father! Therefore, you are no longer a slave (bond servant) but a son; and if a son, then [it follows that you are] an heir by the aid of God, through Christ.

 Galatians 4: 4-7

[6] The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God. And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory. [But what of that?] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (this present life) are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us!

 Romans 8: 16-18

[7] Therefore it is said, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive [He led a train of vanquished foes] and He bestowed gifts on men.


 Ephesians 4: 8

[8] But God's free gift is not at all to be compared to the trespass [His grace is out of all proportion to the fall of man]. For if many died through one man's falling away (his lapse, his offense), much more profusely did God's grace and the free gift [that comes] through the

undeserved favor of the one Man Jesus Christ abound and overflow to and for [the benefit of] many. Nor is the free gift at all to be compared to the effect of that one [man's] sin. For the sentence [following the trespass] of one [man] brought condemnation, whereas the free gift [following] many transgressions brings justification (an act of righteousness).

 Romans 5: 15-16

[9] So Jesus answered them by saying, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the Son is able to do nothing of Himself (of His own accord); but He is able to do only what He sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does is what the Son does in the same way [in His turn]. The Father dearly loves the Son and discloses to (shows) Him everything that He Himself does. And He will disclose to Him (let Him see) greater things yet than these, so that you may marvel and be full of wonder and astonishment.

 John 5: 19-20

[10] Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:] Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being.

 Philippians 2: 5-7

[11] But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.

 Acts 1: 8


[12] Because we know that Christ (the Anointed One), being once raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has power over Him. For by the death He died, He died to sin [ending His relation to it] once for all; and the life that He lives, He is living to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him]. Even so consider yourselves also dead to sin and your relation to it broken, but alive to God [living in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus.

 Romans 6: 9-11

[13] And having been set free from sin, you have become the servants of righteousness (of conformity to the divine will in thought, purpose, and action).

 Romans 6: 18

[14] [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope] That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].

 Philippians 3: 10-11

[15] Who are being guarded (garrisoned) by God's power through [your] faith [till you fully inherit that final] salvation that is ready to be revealed [for you] in the last time. [You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations, so that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.

 1 Peter 1: 5-7


[16] But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]. And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

 Galatians 5: 22

[17] For [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for only a short period of time and chastised us as seemed proper and good to them; but He disciplines us for our certain good, that we may become sharers in His own holiness. For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it [a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness--in conformity to God's will in purpose, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God].

 Hebrews 12: 10-11

[18] Indeed all who delight in piety and are determined to live a devoted and godly life in Christ Jesus will meet with persecution [will be made to suffer because of their religious stand].

 2 Timothy 3: 12


[19] [But what of that?] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (this present life) are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us!

 Romans 8: 18

[20] And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth.

 Genesis 1: 28


[21] Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!

 2 Corinthians 5: 17

[22] Be not wise in your own eyes; reverently fear and worship the Lord and turn [entirely] away from evil. It shall be health to your nerves and sinews, and marrow and moistening to your bones.

 Proverbs 3: 7-8


[23] The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the [whole] person; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure and bright, enlightening the eyes.

 Psalm 19: 7-8


[24] [He has also appropriated and acknowledged us as His by] putting His seal upon us and giving us His [Holy] Spirit in our hearts as the security deposit and guarantee [of the fulfillment of His promise].

 2 Corinthians 1: 22

[25] I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father.

 John 14: 12

[26] And so faith, hope, love abide [faith--conviction and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope--joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation; love--true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for and in us], these three; but the greatest of these is love. Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest]; and earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching).

 1 Corinthians 13: 13-14:1


[27] And they took offense at Him [they were repelled and hindered from acknowledging His authority, and caused to stumble]. But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house. And He did not do many works of power there, because of their unbelief (their lack of faith in the divine mission of Jesus).

 Matthew 13: 57-58


[28] And the huge dragon was cast down and out--that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Then I heard a strong (loud) voice in heaven, saying, Now it has come--the salvation and the power and the kingdom (the dominion, the reign) of our God, and the power (the sovereignty, the authority) of His Christ (the Messiah); for the accuser of our brethren, he who keeps bringing before our God charges against them day and night, has been cast out!

 Revelation 12: 9-10


[29] [But] he who commits sin [who practices evildoing] is of the devil [takes his character from the evil one], for the devil has sinned (violated the divine law) from the beginning. The reason the Son of God was made manifest (visible) was to undo (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) the works the devil [has done].

 1 John 3: 8

[30] [Even as my preaching has been accompanied] with the power of signs and wonders, [and all of it] by the power of the Holy Spirit. [The result is] that starting from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel [faithfully executing, accomplishing, carrying out to the full the good news] of Christ (the Messiah) in its entirety.

 Romans 15: 19

[31] Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]--these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself].

 1 John 2: 15-16

## Conclusion. What now?

If you are not yet a Christian then I hope you can see from this book why the gospel is called the good news! You can admit to God that you come hopelessly short of making the grade to enter heaven, but that you accept the imputed righteousness of His Son to qualify you for that idyllic paradise, because you are sorry for all you have done wrong. You can boldly claim that because you want to stop serving yourself and begin the path of living a life of holiness, with Jesus as your means and your goal, you can now enter into a righteous relationship with Him through the sacrifice of His Son, gaining access to blessings you could never have imagined in order to live a life that is pleasing to Him and of great reward to yourself.

On a personal note I found that my sincerity in wanting to repent expressed itself when I vocalised it in a room praying with others. That desire to change might already be in your heart, stirred by the Spirit as you hear the gospel preached, but you need to choose to vocalise it in order to make it come alive. In this way you will be willingly confirming to come near to God, to become like Him, to become one of His children. Then you should witness some kind of confirmation,<sup>[1]</sup> which is received, or at least perceived, differently by each individual as God's Holy Spirit communicates with you according to your own understanding and situation. My personal witness was an overwhelming presence of love within and without me, and a sacred spiritual experience that I later came to realise was symbolising the fact that God had separated me out from the world and into His kingdom. The most important aspects of the experience were the sincerity that I felt in my heart as I spoke, and the feeling of love that I felt in confirmation,<sup>[2]</sup> because the devil cannot create counterfeit spiritual experiences that include love. He may be able to induce nice bodily feelings, present visions, or many other things, but he cannot induce love. Only God can do that.


So don't delay. Find a quiet space and pray to God what is in your heart. If you don't find a strong desire to repent, ask God for that desire. He will sow the seed and you may feel it then, or you may feel it in time, but you most certainly will because God says that if you draw close to Him then He will draw close to you too.<sup>[3]</sup> He tells us that He saves all who sincerely call on Him.<sup>[4]</sup> And when you find that you believe - that your faith has been rewarded - make a public commitment to God through the watery passage of baptism.<sup>[5]</sup>

And you're home dry.

[1] The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God.

 Romans 8: 16

[2] Anyone who confesses (acknowledges, owns) that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides (lives, makes His home) in him and he [abides, lives, makes his home] in God. And we know (understand, recognize, are conscious of, by observation and by experience) and believe (adhere to and put faith in and rely on) the love God cherishes for us. God is love, and he who dwells and continues in love dwells and continues in God, and God dwells and continues in him. In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world.

 1 John 4: 15-17

[3] Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery]. [As you draw near to God] be deeply penitent and grieve, even weep [over your disloyalty]. Let your laughter be turned to grief and your mirth to dejection and heartfelt shame [for your sins]. Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant].

 James 4: 8-10

[4] For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord [invoking Him as Lord] will be saved.

 Romans 10: 13

[5] And now, why do you delay? Rise and be baptized, and by calling upon His name, wash away your sins.

 Acts 22: 16

## Afterward.

There has developed a disturbing movement in recent years called the Emerging Church, whose aim is to subvert and replace traditional and faithful Christianity with the belief that the gospel itself is a hindrance to people finding Jesus. But it must be stressed that the gospel IS Jesus. The Bible says that Jesus is the WORD, the word made flesh:

And the Word became 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**

As a born again Christian you can have the Spirit within you, and the Spirit testifies of truth, He testifies of Christ, and He testifies of the word of God. They are all one and the same. And if any of these three are denied, they are all denied.

So may the gospel show you the way in grace and truth, and let Christ walk with your every step.

This is my heartfelt desire, and God's promise to all who follow Him.

Amen.

## Appendix – Are we Alone?

For many decades now, one of the goals of secular science and state education has been to try and disprove the need for - or depending on your disposition, the burden of - a creator. The big bang, evolution, genetically determined sexuality, and the search for extraterrestrial life have all been pushed so far into the mainstream that one could be forgiven for forgetting that they are only theories with missing, erroneous, and conflicting evidentiary support. Whilst we will never be able to observe the big bang or evolution, and whilst the *exact* role of genes in shaping the mind will for some time remain open to statistical interpretation, it is generally thought that the one killer blow to established religions would be first contact with an E.T. Unless an extraterrestrial species was to come in the name of Christ, Jehovah, or Allah, all the nations would feel forced to agree that all major religions had been dealt their death blow.

But this isn't strictly true, for the Bible neither affirms nor denies that this world is the only world upon which God created life. But a problem would arise if an alien race appeared to us and said that all of our religions were wrong; either the offshoots of their own visits over the millennia, or our misinterpretation of a true spiritual realm which they then offer to educate us in. But what if their agenda was not the altruistic liberation from an alleged spiritual dark age, but the furtherance of opposition to the truth and the Holy God at the centre of it? What if all the half-truths, myths, legends, and disinformation spread over the years by our societies were but a calculated preparation of our fertile minds for the seeds of their coming?

The reason I propose such a scenario is because there is a real possibility that such an event may occur in the near future, and it is important to realise that there are *hints* of this within the Bible. It is therefore important to detail such a scenario within this appendix to preserve the integrity of the Bible in the face of such an extraterrestrial event. For just as Galileo was wrongly persecuted by the Catholic church for saying that the earth orbited around the sun (when in fact the Bible never said anything to the contrary), so too may Christianity be subjected to ridicule if today's churches falsely proclaim that there are no aliens and then they do in fact turn up.

In truth, the Bible is amazingly informative about many things that science has only discovered or confirmed in the last few centuries, such as the earth hanging in space<sup>[1]</sup>, the hydrological cycle<sup>[2]</sup>, and the presence of water springs on the seabed<sup>[3]</sup>, to name only a few of the hundreds of scientific facts to be found within its pages. But of interest to this appendix is its mention of a race of creatures called the Nephilim.

They first turn up in Genesis, and are described as being the result of an unnatural sexual union between fallen angels and humankind.<sup>[4]</sup> The Nephilim were giants in the true sense of the word, described as the mighty men of the earth, and this could easily explain the existence of structures around the world built from massive stones that even cranes today would struggle to lift. Despite being destroyed in the global flood along with all the other creatures that weren't secured within Noah's ark, a new breed reappeared many centuries later in the land of Canaan prior to its conquest by Israel. The spies of Joshua reported that they were like grasshoppers in comparison to the size of these Nephilim.<sup>[5]</sup> This may have been an exaggeration on the part of the spies, but Jewish rabbis today claim that in antiquity the Nephilim once stood three times the height of a man.

Because of the Nephilim's abominable evil, God ordered the Israelites to destroy them all, but they were not diligent enough and so we witness another encounter with the Nephilim in the days of King David, when as an uncrowned youth David faces Goliath (after so many generations it would seem that the Nephilim genes had been watered down, because Goliath stands *only* ten feet high).<sup>[6]</sup>

The Nephilim are also encountered in many Greek legends where we are told of mighty heroes and great abdominal monsters that were created by the sexual unions of Greek gods and mankind. The Egyptians and many other ancient civilisations have similar tales built into their religious belief systems. Considering the great effect these beliefs had upon various peoples in shaping their entire societies, we cannot believe that there was smoke without fire. There is also much supporting evidence in the fact that the stories share great similarities around the world and through different epochs; as many secular books have laid out in great detail over the last few decades. Many of these books favour the star people theory and believe that all religions are the result of such extraterrestrial visitations. But it is just as plausible that the truth can be found in one religion alone because of direct revelation from God, whilst alien visitations are a part of that truth but have been distorted by *manmade* religions and cultures.


So where does this leave us today?

Clearly most UFO reports are either hoaxes or the products of people's overactive imaginations, but there are also many reports that have been firmly substantiated and left unexplained. The number of alien abductions is also reported to be in the millions in the US alone, so there must be some truth to them as many psychologists concur. But do these alien beings really originate from other worlds? Or are they the ancestors of the ancient Nephilim who have since disappeared from our own? As angel-human hybrids it is quite possible that their angelic forefathers provided them with means to remove themselves from this world, to return permanently when the time was right; which may be when the world is in sufficient trouble to willingly receive them as an answer to its global problems of religious war, natural catastrophes, and technological failure.


This theory is admittedly based on just as much conjecture as fact, but what can't be ignored is the fact that there is enough material in scripture, the myths of the world, and in modern UFO experiences to say that there is definitely more to our material and spiritual reality than many are currently willing to believe.

Yet whatever the truth of alien visitations may be, the main concern is that you come to personally know and accept your saviour Jesus Christ, preferably before any Nephilim return...


[1] He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing.

 Job 26: 7 (ESV)

[2] All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place from which the rivers come, to there and from there they return again.

 Ecclesiastes 1: 7

[3] Have you explored the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?

 Job 38: 16


[4] The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God [angels] came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

 Genesis 6: 4

[5] ...The land through which we went to spy it out is a land that devours its inhabitants. And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the Nephilim [or giants], the sons of Anak, who come from the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

 Numbers 13: 32-33

[6] And a champion went out of the camp of the Philistines named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span [almost ten feet]. And he had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of mail, and the coat weighed 5,000 shekels of bronze. He had bronze shin armour on his legs and a bronze javelin across his shoulders. And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam; his spear's head weighed 600 shekels of iron. And a shield bearer went before him.

 1 Samuel 17: 4-7