

WHAT'S YOUR STORY

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Other Titles by Oleson Joe Lyng:

"Things That Count"

"Thirsty"

"Deception in the Church"

Introduction

Everyone has a story. Some stories are enduring, and some are not. So what is your story? The world is filled with heroes and villains. But they are not always human. I have two cats named Koko and Peli who can fit the bill of hero or villain. I have written about my cats in previous books. Maybe I will “**string**” you along with something about them or other things in this book. Although this book is not about cats, my world and yours have a lot of characters. As the tv show known as dragnet use to say at the start, “There are a million people in the naked city and this story is only about one of them.” This is a useful Christian book that starts out by talking about villains and goes on talking about good guys. If your mojo is villainous, you may get your mojo changed

by the end of the book. If your mojo is heroic, then maybe you will become an advanced hero! The main thing is that everybody has a story, and our stories are not over until the curtain falls. I hope that by the end of your story there will be loud clapping and cheering from your audience. Stories need to be true and not just imagination. Do you remember stories that you were sure were conceived from only imagination and fantasy? I want to include true stories in my book that picture as much of reality as I can write about. So, what is reality? Here is one definition of reality: “The world or the state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them.” That which is real is genuine, and dependable, that which I can safely trust in. Reals opposite is illusion, the fake, the counterfeit, and that which can’t be trusted, or has no cash value. Many things deal in illusion such as theatre, television, paintings, and literature, but can be real in the sense that they nurture and enlarge us to help to make sense of experience. When they fail in this, they feel unreal, they don’t ring true. They are false, and they fail as art. Theatre and everyday life overlap. Sometimes the murderer in the play is not prosecuted but, in real life he is. It may not matter if the story of my life is real or invented, until a lawyer asks if I am really the person mentioned in my uncle’s will. Stories that are real have a certain ring to them. Stories told within the Bible either ring true or not, depending on one’s personal belief system. Perhaps you need a test to see what you believe about the truth.

Here is a copy of the HILLBILLY 10 COMMANDMENTS. What does your heart tell you when you read them?

1. Ain't but one God.
2. Honor your Ma and Pa
3. No tellin' tales or gossipin'
4. Git yer hide ta Sunday meetin'
5. Ain't nothin' come before the Lord.
6. No foolin with another feller's gal.
7. No killin' cept for critters.
8. Quit yer foul mouthin'
9. No swipen' yer kin folks stuff.
10. Don't be hankerin' for it neither!

You might say something like, "I seem to have heard this stuff before somewhere." Or if you are like most people, you will probably say: "Guilty as charged!" If you are guilty then I hope you get a good lawyer. There is only one lawyer that can get you off in this case. You will have to read this book to find out his name. Or maybe you know him already. In this book you will find stories of criminals as well as good guys, but my last chapter is a secret until you read it. So don't peak over ahead of time. When I get up in the morning I hear a bunch of meows. That's our cats Koko and Peli. They are wanting their morning treat and will do anything including waking us up to get it. They are trying to persuade us to get out of bed and make feeding time at the zoo something special. This book could be your special feeding

time at the human zoo so don't spoil it by demanding your treat before you have read this book from start to finish. Oh, what the heck, you will probably take a secret peek at the last chapter titled: . ***"When the final curtain falls."***

I am trying to ravel together a story that incorporates a story of mankind, including the good parts and the bad parts. We will start out by acquainting you with the story of some of histories notorious bad guys and then include some stories about some reportedly good guys and then also some stories of ordinary people who have their highs and lows in life. Finally, I want to tell you the greatest story ever told which is the true story of Jesus Christ from both the old and new Testament of the KJV. Ultimately, Can you relate to any in this book? Have you noticed that your story is unique? Ultimately God would like to include you as one of his glorified saints. Luke 24:25-27 states: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them all the scriptures the things concerning himself." May God be glorified, even if my writing is from a sinner saved by grace with human qualities that picture one who has been imputed or credited with His righteousness.

CHAPTER 1

VILLAINS HAVE A STORY

Cats can only be described as villains. Koko, my male kitty will decide to throw up and usually does it under the bed which makes it hard to clean up. My first story about villains other than Koko will be interesting and will show the downside of being a human on planet earth. Villains must hide their throw up so to speak. Perhaps one of the greatest villain of the 20th century was:

Villian #1 Adolph Hitler (1889 – 1945)

Everyone has heard of and knows the man by the name of Adolph Hitler. In World War II he was the dictator of Germany. His governance was by way of the Nazi party. This man was called the Fuhrer of Germany. Initially WWII started with his invasion of Poland. The greatest history of Hitler was his killing of a large number of Jews. There were other victims but he especially dislike the Jews. Hitler is known for writing Mein Kempf. This book was a book designed to make others think like he thought about everything. He was a master at spell bounding a crowd. Hitler was also a painter but did not pursue that as much as being the dictator of Germany. He organized his own political party and managed to grab power in Germany in 1933. He was a master propagandist and swayed much of the public with his oratory. He was a master at spell bounding a crowd. Hitler and his wife finally committed suicide in their bunker near the end of WWII. Was Hitler a dress rehearsal for

the Antichrist? The future Fuhrer will be much worse than Adolf Hitler, but also more cunning and initially liked by the Jews according to scripture.

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Villain #2 John Wayne Gacy

John Wayne Gacy only alive for 52 years. But during this time he became a serial killer who managed to do away with about 36 men. He was known as a clown and publicly displayed himself in that way. He lured young victims into his house and did a handcuffing trick on them in order to kill them. He was also a rapist and often was reported to have raped his victims. In later years many of his victims were found buried in his home or outside on the property somewhere. Some have called him a victim of Sadism, even though his childhood was fairly normal. He spent time in prison for sexually accosting a young boy. His work was that of an independent contractor in Chicago. The hiding of his victims on his property and in his house caused a vapid smell coming from his property but he told his neighbors that it was just the house he lived in. He had buried 29 victims either in the houses crawl space on the property somewhere. When he was tried he pleaded insanity that was confirmed by psychologists. He was executed by lethal injection in 1994.

Villian #3 “Atta”

Mohammed Atta was set upon making a name for Allah. He probably viewed the United States as an enemy for its support for Israel. His goal

was to bring down the U.S. with driving planes into the buildings in New York known as the World Trade Center. In September 11, 2001 he flew a plane he had hijacked from American Airlines into one of the towers of the World trade center in New York. Previously before the attack they had been wired \$70,000 from the United Arab Emirates to be used for training and such for the attack. He and his helpers Marwan al-Shehhi and Ziad Jarrah were known as the “Hamburg Cell.” The net result of this terrible event murdered 1600 people caused by the crash and ensuing fire and collapse of the tower. Allah is a non-existing God that many Arabs believe is their real God known as Allah. It is a shame that Attah’s death tells the story of what false religion can accomplish. Brutal murder of innocent people cannot be what a god would tell someone to do. Instead, the real God the Father sent Jesus Christ to die on a very painful cross so that he could pay for the sins of anyone who would take Him as Lord and Savior.

Villian #4 Jeffrey Dahmer

This villain murdered numerous boys and men and cut body parts up. He managed to store many of his body parts in his apartment. He also had a homosexual inclination. He was finally caught and sent to prison. While in prison he claimed to have become a born-again Christian. Some said later that he began to doubt his conversion and forgiveness of his sins. While he was in prison he led Bible studies and read the bible in his cell. Are you wondering if he really became a

Christian. We cannot tell for sure. If we see him in heaven we will know that God's grace even extended to Jeffrey Dahmer inspite of his horrific crimes. If that be the case, we will be in wonder at the extreme extent of God's wonderful grace. Could you forgive him if one of your relatives was one of his victims. It would be hard to do so.

Villian #5 John Newton

John Newton was famous for writing "Amazing Grace." He most likely composed the song in 1772. He was known as a slave trader and was converted to Christianity during a violent storm at sea. His escape from being a villain can be attributed to his faith in Jesus Christ. He was later ordained as a priest in the Church of England.

Villain #6 Jim Jones

What a character this man known as Jim Jones was. He was a leader of a group known as the Peoples Temple in Indianapolis in 1955. Jones was making in-roads with the Peace mission movement. One way that Jones differentiated himself was by involvement in the civil rights movement. He was ordained by the Disciples of Christ church in 1964. One of his first missions was to set up a Temple in San Francisco. In the 1970's he made moves in the political and charitable 1970's type of action. Jones began to make people think that he was a god and had his own divinity. He eventually established his own commune in Guyana

and moved those that followed him there to get away from the U.S. and it's capitalistic type of government. There was a man who was a government official named Leo Ryan that found out about Jone's commune in Guyana and went to investigate. Unfortunately he and four members of the commune were murdered by gunmen from the commune. Jones became out of his mind and ordered a mass suicide. They had previously practiced this procedure with drinks not containing cyanide. We are reminded of Jesus' words when he said in (Matthew 24:5) "For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ and shall deceive many."

Villian # 7 Susan Smith

Susan Leigh Smith was convicted of murdering her two sons in 1994. She drowned them in a South Caroline Lake. She tried to escape prosecution by claiming someone else had killed her two sons but was convicted and sent prison for years with a possibility of parole after 30 years. She was denied parole in 2024. She claimed God had forgiven her for her sins.

Are you already tired of stories about villains? My next chapter will have stories about teachers of the scriptures. Some are good and some are questionable to say the least. Let us start the rest of my book with a joke:.

The Broken Clock: Late one night, a burglar broke into a house that he thought was empty. He tiptoed through the living room but suddenly froze in his tracks when he heard a loud voice say: "Jesus is watching you!" Silence returned to the house, so the burglar crept forward again. "Jesus is watching you," the voice boomed again. The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. He looked around frantically. He saw a bird cage in the corner with a parrot in it. "Was that you who said Jesus is watching me?" he asked. "Yes," said the parrot. The burglar breathed a sigh of relief and asked the parrot: "What's your name?" "Clarence," said the bird. "That's a dumb name for a parrot," sneered the burglar. "What idiot named you Clarence?" The parrot said, "The same idiot who named the Rottweiler Jesus." Jesus of course is watching everyone. And that includes convicted criminals as well as all others. In a sense we are all convicted criminals in God's eyes until we repent and find the Savior. Please enjoy and learn from the rest of my book."

“Teaching kids to count is fine but teaching them what counts is best.” –Bob Talbert.

Chapter 2

Bible teachers have a story.

The Bible says that there will be false teachers in the last days. You can decide who is true and who is false by comparing their teachings with scripture. Teachers of the Bible need to have a pristine lifestyle and live as well as teach from the Bible things that tell the real truth of scripture. All of us have problems but false teachers seem to have a lot of problems.

1. False teaching can be the product of distorted interpretations of Scripture by those not firmly established in the truth.
2. False teaching grows out of ungodly ambition, ignorance, and conceit.
3. False teaching sometimes stems from a desire for material gain.
4. False teaching is sometimes attributed to demonic deception.
5. False teachers seek to divide the body of Christ.
6. False teaching can result from and lead to inappropriate sensuality and sexual immorality.
7. False teaching can come from apostates and deviant teachers within the church.

The Story of health and wealth

1. Many of today's preachers preach about health and wealth. In the KJV Bible it says the following about Satan tempting Jesus as follows: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto

him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Matthew 4: 8-10 It seems apparent that Satan offered Jesus a really big reward if he would worship him. But Jesus is the Son of God and he needs no award because he is the creator of all things. Health and wealth is what most people seek after, but it is often the luck of the draw who has good health and money. When you look at the story of Job you will see that God allowed Satan to take away both his bodies health and his wealth. And Job was an especially good character who God approved in the end and restored good times to him such that he had twice as much as before when Satan was allowed to take it away. You can read about Job in the book of Job, and will have to read it all to see what really happened to him. You will find that many of the health and wealth teachers are wealthy. Do you suppose that some of them are bowing to Satan for their wealth. It is not bad to be wealthy, but it is bad to get money in wicked ways as opposed to hard work and diligence with spending. From a biblical standpoint, wealth is seen as a blessing from God. However, Jesus denied that wealth is a sign of God's favor or

that poverty is God's punishment for sins. Here is a typical question and answer about money. Is having lots of money a sign of God's blessing? I got to wondering about this because I read an article about some of the world's billionaires recently, and it didn't sound like most of them have much use for God. For that matter, most of them didn't seem very happy. The prosperity gospel has its roots in the occult movement known as New Thought. New Thought movement is a spiritual thinking that started in the U.S. in the late 19th century. This movement was not defined especially as Christian but was influenced by Christian thought and Eastern Ideas, metaphysical ideas, and psychology as well as self help. It was thought that positive thought would result in positive outcomes. This is not always true. This was sometimes called the law of attraction or that like things attract. Likewise this idea called one to think that ones mind has the ability to heal the body or attract a positive outcome as far as money. In Matt 7:7 it says to ask and you will be given what you ask for. But one forgets that motives of the heart play in the reception of that which is sought after. And the Bible says that the heart is desperately wicked. The father of the faith healing story started with Oral Roberts in Oklahoma. He said he was healed of a disease by faith and that started him on the road to a healing ministry. Prosperity and health are something that God can give an individual, but it is also

possible that his counterpart “Satan” can cause health and wealth to seem as a result of right living. In reality it is selfishness that causes humans to seek and sometimes get health and wealth.

Have you ever heard of the doctrine of “seed-faith?” This is the thought that giving to certain ministries that promote prosperity gospel preachers is like planting a seed that will yield a harvest of blessings. If you sow a seed into a ministry as an act of faith then God will bless you. The concept of seed-faith is a cornerstone of the movement. The doctrine of seed-faith posits that financial giving—particularly to ministries that promote prosperity gospel preachers—can be likened to planting a seed that will eventually yield a harvest of blessings. You sow a financial “seed” into a ministry as an act of faith and, in turn, God will multiply that seed in the form of various blessings, which could be financial prosperity, physical healing, or other forms of favor. Essentially, it represents a transactional relationship between the believer and God, facilitated through a financial gift.

Many Christian scholars and ethicists argue the prosperity gospel’s focus on material prosperity undermines the teachings of Jesus, who emphasized humility, compassion, and the normalcy of suffering.

What is your story D.L. Moody

In February of 1837 Dwight Lyman Moody was born and he died December 22, 1899. Moody was a book writer and started a church known as the Moody Church in Massachusetts. Moody said famously that “Faith makes all things possible and Love makes things easy.” When Moody was 17 he moved to Boston to work in his uncle’s shoe store. His uncle made him required to attend his uncle’s congregational church of Mount Vernon. Moody had a Sunday school teacher named Edward Kimball that converted him to Christianity. Edward Kimball is quoted as saying that he had encountered very few persons whose mind was spiritually darker than Moody’s. Isn’t God great to have converted Moody. You never know whom God might bring into submission and greatness as a preacher. I have learned that for a person to become earnest about his salvation and begins to seek God, it is likely to happen that the anxious sinner will soon meet with an anxious Savior. The Bible says that “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” This scripture is found in Jeremiah 29:13. Anyone that seeks Jesus with all their heart will find him.

Whats your story J. Vernon McGee?

J Vernon McGee is known for his “Thru the Bible” broadcast. He also has written some excellent commentaries on the Bible. I have a copy of his 5 book commentary on the bible in my office and find them very helpful in digging into the scripture. McGee was a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and was a dispensationalist. McGee was opposed to the ideas of Fatalism and Absolute Predestination in Calvinism. McGee said that there is a distinction between the false Roman Catholic Church and the early church. McGee made many speaking engagements but finally succumbed to heart disease in 1965. He died while sitting in his chair. “Thru the Bible” continues to air worldwide in 130 languages by radio shortwave and the internet. His beloved wife Ruth died in 1997 after suffering with dementia for nearly a decade. McGee was posthumously inducted into the National religious Broad-casters hall of Fame in 1989. Mr. McGee could really get into almost every verse of scripture with clarity and usability for the common man.

What's your story Charles Spurgeon?

. Charles Spurgeon was known as a prince of Preachers. He lived to be in his upper 50's before he died. Spurgeon lived in England and preached there for 38 years. Spurgeon founded Spurgeon College and wrote his own biography as well as many other writings. He also wrote commentaries, magazines and devotionals as well as hymns and poetry. He was a master at speaking and could get just the

right words out to his audience and church. He brought his audience into a state of listening well to what he spoke. 1 Corinthians 1:17 says “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect.” KJV

ARE YOU ECHOING GOD LIKE
SPURGEON DID?

*Just to let you know I put an extra page here to
Let you write some notes if you like.....*

Some men are heroes by nature in that they will give all that is in them without regard to the effort or to the personal returns.

Carson McCullers

Chapter 3

Stories of Heroes and Possible Saints

While Shakespeare said that life is but a poor player.... perhaps some players get more recognition than others. My cat Pelli gets a lot of recognition when she zooms. Cats get in the mood to run lickety split around the house sometimes. I often wonder what makes them do that. A poor player should not even know that he is a poor player and that is best. When we look at heroes and saints, we are sometimes challenged to live our lives better. How is your “likety split?”

Track and field:

Usain Bolt was the one known as the fastest man alive today. He set records in the 100- and 200-meter sprints of 9.58 seconds and 19.19 seconds.

Basketball:

Labron James played for several different teams in the NBA and won championships with every team he played for. He is now old and is going strong and maybe his career will eclipse Michael Jordon's. He scored an average of 27 points per game during that time period.

Golf

Tiger Woods is perhaps the best well-known golfer and he has his sight on overtaking Jack Nicklaus's 18 championship record. Woods has had numerous challenges in his career, including a failed marriage and a serious car accident, but he keeps playing.

Tennis

Williams compares statistically to be the best player in the history of tennis while winning 23 grand slams singles titles, 16 in doubles and

four Olympic gold medals, including two at the 2012 London Olympics.

Swimming:

Michael Phelps has won 8 gold medals in the Beijing Olympics. In London in the 2012 games, he continued to win the gold. Phelps announced his retirement after the games and later revealed that he had health problems and was contemplating taking his life. A return to swimming helped him get over the depression.

Football:

Tom Brady has had an illustrious career as a quarterback. He has won numerous Superbowl championships and has won mostly with the New England Patriots. He also went through a divorce with his first wife.

Baseball:

How can we forget Stan Musial. Although he did not play in this last decade, he had a great career with the St Louis Cardinals. There are other stars to be considered. What about Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle, and Casey Stengel (Manager of the Yankees)

You can visit the Halls of fame to find out about many of these players. But just like “poor player”, according to Shakespeare, they have their hour upon the stage and then are heard no more!

Let's take a look at several Saints. Protestants and Baptists believe that saints are anyone who is born again, while Roman Catholics have their special list of saints. This writer believes that a saint is a person who believes in Jesus Christ and has been “born again” apart from works.

Possible Saint #1 **Johannes Gutenberg**

This man invented the printing press. His involvement in the printing of Bibles revolutionized Christian thought. He brought the Word of God to the little people of the world. This brought about the schism of believers from Roman Catholicism over to Protestantism. Also, the history of the Baptist church shows that the Bible has made this group different to some degree from the Catholics. I am not sure if Gutenberg was a genuine Christian, but his work on the printing press opened the door to Biblical Christianity.

Possible Saint #2 **William Shakespeare**

Shakespeare came from a Catholic family but conformed to the Church of England. Despite this, the exact nature of his Christian beliefs remains the subject of widespread debate. Shakespeare is one of the greatest writers in history for the English-speaking people. His plays and sonnets are studied in schools across America. He at one time was a Catholic but he converted to the Church of England.

Possible Saint #3 **Blaise Pascal**

Pascal invented the calculator. He was a physicist, mathematician, Catholic theologian, child prodigy, and one of the most ardent supporters of the scientific method. Pascal made a wager known as the Pascal wager. He said that either God exists, or he does not. This Wager suggests, a smart person should live as if God exists because doing

otherwise would result in damnation whereas wagering on God and being incorrect loses nothing.

Possible Saint #3 **Martin Luther**

Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door at Wittenberg church October 31, 1517. I list a few of them for your consideration:

1. The Pope can forgive sins only in the sense, that he declares and confirms what may be forgiven of God; or that he doth it in those cases which he hath reserved to himself; be this contemned, the sin remains unremitted.
2. They preach vanity who say that the soul flies out of Purgatory as soon as the money thrown into the chest rattles.

Your can write notes here:

3. On the way to eternal damnation are they and their teachers, who believe that they are sure of their salvation through indulgences. *More notes:*
4. Beware well of those who say, the Pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to God.
5. Every Christian who feels sincere repentance and woe on account of his sins, has perfect remission of pain and guilt even without letters of indulgence.
6. He who says that the cross with the Pope's arms, solemnly set on high, has as much power as the Cross of Christ, blasphemes
31
God.

7. Away then with all those prophets who say to the community of Christ, "Peace, peace", and there is no peace.

Possible Saint #4 Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Dickens said, 'It is Christianity to... always show that we love Him by humbly trying to do right in everything.' For Dickens, faith in Christ meant acting out of Christlike empathy, using what was in his hands to improve the lives of others. Dickens famous "Christmas Carol" retells the story of love in a man-to-man way.

Possible Saint #5 Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

'God called me in the morning and asked me would I do good for him alone, without reputation?' Statement made by her. She was a nurse and endeavored to save lives in her work. When she was 34 years old, she went to work with 38 woman to save wounded soldiers. She worked at night by candlelight and was known as 'The Lady with the Lamp.' She was also known as a national hero for her work.

Possible Saint #6 William Tyndale (1494-1536)

Man is lost, spiritually dead, condemned. God is sovereign; Christ is sufficient. Faith is all. Bible translation and Bible truth were inseparable for Tyndale, and in the end, it was the truth—especially the

truth of justification by faith alone—that ignited Britain with Reformed fire and then brought the death sentence to this Bible translator.”

William Tyndale was given a death sentence for being a Bible translator. He found that faith is all that is needed for salvation. His bible told the story of faith which upset the Catholics and political leaders. He was executed for what they called “heresy” in 1536. He was strangled and later burned at the stake and had his body parts torn apart. It was against the church doctrine to translate the Bible from Greek to English. The Tyndale Bible was later translated into the Geneva Bible and finally the KJV. And because the English Bible suggested that many of the Catholic doctrines were false, he met his maker. I am fairly certain that he should be considered a genuine saint. Christianity was an incorporated religion under the Catholic system that had become corrupt from the original scriptures, having added to the Bible certain doctrines not found in Scripture.

Possible Saint #6 Thomas Helwys (1570-1616).

In 1699 while living in Holland, Helwys founded the first Baptist church and embraced the principle of believer's baptism. In 1611 he returned to England and formed the first Baptist church in England. He was known for writing a paper known as the “declaration of Mystery of Iniquity” which historians credited him with a plea for liberty of conscience in belief systems of faith. After the book's publication he was put in jail in Newgate Prison where he eventually died.

Possible Saint #7 Annie Armstrong (1850-1938)

Annie Armstrong was noted for organizing Baptist missionary work. She was a strong advocate for missions, mission funding, and education.

OBSCURITY CAN BE ON THE WAY TO GREATNESS IN THE EYES OF GOD

Well has he lived who has lived in obscurity. (OVID)

Chapter 4

Stories of Obscure Bible Characters

There are stories of obscurity in the Bible that is highlighted by a few characters which I will list below. Sometimes we battle with our own obscurity, only to find out that God is using us in some profound way. God is the God of the individual. He often works on individuals rather than governments or teams of people. Are you feeling obscure? I was out walking and ran into one of my neighbors and I asked him how he was doing? He answered with a smile, “I think I am just rearranging the chairs on the Titanic.” If you are just rearranging the chairs on the Titanic, you can only be sure of one thing. The ship is going down! In a sense we are all rearranging the chairs on the Titanic because our ship is going down. Most of us are going to die someday. A few will escape in the rapture of the church. The message is that we should stop just rearranging the insignificant chairs on the Titanic and do something that puts out a lifeline to somebody. The Lifeboat and lifeline “of course” is Jesus Christ. Here is the story about someone whose life was essentially one of rearranging the chairs on his Titanic, which was being a military leader of his country. But he had one small problem. He had leprosy. Here is his story:

1. Naaman

2 Kings 5 tells the story of Naaman, a successful Syrian commander who had the disease of leprosy and was desperate for a cure. At the

suggestion of a servant girl, Naaman went to see the prophet Elisha. Namaan's story is one of turning to the Lord, filled with twists and ironies. The king of Syria wanted Namaan to be healed since he was a mighty man of valor. So, he sent a letter to the King of Israel asking for his healing. Of course the King of Israel could not heal Leprosy because at the time leprosy was not something to be healed from. In the end, Namaan ended up at the door of Elisha the prophet. Elisha sent his messenger to Namaan to tell him what to do. He was to go to the Jordan river and dip himself seven times in the river. Namaan being a proud man found this disturbing and denied doing this crazy thing. We read in 2 Kings 5:13 the following words: "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My Father, if the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?" Apparently Namaan realized his own prideful heart and submitted to the directions of Elisha and went to river and dipped himself seven times and his fleshly disease departed from him and his skin was as that of a little child. Namaan was popular in the world and was a rich man so to speak, but he was obscure in God's eyes before he obeyed the man of God. God can overcome our obscurity with him by providing a lifeboat away from our Titanic if we will only pay close attention to the prophets of God. My friend the prophets of God are available to you in God's Holy Word.

2. Jabez

(1 Chronicles 4:10): And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested. Here we see a character briefly mentioned in the Bible whose prayer was answered. Obscurity does not count with God. He hears all prayers. Even the prayers of non-Christians and Jews. Speaking of prayers, I remember one of my prayers as a high schooler. I had played Golf but did not have a ride home, so I decided to go cross country from the course to my house. It was a hilly pasture to nowhere but I knew the general direction so I set out. In the process I could hear what I thought was the sound of wolves howling in the yonder, so I came to a place where there was a huge pipe trans crossing the canyon. So, I set out to cross the pipe hoping I would not fall. And that was a trial for carrying my golf clubs. But I wondered if I had not risked crossing the canyon on the pipe, if the wolves would have found me. Although as a boy I know nothing of prayer, I am sure my mind was probably hoping God would see me safely across and I guess he did. I made it home safe and sound. Maybe it was just my imagination about the wolves howling, but all kinds of dangerous thoughts can come in when you are alone against the elements. So, what about prayer? If only I had been familiar with Numbers 6:24-26 which reads: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Our fears are not always founded on truth but on imagined evil and the

Lord can give us grace over all danger, real or imagined. While we are on prayer let's look at several prayers from the scripture that are awesome before we move on to obscure Bible character #3

Prayer 1. Psalm 23: **The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.** Is the Lord your shepherd? If you want a prayer that covers all the bases, this one is it. King David had a way of hitting the nail on the head at times. He was known as a man after God's own heart. Listen to David closely in the following verse 15 of Psalm 17: **As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.** Did you catch what he said...when I awake, with thy likeness. I think David was saying that he would awake from the sleep of death with a different body that will be somewhat like Jesus body! We will not see Jesus until the resurrection/translation of the Saints. But when the saints awake, they will be like Jesus with a glorified body! read about this in Phil: 3:21.."Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he able to subdue

all things unto himself.” When you get old you will be ready for a new body.

Prayer 2. (Psalm 37:1-4)

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. The profiting of evil doers is but for a short time. They do not realize that their end of life is coming on the earth and that their future depends upon whether they develop faith in Christ or not.

Prayer 3. (Psalm 51:1-2)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. King David had sinned by ordering Bethsheba's husband into battle so he could have sex with her. Uriah was killed because he was put on the front line where it is easily possible to die. So David then had Bethsheba to himself. But he paid dearly for that sin even though God answered his prayer. The message here is to be honest with God and he may have tender mercies and blot out our transgressions whether they be greater or lesser than King David's sin.

Prayer 4. Proverbs 30:7-9

Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and

deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. Our prayers should only be for our needs. We need not seek to be rich, and our Christian needs will be readily provided by God. The tendency of our soul is to get away from God when our life is overfilled with abundance or the other way around when we are in poverty.

Prayer 5. 1 Kings 3:3–9

And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? Do you see that God is more pleased to grant wisdom

than he is to grant earthly riches. Have you ever noticed that when parents or grandparents spoil their children it often corrupts them and gets them to thinking that they are really special. But God is no respecter of persons and is perfect in every way.

Prayer 6. 2 Chronicles 20:5–12

And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. Are our eyes upon the Lord for a

victory? We may be small against a great army, but God is greater than them by a long shot! We just need faith in Jesus Christ for God to make the battle ours.

Prayer 7. Luke 23:34

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. Many in our world say, **“hate your enemies and destroy their lives.”** Jesus says, **“love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”** (Matthew 5:44). He models this in His dying moments as He petitions God to forgive His executioners. When Jesus Died the earth shook and the centurion replied, **“Surely this was the Son of God.”** We should forgive others who have wronged us and pray for them. Perhaps God will hear our prayer as well as he heard Jesus’s prayer for those who did not know what they do.

3. The Thief on the Cross:

In Luke 23:32-43 we read of the 2 persons that were being crucified with Jesus Christ. Both were being crucified for thievery. While one of them asked Jesus to come down from the cross and take them to freedom, the other answered rebuking him and saying: **“Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto**

him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” We do not know the name of this thief who found faith in Christ while hanging on his cross. In a sense we are all going to be hanging on a cross unless Jesus comes before our death date, and we are one of his sons or daughters. Everyone whose name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life can rejoice over his future habitation in the place Jesus called paradise and at the resurrection-translation heaven!

4. Korah

Korah’s legacy was of an obscure Bible character who got a group together to oppose Mose’s leadership. He thought that there should be more than one leader for the Jews. So, God did not respect him at all, and the “Korah’s rebellion” was where God caused the earth to swallow them up in judgment. It isn’t a good idea to oppose God’s chosen leaders when they are doing what God has commanded them to do. Rebellion is not permitted while the leader is obeying the Word of God.

5. Elishama

In Jeremiah 36:12 we read: **“Then he went down into the king’s house into the scribe’s chamber: and lo, all the princes sat there, even Elishama the scribe, ...”** Elishama got his name in the Bible, and he probably had no idea it was going to happen. But it did happen for a reason. In 1986 a clay seal was found that said “Elishama, servant of the king,” thus proving that he was indeed one scribe in the time and setting and situation that Scripture describes. This is true evidence that

all of Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16-17) even down to the most tiny detail and seemingly insignificant person. Are you beginning to get the picture how real and perfect the God of the Bible is. None other book can even come close to the KJV Bible. Including other books of other religions that are not worshipping the one true God of Israel.

6. Mordecai:

The story of Mordecai is in the 17th book of the Bible known as Esther. Mordecai is a cousin and a guardian of Esther who is a foreigner who becomes the queen of Persia. Mordecai uses his position as one of the King's court to defend the oppressed people of God while stopping a plot to assassinate the king. God uses the Book of Esther to show us that this foiling of a plot to stop God from his saving work through the Jewish people, and eventually Jesus Christ is clearly an error and a sin. Had this not happened our Savior could not have been born. Isn't it wonderful what God can do through courageous people who are his?

7. Jethro

Jethro was the father-in-law of Moses. Moses was overwhelmed with his task to lead Israel. Everyone who had a problem came to Moses for a solution. Exodus 18:13-27 tells us how Jethro called to Moses and suggested that he divide out the leadership between others of the Jews. This allowed Moses to take care of big problems while small matters were mediated by his chosen assistants.

8 Ebed-Melek

Imprisoned in a cistern filled with mud. It looked like king Zedekiah

would put Jeremiah to death. Jeremiah's imprisonment had been the result of some powerful but corrupt government officials who hated some of Jeremiah's prophecies. (Jeremiah 38:1-5) But Ebed-Melek came to Jeremiah's rescue by courageously asking Zedekiah to release Jeremiah. It takes courage to stand up against powerful people who take no pity on the small and powerless masses. God blessed Ebed-Melek for his efforts.

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Perfect numbers like perfect men are very rare.

Rene Descartes

Chapter 5

Stories by the numbers

Numbers can tell you just about anything. Sometimes the numbers are true and sometimes they are false, however, numbers do not lie. Have you ever done a paint by the numbers? I tried that once upon a time, because when I tried painting by spontaneity, I found that my painting talent was zero. So, I produced a fairly decent painting by the numbers, and I did not have to think about what color I needed for each jab of the brush. Do you imagine that there are numbers in the Bible that tell some sort of story? Well, this is true at least for the KJV Bible. Let's look at some of the phenomena that appear in the KJV.

Some commentators say that the first heaven is our atmosphere, the second heaven is the sun moon and stars, and the third heaven is God's un-created dwelling place probably located in another dimension which we cannot detect with our human senses. Now my cat (who knows just about everything) thinks he knows where the God dimension is. Maybe you should get yourself a cat and forget about dimensions. I may be repeating myself in the following writing about numbers in the Bible, as I have written about it in my book "Things That Count." This makes a good story since it is a part of God's written story in His Bible the KJV.

Take for example the word one. It appears 1,976 times in the KJV and the word one's occurs 77 times. Words that occur by a number of times that are evenly divisible by 7 seem to occur quite often in the KJV. I don't believe the NIV, NKJV, or the NASB have this naturally occurring event happening in them. I used some Bible software to come up with my numbers. Are their numerical phenomena within the KJV

that point to the fact that this Bible is God-Breathed. Pardon me while I take a rabbit trail onto the number 7. The number 7 has a story in the Bible as:

- God created in six 24-hour days and then rested the 7th day.
- “the word of the Lord is found 245 times in the KJV and 245 is evenly divisible by 7.
- “Lord of Hosts” is found 245 times.
- “Word of God” is found 49 times.
- Jesus is found 983 times but 3 of those times are about another man leaving 980 for Jesus.
- “Jesus Christ” is found 196 times.
- “Son of Man” is found 196 times.
- “Holy Spirit” is found 7 times.
- Various forms of “book” are found 196 times.

All of the above are in the KJV only. Other Bibles have different counts that are not divisible by 7. If you want to see a chart of numberings for different words and names in the Bibles KJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, and the Catholic Bible known as the DRB *Douay Rheims Bible see this reference¹

The word two is found 835 times in the KJV. There are a lot of twos in the world. It takes two to tango. All humans (and cats for that matter) have two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two breasts (cats have more) two

¹ Things That Count, Oleson Joe Lyng, Goodnewspublishing New address is 14606 Open Range Road Lytle tx.) 78052 Pg 31-32

matching upper and lower teeth, two hands, two legs. Well, you get the picture. The number two indicates a union of sorts. For example, the union of man to woman, the union of Christ to his church, the old and new testaments of the Bible, the first Adam brought death to mankind while the second Adam (Jesus Christ) brought life. And then there is the major light, the sun for the day and the lesser light the moon for night. Facts are verified by at least two witnesses.

How about that number 3. Ever heard of the trinity. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All forms of the word “three” occur 579 times in the KJV. And $579 = 3 \text{ times } 193$. Here is a list of amazing facts about 3; s in the Bible:

- There is a triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (1 Jn 5:7) (Mt. 28:19)
- Time comes in the past, present and the future.
- Adam had three sons whose names were Abel, Seth, and Cain.
- All men are descended from the 3 sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, And Japheth. (Gen 9:18)
- The three patriarchs or founding fathers were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Gen 50:24
- Both the Tabernacle and Temple were divided into 3 sections: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. (Ex 26:33) (ex. 27:9)

- Three items were contained in the Ark of the Covenant: a pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the ten commandments. Heb. 9:4, Ex 16:32-34, Ex 25:16,21, Num 17:8,10-11
- The three big feasts that Israel celebrated were: The Feast of Unleavened Bread, The Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Ingathering. Ex. 23:14-16, Ex. 34:18-23, Deut. 16:16
- Elijah stretched out his body over the widow's dead son 3 times, and he came to life again. 1 kings 17:21-22
- The Lord brought famine for 3 years while King David reigned. 2 Sam 21:1
- Jesus was tempted 3 times in the wilderness by Satan. Mt. 4:1-11, Lk. 4:1-13
- Daniel prayed 3 times per day. Dan. 6:10,13
- Jonah spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of a large fish Jn. 1:17, Mt. 12:40
- Jesus went missing from His parents for 3 days when he was 12 yrs old. Lk. 2:41-50
- Jesus was resurrected on the 3rd day. Mk. 8:31, Lk. 9:22
- Jesus was crucified on the 3rd hour. Mk. 15:25
- Jesus prayed to His Father 3 times in Gethsemane Mk. 14:32-42
- Jesus said He was the way, the truth and the life. Jn. 14:6
- Jesus raised 3 people from death. Lk. 7:11-15,8:41-42,49-56, Jn 11:1-44

- Jesus had 3 men that seemed close: Peter, James, and John.
Mk.9:2, Mk.5:3, Mt. 17:1

What about the number four? In case you haven't noticed, you have four fingers and a thumb. On the fourth day of creation the physical universe was completed: the sun, the moon, and the stars. Did you know that the Bible says, "He made the stars also." (Genesis 1:16) It was no problem for God to make the millions or billions of stars also. If you look at the universe through a telescope you will see so many stars you will wonder just how God did that. No problem. God can do anything. Which includes making something out of nothing. Wow. If you think that God did all this with a big bang, I will have to think that maybe he would have seen the mess it would have made and started over. There are also four seasons in the year. Speaking of seasons, do you think we are in the season of Christ's return for his church? I may talk about that later. The word four occurs 328 times in the KJV. Okay then 328 is evenly divisible by 4. Is that significant? I don't know but it is another interesting event of the KJV Bible. The word creator occurs 4 times in the KJV. Heaven and earth are used together 156 times in the KJV which is 4×39 . The KJV speaks of "four corners" 20 times, or 4×5 , and of "four quarters" 4 times. The KJV speaks of a new heaven and earth 4 times. (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22: 2 Peter 3:13: Revelation 21:1.) The phrase "ends of the earth" occurs 28 times or 4×7 in the KJV. Jesus is introduced in the 4 gospels as "King of the Jews" 4 times apiece in the gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. (KJV) The word "cross" is listed 28 times in the KJV. In the NIV it is written several

times in the Old testament and 31 times in the New testament but sometimes as in “crossing the road” or something like that. The word “Gospel” appears 104 times or 26×4 in the KJV.

Consider also when Jesus talks about the seeds that fall on:

1. The wayside
2. Stony Grund
3. Thorns
4. Good ground (Matthew 13:18-23) None of the seeds produced except those that fell on good ground. If one is grounded in scripture, then he can be productive for the Lord.

How about the 4 people who appeared in the fiery furnace together? (Daniel 3:19-25) The fourth person was undoubtedly the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. He protected the three men whom Nebuchadnezzar had cast in the fire because they refused to worship an image. Could it be that in the fourth dimension a fire in the third dimension has no effect on those within that dimension? Would you choose faith over fire?

It is spellbinding that there are 4444 occurrences of the word “God” in the KJV.

Next, let's consider the number 5. I think the number 5 is about God's grace. We all have 5 fingers on our hands. What could we do without our hands? When a man and woman dance, they hold each other with their God given hands. Consider the 55th verse of the KJV where it says: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) Here is another story that magnifies the coming together of man and woman.

“And Abigail hasted, and arose upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her: and she went after the messengers of David and became his wife.” (1 Samuel 25:42) I hope you see the connection here in the Old testament with the coming of the bride of Christ to Jesus Christ. David is a type of Christ. Who are the messengers of Christ? They are the prophets and apostles of the Holy scripture. Notice the 5’s involved. Here we have the 5 damsels and the verse 25 (5 X 5) I see that the number 5 seems to be about the grace of God. For example, the name “Christ” appears 555 times in the New testament. “Christ appears 516 times in the NASB, 530 times in the NIV. Looks like God wants his Son’s name related to the number 5! Did you know that the word righteous (all forms) occurs 555 times in the KJV? How about the fact that Christ was wounded five times....2 nails in the wrist, 2 nails in the feet and one spear in his side while on the cross. There is also coming a 5th Kingdom on the earth which will be governed by Jesus Christ in person. The third Reich was Adolf Hitler’s reign which fell, and the fourth kingdom will be the one of the Antichrist which will also fail. These patterns of fives are almost always broken in the (NIV, NKJV, NASB, RSV).

Next up is the number 6. The phrase “sixth day” appears exactly 6 times in the KJV. Is it okay to count things in the Bible? If you read Ecclesiastes 7:27 you find that Solomon recommended counting to figure something important out. In revelation 13:18 we read, “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore

and six. And that is 666. And another amazing thing about all this is that Ecclesiastes 7:27 is that it is in the 666th chapter of the Bible! Perhaps you might think that that is just a coincidence. If it is a coincidence, then it's something like finding a \$100 dollar bill under a rock somewhere. It is also interesting that the Roman numerals DLCXVI all add to 666.

Do you see the 3 long double bars on the outside and middle of the bar code below?



They represent the number 6. Conceivably every human could be tattooed with a bar code. Could this be the usage of the number 666 story told in rev. 13:16-18? Hopefully you won't miss the rapture of the church and have to deny the putting of the mark of the Antichrist on

your forehead or hand. (Revelation 13:16) I list several incidents of the number 6 in the Bible.²

- The Earth and all things were created in 6 days (Gen 1:31-2:2) (Ex 20:11) (Ex 31:17).
- Man was created on the 6th day (Gen 1:26,31).
- God flooded the whole world when Noah was six hundred years old (Gen 7:6,11).
- Abraham interceded on behalf of the people of Sodom 6 times (Gen 18:16-33).
- Leah had 6 sons (Gen 30:19-20) (Gen 35:23).
- The Israelites were to gather Manna for 6 days (Ex 16:5,22,29).
- The 6th Commandment is “thou shalt not murder” (Ex 20:13) (Deut 5:17).
- A Hebrew slave was only to work 6 years and then be released (Ex 21:2) (Deut 15:12,18) (Jer 34:14).
- God commanded the Israelites to give their land a Sabbath rest after 6 years of farming it. (Ex 23:10-11) (Lev 25:1-7)
- The glory of the Lord covered Mt. Sinai for 6 days (Ex 24:16).
- The gold lampstand in the Tabernacle (which signified Jesus) had 6 branches coming out of it (Ex 25:32-35) (Ex 37:17-21).
- Two onyx stones, each with 6 names of the sons of Israel were put on the ephod of the High Priest (Ex 28:9-12).

² Things that Count, Oleson Joe Lyng, Goodnewspublishing (new address 14606 Open Range Rd. Lytle tx 78052 Pg 18-20.

- There were 6 “cities of refuge” in the land of the Levites (Num 35:6,13,15).
- Jephthah judged Israel 6 years (Judges 12:7).
- Goliath’s height was 6 cubits and a span (1 Sam 17:4).
- When the Ark was being brought to Jerusalem, after those that carried the ark took 6 steps, David sacrificed sheep and oxen (2 Sam 6:13).
- There was a giant that had 6 fingers on each hand and 6 toes on each foot (2 Sam 21:20).
- Solomon’s throne had 6 steps (1 Kin 10:19) (2 Chr 9:18).
- Joab remained in Edom 6 months until he had killed every male (1 Kin 11:16).
- Evil Queen Athaliah’s reign was 6 years (2 Kin 11:3) (2 Chr 22:12).
- Boaz gave Ruth 6 ephahs of barley (Ruth 3:15,17).
- The Seraphim angels have 6 wings (Isa 6:2) (Rev 4:8).
- After 6 days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up the mountain for the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1) (Mk 9:2).
- In the 6th month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce she would give birth to Jesus (Lk 1:26:36).
- In Jesus’ first miracle, He changed 6 waterpots into wine (Jn 2:6-10).
- Mary anointed Jesus’ feet 6 days before Passover (Jn 12:1-3).

- At about the 6th hour, Pilate said to the Jews, “Behold your king” (Jn 19:14).
- When Peter received his vision from God opening the door to the Gentiles, it was the 6th hour (Acts 10:9).
- The number of the Antichrist (or beast) is 666 (Rev 13:17-18).

The next number to consider is seven. Seven is one of the most interesting numbers in the Bible. God seems to like to do things in 7 or arrange things in 7's. For example:

1. There are 7 colors.
2. There are 7 continents.
3. There are 7 seas.
4. There are 7 divisions of the periodic table.
5. There are 7 days a week.
6. There are 7 notes on the musical scale.
7. There are 7 different crystal shapes in chemistry.
8. God created the heavens and the earth, and them rested on the 7th day.
9. God purified His word 7 times. (Psalm 12:6-7)
10. Psalm 12 is the 490th chapter of the Bible which is a multiple of 7.
11. “the Word of the Lord” is found 245 times in the Old Testament.
(7 X 35)
12. “Lord of Hosts” is found 245 times in the Old Testament.
13. “Thy Word” is found 7 times in the New Testament.
14. “Thus, saith the Lord of Hosts” = 70 times.

15. "Word of God" = 7 times
16. "Gospel of God" = 7 times
17. "message" = 7 times
18. "thunders" = 7 times
19. "Jesus" appears 983 times in this Bible (KJV), but 3 of these are not Jesus of Nazareth. So
20. $980 = 70 \times 7 \times 2$.
21. "Son of Man" appears 196 times or $7 \times 7 \times 4$
22. "Jesus Christ" appears 196 times.
23. "beloved Son" appears 7 times.
24. "Thy Word" appears 35 times in Psalm 119 which is all about God's Word.
25. "Holy Spirit" appears 7 times.
26. All variants of "book" appear 42 times in the New Testament.
27. Leviticus 16:14 prefigures Christ's work in sprinkling His Blood 7 times on the altar.

All of the above and below are from the KJV only. In other bibles this does not occur very often at all. Below is a list of words that appear in multiples of 7 times in the KJV only.

"forgiven" = 42 times.

"forgiveness" = 7 times

All forms of "forgive" = 112 or 7×16 .

"reconciles" = 7 times

"confess" = 28 times

"confesses" = 7 times

“favor” = 7 times

“forgive” = 56 times

“wool” = 14 times

“consecrated” = 14 times

“sanctify” = 70 times

If you check out the NASB, NIV and others you will find that almost none of these words are multiples of 7 (times) in occurrences.

The next number up is 8. In Genesis Chapter 8 we see that God brings Noah out of the ark into his new world. This seems to be a picture of how God will bring those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior into the 8th day after the 1000-year reign of Christ on this earth.

Thomas also believed in Jesus' resurrection on the 8th day after he had said he would not believe until he could put his hand into Jesus' wound in his side. (John 20:24-29) Our faith will become sight some day when in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ during his reign on the earth. In 1 Kings 8:66 we read, “On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant and for Israel his people.” This is the same type of joyful day when we experience the new heavens and the new earth.

Are you a thinker? What types of things do you think about? According to God, there are listed 8 things to think about in Phil.

4:8: “Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Another “eight” listing happens in Colossians 3:11 where exactly 8 types of people are listed. The word “eight” occurs exactly 80 times or 8 X 10 in the KJV. “Eight” occurs only 35 times in the NIV. In 2 Peter 2:5 we read that Noah is described as the 8th person. So here again we can surmise that God may be using 8's to signify something new is beginning to happen. In the 8th book of the Old testament, Ruth, Naomi is given new life. The word “redeem” occurs 8 times in Ruth but only 5 times in the NIV. “Revive occurs 8 times in the KJV and 5 times in the NIV. Interestingly, eight books of the New Testament have Jesus' words in red.

I am including a lot about numbers in this book that were also messaged to you in my 2nd book, “Things That Count”, because I think it is truly an amazing find by myself and others who have perused numbers within the Bible.

Onward to number 9. There are nine words in the 9th commandment in the KJV where it says in Exodus 20:16: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. There are also 9 fruits and gifts of the Spirit. “Be fruitful” occurs 9 times in the KJV but only 8 times in the NIV. God spoke 27 words (9 X 3) in the KJV in Gen. 1:11. The NIV has it at 24 words. The NASB has it at 23 and the ESV has it

at 26 words. The term “planted” occurs 9 times in the KJV (New Testament) and 11 times in the NIV (New Testament)

In “Things That Count” I used the word “meow” to say that I just told you something fishy. So, If I say “meow” you might want to scratch your head and wonder what is what? Have you ever been touched by the hand of God? Paul the Apostle knew about this when he exclaimed in in 2 Timothy 1:12....” I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” And this is exactly 25 words or 5 X 5. Wow! No meow here. My meows may raise a few eyebrows, but that’s okay. And in case you did not know, cats have eyebrows, but it is just a few hairs over their eyes.

What about the number 10? Are you a 10? Thats when you are the most beautiful man or woman to look at. Just so you know there are 10 top college football teams. And a tithe is 10 percent of your income. As I said in my last book, some teachers say a tithe is for Christians and others say it was for Jews only. You make the call. Not much about the next number 11. Perhaps the number 11 is about confusion and disorder. When Judas betrayed Christ, there were only 11 disciples left.

But what makes the Bible have 66 books? The Catholic church has their Bible at 73 books which includes the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha was written in the interim between 400 B.C. and the first coming of Christ to the earth. It is really doubtful that the Apocrypha should be included since it has errors, and no New

Testament writer referenced them. Also, some of the doctrines of the 66 book Bible conflict with the doctrines of the Apocrypha. Such things as prayers for the dead are in the Apocrypha but not in the rest of the Bible. So, which is it? The Apocrypha has many problems such as “the use of magic”, “Salvation by works.” And “offering money as an offering for the sins of the dead. The Apocrypha, as I mentioned before, has incorrect historical facts. The book of Judith incorrectly says Nebuchadnezzar was the king of the Assyrians when he was the king of the Babylonians. Baruch 6:2 states “And when you come into Babylon, you shall be there many years, and for a long time, even to seven generations: and after that I will bring you away from thence with peace” while Jer. 25:11 states it like this: “And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the King of Babylon seventy years.” Many generations would have been far more years than 70 years as stated correctly according to historians and the KJV Bible. Looks like the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church is not the means by which God is communicating his truth to his people. Seems to me that they are infested with man’s false tradition rather than God’s absolute truth as given by the KJV.

The number 12 is interesting not only in the Bible but also in our earthly environment. For example:

1. There are 12 eggs in the dozen.
2. There are 12 years in school.
3. 12 jurors on a jury

4. 12 volts in a car battery
5. 12 months in a year
6. 12 inches in a foot
7. 12 functions on a keyboard
8. 12 men have walked on the moon.
9. We celebrate Jesus' birth in the 12th month.
10. When Jesus was 12 yrs. old, he was stumping the authorities with his knowledge.
11. There were 12 Apostles.
12. Jesus healed a girl who was 12 years old.
13. Jesus healed a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years.
14. The length of the chromosomes in our body is said to be about 12 X 10¹³ meters.
15. In Matt. 26:53 Jesus said he could call down 12 legions of angels if he wanted to.
16. Our galaxy arm pitches at 12 degrees.
17. When Jesus fed the multitude there were 12 baskets of leftovers.
18. The New Jerusalem has 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel inscribed.
19. There are 12 notes on the musical scale of a piano.
20. A baby sometimes takes steps at 12 months.
21. Girls start their reproductive cycle at 12 years.
22. Our bodies contain carbon 12.
23. There are 12 pairs of ribs in our bodies.
24. We have 12 pints of blood in our body.

25. There are 12 pairs of cranial nerves in our body.

26. Our upper back has 12 vertebrae.

You can read more information about numbers in the KJV and other Bibles at: ³

Perhaps here is a copy of what is found in my other book that will spark your interest. I list 8 spiritually significant Bible words in the chart below. The Bibles are listed along with the ones whose numbers are evenly divisible by 7. Notice that all the KJV are divisible by 7 but few of the words in other Bibles have that facet.

Name	KJV	div	NIV	div	NASB	div	ESV	div
forgive	56	7	75		61		61	
forgiven	42	7	46		48		47	
forgiveness	7	7	15		18		19	
reconciled	7	7	9		7	7	7	7
confess	28	7	11		20		20	
confessed	7	7	5		8		3	
favour	70	7	126	7	118		127	
sanctify	70	7	4		19		12	

³ Things that Count, Oleson Joe Lyng, Goodnewspublishing (new address 14606 Open Range Rd. Lytle Tx 78052 Pg 31-32

Another story found in the Bible and the world is that many things are trinitarian in nature. In fact, God is said to exist as a trinity of persons and yet he is one God. Humans have difficulty with this because in human beings we see a separation of beings who are not the same being. For example, I am Joe, and my neighbor and friend is Bobby. We are different and not just one being when considering the two of us. Here is a list of trinitarian things within nature and the Bible:

1. God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.
2. Time is divided into past, present, and future.
3. Jesus earthly ministry was 3 years long.
4. He was resurrected on the third day.
5. He was crucified at the third hour.
6. Jesus said He is the way, the truth, and the life.
7. Peter, James, and John were in His inner circle.
8. He was tempted 3 times in the wilderness.
9. The inscription over His cross was in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.
10. Peter denied Him 3 times.
11. Jesus raised 3 people from the dead.
12. All men are related to Shem, Ham, or Japheth.
13. The three Jewish fathers were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
14. The three sons of Adam are mentioned as Abel, Cain, and Seth.
15. The Tabernacle was made up of the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies.
16. Jonah spent 3 days in the belly of a whale.
17. Daniel prayed 3 times a day.

18. God told Isaiah to walk naked for 3 years as a sign against Egypt, and Ethiopia.

Stories of the number 17:

1. It is the seventh prime number.
2. The sum of its digits is 8 which is the number for the resurrection and new beginnings.
3. In Genesis 17 Abram's name was changed to Abraham and circumcision was instituted as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham.
4. In Leviticus 17 blood was sacrificed as atonement for the soul.
5. In 1 Samuel 17 David killed Goliath
6. In 2 kings 17 Samaria was captured, and Israel was carried away to Assyria.
7. In Matthew 17 on a mountain the transfiguration occurred.
8. In John 17 the High Priestly prayer of Jesus was uttered.
9. In Revelation 17 many Bible students think it is talking about the Roman Church as mystery Babylon, the great harlot.
10. The book of Esther is the 17th book of the Bible, and its story is a type of the rapture of the church.
11. Israel is spoken of as redeemed in Chapter 51 of Isaiah. (51 is 17 X 3 hmm.)
12. In 1 Corinthians 15, verse 51 describes the rapture of the church. hmm again! 51 is 17x3.
13. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 we have another verse about the rapture of the church.

14. In Genesis 24, verse 51 it looks like Abraham is a type of God the Father, Isaac is a type of Jesus the Son of God, and the servant is a type of the holy Spirit; and Rebekah is a type of the bride of Christ, the Church.
15. In John 14:3 we see that this is likely a reference to the rapture of the church. and wouldn't you know it: $(14 + 3 = 17)$
16. Some teachers think that Luke 17:34 could be a description of the rapture of the church.
17. What about John 21:11 in which the number of fish caught in the net was 153. And wouldn't you know it... $153 = 17 \times 9$.

These can all be said to be “types” which are something that gives a picture of something else that may occur later in time. Do you think about time much? Apparently, God invented time for us in this world, but He is existing such that: the past, the present, and the future are all coexistent. That probably will blow your mind. If you were like God, you could see your birth, marriage and death all at the same instant.

Here is another list of interesting 17's in the Bible and elsewhere:

1. The ark rested on Mt Ararat on Nisan 17. (Genesis 8:4)
2. On Nisan 17 queen Esther entered the inner court of the king's palace. (Esther 5:1) Could this be a “type” of the event known as the rapture when Christians enter the court of King Jesus Christ?
3. Jesus rose from the dead on Nisan 17. According to Bible scholars he was crucified on Nisan 14 and rose from the dead 3 days later on Nisan 17, according to the Jewish Calendar.

4. Daniel's beasts have 7 heads and 10 horns which when added gives 17.
5. King Rehoboam reigned for 17 years.
6. The book of James has material from 17 Old Testament books.
7. There are 17 things mentioned in Romans 8:35-39.
8. Psalms 83:6-11 lists 17 enemies of Israel.
9. Biblically 17 relates to "overcoming the enemy" and complete victory.
10. $153 = 1 + 2 + 3 + \dots + 17$ and 153 is in the Bible in John 21:11; $153 = 17 \times 9$.
11. An equilateral triangle with 17 units on each side contains 153 dots. This is not in the bible, but it is interesting.
12. Numbers 24:17 refers to a future king.
13. There are 17 angelic appearances in the Gospels + Acts.
14. There are 17 named works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21.
15. Jeremiah bought a field for 17 shekels of silver in Jeremiah 32:9.
16. John 17:17 says "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." True disciples and believers are to be set aside for special purposes in the plan of God by His Word.
17. Psalm 17:15 states, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with, thy likeness." David makes reference to his resurrection someday.

**TRUTH IS FOUND BY
LOOKING FOR IT!**

He came the first time to die; He is coming again to raise the dead. When He came the first time, they questioned whether He was King; the next time the world will know that He is King of kings and Lord of lords. The first time He wore a crown of thorns; the next time He will be wearing a crown of glory. The first time He came in poverty; the next time He is coming in power. The first time He had an escort of angels; the next time He will come with ten thousands of His saints. The first time He came in meekness; He is coming again in majesty.

- Adrian Rogers

Chapter 6

Stories from the Old Testament

Picturing Christ

Many things written in the Old testament were fulfilled in the New Testament as I will show below. Only God's prophets can speak the things about the future! The Old Testament was written 100's and 1000's of years before the coming of Christ.

1. From Jacob shall come a deliverer. **"I shall see him but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab; and destroy all the children of Sheth.** (Numbers 24:17) *Prophecy fulfilled in Luke 3:23:34*
2. **"The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."** (Gen. 49:10) *fulfilled in Matthew 1:2-16*

The scepter of God is simply one way the Bible describes the authority of the Lord over kings, peoples, and nations. By describing Jesus Christ as ruling with a scepter (Revelation 12:5), the Bible also establishes His authority as equal with God the Father. (Philippians 2:5). Hebrews 1:8 quotes Psalm 45:6 and applies it to Jesus. The scepter of God is a fearful thing to His enemies. But to us who know Him through faith in His Son (1 John 3:1), the scepter of God is the most comforting idea in the universe. It tells us that, despite the insanity and evil of this world, our God reigns supreme, and His scepter will never be defeated.

3. **“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:”** (Isaiah 11:1) *fulfilled Luke 3:23,32* Here is a reference to the Davidic line of Jesse. And from that line shall come Jesus Christ! Jesus will rule some day with perfect righteousness which is something ordinary Kings fail to accomplish.
4. **“Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive; and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.”** (Isaiah 7:14) *fulfilled in Matt. 1:23* This speaks of the Virgin Mary who will deliver the Son of God to us. Immanuel means God with us.
5. **“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from the old, from everlasting.”** (Micah 5:2) *fulfilled Matt. 2:6* Here we have an obvious reference to Christ as a being who was from everlasting. In other words, he has always been existing and the 2nd person of the trinity of God.
6. **“Yet have I set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.** (Psalm 2:6,7) *fulfilled Matt. 1:25* God is declaring who the real king of the earth shall be which is Jesus Christ.
7. **“The Lord thy God will raise up into thee a Prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye**

shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see the great fire any more that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.” (Deut. 18:15-22)

Prophecy fulfilled in Acts 3:22-23 Who is this prophet whom God will raise up? I submit to you that it is Jesus Christ. Here the word of God warns us not to put any prophetic utterance to any truth if it comes not from a prophet of God. The only Prophets I know of are the ones in the 66 book KJV Bible.

8. **“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”** (Psalm 110:4) *fulfilled Heb. 5:6-10 Our Priest is Jesus Christ. God says he will remember our sins no more. (Jeremiah 31:34) Hebrews 6:20 says, “Jesus has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek is thought by some to be the same person as Jesus Christ. Hebrews 7:3 says that Melchizedek was “without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of days. Does the author of Hebrews mean this to be figurative or actual? Are Jesus and Melchizedek actually the same person? Your guess is as good as mine.*
9. **“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.”** (Isaiah 33:22) *fulfilled John 5:30*
10. **“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool”.** (Psalm 110:1) *fulfilled Luke 2:11 Jesus is indeed Lord. He is the 2nd person of the trinity. He is God the Son. Some want to deny that Jesus Christ is God almighty, but scripture proves that he is God. Jesus said also, “I and my father are one.” John 10:30*
11. **“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”** Isaiah 7:14 *Fulfilled Matthew 1:23 These verses imply that Jesus is “God with us.”*

12. **“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;”**

Isaiah 11:2 *fulfilled Matthew 3:16-17* Jesus Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit. I believe that when believers are saved the Holy Spirit indwells us and we become a new man or woman in Christ. We will begin to recognize that our life and attitude has changed for the better. We hopefully will be less sinful and more into glorifying God. Only Jesus can claim to be God almighty, but we can let our little lights shine by following the direction given to us by the Holy Spirit.

13. **“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”**

Psalm 69:9 *fulfilled John 2:15-17* Jesus showed that he was the real deal because he had zeal for the house of God. Do you have zeal for anything? If you have the Holy Spirit, you will have zeal for God and His house. Jesus said in Matt 7:14: **“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”** It looks like to me that during the church age, few will have the zeal that comes from being a true believer, however perhaps a great number of believers will come to faith in Jesus Christ during the 7-year tribulation time.

14. **“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from**

him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” Isaiah 53:3 *fulfilled John 7:5,48* None of us have ever been rejected to the tune that Jesus was. Not only was he rejected of men, but he was given the agonizing pain of crucifixion. This is another example of prophecy in the Old Testament, fulfilled in the New testament.

15. **“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”** Psalm 22:7,8 *fulfilled Matt. 27:39,43* Jesus was ridiculed while he was on the cross as was predicted in the Old Testament. He was ridiculed by the very people whom he had given life to on this earth and yet he went through with the Father’s will that he should suffer and die for the sins of the world.
16. **“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”** Psalm 118: 22 *fulfilled 1 Peter 2:7* The leadership of the Jews rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Peter saw this as a fulfilled prophecy when he pinned 1 Peter 2:7
17. **“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”** Isaiah 53:3 *fulfilled John 7:5,48* As was predicted by Isaiah Jesus was rejected by his own Jewish people.

18. **“I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:” Psalm 78:2 fulfilled Matt. 13:34** Jesus taught in many parables or short stories that he developed to show a spiritual truth. Jesus spoke all the time in parables. One example of Jesus parables is the one recorded in Luke 14:33: **“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”** So, is Jesus saying to sell your car and house and property so you can be his disciple? Or maybe he is saying to reject one’s own opinion if it conflicts with scripture. We cannot learn or be a disciple of Jesus until we are willing to obey his word. While Jesus could also want one to give up his possessions, that would not necessarily be for everyone. If the things you possess enable you to spread the Gospel, I think Jesus would want you to keep your possessions. Jesus will make it clear to his disciples the things that are hindering his testimony. Job for example had great possessions and Satan was allowed to take them all away. But in the end Job recovered more possessions and was surely a great and Godly man who was following his maker in good times as well as bad.
19. **“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.” Zechariah 13:7 fulfilled Matt. 26:15** Here is Matt. 26:15: **“And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”** The prophecy in Zechariah was

given many years before it occurred in the future. Jesus was betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver just like the prophecy said.” Do you think the Jews, who hated Jesus, knew about the Old Testament prophecy? I doubt it. They would have paid Judas a different amount, because they did not believe he was the messiah.

20. **“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.” Zechariah 13:7 fulfilled Mark 14:** The disciples all forsook Jesus and fled from the Romans as was predicted by Zechariah. They fled because they were scared of the Roman persecutors and not because they wanted to fulfill the scripture. Do you think that after Jesus was crucified that they decided to steal Jesus body away to make it look like he was resurrected. If they were scared of the Roman guards, why would they suddenly and bravely want to steal His body away since the guards were told to guard the tomb so no one would be able to say He rose from the dead. Remember Peter denied Jesus 3 times. That gives you a picture of the feelings of the disciples toward Jesus after he was put on the Cross. Jesus rose from the dead on schedule, and as was predicted by himself, and by the story of Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights as a forecast of Jesus being in his tomb for 3 days and 3 nights.

21. **“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”** **Isaiah 53:7** *fulfilled Matt. 27:12-19* Jesus knew the scriptures and he knew that he was not going to answer them but was going to remain silent before his accusers. Do you think that if Jesus was lying about being the Messiah, he would have tried to make them give him a reprieve from execution? No Jesus knew that he had to die for the sins of the world and that he would rise again after 3 days. Jesus knew that he was more than just a human being. He was God almighty. Remember what he said in John 8:58 **“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**
22. **“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”** **Psalm 22:16**, *fulfilled John 20:25* Do you really think that someone was willing to get his hands and feet pierced in order to make it look like he was fulfilling scripture. I think not. God knew exactly what was supposed to happen before it took place 100's of years beforehand. God is omniscient.
23. **“Therefore, will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”** **Isaiah 53:12**, *fulfilled*

Matt. 27:38 God knew way ahead of time that Jesus would be crucified between 2 thieves. The Roman authorities were the ones who decided to put Jesus between 2 thieves. They had no idea that they were fulfilling scripture.

24. **“I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.”**

Psalm 22:17, *fulfilled John 19: 33-36.... “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:”*

25. **“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” Psalm 22:18 Fulfilled John 19:24.** The soldiers had no idea they were fulfilling another of the scriptures written many years ahead of time by King David under the inspiration of God.

26. **“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” Psalm 29:61, fulfilled John 19:28.** *“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”* Jesus who was God the Son knew that he had to say “I thirst” because he had to fulfill all the scriptures about Him.

27. **“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:” Psalm 52:14, fulfilled John 19:** “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.” Jesus was beaten to a pulp for our sins by Pilate’s executioners. Jesus literally took our punishment on our behalf so that the justice of God could be

had! Would you take the punishment assigned to someone else for their benefit? So, they could go off scot-free? That is what Jesus did for all who would come to him for salvation. The justice of God demands that every sin be punished! You can either take Jesus' gift of forgiveness or pay for your sins in hell. The Bible says: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 John 1:8*

28. **“(To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” Psalm 22:1, fulfilled Matt. 27:46** When King David penned this verse, he was talking about what Jesus would say while upon the cross. Jesus said, why have you forsaken me because he knew that he was without sin, while at the same time he knew that he was suffering for the sins of mankind. We as Christians would be forsaken for our sins if Jesus had not paid for them! There will be many in Hell who rejected Christ's payment for sins.

29. **“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.” Psalm 31:5, fulfilled Luke 23:46** The most wonderful thing that any man can do is commit his very existence into the hands of God who has redeemed that

man. I remember suffering from acid reflux and thinking I was having a heart attack. I simply told God that he could take me away if it was His will. God did not take me away, but he changed my circumstances so that I could serve him still while on earth. I recovered completely within a few days. I had written in my journal that I thought I was about to die because I had tried all kinds of medicine etc. with no relief. for many days. Donna My wife prayed for me, and I recovered. I gave up my will to His will. That is what Jesus asks us to do. We must trust him even if it means death. Jesus will give us the strength we need to get well or to get away from the body and be present with God.

30. **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Psalm 16:10, 22:22, fulfilled Matt. 28:6** Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive forever and is building a place for us somewhere in His dimension. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Someday Jesus is going to make it so that all Christians dead or alive will be caught up to meet him in the air. That event is called the rapture of the church.

Look not mournfully into the past, it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present, it is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Chapter 7

Stories of the future

IF you want to know about the future, where can you find the best information? Obviously, the Bible is the best place to find out what is going to happen in the future. There are many prognosticators out there. They even get some things right by just guess work.

Everybody would like to know what is going to happen in the future. Questions like: “will I get this new job?” or “when can I find a wife or husband” “What is going to happen with all the corruption and warfare going on in this world?” Have you noticed that there is an ever-increasing dislike of Israel in the world. This is especially noticeable among young people today. They are protesting and holding up signs that say, “death to Israel” and Pro-Palestinian. It would seem that about the only country that still supports Israel is the United States. But it also seems that the US is also calling on Israel to back off in their justifiable war against Hamas and Iran and other terrorist groups. Here is what the prophet Zechariah says about how Israel will lose the support of many nations in the end times: **“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.” Zechariah 12:3** Do you see that happening these days? I see it in the news a lot: The campuses of Universities are having protests that say that Israel is an occupying nation of what they say is “Palestinian territory.” The truth of the matter is that the land that is now Israel was almost empty of any people for centuries. And when the Jews took the land in 1948 and then took Jerusalem in 1967 and followed that up with cultivation and building up of the area, the Arab’s

coveted this land so they called Israel and occupier of their land. Pay attention to what Amos 9:14-15 states: **“And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.”** If you don’t believe in the scriptures, that is your problem. You will see that God’s word will be true in the end. I have a feeling that the protestors either do not believe in God and the Scriptures or they are ignorant of what they say. The broadcasters of the news have used the word “Occupier” to describe Israel, so many times, that these people are thinking that it is true. Who do you think God wants to occupy the land. Would that be the Jews? I think so since he repeatedly says so in the scriptures. God’s word shall be fulfilled in the end for His glory. He alone knows the future. Here is what God says about the future: **“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:”** Isaiah 46:9-12 How does God do that? I don’t even

want to venture a guess as to how he does it. But every prophecy of Scripture comes true whether we want it to or not. Approximately 2,500 prophecies appear in the pages of the Bible, about 2,000 of which already have been fulfilled to the letter with no errors. The other 500 or so reach into the future and may be seen unfolding as days go by. I am going to first list a few prophecies that are either being fulfilled or are in the process thereof.

1. False Bible teachers would be money hungry. They would be smooth talkers, have many followers and slur the Christian faith (2 Peter 2:1-3). If you haven't noticed the airwaves are full of Bible teachers who want you to send in your money so you can get blessed in some way. Do you believe that stuff? If you do you have been hoodwinked!
2. Mankind would be capable of destroying all life. (Matthew 24:21-22) **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."** The world is full of nuclear weapons, enough to destroy life on earth. Only God can limit this destruction. Apparently, he will shorten this time period by enough to limit the destruction. But at the same time this time period will be the worst one in history forever.

3. The use of nuclear weapons is anticipated. (Zechariah 14:12)
“And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.” Can there be any doubt that this describes something like a nuclear bomb?
4. There would be a global cry for peace (1 Thessalonians 5:3).
“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” Have you heard about the call for “peace and safety” by the United Nations and the nations of the world? President Biden is calling for Israel to back down in its efforts to put down Hezbollah. Do you suppose he would ask for our troops to stop attacking them if Hezbollah was attacking Americans on American soil?
5. Global communication foreseen (Revelation 11:9-10; 17:8).
“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.”
When these two prophets are killed the world will see their dead bodies lying in the streets of Jerusalem for three- and one-half days. The only way that could happen is by satellite TV broadcasts around the globe.

6. The Christian gospel would be preached as a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10; Revelation 14:6). **“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”** **“And the gospel must first be published among all nations.”** **“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”** The gospel is being given out all over the world and Bibles are being printed and given to all sorts of nations and peoples. Eventually the gospel will be proclaimed by Angels flying around the earth during the last days and during the tribulation time period.
7. The possession of Jerusalem would be at the center of international turmoil (Zechariah 12:3). **“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”** This is obviously true to a great extent as we see daily the news broadcasts about the trouble brewing in the Jewish state of Israel.
8. The fact that God once flooded the earth (the Noahic Flood) would be denied (2 Peter 3:5-8). **For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the**

water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Today's scientists (many of them) are in denial of the worldwide flood of Noah's day in the Bible. But there are also scientists who proclaim that it did happen.

You can read about it in:

[\(https://answersingenesis.org/geology/grand-canyon-facts/startling-evidence-for-noahs-flood/\)](https://answersingenesis.org/geology/grand-canyon-facts/startling-evidence-for-noahs-flood/)

9. The nation of Israel would be born in one day (Isaiah 66:8). **“Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”** The nation of Israel was indeed born in a single day. That day was May 14, 1948.
10. The Jews would regain control of biblical Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:6; Luke 21:24). **“In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.” “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword,**

and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” I list scripture to show you that God’s word is true. Please do not get detached from this truth as you read over and over how the word of God is being fulfilled. Instead put your faith in God and call upon him to save you from your sins. This event happened during the 6-day war in 1967!

11. Asia (the kings of the east) would be capable of deploying a 200-million-man army during earth’s final days (Revelation 9:13-16). **“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.”** Did you know that when John penned this prophecy 2,000 years ago, there were only an estimated less than 400 million people on the entire planet. Yet today, according to government information, China alone has 281 million men fit for military service. And there are other Asian nations as well that could help add to this army’s total.

12. People will become increasingly rebellious (2 Timothy 3:1-3; **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;”** Do you love yourself too much? Toxic self-love can hurt other people. These don't always consider the feelings of others and may not think about how their choices affect them. Self-love can make you want to avoid conflict. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three young men who refused to compromise their worship of God despite facing a life-threatening situation. When King Nebuchadnezzar commanded everyone to bow down to a golden statue, these three individuals refused to do so, as it went against their faith and beliefs. So instead of protecting their own selves they refused to do so and got thrown into the fiery furnace. But by the grace of God, they were saved out of the fire. So, the message is “Do not love yourself so much that you always avoid conflict.” Do you see any covetousness in today's society? It is all over the place. TV ads are always wanting you to covet something to love yourself with. If you buy this car or something your neighbors and friends will be jealous of you. Do you get tired of boasters and overly proud people you come

in contact with? They are just self-loving so to speak. *I have a cat named Pelli who will jump up in my lap and paw at me until I give her a petting. I guess cats are self-lovers too.* How about gay pride parades. Being gay is not something to be proud of. I think they are without the grace of God, or they would have repented of such non-sense. If you want to find out who despises your faith in God, just start talking about Bible verses or how important Christ is in your life to them. When it comes to pleasure, you can get so much pleasure in today's society that pleasure snot will run out of your nose. Some pleasures are good but overdoing it is bad.

13. Homosexuality would be flaunted at the end of the age. Jesus warned that the last days would be like the days of Lot – who lived in wicked Sodom (Luke 17:28-30). **“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”** Today we have same sex marriage. Men are marrying men and women are marrying women. This is in the U.S. as well as all

over the world. There are still places where it is not allowed by law, however. It is called an “alternate lifestyle but according to God’s word a Christian must deal with this sin ultimately with abstinence. The Holy Spirit will help anyone to repent of any sin-invested lifestyle, even something so obnoxious as homosexuality. **“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

14. Epidemic drug use predicted (Revelation 9:21). **“Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”** Sorceries are drug abuse. There is even prescription drug abuse going on. In the United States approximately 6% of the population uses illicit drugs. There is a tribulation time coming in which drug use and other bad behaviors will multiply. There will be little resistance to the evil of the last days because I believe that all born again Christians will be gone up to meet Jesus in the air at the rapture of the Church. As a Christian we are to stand in the gap in prayer for those who have been sucked into drug use and other bad

habits and be a sounding board to anyone who wants out of their bad habit.

*The further a society drifts from
the truth, the more it will hate
those that speak it.*

George Orwell

Chapter 8

Stories of the culture

Christians today find it harder and harder to live in a world torn upside down by declining morals. Culture has eroded bit by bit, decade by decade. Whereas it used to be hush hush to talk about someone being gay.... (homosexual), it now seems acceptable to parade your sexual desires as if nothing was wrong with loving someone sexually guy to guy or girl to girl. It seems the further we go in time; we find a new way to be immoral people. Jesus said, **“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily, nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”** Luke 18:8. Jesus is questioning whether he will find faith to any or much degree when he comes back to the earth at the time of the rapture of the church and the great tribulation time.

1. Religious Attachment Has declined.

For the most part church participation has dropped. Fewer people go to church on a regular basis.

2. Perilous times dead ahead

When Jesus mentions such things as: 1. The sun will be darkened. 2 The moon will not give its light. And 3. The stars will fall from the sky and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. He is speaking of events during the tribulation time that will be unlike anything that has ever happened before. This will be a time of great distress that will be unequalled by any previous time. It will be the worst time of trouble the world has ever seen. Of course, we will see some things before this period of

unequalled trouble that are less but seem to point to the ever-increasing trouble dead ahead. For example, have you noticed that weather events and earthquakes are on the increase? We see things like tsunamis hitting places that result in multiplied deaths and destruction.

What about the ever-increasing national debt? Have you ever seen kids building things with toy blocks? At some point their whole structure will fall down. It looks as if the dollar is headed that way. It will all come tumbling down. Individuals know what it is like to have debt so high that the interest eats up the money they need for necessities. Borrowing from Peter to pay Paul is what is going on. Have you noticed that Joe Biden wants to pay off student loans of college students. The government does not borrow money from you. It just raises your taxes so it can give the money to pay off a student loan. Or it prints more money which lessens the value of your dollar. It is shameful that most of us are not getting it when it comes to finance.

If our society becomes more and more morally corrupt, then will it be due for a Sodom and Gomorrah type event? We have become disgusting when it comes to sexual sins. Men marrying men and woman marrying woman is not God's cup of tea.

Our freedom of speech is being quarantined by "hate crime legislation." Sports are becoming increasingly violent as on the field fists begin to swing. What about the tendency for people to be star-struck by celebrities instead of people with Christian integrity. We see churches bent upon attracting "customers" than by preaching the "Word of God." We are seeing major natural disasters such as floods and fires and

tornadoes. Sinning homosexuals are becoming more militant with gay pride parades and the like. Even church organizations are saying such things are okay.

The unbelievers are saying, “where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3:4) They are denying that payday for evil is coming on an unbelieving world. They deny the flood and they deny that Jesus Christ is God the son.

Surely, we must be living in perilous times and last days. What do you see in the headlines? What you see is violence of every type with less and less restraint. The term “last days” refers to the time period between Christ’s resurrection and his second coming back to earth. See Heb. 1:1,2 where the KJV says: **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”**

The Bible points to a time known as the “great tribulation.” This will obviously be the worst time in earth history and there will never be a time like it going forward. It will be perilous times indeed. Let’s look at a passage in the Bible from Matthew 8:28 and 2 Timothy 3:1 **“And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.”** And in Timothy we read: **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”** The two demons were not fierce, out of control, simply because they were demons. They lacked self-control

because they were without salvation. People who have a total depravity like this are without Christ. This total depravity is expressed in varying ways. And the gambit of it can vary from mildly wicked to completely wicked as exemplified in Adolf Hitler for example. These have a disposition of “lover of pleasure” over restraint and altruism. Without Christ any bad behavior can manifest without the person having much self-control. For example: In 2Ki 6:26-29 women were eating their own infants. Since mankind has chosen for the most part to reject the truth of God, and refuse to bow to the knowledge of God, He has given them over to allow that freedom. Some will be confronted with their depravity and will repent and seek God’s forgiveness. The world often portrays God as a bully, but he does not discipline the lost until they find salvation in Christ.

*Jesus was God spelling himself
out in LANGUAGE HUMANITY
could understand.*

S.D. Gordon

Chapter 9

The Greatest Story Ever Told

This chapter is a story that starts out with my imagination of what God is doing before he decides to create planet earth and then proceeds to illumine you about what the KJV Bible really says about creation and thereafter. *God called to his Son Jesus and said, "I'm bored, let's get together with the Holy Spirit and figure something interesting and exciting to do." Jesus responded by saying, "Why don't we create something like we did 6 trillion years ago?" (God did not really say this. I just made it all up to amuse you and get you into the creation story.) Maybe the Holy Spirit could have said, "I've got an idea. Let's create a new dimension different from ours and put a planet called earth in the midst of a vast universe of planets and swirling stars and galaxies. But we will be outside of their time and space here in heaven. Then Jesus spoke up and said, why don't we create some new living creatures and let them live on the earth. Let's put a sun about 90 million miles from the earth to give light upon the earth. About that time Satan came into the room and said, "I will play some really good music for us to hear while we work. I will round up a bunch of angels to help with all this new creation. Then God the father said, "I like the idea of two different types of life. Let's make plants and animals." And Jesus replied, I've got a great idea let's make a special being that is similar to us in their image. So, the heavenly crew of the triune God and angels decided to think about this new project for the next x billion years before beginning. (Actually, where God is there might not have been time yet, so I just added that in to make you think in terms of time. (The above italic words are mine, so don't accuse me of speaking for God.)*

None of the above ruminating is an exact true analysis of pre-bible times, but at least it makes you think about what God was doing for those 6 trillion years of imaginary time that did not exist yet! By the way the real story of ultimate divine truth is found in the KJV Bible. And this Bible is written by God. The Bible says of itself: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3:16) And for the next few of pages, I will try my best to outline the story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation so you can see that this is not just a story like the one in the preceding paragraphs, but is the Greatest Story ever told. If you enjoy a break from my ongoing story, every once in a while, I will give you a sideline story that will make you wonder if I lost my train of thought. Don't worry though I will get you back up and running in a few sentences or paragraphs.

The story of God and his creation is accurate and real. It's as real as $2 + 2 = 4$. Every human being that has a part in God's masterpiece of "The Regenerated Soul" will come to know that there is only one God, and his name is "I Am Who I Am" He is the Christian God. His name is also Jesus Christ. You will find that Christ can be found also in the Old Testament if you look in the right places. Ultimately if you get into the Word of God and believe, you will be one of his Saints that lives forever with him. Because Jesus told his disciples. "I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am you may be also." With that being said, let's get into the "Greatest Story Ever Told." Just remember this story is not fiction and

it is not a story made up by some book writer to sell books and be “important.” But a story that is engineered to make you want what millions already have. And that is eternal life! If you are saved already, then maybe this book will cause you to grow in grace. So, let’s get started with the book of Genesis.

(Genesis 1:1) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. I would imagine that this was not God’s real beginning point. After all He has been around forever in the past and forever in the future. So, if you think that God just magically came into being at some point in the past you are wrong, because God does not have a beginning or an end. You will have to roll that thought around in your mind for a bit. And if you still do not get it, then take a break and drink a cup of coffee. When God was creating the heaven and the earth, he created the sun, the moon, and he made the stars also. If you have ever looked at some of the “out there” creation in books that have telescopic images, you will really get bogged down with “how did he do that?” But if you believe that Jesus changed water into wine, why not take it a little deeper and believe he created the cosmos? If you think I am now going to Genesis 1:2 to elaborate, I’ll let you do that.

If you have ever looked at all the creatures on planet earth, you will see what should be characterized as CREATIVITY.TY.TY.TY...that will make you want to say to God, “What were you thinking when you created the sloth? Sloths rarely congregate with one another. Ever heard of Henry David Thoreau? He wrote “On Walden’s pond” and to Thoreau two was company but three was a crowd. Maybe that is koalas

thinking. But in today's world the young generation thinks it wonderful to gather with other humans and drink a few beers and tell dirty jokes. At least they are trying to get over their anti-koalaness. Wow, Is anti-koalaness a word? It is now. Koalas just hang loosely and climb very slowly up their eucalyptus tree to eat leaves. Actually a koala type party would only involve one person. When I was in Australia my wife got to hold a koala, and he did not make a move and it made a great picture to take back to the states. How did I get off on koalas and Australia. If you find me disturbed as a writer I will turn into a koala and invite you over for a cup of tea. But no, I cannot do that because only God can turn a human into a koala. But I doubt he would do that. And by the way, if you think that evolution created a koala, then maybe you are disturbed. Koalas are similar to Sloths, and I guess that is why they are so slow moving. Australia is a long way from Texas, but it was interesting to be there. Australia, the smallest continent and one of the largest countries on Earth, lying between the Pacific and Indian oceans in the Southern Hemisphere. Australia's capital is Canberra, located in the southeast between the larger and more important economic and cultural centers of Sydney and Melbourne. We did not make it to Melbourne, but we did make it to Cairns which is way up north more near the equator. One of the most interesting things about Australia is that it has a lot of snakes that are poisonous. In fact Donna and I got chased by a snake during part of our journey.

If you want to spend several hours in a plane, Australia is the place to go.

My guess is that you are tired of my ruminating and wondering when I am going back to the Bible. So, let's see, we got verse one of Genesis so what is next. After God created it all and the plants and animals he decided to create mankind. You might want to say, "How do you know this?" And my answer is that the Bible says so. If you do not believe the Bible that is your problem. I could go into why the Bible is true but then I would also start ruminating on that and it might disturb our train of thought. But what the heck, I think I will just give you a few reasons to believe the Bible. So here goes. I believe the KJV is the real and perfect Bible for English speakers. The Bible is the only book that predicts something before it happens and then it happens. There are multiple times where the Bible has predicted such. The Bible is really about Jesus Christ and many prophecies fulfilled are about him. God is omniscient and he knows everything before it happens. No human being can even come close to that. God created man and then made a woman out of a rib of Adam. So why did he use a rib? God used Adam's rib to form Eve—He used existing tissue and did not "start from scratch"—to show that Adam and Eve were of the same substance; she was made from the same "stuff" and was a bearer of God's image and likeness, just as Adam was (see Genesis 1:27). The woman made of Adam's rib was designed to be a companion and "helper suitable" for Adam (Genesis 2:18). Eve, formed from a physical part of Adam, was truly his complement, an integral part of who he was. As such, she was a perfect companion. Why did God use Adam's rib? Interestingly, ribs have amazing regenerative powers. Portions of rib bone and cartilage

removed in bone graft surgery will regrow in a few months' time, as long as the rib perichondrium is left intact. This means that Adam's loss of a rib was only temporary; he did not have to go through the rest of his life with an incomplete skeletal system.

So, God made us man and woman and expected us to have children by wedlock. He did not make us Adam and Steve but Adam and Eve.

Now the big problem with Adam and Eve was that they disobeyed God and ate of the tree he specifically said not to eat of. Let's look at (Gen. 3:1):

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And said to the woman, Yea hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

As you can see the serpent (the devil) was **SUBTLE**. When someone is subtle, they are capable of causing harm. He was trying to get Eve to doubt God's word. Did he really say that, or was she mistaken about it? Maybe he didn't really mean it that seriously. But our God is someone who says what he means and means what he says. Just a sideline, have you ever gone over the speed limit? Say you drove 67 mph in a 65 zone. Do you say what the heck they aren't going to stop me for a measly 2 miles per hour over the limit. Perhaps, the Devil wanted Eve to think

that God was speaking in generalities that only applied to the “really” bad people. Notice also that Eve added to the word of God when she said, we shall not touch it as well. Do you know that there are so many laws on the books in our society that some of them probably overwrite previous ones without knowing it. But this isn't the case with God. He makes laws in a perfect way, as we will see later in our story how God comes up with the perfect 10 suggestions—commandments.

As a result, you and I are born into sin just like they were. To make sin worse all one has to do is deny it to God. That is what Adam did when he blamed his sin on Eve, instead of himself. And Eve blamed her sin on the serpent. As a result, we have problems with our bodies and problems with our work. The result of a sinful world is exemplified in hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, and tornados. Just go out and look at your yard and you will see weeds growing and will have to spend some time pulling them. Woman knows the pain of childbirth. After Adam and Eve had children, the children started not liking each other. Cain slew Abel because Abel pleased God more than Cain. Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was a farmer of plants. The first message of salvation was occupational. Abel did not have to do anything to get the sheep to grow because they just grazed and drank in water while he watched them. On the other hand, Cain had to plant seeds and cultivate his crop to get a return. So, his living consisted of working a lot for his upkeep, while Abel just watched his sheep do it on their own. The moral of the story is that someone else has to do all the work for us to obtain favor with God. This is the message that comes later when Jesus took

our sins on the cross and forgave our sins and then imputed his righteousness to our account! Isn't it interesting that the Bible says later that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. So, if you belong to God, you are blood bought.

So, you know the story, Cain slew Abel. The first murder in the Bible. He slew him because he was angry with God for accepting Abel's sacrifice of a lamb instead of Cains sacrifice of his garden work. The sordid history of humanity is scored with sin. God needed to find a way to save us from our sins. But God could not let us get off scot-free without some payment for our sins. And to be back in the garden of Eden with God we also have to live a perfect life. However, we will also have to have some way for God to credit us with that perfection! As we unravel the story, we will get the picture that God has revealed to us in his Word. Human error requires a human fix as we shall see. We see that Adam is a failed human in this respect. We need a perfect human redeemer to be able to grant us readmission to the garden as God banned Adam and Eve from the Garden in shame. So how could God redeem man without compromising his requirement for sin to be punished? God cannot sweep moral offenses under the rug. All men are sinners and come short of the glory of God.

God's first move to picture redeemed life came about in the story of Noah's ark. When God looked upon his creation, he found that man had become totally corrupted in sins and told Noah that he wanted to destroy all mankind. Noah found grace in the heart of the Lord and pleaded with God not to destroy all of mankind. So, Noah built the ark

according to God's command and at least two of every species came aboard the ark before the flood came. I wonder if the crowd of sinners hollered at Noah and said something like, "Look at the old man building this ship out in the middle of nowhere." There is a message in this in that we are to ignore anyone who criticizes our work for God and just keep on hammering away on God's ship! It wouldn't hurt anything to give them a few lines of scripture from the Bible in hopes that they will repent and believe in God. Not everyone you speak to will listen. In fact, sometimes others will tell you to bug off even if you present the gospel to them. They will call you a goody two shoes. Sufficient to know is that "faith" comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. You gave them the Word; it is up to them to believe. However, even though Noah pleaded with his accusers to repent, Noah could not save mankind because he needed someone to save him. There is a hint of a redeemer in Gen. 3:15 where the Bible says: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Nevertheless, the flood came, and all flesh was dead except Noah and his family aboard the arc.

Here is the evidence for the flood:

1. Fossils of sea creatures have been found high above sea level.
How did they get there without a flood?
2. There is evidence of the rapid burial of plants and animals that suggests very fast-moving water.

3. Rapidly deposited sediment layers spread across vast areas suggest a flood moving sediments great distance that could only be done by a huge worldwide flood.
4. Sediment transported long distances.
5. Slow and gradual erosion could only occur in sediments built up in a few days by moving water.

Noah's flood really happened, and we must come to the conclusion that someone greater than Adam or Noah had to come along to redeem mankind. However, Noah was a temporary reprieve for the continued existence of mankind. Noah's flood took the people by complete surprise. Is there coming another day of complete surprise for unbelievers? Does the flood point us to future judgment by God upon sinful man? God will provide a savior much greater than Noah.

If Noah was plan A, then who would become plan B for the salvation of mankind? Perhaps plan B was Abraham. Abraham had his own plan B when he was told that Sarah was going to have a child that God would use for his glory. Isaac was going to be his name. Abraham took another wife at Sarah's command, and she produced Ismael. Big mistake but God would work it into his plan. So, Abraham was not perfect but another character in the Bible which attests to the fact that God uses imperfect humans to bring about his desires. Abraham was told that he was to inherit some land and Abraham wanted to know how he could be sure of that. God told him to cut in half several animals so they could walk between them verifying a covenant was going forth. However, Abraham went to sleep and only God walked between the

animals! This was to show us the divine certainty of anything God says in his word. We can be sure of salvation when God does the saving. God alone saves but he still has to demand obedience.

When I think of obedience I am reminded about cats and dogs. Dogs will obey if they are given a treat, but cats are their own boss. Just try to put a leash on a cat to take him for a walk and you will find yourself dragging a cat along the ground. My cat expects me to be obedient to him. He will meow me crazy until I sit down so he can crawl up in my lap and fall asleep. But first Koko demands a petting stroke or two. The next thing we know about Abraham is that God told him to sacrifice his son Isaac. God had done the impossible by providing them with a son by his previously barren wife Sarah. Abraham was also very old to have a child in the first place. It was hard for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, but he obeyed God and took him up on the mountain and just before the knife was to come down God told Abraham not to do it because he had found a substitute of an animal in the bushes. I hope you are beginning to get the story that God is providing a sacrifice for your sins and mine by giving Jesus to receive the death and punishment that we deserve. The scripture says that by His stripes we are healed! (Isaiah 53:5) Our election is by the grace of God. If you intently look into the story of the Bible, it is that God has to see faith in us to reclaim us as one of his sons or daughters. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Sadly, there are fake Christians in this world. They may attend church only so they can check it off their list. Fake Christians eat fake cake! Fake Christians are trying to fill their hole in their heart with the things of this world. They fill their hole with friendships and entertainment, but they are still hungry. The highlight of their life is a forever party that gives a temporary filling of their empty hole, but they're still hungry. If this is your case, it is time to turn it around by seeking God with your full heart. **And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.** (Jeremiah 29:13)

Do you want a “wow” picture of the coming Jesus Christ? Just read in scripture Gen. 37-48. See if you can discover these facts about the story of Joseph as a pre-picture of Jesus Christ:

Here are 10 examples followed by 48 event parallels in scripture between Joseph and Jesus Christ.

Both Joseph and Jesus were highly esteemed by their father.

Joseph is adored by his father. This caused strife with his brothers (Genesis 37:3-4).

When Jesus is baptized by John, he received a congruent message of fatherly approval: (Matthew 3:17)

Both Jesus and Joseph were hated, despised, and humiliated. Genesis 37:23-27

Jesus, having done nothing wrong, was delivered into the hands of Pilate and then was beaten, mocked, and crucified. He too

was stripped of his clothing (Matthew 27:28). ‘They hated me without a cause’ (John 15:25).

Both Joseph and Jesus were ones whose future bared authority. (Genesis 37:7) and (Matthew 26:63–64)

Both Jesus and Joseph were sold for money

Joseph’s brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites for “twenty shekels of silver,” and Joseph was taken to Egypt (Genesis 37:28). Likewise, Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16)

Both had a life of servanthood:

Both Jesus and Joseph lived a life of servitude and selflessness. Joseph was brought down to Egypt and became a servant “in the house of his master” (Genesis 39:1–2). And Jesus stated in Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Both resisted temptation but were falsely accused.

Potiphar’s wife tempted Joseph to sleep with her, but he continually refused (Genesis 39:7–12). Jesus lived in a human body that experienced hunger, anger, and a range of other feelings and emotions. He was even tempted in the wilderness by Satan with promises of glory and satisfaction (Matthew 4:1–11). Yet in all the ways he was tempted, he did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Both foretold the future:

Pharoah could not find anyone to interpret his dreams, so he summoned Joseph who correctly said that 7 years of plenty would come and then 7 years of famine in the land. (Genesis 41:9-13)

Jesus also knew the future and predicted events of the future to come. (John 13:19)

Both men were wise with discernment:

Joseph was well esteemed in Egypt and was put second in command over Egypt (Genesis 41:39-40) Jesus was known as a wonderful counselor. Isaiah 9:6 and Philippians 2:9

Both provided for the needs of the people:

Jesus both physically and spiritually provided for people's needs. Gen. 41:57 and Jesus fed the 5000. (John chapter 6) Jesus both physically and spiritually provided for people's needs.

Both were not recognized:

When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to get grain during the famine, Joseph recognized them but they did not know him (Genesis 42:8) Jesus told one of his disciples, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Phillip? and you still do not know me?" (John 14:9) Joseph and Jesus have many parallels.

Here is that list:

1. He was a shepherd. (The Lord is my shepherd) Ps 23.
2. He was loved by his father
3. Sent unto his brethren

4. Hated by his brethren
5. Prophetised his coming glory
6. Rejected by his brothers
7. Endured unjust punishment from his brothers
8. Sold for pieces of silver
9. Handed over to the Gentiles
10. Regarded as dead but raised out of the pit
11. Was tempted severely but didn't sin
12. Falsely accused
13. Associated with two criminals, one was pardoned, and one was set free.
14. Joseph was shown to have divine wisdom
15. He was recognized as having the spirit of God.
16. Joseph was glorified after his humility
17. Was honored among gentiles and despised by his brethren
18. Joseph was given a gentile bride
19. He became the only source of bread for the whole world
20. In his second appearance, he did not first go to his brothers; they came to him.
21. There was a long-time gap between his initial relationship with his brothers and his second relationship with his brothers

22. His “second coming” to his brothers had two appearances. He made himself known to his brethren at his second appearance to them.
23. His brothers repented of rejecting him, with great amazement and tears.
24. His brethren went forth to proclaim his glory
25. He prepared a place for his brethren, and he received them into it
26. betrayed by his friends
27. Glorified after his humility
28. Honored among Gentiles while still despised or forgotten by his brethren
29. Given a Gentile bride.
30. Was 30 years old when he began his life’s work.
31. Blessed the world with bread.
32. Became the only source of bread for the world
33. The world was instructed to go to him and do whatever he said to do
34. Was given the name “God Speaks and He Lives”
35. His brethren were driven out of their own land.
36. In his second appearance, he did not first go to his brothers; they came to him
37. He knew his brethren even while unknown and unrecognized by them
38. He blessed his brethren without their knowledge

39. He wanted all of his brethren to come to him
40. There was a significant time gap between his initial relationship with his brothers his second relationship to his brothers
41. He gave his brothers a way of deliverance through substitution
42. His “second coming” to his brothers had two appearances. He made himself known to his brethren at his second appearing to them.
43. He was revealed as a man of compassion
44. His brothers repented of rejecting him
45. He allowed no fellowship (as in eating together) until his brothers repented and he revealed himself
46. His brethren went forth to proclaim his glory
47. He made provision for his brethren. (brought Jew and gentile together in the land)
48. He prepared a place for his brethren, and he received them into it.

So, what can you glean from this story? One thing for sure is that there is a parallel comparison that is put there by God to show the coming messiah! God is Creator of the entire universe and all that's in it, God is “omnipotent”, “omniscient”, and “omnipresent”. He is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. Our earthly eyes cannot see him because he hides himself from our view by his miraculous power to exist in all dimensions. Perhaps oxygen is an example of something

that exists, but cannot be seen in a similar way that our God hides himself from our view.

After Noah and Abraham, we see that God chooses Moses to bring the Jews out of bondage in Egypt. Earthly humans have a characteristic known as bondage. Perhaps you have been in bondage before. Have you been in bondage to the things of this world? For example, we find that many are in bondage to things such as houses, cars, jewelry, clothes, entertainment and on, and on, and on. The bondage comes when people get in debt trying to keep up with the Jones'. Every once in while you see a salvage truck taking an expensive looking vehicle off to be sold so the bank can get their money back. You also see people panhandling on the street and you wonder if maybe they should get off their butt and find a job for sure. Both of these two examples are in bondage. One is in bondage to things. while the other is in bondage to laziness. Perhaps in the middle of these two, maybe, is someone who lives in reality. Moses was called to deliver the Jews from their bondage to slavery in Egypt. The book of Exodus opens with God's people in slavery, and ends with them in service to God. There is a real difference in slavery and service. Slave masters can be cruel, while God tenders his touch with compassion and kindness and at the same time he disciplines us for our own good. Slave masters discipline people for their selfish benefits. This is not a Godly way. God uses his brand of

redemption to show the world that he alone is God and the one who is faithful to his promises. Israel becomes God's treasured possession.

In this story the king wants to drown the children of Israel but he and his soldiers get drowned later. It opens with servitude to Egypt and ends with God's people serving God. Through the nation of Israel, we can see shadows of our escape from bondage for both Jew and Gentile. While Joseph's life was a shadow of a greater one. The Jews escape from captivity is a shadow of a greater exodus for us all:

1. True Christians will have a greater exodus. We who believe are cured from our slavery to sin by the blood of Jesus Christ who took our punishment to release us from our bondage.
2. The Israel of God will be greater than the Israel of Moses and beyond. True rest from our slavery comes by way of a redeemer from God who sent His son that we might have true rest from our bondage.
3. We Gentiles have a greater "Israeli existence" because one greater than Moses has come to our rescue. The Jews will also rest in Jesus Christ at the end of the story during the millennial reign of God the Son.
4. A greater prophet than Moses speaks to us. The book of Hebrews 1:1-2 speaks of Jesus Christ as the greater prophet.
5. Moses gave us the 10 commandments, but Jesus gave us a greater law done by him in his life, death and resurrection. When we go to a funeral, we observe the dead body that is lifeless and still in the casket. There is no life in that body. If he was a Christian, he is now absent from the body but present with the Lord. There is a day coming in which all believers will

receive a new glorified body that never dies. Our new body will be like Jesus' body which has eternal life in it!

6. We have a greater mediator than Moses. While Moses did pray and mediate between man and God, we now have a greater mediator in Jesus. **Have you asked Jesus to pray for you?**
7. We can now enter into a greater tabernacle than the tabernacle of Moses. **Have you tabernacled with Jesus Christ?**
8. Moses' glory was great but our glory in our new bodies will shine brighter. Moses was only allowed to see the tail end of God's glory, but the Christians glory will outshine Moses glory and God's enemies will be defeated for the last time.

After Moses death came Joshua. After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, Joshua became their leader going into the promised land. Here are several take aways from the book of Joshua:

1. **The secret of success:** The secret of success is always complete obedience to God. Look for God to be with us in our every adventure. Obedience to his Word will lead us to have thrilling and rewarding experiences in spite of travel difficulties.
2. **Rahab the harlot becomes one of Israel's helpers.** Rahab hid the spies from the locals. Rahab helped the Jews to win their first victory in the promised land. A victory over the world was to be had and later we see victory over the flesh in Ai and the Devil when they battled the Gibeonites. Jerico represented the world and Ai represented the flesh. Satan uses deception, and

the flesh wants what it wants, and the world draws us away from God's ways.

3. **Do it God's way.** God will either block or make a way for us to do the right thing.
4. **The walls came tumbling down.** Taking one day at a time and following closely God's word will produce a victory that comes in spite of the seemingly ridiculous things we seem to need to do in following God's directions.
5. **Victory follows defeat because of Achan's sin.** Achan sinned by taking some spoil such as gold or silver which God had told them not to take a spoil at Ai. Joshua did not rest in defeat but called Achan to confess his sin. Then they proceeded to have victory over Ai the second time. Ai represents the flesh that we have. It wants what it wants, but we have to be realistic in our desires and seek to keep the desires of the flesh limited to what we really have need of. While the people of Gibeon were wrong to deceive God's people, the Israelites erred in not asking the LORD if they should make the treaty. Thus, Joshua and the Israelites had to live with the consequences of their rash promise. Let's listen to God before we make decisions. Vernon McGee sums up the battle with the world, flesh and the devil as follows: "As you recall Jericho represents the world. The World needs to be overcome by us. It takes faith to do that and faith comes by hearing the word of God with distinctness. In the Bible Ai represents our flesh. So how do we overcome our flesh.

It will not help to fight against it . We need to be honest with God and tell him we have a problem with our flesh and need his help. Often the Spirit of God will help us to get the victory. After the flesh, we have another enemy known as the devil. We must put on God's armor to stand against the devil." See Ephesians 6:11 for a reference.

Our next Bible hero is King David. Between Joshua and the Books of Kings we have the book of Judges. While Joshua was mostly positive, the book of Judges was mostly negative. In those days they had no king and people did what they saw fit. But King David brings the story of the Bible to a high point indeed. The promised son of Eve that will crush the serpent's head will also be a son of David! In those days Israel clamored for a king, but she was wrong to want a king such as the other nations had. (1 Sam. 8:5) Kings generally do not seek the Lord. Saul became this king. Saul failed as king when he failed to wipe out the Amalekites completely but instead spared anything of value. (1 Samuel 15:9) Because of Saul's failure to do as God commanded, we see David becoming king. David does not look the part of a king because of his lowly nature. God looks upon the heart rather than personal stature. David shows the might of God when he kills Goliath in battle with a sling shot. See (1 Samuel 17:45-50) Saul had failed because he feared the people, while David succeeded because he feared the Lord God. What had begun with Abraham's seed, now is extended by

David's seed to come because, it is through the Davidic king that salvation will come, and the horrible effects of Adam's sin will be tamed. Was David, however, anywhere near perfect? No, for he fell into sin with Bathsheba. He further tried to hide his sin by sending Bathsheba's husband into battle to be killed so he could have her as his wife. However, David's son Solomon became the builder of the temple in Jerusalem, but he too was carried away by his own sins. These two were not righteous in their lives but God declared them just because of their faith! We are to look to the future King, who will be a son of David, who would not conform to the patterns of the world's rulers. He would not take from people but would give. He would come out of lowly Bethlehem, the smallest of Judah's towns. (Mic 5:2) While Abraham was called to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, the future son of David would give his life in a perfect sacrifice for his people. While God has a perfect and genuine sacrifice, the Devil will have a fake sacrifice during the end times. He will try to make people believe that his man the Antichrist has risen from the dead. (Revelation 13:3–4)

Following the story of David, we see the prophets of the Bible and realize there is a tension between the promises of God and the spiritual poverty of the people, even under David the king whose line is supposed to bring us a Savior from our sins. Have you noticed that some of today's churches rarely mention sin? Only God can deal with sin in a way that does not violate his

justice and his mercy! David failed to be that special king, but then Solomon his son came along and looked good for a while but, he too failed, and Israel was eventually banished from its land. The Prophets that followed after Solomon called out to God for a resolution to the problem. When you read the prophets, it is like going to an amusement park and riding all the rides. Some are pleasant, and some are scary, but the prophets predict both calamities, as well as a future restoration of Israel and the people of God. See (Hosea 3:4-5) “for the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without sacrifice and without image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the **latter** days.”

Here is a list of some things the prophets have that could be categorized as “sameness.”

1. **The Prophets speak for God.** The prophets have their own personalities and quirks, but God uses them to say exactly what he wants to say to mankind in scripture.
2. **The prophets speak the truth.** The prophets speak about Gods covenant in the “Now” as well as hinting of the future covenant through the Son of God.

3. **The message of the prophets is congruent.** They speak of the judgements of God, as well as the blessing for then as well as future.
4. **The prophets speak of the future in a like way.** They warn of a future that has very difficult times as well as a future of blessings that are “out of this world” so to speak. Yet, sometimes they speak of trouble and blessings temporally.
5. **The prophets speak in sometimes very unorthodox ways.** They use symbols and earthly items to get their message across. They use ordinary and sometimes sinful people to get their message across.
6. **The prophets all speak of both judgement and redemption.**

The first act of God to the belligerent nation of Israel was banishment to exile from the land. Exile from the land is what God generally announces through the prophets, but he also can call for a divorce from Israel. Hosea the prophet in Hosea 1:2 calls for an adulterous wife to be given a divorce. I know something about divorce, as my first wife and I divorced. It is unpleasant but can lead to a new life with a second wife or husband. In the case of God, he does not divorce and then remarry unless you count the salvation of the Gentiles as such. In Romans 11:11 we read: “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to **jealousy**.” God is using his salvation of the Gentiles to let the Jews see that He loves all his

creation, though he sometimes rejects individuals for their lack of faith in Him.

When the Lord leaves someone, he departs in such a way that his departure is well known. For example, in Ezekiel we see that God departs from Israel for a time and a season but promises a restoration later. We see him leaving his people in Ezek. 10:18. Lastly, the prophets promise the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

What can we look to if God destroys us? The Lord will have to redeem us from his own judgement of our sins. If you see in Israel's life, a picture of your own human sin, you have understood very accurately. Has God a plan to save us from our own sin? Here is a small list of God's redeeming work: There are several times where God has promised to save. When He talked to Noah, he advised him how to build a boat to save him from a future flood with his family and animals. In another example, Isaac was saved by giving a ram in his place from the thicket. Another time, as Abraham slept, God walked between the pieces of the sacrificed animal and made a covenant that even he would not change. For Adam and Eve, God promised a serpent crushing savior.

Our salvation will come through an obedient relative of King David. The truth of how God will save his people can be found in Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Do you know what Immanuel stands for? It stands for God almighty. So, from this verse, we will get a human and yet divine person who will come to

save us. Can you see that most Jews are blinded by this truth? One day they will cry as they realize that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who came to save them from their sins. How does that salvation happen, you might ask? Good question, but it has a wonderful answer. Jesus redeems all those who trust in Him, by taking their punishment and death on the cross at calvary. The tension between how God could manifest his judgement for our sin, and at the same time make us the sheep of his pasture, was perfectly done when Jesus died on the cross. Read for example Ezekiel 34:15,16 where God states: "I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong: I will feed them with judgment."

This seems to be a good point to learn what faith is and how it is obtained. If you want to go to heaven to be with Jesus Christ, you will have to have faith in Him. The Bible says: "So then Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) You will have to hear the gospel in some form in order to be saved. You can go to church and hear a preacher, you can read in a book what someone wants you to hear, which is the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Your best source of hearing is from the prophets and Apostles of the KJV Bible. Can God speak directly to you? It is possible for God to do anything, but God speaking directly to someone is questionable, and should be tested by the word of God. I do not believe that God goes

around talking to people much, and would prefer you to read it or hear it from a preacher. The Bible says for example: “for by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph. 2:8,9) So we as true Christians are blood bought! “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (Eph. 2:13) To hear the message of the gospel can be with or without one’s ears. How does a deaf person “hear” the gospel for example? He either reads in brail or uses hand signs with him. Here is a list of some things about faith:

1. Faith is something by which the righteous shall live. (Habakkuk 2:4)
2. Faith is measurable (Matthew 8:26)
3. Faith is what Jesus expects of His followers (Luke 8:25, 2 Corinthians 1:24)
4. Faith can be increased or decreased. (Luke 17:5, Luke 22:32)
5. Faith can bring a person to live more like Christ.
6. Faith is to be proclaimed (Romans 1:18)
7. Faith is a guiding counsel for decisions with the Spirit’s guidance. (Romans 14:23)
8. Faith rests in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:5)
9. Faith is a special gift of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)
10. Faith is a part of the armor of God. (Ephesians 6:16)

So, the message is clear. You get faith by hearing and reading the word of God. Ultimately, you have to have faith that Jesus Christ

shed his blood on the cross for your forgiveness of sins and adoption into the family of God. I think that new Christians can have a life that is in need of developing a controlling nature over their sins in order to be used by God for His glory. I also believe that if someone is saved and they fall into deep sins, God will discipline them and possibly take their life on earth away early, if they are giving the way of salvation a bad name. But nevertheless, if they are saved, it is forever, no matter what the person does. If they live in sin, it is likely that they will doubt their salvation and in fact it could be that they are not really born again. Sometimes it takes time for a new Christian to make a break from his controlling sin nature. We may never live a perfect life in the flesh, but that should be our goal in Christ with the governance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There is a day coming when we will have a glorified body. That will be our perfect life after the resurrection or translation of the saints. God will save us through the obedient seed son, uniquely identified with the Davidic king! Isaiah says the same thing and teaches that Israel's only hope is found in the Lord. Her hope is the line of David who will be virgin born (Isaiah 7:14), who will sit on David's throne forever. (Isaiah 9:7) A king whose name will be God incarnate (Isaiah 7:14). He is also called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9,6) What kind of salvation will he bring? He will bring a salvation similar to how he saved Isaiah from Abrahams knife. There will be a substitute who will bear the punishment due

to the sinner, thus making God's justice met. The New covenant will replace the old, because the new covenant will be written on the hearts of true believers. The suffering of a substitute will pay for his sins by the grace of God. Isaiah 53:4-6 states as follows: **"Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."** What an awesome God who says, "I will remember their sins no more." Jeremiah 31:34. This new covenant is not like the old one brought by God through Moses, but a covenant that "changes one's heart!" Joel the prophet makes it clear that you have to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Joel 2:32 states: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. Have you called on the name of the Lord to confess your sins and asking for His Salvation? When God makes you a new person in Christ you will know it. This website describes your assurance of salvation as such: (www.gotquestions.org)

Everyone is born into sin, and we all "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; cf. Romans 5:12). Therefore, everyone needs to be saved from sin and death (Romans 6:23). We cannot save ourselves. To be saved, we must place our faith in Jesus

Christ, who died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins (Mark 10:45). When we place our faith in Him, we receive forgiveness for our sins (Acts 2:38), and we are made right with God (Romans 3:24).

So, how can you know that you are saved? Here are a few things that will be true about you if you are saved: 1. You believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. This means that you have confessed “with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believed in your heart that God raised him from the dead” (Romans 10:9).

2. You have repented of your sins. Repentance is the act, enabled by God, of turning away from sin and turning toward God (Acts 11:18). For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Romans 8:13,). Yes, you will still sin, but you now have an earnest desire to honor God by following His commands.

3. You have a new heart and a new life (Psalm 51:10; Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:3, 5; 2 Corinthians 5:17). This means that you are no longer the same person that you used to be. Because you have been transformed by the power of God, you now have a desire to glorify Him in everything that you do (1 Corinthians 10:31).

4. You have the Holy Spirit within you. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, lives within every believer (Romans 8:9). If you have received salvation, then you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), who will empower and guide you to become more like Christ (Galatians 5:22–23).

5. You will read and obey the Bible. The Bible is God's authoritative self-revelation to humanity (2 Timothy 3:16–17), and it is the primary way that He communicates with us. If you have received salvation, then you will want to learn more about God (Philippians 3:10) and His will for your life (Romans 12:2). You will also obey His commands out of love for Him (John 14:15).

6. You will share the gospel with others (Matthew 28:18–20). The gospel is the “good news” of what Jesus Christ has done in dying and rising again. If you have received salvation, then you will testify about the goodness of Jesus and how He transformed your life. You will want others to also experience the joy of salvation.

As a reminder, salvation is not something that we can earn or achieve. It is a gift that is provided by God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23). We cannot save ourselves through good work or by trying to be a good person. It is only through faith in Jesus that we can be saved (John 14:6).

If you are uncertain about the security of your salvation, here are a few things that you can do: First, you can pray and ask God for clarity. He does not want you to wonder and worry about whether you are truly saved (see 1 John 5:13). Second, you can talk to a trusted pastor or Christian friend who can address any questions or doubts that you have. Third, you can read the Bible and study what it says about salvation and what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead, and are you trusting Him fully? If the answer is “yes,” then you are saved.

Now, let us turn our attention to the gospels of Jesus Christ...Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These Gospels will magnify what has already been said about the coming Son of David in the Old testament. Remember when Jesus was talking to the men on the walk to Emmaus. Here is a rather long dissertation of that story: “And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together about all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, **What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?** And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and has not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, **What things?** And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and

certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. Certain of them which were with us went to the Sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, **O Fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?** And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Do you see that the whole story about Jesus needed to be told to these two men? Jesus started in the Old Testament and brought to mind what the scriptures have abundantly said about Him. Sometimes we need to be reminded of the **Full Story**. This full story made these two who were walking to Emmaus become instant believers as they truly understood that Jesus was the Son of God who came to save us from our sins! Jesus broke bread with these two and their eyes were opened and their hearts burned within them as they were allowed to recognize Jesus as their savior but, then he vanished from their sight! Your heart will burn with love for Jesus Christ, and you, like these two men, will want to tell others the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, the story is that in the Old Testament Jesus was predicted to come and save his people. If you are wondering if you really are

one of God's sons or daughters, then consider the following lines of information: If you have been saved you will have:

(A new outlook on life) Your old outlook was to have popularity and all the world's goods and money. Now your outlook is changing to become more Christlike in your habits and doings.

(An aversion to sin) You probably used to be wallowing around in a pig pen, but now you are seeking to live a clean life by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

(An abundance of love) You used to be self-exalting, but now you find yourself seeking to love others and their needs.

(A hunger for the Word) Whereas you used to wonder where your Bible was, you have found a good version of the Bible and are regular in study and reading. The KJV is the perfect word of God.

(An attachment to the Body of Christ) You used to not go to church or maybe once or twice per year, now you are a regular attender because you love to hear the Word of God preached.

(A removal of shame) You can easily remember your pigpen sins, but you are praising God for erasing his memory of your sins through Christ.

(A discovery of new gifts) You are now aware of things that faith is drawing you to do in appreciation of God's gift of eternal life.

(A new sense of intimacy) You will feel a closeness to God and as you look about your world you see a lot of filth, and deception going on and as you read the scriptures you will see that the times of the gentiles is coming to a close and you want to get the Gospel

out to friends, family, and strangers by speaking the truth of the gospel to them in person or by letters or tracts. All these things may take time to develop, but as you seek God in scripture and allow him to discipline you away from life controlling sins, you will become a more serious follower of Jesus Christ. I believe that if a genuine born-again believer doesn't heed God's discipline, he may be taken out of this life too early and therefore lose rewards in heaven. The Bible hints at our rewards in heaven. Do you remember when you interviewed for an earthly job? What was the thing you really wanted to know? Probably you wanted to know your paycheck amount. Did you know there are heavenly paychecks after you leave this world?. There are 5 crowns that a person can receive for righteous activity as a Christian on planet earth. Let's look at each crown.

The Crown of Life:

Jesus references this crown when he says for members of the Church of Smyrna in Revelation 2:10..."Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Anything we faithfully endure for Christ has a reward in heaven.

The Incorruptible Crown:

The incorruptible crown can be called the Imperishable Crown and is given reference in 1 Corinthians 9:25. Paul's remarks give this crown a forever marker of faithfulness as opposed to earthly rewards that pass away. On earth you can get an award, but it may not last as someone will come along and top your award.

The Crown of righteousness:

2 Timothy 4:8 mentions this crown as promised to those who love and anticipate the Second Coming of Christ. These Christians desire a good relationship with God.

The Crown of Glory:

The Crown of Glory is given in 1 Peter 5:4 and is granted to preachers who are good shepherds of their flock and give the impression of love for others.

The Crown of Rejoicing:

This Crown is the Crown of Exultation and is featured in 1 Thessalonians 2:19 and Philippians 4:1 and is given to people who have a heart for evangelism. In the New Testament, Paul gets this crown after winning the Thessalonians to faith in Jesus Christ.

So, the greatest story ever told is the story of Jesus Christ. He wants to save you from your sins. He wants to give you a new life. Your new life in your old body will still have times of disappointment and strife. Your new life will blossom into an eternal life that is free from sin and the threat of death. You will get that life by either death and resurrection or by translation at the coming of Christ for his Church. The things we get caught up on in this life with regard to our possessions and our approval by others will fade away into the sunset when you realize that it's all going by the wayside. You cannot take anything to heaven with you and your popularity with men will disappear into the sunset. As a Christian you will begin to see the folly of trying to satisfy your longing with the things of this world. We all need to be about our Father's business of winning souls to Christ.

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GOOD STORIES NAIL DOWN THE TRUTH

Chapter 10

What is your story?

There are numerous stories of salvation in the Bible. These stories are 100% true while salvation stories outside of the Bible can be true. I would say that most of our stories are true because it is not often that someone wants to share their story even though it is false. People who have been born again can see the change made in their lives by the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. A good story has a hero. Often you hear of heroes in real life. Perhaps someone pulls someone out of a burning car or house. That is a salvation story of sorts, but the saved person could in the future face death of his or her body. Will that person go to heaven? That is the question for all of us to consider. John 14:21 states: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. I believe that means that God will prove himself to us that have believed with faith. Has God spoken to you and made you one of his sons or daughters? Faith that comes along with evidence is where God manifests himself to us who have believed even without evidence.

My first story is the story of Noah.

The Old testament gives us the story of Noah. This is a great story of the redemption of God. In Noah's day God warned Noah of coming judgment that would do away with all living beasts of the field. God told Noah to build an ark to contain the animals. The Ark has not been found but, there are stories of sightings of what could be the Ark. A life size replica of the Ark has been built in Kentucky. Donna and I walked

through it a number of years ago. It was quite impressive and gave the opinion that this could have housed the animals. Noah preached and built his ark for about 120 years and invited people to come aboard with him, but they laughed at him and probably told him he was crazy. Sometimes when we as Christians warn others about the coming storm of the tribulation, they just ignore us and go on as if nothing will happen. Someday it will be too late to be saved as the tribulation flood will have arrived. How is your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The ark rested on mount Ararat on the 17th of the month. Why do you suppose God wants us to know that information about the 17th day? Where else can you find information related to the number 17 in the Bible? In 1 Thess. 4:17 we read, **“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”**

And in 1 Cor. 15:51 read: **“Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.”** 51 is 3 x 17. (The change is into an immortal glorified body.)

And in John 1:51 we read: **“And he saith unto him, verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”** Is this all just my imagination? Is this writing about the rapture of the church where angels of God are coming and going with those who are being translated or resurrected?

What about Luke 17:34? Is this verse about rapture? And 17 x 2 = 34.

Also consider John 21:11 where 153 fish caught in the net. And $153 = 17 \times 9$.

There are many other things in the Bible in which 17 seems prominent. Do I know what this means? No, but it is interesting. Maybe you can figure out what it means.

This story is about Zacchaeus:

When Jesus Christ was passing through, he noticed Zacchaeus up in a tree. Zachaeus climbed the tree because he had heard about Jesus and was interested in Him. Zachaeus was a tax collector and was a rich person. Zacchaeus was a small person and climbed the tree because everyone towered over him. When Jesus saw him, he said, **“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”** (Luke 19:5) So Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and was excited to have Jesus come to his house. The people grumbled because they did not think Jesus should be so friendly to a hated rich tax collector. When Zacchaeus met Jesus he said, “.... unto the Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” And Jesus said unto him, **“this day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.”** (Luke 19: 9,10) This story tells us that we all need to find Jesus and welcome him into our lives. And our past sins are not a hindrance to becoming an adopted son of God.

The story of the Ethiopian Eunuch:

This story is from Acts 8:26-39. I am going to include the whole episode for you to consider:

“And the angel of the lord spake unto Philip saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and behold a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his Chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth

hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

There are some interesting things to think about in this true story from the KJV Bible. 1. The scripture was involved in the eunuch's salvation. 2. He did not get baptized until he had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. 3. It took the preaching of "Jesus" to get him saved. 4. The eunuch rejoiced to know he was saved and after he had this faith, he saw a miracle happen when Philip was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord. You too might expect the Spirit of God to manifest himself to you in some special way, when you truly believe and show your faith to the world through baptism!

The salvation of the criminal on the Cross.

When Jesus was crucified, there were two criminals beside him. One of the criminals asked Jesus to take them off the cross in a miracle. The other one said that he was condemned because of his criminal activity, and asked Jesus to remember him when He (Jesus) came into His kingdom. Jesus answered and said he would be with him in paradise. Paradise and Heaven are synonymous. The thief on the Cross went to be with Jesus in paradise. He will be awaiting his resurrection on the

day when the church age is finished. When the resurrection day comes, the dead in Christ will be refurbished into a glorified body and the Christians who are alive at that time will see their bodies refurbished as well into a glorified body. This body will have a consistency that is touchable and yet it will have the ability to pass through walls and appear and disappear! It will be that way for all eternity and death will have come to an end.

The salvation of Cornelius

Cornelius was a person who wanted to do right, and he was searching for the truth. He called Peter to come to him. Peter said in Acts 10:28-48 **“.... Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou has well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God,**

to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for god was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but into witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they

heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.” What did you learn from these scriptures? It is important to see that God wants gentiles as well as Jews to be saved by Jesus Christ. Did you notice that one has to believe before he gets baptized? The Holy Ghost has to be given to the individual before baptism. Some Churches preach salvation by baptism. This is not according to Scripture. You will notice that they spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost. But is this always an indicator of salvation? Let's look at what Paul says about this: In 1 Cor. 12 Paul states that there are a variety of gifts that indicate the Holy Spirit is working in one's life. Tongues are one of them. It is said later in the same Bible that tongues shall cease. 1 Cor. 13:8 states: **“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”** This passage also makes me think that many times someone has to be seeking God in order for God to save them. Cornelius was seeking God.

The salvation of a Jailer

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all

the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And they took him the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes: and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

. **“What must we all do to be saved?” “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** (Romans 10:17)

So, what exactly is a doubting Thomas? The term 'a doubting Thomas' is a direct reference to the biblical story of the apostle Thomas, who refused to believe that the resurrected Jesus had been seen by the other apostles until he could actually see and feel the wounds Jesus received during his crucifixion. Thomas, known as “Doubting Thomas,” had a problem with doubt; however, Scripture reveals several places where he had a believing heart. Doubt is necessary to advance and deepen us. A faith that asks questions is stronger than a faith that never thinks. So go ahead and ask God what you will in prayer. It may be that he will sharpen your faith!

Abraham's Trust and Unwavering Faith

Abraham was known as the father of faith. He had an above average trust in God's promises. Even when God had asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac, he believed and went ahead as if God really wanted him to do that. Are you trusting God in a situation that calls for you to do something that your mind says "no" to? You must believe that God is always true to "loving kindness" to his own regardless of the possible outcomes just ahead." Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac, but God stopped him and supplied a substitute instead. Did you know that God has supplied you with a substitute for your sins? If you will believe Jesus took your sins with his blood on the cross! **"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."** – Rom. 4:3

Noah's faith while being ridiculed

Noah was told by God to build an Ark for the animals before A flood was going to consume all land animal's lives. Noah faced ridicule and doubt from his contemporaries, but he obediently spent years building the Ark. The story of Noah teaches us to continue to trust God in spite of skepticism from others. It reminds us that following God's plan may lead to ridicule and disbelief. Are you willing to undergo adversity in doing God's will? You are building your own ark when you continue to go to Church even when others stay home and ridicule you. Building your own ark is often tedious and you will be laughed at for your faith. You won't get to heaven because you built your ark. You will get there by your faith in Jesus Christ! God helps those with faith.

Now we want to look at modern day testimonies.

My testimony:

I first began to think about eternal destiny when I was in my twenties. I found an old torn up KJV Bible and began to read the book of Revelation. I did not understand it, so I told one of my co-workers about it and he came over with his wife one evening to witness to my first wife and me. He basically told me the story of the gospel of Jesus Christ and then asked us to pray. My first wife and I did not know how to pray so we just said the apostle's creed. That was just the start of my search for the meaning of life. I spent several years reading Christian books and then one day I was out in the yard in Converse, Tx. mowing the lawn when it came to me that my name was written in Lamb's book of life. This was after I had been through a divorce and married my second wife some years later. But I noticed that after I had truly been saved that my life began to change. I no longer wanted to do those sinful things I used to do. I could see that God was cleaning up my life. I knew that because I was his adopted son. I was different inside. I cannot say that sin suddenly disappeared, but I could tell that I was being made into a new creature in Christ. Since that time, Donna and I joined the Independent Baptist church in Tucson and later Huisache Baptist Church in San Antonio. I have written 3 books since becoming a Christian and am now writing this book you are reading. May you find the grace of God and salvation of your soul and become born again

if you are not already. You can also find my wife's and my salvation story on our Christian website at www.sbgg.life. On the following pages I have collected a few testimonies to share with you. I hope you have enjoyed reading so far and will continue to read about these.

Stories from my Church.

Pastor Bez's Bio

The story of how the Lord saved my soul began when I was nine in the hills of Tennessee, near the small town of Lowellville. I attended an Amish school, although my family and I were not. My father let me work and spend time with my Amish friends, but he had one rule: make it home by dark. Time got away from me, and as the sun began to set behind the hills, I jumped on my bike in a panic; however, I knew I would never make it home before dark. I was trying so hard to be good. I committed to never sinning again just that morning. At that moment, the Lord impressed upon my heart that I was a sinner and on my way to hell. No matter how hard I tried, I could never measure up to Jesus Christ. The Lord showed me that I needed His righteousness, as mine was as filthy rags.

I stood up on my bike, and with my eyes raised to the darkening heavens, I prayed, “Lord, I know that I am going to go to hell. I should go because I am not a good person; I am not only guilty of bad, but I am also bad. Lord, I know you died for me, were buried, and you rose from the dead for my sins. I receive you as my Savior the best way I know how.” I felt a burden of sin lift off of me, and I was changed from the inside out. I no longer wanted to get away with sin but wanted to get away from sin. I will never forget the grace and love that filled my heart that day; it was the defining moment of my life.

A few years later, at 14, I stood before our little church on the edge of Cane Creek and publicly confessed Jesus as my Savior. My pastor baptized me in the clear, cold waters of the creek I swam in as a child. As a young man, the Lord impressed me that nothing in this world would hold lasting value. The Lord called me to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first, and He would add all the rest to me. At 17, I moved to Florida to attend a Bible Institute, where I earned a Bachelor of Divinity. During my time there, the

Lord affirmed my calling to the ministry, and others encouraged me to invest in the gift God bestowed upon me to preach His Word. I preached, and it touched hearts. It is a great honor and a privilege to stand between heaven and hell and to preach to the souls of men. To this day, there is nothing I would rather do than speak to men for God to impress upon them the timeless truths of Scripture.

After graduating in 2004, I married and began a construction business, framing houses, waiting for the Lord's guidance. While attending a meeting in Alabama, a friend from Tennessee gave me the phone number of a Huisache Avenue Baptist Church deacon. After the former pastor passed away, the church searched for a new pastor. I was a candidate for pastor in December 2006, and the small church of 18 dear members voted for me.

My wife and I packed our things and arrived on the 3rd Sunday of February 2007. As I began pastoring the church, I began to grow; the church began to grow, and my family began to grow. With growth comes friction. The pressures of

ministry and the demands of a growing family took a toll on my late wife, and she began to struggle with depression. Tragically, this led to her taking her own life at the end of 2014. This period was a deep and painful valley for me, my children, and our church family.

The Lord has been merciful to us through it all. God works good into the lives of those who respond to tragedy by casting all their hope on Him. God worked in our lives for good and has ministered healing, enabling us to share His hope with others. Counseling and helping people with their struggles is one way the Lord allows me to minister to people. Through this experience, the Lord led me to pursue a graduate degree in biblical counseling. This degree has been a blessing and helped our church minister to others.

Coincidences can be viewed as God's way of remaining anonymous. Through a series of coincidences, the Lord led Michelle to our church, and we got married. God has blessed us with a wonderful marriage. After the loss of their mother, my three boys have been blessed with Michelle's loving care.

She supports them and encourages their love for Jesus. Miraculously, the Lord also blessed us with a daughter. Michelle has been a tremendous help, working alongside me in the ministry and serving our church.

My wife and I are so grateful to serve the Lord together for the rest of our lives, and we cannot wait to see what He will allow us to accomplish. We are excited to see the Lord in our children's lives as we train them in the way they should go!

The Lord is moving in our church, and we desire that the Lamb who was slain receive the reward of His suffering. We invite you to be part of what God is doing in San Antonio, Texas. I can't wait to meet you and see God move in your life!

Thank you,

Pastor Bez

Pastor Ashton's Bio:

My mother had been the first in her family to receive Jesus Christ as her savior as a result of a chapel service at a Christian School in Hawaii. My father and mother met through a church activity in Hawaii and were married. I was born in Tucson, Arizona where my Dad worked and went to school at the University of Arizona for engineering. When I was four years old, we moved from Arizona to Idaho where my Dad took a position with Hewlett Packard, and we began attending a strong Bible believing church. One Sunday evening my mother took my younger brother and me to church. That night we sat right on the front row as the Pastor preached on Hell and eternity. I will never forget how he preached "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." My mind raced as I went through all my disobedience and all the ways I had been a hurtful brother. I knew that according to my conscience I was guilty, and I did not want to burn in a lake of fire. I felt as if the Pastor was talking and preaching right to me. Later that night I went to my mother in our home and asked if I could be saved. My mother was a trained elementary teacher and asked me many questions to make sure I understood, and this was not a youthful or emotional decision. She then took me through the book of Romans and showed my verses that explained sin, Christ's death and resurrection and his gift of eternal life. I bowed my head and prayed for

Jesus Christ to save me from my sin and the lake of fire and put my faith in what he did for me on the cross.

I grew up in a good bible believing church and remember serving the Lord as a child by telling others about Jesus Christ and inviting them to our church. I also had the opportunity to be involved in many youth ministries and learned a lot of Bible, memorized scripture, and grew in the Lord. I'll never forget one time as a child I was in downtown Boise passing out little booklets that gave the gospel of Jesus Christ; and I gave an older man one only to see him throw it away in the trash. I went to pull it out of the trash and there to my surprise was a \$20 bill! I learned at a young age, it paid to serve the Lord, but more importantly my faith was growing. It was also during my early childhood, that the Lord started revealing to me that he would have me be a preacher and teacher. I surrendered to even serve the Lord in foreign missions at the age of eight. As I grew older, I grew distant from the Lord. From high school and into college and stopped living for Jesus Christ, attending church, prayer, or reading my Bible. Life became about my plans and my desires and I left God out of it. I did many things I am ashamed of and was often miserable as I knew I was grieving my Savior. I replaced God in my life with idols. The Lord then began a process of humbling me; "For whom the Lord loveth he chastened, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." I lost my scholarship, my job, and an important relationship. Everything I had set God aside for and worshipped in his place he took away. In the Old Testament Moses took a golden calf that Israel worshipped as a false god; ground it into dust and mixed it in

water and had the children of Israel drink it and it was bitter to them. This is what God did in my life; everything I had replaced God within my life was made bitter to me and was destroyed into emptiness. I joined the military, and the Lord used men I trained alongside to point me back to Christ. As I reviewed my life, I had a strong desire to be clean and righteous before God, and to walk with him daily and live my life for him. As I returned home, I searched for the truth and began attending many Christian Churches including the one I had grown up in. I was still on the fence, one week I would be in Church and the next I would be in places and around people I knew were wrong. Then January 1st, 2009, came; a day that I will never forget. In an old home I was renting from my father, on Wardle Street in Boise, Idaho the Lord convicted me of my life wasted for self, and its emptiness. He made it clear to me that he wanted me to commit to Him or else the last seven years of my life were just a foretaste of what he would give me over to and what my life would become. I broke down and gave my life, my future, my everything to serve him and live for him, no matter the cost. I spent much time in prayer and pouring out everything to the Lord. On that day my life radically changed. I began spending all my time in prayer, the bible, and telling people all over about the Lord Jesus Christ and what he could do. I began working and re-attending college, now with a new joy and challenge; I would preach and deal with people about Jesus Christ on the very campus where my life once mocked him. I began preaching and teaching at the church I had grown up in and I joined the church. Then God dealt with me about going to Bible

College, and after a semester of working, attending college, and Bible College I surrendered to Bible College full time and devote my life to his leading.

God blessed and gave me opportunity for the next 6 years to work in youth ministry, prison ministry, public outreach ministry, country churches, missions work overseas. I have had the opportunity to see Jesus Christ save many people, whether in the middle of downtown kneeling on the pavement, at a church, on a school bus, on a prison floor, and at a rescue mission while drunks hurled profanity. I graduated Bible College and continued to serve and see the Lord have my faith grow. Then in 2014 God directed me to San Antonio. Making it very clear through prayer, fasting and miraculous answers to prayer. He brought me to serve in San Antonio; where I met Pastor Bezaleel Cummings who brought me on to serve at Huisache Avenue Baptist Church as an assistant pastor. Then through much fasting and prayer the Lord allowed me to meet Jessica in 2015 and gave me “exceedingly abundantly above all” that I had asked or thought in a wife to serve alongside. Truly God has fulfilled in my life his prophet’s saying, “And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten” God has abundantly blessed and continues. Though trials and losses have come, Jesus Christ is Faithful and True.

Pastor Ashton

Testimony from Matthew: At Huisache Baptist Church

I'm Matthew and this is my testimony.

So even after I was baptized around 2003, as a young man I never really understood the gospel. I think I merely repeated the words the preacher said to me and was dunked. I lived in various forms of sin for years and watched videos and read articles by false teachers preaching a works-based gospel, misusing this verse (James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead.) and taking the verse out of context. It didn't help that I wasn't reading my bible all that much, despite going to church. Many decades later, around 2016 to 2017 I heard about God from various coworkers and from watching other YouTube videos preaching the true gospel in a clear and concise manner (Romans 11:6-23 KJV And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.) Around February 2017 I finally put my faith in Christ alone for my salvation. Nothing could pluck me from his hands.

A Church is a commissioning of people who for the most part, are seeking to worship God from the heart and lasso the unbeliever with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Chapter 11

Some things I learned in Church.

It is getting harder and harder to find a church, that is the genuine thing. By genuine I mean a church that preaches and teaches the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Many churches have gone off the rails. Many churches do a sloppy job of teaching by making their services worldly attractive by such things as loud music and a watered-down gospel that says, “come join the party with us.” While there are some churches of differing denominations that stick to the truth of the Bible, I personally like the idea of the independent Baptist church. The independent Baptist church usually has no headquarters except the word of God. I want to highlight some of the teachings I have received at two different independent Baptist churches. While living in Tucson my wife and I joined the New Testament Baptist Church. Since we moved back to Texas, we have become members of the Huisache Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas. I also prefer the KJV Bible, as do many other folks who read the Bible. Some of the modern versions of the Bible have skewed the meaning of God’s word. Who do you think is in charge of watering down the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Would that be any and all of God’s enemies? I have always sought to take notes when I listen to a sermon. So, the following excerpts are some wonderful things I learned by attending church.

Here are sermons brought by Pastor King (03/21/21.)

A. The sermon was about making right choices and making aware of “the evidence of a spirit filled church.” Pastor King is pastor of “New testament Baptist church in Tucson Az. Main Points:

1. Genuine preaching: Was the Bible preached with authority?

- a. In Acts 4:31 we see that there was an observable result from the preaching from a boldness that caused the church to shake. While I am not aware of any church today shaking like that, you can recognize genuine church activity by the love and fellowship of the members toward each other and visitors. People will give money to keep the church going and to help with the needs of others in some way. You can look to see if there is any “pretense” in any of the members. This verse of scripture points to the pretense of church members who kept part of the sale of property and told that they gave all of what they received. The result was death of Ananias and Sapphira. A church member needs to be truthful about anything instead of pretending to be truthful.

B. Sermon 05/23/21: “Which gate will you choose?”

1. Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
- C. Choose to be “one of the few.” You will need to establish boundaries for your life and not be someone who has a secret” disciple plan.

- D. Be aware that you will have to take up your cross and follow Jesus. You will be persecuted by forces and people outside of your control as a true disciple. Satan will hinder you and so will people.
- E. By choosing Jesus you are choosing and claiming him as the only way to salvation and eternal life.
- F. Satan and his minions are working to hinder your efforts as a Christian. Then rejoice and go on with your efforts.

C. Teaching 05/30/21 “Poor in Spirit”

- 1. Poor in spirit does not mean having low self-esteem or being shy and quiet. It is the opposite of pride and presents as “I am not the master of my fate.”
- 2. There is an inward sense of helplessness and submission to God that avoids self-righteousness and has an attitude to god of “Save me.”
- 3. Jesus went to the cross even though he knew it would be miserable, and it is interesting that Isaiah 53 in the old testament predicted his crucifixion.
- 4. Matthew 5:1 says that “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
- 5. Let God do the exaltations and serve God because he loves you and you love Him.

D. 06/20/21 “Hungering for righteousness.”

- 1. If there was a scale for righteousness, how much would you weigh?

2. What does a disciple look like? Humility is foundational and represents power under control.
3. Solomon said that all is vanity when living for worldly stuff.
4. True righteousness is “imputed” by Jesus Christ, and:
5. Righteousness is “Imparted” by the sanctification process with the Holy Spirit’s direction of our life.
6. “Eternal” is when we get our glorified body at the resurrection/translation of the saints.
7. “Righteousness” is the result of salvation and not the cause!
8. It is Christ’s righteousness that gets me to heaven and not my own.
9. Has your life been changed by faith in Christ?

E. Matthew 5: 13 “Salt of the earth.” Date unknown

1. Being humble and meek is the starting point to being the salt of the earth.
2. It is not so much what we do. It is who we are in God’s eyes that counts the most.
3. We should seek God’s approval instead of man’s approval.
4. As Christians we are the salt that is a preservative. While unbelievers seek to destroy each other’s lives with worldly living, the true believer seeks to make things work out according to God’s laws for wholesome living.
5. By being salty, you can engender someone to want what you have.

6. We are the preserving agent for this world. Satan cannot gain complete control until the genuine Christians have been translated to heaven in the rapture event to come.

F. Sermon 8.15.21 “The visit that God has.” Acts 10:23-45

1. The gentile Cornelius was a good man because he prayed and practiced hospitality.
2. In this story Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius and his family.
3. We find out that even “good” people like Cornelius need to be saved.
4. In order to be saved the Holy Ghost has to fall on somebody. People will seek after God but not understand what it is all about until He saves them. We know when we have been saved because of the tremendous attitude change in our lives.

G. Sermon 11.28.21 Matthew 6:16-18 Don’t be a “show-off.”

1. Make God your audience when you fast!
2. Do not seek the applause of men.
3. Giving, praying and fasting done in secret makes for an authentic walk with God.
4. Focus on the inner man.

H. Sermon 12.5.21 Acts 16:1-5 Timothy had a testimony.

1. Timothy was well bred into the faith by his mother and grandmother.
2. Timothy was teachable.

3. Timothy died to himself for the souls of others.
4. This story says that God can use a unique home.
5. God can use ordinary people for extraordinary things.
6. Timothy depicts a younger generation willing to sign up and serve.
7. Have you given your life to Christ?

The following sermon excerpts by Bez Cummings of Huisache Baptist Church in San Antonio, Tx:

A. Sermon 11.27.22 Acts 17:16 Knowing God and making him known.

1. Paul saw the idolatry of Athens and conversed with them in the marketplace.
2. The style of the people was one of taking the highest good to be “pleasure.”
3. True worship is relational, but false worship is transactional. Paul knew that for example that giving can be an attempt to bribe God for something.
4. Individuals who know God and have been saved can see change in their life for the good.
5. A secret agenda is not a part of being a Christian. We cannot seek God and the worlds ways at the same time.

B. Sermon 12.11.22 The Church at Corinth was not spiritually minded. 1 Cor. 3:1-11

1. These Corinthians were babes in Christ. They had envy, fighting and carnality.

2. They identified with mere man and the world and had an identity crisis.
3. Christians need to grow into “God confidence” vs “self-confidence.”
4. Point # 1 “Don’t be a men pleaser.”
5. God confidence = pursuit of the truth while self-confidence = the lie.

C. Sermon 1.1.23 Eternal perspectives Psalm 49.

1. Vs 7 says that only God can give payment to redeem a soul from death and that worldly wealth will not redeem one from death and eternal loss in hell.
2. Vs 15 says that God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.
3. A large percentage of people fear death.
4. People can have hope in their money, assets, accounts, and portfolio but only God can give real hope, even in death.
5. Living for anything but Christ is loss. Living for Jesus is gain.

D. Sermon 1.8.23 About love and Jesus set the example John 13:1-20, 34,35.

1. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples a few days before the cross.
2. The Lord redeemed us from more than Egypt. We are to love others like He did.
3. Love is spoken about in Jn 15:10,11, 1 Jn 4:8, 1 Jn 4:20

4. Sin will keep us from loving others. See Matt 14:12
5. Our feet can lead us to walk in the ways of the world but if we have our feet washed by Jesus Christ, our walk can become more righteous.
6. Love flows out of humility.... a rejection of self-importance
7. Take the low position like Christ as a servant of others.
8. Serve those that need it but not necessarily the lovely.
9. When we know who we are in Jesus Christ our ability to show love manifests.
10. Be a refreshment to others even if they don't deserve it.

E. Sermon 2.5.23 Judges 3:1-6, 12-30 "What would Joel Osteen do?"

1. There needs to be a difference between the people of God and the people of the world.
2. The Flesh and the life of a Christian has enemies.
3. Our life is about "what we are serving." What is the loudest thing in your life?
4. Where are all your efforts guiding you? Is it worldly or spiritual?
5. Is your ego on the throne of your life?
6. Ask God for strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.
7. Knowing and practicing God's word will help us defeat our enemies. See Heb. 4:12.
8. The word of God has power that we do not have.

9. True faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17

F. Sermon 5.14.23 “It is well.” Isaiah 62:1-12

1. None of us are a completed work. God sees us more than our faults and sins.
2. People should see you as a person whom God has rescued!
3. God can do the same thing for whoever truly seeks Him.
4. Salvation should be burning in your lamp. Be a crown of glory and a royal diadem.
5. A lot of people do not delight in Jesus. Are you interceding in prayer for them?
You might be surprised some day in heaven when you see someone you have prayed for.
6. God is our greatest hope. Our hope is for sure in Jesus.

G. Sermon 6.11.23 “God will never let you down.” 2 Kings 20:1-12

1. **Recognize our limits:** Hezekiah was told to put his house in order and be ready for death.
2. Prepare for your own death if it comes before the translation of the saints. You can pray that God will grant you more time if there is something left for you to do in this life. Hezekiah prayed and God granted him 15 more years.
3. Depend upon God. Hezekiah wept when he found out he was going to die, and he poured out his heart and this time God granted him his wish.

4. Always believe in prayer
 5. We accept God's help. God gave Hezekiah a sign that the shadow of the sun would go down 10 degrees. Hence God even controls the shadows!
- H. Sermon 9.10.23 "What are your credentials?" 2 Cor. 3:1-18
1. The Corinthians questioned Paul's authority.
 2. Paul reminds us that it is not his letters, but it is the Holy Spirit speaking by our actions.
 3. Paul spoke by making people aware that "I have a message, come and get it.' It does not take fancy words to make something visibly useful, but when the heart is stirred to speak the truth in love it can have a great result.
 4. God's new letter is "You are no longer a slave to sin as a believer in Jesus Christ." And
 5. Do people see Jesus in you and me?
 6. **Finally, you are God's mailman. Are you sharing the scripture and the gospel of Jesus Christ with others?**
- I. Sermon 10.29.23 "The Ai defeat after glorious victory."
Joshua 7:1-13 Achan took the accursed thing. Here is a list of unhealthy problems without a biblical view.
1. In emotional instability, Courage goes away. People cannot be okay and ignore the verse that says, "yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Ps 23. The question is how you respond to defeat like the story of the Ai defeat.

2. Misplaced blame: ...i.e. God. Natural response of fallen man is to blame God. Fallen man does not think that God loves them. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Reputation matters less than righteousness to God.
3. Bad doctrines...It is always bad doctrine to disobey God and ask such as “why does God allow evil?”
4. Failure to take action: when we fall, we are to “get up.” Be honest about our sins and take up weapons to fight for Jesus. We are to be forgiven and sanctified and learn to submit to the Spirit of God.

J. Sermon 11.19.23 Luke 1:26-56 “Only the Spirit gives life.”

The Lord came to Mary. She could not have undertaken her task without God. How God does it:

1. He nominates the “nobody:” He often picks someone living in obscurity. He had regard for Mary the mother of Jesus in her lowly position. She became highly favored of God.
2. He disrupts our personal plans sometimes. Your plans are not God’s plans. Do your plans include what God is doing on this earth?
3. He assists the aligned; He supplied those committed to Him, so submit your vessel to the Lord.
4. He strengthens us. Do fellowship and stop in nothing with God’s plan.
5. He honors the hopeful...so magnify the Lord and purify your life.

K. Sermon 12.7.23 The pagan holiday. 1 Jn 4:17, Eph. 5:1

1. Christmas is often a search for something lesser than Jesus Christ.
2. Real Christians are ambassadors for Christ.
3. We are to involve ourselves in others' lives.
4. Love can give us an entrance into someone's life.
5. We often have to be vulnerable like a child.
6. Our joy is that Jesus absolved the cost of our sins.

L. Sermon 12.24.23 Jesus Christ is born.

1. 63% of people feel stress and dissatisfaction at Christmas time.
2. Domestic violence is elevated during the Christmas season.
3. There was no room at the inn for Mary to birth Jesus Christ.
4. The innkeeper was not an ambassador for Christ, or he could have provided something.
5. Do you have room for Jesus in your life?
6. King Herod tried to kill Jesus by murdering the recent born males.
7. Joseph was troubled about Mary's pregnancy, but Joseph allowed God to change his plans.
8. Without Jesus Christ a life is empty.

M. Sermon 1.21.24 "Vine work" Summarized as below:

1. We are to reach out to people who are needing Jesus in their life. This is similar to the work of a vine dresser:

A vinedresser, also known as a viticulturalist or winegrower, oversees grapevines in a vineyard. Their goal is to optimize grape quality and abundance for wine and food products. Here are some of their tasks:

Pruning: Throughout the growing season, vinedressers prune fast-growing vines.

Soil Testing: They assess soil conditions to ensure optimal grape growth.

Irrigation: Vinedressers manage vineyard irrigation.

Weeding and Fertilizing: They maintain vine health by weeding and fertilizing.

Protection: Vinedressers protect plump, juicy grapes from birds and animals.

Pest Control: They develop pest control programs and inspect diseases.

Harvest Timing: Vinedressers consult with vineyard owners to determine when grapes are ready for harvest. It's a demanding job, especially during busy seasons like harvest time.

2. We are to win souls by loving others and looking beyond their flaws.
3. The Holy Spirit encourages us.
4. Look for talents and gifts in others.

N. Sermon 4.7.24 The struggle of Job.

1. Job experienced a total loss of his property and his sons and daughters as well.
2. Satan was allowed to punish Job but not to take his life in order for God to prove him.
3. Job was rich but he lost it all.
4. Job's friends made things worse while he was suffering and questioning God about his happenings.
5. Only when we are what we appear to be are we real to God.
6. Job continued to serve God even in the absence of reward.
7. Job finally accepted his condition and repented of blaming God.
8. Job was blessed more at the end of his life than before.

O. Sermon 5.5.24 “Are we pretending to love God?”

1. We may pretend to love God thinking he will bless us.
2. False thinking will not get you what you want.
3. Pretenders work in darkness.
4. Deceivers get deceived.
5. The remedy for pretending is:
 - a. Wrestle with god and let him identify your pretense.
 - b. God may give you some pain for your own good.
 - c. You can be like Jacob who said, “I am not letting you go until you bless me.”
 - d. When you stop pretending God will truly bless you, so be honest with God.

P. Sermon 5.13.24 Titus 2:3-7, 15

1. Titus highlights the duties and household activities that Godly mothers and fathers do.
2. Charles Spurgeon had a fire event that greatly disturbed him because seven people were trampled in the escape.
3. Spurgeon's mother greatly helped him to recover from his depression caused by this event.
4. Maybe the devil was trying to hinder his work for the Lord, and he was being tested to see if he would come back from this defeat and problem.
5. Men are often what their mothers make them.
6. Spurgeon definitely had the gift of preaching as out of the 10 million he preached to about 460,000 were converted.

I just got interrupted by my cat KOKO. He is meowing and wanting some attention. While I am on cats, our female cat Peli had to be put down because she was really sick.

That was a hard thing to do, because we loved her so much. So don't just love your animals, practice love to your brothers in Christ, and seek to get the lost to hear the true gospel.

Q. Sermon unknown date "Are you listening?" Luke 8:1-15

1. I believe God is speaking to us all the time, but we do not hear like we should. He speaks in His Word and in nature, and by others who say things that God wants them to say to us.
2. There are 4 types of hearers as Jesus outlines in this verse:

- a. The indifferent hearer develops skepticism and cynicism. 30% of hearers distrust pastors after they learn they are pastors.
- b. The inattentive hearer This hearer has rocks in his soil and instead of hearing the truth he focuses on these rocks.
- c. The inundated hearer The riches of this life sway his thoughts to worldly things.
- d. The improved hearer This hearer overcomes his sins and focuses his life on biblical submission by relying on the Lord. His life is in a change for the better mode. He focuses on becoming a doer of the word of God.

R. Sermon 5.19.24 The prodigal son and the older brother
Luke: 15:11-32

1. Humans could be either the prodigal or the older brother.
2. The prodigal son got his inheritance and went into a far country and wasted it on riotous living, while the older brother stayed home and worked for his father.
3. Later when he had run out of money and was living a riotous lifestyle, he came to his senses and returned to his father and asked him to make him one of his hired hands.
4. The Father welcomed him home and called for a party because his wayward son had returned to his right mind.

5. The older brother was really jealous of his brother, but the father told him to not fret. It is unclear as to whether the older brother welcomed his brother or not.

S. Sermon 5:26.24 Haggai + Ezra 4 “Prophets gave warnings.”

1. Cyrus sent Zerubbabel to build the house of God.
2. Are you building the house of God? Serving God can be dangerous. There will be opposition from the forces of darkness. We are to overcome these and continue with our work and calling.
3. We are to be careful in our reasoning and realize that our reasoning is often errant from the will of God.
4. We are to go to the mountain and bring wood. You have to have your mind think after God's thoughts as to what going to the mountain and bringing wood means to each of us!
5. So go get some wood!

T. Sermon 6.9.24 Gen. 11:1-9 “The tower to nowhere.”

1. Every one of us wants to seek significance. We find that significance is not found in Babylon type of living. So, who are you trusting to make a name for yourself? Put your trust in Jesus Christ like the thief on the cross who said, “Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
2. We cannot forge our identity out of the things of this world. God does not look on you based on your earthly possessions, but on your attitude towards Him.

3. There is no security in the things of this world. Stocks and bonds will not get you anywhere with God. If you have worldly popularity, God is not buying it.
4. Babylon represents what opposes God. Pleasure and possessions do not impress God.
5. The reversal of the Tower of Babel is this: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away and all things have become new."

“A Bible that’s falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn’t.” Charles H. Spurgeon.
.....THE BEST QUOTES COME FROM GOD!

Chapter 12

Making your story scriptural

The Bible says: “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” Rom. 10:17. Are you aware that the word of God can bring salvation? A Christian cannot want heaven and sin at the same time. The true Christian will come to realize at some point in his or her life that sin is not to reign supreme in their life. In the new life from God, we realize that we are a sinner before God, and he wants us to change so that sin does not remain a control of our lifestyle. We are to be changed from glory to glory in this mortal life until we are given a glorified body at the resurrection/rapture. It is God who grants salvation, and we will look at that and various other elements of scripture that move us from self-control to living by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The first few scriptures are about salvation so let's talk about each scriptures purpose as we read. In these first eight scriptures a Christian can use them to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to anyone. People should either memorize or become familiar with these scriptures:

1. **“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23**
2. **“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: Romans 3:10**
3. **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:12**

4. **“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” Romans 6:23**
5. **“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8**
6. **“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:9-10**
7. **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:13**
8. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17**

All humans have been caught with their hand in the cookie jar so to speak. We have done that which God has declared to be wrong and sinful. We have to hear God speak to us about our sin and his plan for us to be redeemed. One of the things about our being saved by God is our willingness to tell others about Jesus and his resurrection. See Romans 10:9-10 above.

9. **“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”**

John 14:23 *It looks as if the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the true believer in such a way that we know he is there indwelling us and moving us away from our old ways into a new life that tends to be more righteous.*

10. **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: By which also ye are saved, if ye keep I memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”** **1 Corinthians 15:1-4** *The Gospel is your source of salvation in Christ. We must see that Christ took our punishment on the cross for our sins and was buried and rose again. To believe in vain is to doubt that Jesus was really raised from the dead. Your belief could be temporary, or it could be that your belief is not producing the fruit that it should. Maybe you are seeking to please Christ for salvation instead of, believing with your heart upon His work on the cross.*

11. **“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”** **2 Tim. 1:12** *Being a preacher of the Gospel confined Timothy to prison but that did not stop him*

nor make him ashamed of the Gospel. He continued to confess Christ no matter what they did to him. His steadfast faith in Christ remained strong as he knew that his future delivery was a sure thing. If we deliver the gospel, we will probably on occasion even in the United States be mocked and treated willfully against us. They will try to stop us from preaching Christ as the only source of salvation. Are you handing out tracts and seizing the opportunity to give out the Word of God to others either verbally or in written form.?

12. **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” 1 John 5:13** *You can know for sure that you have eternal life according to this scripture. But you must be a believer. John the apostle tells us how we know this as a fact: One good effect of salvation is that you can pray in the will of God and get an answer. God has a way of proving himself in the life of the born-again believer. Has God proved himself to you? True faith often has events in which God speaks to us in a private and personal way and usually through his Word.*
13. **“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3** *There is a new birth for the*

genuine Christian. New birth implies that one who has been born again. Born again saints live a life that is as if they have been born all over again. The changed life involves faith in Christ. Sins begin to drop off in the new birth. The person is under the direction of the Holy Spirit, but he/she must yield to him. If yielding is not done, then the Holy Spirit will bring discipline. The new person will eventually hate sin and live more righteously for God.

14. **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.” 1 John 5:1** *To believe that Jesus is the Christ means: one believes that Jesus is the Son of God and is just as much God as the Father and the Holy Spirit are God. Christ is also the **savior** in that he gave his life for the forgiveness of sins of the believer. Have you been saved from your sins?*
15. **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17** *It is true that the Bible is all the believer needs to be moved toward God’s perfection unto righteousness in his life.*
16. **“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt**

keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” Psalm 12:6-7 *The words of the Bible are the words of the Lord. These are the only words that you can trust as being from God. Human teachers of any flavor might be in error so stick close to the Word of God as your guide in life. I believe the KJV is the perfect source of God's word today. Many of the other Bibles have spot on errors as they have been developed by men's thinking.*

17. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” John 14:6 *To come unto the Father means that one has been saved from his sins, and only Jesus Christ does that. Jesus Christ is the only way to God despite there being many so-called ways to God. Many religions have pathways to a God that does not really exist. Or they have a works-based salvation which is totally denied by God. You will even see religions that offer salvation based upon both works and a faith of sorts that is not saving faith.*

18. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us.” 1 John 2:19 *If a person is not following the doctrines of the apostles, then they are not saved and not born again. Some religious organizations are making it up as they go along. They are*

following doctrines made up by men who were not apostles. If someone claims to be an apostle in the same sense that Peter and Paul are apostles, then they are liars. Acts 1:21-22 states that: “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” Thus no one except those that saw him in his resurrected body can design the doctrines of the Church today. If you cannot find it in the Bible, then beware that someone is pulling the wool over your eyes of the truth! Notice that they were choosing Mathias to replace Judas as one of the twelve apostles. Paul became the final apostle, as he became a witness of his resurrection when Jesus spoke directly to Paul such that he heard with his ears the Lord Jesus. So, anyone who puts out a church doctrine today must either have seen the resurrected Christ, or he must state a doctrine that is equivalent to some already biblically established doctrine. I do not think that people are seeing Christ today so be careful who you follow.

- 19. “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7** Obviously a Christian cannot just ask for anything. One has to be in tune with God wonderfully and only ask

things that will give him glory to answer. Thus, one must abide in him and have Christ's words richly in his mind to be able to ask assuredly in prayer for something or someone. That is why you will want to make scriptures like these a hearty investment of your time. Are you praying for someone's salvation or someone's healing of disease, then make scripture something you are willing to invest time in.

20. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." Isaiah 43:10 *We as servants of the one true God are to understand and teach that the God of Isaiah is the only God that has ever been or that ever will be.*

21. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who health all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;" Psalm 103:2-4 *God is the only supreme being who can forgive your sins, heal your diseases, and redeem your life from destruction. He wants to make you into a person of faith who will make others aware of Jesus Christ and what he can do in one's life.*

22. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be

made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 *You can ask God for anything. He wants to be your Savior. He wants to make you into a witness to his wonderful love. God wants to be glorified, and he wants you to have a part in that event.*

23. **“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.” Psalm 4:8** *Sleep is good for all people, but is especially life enhancing for the born again believer in Jesus Christ. Let the peace of Jesus enter your mind and heart as you lay down for sleep.*
24. **“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct they paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6** *Our minds can make us imagine all sorts of things. Some good and some bad. But if we acknowledge God by our lifestyle, we are assured of the best pathway for us to travel on.*
25. **“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” Psalm 41:1** *Does your heart cry out when you see someone suffering from a lack of either spiritual or physical needs being fulfilled? Everyone should help the poor when he can. When Jesus was walking the earth, he took an interest in the troubles of others and often was their helper in whatever their greatest*

need was. You can always ask others what their greatest need is.

26. **“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28** *Sometimes in life things really look bad and troublesome. But we notice that in the end God can work all things out for ours and others good.*
27. **“Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” 1 Timothy 6:17** *Earthly riches will come to an end or vanish away. So, enjoy the things that God hath provided in anticipation of eternal rewards in heaven.*
28. **Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” 1 John 2:22** *To be an atheist is to deny the Father and the Son. That person is clearly against Christ, although he may not know it.*
29. **And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” 1 John 4:3** *The antichrist spirit has always been in the world, but some day the antichrist will be a person who will likely be a king of*

some sort. The antichrist will claim to be your god and will lead people astray with his traps and deception.

30. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was one delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3 *We are to contend for the faith by our words and actions and lifestyle. The true believer will be looking for opportunities to tell the gospel to others.*

31. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Romans 8:16-17 *The Holy Spirit makes it clear to his own in some way that they are a son or daughter of God. We should ask ourselves the question: What am I enduring for him? Is Satan resisting your every effort for God, are there things occurring in which you are suffering for you faith in Christ. Resistance can be a test of faith. Are you being resisted in your effort to contend for the faith? The World, the flesh, and the Devil will try to get you to give up working righteousness even in the face of resistance.*

32. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Psalm 119:9 *The Holy Spirit directs us to His word to find out what is*

important for us to think about and do. God is very pleased when we make it a habit of study and making personal applications to His Word.

33. **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24** *If one takes the Word of God into his heart, it gives life eternal, because the person has received the Holy Spirit into his heart and his life and is moved from the “lost forever” position to life with God in Heaven. Some hear the Word of God and believe, some do not. Some cherish the word of God as a source of life while others try to use it to satisfy earthly rewards. You have to believe on the God who sent Jesus Christ rather than some false teacher who wants your money or accolades.*
34. **“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for -ever.” Isaiah 40:8** *We see things that come and go in this world, but the one thing that is going to last forever is the word of God!*
35. **“Wherefore I say unto you. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.” Matthew 12:31** *Therefore, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is unbelief. Those who continually reject the Holy Spirit’s work portraying Christ as Savior are*

blaspheming the Holy Spirit. If this state continues, they will not receive forgiveness for their sins. Thus, today, as in Christs time, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a continuous state of being rather than one particular sin. It is a state of unbelief. A person of unbelief is in danger of forfeiting the forgiveness of his sins. There is a point in one's life when God could give them over to their sins if they continue in denial of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and application of Christs work on the cross for that individual's forgiveness. It is possible to be given over to a reprobate mind. Romans 1:28

36. **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”** Hebrews 4:16 *As a believer we can ask for anything, but especially when we are in desperate need of something. God recognizes our every plea, even when we have sinned.*
37. **“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”** Luke 10 *“When there is success in our ministry it is His work, not ours.”*
38. **“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** James 5:16 *If I have injured you in some way then I should confess that as*

my fault, but we are to confess our sins to God. Only God can forgive sins, neither I nor any priest or preacher has the authority to forgive sins. Go directly to God with your confession of sins. If you are a Christian, you are already forgiven, but get honest in your admission of sin to God and He will cleanse you of the effects of that sin through Jesus Christ.

39. **“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3** *It is a miracle of sorts when God heals us of things that break our hearts. He knows that we need our hearts and minds to be admonished by God.*
40. **“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” Proverbs 29:25** *One of the affairs of life is where we think we need to be liked by someone, so we fearfully try to impress that person. God says to not do that, but to only do things without the attempt to make someone like us. Instead of fearing man we should fear God with reverence for his perfect holiness, because he watches us to see if we will move our lives to a more perfect lifestyle that lives according to his laws and rules. They can laugh all they want to at us for pursuing righteousness. The only defense we need is from God.*
41. **“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and**

hallowed it.” Exodus 20:11 *There is no reason to think that God’s days are not 24-hour periods of time. God can spend as much or as little time as he wants in his process of creation. For man to make wine out of grapes takes months of growth of the grape vine and then the harvest, the stamping and so forth. But notice that Jesus turned water into wine in an instant of time or maybe no time at all. (John 2: 1-12) God even says of himself, “Is anything too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27) You will have a bit of trouble if you read the Bible and decide that a day for God could be a really long time period. The longest day for God in the Bible is one thousand years.*

42. **“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Ephesians 1:12-13** *When you believed in Jesus Christ, you were sealed by the holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity. I think that means that you as a believer cannot lose your salvation. Being sealed by the Holy Spirit is a gracious gift of God that demonstrates the authenticity of the believer’s relationship with Him. It signifies God’s ownership, authority, and commitment to His people. Christians who are sealed with the holy Spirit are delegated to proclaim, teach, minister, and defend God’s*

Word and His gospel. It is a promise of eternal life and security. The word holy in holy Spirit means that this description of God is one of perfect holiness that exists in a Spirit form; Holy Spirit is the form of God that is present inside the believer and cannot be seen with human eyes. There are other spirits in this world and none of them except the Holy Spirit can be said to be God almighty.

43. **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:21-23** *Just because they name Jesus in cults and isms does not prove they are Christians. Many claim to do miracles, but are they really from God? If you really have come to God, you will recognize that you needed him as your Saviour. It is not the outward profession but the inward relationship to a crucified but resurrected and living Savior that counts as genuine.*

44. **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should**

come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9 *God is willing to forgive and cleanse any sinner who is willing to change his ways.*

45. **“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.”**

James 2:23 *Have you been credited with the righteousness that comes from faith in Christ? That is what the word imputed means. You did not do good work to get your salvation. Christ did the good works, and you just believed! You should be jumping for joy at that outcome.*

46. **“Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doeth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” 1 Corinthians 15:50-52** *You cannot inherit incorruption from your parents, you can only inherit corruption. Someday, God is going to take our corrupted bodies and make them incorruptible as they shine with a new glory. Notice how sudden this comes about. It is like a trumpet sounding and bang the Christian has a new glorified body. I remember my neighbor getting woke up in the morning with several men outside his window awakening him loudly on a trumpet on*

his birthday. Needless to say, I woke up too, but still with my old corruptible body, I am looking forward to hearing God's trumpet call!

47. **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Revelation 3:10** *This is Jesus talking to the Church of Philadelphia. This Church is one of the only ones that did not hear a rebuke from him. Some think this church has existed from the 1700' s to the present. This is the evangelical church that gives out the gospel to the worldlings. Notice it says that because thou has kept the word of my patience...Is Jesus saying that these will be kept out of the earth during the great tribulation that God is sending on the earth? They will be raptured out of this world of evil before it gets to its highest point in temptations during the time of the Antichrist.*
48. **“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:9** *The wrath of God will be given out to mankind during the last few years before Christ comes to establish his millennial reign. It will also be given to unbelievers who end up in hell.*
49. **“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the**

trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1

Thessalonians 4:16-17 *This is another verse that points to the rapture of the genuine church members. Notice that we will be caught up into the clouds which means that we will be leaving this earth for a time and season while Satan has his time to deceive mankind on the earth.*

50. **“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” Matthew 6:3-4** *When you do good deeds and give money to God’s causes within the Church, you will be rewarded openly by God the Father. Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.*

51. **“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17** *Jesus spoke these words to remind us that with God it is golden to have a pure study and recognition of his word as spelled out best, as I believe, in the KJV.*

52. **“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11:13** *God loves his children and his most precious gift to us is the Holy Spirit to guide us unto righteousness.*

Chapter 13

The Story of one world

Government

Are you tired of the ongoing talking points put out by those that favor and those that hate Donald Trump. One of the reasons they hate Trump is his effort to deny the behind-the-scenes people who want to allow world government to come to pass. The sovereignty of the United States is in jeopardy when such is the case. You hear such comments as “you will own nothing and be happy.” Socialism is the system in which the government dictates almost everything to its citizens. In this system reward from work is not dependent upon your effort but upon what some governing authority wants to do with your productivity. The Bible says, “let him who will not work, not eat!” (2 Thessalonians 3:10) But according to the one worlders they want it to say let him who will not work get to eat just as well. After all we can’t just let him starve to death. If you are a politician all you have to do to get votes is promise someone a handout. Here is another problem, what about religious worship? Let’s just make up a one world religion and stop all the arguments about who is right or wrong. You can bet that this one world religion will have plenty of things wrong with it. It will probably make Jesus Christ only one way to be saved out of dozens of salvation plans. The Antichrist will deny that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Jesus said, “I am the way the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6)

The first effort toward one world Government was by Nimrod: When God created human beings He gave us dominion. The Bible says: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion over the fish

of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Gen.1:28 From this we see that God wanted us to spread out over the earth. Nimrod had a different agenda. His was the first Global agenda. He was the Antichrist of his day. Nimrod is told about in Genesis 10, where we are told that he was a mighty warrior, hunter, and also the ruler of the Kingdom of Shinar (Genesis 10:8-10) In the next chapter we learn that he decided to get the people to build a tower that would reach to heaven. He obviously wanted a heaven on earth existence for himself mostly. He saw himself as the leader of the people, but his plans were corrupt according to the Word of God. His selfish plans were a foreshadow of the current Globalist agenda and the coming of the anti-Christ. Nimrod wasn’t content to rule over his own but wanted to rule over all mankind. He had pride and arrogance and tried to interfere with what God wanted. In retrospect, God intervened and confused men’s language such that they were forced to gather in groups and spread out over the earth among those they could understand. The Globalists want to bring all under one umbrella with a few powerful people in charge. Globalism is in direct opposition to nationalism, national sovereignty, and self-governance. Naturally they also want religious beliefs made into one belief system. This works against God’s governance by Jesus Christ during His millennial reign. There is only one way to worship God, and that way is by Jesus Christ alone. The antichrist will not like this idea because he wants to be the one that is worshipped. We see this same spirit working today in the Globalist agenda. They want to make a name for themselves rather than

being obedient to the only God of this universe we live in. They will be attempting to rob Jesus of his right to rule mankind on the earth. True Christians will be the ultimate resistance to this world agenda. No human is going to make a utopia out of our world. It is obvious to me that God confused our languages in order to allow for nation states to exist. The confusion of language by God sent the message that one nation or person in power would lead to corruption of the major kind. The natural mind of man is to seek to be the king on the mountain top and to do whatever it takes to get there. The natural mind does not consider that his time runs out here on the earth. It will not matter how popular, powerful, or rich that person is when his body dies.

Chapter 14

The story of the Church age

Have you ever wondered what the end will be like? You and I will both have an end. Nations of the world have ended as the governments usually corrupt themselves. There is a story of our end which has two outcomes. One is bad and one is good. Will you go to Hell or Heaven? God is working to make us want to go to heaven. He allows troubles and snares to direct our path. The plain truth is that you will go to heaven if you have faith in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.

I think the end times will have started when the church is removed from the earth in the rapture and translation of the saints. Scriptural history makes me think that God removes us before the great tribulations of the end times. Noah was removed from the effects of the flood. Lot was removed from Sodom before its destruction. God opened the Red Sea allowing the Jews to cross out of the oncoming danger of the Egyptian army. And the Army perished as the sea closed upon them.

I believe that God's main purpose of the great tribulation is to bring the Jews to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. At the same time many gentiles will also be converted to Christ. The Bible says that the Jews will look upon Him whom they have pierced. See Zechariah Chpt. 12. The Story of the end is not my story but God's. The story of the end is written in the book of Revelation. Revelation reveals the end to John the apostle. He is instructed to write about seven churches. I believe that the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are probably a preview of the history of the church in general. It would seem Jesus Christ pays a visit to these seven literal churches to show us what will happen in the years to come from about 100 A.D. in reference to the

church in general. These seven churches were literal, which depict the church in the ages to come, which is probably the last 2000 years or so of church history. Perhaps there will be some of these types of churches throughout the age of the church, but with some church types dominant during certain years of history. For example

1. The Church at Ephesus:

This Church lasted from about 33 A.D. to 100 A.D.

The Church at Ephesus was the church that made a “beach landing” for Christ. The members were persecuted and put to death for their faith. This church was led by Peter, Paul and the Apostles. All of the Apostles except John were killed by a violent death, which no doubt was disheartening to the church. Jesus states that these Christians left their first love. Many of them expected Jesus to return after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., so they may have relaxed their efforts.

2. The Church at Smyrna:

This Church lasted from about 100 A.D. to 313 A.D.

The word myrrh is a tree resin with bitter taste. It is a symbol of death and that is a vivid description of this church because many of these were executed and persecuted by the Romans from early 100 A.D. to late 200 A.D. In 312 A.D, Constantine held to an early version of Christianity, and then in 313 A.D., the Edict of Milan ended the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire.

3. The Church at Pergamos

This Church lasted from about 314 A.D. to about 500 A.D.

With the collapse of the Roman empire Satan changed his strategy from destroying the church from without to destroying the church from within. Satan caused Constantine to unite Christianity with pagan idol worship and feasts, and fornication. Pagan Rome was led by idolatry and the church of this era became one that worshipped idols. Perhaps Satan wanted to destroy the Church from within. The supposed church became one that was led by false teaching and gave rise to the next church of Thyatira.

4. The Church of Thyatira

This church lasted from about the early 500's A.D. to about the early 1500, s A.D.

There have always been genuine Christians, and these opposed the Roman Catholic Church which I believe had less numbers of true Christians. This was the Papal church of Rome which was still in the paganism brought about by the church at Smyrna. The early genuine church was led by the Waldenses, and the Albigenses. Non-Roman-Catholic Christians were persecuted by the church of Rome during this era. During this church age and many believe that Papal Rome tortured and killed over 50 million people they deemed heretics, most from Christ's true church.

5. The Church of Sardis

The Church of Sardis was prevalent from the early 1500's to about 1800 A.D.

During this era Sardis was the church of Protestantism. In fact, the word "Sardis" means the "escaping one". At this time Martin Luther started

the reformation period when he claimed that the Roman Church had false teaching and tyranny along with Papal claims of infallibility. This church countered the Roman Church but had problems of its own. Rev 3:4 says: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy." There are true Christians even within Protestantism. Perhaps the best version of Christianity is found in many of the Independent Baptist Churches because they have not necessarily come out of Protestantism but have existed all along the church age although they were not necessarily called by the name Baptist. There have always been true born-again believers of all ages, and they would seem to be few in number within the Roman church or Protestantism. Many are leaving Catholicism and joining other churches.⁴ During this era the Roman church forbade people from reading the book published by William Tyndale in 1525 A.D. who published the first English new Testament. Tyndale was burned at the stake, and he cried out, "Lord open the King of England's eyes." His prayer was answered in 1540 when King Henry VIII of England authorized the publication of the King James Bible. According to historians up to 50 Million humans perished under the persecutions of the Waldenses, Albigenses and many others who were protesting the Roman Church. It was in 1798 that Napoleon's army marched into Rome and captured the Pope thus

⁴ Things That Count by Oleson Joe Lyng Goodnewspublishing Pg 178-9, 2019

theoretically ending the dominion of the Roman Catholicism for the time being.

The era of the Church of Philadelphia.

This church existed from 1798 to 1866 A.D.

The church of Philadelphia did not have one word of condemnation from Christ. The Gospel was preached throughout the world. The evangelical church in America and the British Isles took the gospel to the whole world. A large number of souls were won to Christ during this time known as The Great Awakening because of the missions of the following great men of God.

1. Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758 was a great intellectual preacher in America.
2. Francis Asbury 1745-1716 was a Methodist "Circuit rider." He traveled thousands of miles and preached thousands of sermons and was severely persecuted for doing so.
3. William Carey 1751-1834 was known as the Baptist father of modern missions. His work opened up missions to China, Japan, Korea, India, Africa, and the isles of the sea.
4. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) was known as the prince of preachers and worked in the Reformed Baptist tradition.

Although the church of Philadelphia was dominant during it's time, there are some churches but few in number who preach and carry the gospel to all countries in the time we are now living in 2025. The book of Revelation says that "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come

upon the whole word, to test those who dwell on the earth.” Rev 3:9,10
This church will not be dominant during the time immediate to Christ's return for the church, so it will be kept from the hour of trial in 2 ways, either by, time line, or by being caught up to be with Christ in the rapture of the church.

The era of the church of Laodicea from mid-1800's to present.

The Church of Laodicea was the most criticized church by Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation. During this era, we see that the power of the laity is being turned over to pastors and deacons instead of individual members of the church. Jesus describes this last church as lukewarm and declares that he will spew them out of his mouth. The description of the last times is well spoken by Timothy in (2 Timothy 3:1-5) “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” We are without a doubt living on this day of the church of Laodicea. Just look at all the money-grubbing preachers and teachers that are on the internet or television. Some of these preachers have become filthy rich by getting patrons to give to their so-called ministry. They fly around in jets and live in mansions. Ministries are about self-interest rather than Christian service. All anyone has to do to draw a crowd is to be a good entertainer. We see a

lot of that. Entertainment is a project the world loves, but God's people are about sharing the gospel and its truth.

Chapter 15

The story of pain

While writing this book I experienced the wonderfully harsh pain of a kidney stone needing to pass from my bladder to my ureter. That is absolutely the worst pain I have encountered. They say that it is worse than childbirth. I could believe that. Our whole history of mankind is loaded with stories of pain. It makes you wonder why people do not believe in the afterlife of the born-again believer. In heaven, there will be no pain, nor will there be the commonplace miseries of earth dwelling. After the kidney stones I experienced a C-Diff infection which hospitalized me for 5 days. The infection was the result of the medication I took for the kidney stone which killed off my good bacteria residing in my intestines. After I came home from this, I got sick with a cough, sore throat and laryngitis. Today as I write this, I am well...thank God. I think we have pain of sickness to remind us that this life is going to end someday. For the Christian it can end two ways either by death and resurrection or by translation in the rapture at the end of the age. Essentially there are two types of pain. Pain is either emotional as when someone harms another with verbal criticism or when someone's body has pain from sickness or injury. Let's look at some of the words associated with these two types of pain: First we will look at the words of physical pain:

1. Sickening: Have you ever needed to vomit from a sick stomach? That type of sickness will make you wonder if life is worth living. My wife and I both got sick from eating out at a restaurant (which we now never eat at). It was lucky that we had

two bathrooms at home. As I remember this event, we laid on the floor near the commode. Not pleasant.

2. Aching: this type of pain comes when a particular part of your body sends you a signal that something is not right. Ever had a toothache?
3. Throbbing: This type of pain comes in equally spaced intervals. It is there for a split second and then gone, but back intervallic.
4. Cramping: Cramps involve muscles that tense up. I have toe cramps in which the toe wants to bend a wrong way, and it hurts.
5. Sharp: ever stubbed your foot.
6. Burning pain: have you ever eaten a meal that caused your stomach and esophagus to burn?
7. Stabbing: This pain is sudden and intense.
8. Raw: Have you ever had a sunburn? You will get a raw feeling in your skin.

Emotional pains

1. Anguish: this pain is a result of having done something stupid. Ever notice how a quarterback looks after throwing an interception?
2. Distress: His willful disobedience to his parents caused them distress.
3. Trauma: Emotional, sexual, or physical abuse, bullying, assault, war, genocide, natural disasters, loss of loved ones, and childbirth can cause trauma.

4. Misery: poor living conditions can cause misery. Almost anything can be described as a misery of some type.
5. Affliction: anything that seems to be great suffering.
6. Here are some more words that describe emotional pain: torment, tribulation, woe, heartache, sorrow, stress, irritated, upset.

Historically pain is treated by physicians, psychiatrists, counselors, and soul mates. It comes to my mind now the question of did Jesus treat the pain he encountered while he was on the earth? Did he address physical pain?

Matthew 4:24: “And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.”

As we can see Jesus healed all sorts of physical and mental pain during his ministry on this earth. While we cannot perform the miracles that he did, we can use verbal language to make pain less intense in others. The most helpful thing to do when someone is suffering is to listen to them and offer to pray for them. Prayer often brings God into a situation and sometimes even a healing can occur in the mind or body of the sick person or a lessening of his or her pain.

Turn you eyes upon Jesus

Chapter 16

Just one more thing or two

It takes courage to overcome doubt. During world war 1, a British commander was preparing to lead his soldiers back to battle. They'd been on furlough, and it was a cold rainy, muddy day. Their shoulders sagged because they knew what lay ahead of them: mud, blood, possible death. Nobody talked, nobody sang. It was a heavy time. As they marched along, the commander looked into a church. Back in the church he saw the figure of Christ on the cross. At that moment, something happened to the commander. He remembered the One who suffered, died and rose again. There was victory and there was triumph. As the troops marched along, he shouted out. "Eyes right, march! Every eye turned to the right, and as the soldiers marched by, they saw Christ on the cross. Something happened to that company of men. Suddenly they saw triumph after suffering, and they took courage. With shoulders straightened, they began to smile as they went. You see, anything worthwhile in life will be a risk that demands courage. Christ today is not hanging on that cross, because God exalted him to heaven to be with His Father after his resurrection.

Living with significance requires faith. How is your faith? The clock on the wall is ticking and it is really about what is inside you. Is the Holy Spirit inside of you because of faith? Are you going to live a life that is a story about your Savior? The Clock just keeps on ticking. Do you hear it? Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock.

Hopefully your story will have these qualities in your life on planet earth:

1. Do you enjoy having fellowship with Christ and his redeemed people? (1 John 1:3)
2. Would people say you walk in the light, or walk in the darkness? (1 John 1:6-7)
3. Do you admit and confess your sins to God? (1 John 1:8)
4. Are you obedient to God's word? (1 John 2:3-5)
5. Does your life indicate you love God rather than the world? (1 Joh 2:29)
6. Is your life characterized by doing what is right? (1 John 2:29)
7. Do you seek to maintain a pure life? (1 John 3:3)
8. Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life, and have you stopped sinning as a way of life, not a total absence of sin? (1 John 3:14)
9. Do you demonstrate love for other Christians? (1 John 3:14)
10. Do you "walk the walk" rather than "talk the talk?" (1 John 3:18-19)
11. Do you maintain a clear conscience? (1 John 3:21)
12. Do you experience victory in your Christian walk? (1 John 5:4)
13. Do you share the gospel with others? (Psalms 107:2),
14. Are you looking forward to the coming of Christ? (2 Timothy 4:8)
15. Has the Holy Spirit made you aware of your salvation?

The Holy Spirit regenerates and renews the believer (Titus 3:5). At the moment of salvation, the Spirit baptizes the believer into the Body of Christ (Romans 6:3). Believers receive the new birth by the power of the Spirit (John 3:5–8). The Spirit comforts believers with fellowship and joy as they go through a hostile world (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The Spirit, in His mighty power, fills believers with “all joy and peace” as they trust the Lord, causing believers to “overflow with hope” (Romans 15:13). You really should put your hope in Jesus Christ if you haven’t done so. So here is the ultimate question: What’s your story?

“We keep a comin.”

“The Grapes of wrath.” By John Steinbeck

Chapter 17

Stories of ordinary People

John Steinbeck was the master of writing details. This chapter is about ordinary people. Nobody wants to be classified as ordinary usually, but in “The Grapes of Wrath” he details a woman’s statement about how ordinary people just keep on a comin. There are around 8 billion people in the world and most of us are ordinary people that lead ordinary lives. I list a few ordinary people stories for you to think about.

Story 1: “Luck” by Mark Twain

Are you a lucky person? This person, Lieutenant General Lord Arthur Scoresby. Was the main character of Mark Twain’s writing known as “Luck”....

The narrator attends a banquet in London in honor of a military genius, Lieutenant General Lord Arthur Scoresby. He relishes the opportunity to look upon the man, as do many others in attendance who gaze at him with worship. An acquaintance sitting to the narrator’s left, a clergyman who used to be a military instructor, informs him quietly that Scoresby is actually an absolute fool. Knowing him to be a truthful man, the narrator is surprised by this revelation and aims to find out the details. A few days later, the narrator gets the story from the Reverend. About forty years ago, the Reverend was a military instructor at Woolwich, where young Scoresby was one of the students. His preliminary examination showed him to be stupid and ignorant. Moved by Scoresby’s pitiful performance, the Reverend tutored him relentlessly on Caesar, the one subject he had a little knowledge of. By a stroke of luck, Scoresby’s exam focuses only on the things he knows about

Caesar, and he passes easily. The Reverend drills him similarly in math, which goes the same way. Scoresby even wins first prize. The Reverend's conscience tortures him. He only wanted to ease Scoresby's failure a little but inadvertently set him on a path of unearned responsibility. When the Crimean War breaks out and Scoresby is made a captain, the Reverend is terrified with the possibilities for disaster. He uses his savings to buy a cornetcy in his regiment to help as much as he can. Scoresby blunders constantly, but no one else knows his true aptitude, so everything is interpreted as genius. His reputation for brilliance continues to grow. He advances from grade to grade until he rises to colonel during a crucial battle. The Reverend is sure this means death for everyone. Their regiment defends a crucial position. Scoresby orders a charge over a hill for no apparent reason. They charge into an unprepared Russian army. The Russians could kill them all without much resistance, but they believe the entire English army is on the way. The Russians flee in confusion, resulting in a spectacular Allied victory. The Marshal decorates Scoresby right on the field. It turns out Scoresby made a simple mistake. He was ordered to fall back to the right; he got mixed up and went forward to the left. Because of this blunder, he achieved glory that will never fade. Scoresby is as good and honest as a man can be, but he's a complete fool. Until now, only he and the Reverend knew. It's only by an astonishing streak of luck that he's accomplished everything in his life. Every one of his numerous decorations and medals is a remembrance of some remarkable stupidity. The best thing that can happen to a man is to be born lucky.

This man was lucky, but the ordinary average man will face obstacles. The last obstacle a man or woman will face is death. Or maybe if you are lucky, the rapture before you die. Either way I hope your story before God is a good one. It could even be like Scoresby's.

Story # 2 The story of Esther:

One of the characters in the book of Esther is named Haman. He wanted to eradicate the Jews, but we see that God intervenes to save their race from annihilation. In this story, we find that the Jews had been displaced from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who came against the city in 608 BC. (1 Kings 24:1-16)

Esther also presents a prophetic interpretation in the following way: The spiritual climate of today's world is much likened to the book of Esther. Just as then and now, there are so few that obey the gospel and worldliness is favored over God's ways. Perhaps Haman is a shadow representative of the antichrist that will appear in the last days. His efforts to eliminate the Jews sound much like what we see today. On October 6th 2023 Israel was attacked by Hamas and numerous Jews were killed in a very unexpected raid of Israel. The radical Muslims want to destroy the Jews.

In the story of Esther, the return of the Jews from their captivity at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar would face the challenge of the temple being in ruin. Chapter 1 of Esther is about the wife refusing to obey her husband. Is this a shadow and a picture of how most of the Jews in Jesus day refused to obey their king, and had him executed on the cross.

King Ahasuerus held a banquet and called for all the princes and rulers from all the corners of his empire and he wanted them to see his wonderful and beautiful wife Vashti, but Vashti refused to appear with him at his party. So Memucan made a proposal to the king: If it please the king, let her go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. (Esth. 1:19) Does this seem like the picture of God sending his queen (the Jews) into captivity because they refused to believe in Jesus Christ?

In Chapter 2 we see that Ahasuerus had the chamberlain keeper of the woman to bring before him to see who he would pick to replace Vashti. And it came to pass that he favored Esther who was brought to the king by Mordecai who was a cousin to Esther. But Mordecai and Esther denied their nationality of being Jews. *Likewise, you will see today that where people are out of the will of God they will say very little about their faith in Christ.*

In Chapter 3 we see that Haman is introduced. Haman is an antisemite. But still the king does not know that Mordecai and Esther are Jews. In the remaining chapters we see a reversal of Haman's antisemitism influence upon the king. However, Haman persuades Ahasuerus to make a decree that the Jews be eradicated. It came to pass that Esther through prayer and petition to the King that this decree be revoked. We also see that Haman was bitterly protesting Mordecai to the point of executing him. The king realized that he had to make things right, so

he ordered that Haman be executed instead of Mordecai! The whole story comes to be realized by the providence, much like in today's world we see the providence of God overruling evil through the work of the Holy Spirit. Do we see similarities in that someday God will undo the work of Satan by returning to earth in His Glory and putting Satan into bondage where he cannot deceive until a later time. Namely the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. It is miraculous how God uses his providence to square up the world unto righteousness in the end.

Chapter 18

The Story of a Spiritual awakening

When you wake up in the morning, a new day has dawned. When you wake up spiritually, you realize that God has shed his grace on you in a personal way! Your sins are forgiven, and you know it. You begin to realize the changes God is making in your life. Old habits and sins will in time disappear. You will realize that you have been redeemed by God through Jesus Christ. For some, it happens in an instant, like for example, the salvation of Paul while he was on the road to Damascus. For others it may seem to happen a step at a time, but in reality, it really happened when you believed in Jesus Christ. To the step by step person his or her salvation seemed to grow up to realizing it, but in reality it happened sometime in the past that maybe he or she cannot be certain about when it happened. Maybe they begin to realize that some certain event in their past was the true time of salvation. A spiritual awakening is, generally speaking, a newfound faith like awareness of a spiritual reality. A spiritual awakening can be gradual or rapid, and it can mean different things to different people. When one is truly saved, God writes his or her name in the Lamb's book of life and the Holy Spirit will confirm such in some way to the person. Sometimes people are saved and then fall away for a time, but God will renew their faith in some way so that they are back, in their own mind, into God's grace, although they really were never in a lost condition. According to Psalm 107:2 we are to tell the world that we have been saved. I too am one of those who has been redeemed from my sins by the Lord Jesus Christ. That is one of the reasons I wrote this book. To tell you all about how to get

redeemed by the Lord. It will take faith, and if you seek him with all your heart, He will reveal himself to you and make you bound for an eternity of life in paradise!

Chapter 19

**Your story will either be the best times or
The worst of times**

I began this book with the story of criminals. You know who the ultimate criminal is, don't you. His motive is to make you think that your ultimate place in life will be a result of how good a person you are in this life. So, let's take a look at several types of behavior that one could undertake, in their thinking, to make their lives to end up in paradise-heaven, although in reality only faith in Jesus Christ will get you into heaven! *And you need to know that faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)*

Works Story #1 “The work of philanthropy:”

Are you a giver? Giving is a good thing unless it is done to get something better in return. Many people think that doing good works will make them eligible for heaven. But the Bible says the following: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9 See also Titus 3:5 **“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.**

The person who believes he is saved by good works says: “I cannot imagine in the final day that the Almighty would damn me. After all, look at the money I've given.”

Works story #2 “The work of Service.”

“I'm going to volunteer. I'm going to pitch in. I'm going to give my time. I'm going to use my skill and expertise. I'm going to work in the food pantry. And when I am judged, I just can't imagine that God would

watch a video of my life, of me serving on Thanksgiving day with the homeless, and still send me to hell.”

Works story #3 “The work of Comprehension”

I believe there are many who know all the right words and can explain the gospel with very good clarity, and yet, in time they will fall away and go back to their old way of a sin-controlled life. Or maybe they even live in sin while at the same time yelling “praise the Lord.” The truth is that you can teach a parrot to tell the facts. The Scripture says: **“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21**

Works story #4 The work of comparison

Someone may not be the best person but as they look about in their world, they can find someone who is worse than them. But God’s word says: **“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”**

Romans 4:5

Works story #5 The works of ritual.

What about the works of baptism, prayers, beads, candles, church attendance, confession, communion, and confirmation? These activities will not get you into heaven!

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Galatians 3:5.

None of the works we do will get us into heaven. Have you ever heard the pastor say at someone's funeral that he was baptized therefore we will see him in heaven. He won't be there because he was baptized but because he had faith in God!

Works story #6 The work of Decision

People walk the aisle, sign that card, pray that prayer and believe they have trusted God with their decision. But is that the case? We will see what develops in that person's life. Did God write his name in the Lamb's book of life, or was it an emotional decision without the Holy Spirit's involvement?

Works story #7 The work of Restitution

Sometimes people get the idea that they must make things right by doing something to make things right. For example: what if you have stolen from someone. Your thinking is that you must make things right for God to accept you. God wants you to make things right if you can, but he won't save your soul because of it.

Romans 10:3 states: “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

Works story #8 The work of Affliction

This is called penance. Some people beat themselves up so (as they think) they will not have to suffer in Hell. We are not transformed by self-action but by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Self-flagellation will not make your sins go away.

Works story #9 The work of meditation

When you use your mind, are you pleasing yourself, others, or God.

Psalm 19:14 states: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

We must be redeemed by God, and our own thoughts or actions such as going on a retreat will not save us. If you try to please God by your thoughts and actions, it will fail. Likewise, be not a people pleaser but a God pleaser with faith.

Chapter 20

When the final curtain falls

When I started this book, I told you not to sneak a peek at the end, but now you are here. You should have learned by now that good works are the result of salvation but not the cause! We all by nature seek for affirmation, but the truth is that our affirmation seeking is faulty unless we realize the love of God has already affirmed those with faith. So you and I must come to Christ for affirmation and entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

Some day soon the curtain on the play known as the “church age” play will fall. Is it just me, or do you see what I see going on in this world. It looks as if this drama packed world we live in is winding down. You know what Shakespeare wrote in the play Macbeth...Life is but a shadow, a player strutting and fretting his hour upon the state and then is heard no more. Where will we all be when the last curtain falls and our play has come to its end. Will there be an audience that will stand and cheer or will our audience be quiet and subdued by our character. Our real audience is God and his good angels and perhaps a few that have gone before us by acting in their last play or performance. So, when is Jesus Christ going to return to earth to redeem unto himself the real actors of the last curtain call. And what part will you have in this final episode? Are you a saint or a villain? When I began this Book, I told you about villains but followed it up with some good guys. I hope you realize by now that “good guys” are made by being influenced and trained by God. Are you an obscure actor in this drama known as life on planet earth, or are you famous among the people of this world? It would seem that obscurity more often than fame leads to being in God’s

good graces. That being said, God sometimes chooses famous people to get his message across. I think God likes it when we don't try to get ourselves into fame and fortune, but just play our part in this play known as "God's creation." God has given you a part to play. What have you done with that part? Do you know your lines? Can you say them with a voice that brings the truth in such a way that others will marvel at you for being an ambassador for God? What is your story? I believe that the worst story of all is someone who believes he will go to heaven based on his or her good works. And my prayer is that this book will make you want to "COME TO CHRIST," BUT COME TO HIM WITH NOTHING BUT FAITH. BECAUSE WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD. AND GOD IS YOUR REAL AUDIENCE. HE IS WATCHING YOU!

AND THE **HOLY SPIRIT** CAN MAKE YOUR STORY ONE
of
THE BEST STORIES EVER TOLD

Personal notes: