



Biblical Mysteries Revealed! by R. J. Adams



BIBLICAL MYSTERIES"???" REVEALED!!!

First edition 1995

Copyright © 1995 R. J. Adams

All rights reserved

All scripture verses are quoted from the new international version unless otherwise stated. Used by permission.

The holy bible: new international version, published by Zondervan bible publishers, copyright 1984 by the International Bible Society.

Preface

The book "Biblical Mysteries Revealed! Is the result of things I discovered while doing research for my first book "Countdown to 6000."

These subjects could not find a home in the prophetic study, so I have placed them together in this book. Each chapter is actually a topical study of a particular theme.

Many of the things in this book are of a theoretical nature, especially those concerning the ancient past and the virgin birth.

If you strongly disagree with some of the authors speculations or conclusions, remember, that these are all non-salvation issues and they are presented for the enjoyment of the reader, to stimulate one's imagination, and to promote discussion.

Perhaps in reading this book you yourself will discover some new perceptions and a new understanding of God's word.

Explanation of non biblical sources

The book of Jasher and the prophecies of Enoch are both mentioned in the bible. While they are not scripture they are useful in assisting our understanding of bible.

Joshua 10:13 KJV and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

2 Sam 1:18 KJV also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher?

Jude 1:14-15 KJV and Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

The book of Jubilees is an ancient book written by Jewish rabbis.

The writings of Josephus; Josephus lived in the first century A.D., during the same time period as Jesus Christ and the apostles. He was a general in the Roman army at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. because of this destruction and the scattering of the Jews, Josephus authored a large volume containing the history of the Jews and man covering the time from the creation of Adam to the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus drew from all of the documents available in his time to create his work, documents that are not available to us today.

From time to time I will be quoting from the works of Josephus. The works of Josephus can be purchased from any bookstore, for any who are interested in reading the entire book themselves.

Note: text printed in red are quotations from the bible. Text printed in blue are quotations from other sources.

Index

Chapter 1: The Mystery of the Pre-Adamic World	4
Chapter 2: The Mystery of Aging	10
Chapter 3: The Mystery of Pre-Flood Mankind	14
Chapter 4: The Mystery of The Canopy Theory	18
Chapter 5: The Mystery of Pre-Flood Geography	28
Chapter 6: The Mystery of Jerusalem, The Navel of The Earth	31
Chapter 7: The Mystery of Nations, Races, and Languages	33
Chapter 8: The Mystery of The Virgin Birth	37
Chapter 9: The Mystery of Marriage	43
Chapter 10: The Mystery of Divorce	53
Chapter 11: The Mystery of Polygamy	69
Chapter 12: The Mystery of Money	76

Chapter 1: The Mystery of the Pre-Adamic World

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the mysteries that God has set before man. God created the heavens and the earth and then created man and gave him dominion over the earth and all that was in it. God created man in his image, that is he gave man intellect and the ability to reason, along with many other God like qualities.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

He also gave man curiosity, especially where it concerns the hidden things of God. It is impossible for us in our human bodies to understand all of God's mysteries, because they are beyond our limited ability to comprehend them.

Job 11:7-9 "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens--what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave--what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.

Isaiah 55:9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Although we cannot understand all of God's mysteries, some of them he has intended to be made known to us, and for this reason he gave us the bible.

Daniel 2:28 NIV but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

Colossians 1:26 NIV the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

Daniel 12:4 NIV But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

As we draw nearer to the return of Christ, God is permitting us to uncover more of his mysteries.

In studying prophecy, one of the most frequent arguments against the theory that the history of Adamic creation (beings descended from Adam and Eve) will last for six thousand years, followed by the millennium, is that the earth is more than six thousand years old. The earth is very old indeed, in fact the scripture states that it was created "in the beginning."

Genesis 1:1 KJV In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Psalms 102:25 NIV In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Hebrews 1:10 NIV He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

When was "the beginning,?" it was obviously a very long time ago, perhaps millions or billions of years ago, when God created the heaven and the earth. God, the bible says, is from old, from everlasting.

Psalms 93:2 KJV Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

Psalms 90:2 KJV Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

God himself was in existence long before he created the universe, but he created it long before the species called "mankind" was placed upon the earth.

In the beginning, the earth was no doubt created perfect, as was all of God's creation.

Genesis 1:2 KJV And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Somehow, perhaps due to the effects of war between Satan and the angels of God, the earth became a formless void. The rebellion of Satan and his angels is the most likely time period when Pre-Adamic life on earth was destroyed. Satan has been continuously seeking to destroy the perfect works of God ever since he fell.

Luke 10:18 KJV And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Revelation 12:7-9 & 12 KJV And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Whatever cataclysm struck the earth and left it a formless void also destroyed the dinosaurs and all flesh and blood Pre-Adamic life forms. Before the creation of Adam, about six thousand years ago, the earth had already been populated by some type of beings that resemble modern day humans and by other now extinct forms of animal life.

When God created Adam, and then eve, he told them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth, meaning that it had Already been populated at some time in the past.

Genesis 1:28 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.

God gave the same command to Noah after the flood, using the same word that is translated into English, replenish. The exact same word in the Hebrew text is used in both cases. Some modern translations use the word "fill" in place of "replenish," but it makes no difference, as it is easy to see that God gave exactly the same command to both Adam and Noah, to repopulate the earth.

Genesis 9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

God will give this command again to those few people whom he will bring through the great tribulation. He will again order them to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

The time gap between the creation of the universe and the creation of Adam is the reason that scientists and theologians are unable to agree on the origins of man and the age of the earth.

The scientists are correct when they state that the earth is millions of years old, and that there were living beings inhabiting it in ages past. Where they are incorrect is in believing that these beings are the evolutionary ancestors of modern man.

The theologians recognize that modern man, created in the image of God is a relatively new life form, only existing for about six thousand years. Where the theologians err is in believing that the earth, the universe, and everything in it was created at the same time as man.

Isaiah 45:18 For this is what the LORD says-- he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited-- he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other.

The scriptures state that God formed the earth to be inhabited, which it was, long before modern day man was in existence.

There is a great gap of time between genesis 1:1 and the creation of Adam, about 6000 years ago. During the time of this gap numerous civilizations and races of beings have come and gone. We have for proof the fossilized evidence of these former creations, and the word of God which states that everything that happens has happened before, and will happen again.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 NIV What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow.

When you understand this, you then have no problem reconciling science and the bible. There is no absolute scientific fact that in any way disagrees with anything in the bible. The same God who created the universe, and everything in it, is the same God who inspired the prophets to write the bible. There is no disagreement between true science and the bible when

both are interpreted correctly.

Chapter 2: The Mystery of Aging

Before the flood humans lived much longer than they do today. God had commanded men before the flood to be vegetarians and had given them all of the plants for their food source.

Genesis 1:29-30 NIV Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

Along with the plants mentioned above, God also gave them another food source, a tree whose fruit contained a chemical compound that slowed or stopped the aging process. God gave them permission to eat from all of the trees in the garden, including the tree of life, only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden.

Genesis 2:8-9 NIV Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16-17 NIV And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

The tree of life mentioned above was the source of the chemical that slowed or stopped the aging process. We know this from the verse below telling what God did after man sinned.

Genesis 3:22 NIV And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

After man sinned God barred him from partaking of the tree of life and the special chemical it contained. Apparently Adam and Eve had ingested some of this chemical before they sinned and the longevity effect was

passed on to their children for a few generations.

Genesis 3:23-24 NIV So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

God prevented the human race from partaking any more from the tree of life before the flood, and then later removed it.

At this time there was also no pollution, the water and the air were pure. The animals also had plants and trees as their food source. The average age humans lived before the flood was 700 to 800 years. Methuselah it is recorded in the bible, lived for 969 years.

Without partaking of the trace element or chemical found in the fruit from the tree of life, the life span of mankind gradually decreased. For the first for the first seven or eight generations after the flood each generation lived about 100 years less than their parents until the average lifespan decreased to 70 or 80 years.

Genesis 9:29 NIV Altogether, Noah lived 950 years, and then he died.

Genesis 11:10-26 NIV This is the account of Shem. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad. And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters. When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters. When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters. When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters. When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters. When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Genesis 11:32 NIV Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.

Genesis 25:7-8 NIV Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.

Genesis 35:28 NIV Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Genesis 47:28 NIV Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven.

Genesis 50:26 NIV So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 34:7 NIV Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.

There may also be other conditions that changed after the flood that contributed to the rapid decrease in the life-span of humans. We will take a look at “the canopy theory” in another chapter.

Occasionally someone lives to be one hundred and twenty years of age. In fact, it is reported that there is a woman alive today (in 1995) in Arles, France has celebrated her one hundred and twentieth birthday. But, since the time of Moses this is a rarity, and to achieve seventy or eighty years of age before death is the norm, as the scripture says.

Psalms 90:10 NIV The length of our days is seventy years-- or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

After the return of Christ, during the millennium, God will reintroduce this food source containing the chemical that we are now lacking, and humans will again live for 700 to 800 years or more.

Revelation 22:1-22 NIV Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Isaiah 65:20 NIV "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

Also, the Earth will be purified at the beginning of the millennium, there will be no pollution, and the water and the air will be pure once again. Both man and animals will again be vegetarians.

Isaiah 65:25 NIV The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

There is no need to run out to the health food store and become a vegetarian today. God has decreed that the normal lifespan for man is 70 to 80 years, and that is what it will be until the millennium arrives. Nothing you can eat or refuse to eat will change that.

Revelation 22:14 & 19 NIV "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Isaiah 65:17 NIV "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

After the millennium and the 2nd resurrection, everyone will be given new spiritual bodies that will live forever without the use of special chemicals.

John 6:27 NIV Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

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

Chapter 3: The Mystery of Pre-Flood Mankind

Man, before the flood was not the stupid caveman that some people would lead us to believe. He was not some brute with a club dragging a woman around by the hair. Mankind was created with intelligence, he was created in the image of God.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Man was not created dumb, and gradually through evolution been getting smarter. Man was created intelligent and lost his knowledge due to sin, the flood, and the confusion of the languages.

According to the books of Enoch and Jasher, pre-flood humans had already invented birth control medicine, practiced specialized breeding of animals, knew how to write, used plants and herbs to make medicines for healing, built cities, and studied the stars. Remember, these pre-flood humans had seven or eight hundred years to build their knowledge before they died.

These pre flood humans had the same problem as man today. They used their knowledge for evil rather than good, provoking God to destroy the world with a flood, saving only eight people. These were Noah, Noah's wife, and Noah's three sons and their wives.

We will read below of the state of mankind before the flood, from the books of Genesis and Jasher.

Genesis 4:17 KJV And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

This enoch is not the same Enoch as the one who will preach during the tribulation period. Enoch was a common name in pre-flood times. Notice, that men were already building cities in the first generation after creation. Cain, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, was the inventor of using weights and measures for trade.

Genesis 4:18-21 KJV And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

Jabal, son of Lamech was the first cattle rancher. From Jubal, his brother comes the word the word jubilee, meaning festival or party. This is because Jubal was the inventor of musical instruments.

Genesis 4:22 KJV And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron:

Tubalcain started the first foundry. Josephus states that he was also a body builder and an expert in martial arts. From Tubalcain who was called Balcain for short comes the Roman mythology of Vulcan, the God of fire and metalworking. The word vulcanize, which means to add strength is derived from the name of Tubalcain.

Pre-Flood Birth Control

The men before the flood were just like us today. They wanted their women to use birth control so they could have fun without the responsibilities of children. Notice, that just like today the men wanted the women to take the risk and responsibility for this. I can understand that when you lived for 700 to 800 years you could have a lot of little responsibilities running around. But even so, this still did not justify their disobedience of God's command to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. The book of Jasher give us a more detailed account of the birth of Tubal-cain from Lamech's wife Zillah, and of pre-flood birth control.

Jasher 2:19-24 For in those days the sons of men began to trespass against God, and to transgress the commandments which he had commanded to Adam, to be fruitful and multiply in the earth. And some of the sons of men caused their wives to drink a draught that would render them barren, in order that they might retain their figures and whereby their beautiful appearance might not fade. And when the sons of men caused some of their wives to drink, Zillah drank with them. And the child-bearing women appeared abominable in the sight of their husbands, as widows, for to the barren ones only they were attached. And in the end of days and

years, when Zillah became old, the Lord opened her womb. And she conceived and bare a son and called his name Tubal Cain, saying, after I had withered away have I obtained him from the Almighty God.

Zillah who was apparently wild and disobedient in her younger days, when she took a drink of the birth control medicine, reformed in her later years and God allowed her to have children. Notice that she attributed her child to the Almighty God, indicating that she now had faith, and that her child became a great man on the earth, Tubalcain. Also notice that she only had to take it once and it was supposed to last for a lifetime. We are not that advanced yet having to make our women take a pill every day. We are getting closer though with the invention of new anti-conception methods taken by injection. We will soon reach the point of the ancients and provoke God to send judgments on the earth again, this time by fire rather than by water.

Genesis 6:5-6 & 11 KJV And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

Jasher 4:16-17 and all the sons of men departed from the ways of the Lord in those days as they multiplied upon the face of the earth with sons and daughters, and they taught one another their evil practices, and they continued sinning against the Lord. And every man made unto himself a God, and they robbed and plundered every man his neighbor as well as his relative, and they corrupted the earth, and the earth was filled with violence.

Notice that violence and robbery was the norm in those days, just as it is today. In the verse below you will see that ancient man had already achieved something we are just bordering on today, gene splicing. Man has always practiced hybrid breeding, but until today we have not yet been able to achieve the mixing of one species with the other, creating new life forms not intended By God to exist. When scientists today find the fossilized evidence of these mixed species animals they believe that these creatures disappeared due to evolutionary changes. They disappeared because God did not allow Noah to bring them into the ark to preserve their kind. Not all extinct species disappeared during the flood, some fossils are truly millions of years old, as they were from the time of the Pre-Adamic world.

Jasher 4:18 And their judges and rulers went to the daughters of men and took their wives by force from their husbands according to their choice, and the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the earth, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other, in order therewith to provoke the Lord; and God saw the whole earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth, all men and animals.

Mankind today has returned to the same state of science and low moral character that he had achieved before the flood. We today, are just like they were. The more intelligent we become, the more we find ways to provoke God and do evil.

According to the chronological bible the flood occurred 1656 A.M. (A.M. means after man was created) it has taken us nearly 4300 years to return to the same point of knowledge that they were at in 1600 years. Because they lived so long they did not need computers to store their data. They also all spoke the same language each person could teach what they learned to thousands of other people during the course of their lifetime. Remember, that at the time of the flood there were still some of the men alive that were only two or three generations removed from the creation of Adam. Their bodies and brains were more powerful than ours because they were conceived so close to the time of creation, when man was perfect. But, even though their minds and bodies were strong, their moral character was as bad or worse than ours today.

Mat 24:37-39 NIV As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

It will be just as God has prophesied, "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the son of man." (The return of Christ)

Chapter 4: The Mystery Of The Canopy Theory

Isaac N. Vail, in his book, "Waters Above The Firmament," has a very interesting theory that if true, makes it much easier to understand many obscure verses in the bible. His theory is that the Earth, before the flood, was surrounded by a water canopy.

Genesis 1:1-2 NIV In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

This water that God is talking about here is not the water in the oceans, or water covering the earth as is commonly assumed. Peter makes this clear in the next two verses.

2 Peter 3:5-6 NIV But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

According to Peter, the earth was formed out of water and by water, water that God created when he created the heavens. He also states that the world was destroyed by these waters.

At this time there was apparently no strong gravitational pull to hold the water together in one place. It was drifting aimlessly in outer space, just hanging there without form and void, as Genesis 1:2 stated.

Genesis 1:6-8 NIV And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day.

God then separated this gathering of water into two parts, with an expanse between them, this expanse was called the sky. So now we have two bodies of water, separated by an empty area, known as the sky.

Genesis 1:9-10 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

God then gathered the water below the expanse called the sky, into one place. From the water, as Peter states, the dry ground was formed. So at that time we had a condition where there was water and dry land on the Earth and water above earth.

Exactly how God changed water into land is unknown, but one of the factors used to do this must have been intense heat. This is evidenced by the fact that the earth's core is still molten, to this day.

Just before God created the dry land on the second day, he created light.

Genesis 1:3-5 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day.

Intense heat from the light which he had just created prior to the creation of the land may have been one of the agents he used to form land from water.

This intense heat coming from the molten earth after creating the land would have driven much of the water far off into space, resulting in a water canopy surrounding the earth.

As the earth cooled some of the water that was not yet driven into a fixed orbit would have fell back to earth on top of the hot world, resulting in further cooling and in the formation of some rivers, a few small lakes, and a misty greenhouse type of environment.

Now, there was obviously light in the rest of the universe because the scriptures say that "God is light."

1John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

For whatever reason, perhaps because of the expanse of water in space blocking the light, there was none on earth. We don't know all of the details here but it appears that God allowed the light to penetrate through to Earth for the first time on the first day described in Genesis.

Genesis 1:11-12 NIV Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it,

according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 2:5-6 NIV and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground--

At this time there was no rain. Water came up from within the earth to form rivers which watered the earth. The cradles of human civilization came into existence near water sources, the rivers, because as yet, there was no rain.

Genesis 2:8-15 NIV Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

It was near these rivers that the cradle of civilization began and existed, after the creation of man. (the Gihon is the Nile, the Pishon is an ancient river that flowed through Saudi Arabia.) (see genesis 25:18) the Tigris and the Euphrates are still called by these names today.

At this time there was still a water canopy surrounding the earth, and orbiting with it. This canopy, according to Vail's theory, did not completely surround the earth, but had openings at both poles. The earth, in a figurative sense, was like a child in it's mothers womb, surrounded by water.

If this theory if true, would explain many of the previously unexplainable mysteries of the past.

In Africa there are tribes who worship stars whose existence was unknown until recently with the invention of new and more powerful telescopes. These African tribes claim that the knowledge of these stars was passed down to them by their ancestors who lived before the flood, and were able to view them with the naked eye. A water canopy surrounding the earth could have acted like a giant magnifying glass allowing men to view far off into the heavens at night.

A water canopy would also solve the mystery of the strange giant carvings of spiders and birds that are in South America. Until the invention of the airplane we did not know that they existed, and now scientists wonder how these ancient people were able to view their work as they built these things.

A water canopy surrounding the earth with the sun shining through at the poles would at times could have acted like a giant mirror in the sky, allowing these people to carve the figures in the earth, and view their work by looking above.

This would also solve the mystery of how the flood occurred. The scientists of today reject the biblical account of the flood, because it is a scientific impossibility for enough water to evaporate and remain in the sky until there is enough in the atmosphere to flood the entire earth all at one time.

The existence of a water canopy before the flood would explain this puzzle, how God could send huge amounts of water on the earth, all at one time, for forty days and forty nights, enough to cover the whole earth until it drained off into the lower areas, which are now oceans. It also explains how the Grand Canyon could have been formed in a few years time as trillions of gallons of water flowed from the mountains of Colorado to the Pacific Ocean. Water can carve through rock in a short time if there is enough of it.

Genesis 6:11-12 NIV Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

Jasher 2:6 And the Lord caused the waters of the river Gihon to overwhelm them, and he destroyed the third part of the earth: notwithstanding this the sons of men did not turn from their evil ways, and their hands were yet extended to do evil in the sight of the Lord.

God gave the pre-flood people a warning by sending a catastrophe upon

them and destroying a third of them. This is the same thing that he will do during the trumpet judgments described in the book of revelation, destroy a third part of mankind as a warning to them to repent. The result will be the same. Men will not repent this time either.

Genesis 6:13-14 & 17 NIV So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.

Genesis 7:4-12 NIV Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made." And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month--on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

The floodgates of the heavens could easily refer to the breaking up of the water canopy and it being pulled down to earth by gravity. Before the flood there may have been some other gravitational force in effect that held the canopy in place. Many scientists believe that the earth occasionally collides with asteroids, that could result in knocking it off of its axis. This could have been the trigger that shook the canopy loose from its orbit, causing it to be pulled down to the earth. Another possibility is that we had a second moon that helped keep the water in place.

The Apostle Peter, who was taught by Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit, says that it was by the very waters out of which the earth was formed, that the flood was caused. He also says that the next destruction of the earth will come, not by water, but by fire.

2 Peter 3:5-8 NIV But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being

kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

The fountains of the great deep being broken up could easily refer to the continents breaking up and moving apart, creating the low areas for this torrent of water to drain into. The earth being thrown off of its axis could easily have caused the land mass of the earth to be ripped apart forming the continents that are in existence today, and the valleys for the oceans between them. The newly created low places would become the oceans when the waters that surrounded the earth came down and flowed into them. Glaciers would be formed in the new colder areas. This would explain how large animals are still found today encased in ice with food still in their mouths.

Jasher 6:11 And on that day, the Lord caused the whole earth to shake, and the sun was darkened, and the foundations of the world raged, and the whole earth was moved violently, and the lightning flashed, and the thunder roared, and all the fountains in the earth were broken up, such as was not known to the inhabitants before; and God did this mighty act, in order to terrify the sons of men, that there might be no more evil upon the earth.

Jasher 6:12-14 And still the sons of men would not return from their evil ways, and they increased the anger of the Lord at that time, and did not even direct their hearts to all this. And at the end of seven days, in the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, the waters of the flood were upon the earth. And all the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

We Will Now Look at the Biblical Account of The Flood.

Genesis 7:4-24 NIV Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made." And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month-

-on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in. For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. Every living thing that moved on the earth perished--birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

With this huge amount of water coming down on the earth during a forty day period, it would have been similar to what happens when we have a large amount of rainfall in a short period of time, and the storm sewers back up and flooding begins. It would take some time for this water to drain off into the lowest areas of the earth. According to the bible, it took 150 days just to get rid of it from the highest peaks of the mountains. In the Psalms it is explained that this is exactly what happened.

Psalms 104:6 & 8-9 NIV You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. They flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.

150 days seems like a fair estimate of how long it would take for the water from the canopy to drain off into the newly formed valleys, to become the oceans, if it were all dumped on the earth in a forty day period. Great valleys could have been formed in a few months that would appear to have taken thousands of years to form from the normal erosion of a flowing river.

The Grand Canyon and other great valleys could have been formed in a few months.

Genesis 8:1-18 NIV But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible. Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you--the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground--so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it." Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives.

Genesis 9:9-11 NIV "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you--the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you--every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

The presence of a canopy also explains the promise of god to Noah, that a flood like this would never happen again. Any thing that can happen once, can happen again, unless the conditions that caused it are changed. If the condition of the earth during the time of the flood was the same as it is today, then another flood of this magnitude should be scientifically possible.

God does not normally violate his own scientific laws. Many things that seem like miracles to us, are really not miracles at all, in the sense that they are some kind of hocus pocus magic that God uses to make unbelievable events happen. They are simply the results of scientific laws and principles that we have not yet discovered or differing conditions that existed that we are not aware of.

The existence of a canopy and its subsequent destruction and being drawn to earth explains why God could promise to Noah that a flood like this

would never happen again, because the conditions that allowed it to happen were changed, and now it was not possible for it to happen without overriding the laws of nature or reforming the water on earth into a canopy around the earth. Since God stated that there would not be another flood like that one then he must have no intention of ever putting the water back around the earth.

Genesis 9:12-16 NIV And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth." So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

Certain political parties and homosexual groups have adopted the rainbow as their symbol. This in occurring no doubt due to Satan's inspiration to use God's promise symbol to represent evil.

Isaiah 54:9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth.

Before the flood, there was no rainbow. With a water canopy surrounding the earth the direct sunlight required to form the refractive dispersion of sunlight through drops of water, would not have been possible. Also, with most of the water on earth being in orbit around the earth, there would not have been much water on the earth to evaporate and cause rain.

Following the flood, the life expectancy of man began to drop rapidly, until it reached seventy to eighty years, rather than seven hundred to eight hundred years.

Genesis gives us an account of the swift drop in the lifespan of humans after the flood. Vail believed this effect to be caused by the gradual degeneration of the perfect food supply due to the new rays from the sun that plants were now exposed to. We have already reviewed the life-span reduction of the patriarchs in the chapter on aging.

It would be interesting if some scientist would investigate what the effects would be on plant and animal life if the water in the oceans were surrounding the earth and filtering the sunlight. They may find a key to what causes us to age so rapidly today. Perhaps it is direct sunlight that causes us to age so fast. Can we put a water canopy over our swimming pools?

Chapter 5: The Mystery of Pre-Flood Geography

The physical condition of the earth before the great flood was much different than it is today.

The earth at some time in the past was one solid land mass in the form of a square. This can be easily seen when looking at a wall map. Notice how all of the continents fit together like a giant puzzle to form a square. Africa fits into the pocket between the United States and South America, Greenland pulled down fills in the area between Europe and Canada, Australia fills the gap underneath India. Some of the land mass around the edges of the continents is underwater now, and due to thousands of years of erosion does not appear to be square along the edges, but it was at one time.

God himself still refers to the earth as a square, having four corners, even though it is a broken apart square now. This is why the ancients thought that the earth was flat, because at some time, long ago, all of the land mass of the earth was connected together divided only by rivers, not vast oceans. Look on any world map, and see this for yourself.

Isaiah 11:12 KJV And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Revelation 7:1 KJV And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

At least two great cataclysms have struck the earth since its formation. The third is just around the corner. The earth at some time in the past has actually been flipped over on its axis at least 1/4 of a turn, possibly a full turn. This is the great catastrophe that destroyed the Pre-Adamic world.

We find the evidence of this today in the polar regions where prehistoric animals, mammoths, have been found encased in ice, with food still in their mouths and stomach. When the earth was flipped the single square land mass was broken apart by the inertia and gravitational forces, into continents. Areas that were before warm and tropical were now located in the polar regions, and vice versa.

The stories and myths that have come down to us about the lost continent of Atlantis are not so far fetched as they may seem, when you understand that the land masses of the earth have been moved out of their original places. This was the first cataclysm. The second was the great flood in which God further broke up and separated the continents, when he broke up the fountains of the great deep.

Genesis 7:11 KJV In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Jasher 6:11 And on that day, the Lord caused the whole earth to shake, and the sun darkened, and the foundations of the whole world raged, and the whole earth was moved violently, and the lightning flasher, and the thunder roared, and all the fountains in the earth were broken up, such as was not known to the inhabitants before;

A third cataclysm will happen when the events prophesied in the book of revelation are fulfilled. God will again cause the earth to be moved off its axis. By what means this will happen, we don't know. It could be by a collision with a large asteroid, or by some other means.

Isaiah 13:9-13 NIV See, the day of the LORD is coming; a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Isaiah 24:1 & 5-6 & 19-20 NIV See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard,

Revelation 16:17-21 NIV The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

Great earthquakes will strike the earth when the seventh bowl is poured out. The huge hailstones could be chunks of debris thrown into the air by the earthquake, or perhaps they will be actual giant ice chunks that have formed because of the drastic changes to the earth's atmosphere from the previous plagues

These things will not happen until after the first resurrection has taken place so if have faith in Christ, and don't take the mark, you won't be here when it happens. There is no need to worry about it.

The only people who will be here will be Antichrist and his followers, God will use this cataclysm to prepare the earth for the millennium, cleaning up everything afterwards. God may move the continents back into their original positions with this last cataclysm, separating the land masses by large rivers again, rather than by oceans.

Chapter 6: The Mystery of Jerusalem, The Navel of The Earth

Jerusalem is the geographic center of the earth. This is why God chose Jerusalem to be the focal point of his dealings with men.

According to ancient legends Adam, the first man was buried in Jerusalem. We know from the scriptures that Christ was crucified in Jerusalem and when he returns, he will rule from Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the navel of the earth, just like your navel is in the center of your body, Jerusalem is the center of the original land mass of the earth, when God formed it. Anyone who has worked in metal casting or injection molding will understand that there has to be a filling point for the formation or molding of an object. Jerusalem is that point for earth's creation.

Your umbilical cord, before your birth was the lifeline that connected you to your mother and nourished you to keep you alive. Jesus, the man who died at the center of the earth is your spiritual umbilical cord, who connects you to spiritual nourishment from God. He connects us through what occurred at Jerusalem, his crucifixion and resurrection.

Ezekiel 5:5 KJV Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.

Ezekiel 5:5 NIV "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her.

Psalms 135:21 KJV Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

Isaiah 2:3 KJV And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 3:17 KJV At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

The God that created the universe is an orderly God. He practices the old

saying, a place for everything, and everything in its place.

When you study science, medicine, history, geography, or any other subject, if you keep this in mind you will soon begin to see the work of this orderly God in all of the universe and in nature. He does things over and over again, in the same places, at the same times, using the same numerical combinations.

Matthew 24:3 KJV And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Zechariah 14:3, 4, & 9 KJV Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

In the same place where Peter and the disciples asked Jesus about the end of the age, in that very place Christ's feet will touch when he returns. They had no idea they were asking him about the end of the age while sitting in the very same spot where he will end it.

God has a sense of humor. He constantly watches us humans run around searching for answers to some problem when the solution to the problem is right before our eyes, just waiting for us to find it.

Chapter 7: The Mystery of Nations, Races, and Languages

Isaiah 14:24 The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.

God has stated in his word that he has a plan for the world and the nations and that no one can stop him from accomplishing that which he has planned. The only thing we can do is study to find out what that plan is, and make sure that we are not fighting against his plan. Anyone who is will surely suffer for it eventually.

Isaiah 14:26-27 KJV This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

The Dividing of The Earth Amongst Noah's Sons

Genesis 9:18 NIV The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)

According to the book of Jubilees, Noah divided the world into three parts, and dealt it by lot to his three sons.

Jubilees (Paraphrased from chapter 8) And Noah divided the land into three parts and he divided the land by lot which his three sons would possess. Shem was assigned the middle of the earth, and to Ham was assigned the south and the Nile river. For Japheth came the portion in the north, the region of Gog. And the sons of Noah divided the land for their children before Noah. And he made them all swear an oath to curse each and every one who seized a portion which did not fall to him by lot. And they all said, so be it, let it be so until the day of judgment when the Lord God will judge them with a sword and with fire.

The sons of Noah subdivided the areas given them to their sons. This dividing up of the earth by Noah occurred before the incident at the tower of Babel.

To Ham and his descendants he had given Africa. Ham is the progenitor of all of the darker sinned races.

To Japheth he had given all of land of the north, Europe and Russia. Japheth is the progenitor of the light skinned races.

To Shem he had given the Mideast. This is why the Jews are called semites, because they are the descendants of Shem. To be anti-semitic is to be against the descendants of Shem. This term is used incorrectly today to apply only to the Jews, because all of the Arabic mid-eastern peoples are descendants of Shem. Only the descendants of Abraham are Israelis. Anti-Abrahamic would more correctly apply to Israel or even Anti-Jacobic.

The oriental races are a combination of the three, and have some of the physical features of the descendants of shem, ham, and japheth.

Deuteronomy 32:8 KJV When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

God, in his foreknowledge, set the boundaries of the nations of the world according to the number of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God did not do this because he considered the Israelites to be superior to everyone else or because he wanted to give them the best land area in the world. God's plan was to prepare a place where the Messiah, Jesus Christ would be born and fulfill God's will to redeem his creation. Anti-Shemites think that God is prejudice towards the Jews, Nothing could be further from the truth. He sent Jesus to redeem all creation, Jews and gentiles, and even other life forms.

Col. 1:20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

1 Pet 1:18-21 KJV Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11:1 NIV Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.

Genesis 11:4-9 NIV Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth." But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the LORD scattered them from there over all the Earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel --because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

The sin of the people who were building the tower was that they were refusing to migrate to the places God had appointed for them. God, as you read earlier, has a plan for all of the nations. In order to fulfill this plan, the nations had to exist, and be populated by the descendants of the correct sons of Noah.

This is why he confused their speech, forcing them to migrate. When they could not understand one another, they formed groups of people who spoke the same language and began to wander away from Babel. God directed the wanderings of the various groups to cause them to settle in the areas that Noah had appointed them.

Man, through the use of computers has almost reached the point of having a common language again. This is why knowledge is increasing at such a rapid pace today. Discoveries made anywhere in the world can be shared and improved on by anyone else in the world, through the use of computers.

Dan 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

When God scattered man at the tower of Babel by changing his speech, each group that spoke the same language migrated to an area and

intermarried amongst themselves. Each group then carried with them their own particular genetic traits, and developed their different cultures. These groups, now called races and tribes, have been separated by the language barrier for about 4000 years. Not until the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1450 A.D. could the various groups begin to exchange information and knowledge on a larger scale

Now, with the use of computers, information and knowledge can be exchanged worldwide at lightning speed. This is why mans scientific advances are progressing so rapidly today. All of the various racial and language groups can now input into the total pool of human knowledge.

Genesis 11:6 NIV The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

Man has again reached the point where nothing will be impossible for him, if he could only avoid killing each other in wars, long enough to accomplish it.

Chapter 8: The Mystery of The Virgin Birth

Another great mystery that has troubled those striving to have faith is the virgin birth. For centuries the human mind has not been able to accept the fact that such a thing could be possible, except by faith.

Now, in the twentieth century we no longer have to be mystified by God's work, as modern science can also duplicate a similar miracle. Artificial insemination is a common medical practice.

The fact that the God who created mankind could artificially inseminate a virgin woman through the power of his Holy Spirit should come as no surprise to anyone in today's world.

God predicted through Isaiah that he would cause a virgin to conceive for a sign to the people of Israel.

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.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

The bible does not give us all of the clinical details concerning how the holy spirit initiated the conception of Mary. God has the option of performing his work in any manner he chooses, and until he reveals his methods to us we

can only guess at how he accomplishes his will. Having said that, I do have a new theory as to how he could have brought about the virgin birth. Please remember that this is just a theory. I'm not stating it as a fact so don't get too excited if you disagree. It's just a possibility.

The Creation of Adam

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

When god created Adam, he did not immediately create a wife for our ancient ancestor. Adam spent time doing God's will and naming the animals before he realized he was without a mate himself.

Genesis 2:19-20 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

Adam had not yet sinned at this point in time and any offspring he might have produced would be without sin also. However, Adam did not have a wife yet, so he could not father any perfect children. (You smart one's already know where I'm going with this.)

Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Genesis 2:21-22 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Now the lord determined that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so he created a mate for Adam using a part of Adam's own body as the basis, the initial component of creating the woman.

Genesis 2:23-24 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

God could have created Eve from the dust of the ground just as he did Adam, but he wanted the two of them to be physically related to one another, making an eternal bond between men and women.

Now while God was performing this surgery on Adam and creating Eve, he could also have very easily procured a semen sample from Adam to be preserved for future use, since God already knew that the man and his wife would sin. God would then be able to impregnate a woman with the seed of Adam, acquired before Adam sinned, and create a perfect body, one without the taint of sin, for his Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

While this may sound far fetched to those reading it for the first time, remember that God planned the redemption of mankind before he ever created human beings.

1 Peter 1:18-21 KJV Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Ephesians 1:4-11 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace That he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

The first Adam was also called the son of God as was Jesus.

Luke 3:38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Luke 1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

1 John 5:9, 12-13 We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Jesus differed from Adam however because he existed before he took on a human body and was born into this world on the planet called earth.

Jesus the messiah in the scriptures is called the last Adam, meaning the second Adam, or the second perfect man.

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 KJV And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

Romans 5:13-19 For before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed

many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

1 Corinthians 15:48-49 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

The biblical comparisons between Adam and Jesus Christ indicate that the connection between them that is much closer and more complex than between Christ and the rest of the human race.

All who believe are called the sons of God by adoption, and that is in a future tense.

Romans 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Only Adam and Jesus are presented with that title in the scriptures as a matter of right.

Summary of The Virgin Birth

God with his power could have initiated the virgin birth in many ways. He could have caused Mary to conceive without the benefit of impregnation. He could have created by his power a perfect sperm cell and had Gabriel implant it in Mary's womb. He could have spoken a word and by his power it would have come to pass instantaneously.

It seems likely though, given the many comparisons in the scripture between Adam and Christ that the human body that Jesus used while he walked the earth was the product of the union of a perfect sperm cell garnered from Adam before he sinned, and implanted in Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Is it too much to believe that God, who created humans from dust and dirt could cause a woman to conceive without having had sexual intercourse, when we are able to accomplish this today?

The seed of Adam would have allowed Mary to give birth to a body for Jesus that was free from automatically sinning. This body would have been like Adam's, the first man, who had the option of choosing to do good or to do evil. Normal humans do not have this option. We sin from the days of our youth. We do not even know what sin is until it is too late, and we are already guilty of it, and in need of forgiveness.

God took Christ's spirit and put it in this human body that Mary Gave birth to. Christ knew who he was, but he still had the same human feelings and desires that we do, and he resisted all temptation to sin and gave himself for our sins. This was Christ's test, and he passed it.

Jesus Christ, who himself created the universe at the command of God, had to be tested to see if he would voluntarily serve God one hundred percent if he were placed in a human body like the one he himself made for us. Christ shared our pains by living in the type of body he created for us.

John 1:1-3 NIV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:10-14 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Christ could have sinned had he so desired, and become an enemy of God, like Satan is. Because he passed the test, God has given Christ the right to rule and reign over the entire universe and to reward all of those who believe in him, (Christ) with eternal life and to rule the universe with him.

Revelation 11:15 NIV The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there

were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

2 Timothy 2:11-12 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;

Chapter 9: The Mystery of Marriage

There is much confusion in the church today concerning marriage and divorce. Every church and denomination has different views on the subject, the Catholics on the conservative side, have a very strict view concerning divorce and remarriage, and there is the liberal protestant viewpoint, which casually accepts divorce and remarriage as an almost normal occurrence in today's society, even in the clergy arena.

God created man, and then later he created woman from man. It was God's intention from the beginning that one woman and one man should spend their lifetime together. He showed his intent by creating only one man and one woman, not one man and many women or one woman and many men. Just one pair.

Genesis 2:19-25 NIV Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the Man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman, ' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 3:20 NIV Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The name "Eve" life or breath and it is the root word for "mother" in the Hebrew. God himself performed the first marriage ceremony when he created Eve and gave her to Adam to be his wife. He then commanded them to consummate their marriage and have children, and fill the earth with human beings.

Genesis 1:27 NIV So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them

and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Adam and Eve then obeyed gods command (after falling into sin) and began to populate the earth with their children.

Genesis 4:1-2 NIV Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

At this time there was no command of God against marrying a brother or a sister, so Adam and Eves children married each other, and they too were fruitful and multiplied.

Romans 4:15 NIV And where there is no law there is no transgression.

What Is Marriage?

In mans eyes a marriage license and a ceremony performed by a pastor or a judge constitutes a legal marriage. In many states living together for a specified period of time as man and wife constitutes a "common law" marriage. A common law marriage gives the parties rights to each others assets should one of them die or if they separate.

To look deeper into the subject we need to find out what constitutes marriage in Gods eyes.

Exodus 22:16-17 NIV "If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.

In the Old Testament God shows us that in his eyes sexual intercourse constitutes marriage. If a man seduced a woman and had sexual relations with her, the father of the girl had the right to demand that the man marry his daughter. If the father of the girl who was seduced disliked the man who violated his daughter and did not want her to be married to him, then the man who did the seducing still had to pay the father the price for a bride, which was 50 shekels of silver. This also included not only seduction, but rape.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29 NIV If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.

In Deuteronomy God says that if a man rapes a woman who is not engaged to be married, he must marry her, and can never divorce her all the days of his life. This order would again be conditional on the father of the girls approval to allow his daughter to marry the man. The girl could discuss with her father whether or not she desired to marry the man. This rule was not to reduce the rights of a woman but to protect her from being destitute if she was raped and then no man wanted to marry her. The rapist owed her support for the rest of her life, even if she did not become pregnant. God was way ahead of us concerning women's rights.

Much of the time it was not a stranger who was the rapist, but a boyfriend, similar to what is known today as "date rape." In the case of a date rape, or any rape, the father of the girl had the option of forcing the man to legally marry his daughter, with no possibility of him ever divorcing her. This once again shows that God views sexual intercourse as the act that summates a marriage, with or without a legal contract, even in the case of rape.

Paul taught the same thing in the New Testament, that a person who had sexual intercourse with anyone other than the one they were married to, was in effect marrying the person they were having illicit sexual contact with.

1 Corinthians 6:13 & 15-17 NIV "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a Prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, " The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

THE WORD PROSTITUTE DOES NOT APPLY ONLY TO THOSE WOMEN OR MEN WHO SELL THEIR FAVORS FOR MONEY, IT INCLUDES ANYONE WHO AGREES TO A SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT TO MARRY, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.

John 4:7-9 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

John 4:16-19 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.

The implication above is that the Samaritan woman had lived with or had relationships with five other men before her present lover. Jesus indicated that in God's eyes she had been married five times.

To God, sexual intercourse constitutes marriage. Anyone who has slept with more than one person in their lifetime, unless their first partner had died before they did so, is married and divorced.

Marriage, in God's eyes is not completed with paperwork. Sexual intercourse already makes a person married, from God's point of view.

The act of taking the vows of marriage is a public demonstration of the couple's intent to remain together for a lifetime. If the couple has slept together before they spoke their vows, then they were already married according to God's definition. WOW! Do you realize that a person who has had a physical relationship with thirty different people in their lifetime is considered by God to have been married and divorced thirty times. That is why almost none of us will be perfect in the marriage fidelity department when we stand at the judgment. We need to judge ourselves before we start to condemn others. We are all guilty and need forgiveness. At the same time that is no excuse to continue in sin without repenting. No matter what we have done in the past we need to get our lives on the right track, God's track, Now!

From the scriptures it appears that even an agreement to marry, an engagement, is considered to be binding unless prior sexual intercourse with another person is discovered to have taken place.

Matthew 1:18-19 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came

together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

According to the bible Joseph would have had to divorce Mary to annul his engagement to her. From this it appears that even the agreement of two people to marry is considered to be sacred from god's vantage point. We are responsible for what we have agreed to do unless the other party has been found to be a liar. (Such as someone claiming to be a virgin, male or female, and is not one)

Matthew 1:20-25 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from Their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" -- which means, " God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord Had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Having a marriage legalized by the church and the government is similar to being baptized after a person comes to faith in Christ. Baptism is a public display of what has already taken place in a persons life, and a marriage ceremony is the same thing. The couple has promised themselves to each other only, and the ceremony is the public profession of it.

Vows and Oaths

An agreement to be married is nearly as binding as the marriage itself, and this not only includes marriage, but all contracts, verbal or written.

Matthew 12:36-37 NIV But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Ecclesiastes 5:4 NIV When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.

Be careful in what you say, because God who sees and hears all things will

hold you responsible for every careless word you speak.

Numbers 30:2 NIV When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

When a man made a vow to or before God or an oath to obligate himself in some way it was as binding as a written contract. When a single woman living in her father's house made a vow it had to be seconded by her father before it was binding on her. Her father had the right to overrule her, as long as she was living in his house.

Numbers 30:3-5 NIV "When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to the LORD or obligates herself by a pledge and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, None of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the LORD will release her because her father has forbidden her.

When a woman married the right of approval or refusal of her vows then fell to her husband.

Numbers 30:6-8 NIV "If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the LORD Will release her.

Any vow made by a woman before she married could be nullified by her husband, and it would not be counted as a sin for her to break it.

Numbers 30:10-16 "If a woman living with her husband makes a vow or obligates herself by a pledge under oath and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her And does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, And the LORD will release her. Her husband may confirm or nullify any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself. But if her husband says

nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them. If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he is responsible for her guilt." These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

Any vow made by a married woman after she was married, could be nullified by her husband, provided that he does so soon after he hears of the matter. If he keeps silent for a period of time and then later causes his wife to break her word, the guilt before God falls to the husband.

Numbers 30:9 NIV "Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.

Any vow made by a widow or a divorced woman was as binding on her as if she were a man.

It is better not to make a vow, sign a contract, or casually agree to something, than to do so and later change your mind. Once you have given your word on something it is a sin to refuse to do whatever it is you agreed to.

Rev. 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters **and all liars**—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

In today's world a slick lawyer can get almost anyone out of any contract for enough money. This will hold no weight with God however at the judgment. Both the lawyer and the liar will be cast into the lake of Fire.

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 NIV If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow To pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.

Ecclesiastes 5:5-6 NIV It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at

what you say and destroy the work of your hands?

According to the verses above loose and lying lips can lead to poverty if we anger God by our sin and he destroys the fruits of our labor because of it. Do you want to be poor in God's kingdom? Then be a liar or a contract breaker.

Jesus expanded on the teaching that we are bound by whatever we say to include things we say without an oath. What Jesus was teaching here is that even casual talk is as binding as an oath, and that all that is required is for a person is to let their yes mean yes, and no mean no. If you can't do what you say then it is best to keep silent. Loose lips sink ships, and destroy peoples lives.

Matthew 5:33-37 NIV "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

When God speaks, he says that what he has spoken is as good as already done. We are created in the image of God, and he expects us to keep our word. The old saying that "a man is only as good as his word," is true.

So then, the summary of the matter is that there are three things that constitute a legal marriage in Gods sight, an agreement to marry, a religious or civil marriage contract or vows, and sexual intercourse. If you have done any of these things with more than one person in your lifetime, then you have been married and divorced, unless your first spouse has died or you are still with the very first person you have had a physical relationship with.

So then I say again, since all of us are guilty before God in some manner of sin, let's not be too quick to judge others for their failures.

Matthew 7:1-4 NIV "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?"

Luke 6:37 NIV "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

Chapter 10: The Mystery of Divorce

Moses gave the law of God concerning divorce to the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 NIV If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him Because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Jeremiah 3:1 NIV "If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and marries another man, should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled? But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers-- would you now return to me?" declares the LORD.

God said that if a man desired to divorce a woman he could write her a bill of divorcement and send her from his house, and both he and she were free to marry another person. God also decreed that once a woman had married again, the first husband could not remarry her even if her second husband divorced her or died. Even though God permitted divorce, he was not sanctioning it for any frivolous reason. Continual adultery was intended to be the only grounds for divorce.

All of the verses below pertain to spiritual adultery, Israel's sins of worshipping idols.

Jeremiah 3:20 NIV But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel," declares the LORD.

Ezekiel 16:32 NIV ""You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!

Ezekiel 16:45 NIV You are a true daughter of your mother, who despised her husband and her children; and you are a true sister of your sisters, who despised their husbands and their children.

Hosea 2:2 NIV "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

Hosea 2:7 NIV She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.'

Hosea 2:16 NIV "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master. '

Throughout the bible adultery is used as an example of people who worship idols. Part of the sanctity of marriage lies in the fact that it is a spiritual picture of how God considers his dealings with human beings.

Malachi 2:13-15 NIV Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking Godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

God told the Jews through the prophet Malachi, that one of the reasons he would not accept their offerings, answer their prayers, and bless their nation as he had in the past, was because of their widespread practice of divorce. WoW! The way our divorce rate has skyrocketed in the USA since the 1950's, it's no wonder we are in an economic meltdown today.

God gave Moses the law concerning divorce because he knows that there are some cases where keeping a marriage together is just not feasible. This law concerning divorce was not intended by God to be used casually, but only as a last resort, when a marriage was totally beyond saving.

Also notice in the verse above that what God desires from a marriage is children brought up to have faith in God.

Malachi 2:16 NIV "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

God says that he hates divorce, and he hates violence. We here in the United States are guilty of doing these very same things that God rebuked the Israelites for twenty five hundred years ago. Our divorce rate and violent crime are going to, and already are, bringing down the punishment of God upon our nation.

The results of divorce and crime are bad enough themselves without God's wrath being added to them, so we must hope our nation can reverse these trends.

Even though God hates divorce and violence, he himself uses these tools when it becomes necessary.

God split the nation of Israel into two parts after the reign of Solomon, and cast off one part. God, in a spiritual sense, is divorced. One nation he called Judah, and the other he called Israel. He characterizes them in the scriptures as two sisters married to one man and both are unfaithful to their husband.

Jeremiah 3:6 NIV During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there.

Jeremiah 3:8 NIV I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.

God hates divorce, but, he had also decreed in his word that he would only forgive Israel's national sins, their spiritual adultery of worshipping other gods and idols, six times, and the seventh time he would cast her away from him, and divorce her, which he did.

God divorced the house of Israel, in 721 B.C., and they were carried off to Assyria.

Jeremiah 3:9-11 NIV Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the LORD. The LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah.

Marriage and divorce in God's eyes is a picture of how he deals with the nations, especially his two chosen nations, Judah and Israel. God divorced Israel and yet even after the kingdom of Judah had seen what God had done to her sister Israel, after he had destroyed their nation and sent them off into captivity, Judah still did not repent and worship the true God, but continued to worship idols.

Isaiah 50:1 NIV This is what the LORD says: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.

God never did divorce Judah, even though they were scattered after they rejected Christ, God has not divorced them to this day. God divorced Israel, the lost tribes, but he is still married to Judah. Judah's punishment was two thousand years of wandering, two thousand years of spiritual whoredom before God would forgive her and gather her back to his land, which he is doing today.

Jeremiah 3:12-15 NIV Go, proclaim this message toward the north: "'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD, 'I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,' declares the LORD, 'I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt-- you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign Gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,'" declares the LORD. "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you--one from a town and two from a clan--and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

God had a problem, he had set the precedent in his word that a divorced man could not remarry the same woman after he had divorced her and she had married another.

1 Corinthians 7:39 NIV A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

The Israelites had married their false gods, their idols, after he had divorced them. But, God had given a prophecy that he would someday forgive Israel and bring her back as his wife. How could he do this? No problem for God. Christ, the creator, simply died himself, and when he was

resurrected from the dead he had the right to again pick up his dealings with the lost tribes, whom he divorced, because death frees a person from the bonds of marriage.

The Grounds for Divorce

Christ tells us what the grounds for divorce are. Continual, unstoppable adultery is the only legal ground for divorce that God recognizes.

Matthew 5:31-32 NIV "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 19:3-12 NIV Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.

Matthew 19:9-12 NIV I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

Mark 10:11-12 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

Divorce, except for the cause of adultery, is a sin. Now this does not mean that everyone who is divorced and remarried is living in sin, and should separate. This would be another sin, the breaking of yet another contract.

Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

God does not hold us responsible for what we have done in the past, in our ignorance, and he will forgive us for the sin of divorce just as easily as any other sin.

Once you know what God expects however, you are responsible to live according to his commands. If you have faith in God and the knowledge of what he expects and are thinking about obtaining a divorce for any other reason than the continued adultery of your marriage partner, be forewarned, God may make your next marriage even more miserable than the one you are in now. Those whom God loves, he chastens when they sin willfully and knowingly. If nothing else, you will lose rewards at the judgment, for doing wrong knowingly.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2 NIV Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

1 Corinthians 7:7-9 NIV I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Paul taught that it was good for a person not to marry if they had control over their sexual desires. If not, then they should marry.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 NIV The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Paul also taught that those who are married should not deprive each other of their marital rights. He taught that the wife's body belonged to the husband, and the husband's body belonged to the wife. In marriage, each partner has rights to their spouse's body.

Marital unfaithfulness may also include the refusal of one partner to render to the other partner their marital right, sexual intercourse. A refusal by one partner to provide their spouse with the physical rights of marriage has the effect of forcing the other to commit adultery. The guilt for this lies with the refusing partner. Refusal by one partner to meet the physical needs of the other is in effect adultery, and possibly grounds for divorce.

Now this does not mean that a person has to say yes every time the other person has a desire. Sexual intercourse is like worship, one occurrence per week, three times a month is enough to maintain the marriage. I say three times a month because God, in the old testament commanded people to abstain from sexual intercourse during the time of a woman's monthly cycle.

This is not a command to hold it down to this amount, married couples may enjoy each other as much as they mutually desire. This is only a minimum standard set to assure that a person is not guilty of violating the marriage contract and forcing the other person to find sexual fulfillment elsewhere.

I mention this because there are some people who treat their spouses badly, refuse sexual intercourse to their partner, and then say, "it wasn't my fault" I didn't file for the divorce." Then in the matchmaking services they write "Biblically Divorced." Beware of anyone who says this. It means that they have not accepted any responsibility whatsoever for being divorced. They are always right in their own mind. If you want a miserable partner, marry someone who says nothing is ever there fault, not even a small percentage of it. A terrible life is ahead if you marry one of these, unless they see the light and repent.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 NIV To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

Paul taught that if a person desires a divorce after coming to faith in Christ, (for a reason other than infidelity) then they must be sure in their own mind that they will have control over their own body and remain unmarried without committing sexual immorality.

1 Corinthians 7:12-13 NIV To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a

believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.

If one person comes to faith in Christ after they are already married to an unbeliever then they must not separate from their spouse as long as the other person is content to stay together.

1 Corinthians 7:15 NIV But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

If the unbelieving partner leaves then the believer is not bound in such a case, they are free to remarry, but only to another believer, and this marriage is permanent until the death of one of them.

Romans 7:2-3 NIV For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

If one of the partners in a marriage dies, the survivor has the right to remarry, but again, only to another believer.

1 Corinthians 7:17 & 20 NIV Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him.

1 Corinthians 7:24 & 27-28 NIV Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

Paul taught that each person should remain in the situation they were in when they were called by God, but if they desired to marry it is no sin.

Those who are living together or sleeping with someone they are not married or engaged to, have a choice to make. They can either marry or separate totally. If both persons in a relationship come to faith in Christ and

are believers then in most cases it is probably best to marry. If one person has become a Christian and the other has not, then total separation is the best thing to do.

You may ask, why should they legally marry if they are already married in God's eyes? That is a very good question. It is because they apparently have not previously been committed to each other enough to make it a lifelong commitment. After coming to Christ we are to avoid even the appearance of evil.

1Th. 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

There has to be a change in one's life after coming to Christ. Either commit to the one you are living with, and they must commit to you, and get married or separate and be celibate until you find a Godly and believing person to marry. Remember, a believer can only marry in the Lord, so do not go ahead and legally marry a non believing live in partner after coming to Christ. It will almost certainly wind up in divorce down the road if both people have not had the new birth experience.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 & 18 NIV Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

2 Corinthians 7:1 NIV Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

God has commanded us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. This command forbids mixed marriages, a believer to an unbeliever. Two believers may marry, and two unbelievers may marry, but not one of each. Mixed marriages have many problems because one partners mind is set on spiritual things, while the other partners mind is set on material things, the things of this world.

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 NIV I would like you to be free from concern. An

unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs--how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world--how he can please his wife-- and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world--how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Paul taught that if a person had self control they would be better able to serve the lord being single. This is in no way a command not to marry, only advice to those who have their bodies fully under control.

1 Corinthians 7:36-38 If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin--this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.

Anyone who has a strong sexual desire should be married.

To a person who is already married but in a miserable one, you should bear it as long as possible, and pray for the conversion of the partner who is mistreating you. God is fully able to change the person you are married to, or cause their death. You should not pray for their death, but continue to be kind to that person until God does one thing or the other for you.

As an example we will look at the doings of Abigail, who protected her evil husband, and was rewarded by god for it with his death, and she was then married to David, who was to become the king of Israel.

1 Samuel 25:2-12 NIV A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your

household! And good health to all that is yours! "Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them." When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited. Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.

1 Samuel 25:13-28 NIV David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him." Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. David had just said, "It's been useless--all my watching over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!" When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said: "My Lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. May my Lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name--his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent. "Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as

the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the Lord's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.

1 Samuel 25:32-42 NIV David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak." Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request." When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife." She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master's servants." Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife.

It was the lord who struck this evil man, Nabal, with a heart attack so he died, and his wife Abigail, who was both beautiful and intelligent was free to become David's wife. If she had left her husband before this event happened, she would not have been in the right place at the right time to meet David, the future king of Israel, and become his wife. The Lord blessed Abigail for putting up this evil man for as long as they were married, and he finally freed her from him.

The partners in a marriage should be kind and forgiving to one another. One act of adultery is not grounds for divorce if the other person asks their spouse to forgive them. Only perpetual adultery, without repentance is

grounds for divorce, from Gods viewpoint.

Ephesians 4:32 NIV Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:21 NIV Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives should submit to their husbands, and her husband should submit to Christ.

Ephesians 5:22-24 NIV Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Many men have used these verses down through the centuries to try to make their wives feel guilty if they do not obey the husband like a slave. This is not the intention of God, to make the wife a slave. Any man who expects his wife to obey him must do what follows this command to wives, the command for the husbands.

Ephesians 5:25 NIV Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 5:28-30 NIV In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--for we are members of his body.

Ephesians 5:33 NIV However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Any husband who expects his wife to obey him in all things, must himself be willing to give his life for his wife, and be obedient to Christ in all things, and love his wife as he loves his own body. If a man does this then he will not treat his wife in a manner the he himself would not want to be treated if the roles were reversed.

A man who expects his wife to follow the word of God, must follow it himself and love his wife as much as he loves himself, and treat her accordingly.

Ephesians 5:31-32 NIV "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Paul understood the mystery of what marriage signifies, the union of Christ to the church at the first resurrection, when all believers will be united to God in our new and perfect bodies.

The mystery that Paul was talking about is the fact that the church, the saved of all ages is called in the scriptures, "the bride of Christ," and "the wife of the Lamb."

Revelation 21:9 NIV One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Revelation 19:7-9 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

Revelation 21:2-4 NIV I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Human marriage symbolizes the time when God and men will dwell together in perfect unity after the return of Christ.

Children

Paul, in Ephesians, then goes on and gives commands for bringing up children.

Ephesians 6:1-4 NIV Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life

on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

God is a God who believes in order and in the chain of command. God the father is over Christ, Christ is over the angels and men, men are over their wives, and the wives are over the children. All humans are over the animals. This is the order that God expects us to adhere to while we are alive on this earth.

Luke 20:34-35 NIV Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,

Mark 12:25 NIV When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

At the resurrection there will be no male or female beings, we will all be made equal to the angels, but while we are here on this earth we are to live according to the commands of God for whatever type of body he saw fit to put us into. To do this is pleasing to God and earns rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.

While on the subject of doing the best we can with whatever bodies we have been give I want to explain something. When we are in heaven we will be like the angels, we will neither marry or be given in marriage. God can put us in any type of body he wants to. We are not our bodies, Each of us is truly the spirit that resides in our body, the life force that God has given us. God could have just as easily put any of us in the body of the opposite sex. It is a part our test to do the best that we can with whatever we are given. That includes our bodies and our material goods. That is why it is wrong to desire to be of the opposite sex. To do so is to fail the test. Do the best you can with whatever you have been given and you will be rewarded at the judgment. To go through life wishing to be something you are not is wasting your life and losing eternal rewards. That is the best of the scenario, losing rewards. Some will find themselves cast into the lake of Fire because they devoted their entire life to seeking to become something that God did not intend them to be. Beware of the gay pride movement. Life is short, hell is eternal.

If you are in a marriage that is totally unbearable or are an abused spouse, then you may be forced to live separately from your spouse until God

solves the problem. But, do not plan to divorce and remarry until the death of your first spouse, unless your spouse is guilty of continual adultery, or completely refuses to give you your marital rights, through no fault of your own.

Chapter 11: The Mystery of Polygamy

The next portion of this study may come as a shock to some people, but it is biblical truth nonetheless. God states in his word that it is better to have two or more wives than to divorce one to marry another. In old testament times it was the common practice for men to divorce their wives and send her and her children away to fend for themselves the best that they could. The woman then had to go back and live with her parents, or take some menial job for low pay, become a prostitute, or quickly find someone else to marry her and support her and her children.

God, as you read earlier compares himself to a man with two wives. He divorced Israel, the lost tribes, and in a spiritual sense remarried them after the resurrection of Christ. He is also still married to Judah, the Jews, and he will marry a third wife, the church, when the first resurrection takes place.

Exodus 21:10-11 NIV If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

The husband of more than one wife was required not to diminish the food, clothing, or sexual rights of the first wife when he took a second wife. If he did not live up to this command, then the first wife was free to go and marry another man, if she desired to do so.

Someone may say, isn't this then another reason for divorce other than adultery. The answer is no, because the man who takes a second wife is in a state of continual adultery and his first wife is innocent. The first wife has the right before God to divorce him if she so desires. God permits her to stay with her husband if she can bear the situation, out of concern for both her and her children, that they may continue to be supported in the style they have become accustomed to.

This was not intended by god to endorse polygamy, but in Gods sight it was more honorable for a man to have two wives, and continue to live up to the first marriage contract, than to cast the first wife and her children out into the street with no means of support. All men today who have a wife and a mistress or mistresses, in Gods eyes have two or more wives.

In the New Testament it is evident many men still had more than one wife. The taking of more than one wife is evidence that a person does not have self control, and this excluded these men from assuming positions of authority in the church, but it did not exclude them from belonging to the church. An overseer is another name for a pastor.

1 Timothy 3:2 NIV Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Timothy 3:12 NIV A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

Titus 1:6 NIV An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

The taking of more than one wife then shows a lack of self control, but it is preferable to divorce, if the first wife is content to live in that type of a situation. Normally the two wives did not live in the same house or tent. Each wife would have her own living quarters, but it would be on the same property. God also commanded that a man should not be married to two sisters at the same time.

Leviticus 18:18 "Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

The patriarch Jacob was married to two sisters, but he was tricked into it, and at that time the law had not yet been given.

Having more than one wife is against the law in this country, and God has commanded us to obey the laws of the land that we live in, so polygamy is not a viable option today. I include the study of it here to show how serious god is about a person keeping the terms of a contract that they have agreed to. Some misguided sects and cults endorse polygamy and proclaim that it is their God given right. God permitted it as an option to divorce, which as we have seen, he hates. Nowhere is it commanded that a man should have more than one wife. Those who promote it under the guise of religion are more likely to be sexual deviates than God fearing disciples of Christ. Polygamy is simply an option to divorce in places where it is permitted by civil law, and a man involved in such a thing is not permitted to be a church leader. A low level member, maybe, but a leader,

Newer! Those who promote polygamy and claim high positions in their church are hypocrites and liars and false prophets. They want to accept one part of the bible but not all of it. A bishop, elder, deacon, pastor and anyone in church leadership must be "The Husband of One Wife."

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 NIV If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

The man with two wives was still bound to recognize the inheritance rights of the first born son of the first wife, if there was one, and give to him a double share of his estate.

Women were not permitted to have two husbands because women are the childbearers in this world. If a woman were permitted to have more than one husband at a time, the children she gave birth to could never be absolutely certain of who their fathers were. The two husbands could never be sure which children of a woman with two husbands were to receive their inheritance rights.

Do not get the idea from this study that I am promoting polygamy. The scriptures state that the laws of the land must be obeyed except when they would force us to worship idols or forbid the preaching of the gospel.

Romans 13:1-5 NIV Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

My point in this chapter is to show that men who leave their wives, except in a case where she has committed continual adultery, should pay alimony and child support to their first wife until she remarries. Even after she remarries he should continue to support his children. This is a man's duty before God and the government. However, in biblical times the Israelites were not permitted to sell the family property. That being the case it did not cost much to provide food, clothing and shelter for ones previous spouse and children as long as they lived on the property. Today we have not followed God's plan that every man have his own tax free property to live on so no one would ever be homeless. Because we have violated God's commands on property ownership we are in a position where a man cannot afford to support two separate households. Now we have government sponsored section eight housing instead of doing it God's way. God has a good plan. We have a stupid plan and that is why we have so many problems. Because we are following our own wisdom and not the wisdom that comes from God.

Fidelity

God commands and expects fidelity in a marriage, by both partners. God compares being faithful to your marriage partner to drinking water from your own well.

Proverbs 5:15-21 NIV Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer-- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths.

Adultery

Marital unfaithfulness or adultery is in gods view a comparison to idol worship. God compares himself, for the benefit of us understanding how he feels, to a husband who has an unfaithful wife. When we worship or place anything ahead of God in our lives, it is spiritual adultery.

In the Old Testament the penalty for adultery was commanded by God to be death. The Jews rarely ever enforced this law, as they were constantly

committing both physical and spiritual adultery from the day that God brought them out of the land of Egypt. The purpose of god in giving this command was to show the seriousness of committing spiritual adultery and worshipping anyone other than Himself. The penalty for spiritual adultery is eternity in the lake of fire, which is called in the bible, the second death.

Leviticus 18:20 NIV "Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her.

Leviticus 20:10 NIV "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife--with the wife of his neighbor--both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

God hates the sin of adultery, and commands against it for both men and women. Adultery is a forgivable sin, but those who indulge in it will at the very least, lose some of their rewards at the resurrection. What good is it to you to be charitable and do good if you are going to erase it all by committing adultery?

Proverbs 6:23-29 NIV For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life, keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.

God compares adulterers to horses, to lusty well fed stallions.

Jeremiah 5:8 NIV They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife.

It is the man's responsibility to set the standard for his household. There has been a double standard in almost all societies down through the centuries that allowed men to commit adultery, while the women were punished severely for it. God has no such double standard, in fact God holds the man of the house responsible for the adultery and fornication of his wife and his daughters if he himself is involved in this sin.

Hosea 4:14 NIV "I will not punish your daughters when they turn to

prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery, because the men themselves consort with harlots and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes-- a people without understanding will come to ruin!

It is not necessary to complete the act of adultery to be guilty. The mere thought of it with the intention of doing it if the opportunity becomes available is enough to render one guilty of it. This is not just true of this particular sin, but all sins. The person who would steal money if they thought that they could get away with it is just as guilty as if they had stolen it already.

Matthew 5:28 NIV But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

In proverbs, God gives us an example of the modus operandi of an adulteress.

Proverbs 7:6-27 NIV At the window of my house I looked out through the lattice. I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment. He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in. Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows. So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you! I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love! My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon." With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose; till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

A Good Wife

A good, and faithful, and prudent wife is a blessing from God. The man who finds one has received a great favor from the Lord.

Proverbs 18:22 NIV He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

Proverbs 19:14 NIV Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

Proverbs 31:10 NIV A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

According to God it is preferable to be single than to live with a nagging wife. This is true for both sexes. It is better for a woman to remain single than to marry below her standards, and be sorry for it later. At least if a person is single, the finding of a good marriage partner could be right around the corner. A person involved in a bad marriage can be sure that nothing but misery lies ahead for quite some time.

Proverbs 19:13 NIV A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.

Proverbs 21:9 NIV Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

Proverbs 21:19 NIV Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.

Proverbs 27:15 NIV A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day;

According to God it is better to live in an attic or in the desert alone than with an unsuitable marriage partner. This is true for both women and men, so if you are thinking about getting married try to visualize what life will be like with this person ten, twenty or thirty years down the road and be sure you are prepared to handle it. Otherwise you may find yourself in a situation where you find yourself torn between two desires, the desire to please God and stay married, and the desire to divorce and get out of a miserable marriage.

Hebrews 13:4 NIV Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

The final end of the matter concerning marriage is this, the marriage bed

should be kept undefiled by both partners, for God will judge adulterers and all of the sexually immoral.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Chapter 12: The Mystery of Money

The Basic Principles

There Are Biblical Principles Concerning The Handling Of Money. If You Follow These Principles, Your Money Problems Will, For The Most Part, Vanish.

The Bible Teaches That We Should Do Three Things:

1. GIVE TEN PERCENT.
2. SAVE TEN PERCENT.
3. LIVE TEN PERCENT BELOW OUR MEANS.

If you make it your goal to achieve these three things, money will become the least of your worries. If you set up your lifestyle to live on seventy percent of your income, you should never have a problem making ends meet.

The first principle of biblical money management is to return a tenth, a tithe, to God. It is he who has given you all your money in the first place.

Deut. 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth,...

Now, I realize that many people are already in financial difficulties and can hardly make ends meet, but if you begin now to manage your money more wisely, you will, within three to five years, be able to accomplish all of the items above.

God does not want you to neglect your bills you have accrued before you learned of these principles. It is a sin to defraud someone you owe money to by not paying them or being late with the payments you agreed to in a contract. God does not want you to sin to enable you to pay your tithes. God already owns everything. He does not need your money to complete his program and do his work. The purpose of tithing for God's people is to please God by obeying his command and lay up treasure in heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21 NIV "do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,

where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The purpose of giving is so that we can lay up treasure in heaven. If you cheat someone else to give it to God's work, you have accomplished nothing. Any good that you did will be offset by the evil you did in cheating someone else of their rightful due.

What you can do is begin small and work your way up gradually to the biblical standard. Start with one percent. Give one dollar from every hundred that you make to God's work, and put one dollar in the bank. If you make \$300.00 a week, this is only \$6.00, which is about the price of a meal for one in a restaurant.

Everyone should be able to start out with one percent; but, if this is still too much, then start even smaller, with one tenth of one percent, but start!

This gradual method of beginning to tithe and save is only intended for those who are deep in debt. Those who are able to do so should begin to tithe and save immediately.

Then, following this, sit down and make up a budget. Jesus taught that financial planning was the wise thing to do.

Luke 14:28-30 NIV "suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 'For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'this fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

Proverbs 22:7 NIV the rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

If you don't enjoy being a servant, then get yourself out of debt. This is not to say that you should not borrow to buy big ticket items, like a car or a house or a boat. But, if you borrow, make a large enough down payment, so you can easily sell whatever it is you have bought without still owing money on it.

Note: The book was written in 1995, years before today's crisis in 2011.

How many wish they could go back and do things the right way instead of being deceived into borrowing using balloon mortgages with minimal down payments?

The bible teaches that saving is the wise thing to do. God has commanded that ten percent is the minimum amount that we should save toward heavenly things, so it stands to reason that ten percent is also an excellent amount to save for earthly needs. Ten percent is by no means the maximum that we should give for God's work or for earthly savings. It is the minimum once you are out of debt and can afford to do it. After you reach the ten percent goal of giving and saving, if God blesses you with more than enough of everything, you can give free will offerings and free will savings. Some people give thirty percent of their income to God's work.

Proverbs 6:6-11 NIV go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

The ants have more sense than many people. They save up their provisions during the summer so they will have food for the winter. Some would say that these actions show a lack of faith because they were saving in case hard times come. This is not true. God commanded Joseph when he was in Egypt to store up the grain for the seven good years so there would be food during the coming seven years of famine. God gave us a brain for the purpose of using it. When times are good, we should save some money. Even the squirrels have this much common sense. This does not mean we should be greedy and hoard everything either. Saving ten percent is sufficient.

For those who wish to start on the road to financial freedom, I will show you a way to begin, even if you are deeply in debt. Add up all of your monthly and yearly bills and see where there is something that can be paid off quickly to reduce your outgo. Take those credit cards and get rid of most of them, keeping only one or two for travel and emergencies. Pay off your credit bills One by one. As you pay them off, increase your giving and saving by one or more percent.

Let's say, for example, that you have a bill that is \$25.00 per month. If you pay it off and increase your giving and saving by \$3.00 in each case, you

will still have \$19.00 more dollars per month for yourself. Remember, the additional \$3.00 that you are saving is yours also. Put it away and collect interest so you will not have to make future purchases on credit. You will be able to pay cash and collect interest while the money is sitting in the bank, rather than pay interest on something for a couple of years after you have charged it.

If you have some larger bills that you can pay off in a year or two, such as bills that are between \$75.00 and \$100.00 a month, you can jump up two or three percent on your savings and giving. When it is paid off, you still have more money for yourself each month. If you do this, before long you will be giving ten percent, saving ten percent, and have money in your pocket to do the things you enjoy, without paying interest. The interest is now yours to spend too!

Finally, after you have attained the giving and saving at ten percent levels, make it your practice to buy ten percent below what you can afford when you make major purchases. Don't stretch yourself to the limit when making a major purchase so you have to watch every penny to make the payments on a house Or a car. If you can afford a \$100,000.00 house by stretching your budget to the limit, don't do it. Instead buy one for \$90,000 and leave yourself a ten percent cushion. If you are looking at a car for \$15,000.00, try to find one for \$13,500.00. Often, with a little patience and careful shopping, you can get just exactly what you want and need for ten percent less than you planned to spend. Look for a bargain and pray for the wisdom to act on it when you find one.

By doing this, you will not find yourself pinched for cash flow if your income goes down for some reason. If you are already living ten percent below your means, then a ten percent decrease in income will not affect your lifestyle at all. You can keep on living just like you have been, with no worries about money. Of course if the decrease is permanent you will have some adjustments to make to get back in sync as soon as possible. But, pity the poor person who was just barely making it before their wages got cut ten percent.

Also, you will be allowing yourself the freedom to make a career change if you so desire. Perhaps, a job opportunity will come your way that is just the type of work that you enjoy doing, but the pay is ten percent less. If this would happen, you could take the job without a second thought, because you are already living below your means and a pay cut will not affect you like it would Those who are just scraping by. When one is happy in their

work they are a better worker and in the long run usually wind up making more money.

Finally, it is your responsibility to see to it that the ten percent you give to God's work is used wisely. Don't give it blindly to some church or organization. Check them out and make sure they are not wasting the money and are meeting the spiritual and material needs of the people, as God commanded.

God gave you a brain and he expects you to use it. Put God's money to work where it will earn you the maximum rate of return in spiritual rewards in his kingdom. If God sends someone your way who has no food, buy them a dinner. If they have no coat and are freezing, buy them one. Follow the example of the good Samaritan that Jesus taught about in the following parable.

Luke 10:25-37 NIV on one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. Teacher," he asked, "what must i do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" he answered: "'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" "you have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." but he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "and who is my neighbor?" in reply Jesus said: "a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when i return, i will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" the expert in the law replied, "the one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

A good way to manage God's money is to start a separate checking account just for his ten percent. Put the money in there until God sends some person or organization your way that needs your help. By doing this, you will always be ready to be used by God for good. He will know that he

can always send someone your way and you will be ready to help that person.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 NIV now about the collection for God's people: do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Paul used this principle when he was planning to take up a collection for the Christians in Jerusalem who were being persecuted and martyred by the roman emperor Nero. He instructed the Corinthians to set aside the portion of their tithes that they wished to contribute to those suffering and have it ready when he arrived. God desires that things be done orderly, not with confusion and a last minute scramble to get everything prepared. This pertains not only to money, but to everything.

1 Corinthians 14:40 KJV let all things be done decently and in order.

God has had his plans for earth and the nations and you. He planned this before he created the world. We who are made in the Image of God, should at least be able to plan things out a couple of months or years in advance.

Tithing

Leviticus 27:30 "a tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.

Malachi 3:8-12 NIV "will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "but you ask, 'how do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the Lord Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

Although there should not be a need for including a study on the biblical principle of tithing, as it is common knowledge among both believers and unbelievers that ten percent is the biblical principle, I will do a short study

on it anyway, just in case there are some who have not heard or who disagree.

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Luke 11:42 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

Jesus told the Pharisees that they were doing right by tithing, but that they were neglecting the more important matters which were justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Abraham also followed this practice of giving a tenth to God when God helps him win a war, defeating the kings who had taken his nephew, Lot, captive. He was met by the king of Salem, which is short for Jerusalem and gives him a tenth of everything.

Genesis 14:14-24 & 15:1 KJV and when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, give me the persons, and take the goods to Thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, i have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that i will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, i have made Abram rich: save only that which the young

men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Paul gives us even more insight on this matter in the book of Hebrews. Paul was teaching that the practice of tithing was in existence before the law of Moses was ever given. Many Christians today, because of their greed, teach that the tithe is part of the Law of Moses; and that we no longer should practice it. Moses was not even born until more than four hundred years after the time of Abraham. The tithe, although it is recorded in the law given to Moses by God, is not a part of the ceremonial law. It is a biblical principle that has been in effect since the creation of Adam.

Hebrews 7:1-2 NIV this Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.

First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "King of Salem" means "King of Peace."

Hebrews 7:4 -10 NIV Just think how great he was: even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people--that is, their brothers--even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

Jacob also practiced this principle when he was fleeing for his life from his brother Esau, whom he had just cheated out of the blessing and the birthright. Jacob made a vow, he said that if God would look after his needs, he would return a tenth to God.

Genesis 28:10-22 NIV Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth,

with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." when Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." he was afraid and said, "how awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the Lord will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

God did look after his needs and made him a rich man and he returned to the land of his father in peace twenty years later.

Genesis 36:6 NIV Esau took his wives and sons and daughters and all the members of his household, as well as his livestock and all his other animals and all the goods he had acquired in Canaan, and moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. Their possessions were too great for them to remain together; the land where they were staying could not support them both because of their livestock.

God has promised blessings for those who follow his plan. He asks you to test him and see if this word is true or not. In Malachi, God asks us to test him and see if he will keep his word.

Malachi 3:6-12 NIV "I the Lord do not change. So you, o descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty. "But you ask, 'how are we to return?' "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'how do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the

Lord Almighty, "and see if i will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the Lord Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

Many do not believe God's word and they idolize those who rob, steal, cheat, sell drugs, commit murder, and do all manner of evil for the wealth that comes from sin. God continues on in Malachi with a word for these people.

Malachi 3:13-18 & 4:1-4 NIV "you have said harsh things against me," says the Lord. "Yet you ask, 'what have we said against you?' "you have said, 'it is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.'" then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. "They will be mine," says the Lord Almighty, "in the day when i make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when i do these things," says the Lord Almighty. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at horeb for all Israel.

God also required the people living off of the tithes to give a tenth of the tithes they received to the high priest. This principle should be followed today by the church. The church should give ten percent of its income to other organizations who are doing God's work. It goes without saying that the pastor and of those on the church payroll should surely present their tithes to the Lord.

Numbers 18:26 & 28-29 NIV "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'when you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you

must present a tenth of that tithe as the Lord's offering. In this way you also will present an offering to the Lord from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. From these tithes you must give the Lord's portion to Aaron the priest. You must present as the Lord's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.'

The tithe was also to be of the best portion of everything God blessed them with. In those days, the tithe was not always made with money. Most of the time it was in crops or animals. It shows disrespect for God to give him some mangy cow or rotten fruit. We wouldn't present such gifts to an earthly king, so how could we present them to the ruler of heaven and earth?

Leviticus 27:30 NIV "'a tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.

Today, this principle can be accomplished by taking out God's portion first. Just as if it was not a part of your paycheck, like taxes

God also required that the Israelites take a spiritual vacation each year to Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 14:22-26 NIV Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always. But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the Lord your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the Lord will choose to put his name is so far away), then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose. Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice.

Many people are of the opinion that God is no fun and that if you are a Christian you have to look sad and spiritual all of the time.

They visualize Christians weeping and moaning for sinners and the ungodly all the time. God commanded his people to bring their tithes to Jerusalem each year at harvest time and allowed them to use a portion of it to celebrate and have a good time. He also allowed them to buy wine or

other fermented drink to celebrate the blessings of the good harvest he had given them.

God does not want every Christian to be the boring person that some churches would have you be. Drunkenness is also a sin, but there is a time and place for proper moderate use of everything that God has created for man's benefit.

Today, we do not have to go to Jerusalem to drop off our tithes, so we don't use this verse as an excuse to take a vacation on God's money. I include it here only to show that God does not desire for us to be broke and miserable all of the time, as some would have us believe. When he blesses us with good things, he permits us to enjoy them.

Every third year the tithe was to go to help the needy.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NIV at the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 26:12-13 NIV when you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then say to the Lord your God: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them.

You should try to find a church that supports rescue missions and the poor. If you cannot find one then you may have to give a portion of your tithe directly to an agency that helps the poor.

Also remember to keep a small portion of God's money on hand, perhaps a hundred dollars to help those you may encounter who desperately need food, clothing, or a place to spend the night.

By doing this, you will be sure to make maximum use of God's money and be doing exactly what Christ commanded us to do. By giving to your

church, you will be obeying Christ's command to spread the gospel. This church must be one that is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. By giving to a Christian rescue mission or shelter for the homeless, you will be obeying Christ's command to help the poor and needy. Lastly, you need to be ready, at all times, to help someone who needs it, as Christ commanded.

There are a few churches that are doing all of the things mentioned here. If you find one you could give all of your tithe to the church, except for the small portion you keep on hand to meet individual needs.

Matthew 5:42-45 NIV give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' but i tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Jesus says to give to those who ask and to lend to those who wish to borrow. He does not say we have to give them everything that they ask for though. Some people would ask you to give them everything you own. Many have misunderstood this verse to mean that a Christian would almost have to take a vow of poverty to do what Christ says. You are also responsible to use what God has given you wisely. To give it to someone who will spend it on booze, drugs and cigarettes is not wise. You would be enabling sin, which is about the same thing as the person doing the giving sinning.

All that is required is to give a person in need the same thing that God gives us, which is food and clothing to get through the day. Or perhaps pay for a hotel room for someone, as the good Samaritan did. If you have some of God's money in the bank at all times, you will always be able to do this by simply keeping a blank check in your wallet or purse. If God sends someone to you with a need, you reach for the check and write it out. You need to also instruct the person receiving the gift that it is God's money they are receiving; and they will be responsible to him for using it wisely or they will be held accountable. By doing so you will be sure to be well rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

Mark 10:28-30 NIV Peter said to him, "we have left everything to follow you!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the

gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

Jesus gives the best interest rate in town. He promises a hundred times as much for everything you do for him. This does not concern money only, but everything you do that stems from faith. This is why it is not for God's benefit that you should give and serve. It is for your benefit that you send something on ahead of you before you die. The old saying, "you can't take it with you" is not entirely true. It's true that you can't take your possessions with you in your casket and have them do you any good. But, you can send some on ahead and earn one hundred times as much in interest and have it waiting for you when the day comes that the seventh angel blows his trumpet and the dead are raised.

Today, it is hard to find a church that is not operating like a business to make a profit. In Jesus' day, the conditions were the same. He drove the money changers out of the temple with a whip.

John 2:13-17 NIV when it was almost time for the Jewish passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my father's house into a market!" his disciples remembered that it is written: "zeal for your house will consume me."

When they questioned his authority for doing this, he gave them a prophecy that would prove that he had the authority to do these things.

John 2:18-22 NIV then the Jews demanded of him, "what miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." the Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

True Repentance From Greed

The account of Zacchaeus given in Luke is a true example of repentance.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, which was a well paying job in Jesus' day. It was a common practice, however, for tax collectors to overcharge the people in their taxes and pocket the extra. That is why tax collectors were hated by the people.

Luke 19:1-10 NIV Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." so he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "he has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" but Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "look, Lord! Here and now i give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, i will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost."

When Zacchaeus was converted, he made restitution for his thievery and gave half of his ill gotten gains to the poor. This is an example of true repentance.

Paul says in Ephesians that a person who was formerly a thief must now go to work, not only to support himself but to have something to share with those in need.

Ephesians 4:28 NIV he who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Lending

Exodus 22:25 NIV "if you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest.

If you lend money to one of God's people who is in need, do not charge interest. Notice, this applies only to loans given directly to a person who is in need, not to loans given to people for business or other reasons. God does not expect us to lend our money to a businessman to build a skyscraper or to someone to buy a house or a car with. This is talking

about lending to someone who needs the money to feed and clothe himself or his family. The next verse shows that clearly. This is talking about a person so poor he only has one coat.

Exodus 22:26-27 NIV if you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, i will hear, for i am compassionate.

I mention this because some churches and some Moslem sects teach that it is wrong to put your money in the bank and collect interest or to sell a house on a land contract and collect interest on the loan. This is not at all what God was referring to in exodus.

What God was talking about is money that is loaned to a poor person to provide them with the bare essentials of life. The best practice is not to make a loan at all, but simply to have enough of God's money set aside to give the person what they need without requiring repayment.

If you do lend to someone and they cannot afford to repay you for a long time, the best thing to do is forgive the debt.

Deuteronomy 15:1-10 NIV at the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. This is how it is to be done: every creditor shall cancel the loan he has made to his fellow Israelite. He shall not require payment from his fellow Israelite or brother, because the Lord's time for canceling debts has been proclaimed. You may require payment from a foreigner, but you must cancel any debt your brother owes you. However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, if only you fully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. For the Lord your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you. If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward Your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "the seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything

you put your hand to.

While we do not celebrate the jubilee years in the gentile church age, we can follow the principle laid down here. If we have gotten by without the money lent to a poor person for a few years it is best to just count the debt as an offering to God and forget about it.

Note though, that this statute is intended for the poor, not for thieves who have the money to pay but refuse to do so.

Matthew 18:23-35 NIV "therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' the servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'be patient with me, and i will pay you back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. "then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'i canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as i had on you?' in anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "this is how my heavenly father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

God has forgiven us all of our sins through Christ, so we should also forgive those who owe us money and those who sin against us in other areas.

Being a Trustworthy Servant

According to Jesus, anyone who can be trusted with small amounts of money can also be trusted with large amounts. Anyone who is dishonest with small amounts will be dishonest with large amounts if they are given the opportunity.

Luke 16:1-15 NIV Jesus told his disciples: "there was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'what is this i hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.' "the manager said to himself, 'what shall i do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and i'm ashamed to beg--i know what i'll do so that, when i lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.' "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'how much do you owe my master?' "'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.' "Then he asked the second, 'and how much do you owe?' "'a thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. "He told him, 'take your bill and make it eight hundred.' "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? "no servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." the Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "you are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

The Pharisees in Jesus' day were like many of the modern day television preachers who are in love with money. Jesus explained to them that what is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

The scripture also says that if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? The person who steals small items from their employer will steal money or goods if they are given a position from which it is possible to do so.

Paul taught in that we should lead a quiet life, mind our own business, and to work with our hands.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 NIV Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 NIV in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "if a man will not work, he shall not eat." we hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

It's not only men who should work, but women also. In proverbs, God gave us the description of the perfect woman. This description does not mean that all women should do the type of work described here. It means that a woman should be wise, faithful, skillful and hard working in all that she does, whether she is a housewife, businesswoman, or in whatever field she has chosen.

Proverbs 31:10-31 NIV a wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and

faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Riches

It is no sin to become rich provided that you do it legally and ethically. If you do become rich, do not set your heart on your wealth and forget about God. There is nothing wrong with having a lot of money. It has been said that "money is the root of all evil". This is an incorrect quotation.

1 Timothy 6:10-11 NIV for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

The bible explains that it is not money that is the root of all kinds of evil, but the love of money.

Hebrews 13:5 NIV keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

1 Timothy 6:5 & 9 NIV and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that Godliness is a means to financial gain. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Those who are rich must be careful not to let their riches lead them into temptation. God has provided us with everything for our enjoyment, but we must make sure that if God blesses us with an abundance of material goods they do not push God out of our lives.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 NIV command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for

themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Jesus told the Pharisees a parable about a rich man who became richer but did not use any of his wealth for good. He only used it for his own pleasure.

Luke 12:13-21 NIV someone in the crowd said to him, "teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" then he said to them, "watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." and he told them this parable: "the ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'this is what i'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there i will store all my grain and my goods. And i'll say to myself, "you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'you fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Jesus warned us to be on our guard against all forms of greed. This man thought he had it made because he had plenty of money to last him for the rest of his life. He was correct, because his life was coming to an end that very night, so what good did all his money do him?

Many television and radio preachers spread the false doctrine that if people send in their tithes or a donation that they will have good luck, win the lotto or some other such nonsense. Those who give money to such a cause in order to try to get rich are just as guilty of greed as the person asking for the money. God has promised to provide us with what he knows we need, not what we think that we want. Anyone who is teaching that Godliness will automatically bring great riches is spreading false doctrine.

Luke 12:22-34 NIV then Jesus said to his disciples: "therefore i tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? "Consider how the lilies

grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. "do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus was not telling us to be lazy or slack in our work. He is simply telling us that after we have done the best we can, not to worry about the outcome. Worrying solves nothing. All it does is add stress to our lives. God knows we need food, clothing and shelter to survive in this world. He promises to provide these things, if we follow his plan and work and seek after spiritual truth.

Although we should plan for the future as if we are going to live to be one hundred years old, we should always keep in mind that our life on earth could end at any moment.

James 4:13-16 NIV now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." as it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

James also warns us not to show favoritism to someone because they are wealthy.

James 2:1-9 NIV my brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "you stand there" or "sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world

to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in scripture, "love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

Co-signing

The bible also teaches that it is foolish to co-sign for a loan for someone else. Many people who do this wind up getting stuck paying for something that is not theirs. This is not to say that you cannot co-sign for a loan for a car or for school to help your children get their credit rating established; but if you do, make sure you have the money in the bank to pay the loan off if it becomes necessary.

Proverbs 11:15 (NIV) He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe.

You should be very cautious in co-signing for anyone, except your younger children, who have never established a credit rating. After one or two loans, they should be on their own. If the bank, whose job it is to lend money, does not consider the person desiring the loan a good risk, then why should you?

Biblical proverbs concerning money

The book of proverbs is full of teaching on money management. Only a few of the verses on this subject are included here. Anyone desiring a complete understanding on how God wants us to handle our money would read the entire book of proverbs and the four gospels, and highlight every verse pertaining to money. The proverbs given here are self-explanatory and require no explanation.

Proverbs 15:6 - The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings them trouble.

Proverbs 13:7 & 8 - One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth. A man's riches may ransom his life, but a poor man hears no threat.

Proverbs 14:20 & 21 - The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends. He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

Proverbs 18:23 - A poor man pleads for mercy, but a rich man answers harshly.

Proverbs 22:2 - Rich and poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all.

Proverbs 23:4 - 8, Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. 'eat and drink,' he says to you, but his heart is not with you. You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.

Proverbs 22:1 - A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

Work

According to the bible, God works and expects us to do so also.

John 5:16 & 17 "So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, 'my father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.'"

Psalms 102:25 "In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands."

Psalms 8:3 "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,"

Psalms 19:1 "for the director of music. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

All honest work is profitable. It is better in God's sight to have a menial job than no job. When you are working for someone else, do your job to the best of your ability, as if you were working for God and not for men. God knows your motives for whatever you do and will reward you, if not in this

life, then in the life to come.

Colossians 3:23-24 NIV Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

The final end of the matter concerning money is that we brought nothing into the world; and physically, we can carry nothing out. While we are here in this world, we should use what we are given for good, so that we will have a reward waiting for us at the resurrection.

Proverbs 30:8-9 NIV Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'who is the Lord?' or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 NIV but Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Send comments to: countdownto6000@aol.com