



**Spiritual Truth Awakening** by R. J. Adams



# **Spiritual Truth Awakening**

By R. J. Adams

First Edition 1995 Copyright (c) 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 return of Jesus Christ is drawing near. God is revealing his word to those who are willing to listen. The gospel is being printed and distributed worldwide, broadcast by television, beamed by satellite, and presented on the internet. There is no longer any excuse for anyone within the range of any of these services to live in darkness. Only one question now remains, for those who have been presented with the gospel. It is the same question that the people asked on the day of Pentecost when the Holy spirit was poured out.

### **"Men And Brethren, What Shall We Do"?**

Acts 2:36-39 KJV Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom yehave crucified, both lord and Christ. Now when theyheard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ forthe remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our Godshall call.

Acts 2:41-42 KJV then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:45-47 KJV and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily

with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The time for hesitation is past. Now is the time for all who name the name of Christ to answer the call to action by living victoriously through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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.

### **Index of Topics - Page Numbers**

<b>Chapter 1: Born Again</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Faith</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Keeping Your Faith</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Chapter 4: The Book Of Galatians</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Sin</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Chapter 6: What Goes Around Comes Around</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Chapter 7: The Faith of David</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Spiritual Gifts</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Chapter 9: Basic Christian Doctrines</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Chapter 10: The Lifestyle of John the Baptist</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Chapter 11: The Lifestyle of Jesus</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Chapter 12: Hypocrites and Pharisees</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Chapter 13: The Teaching of Paul</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Chapter 14: Charity and Judgment</b>	<b>91</b>

# Spiritual Truth Awakening

## Chapter 1: Born Again

Jesus taught that another name for the spiritual awakening of a person's mind was to be "born again." This is, indeed, an accurate description of what happens to a person's thought processes when God opens their mind to understand the truth. All things become new. It is like turning on a light in a completely dark room.

Jesus explained this to Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.

John 3:1-3 NIV now there was a man of the pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him. "In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a person was "born again," he would never see the kingdom of God.

John 3:4-7 NIV "how can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'you must be born again.'

Many people have misunderstood John 3:5 because they believe it means that a person must be baptized to become a Christian. Jesus explained what he is speaking about in the very next verse. He is talking about human birth, which takes place before you can be born again.

Being born of water refers to human birth, to being surrounded by a water-like fluid when a child is yet in it's mother's womb. You must of course be born, before you can be "born again."

Being born of the spirit refers to the time in a person's life when God

places his Spirit in them and opens their mind to understand spiritual truth.

John 3:8-12 NIV the wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"

Jesus chided Nicodemus for his inability to understand what he was talking about in John 3:7-10. Although Jesus was using new terminology to describe the conversion experience, as a teacher of the law, Nicodemus should have been able to understand it. All of the saved from the creation of Adam had been "born again"; but in the old testament it was simply called "walking with God" or "knowing the Lord."

Genesis 5:22 & 24 NIV and after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

Genesis 6:9 NIV this is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

Deuteronomy 34:9-10 NIV now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses. Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,

1 Samuel 3:7 NIV now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

Judges 2:10 NIV After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.

Nicodemus had not had the experience of "knowing the Lord", or being "born again", so he could not understand the words of Jesus; and yet, he was a teacher of the law.

John 3:13-18 KJV and no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus goes on to tell Nicodemus the gospel in a nutshell, which Nicodemus later understood and believed when he was "born again".

Being born again is not joining a church, being baptized, undergoing some secret ritual initiation rites, turning over a new leaf, or being converted to another religion. Being born again is what happens when God puts his Spirit in you. Suddenly, you will begin to see things from a totally different viewpoint, God's viewpoint.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man cannot understand spiritual things. He looks out at the world from inside himself. It is as if he were a horse with blinders on. He is able to see only a narrow path ahead of himself, like a person with tunnel vision.

The spiritual man views things from a totally different perspective. He views things as though he were above the earth looking down on all of the foolishness occurring on the earth below. It is like a person who views an ant farm in a glass case or fish in an aquarium.

The natural man views things like the ants or the fish, who are inside

the glass case. The ant is unconscious of the fact that the tiny amount of space he is living in is not the whole world nor is the fish aware that the aquarium is not the entire ocean. In the same way the natural man cannot understand spiritual things, because they are spiritually discerned.

If you cannot understand this, it may be because you are not receiving the assistance of the Holy Spirit of God within you to enable you understand it.

To receive the Holy Spirit's assistance you need to come to the conclusion that God exists, believe that God sent Christ to pay for your sins, acknowledge that Jesus died for your sins and is now seated at the right hand of God to intercede on your behalf, confess that Jesus is your Savior, and ask him to be merciful to you, a sinner.

If you do this and believe it with all of your heart, God will, in a moment, transform you into a new creation. From that moment forward you will begin to see everything from a new vantage point, from the viewpoint of Christ. You will no longer live under the curse of not understanding, but will have the capacity to begin to become the kind of person that God wants you to be.

1 Corinthians 2:9-13 NIV however, as it is written: "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 2:16 NIV "for who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

When God puts his Spirit in you, he will give you the mind of Christ. This is not to say that you will have total knowledge or understanding of all things. What you will have is a new perception of good and evil. You will begin to understand what is right and what is wrong in God's

sight. God will give you a desire to study his word and you will see all things from a new perspective.

God does not normally put the Bible into a new Christians head like a person loading a program into a computer. What God does is to enable you to begin to understand spiritual things when you study his word and related material. It is your job to grow in knowledge and understanding by studying the Word of God.

### **The Test Of Love**

There is another test that you can give yourself to see if your conversion was real. That is the test of love.

1 John 4:7 NIV dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

If you are truly converted, you will have the love of God in you for other believers and for humanity in general; and you will prove it by your actions.

To test yourself and see if you have a changed attitude, ask yourself this question. Do I truly love people or am I still prejudiced against others.

If you have the love of God in your heart and prove it to yourself by your actions, then you can rest assured that your conversion was real.

1 John 3:17-18 NIV If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

1 John 4:20 (NIV) If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

Many of those who claim to be Christians but are filled with hatred for other people, all prove one thing by their actions. They prove that they have not been truly converted, or at best that they are very

carnal and immature in their Christian walk.

This love for people must be coupled with faith in Christ for it to be true love--that love that comes from God. Anyone who truly loves God, which is what faith is all about, will also love Christ and other people.

1 John 4:11-15 NIV Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his spirit. And we have seen and testify that the father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

True faith in Christ will result in both love and action. Some of the coldest and most unforgiving people you will ever meet are those who claim to be religious but are unconverted according to God's standard. These people are deceiving themselves into believing they are saved; but they prove by their actions that they do not have the Spirit of God in them. Their heart is still wicked.

When you are able to understand spiritual things, have the love of God for other people in you, and are trusting only in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, you will know that you have truly been "born again"

## Chapter 2: Faith

Everyone who has been saved from the creation of Adam until today has been saved by faith.

From the fall of Adam until Christ came the first time, they were saved by faith because they believed God's promise that he would send a Messiah to save them from their sins.

While Christ was on the earth, those in the area were saved by faith because they believed him to be the Christ. Those in other countries, who had not yet heard of Christ, were still being saved by faith because they were looking for the Messiah to come.

Today, we are saved by faith in believing that the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus Christ, nearly two thousand years ago.

Faith is the agent by which God gives salvation. It doesn't matter whether faith was looking forward to Christ, as those in the old testament did, or if faith is looking backward to Christ, as we do today. It was and is, still by faith!

Some religions and sects have come up with the strange teaching that God will raise all of the dead who never heard the gospel during their lifetime and give these people a chance to be saved.

The intention of these well-meaning people is to make God appear fair, because a God who would send people to hell for something they never had the opportunity to learn seems unfair; and it is. What they do not realize is that God does not need their help. He is already fair.

**Romans 5:13 NIV for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.**

**Romans 2:12 NIV All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.**

Just as those who never had the law preached to them during the time of law died without being judged by the law, so to those who do not hear the gospel will not be guilty of rejecting it. This does not

mean that they will be saved by following some pagan religion, as we will see.

God can save a person who has lived out in the middle of the desert or on a deserted island all of their lives and has never had the opportunity to learn or read the Bible. If that person looks up in the sky and sees the sun, the moon, and the stars, and looks at their own body and everything around them and says in their heart and mind, "I believe there must be a God who created all of this and wish I knew who he was", God can because of their faith, make arrangements for their salvation. He will show them what they must do to be saved, like he did for Saul (Paul) on the Damascus road.

**(Acts 9:3-6 NCV) So Saul headed toward Damascus. As he came near the city, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."**

No one, who has honestly searched for the truth pertaining to God, will fail to find it. God is constantly searching the hearts and minds of all human beings, looking for someone who wants to know the truth.

**Psalms 14:2 NIV the Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.**

**Proverbs 8:17 NIV I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.**

In speaking of the wisdom that leads to God, the book of proverbs states that "those who seek me find me."

God is not in the business of hiding the gospel from people who wish to find the truth. He will go to great lengths to get his word into the hands of those who seek it.

The story is reported of a man in Russia who was walking alongside some railroad tracks thinking to himself, if only I could find out about God. Inside of a train passing by, a guard discovered a passenger, a pastor, who possessed a Bible. The guard took the Bible from the pastor and threw it out of the open window where it landed at the mans

feet who was desiring to know about God. After taking it home and finding the owners name and address in it he contacted the owner, returned the Bible, was led to Christ, and given a bible of his own. God will get his word to those who truly desire it by whatever means necessary.

This though does not absolve us of our responsibility to be an instrument God uses for this purpose. God will get the job done with us or without us, but we will be accountable at the Judgment seat of Christ for every opportunity we carelessly disregard.

Acts 8:29-39 NIV The Spirit told Philip, "go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "how can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The Eunuch was reading this passage of scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The Eunuch asked Philip, "tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the Eunuch said, "look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the Eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

From the time that a person desires to know God, it is God's responsibility to reveal the truth to that person. God has made it his responsibility by stating in his word that anyone who searches for the truth will find it.

Jeremiah 29:13 NIV You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

God can make provision for anyone seeking him to be given his word. The problem is that not very many people are seeking after God. God will save everyone who truly desires with all of their heart to seek God and find God.

Titus 1:2 KJV in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

If God does not save everyone who seeks him, or at least presents the opportunity to that person to know the truth, then God would be a liar and a sinner, like we are. But he is not and cannot be either a liar or a sinner.

John 8:47 NIV he who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

Out of the millions of people in the world there must only be a few who are seeking God, or the planet earth would be saturated with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God would see to it. God will get the gospel to every person who wholeheartedly desires to know the truth, no matter how much that truth will affect their lifestyle. God will send someone with the gospel to that person via some means, be it another person, the radio, the television, the printed word, the internet, an angel, or the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can prevent God from getting the gospel to any person on earth.

Psalms 139:7-19 NIV where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, o God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

God has left himself with the option of saving anyone who has faith regardless of how much knowledge he (God) has made available to them. God has stated in this word that, "to whom much is given, much is required"; and the reverse is also true--to whom little is given, little is required.

**Luke 12:48 NIV From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.**

No one knows everything. God does not reveal all of his truth to anyone in a body of flesh or even to the angels. Even Christ did not know the day or hour of his own return, when he was living in a human body. The amount of truth God reveals to a person is God's business. It is our responsibility to believe whatever amount of truth God reveals to us as individuals.

God will be a fair judge. No one who has desired with all their heart to know who the true God is and believes whatever amount of truth God has chosen to reveal to them, will be cast into the lake of fire. They will be saved.

### **What Is True Faith?**

There has been much confusion down through the centuries on the subject of salvation by faith. The reason for this is that the definition of what true faith actually is has been overshadowed by man's opinions of what it is. True faith is not simply an intellectual belief. Even the devil believes and trembles, and he is not saved. True faith always results in action.

**James 2:19 NIV you believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.**

**James 2:19 KJV thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**

As an example, have you ever heard people talking about a get rich quick scheme or some way to invest money and double or triple it in a few months? If the person doing the talking had true faith in this idea, they would not be sitting around talking about it, they would be out doing it. Human greed being what it is, they probably would not even

be telling anyone else about it unless they needed a financial backer. They would be putting every penny they could find into this scheme, if they had true faith that it would make them rich.

James 2:17 NIV in the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

The result of true faith is not simply idle chatter. True faith is always followed by action.

Hebrews 11:1-19 NIV Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in Holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Hebrews 11:17-19 & 11:24-26 NIV by faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Hebrews 11:39 & 12:2 NIV these were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In Hebrews the faith of the Patriarchs is extolled, because it was their faith that motivated them to perform their deeds of righteousness.

In the book of James the deeds of the Patriarchs are lauded to show how their faith resulted in action.

James 2:18 but someone will say, "you have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

James 2:20-26 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Actions that result from faith do not save us, they are merely the

outward expression of the inner faith that we possess if we have truly been "born again."

Anyone who actually believes that the Bible is true, will not simply give lip service to the name of Christ. They will be doing something about it. This is why many have not understood the teachings of Paul compared to the book of James. Paul was constantly instructing and exhorting those he taught that salvation was by faith.

Paul had taught the people who were written to in the book of Hebrews, and they understood what true faith consisted of. He did not have to explain it to them again. The Galatians, who we will study later, were so action oriented, they were losing sight of the fact that salvation was by faith and not by works.

James, on the other hand, was writing to people who were under the mistaken impression that faith was simply saying, "I believe" and then doing nothing after that. James was trying to teach them that true faith and true belief will result in action.

While those of us in whom God has placed his Holy Spirit may not perform any spectacular deeds like those of the "hero's of faith," our attitudes and our life style will certainly begin to change after our conversion.

## **Rewards**

Although God has given us eternal life as a result of faith, he has also promised in his word that a person's good works and giving will be repaid to that person one hundred times over, both in this life and in the life to come.

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.

This means that in monetary terms, one dollar invested in God's work would result in a hundred dollar return at the time of the resurrection. Now God is not talking simply about money in the verse above. He

will place a value on every good work that we do that stems from faith and reward us one hundred times over for it in his kingdom.

Much of the reward in this life comes from the peace, joy, and happiness that comes from knowing Christ, which is something that no amount of money can purchase.

John 15:11 NIV I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Philippians 4:7 NIV and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 1:8-9 NIV though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Jesus taught that every true believer, when they come to faith, will be given the spirit of God to open their mind to spiritual truth. Anyone having this spirit of God in them will not be so senseless as to let the opportunity for spiritual rewards slip through their fingers so easily.

Not all will do everything, but all will do something.

True faith then will result in good works. The good works are not in any way a part of earning the salvation that came by faith. They are simply the outward evidence that faith may be present. I say may be present because as you will see later in this book not everyone who does good works has true faith. However, everyone who has true faith will have some good works, if they live long enough after proclaiming their belief in Christ to have time to do some.

These works may not always be evident to men, but they will be known to God and will be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ. Christ has commanded us not to blow our own trumpet about the things we do for him because of our faith.

2 Corinthians 5:10 NIV for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 NIV for we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

God and the person to whom one's good works are directed, will know of them; and the person doing the good works will be repaid by God in his kingdom one hundred times over.

### **Chapter 3: Keeping Your Faith**

There have been arguments down through the centuries, and denominations and sects have been founded on the debate of whether a saved person can ever be lost.

The answer to this question is no! A saved person can not be lost. However, the definition of a saved person must be God's definition of "saved". This is a person whose name is written in the "lamb's book of life", from before the foundation of the world, and whom God in his foreknowledge knows will not be blotted out.

Matthew 7:13-14 NIV "enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Matthew 7:15-20 NIV "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Matthew 7:21-23 NIV "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, **'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**

At the last judgment, Jesus will say to all those on his left, " **I never knew you**", depart from me ye cursed into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

The key word here is "**never**". Many people, who appear to men to be converted, never were and never will be. These are the people who appear to men have good works, but their good works are not motivated by faith in Jesus Christ.

Men, who can only judge from outward appearances, would view a person who claimed to be a Christian at one time in their life and later denies Christ, as being saved and then lost. This is not true. Any person, who will be on the left side of Christ at the last judgment, was never "**saved**" according to God's definition.

1 John 2:19 NIV they went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

The apostle John makes this clear in 1 John 2:19. Anyone, who at some time in their life makes a profession of having faith in Christ and then later denies him, is simply proving that they were never truly converted in the first place.

Many call out to God in the midst of a bad situation only to forget all about him when the trouble passes. Often these people appear to have been saved and then lost. In truth, their initial commitment was not real, it was just a desperate cry for help in a moment or crisis. Like a person drowning in the ocean promising God he or she will do anything if he just gets them out of this.

So, the next question is how can one know he or she is truly saved? In chapter one we saw what happens to a person when they are "born again." Their life and their attitude changes. But, many people have an attitude change without becoming a Christian.

The final test of real faith is that if a person makes it the end of their life with their faith intact, then they were truly converted. Anyone who doesn't was not truly "born again."

The scriptures state that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked; and many times **we deceive ourselves**.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 NIV The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

James 1:22 NIV Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Some people deceive themselves into believing they are converted because they have joined a church and are living by a few do's and don'ts. They begin to follow Christ for selfish motives and may not even realize their motives are wrong.

They think in their heart "if I follow God, maybe he will give me a husband. (or a wife) they may say "If I follow God maybe I will get rich, or perhaps he will deliver me from all of my problems". Then later if they do not receive the gain they had hoped for, they fall away saying "I was into religion once, but it didn't work for me." Others may receive the things they hoped for and when they are satisfied with their life they forget about God. They prove by their latter behavior that their faith was not real.

2 Corinthians 13:5 NIV Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?

Colossians 1:21-23 NIV Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you Holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

Once you are converted, it is a lifetime commitment to constantly be

vigilant and resist any efforts of men and the devil to dissuade you from following Christ.

Philippians 4:3 NIV yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Revelation 13:8 NIV all inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

So then, the conclusion is that no one whose name is written in the "Lamb's Book of Life," will be lost, and this is God's definition of saved, one whom he knows will be in his kingdom. **But, since God is the only one who has access to that book we must be on guard throughout our life to make our calling and election sure.**

2 Peter 1:5-8 NIV for this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:10-11 NIV Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our lord and savior Jesus Christ.

## **Spiritual Growth**

Once a person has accepted the fact that there is a God, God will take the next step and reveal to that person who he is--the God of the Bible. Following this God will see to it that the gospel is presented to that person, and if they receive it and accept God's offer of salvation they will be "born again."

Many people never get very far beyond this step. They have faith, they are saved, they may join a church, but that then, is just about the end of the matter. They progress slowly and never sustain any steady

long term spiritual growth.

They love their old traditions too much to ever change. Whenever God reveals to them a new piece of truth, they reject it if it doesn't fit in with their old way of doing things.

They had some works after their conversion, enough to show that their heart had been changed, but they never get off of the spiritual baby bottle and graduate to eating spiritual meat. They remain infants in Christ for their entire lifetime.

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 NIV Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

If you wish to progress beyond the norm, beyond step two, you have to constantly be ready to learn new things from God. Whenever he flashes some new piece of truth through your mind, you have to grab it, evaluate it, think about it, and see if it is in agreement or disagreement with the word of God. If it is in agreement, you add it to the library of truth that is in your mind. If it is in disagreement with the scriptures, then discard it. If you are not sure, then put it on hold and wait for God to give you some more insight into the matter. If there is something he wants you to know and you have honestly tried to understand it but cannot, he will show it to you again in another way, a way that is easier for you to understand.

Even Mary, the mother of Jesus did not understand many things about her son Jesus until after his death and resurrection more than thirty three years later.

Luke 2:19 KJV but Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

God compares gaining spiritual knowledge to being weaned from the breasts.

Isaiah 28:9-10 KJV whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

The writer of Hebrews goes on to teach that most people never get to the point where they can eat meat and learn the deeper truths of God;

Hebrews 5:11-14 NIV We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 6:1-3 NIV therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.

It is by use, by spiritual exercise, that your senses become attuned to discerning what is good, and what is evil.

Hebrews 5:14 KJV but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The book of Hebrews says that it is by reason of use that a person's senses are exercised to discern both good and evil. Spiritual exercise is no different than physical exercise. If you don't use it, you lose it. If you never start, you will never get anywhere. The place to start is to do what Jesus said, which is to believe in God, believe in him, (Christ) and study the scriptures.

The first step is to believe that God exists. The second is to believe that Christ was the image of God in the flesh, sent to die for our sins. The third is to study the scriptures with an open mind and to forget all of the teachings that the modern day Pharisees try to pound into the heads of all those who are foolish enough to listen to them. The lazy, those who do not study, will never attain their spiritual potential.

The way that you build your spiritual knowledge pool is a little at a

time, piece by piece, as the Holy spirit teaches you, adding to it at every opportunity.

## Chapter 4: The Book Of Galatians

Once you have been "born again," the devil will immediately attack you and try to destroy your new found faith. He will try to deceive you with another gospel or false doctrines or demonic miracles. False gospels, false doctrines, and false miracles will be more and more prevalent in the days ahead.

Matthew 24:24 KJV for there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Mark 13:22 KJV for false christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

1 Timothy 4:1 NKJV now the spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

Jesus said that, "if it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived" by false christs showing great signs and wonders. The key word in the verses above is "if". It is not possible for God's elect to be deceived, but, it is only because the Holy spirit will not permit it, not because of our own righteousness or intelligence.

John 17:12 NIV while I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that scripture would be fulfilled.

John 17:15 NIV my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

John 17:20 NIV "my prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

If Christ saves you, he will keep you. He has never lost any of those he has been given.

Once you come to have faith in Christ, many will try to deceive you with a false gospel based on an outward show of man's idea of what good works are.

They will try to make you conform to their teachings by giving you a bunch of their rules and regulations to live by. I have talked with people who have made the claim that they have not sinned for five years; and yet, they were sinning at that very moment by lying, boasting and not obeying the command of Christ to study the scriptures and find out what sin really is. If they had, they would not even dare to make such a statement.

**1 John 1:8 KJV** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Once you have been saved by Christ, don't ever let anyone deceive you into believing you can become perfect and obtain salvation by keeping the law. This includes both old testament law and man-made church rules. If you allow those who claim to be perfect to entangle you into their false doctrines, you will suffer much for it. If the devil cannot consign you to hell then he will try to render you ineffective in your Christian walk by deceiving you with false doctrine.

If the devil deceives you after you are truly saved, God will bring you out of it. But, only after you have been taught by God that you cannot live a perfect life by human will power. Just as soon as you eliminate a sin from your life and think that you are almost perfect, God will open your mind and show you ten more that you never knew you were guilty of.

This will go on until you finally reach the point where you say to yourself, "if I'm going to be saved at all, it will be because Christ was perfect for me and I believe in him! I cannot by my own power attain total perfection as long as I am trapped in this body of flesh and blood, because sin is built into it."

**Galatians 2:16 KJV** knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

False teachers instruct us that good works include: not smoking, not drinking, not going to movies, going to church three times a week, praying in public, and blowing your own trumpet about how good you

are and how evil everyone else is. Now there is nothing wrong with following the instructions listed above, with the exception of bragging about your spiritual accomplishments. However, it is not an outward show of piety to impress others that God desires from us. He desires inner purity of the heart and the mind.

Colossians 2:20-23 NIV since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Some people believe that doing nothing is the equivalent of godliness. They are like someone who comes to work and does nothing all day and thinks they have done a good job because they haven't made any mistakes. God does not want inactivity from you, he desires action.

It is fine to quit your bad habits when you come to have faith in Christ, but God is not looking for more dead weight in the church. Don't just quit the negative actions, but do something positive. If God wished, he could cause us to die the moment we were saved. Then he would never again have to worry about us sinning again or making any kind of mistake.

God desires mercy and not sacrifice. What God wants is for you to love him with all of your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. He does not desire an outward pompous show of phony religion such as loud prayers in public, bragging about your giving, and exalting your own holiness because of the sins you have stopped committing.

God chastens every believer and teaches them what it is he wants them to do or not to do. His plan is different for every person. Don't judge others. Judge yourself. Christ will judge the rest of us when we stand before him.

Mark 12:28-34 NIV one of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "of all the commandments, which is the most

important?" "the most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, o Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' the second is this: 'love your neighbor as yourself.' there is no commandment greater than these." "well said, teacher," the man replied. "you are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "you are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

God has made it so simple that no one will be able to boast about saving themselves. Many false teachers try to entangle those who are babes in Christ into keeping the law by telling them "you must do the will of the father to be saved, and keep the law." (along with their traditions and the commandments of men)

Matthew 7:21 NIV "not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven.

The answer to these false teachers who would again entangle you in the law is found in John 6:40.

John 6:40 KJV and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is the will of God for you, not a bunch of man-made traditions. Whenever you have doubts, refer to the verses above and Ephesians 2:8 & 9.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV for it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.

The false teachers will tell you that you must do the will of God to be saved, and this is true. But they will also tell you that the will of God is for you to obey their doctrines, which are man made rules.

You can have confidence that the word of God is true that he can be trusted to keep his word and keep you in faith for the duration of your life

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Jesus compared the preaching of the gospel to a farmer sowing seed in the parable below.

Luke 8:4-10 NIV While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear." His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'

Jesus then interpreted his parable to the disciples in private.

Luke 8:11-12 NIV "this is the meaning of the parable: the seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

These are people who hear the gospel, but it goes in one ear and out the other. They hear it and maybe think about it for an hour or two, and then it passes out of their mind.

Luke 8:13 NIV those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

These are the people who appear to have been saved, but never were. These are the people about whom the church world has argued about for centuries, believing them to have been saved and then lost.

Jesus says that they received the word with gladness, but had no root, they were never truly "born again." To them the Gospel was just a happy story that gave them comfort for a moment, and then they forgot about it.

**Luke 8:14 NIV the seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.**

These are carnal Christians. They have a saving faith in Christ, but they are choked off by the cares of this world, and never grow very much spiritually. These are the people who never get off the milk and graduate to eating meat. They think that becoming a deacon or an usher in the church on Sunday is doing a great work for God. They will make it into God's kingdom, but will not have a very great reward waiting for them when they get there. Still, it is infinitely better to be one of these, than to be lost. Nothing against deacons and ushers, it is a good work to be one, but there is more to the spiritual life than serving in a church office or performing a useful task. Spiritual growth must ensue also.

**Luke 8:15 NIV but the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.**

**Mark 4:20 NIV others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop--thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."**

**Matthew 13:23 NIV but the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."**

To those who are truly converted and are not choked by the cares of this life, the devil has another method of trying to deceive them and stunt their spiritual growth, he deceives them with another gospel, the gospel of salvation by keeping the law in the flesh. The entire book of Galatians was written by Paul to deal with this subject.

After you come to faith in Christ, if the devil sees he cannot entice you by using the things of this world, he will attack you through the

use of false doctrine that appears to be super spirituality, the keeping of the law. Paul wrote the entire book of Galatians to deal with this problem.

Galatians 1:1-2 NIV Paul, an apostle--sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the father, who raised him from the dead--and all the brothers with me, to the churches in Galatia:

Galatians 1:6-7 NIV I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Paul was astonished that these people could so quickly be deceived by a false gospel. These people were the exact opposite of the Corinthian Christians who were doing everything they wanted in the flesh and calling it freedom in Christ.

The Galatians were trying to be so Holy, that they thought they were becoming perfect in the flesh. God gave Paul these two churches that were 180 degrees apart, for our benefit, that we could see both sides of the coin, and know that we don't belong on either side, but in the middle, led by the Spirit of God.

Galatians 1:8-12 NIV but even if we or an angel from Heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: if anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Paul did not receive the gospel he preached from any man, but directly from Christ. He told the Galatians that if anyone, even an angel from heaven preached any other gospel to them, other than what he himself had preached, then that person should be condemned, and what Paul meant was condemned to hell.

Galatians 1:13-14 NIV for you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Paul was zealous for the Judaic faith, and Paul was truly blind, thinking that he was doing right, and not for greed or monetary gain, but for the service of God. God did not hold Paul guilty for his sin because Paul sincerely desired to know the truth, and God gave it to him, as he will do for anyone with an honest heart.

Galatians 1:15-16 NIV but when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his son in me so that I might preach him among the gentiles, I did not consult any man,

Paul, after his conversion understood, that all of the training that he received before he believed the gospel, was by the will of God to prepare him for his mission, to be the apostle to the gentiles. Paul recognized that he was set apart from birth for his mission, and so are you, if you are one of those whose spiritual eyes God opens.

Galatians 1:22-24 NIV I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 2:1 NIV fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.

Paul preached the gospel to the gentiles for fourteen years without ever having met the inner circle of the disciples that had been with Jesus, except for Peter and James.

Galatians 2:2-4 NIV I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

Poor Titus, the Greek. He was not even safe from the salvation by good works people, in the rest room. These peeping toms were spying on him in the bathroom, to see if he had been circumcised, according to their tradition.

They are just like many today, always looking to find something wrong with another persons lifestyle, not even realizing that the spying and gossiping that they are doing is a sin for them, and even worse, because they claim to see, when they are blind.

Galatians 2:5-6 NIV we did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message.

Paul received the gospel directly from Christ, and no church leader of the day added anything to the gospel that Paul preached.

Galatians 2:9-10 NIV James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

The church world today, for the most part has forgotten this, to remember the poor. This was the only request that James, Peter and John made to Paul, when they learned that he now understood the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 2:11-16 NIV when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "you are a Jew, yet you live like a gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force gentiles to follow Jewish customs? "we who are Jews by birth and not 'gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in

Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

The gospel that Paul received directly from Christ was that no one could be justified by the keeping of the law.

On top of this, there is the teaching of Christ that even thinking about breaking the law, with the intention of doing it if one has the opportunity, is a sin itself.

Matthew 5:27-28 NIV "You have heard that it was said, 'do not commit adultery.' but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Also, the same God who said, "do not commit adultery," also commanded us to obey all of the laws of the government that we live under, provided they are not contrary to the laws of God.

Romans 13:1-9 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. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "do not commit adultery," "do not murder," "do not steal," "do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "love your neighbor as yourself."

To drive one mile an hour over the speed limit is enough of a sin to render one lost. To spit on the sidewalk or throw a gum wrapper out of the car window is enough of a sin to get you a one way ticket to the lake of fire.

God has also stated that we must obey our earthly masters, our employers. Overstaying a coffee break by one second would send you to hell, if salvation were by works.

Ephesians 6:5 NIV slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.

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.

To be saved by ones own righteousness, a person would have to keep all of the biblical commandments, never sin in ones thoughts, and keep all of mans laws that do not violate Gods law, and always do exactly as your parents tell you before you become of age, and always do as your employer tells you, and do it perfectly for your entire lifetime.

James 2:10 KJV For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

This is why no one will ever be saved by their own righteousness. Gods standard is absolute perfection, and the only way to obtain it is through faith in Christ, or faith in whatever amount of light God has given to a person.

Isaiah 64:6 KJV but we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

To those of you who still do not understand, the word translated as filthy in the verse above literally means "menstruous." All of our good works, as far as obtaining salvation is concerned are of about as much value as a used feminine napkin or a used tampon. To those of you who think you will be saved by your works, think about this verse every time you see one of these items, because that is how God

views your works until you first have a saving faith in Christ, to wash away your sins.

Isaiah 1:18 KJV come now, and let us reason together, saith the lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

The scarlet and red that is spoken of in the verse above, is the scarlet color of blood on a white rag. Though our sins are as red as blood, we can be cleansed from them through faith in Christ.

It is impossible for anyone born from human parents to ever keep the whole law. Those who think that they are keeping the law by adhering to 10 or 15 traditions of their church or denomination are deceiving themselves. Unless they study all of the biblical law and keep it perfectly, even in their mind, and all of mans laws, and always obey their parents until they are of age, and obey all of their employers rules, their works are worthless, as far as salvation is concerned.

Galatians 2:17-20 NIV "if, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Does this mean that we are free to sin, because the law is dead, having been fulfilled by Christ. Emphatically not. We are not free to sin even though Christ lived the law for us, and by faith his perfection is given to us. What we are free to do is to be led by the Spirit, and we are not bound to keep the letter of the old testament law.

Galatians 2:21 NIV I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

If it were possible for anyone to attain salvation through perfection in the flesh, then Christ died for nothing, his sacrifice was unnecessary. It is not possible, the only perfection we can obtain before the resurrection, is the perfection that is given to us by God through faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:1-2 NIV you foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?

Paul then asks these people, how did you receive the Spirit, by keeping the law, or by faith, by believing what you had heard when you were still in darkness. To those of you who have been born again and God has opened your mind to understand spiritual things, when did this happen, when you were already keeping the law to perfection, or when you were still in your sins. It cannot have happened to you when you were keeping the law, because until the spirit of God is in you, you cannot even understand what the law teaches.

Philippians 3:4-9 NIV If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the Church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Even Paul, who was a member of the strictest sect of the Pharisees and was more zealous in keeping the old testament law than most of his peers, could not even understand what the law meant until he was converted when he saw the vision on the Damascus road.

Galatians 3:3 & 5 are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? After having begun in the spirit, are you so foolish as to desire to go back and try to attain perfection by human will power?

Galatians 3:22-24 But the scripture declares that the whole world is a

prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

The purpose of the law was to show us that we were sinners in the eyes of God, that we were not perfect and in need of salvation, and forgiveness for not keeping the laws that he had given.

Galatians 3:25-27 NIV now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Once you come to faith in Christ, you are no longer under the supervision of the law. The baptism spoken of here is the baptism of the spirit, the spirit that was received through faith.

Water baptism follows spirit baptism and is a picture of being born again. Going under the water symbolizes death, and coming up out of the water pictures being raised to a new life, the life in the spirit.

Galatians 5:1-3 NIV It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

Paul tells these people that if they are to be saved by keeping the law, then they must obey the whole law. It doesn't matter what part of the law you choose to keep to justify yourself. If you pick out five or ten commandments and choose to obey them, thinking yourself to be righteous because of it, you are wrong. If you are going to keep the law to be saved, you must keep all of the law. God has already stated that by the works of the law, no one would be justified.

If you think you are receiving your salvation by keeping the law, you are in danger of not being saved at all, because God says no one will be in heaven because they kept the law. You are deceiving yourself, and in need of salvation.

Galatians 5:10 NIV I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.

Galatians 5:12 NIV as for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Paul goes on to say that he wishes these people who were teaching salvation by works, would go the whole route, don't stop at just circumcising it, cut the whole thing off. Then they would be sure to have cut enough off to be pleasing to God, if it were possible please him by punishing the flesh.

Galatians 5:13-14 NIV You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "love your neighbor as yourself."

Paul then goes on to say that just because we are free from the letter of the old testament law, not to use this as an excuse to sin. We are under the law of love, to love God with all of your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

After conversion we should strive to sin as little as possible, and do as much good as possible, but always keeping in mind that our salvation is possible only through faith in Christ, not because of our good work or Christian service.

Galatians 5:16 NIV so I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Galatians 5:18 & 5:19-21 NIV But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul gives us a list of things that are never right. Anyone who is led by the Spirit will not be led to do these things, because the spirit of

God never leads us into sin. Everyone can and will fall into one sin or another at times, but this will not be the normal lifestyle for anyone who is led by the spirit of God.

Galatians 5:22-24 NIV But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Paul then lists the opposite of the works of the flesh, the fruit of the Spirit. We are free to indulge in these as much as we desire.

Galatians 6:3-4 NIV if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,

Everyone should test their own actions, without comparing themselves to someone else. Only God who knows the thoughts of a person can judge someone else. Let each person judge themselves, and the Lord will judge everyone else at the judgment seat of Christ. In the meantime Paul tells us not to become tired of doing good, but to continue on until we reap the harvest.

Galatians 6:9-10 NIV let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

The book of Galatians was written for the purpose of keeping us from being deceived by those who after we have been "born again," would lead us back to mans philosophy of salvation, the keeping of the law and of good works.

## Chapter 5: Sin

The next subject we will study is sin. There is a grave misunderstanding about sin, both by the church and by the world in general. Sin, by God's definition, is any act or thought that does not stem from faith or violates the commands of Christ. Any act that violates a person's conscience is a sin for that person, even if the act or thought in itself is not a sin that is specifically mentioned in the Bible as sin.

**Romans 14:23 NIV and everything that does not come from faith is sin.**

Another misunderstanding about sin is that there are some sins that are worse than others and that certain sins will send you to hell and others God will overlook, because they are not really that bad. This is a horrible false teaching that has been taught by the roman catholic church and her daughters through the centuries.

**Mark 3:28-29 NIV I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."**

One sin, of any type, after you know right from wrong, is enough to render you lost. (only God knows how he will deal with those who die before reaching an age of understanding or are mentally deficient from birth.) The only sin that is unforgivable is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which in effect is rejecting Christ until the day you die.

Many people have the false impression that one good work will cancel out one or many sins. They also believe they can somehow gain favor with God by doing some type of good work to atone for their misdeeds.

**Romans 4:4-7 NIV now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.**

God has only one standard, and that is 100% perfection.

Matthew 5:48 NIV be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect.

Let me explain it in very simple terms that everyone should be able to understand clearly. As an example, I will use a baseball player's batting average. If we had a baseball player who batted 1000 times and hit 999 home runs and struck out once, he would have a batting average of .999. If he batted 1000 more times, ten thousand more times, or ten million more times and hit a home run every time he was at bat, he could still never achieve that perfect average of 1000 again after only one strike-out. He could never get rid of a 9 at the very end of his average, even if the number were carried out to infinity. After just one failure, perfection could never again be achieved.

It is exactly the same with God's standard and sin. After only one sin in your lifetime, you can never again reach perfection.

Hebrews 10:14 NIV because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made Holy.

Hebrews 9:22 NIV in fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Revelation 1:5 NIV and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,

After one sin, we must achieve perfection by accepting the fact that Christ lived the perfect life for us and that through the shedding of his blood his perfection will be credited to us because we believe in him.

Romans 4:8 NIV blessed is the man whose sin the lord will never count against him."

Faith in Christ will cancel out all of your strike-outs (sins) and leave you only with your base hits and home runs (good works) on your record.

At the last judgment, those with faith in Christ will be given a position

and a job in God's kingdom, based solely on the good works they have done that stemmed from faith. You can be saved on your deathbed, (if the Holy spirit calls you at that time) without even one good work to your credit and still enter into God's glory; however, you probably won't have a very good job in God's kingdom.

But as king David said, it's better to have a menial job in God's kingdom than to spend eternity with the wicked.

**Psalms 84:10 NIV better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.**

## Chapter 6: What Goes Around Comes Around

Galatians 6:7 NIV do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

God can read our thoughts. Just as easily as we can turn on a radio and adjust the dial to the desired station, God can tune in on our thoughts.

Matthew 10:26 NIV "there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

God can and is recording our every thought from the day of our birth to the day of our death. He knows every motive that we have for everything we do.

Psalms 94:8-11 NIV take heed, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise? Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches man lack knowledge? The lord knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.

God is also recording everything we do, every act, every deed, every spoken word whether good or evil. To us alive today, this should come as no big surprise. With the use of television, video cameras and vcr's, we can do the same thing. We just don't do it from cradle to grave like God does.

God has an angel assigned to every being on this planet who is recording your entire life.

Matthew 18:6-7 &10 NIV but if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. "woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! "see that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my father in heaven.

At the last judgment, every person's life will be reviewed for them;

and they will know that whatever sentence or blessing they received from God will be perfectly fair and just. It will be exactly what they deserve with the exception that those who had faith in God and Christ will have the evil they have done deleted. Only the good will remain.

Romans 2:7-8 NIV to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

## **Sowing good seed**

Reaping what you sow is not as bad as it sounds, when one first hears of it. We just have to change the kind of crops that we you are planting. We need to plant fruit, the fruit of the spirit, rather than weeds.

2 Corinthians 9:6 NIV remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Galatians 6:9-10 NIV let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 5:14 NIV the entire law is summed up in a single command: "love your neighbor as yourself."

Paul, in the book of Galatians lists both the works of the flesh, and the fruit of the spirit. First he lists the works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21 NIV the acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Following this he lists the fruit of the spirit, against which there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

God has promised that all things will work for the good, to them that love him and are called according to his purpose. What this means is that to those who have faith, and are following according to his plan he will make everything work out for our good, just as he did for Job and Abraham. Because this is such an important and powerful verse, I have included it in both the KJV and NIV translations.

Romans 8:28 NIV and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28 KJV and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Following Gods plan is also easy. He has said in his word, that whatever an opportunity that is placed before us to do good, we should do it. He himself will take the responsibility of giving us plenty of work, the work he wants done. He has prepared these works for us in advance, before we were even born.

Ephesians 2:10 NIV for we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 KJV whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Ephesians 6:8 KJV knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the lord, whether he be bond or free.

Colossians 3:23 KJV and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the lord, and not unto men;

Paul also taught that we should learn to be content with our circumstances when they are beyond our ability to change them.

Philippians 4:11-12 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Being unforgiving, and carrying a grudge is also a cause of stress and anxiety, and is not pleasing to God.

Remember, if you have faith, God has already forgiven you for all of your sins, past, present, and future. The least we can do is to forgive others.

Colossians 3:13 NIV bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the lord forgave you.

Lastly, Peter tells us not to be surprised when problems arise, as if something strange is occurring. This is a normal part of life.

1 Peter 4:12-14 NIV dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

## Chapter 7: The Faith of David

We will now take a look at the man after Gods own heart, David, and see what our reaction should be when we do fall into sin and are chastened by God for it.

God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David to be king over Israel. Samuel did not know David, who was the seventh and youngest son of Jesse. Samuel had been shown the first six sons and God had told him that none of these were the man He wanted to be king.

1 Samuel 16:7 NIV but the Lord said to Samuel, "do not consider 'his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:11-13 NIV so he asked Jesse, "are these all the sons you have?" "there is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Acts 13:22 NIV after removing Saul, He made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

The Bible says of David that he was a man after Gods own heart. David was by no means perfect as you will soon see, he was an adulterer and a murderer. God had made him king and given him everything he desired.

Where David was perfect is whenever God confronted David with a sin that he had become involved in, David was swift to repent and accept whatever punishment God decreed for him without whining about it.

This account of the sin of David and how God dealt with him is a perfect example of how God deals with those who are the heirs of

salvation. It shows how quick God is to forgive our sins, when we repent.

Revelation 3:19 NIV those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

The next few verses refer to God's dealings with the end times church, but they also show the way he gives time for repentance before he disciplines us as individuals.

Revelation 2:21-23 NIV I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

They also teach that if we do not quickly repent of our sins on our own, God will require us to endure some chastisement and earthly trouble for our sins. Notice too as we read the account of David's sin how closely these verses portray the punishment that Bathsheba received.

Keep the verses above in mind as you read the account of David's sin, repentance, and restoration to God.

2 Samuel 11:2-5 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (she had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then She went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

David, when he found out that the woman was pregnant tried to cover up his sin by sending for her husband who was a soldier at war.

2 Samuel 11:6-13 NIV so David sent this word to Joab: "send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to

him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?" Uriah said to David, "the Ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my Lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" Then David said to him, "stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

Uriah, the husband, by the design of God refused to sleep with his wife while he was home on leave. When David saw that this ploy had failed devised a plan to kill Uriah.

2 Samuel 11:14-27 NIV in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. Joab sent David a full account of the battle. The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. The messenger said to David, "the men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate. Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead." David told the messenger, "say this to Joab: 'don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' say this to encourage Joab." When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

David killed Uriah and then took his wife and she became David's wife. The Lord was angry with David and sent Nathan the prophet to confront David with his sin. Notice how Nathan first tells David a parable concerning what David had done, and when David became irate over the parable, Nathan told him that he was the man who had done this thing.

2 Samuel 12:1-13 NIV The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "there were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. "now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "as surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "you are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.' "This is what the Lord says: 'out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'" then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

God did punish David with this that he told David he would do. David's son Absalom later rebelled against his father, tried to usurp the throne from David, and drove him out of the palace. Absalom then

took some of David's wives on the roof of the palace and lay with them in broad daylight in front of all the people. David's son Absalom was then killed by David's army and David returned to the palace. God made the punishment fit the crime.

God immediately forgave David of his sin when he acknowledged it, as far as salvation was concerned. But the earthly penalty for his crime still had to be paid. David would reap what he sowed.

God also told David that the child he had conceived in sin would die. This was also part of Bathsheba's punishment. David already had many sons and daughters. She apparently had none, or if she did they are not mentioned in the Bible.

2 Samuel 12:14-18 NIV But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die." After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "while the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

David's servants were afraid that he might commit suicide, or go on a rampage when he found out the child had died. David looked at things differently than they did, he understood the ways of God.

2 Samuel 12:19-23 NIV David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "is the child dead?" He asked. "yes," they replied, "he is dead." Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. His servants asked him, "why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" He answered, "while the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.' but now that he is

dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

Notice that David said that he would go to the child someday. This indicates that those who die at an early age or are aborted will be saved.

David looked on things as if he were viewing them from above, like God views them, when he was walking in the Spirit of God. How could David fall into sin then? The answer to this is that when a person is "born again," they now have two personalities, the old nature, and the new nature.

Romans 7:18-25 & 8:1-2 NIV I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

These two natures war against each other in our bodies until we die. The new nature never sins, while the old nature desires nothing but sin. Sometimes one side is winning the war, and at other times it is reversed. We will not be totally free from the desire to sin until we receive our new bodies at the first resurrection. When we do sin, and allow the old nature to take over, God will send us chastening to get us back on the right track, just like he did for David.

Even though we give in to the old nature at times, this does not mean we are saved and then lost moment by moment as we sin and repent and sin and repent again, over and over. God forgave us the eternal penalty for all of our sins, past, present and future, the moment we

were "born again."

When we fall into sin we are losing our rewards because we are doing evil rather than good, and we are making our stay on earth more miserable, because we will receive chastisement from God for it, if we continue in sin very long.

2 Samuel 12:24 NIV then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The Lord loved him;

Even after all the evil that David and Bathsheba had done, notice the forgiveness of God. He granted them another son, Solomon, who was to become the greatest king of Israel. Solomon did inherit his fathers trait for promiscuity though, and to a larger degree. Solomon when he became king took for himself 700 wives and 300 mistresses. Solomon will make it into the kingdom of God, but he is an example of one of those who though he was great on earth, will be one of the least in the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:31 NIV but many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Solomon, though he believed in God, did not lay up very much treasure in heaven. He spent most of his time and money for his own pleasure. Solomon, the great king of Israel, will probably be a doorman in the kingdom of God.

1 Kings 11:1-4 NIV King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter--Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "you must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

1 Kings 11:6 NIV so Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

1 Kings 11:11-13 NIV so the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your

attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Following the reign of Solomon, God split the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms, the house of Judah, and the house of Israel.

## Chapter 8: Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1 & 3-4 NIV now about Spiritual Gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

God has given to us the gifts that he desires us to have, to be used for the purpose of helping others and to preach the gospel.

1 Corinthians 12:8-12 NIV to one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between Spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Not all of us have the same gifts and abilities, and it is not God's intention that we do.

1 Corinthians 12:14 NIV the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.

1 Corinthians 12:18 NIV but in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

Paul then goes on to say that without love, even the best gifts are worthless.

1 Corinthians 12:28 NIV and in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:31 NIV but eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

## Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NIV if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:8 NIV love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Corinthians 13:13 NIV and now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Paul states that the greatest gift is love. This is the gift that the salvation by works people do not understand. It is because they do not have the love of God in their hearts that they do not understand how God could forgive anyone without the grief and anguish of trying to keep the law. Because they themselves are unloving and unforgiving, they think that God must be also.

1 Corinthians 14:1 NIV follow the way of love and eagerly desire Spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

1 Corinthians 14:39 NIV therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

1 Peter 4:10 NIV each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

## Chapter 9: Basic Christian Doctrines

Paul then reiterates the gospel that he preached to them, so there could be no misunderstanding on what their faith should be founded on. Paul gives in a few verses, a summary of the basic doctrines of Christianity.

**Doctrine #1: We are saved by faith, by believing the gospel.**

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NIV now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

**Doctrine #2: Christ died for our sins, as predicted in the scriptures.**

1 Corinthians 15:3 NIV for what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures,

**Doctrine #3: Christ was raised from the dead on the third day.**

1 Corinthians 15:4 NIV that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures,

Doctrine #4: the resurrection was verified by the fact that Christ was seen alive by more than 500 people after his resurrection.

**Doctrine #4: the resurrection was verified by the fact that Christ was seen alive by more than 500 people after his resurrection.**

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 NIV and that he appeared to peter, and then to the twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

**Doctrine #5: there will be a resurrection of the dead.**

1 Corinthians 15:21-23 NIV for since death came through a man, the

resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

**Doctrine #6: there will be a second coming of Christ, and he will reign over heaven and earth.**

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 NIV then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

**Doctrine #7: death will be destroyed, we will have eternal life.**

1 Corinthians 15:26 NIV the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

**Doctrine #8: Christ will present the universe and everything in it to God the father, and all creation will be in unity with God.**

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 for he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Paul has given us a simple outline of the basic tenets of Christianity.

## Chapter 10: The Lifestyle of John the Baptist

Down through the centuries there have been many controversies concerning eating meat and drinking wine or other forms of strong drink. There have also been many disputes concerning fasting, which is abstaining from food for a period of time for Spiritual purposes. We will take a look at these subjects, and see what the Bible has to say about them.

Matthew 3:1-4 NIV in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the desert of Judea. John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

John the Baptist was a Nazirite. He was chosen by God before his birth, for the job God wanted him to do, as all of us are.

Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV) "before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart;

A Nazirite is a person who is set apart by God, and for God, for a special purpose.

Numbers 6:2-8 NIV "speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'if a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the Lord as a Nazirite, he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. "'during the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be Holy until the period of his separation to the Lord is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. Throughout the period of his separation to the Lord he must not go near a dead body. Throughout the period of his separation he is consecrated to the Lord.

This was the law of the Lord concerning Nazirites. They were not to drink any alcoholic beverage, or cut their hair, during the time of their vows.

Luke 1:5-8 NIV in the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest

named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God,

Luke 1:11-15 NIV then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.

John the Baptist, was a Nazirite from birth, even his mother could not drink alcoholic beverages while he was in the womb. The verses below pertain to Samson, the deliverer of Israel in ancient times. Samson was also a Nazirite, and the same rules applied to him, as to John the Baptist.

Judges 13:3-5 NIV the angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "you are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the philistines."

Judges 13:7 NIV but he said to me, 'you will conceive and give birth to a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death.'

John the Baptist, before the day of his birth, already had work planned for him by God, just as we do.

Luke 1:16-17 NIV many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the Spirit and

power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

### **Zechariah Asked For A Sign, And He Was Given One.**

Luke 1:18-20 NIV Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

Gabriel, the archangel, one of the three highest in command in the kingdom of God was the spokesman for God to Zechariah, announcing to him the conception, birth, and future of his son. Zechariah asked for a sign, to confirm the words of Gabriel, and Gabriel gave him a sign, he made Zechariah mute until the birth of his son, John the Baptist.

Luke 1:21-24 NIV meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. When his time of service was completed, he returned home after this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.

Luke 1:57 & 59-66 NIV when it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "no! He is to be called John." They said to her, "there is no one among your relatives who has that name." Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "his name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "what then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

God had already named John, before his birth. God has everything planned for those who love him before their birth, even our names are not an accident.

John had a job already planned for him before his birth, he was to prepare the way for Christ, and to baptize him.

Matthew 3:13 NIV Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

Matthew 3:16-17 NIV as soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "this is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

John was the ultimate holiness person. He was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was yet in the womb. His lifestyle was cleaner than the strictest holiness person you have ever met or heard of. His diet was more limited than the most avid vegetarians. He never drank wine or strong drink, all the days of his life. Jesus spoke about John in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 9:14-15 NIV then John's disciples came and asked him, "how is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "how can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

Matthew 11:7-11 NIV as John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "what did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' I tell you the truth: among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest human that had ever lived, as far as holiness was concerned. He also said that the least in the kingdom would be greater than John. Jesus said this, because even though John was almost perfect, he was still human, had a human body, and was a sinner in need of salvation.

At the resurrection we will be given new bodies that are totally free from sin, so even the very least person in Gods kingdom will be greater in holiness than John was on earth. John at this time will also have his new body, and will be rewarded for the work he did, and will be great in the kingdom of heaven.

John 3:23-30 & 4:1-2 NIV now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized. (this was before John was put in prison.) An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, "rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan--the one you testified about--well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." To this John replied, "a man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' the bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less. The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

John had completed his work, Christ had now arrived and John had prepared the way for him, as it was prophesied. Johns disciples were jealous over the fact that Jesus and his disciples were gaining more new converts than they were.

John told his disciples plainly that Christ would become greater, and he (John) would become less. After this, John was put in prison by Herod, because Herod had taken his brothers wife and was living with her. John had rebuked Herod for this, and Herod, at the urging of his brothers wife, put John in prison.

Matthew 14:3-13 NIV now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,

for John had been saying to him: "it is not lawful for you to have her." Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet. On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Prompted by her mother, she said, "give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

John the Baptist, the most perfect human to ever walk the earth, (other than Christ) died young. He was murdered by Herod, at the request of the woman Herod was living with. The point of all this is that holiness and doing Gods will is no absolute guarantee of a long life, but it is the guarantee of a quality life, and of accomplishment of ones purpose before dying.

Johns work was finished, and God allowed him to die. John died for the word of God, and has much treasure in heaven. John the Baptist was only six months older than Jesus, so he died being only about thirty two years old.

John in his life, was the apostle to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law of God. They rejected him. God sent them a man whose lifestyle was far beyond their own, in outward holiness, so that they would have no excuse for not believing his words. Johns life was more pure than the strictest of the Pharisees, and they will be without excuse at the last judgment.

Now, we will take a look at the life of Jesus and some more of his comments about John the Baptist.

## Chapter 11: The Lifestyle of Jesus

Luke 7:17 NIV this news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Luke 7:20 & 22 When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'" so he replied to the messengers, "go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Luke 7:24-30 NIV after John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "what did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (all the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

The Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law rejected John the Baptist, and in doing so rejected God's purpose for their lives. God is a God of freedom. He allows us to choose what path we will follow during the course of our life, his plan, or our own plan.

God had a plan for the Pharisees, but they rejected it, so God would give their work to someone else, Jesus' disciples and his followers. These were unlearned men and women, fishermen, laborers, tax collectors, and prostitutes.

God gave the work and that the Pharisees and the teachers of the law should have been doing, to the common people, and these people will earn the rewards for that work.

God does not force anyone to believe his word. Even though God knows what we will do before we do it, this in no way violates our freedom of choice.

It is similar to a parent who knows that one child will behave when they are away, and another child will get into mischief. Just because a parent knows that one child is inclined to be bad when left alone, and another child good, this in no way detracts from the fact that it is the child's own choice do whatever he or she desires while left unattended.

We have the same situation today as was in Jesus day. Many of our priests, pastors, and Bible college professors, are neglecting to do their jobs. They are not studying and then teaching the people the truth from Gods word, so God is finding other people to complete his work.

This is not to say that there are no pastors that are doing Gods work, but you have to search to find them. Many are teaching the social gospel of humanism, and reject repentance from sin, and salvation through the shed blood of Christ. They also fail to teach about prophecy, because they do not believe God's word.

Luke 7:31-32 NIV "to what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: "we played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry."

Christ compared the religious leaders, and all of the people who rejected both Jesus and Johns message, to children in the market place, who were not satisfied no matter what type of music was being played.

Luke 7:33-35 NIV for John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'he has a demon.' the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ' here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." 'But wisdom is proved right by all her children."

John the Baptist was the dirge, the mourning song. John denied himself all of the physical pleasures in life.

Jesus was the flute, Jesus denied himself of nothing that was not specifically mentioned in the scriptures as being a sin.

Jesus took freedom to the very limits, yet without sinning. Jesus knew exactly how much he could eat, without being a glutton, he knew exactly how much he could drink, without being drunk, he knew exactly how much he could touch or hold a woman, without being immoral.

While John the Baptist was specifically sent to the Pharisees and the religious leaders, Jesus was the minister to the common people, for he lived like they did, yet without sin. The life style of Jesus, and the life style of John, were 180 degrees apart, Jesus was the only perfect man to ever live, and John was the closest to perfection in the flesh.

Both men were doing the will of God for their lives, yet their life styles were vastly different. John lived in the wilderness with a group of stoics, while Jesus lived in the city, with the common people. John never partied, never touched a drop of wine, or ate a steak, during his entire life. Jesus it seems, was always attending a feast.

Luke 5:27-32 NIV after this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, " why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus answered them, "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Jesus had a sense of humor, he was toying with the Pharisees, yet telling them the truth at the same time, but they were too dull to understand it. They thought they were perfect, because of their outward appearance, just like some do today. Matthew elaborates on this subject in his account of this same feast.

Matthew 9:12-13 NIV on hearing this, Jesus said, "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus, quoting from the scriptures, told the Pharisees that God desired mercy and not sacrifice. The Pharisees were meticulous in the keeping of the ceremonial law, and their traditions, but their hearts were evil. They thought they were perfect, and looked down on everyone else. They were unforgiving, unmerciful, and greedy for wealth. Jesus was telling them that what God wants is a pure heart, not an outward expression of piety. The Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him why his followers did not observe their traditions.

Matthew 15:2-6 NIV "why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" Jesus replied, "and why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'honor your father and mother' and ' anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' but you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ' whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father ' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

The Pharisees, had a tradition that everything they had was devoted to God, therefore they could not give anything away, even to help their aged parents who were in need.

They did this, not out of love for God, but out of greed, so no one, not even their own family could ask them for financial assistance.

They were like the people today who declare their house to be a church, to avoid paying taxes to the government. These people do not do this out of love for God, but out of love for money.

Matthew 15:7-10 NIV you hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ""these people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' " Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "listen and understand.

Much of the church world today, is exactly like this, full of the traditions of men, but ignoring the word of God.

Matthew 15:11-14 what goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him'

unclean.'" then the disciples came to him and asked, "do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?" He replied, "every plant that my heavenly father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

Jesus said of the Pharisees in his day, that they were the blind leading the blind, and we have returned to the same condition today in most of the church world.

Matthew 15:15-20 Peter said, "explain the parable to us." "are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. "don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' for out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Jesus taught that it is not what you eat or drink that is important, but what you think, what you say, and what you do.

The Gospel of Mark also recorded this incident, and he adds a few explanatory remarks.

Mark 7:17-23 NIV after he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. "are you so dull?" He asked. "don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (in saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") He went on: "what comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' for from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

While Jesus was liberal in his actions concerning obeying the letter of the law, he introduced a radical new concept concerning the definition of sin, and the Spirit of the law. This concept was not really new, as it was understood by the prophets of old, and by Enoch before the flood, but it was new to the Pharisees and the church world of Jesus time, because it had been lost for so long.

Matthew 5:17-19 NIV "do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus teaches in the verse above that errors in doctrine would not prevent a person from being saved, what it would do is reduce their rewards. Many people from the traditional and fundamentalist churches teach that no one from what they call a "cult," can be saved because they have bad doctrine. The people in the so called "cults," do the same thing and teach that no one in the traditional churches will be saved.

They are both wrong. Christ paid for all sin, and this includes the sin of not studying enough to root out false doctrine from your mind. Anyone trusting in Christ for their salvation will be saved, in spite of whatever other false doctrines they might believe in. They might be working at the door with Solomon, but at least they will make it in.

The key though is "Trusting in Christ for Salvation." Without that, no one will make it into God's Kingdom.

## Chapter 12: Hypocrites and Pharisees

Matthew 5:20 NIV for I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the Teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

This was a stunning statement to the disciples, and the people listening to Jesus. The Pharisees and the Teachers of the law outwardly, had the holiest lifestyles of anyone. This statement was a paradox to those listening because Jesus and his disciples were constantly breaking the laws of the Pharisees.

They did not understand that the righteousness that Jesus was talking about was the righteousness of faith. Faith in Christ makes a person perfect in the eyes of God, because it washes away the guilt for all of our sins, even those we have not yet committed.

The Pharisees did not believe they were sinners. Jesus then continued on to clarify the fact that a person does not have to actually commit a misdeed to sin, the intention of doing it is already a sin.

Matthew 5:21-22 NIV "you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' but I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'you fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Matthew 5:27-28 NIV "you have heard that it was said, 'do not commit adultery.' but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

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 5:43-45 NIV "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. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect.

Jesus, was not saying that anyone who had done these things could not be saved, as many teach today. What he was doing is trying to convince the Pharisees that they were sinners also. Until a person recognizes the fact that they are a sinner and in need of forgiveness, they will not seek forgiveness, so they will remain in their lost condition. Jesus was broadening the definition of sin to the point where it included the Pharisees also.

The Pharisees considered themselves to have a lock on the kingdom God, meaning that they were a sure bet to make it into Gods kingdom. They considered themselves above needing salvation because they were the physical descendants of Abraham, because they held high positions in the religious hierarchy, and because in public least, they obeyed the letter of the ceremonial law.

Jesus, after proving that everyone is a sinner, if not in deed, then in thought, went on to teach what true religion is.

Before you can understand the following verses, you must first understand what a hypocrite is. The word in modern usage has come to mean a person who believes in God, but sins, usually in public.

This is not the meaning of the word at all, the very opposite is true. The word "hypocrite" comes from English drama, and refers to a person who in disguise, an actor wearing a mask and a costume, berating someone else. The actor in disguise cannot be seen for what he really is because of his makeup and attire.

A modern day example of what a hypocrite would be shown in our form of comedy known as a "roast." The hypocrites are the people doing the roasting, while the person being roasted is the object of their taunts.

Only John the Baptist and Jesus understood that the scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites. The common people and the disciples looked up to the scribes and Pharisees as being the most Holy people.

A hypocrite then, is a person who appears to men to be Holy, but only

God and a few persons to whom God chooses to reveal it to, know otherwise. A hypocrite is Holy in his outward actions, as men judge holiness, but inside is Spiritually dead. A saved person, is a person who appears to be a sinner, as men judge sin, but inside is Spiritually alive. Keep this in mind as we study the next few verses.

## **Giving**

Matthew 6:1-4 NIV "be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your father in heaven. "so when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

The hypocrites, when they give money or do some good work, seek the attention and the praise of men. God says they already have their reward, they will get no more reward from him.

A modern day example of this type of hypocrisy is when a person gives money to a good cause and demands a plaque or an award for them to hang in their home, office, or place of business, so that men can see how righteous they are.

Another example would be those who give money to a church building program for the purpose of having a wing or a room named after them, or their names inscribed on the wall, or published in a newspaper or church bulletin.

The modern day church is robbing its members of eternal rewards whenever they publish the names and amounts of the givers. If you give to a worthy cause, and your name and the amount is published, you have lost your reward, as far as God is concerned.

Even adding up the amount of your charitable deductions and giving the amount to your tax preparer, and the government, is enough to cause you to lose your reward. Jesus said, not to let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. When you keep track of every dollar you have given to a charitable organization, you are violating

the command of Christ, not to let your right hand know what your left hand is doing, and to do your giving in secret.

Luke 16:13-15 NIV "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.

Those who love money will not be able to accept this teaching. Notice, that Jesus said that what is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

God couldn't care less what you eat, what you drink, how you dress, the style of your hair, whether you have a beard or are clean shaven, and on and on the list could go. Only hypocrites, Christians with bad doctrine, and unsaved people are concerned about these things.

God is only concerned with what you think in your mind, and believe in your heart.

## **Prayer**

Matthew 6:5-8 NIV "and when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your father, who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your father knows what you need before you ask him.

When the hypocrites pray, they do so loudly and in public so that everyone will see them, and they will receive the praises of men. They have their reward, they will receive no more from God. You can turn on your television on any Sunday morning and see many hypocrites, weeping and wailing and crying, begging God to have mercy on men who are not so fortunate as themselves, to be perfect like they are. These are modern day Pharisees doing the same things

that their Spiritual ancestors, the Pharisees of Jesus' day were doing.

Now, there is nothing wrong with public prayer in the church for the sick, or for some brother or sister who is going through a time of trial. Neither is there anything wrong with thanking God for your food before you eat in your home. But, if you do it in public for the purpose of being seen, you have lost your reward. God can read your thoughts, you do not have to speak out loud when thanking God for the things he has given you. When you do so, you are losing your reward from God, because people will see you and praise you, and say what a Godly person you are.

When you desire something from God, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to God in secret, not letting others know what you are doing. Then God who sees and hears the things done in secret will give you what you ask for, if it is part of his plan for your life. And when you pray, do not use repetitious prayers, like the rosary or repeating the Lords prayer over and over. This is this is babbling, and is of no value. Simply state your needs to God, thank him for what you already have, and do so in the name of Jesus Christ.

God already knows what we need before we ask him, the purpose of prayer is for our benefit, so that when we receive what we asked for, we know it is from God and our faith is increased.

## **Fasting**

Matthew 6:16-18 NIV "when you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your father, who is unseen; and your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

The purpose of fasting, is to heighten Spiritual awareness. When you fast, your body automatically begins to shut down unnecessary energy burning functions to preserve the nourishment your body has stored, to make it last for the longest possible time. The longer you fast the more functions are shut down and slowed down. What this accomplishes is that it decreases your energy level so you are less inclined to be distracted by thoughts about playing sports, sex, work,

and anything that you enjoy doing when you feel great, and your body is full of power. When these bodily functions and desires are dulled Spiritual awareness is heightened.

The time to use fasting as a tool is when you are expecting some great crisis to come upon you, that requires Spiritual power, or when you have been praying for something for a long time and have received no answer from God.

Moses fasted forty days when he received the ten commandments, Elijah fasted forty days when he was in great fear for his life from queen Jezebel, Jesus fasted forty days before he was tempted by Satan. He did this to give himself Spiritual power to resist the temptations he was about to endure. Notice, the very first temptation was with food. Jesus answered Satan every time by quoting from the scriptures. Satan also quoted from the scriptures, but with a false interpretation.

Matthew 4:1-11 NIV then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "if you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "it is written: 'man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" then the devil took him to the Holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "if you are the son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'he will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" "Jesus answered him, "it is also written: 'do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "all this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

It is not recommended that anyone try fasting for forty days, especially if you are working. Forty day fasts are only for prophets who are instructed by God to do this. Three days to a week is sufficient in most cases, and then, do not gorge yourself after a fast or this can lead to severe medical problems, or even death. If you wish to fast for Spiritual reasons, start with a 24 hour fast, and work

your way up to a week, if this is what is necessary to receive an answer from God.

And when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, who tell others they are fasting to appear Holy before men. Wash yourself, put on nice clothes and a cheerful face, and conceal the fact that you are fasting, and God who sees what you are doing in secret will give you the answer that you seek, or make you aware of the reason why you cannot have what you want.

Ritual fasts, such as lent, or not eating certain foods on certain days, are meaningless. There is no Spiritual value whatsoever to a ritual fast. Don't even bother with these. Reserve fasting for times when you desperately need an answer from God. In most cases the answer you seek can be found in the scriptures, once your mind is Spiritually ready to receive it, and you are willing to accept it.

**Matthew 23:1-3 NIV then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "the teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.**

We are not bound by this today, having to do what the scribes and Pharisees tell us to do. In Jesus time there was only one temple, the one in Jerusalem, and one high priest. Even when this high priest did not know what he was saying, God would put words in his mouth to make him say the right thing.

Today, in the church age, when we find we are in a church with false preacher, we can simply change churches.

**Matthew 23:4-5 NIV they tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. "everything they do is done for men to see: they make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long;**

This is the same thing that the hypocrites do today, try to make you conform to a bunch of man made rules, that are impossible to keep, while they themselves, in secret, do not even try to keep them.

**Matthew 23:6-8 NIV they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in**

the marketplaces and to have men call them 'rabbi.' "but you are not to be called 'rabbi,' for you have only one master and you are all brothers.

The Jews today still call their priests, "rabbi's", which means "master" and is against the command of God.

Matthew 23:9 NIV and do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one father, and he is in heaven.

Jesus is talking here about calling a priest or pastor "father," not our human fathers or mothers. The catholic church still practices this today, against the clear command of Christ.

Matthew 23:10 NIV nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one teacher, the Christ.

At the time of Christ there was a strict religious sect known as the "Essenes," who called the leader of their group, "the teacher of righteousness." Jesus is here again talking about calling someone who is a priest or pastor "teacher," for this would be implying that they have some special Spiritual wisdom, above and beyond what is available to every Christian.

Jesus was and is the first and the last Spiritual "teacher." Everything we now learn Spiritually, comes to us from Christ, via the Holy Spirit. Anything we learn Spiritually is made possible by Christ, whether we hear it or read it, by him opening our minds to understand it. Christ was not talking about calling someone teaching at a school or university "teacher," only Spiritual group leaders.

In all of the cases above, calling someone master, father, or teacher pertains only to Spiritual leaders, not to those who are in authority over us in secular matters.

Matthew 23:11-12 NIV the greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

The point of the verses above is that while we are here on this earth, we are here to serve, to help others. Jesus is still talking here primarily to pastors. Pastor, by the way is the proper term for a

Christian group leader.

Pastor means "shepherd." A shepherd is to be kind and gentle to his flock, guiding and protecting them, not Lording over them like a lion tamer in a circus, making the lion jump through a flaming hoop.

Matthew 23:13 NIV "woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Jesus said of these scribes and Pharisees that they were not saved, and that they were actually preventing others, from being saved. They were then, and are today, only a temporary roadblock though. God will not allow even one person throughout the entire seven thousand years of human history, to be lost, if that person is willing to know and believe the truth. God will simply go around the scribes and the Pharisees and reveal the truth to the person desiring it by other means.

Matthew 23:15-17 NIV "woe to you, teachers of the law and 'Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. "woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'if anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' you blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

The Pharisees, loved money. They considered the gold in the temple to be of greater value than what the temple represented, the dwelling place of God.

Matthew 23:23-24 NIV "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. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

The biblical principle of giving is the tithe, ten percent. The Pharisees adhered strictly to this principle, even giving ten percent of their spices. They were adhering strictly to the letter of the law, but neglecting the greater matters, justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Notice, that in this case Jesus did not tell them to stop what they were doing. He told them that they should be doing both, tithing, and practicing justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Tithing is still for us today. This subject is covered in the book "Biblical Mysteries??? Revealed!!!

In Luke, Jesus gives us a parable showing how a hypocrite acts, and how a saved person acts, and how God views both of them.

Luke 18:9-14 NIV to some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'" "but the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'" "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The modern day Pharisees do the same thing, they thank God that they are not like the rest of us poor sinners, thinking themselves to be justified by their works. It was the sinner who recognized his sin who went home justified, not the one who thought he had no sin in him.

Matthew 23:25-28 NIV "woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. "woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Jesus is here telling the hypocrites that if they clean the inside, the mind and the heart, the outside will be clean also.

From the Pharisees viewpoint, Jesus and his disciples lives were unclean, because they did not obey the traditions of the Jewish religion. Modern day hypocrites are the same way, they judge others according to their traditions, and not according to the scriptures and the Spirit of God.

Matthew 23:29-36 "woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'if we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' so you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! "you snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

All this did come upon that generation, they crucified Christ, and said, "let his blood be upon us and upon our children," and it was. For this sin, the Jews were booted out of their country for two thousand years, just as God had told them they would be.

Matthew 23:37-39 NIV "o Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' "

The Jews will not see Christ again, until they have suffered horribly under the Antichrist, and are praying and begging for Christ to return and save them. This will happen during the lifetime of this generation, because we are the generation who have witnessed the restoration of the state of Israel.

## Chapter 13: The Teaching of Paul

John the Baptist was the ultra conservative, Jesus was the ultra liberal, and Paul taught that the place for most Christians to be to be was in the middle, between the two.

Romans 14:1-3 NIV accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.

Romans 14:23 NIV but the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Paul taught that there was room in the church for both those who abstained from certain foods, and those who felt no compulsion to abstain.

Romans 14:4-6 NIV who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Colossians 2:16 NIV therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day.

He taught the same thing concerning regard for special days. There is room in Gods church for both those who regard one day as superior to another and those who view all days alike.

There is room in Gods church for seventh day Adventists and the worldwide church of God who view Saturday as the proper day of worship, and for those worship on Sunday, and for those who view all days as being alike.

Saturday, by the way is the Sabbath day, the seventh day, and is a prophetic picture of the millennium.

Sunday, is both the first day and the eighth day, and is a prophetic picture of eternity, the eighth day, which will follow the millennium.

Corinthians 12:12-14 & 18 NIV the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

God has arranged the parts in the body of Christ just the way he wants them to be, so let there be no judging of one another concerning food, drink, and special days.

Romans 14:10-12 NIV you, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'as surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" so then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Philippians 2:9-11 NIV therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.

Each one of us will give an account of ourselves to Christ, when we stand before him and bow and worship. We will then be rewarded for our works and our faith. Christ is our judge, not other men.

Romans 14:13-14 NIV therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

Paul was fully convinced that there was no food that was unclean in

itself, but if someone thought that there was, for that person it was a sin to eat it, because they were violating their own conscience.

Romans 14:15-16 NIV if your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.

Many people use these verses of Paul to try to prove that even if certain things are not a sin, that we should always abstain from them because it could cause a weak brother to stumble, and then they tack on something about avoiding all appearance of evil, trying to make everyone think and do like they do, while they themselves would not lift one finger to accommodate someone with beliefs different from theirs.

Paul said not to allow anyone to speak evil of what you consider to be good, but at the same time be sensitive and compassionate about the beliefs of others.

Romans 14:17-23 NIV for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Romans 15:1-2 NIV we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

If these people actually believed what they were saying, then they would adhere to all of the things that weak believers consider to be a sin, not just a few that they pick and choose for themselves. If Paul meant that we should always abstain from everything that anyone

who is weak in the faith considers to be a sin, then we should all be living like the Amish, without electricity and modern conveniences, because these brothers consider it to be a sin.

Anyone who tells another to avoid something that God has not commanded us to refrain from, had better be living like the Amish, or they are judging others, and are losing some of their Spiritual rewards by doing so.

What was Paul talking about then? What he was saying is, that when you are in the presence of someone who has a problem with something, don't flaunt your freedom in Christ to make them feel bad, or to cause them to be embarrassed and partake of something that they consider to be a sin because of peer pressure from you.

Examples of this would be to partake of an alcoholic beverage in front of someone trying to quit drinking, or to eat a delicious dessert in front of an overweight person who is on a diet, taunting them by your actions.

If a person has had a problem with something in the past, then it is better for them to totally abstain from it, to keep from being bound by it once again.

1 Corinthians 8:8 NIV but food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

1 Corinthians 9:3-4 NIV this is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right to food and drink?

1 Corinthians 9:19-22 NIV though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

Paul made it his practice to find common ground with all people, and when he was with them to adhere to whatever things they practiced,

so long as they were not sinful practices. This is what Paul was teaching. If you are with someone who believes that they should worship on Saturday, don't argue with them, accept this as Gods will for their life at the present time. If God wants to change them, that is his job. If you are invited into someone's home who feels it is a sin to eat meat or drink wine, don't argue with them about it, submit yourself to their customs while you are a guest in this persons home, or even if you are out to dinner with them at a restaurant. It is no sin to abstain, anymore than it is a sin to partake.

This does not mean that you should be a hypocrite and pretend that you always abstain from the same things that they do. To the contrary, Paul said not to let anyone call evil what you consider to be good, but don't harp on the subject, food and drink are not important anyway, they will both become unnecessary after the resurrection. There are many things of more value to discuss when meeting with those who have faith in Christ.

This abstaining applies only to the weak, not those who claim to be strong. Neither Paul or Jesus spared having words with those who thought they were better than others because of something they were doing or not doing with their physical body.

Jesus made it a point to infuriate the Pharisees with his freedom at every opportunity, because although they claimed they could see, they were blind. In their case it was the kindest thing to do because they were beyond the point of being taught by reasoning with them from the scriptures.

Adhering to the customs of others when you are with them only pertains to those who are weak in the faith, not those who claim to be strong, teachers of the law.

John 9:40-41 NIV some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "what? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "if you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

God does not condemn people who are in ignorance and searching for the truth, but those who claim to be wise are guilty before God.

Romans 1:22 KJV professing themselves to be wise, they became

fools,

It is only to the weak that we are to be accommodating, not to those who claim to be strong but are self blinded fools. What the Spiritually blind need is a good shock to wake them up.

A person who is truly blind is not guilty of sin, because they are blind, and need only to be taught, and they will understand, if they have the Spirit of God in them.

Those who claim they see are guilty of sin because they are unteachable, they think they know it all already. Even Jesus couldn't teach these people, even after they had seen his miracles, they still would not believe.

This was also proven by Paul in his dealings with peter, when peter fell into sin by forcing the gentiles to adhere to Jewish customs. Paul did not mince words with peter to be a kind and accommodating Christian brother, peter was strong, but in error, and Paul withstood him to his face.

Galatians 2:11-16 NIV when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to peter in front of them all, "you are a Jew, yet you live like a gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force gentiles to follow Jewish customs? "we who are Jews by birth and not 'gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Paul rebuked Peter in front of them all for his sin, because peter was not doing this out of ignorance, but out of fear of those who belonged to the circumcision party. Paul was gentle with the weak, but fearless with the strong, and those who claimed to be strong, but who were Spiritually blind because they hardened their hearts to the truth.

1 Corinthians 10:23 NIV "everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial. "everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive.

1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

The final end of the matter is, that whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Help the weak, and rebuke those who claim to see, but are in error, like Peter was.

## Chapter 14: Charity and Judgment

One of the greatest failures of the church down through the ages and continuing until this day is its treatment of the poor and needy.

There should not and would not be a social welfare system in the United States if all of the Christian churches had been doing the job that Jesus and the apostles had given them to do.

Acts 6:1-7 NIV in those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Luke 14:12-14 NIV then Jesus said to his host, "when you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

That job is to preach the gospel and help all of those in need--any need. The reason that so many people, and especially young people, are deserting the church today is because the church has failed to extend a helping hand to the poor, the sick, the widows, the unemployed, the unwed mothers, the drunkards, and people with any and all manners of problems.

The very same bigots who praise God in church on Sunday will curse

these people during the ride home.

Matthew 5:46 NIV if you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

James 1:27 NIV religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

It is because the church has refused to do its job and give food, shelter, a change of clothing and the bare necessities of life to those who need it that the government now has to do it at ten times the cost. The government uses an army of highly paid bureaucrats and non-Christian social workers who are unable to give Spiritual counseling along with financial assistance.

Charity needs to be accompanied by Spiritual guidance, when necessary. By doing this there is a possibility that those who are poor because of sin will come to faith in Christ and become useful members of society, rather than a burden to the taxpayers.

The church has robbed the poor rather than helped them. The churches beg for money to finance huge building programs, business ventures, ornate interior and exterior decorating schemes, crystal cathedrals, amusement parks and on and on.

If the church had done its job for the past two hundred years, those in need would be receiving financial assistance and Christian counseling from the same place. Instead, if any counsel is given at all, it is ungodly counsel that will, in most cases, cause their life to become worse in the future rather than better.

It will come as no surprise when the churches are taxed, they deserve it. They have become a self-perpetuating big business, rather than a lifeline to those in need.

It was recently reported in the news media that a major denomination has decided to concentrate more on home missions in the united states. From their new twelve million dollar office building, they announced that they would spend a total of eight million dollars on missions, four million on foreign missions and four million on missionary work in the United States.

Well! Well! Isn't that just wonderful. Of this eight million, I wonder how much will actually go to the poor. If we are lucky, maybe one dollar out of a hundred of that eight million will aid those in need. Most of it will go for salaries and more new buildings to administrate this missionary work from.

The disciples of Jesus were also subject to being awed by the great buildings and edifices of the temple, before Christ was crucified and resurrected and they were truly converted.

**Matthew 24:1-2 NIV Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "do you see all these things?" He asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."**

Many of the churches today are just like those in Jesus' day. The people in them worship the temple, rather than the God who dwells in the temple. They worship idols of wood and stone, fancy churches and office buildings.

The prophecy of Jesus proclaiming that not one stone would be left on another was fulfilled when the Romans invaded Jerusalem and leveled the temple.

Let this be a warning to the churches of today. During the reign of the Antichrist and because of our wars with him, many buildings and churches will be destroyed. The churches should spend less money on expensive buildings and spend more money on preaching the gospel and helping the poor. By doing this, they will be building an eternal treasure that will last forever, not a temporary treasure on earth that will eventually be destroyed.

## **The Left Side**

Not all of man's problems originate with the devil. Some of them we cause ourselves when we violate the natural laws that God has set in place. The laws of God are at work to insure that everyone will eventually get exactly what they deserve. (except those whose sins are forgiven)

The law states we will reap what we sow. If we do good, good will be

returned to us. If we do evil, evil will pursue us throughout this life and the life to come.

It seems that many people can go through life and get away with just about anything and never get caught. This is true in a sense, because God has divided his promise of reaping what we sow into two separate streams--the left side and the right side.

Those on the right side are disciplined swiftly for their sins. Those on the left side are sometimes allowed to do what they will until the day of their death. They will receive their punishment at the last judgment.

Matthew 25:31-34 NIV "when the son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "then the king will say to those on his right, 'come, you who are blessed by my father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Matthew 25:41-46 NIV "then he will say to those on his left, 'depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "he will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Those on the left side who have no faith in God will be allowed to go through life sinning without immediately being chastened for their sins. They are those who God has foreknowledge will never attain salvation. He will allow them to enjoy themselves in the evil that they do. God knows that this is the only enjoyment they will ever experience throughout eternity, as their final destination is the lake of fire.

These people appear to others to be the lucky ones, but they are

actually in the worst position. Once a person's heart has become so hardened against God that they can never repent, he gives them up to do whatever they wish.

Usually near the end of their life, God brings their world crashing down around them to give them one last chance to acknowledge him and be forgiven for all that they have done.

With some who have committed blasphemy of the Holy ghost during their lifetime, God simply leaves them alone to die in their sins and be punished later, at the last judgment.

Romans 1:20-32 NIV for since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator--who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

The element of time is of no concern to God. He has forever. All

people are coming to him. With each passing second every living being is closer to his or her death. They will stand before God, sooner or later. He will wait patiently until they appear before his throne. He has already set the day for the last judgment at the end of the millennium.

When a person hardens their heart beyond the point of ever repenting, God permits them to do whatever they wish for the rest of their life. When they have been presented with the truth but decide to reject it and push the knowledge of God out of their minds, it is blasphemy of the Holy ghost. If you think about God at all, you have not committed this sin. If you had committed it, you would not have read this far into this book.

**Matthew 12:31-32 KJV wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**

Blasphemy against the Holy ghost is the only sin that is unforgivable. It consists of God opening a person's mind to understand the truth that he is the only true God, and then they knowingly and consciously reject the truth because they wish to continue on with their life in the same evil manner as they had before. At this point, God gives them what they desire and turns them over to a reprobate mind. They will never again think about the true things of God. They may be religious; but their religion is a false religion, like that of the Pharisees.

When Jesus spoke these words about the blasphemy against the Holy ghost, he was speaking to the scribes and the Pharisees who were the high religious leaders of the day. They knew the scriptures, had seen him perform miracles, and should have accepted him as their messiah. They attributed the miracles and healings he had performed to the power of Satan, although they knew otherwise.

They did this because they were afraid they might lose their position of power over the people who belonged to the synagogue. The Pharisees closed their minds and hardened their hearts to the truth because they loved this present world.

If Christ were to return as a humble servant today, it would be the church leaders who would crucify him again, for the sake of their traditions and to preserve their power over the people.

After committing this sin, a person continually becomes more and more hardened against the truth of God until the day of their death.

Romans 1:32 (KJV) who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

For these people, it would have been better for them never to have known the truth than to have known it and rejected it. People who commit this sin were never truly saved. There is a difference between knowing the truth and accepting the truth.

2 Peter 2:21 KJV for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the Holy commandment delivered unto them.

God is under no obligation to reveal any more truth to a person until they have accepted what they have already been given. The first step is to believe there is a God. It will be shown at the last judgment that God has revealed to everyone who has ever lived, at some point in their life, that he exists. If they do not accept this, then they can never progress any farther with Spiritual things. It would be pointless for God to give them more information, because they would not be able to understand it.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are Spiritually discerned.

We have seen in this chapter how God will deal with those who will be on the left side at the judgment. Now, let's look at those who will be on his right side.

## **The Right Side**

Matthew 25:34-40 NIV "then the king will say to those on his right,

'come, you who are blessed by my father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "the king will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Those on the right side will be dealt with differently by God. These people can't get away with anything. It seems as if they get caught before they even finish whatever evil thing they intended to do. This is a blessing from God to those whom he has foreknowledge will be on the right side at the last judgment.

The quicker he allows you to be caught and punished for your sins, the quicker you will come to your senses, stop whatever you are doing wrong, and get on with the business of laying up treasure in heaven. Laying up treasure in heaven is accomplished by the good that you do in your life when it stems from faith in God. What you do on earth will determine what your job and rank is in God's kingdom. God wants every person to earn the highest rank possible. He wants you to live up to your full potential, both in this life and in the life to come.

**Revelation 3:19 NIV those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.**

God compares himself to a father that disciplines his children. The purpose of this discipline is not to hurt you, but to teach you the truth and the path which you should follow. As soon as you acknowledge your sin, God will forgive it. In fact, he has already forgiven it before you ever committed it. Although this is true, you may still have to bear some earthly punishment for whatever you did wrong.

If you murder someone and are sentenced to twenty years in jail, do not expect God to appear to the governor in a vision and tell him to pardon you as soon as you recognize that you committed a sin and

repent. What he will do is make your burden easier to bear in whatever situation you are in.

Proverbs 13:24 NIV he who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

Many people through the centuries have used the verse in proverbs 13:24 as an excuse to abuse their children. We need to discipline our children as God disciplines us, not in anger but with love.

Colossians 3:20-21 KJV children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

God has decreed that the punishment should fit the crime. He practices this; and you can see it in your own life and the lives of others who belong to him.

If you habitually lie, you will be lied to. If you steal, you will lose your own goods. If you cheat, you will be cheated. If you live by the sword, you will die by the sword. There are some cases where spanking is the correct punishment. In most cases, other forms of punishment are more suitable. If you are wise, you will be able to look back on your life and see that many of the bad things that have happened to you are the result of you receiving back in your body the same thing you did to someone else.

The same thing is true in reverse. If you help others, when you are in need you will be helped, if not by others than by God.

In the book of Hebrews, God repeats this same thing he told us in the old testament concerning chastening those that he loves.

Hebrews 12:5-11 NIV and you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "my son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How

much more should we submit to the father of our Spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

## **Worry**

Psalms 37:4-7 NIV delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: he will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm;

Psalms 37:24-27 NIV though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand. I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed. Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever.

The book of proverbs is full of wisdom and wise sayings. Solomon collected these and put them in the book known today as proverbs. Anyone wishing to make their life better should read the book of proverbs. Much of it is just good old common sense, put together in such a way that one or two sentences teach a whole lesson on a subject.

Proverbs 3:5-8 NIV trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Notice in the verse above that trusting in God will bring health to your body. Many people do not realize how much stress, anxiety, worry and depression, are a detriment to us, wearing down our bodies and lowering our immunity to disease.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 NIV so then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body,

When we stop worrying about what tomorrow will bring, and relax, trusting in God to make it turn out for our good, our immune system can then concentrate on fighting off disease rather than being worn down by the stress we place on ourselves.

Matthew 6:25-34 NIV "therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? "and why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that 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, will he not much more clothe you, o you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'what shall we eat?' or 'what shall we drink?' or 'what shall we wear?' for the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

1 peter 5:7 NIV cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

John 14:27 NIV peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

## **The Cloud of Angelic Witnesses**

In the verses below it is shown that the beings known as angels are both interested and involved in the affairs of men.

Luke 15:3-10 NIV then Jesus told them this parable: "suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. "or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' in the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

1 Corinthians 4:9 NIV for it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.

Hebrews 1:14 NIV are not all angels ministering Spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

We are on display before the angels who rejoice with us in our Spiritual victories and agonize over our defeats. They are also there to assist us invisibly, when God commands them to do so.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Galatians 6:9-10 KJV and let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

1 Corinthians 2:9 KJV but as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

## Bibliography

The Holy Bible: New International Version, published by Zondervan Bible publishers, copyright 1984 by the International Bible Society.

Quickverse Bible Concordance, New International Version, by Craig Raiardin, Parsons Technology, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, copyright 1988.

The Holy Bible: King James Version, used in conjunction with Quickverse Bible concordance, by Craig Rairdin, Parsons Technology, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Copyright 1988.

The Holy Bible: New King James Version, used in conjunction with Quickverse Bible concordance, by Craig Rairdin, Parsons technology, Cedar Rrapids, Iowa. Copyright 1984, Thomas Nelson.